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The Genesis of Neo-Kantianism

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Frederick Charles Beiser, professor of philosophy at Syracuse University (USA) whose field of expertise is the modern German philosophy, is one of the most erudite historians of philosophy today. His first book *The Fate of Reason: German Philosophy from Kant to Fichte* (1987) didn't only present a fresh account of German philosophy at the end of the 18th century, but it also introduced a new method of historical research. His more recent works, starting with *The German Historicist Tradition* (2011) until the most recent *Weltschmerz: Pessimism in German Philosophy, 1860–1900* (2016), have focused on the main currents of the 19th century German philosophy. This is also the case with *The Genesis of Neo-Kantianism*. Spanning over more than six hundred pages, this book is a major contribution to the history of an important philosophical movement that would dominate the German philosophy after the collapse of speculative idealism in the second half of the 19th, and the beginning of the 20th century. The book itself is divided into three main parts. The first part (pp. 11–205) is concerned with the origins of the movement, the second (pp. 207–453) with its maturation, and the final (pp. 455–571) with a new generation of neo-Kantians that would be active from the 1870s. Therefore, the focus of this book is on the history of neo-Kantianism before the formation of three famous neo-Kantian schools: Marburg, Southwestern (also known as Baden or Heidelberg school), and the neo-Frisian school.

Beiser defines neo-Kantianism as “the movement in 19th-century Germany to rehabilitate Kant's philosophy”. Although heavily indebted to previous scholarship on this subject, mainly Klaus Christian Köhnke's book *Entstehung und Aufstieg des Neukantianismus* (1986), Beiser succeeds in providing a fresh account of the genesis of neo-Kantianism. He challenges the widespread prejudices that the neo-Kantians were unimportant scholars locked up in their towers divided from the world, or that they were unoriginal thinkers who were just repeating what Kant had already said. One of the most innovative theses

of his book is that the movement's origins are to be found already in the 1790s, in the works of Jakob Friedrich Fries, Johann Friedrich Herbart, and Friedrich Eduard Beneke. They constitute “the lost tradition” which preserved the “empiricist-psychological” side of Kant's thought, his dualisms, and things-in-themselves against the excessive speculative idealism of Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel who tried to rehabilitate the dogmatic rationalist metaphysics of Spinoza, Leibniz, and Wolff after Kant's critical project.

The first chapter of the first part (pp. 23–88) is concerned with the philosophy of Fries who tried to base philosophy on empirical psychology, and epistemology on psychology which could recognize the synthetic *a priori* but not prove it. His book *Reinhold, Fichte und Schelling* (1803) saw the history of philosophy after Kant as the “struggle of rationalism to free itself from the limits of the critique”. In his political philosophy Fries was an anti-Semite, but gave the leading role to public opinion which could correct even the ruler, although he encountered problems in trying to reconcile his liberal views with the social injustice that liberalism created. Like all the thinkers of the lost tradition, Fries defended Kant's dualisms against Schelling and Hegel whose organic conception of nature he criticized because he saw it only as another form of the mechanistic explanation of nature. He also criticized Kant's attempt to rationalize faith, and he introduced the concept of *Ahnung*, a kind of a feeling on which religion was based, and through which humans are aware of things-in-themselves. Fries' work *Neue Kritik der Vernunft* (1807) tried to bring a new transcendental deduction of the categories against the skeptical objections to Kant's philosophy, but Beiser agrees with Cassirer that Fries had failed in such an attempt because of his psychologism.

The second chapter (pp. 89–141) is dedicated to Herbart who was, according to Beiser, also a Kantian. Herbart defended Kant in his claim that reason deals with concepts (and not existences), as well as Kant's dualism of theoretical and practical reason, against the neo-rationalist metaphysics of Schelling and Hegel. Although a Fichtean in his early years (and later a Romantic), Herbart already then criticized Fichte and Schelling for their foundationalism, and for the concept of the ego that transcends the boundaries of experience and then relapses into dogmatism and fallacies of Spinoza, Leibniz, and Wolff. Beiser thinks that Herbart didn't start to develop his new system in his Swiss years, although it was then that he broke his relationship with Fichte, but in his Bremen years. It was in

his manuscript *Zur Kritik der Ichvorstellung* (1800) that Herbart criticized Fichte's ego, claiming that it is self-contradictory because, as Beiser summarizes, "thinking of being and being" are not the same and therefore "thinking of being cannot be the being thought of". Around 1802 Herbart adopted a skeptical standpoint from which he attacked Kantian-Fichtean idealism and the Romantics, but he never rejected transcendental philosophy. In his later years he increasingly identified himself with Kant and was alienated from the prevailing currents of German philosophy. Thus, in his mature metaphysical writings he defended the synthetic *a priori*, unknowability of things-in-themselves, and the necessity, as well as complementarity, of both empiricism and rationalism for the critical philosophy. However, Herbart recognized the problem of formalism or moral motivation in Kant's ethics. He held that morality depends on moral taste and cannot be universal or *a priori*. Like Fries, he thought that psychology should be the foundation for philosophy and criticized Kant's antiquated Wolffian scholastic empirical psychology. It was because of these criticisms, Beiser thinks, that Herbart was (wrongly) not considered a Kantian, but concludes that his project failed for similar reasons as in the case of Fries, for trying to base epistemology on psychology.

Last philosopher who belongs to Beiser's empiricist-psychological triumvirate is Beneke to whom the third chapter (pp. 142–177) is dedicated. Beneke was a victim of Hegelianism (he couldn't get a post at the University of Berlin because of Hegel in 1822), he was murdered under unsolved circumstances, and was therefore dubbed "neo-Kantian martyr" by Beiser. He was another staunch opponent of Romantic enthusiasm and neo-rationalist speculative idealism, as well as a radical empiricist and an ally of the best that the new natural sciences could give. Accordingly, Beneke rejected Kant's division of judgments into synthetic and analytic because the only criteria for the validity of a judgement is its confirmation in experience. He criticized Kant's claim that genuine self-knowledge is impossible, but defended the existence of things-in-themselves against speculative idealists. Beneke tried to base ethics on aesthetics, and his *Grundlegung zur Physik der Sitten* (1822) is, according to Beiser, "one of the most interesting and important works to appear in the early 19th century", an attempt to rehabilitate British sentimentalism of Hutcheson, Hume, and Smith.

The last chapter (pp. 178–205) of the first part deals with the circumstances that took part in the 1840s and the 1850s, and were crucial, in

Beiser's interpretation, for the breakthrough of neo-Kantianism. Political context which prepared such a breakthrough was the failure of the Revolution of 1848 which meant a disaster for the Hegelians in Germany but a victory for the neo-Kantians who were defenders of liberal ideals. At the same time, authors like Ernst Sigismund Mirbt, Christian Hermann Weiße, Carl Fortlage, and Otto Friedrich Gruppe called for a return to Kant. However, the crucial "philosophical developments without which neo-Kantianism would never have taken place", Beiser argues, were the rise of materialism and the identity crisis of philosophy due to a collapse of speculative idealism and the rise of the empirical sciences. Two other significant factors were the appearance of Trendelenburg and Lotze, and lastly Helmholtz, a formidable and famous scientist who thought that the natural sciences confirmed Kant's philosophy, or at least its empirical side.

The second part of Beiser's book deals with the "coming of age" of those neo-Kantians that flourished during the liberalism of the 1860s, a "breakthrough decade for neo-Kantianism". Beiser considers five major thinkers: Kuno Fischer, Eduard Zeller, Otto Liebmann, Jürgen Bona Meyer, and lastly Friedrich Albert Lange. They have affirmed psychologism of Helmholtz and the "lost tradition" but wanted to eliminate the thing-in-itself and the question of value. However, some of them have gradually distanced themselves from such views because of Schopenhauer's growing success during the 1860s, and because they wanted philosophy to be autonomous from psychology, whose possibility could be proven only by transcendental idealism.

Fischer is the first author to whom the first chapter (pp. 221–254) of the second part is dedicated. This may be a surprise to readers who think of him as a Hegelian, which is confirmed by Beiser who cites him as the example of a paradoxical Hegelian who also tried to be a Kantian. In his early work *Diotima* (1849), Fischer espoused his Hegelianism or pantheism for which he was expelled from Heidelberg. First traces of his Kantianism are found in his *Logik und Metaphysik oder Wissenschaftslehre* (1852) where he claims that Hegel's system "must be placed under the control of Kant" because, as Fischer recognized in the late 1850s, only his philosophy can solve the problems raised by Hegelianism and the empirical sciences. His *Geschichte der neueren Philosophie* (1860¹) was important for spreading the fame of Kant's philosophy among the reading public. However, by the time of his *Kritik der kantischen Philosophie* (1883) Fischer had turned a full circle

because “he had created a Kantian system under the control of Hegel” which proved, according to Beiser, that a Hegelian ultimately cannot be a Kantian.

Zeller, a great historian of philosophy, is given his due space in the second chapter (pp. 255–282) and was important, just like Fischer, for his call for a return to Kant in the 1860s. In his younger days he was also a Hegelian but by the 1840s he became critical of Hegel, especially his philosophy of religion. Historical criticism of the Bible by David Friedrich Strauß had a lasting effect on Zeller who afterwards became close to Kant. Unlike Fischer, he thought that the collapse of speculative idealism was “irreversible and final” and that philosophy should become epistemology and logic of special sciences. However, he understood philosophy in psychological terms and finally claimed that it should follow the methods of natural sciences. Zeller criticized Kant’s ethics as formalist and covertly consequentialist, adopting instead the virtue ethics of Plato and Aristotle.

Third chapter (pp. 283–327) of the second part is focused on Otto Liebmann whose legacy Beiser rehabilitates and defends against Köhnke. In his famous *Kant und die Epigonen* (1865) Liebmann interpreted Kant’s critical project in epistemological rather than psychological terms and would therefore precede in this respect Hermann Cohen and Wilhelm Windelband. In Kant he saw the central figure of German philosophy whose proper interpretation could solve the identity crisis of philosophy. The main stumble block was (in his interpretation) the thing-in-itself, whose existence he rejected, but he ultimately had to admit its existence and his failure to base philosophy on physiology. Beiser defends Liebmann against Köhnke’s accusations of chauvinism, concluding that he is a conservative liberal, and not a reactionary monarchist. In the 1870s Liebmann discussed Kant’s relation to then-contemporary development of natural sciences, criticized *Naturphilosophie* of Schelling and Hegel, as well as materialists and positivists, and developed epistemological interpretation of transcendental philosophy. Beiser thinks that Liebmann’s *Zur Analyse der Wirklichkeit* (1876) is his best work, but concludes that by the time of his *Grundriß der kritischen Metaphysik* (1901) he fell into Platonic reasoning beyond the limits of experience and even mysticism.

Meyer, a neo-Kantian sceptic, was one of the last who offered an important psychological interpretation of Kant’s philosophy, and is discussed in the fourth chapter (pp. 328–355). In his *Zum Streit über Leib und Seele* (1856) Meyer thought that Kant’s main goal was to

set the limits of knowledge and that his philosophy is a middle path between “a soulless materialism” and “groundless spiritualism” whose dispute was irresolvable because both had tried “to conceive the inconceivable”. Like Fries, he criticized Kant’s rational faith and encouraged subjective belief. In *Kant’s Psychologie* (1870) Meyer advanced the view that “the greater use of psychology (...) would have saved Kant from the formalism of his logic and ethics” and he tried to interpret Kant’s epistemological project in psychological terms, which is why his views became obsolete by the end of the 1870s. His *Zeitfragen, populäre Aufsätze* (1870) are neglected but, according to Beiser, “one of the best in the neo-Kantian pantheon”. In this work Meyer put forward his thesis that philosophy should become psychology, defends the possibility of the freedom of the will, and advocates its compatibilism with theism. Another two important aspects of Meyer’s thought are his philosophy of religion, which he saw as an unalterable characteristic of human nature and a public matter, and his views on the rise of scientific history which was a neglected topic among the neo-Kantians.

The last thinker of this transitional period of neo-Kantianism is Lange to whom the fifth chapter (pp. 356–397) is dedicated. Beiser concludes that his *Geschichte des Materialismus* (1866) “overshadows Fischer’s and Zeller’s 1860 lectures and Liebmann’s 1865 *Kant und die Epigonen*”, all of which advocated a return to Kant. However, he also argues (against Ulrich Sieg) that he wasn’t the father of Marburg neo-Kantianism nor the founder of neo-Kantian socialism (against Thomas Willey) because he criticized Kantian reasoning concerning private ownership and ethics, in which he endorsed Smith’s sentimentalism. In his younger days, although he wrote poetry, Lange held positivist views and in his *Geschichte* he would show, through historical critique of materialism, how Kant’s philosophy could solve the conflict between speculative idealism and materialism and therefore preserve their good sides which have clashed during the Revolution of 1848. Although he held positive views about materialism whose historical mission was the liberation from superstition, Lange thought that Kant’s philosophy drove it into a crisis because it proved that “all sense qualities depend upon our perceptive and cognitive organization”. It is important to note that, according to Beiser, most of Lange’s theories failed: his attempt to prove or reject the existence of things-in-themselves, his interpretation of Kant’s critical project on psychological grounds, and his rejection of Kant’s “rationalist” transcendental deduction

of the categories. However, he was also one of the first who recognized the importance of Hume for Kant. In metaphysics he accepted dualistic views, in his philosophy of religion he rejected noumenal world and rational faith, he thought that religion should be “aesthetic experience” like poetry, and he reduced morality to aesthetics which he in turn reduced to subjective taste. Beiser concludes the chapter on Lange with the observation that philosophy is for him a science which is cut off from metaphysics as poetry and that he therefore “squeezed out” traditional philosophy whose place should have been between science and poetry.

The last two chapters (pp. 398–453) of the second part are devoted to pessimism and Darwinism, both of which became a significant force in Germany in the 1860s, and would therefore challenge the neo-Kantian domination. Beiser follows Köhnke in his claim that pessimism (whose champions were Schopenhauer and Eduard von Hartmann) rose because of social, political, and economic circumstances. It troubled the neo-Kantians because it showed “that all striving for a better world is pointless”, but in their answer they followed Fichte, not Kant’s strategy espoused in his *Ideen zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltbürgerlicher Absicht* (1784), which, Beiser claims, was directed against Rousseau’s pessimism. Fichte taught the neo-Kantians that the better world would be achieved if people were working “together in political association”. Last part of the chapter on pessimism considers Schopenhauer’s essay *Über die Universitätsphilosophie* which lampooned university professors because they couldn’t teach anything contrary to religion and state, but Beiser thinks that this accusation is unfair because most neo-Kantians were persecuted by the state in the period from the 1820s to the 1860s. Like pessimism, Darwinism also had a quick success in Germany in the 1860s and it became associated with leftism and materialism at first. Lange embraced Darwinism and tried to connect it with his socialist views, although he was critical of some of Darwin’s theories, like the natural selection as the only mechanism of evolution. Meyer was sympathetic but critical of the theory of evolution for which there was no empirical evidence, while Liebmann sought to reconcile Darwinism and Aristotelianism in a kind of a neo-Kantian dualism. The chapter on Darwinism concludes with the answers of Friedrich Paulsen and Erich Adickes to Ernst Haeckel’s *Die Welträthsel* (1899) which advocated mechanism disguised in monism. Their refutations were theoretically successful, but Beiser thinks that the “spirit of

the age”, which was increasingly unfavorable to neo-Kantianism, had already changed.

The last, third part of the book deals with the first decade of “the neo-Kantian period of German university philosophy” (1870–1900) or, more precisely, with the “new establishment” of neo-Kantians who marked the final victory of epistemological interpretation of Kant: Hermann Cohen, Wilhelm Windelband, and Alois Riehl. In the prevailing liberal atmosphere of the 1870s neo-Kantianism flourished as a “bulwark against materialism” and an established “account of philosophy in the modern scientific age”, namely, as epistemology or logic of the sciences. Although neo-Kantians formed an uneasy alliance with positivism during the 1870s, such alliance proved fragile due to growing neo-Kantian involvement with ethical problems and their criticism of positivist “extreme empiricism”, “naive faith in given facts”, as well as equally naive “belief in the complete autonomy of the sciences”.

The philosophy of young Cohen, who would become the father of Marburg school, is discussed in the first chapter (pp. 465–491). In his early days he was an adherent of *Völkerpsychologie*, but in the summer of 1870 he wrote *Kants Theorie der Erfahrung* (1871) which wanted to reconstruct “proper historical Kant” whose critical project was for the first time clearly understood in epistemological rather than psychological terms. The book also stressed the importance of the transcendental for Kant and the central role of the transcendental deduction in the first *Kritik*, although (ironically) Cohen denied Hume’s influence on Kant. Beiser challenges the view that early Cohen’s transcendental idealism is “an idealism without the subject” and that *Theorie* is “the product of Cohen’s mystical Platonism” because he emphasized Kant’s rejection of intellectual intuition. In his groundbreaking book Cohen also responded to Lange and Trendelenburg and eliminated the threat of materialism which both have left open. The former because he thought that *a priori* forms were part of nature and the latter because he presupposed the independent existence of matter in space.

Main topic of the second chapter (pp. 492–530) is the concept of normativity in the early works of Wilhelm Windelband who would become the father of Southwestern school. In his 1881 lecture Windelband put forward “his normative conception of philosophy”. According to him, Kant was the first who had explained “the possibility of knowledge not through the correspondence of a representation with an object but through the conformity of representations with rules”. It was here

that Windelband introduced the term “norm” in the rule: “truth is the normativity of thinking”. He defined philosophy as the science of norms because it “makes appraisals, determining what should be or have a value”. When a critical philosopher makes an appraisal, according to Windelband, “he assumes that something should be recognized as valid for everyone”. In his interpretation Kant was the one who held that philosophy should make a difference in the world, but there was a gap between the normative (what should be) and the natural (what is) which young Windelband tried to cross with his compatibilist theory of freedom. In his early works he also advocated foundationalism, syncretism of epistemology, psychology, and metaphysics, as well as the impossibility of the thing-in-itself. In the last part of this chapter Beiser clashes with Köhnke’s theory of Windelband’s intellectual development, which claims that he had conceived his normative conception of philosophy only in 1878, after assassination attempts on Kaiser Wilhelm I, as a bulwark against the socialists and democracy. Beiser proves that Windelband had formulated such a view before 1878 and that he was actually advocating a “full enlightenment” which would make “every individual think for himself”.

The last chapter (pp. 531–571) of Beiser’s book is dedicated to Alois Riehl, who, unlike Cohen or Windelband, never became the father of a neo-Kantian school but had a big following. His major work was *Der philosophische Kriticismus* in three volumes (1876, 1879, 1887), “one of the classics of the neo-Kantian tradition” whose goal was to affirm the existence of things-in-themselves and to reinterpret Kant’s philosophy in the spirit of modern science. Beiser challenges the common view that Riehl was a positivist and throughout the chapter stresses both positivist and anti-positivist sides of his philosophy. He finds the first traces of Riehl’s realism in his early work *Realistische Grundzüge* (1870) and stresses that in his early years he adopted nominalism, naturalism opposed to dualisms, and vitalism. According to Beiser, Riehl preceded psychology of Franz Brentano and the interpretative psychology of Wilhelm Dilthey with his conception of philosophy whose object should be the content of consciousness. By realising the tensions between his definition of philosophy as psychology and his admittance that Kant’s project was essentially epistemological, Riehl’s conversion to Kant became complete, which can be seen in the first volume of *Der philosophische Kriticismus*. In the first part he followed Cohen in reconstructing the historical Kant but gave much more importance to British empiricism, through which he criticized positivists. He af-

firmed the version of realism which claims that what we know “of reality in itself is only its existence, not its nature or essence” and which, Beiser claims, corresponds to Kant’s formal idealism. Unlike Cohen and Windelband who claimed that the thing-in-itself is only a “goal of enquiry”, Riehl tried to prove its existence and failed, but like them he was bothered by Kant’s practical or noumenal realm where he placed morality and religious belief in such a problematic way, relying their existence on “mere logical possibility”. Mature Riehl saw theoretical philosophy as epistemology, a servant of the natural sciences, but practical philosophy as a noble “guide to life”, and practical philosopher as “a moral legislator and guide”. However, Beiser concludes, Riehl’s big weakness was a huge divide between his theoretical and practical philosophy.

It is impossible to give full justice to professor Beiser’s bold attempt to sketch the genesis of neo-Kantianism, nor to fully discuss all the topics of his splendid book in this review. Instead, only a few more important assessments can be given. Positive aspects, like the rehabilitation of all the thinkers and their philosophical relevance mentioned above, definitely give his book the highest value. Therefore, only some problems and issues that were encountered during the reading will be given below.

One of the characteristics of Beiser’s general overviews of particular periods or movements in the history of philosophy is his heavy focus on theoretical philosophy which leaves his readers with an impression that practical philosophy is of lesser importance. This is particularly sensitive in the case of Kant who did give priority to theoretical philosophy, but he also gave the primacy to practical philosophy. Kant’s first *Kritik* clearly shows that empirical sciences threatened to destroy the unique place of philosophy and its question of value already in the 18th century. However, most of Beiser’s book is concerned with metaphysics and epistemology and the reader is left with a false impression that the neo-Kantians didn’t really concern themselves with ethics or aesthetics which were cut off from their theoretical deliberations. This is a false impression because Beiser completely left out those neo-Kantians whose main field of expertise was practical philosophy. In the first place one should mention Austrian philosopher Robert Zimmermann who opened philosophically interesting debates in aesthetics but was mentioned only in a footnote as a teacher of Riehl (the same case was in Köhnke’s book). In reality Zimmermann was active at the time of Fischer and Zeller, he would hold lectures on the history of philosophy for decades in Vi-

enna, and in them he would give central place to Kant. Moreover, Zimmermann would influence generations of philosophers throughout the Habsburg Monarchy and that means a huge part of Central Europe. This opens another problem, and that is Beiser's exclusive focus on Germany, while the Habsburg Monarchy, which would reform its universities according to Humboldt's German model in the Revolution of 1848, was completely left out.

There is also an issue concerning Beiser's lack of interpretations and a conclusion to the book. Although there are many places where he engages in fierce debates, there are also many places where he just reiterates works at length without discussing their philosophical importance or his own stance, for example, parts of Herbart's metaphysics or Beneke's rejection of universal moral principles. Some of his interpretations are antiquated, which is mostly seen in his interpretation of British philosophy. Thus he follows older scholars in claiming that Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature* has an anthropological foundation, although most contemporary scholars agree that Hume is thinking of philosophy of mind and epistemology rather than philosophical anthropology when he is discussing the "human nature". There are similar issues when it comes to a discussion of Hume's skepticism, the sentimentalism of Hutcheson, Hume, and Smith (as if they held completely identical views), or their "relativistic" ethics (pp. 164, 171, 282). Beiser has also left out detailed historical connections between philosophers, like the reaction of speculative idealists to arguments of the "lost tradition", or the fact that some neo-Kantian philosophers, like Zeller and Fischer, were also important for the philosophers of the "new establishment" and were active during that time, which alters chronological structure of the book. Sometimes it seems that the book was written with an intention of being a contribution to contemporary Kant scholarship in the USA as much as a historical investigation. However, this doesn't have to be an issue and Beiser's book doesn't have to be read as a detailed historical study, but as a series of elegantly and seriously written philosophical portraits or essays which are connected by some major themes like the decline of psychological interpretation of Kant's theoretical philosophy in the 19th century Germany.

Careful readers will also encounter some contradictions and ambiguities in the book. One contradiction is a constant tension between defining Herbart as an independent thinker and a Kantian, and philosophers under his influence as Herbartians or Kantians. Although Beiser thinks that Herbart was a Kantian, that

didn't prevent him from claiming, for example, that Lange was at first a Herbartian and only later became a Kantian (pp. 359, 463). The second contradiction is Beiser's claim that a "good Kantian" adheres to Kant's ethics (p. 403), although all of the thinkers he discusses actually rejected his formalistic ethics and some of them embraced sentimentalism or virtue ethics. Similar, but minor examples can be found in the chapter on Meyer who advocated theism but adored Voltaire and deism (pp. 348, 351), or on early Windelband who thought that logic should completely steer away from metaphysics and psychology but warned that it should "not completely isolate itself" from them (p. 521). There are also some minor mistakes in historical facts, for example, claim (p. 255) that Zeller is famous for his *Grundriss der Geschichte der griechischen Philosophie* (his most important work is actually *Die Philosophie der Griechen in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung*) or that the Second Reich existed already in the late 1860s (p. 349). Beiser also sometimes mentions important facts for neo-Kantianism but leaves them unexplained, like the Kantian school of orthodox dogmatic theologians (pp. 365–366). It should be noted, however, that those are rare examples in Beiser's otherwise consistent account.

The book itself is clearly and beautifully written. There are only a few mistakes like repeated ("that that" /p. 158/ "upon upon" /p. 488/) or dropped words ("[in] Lange's later philosophy", /p. 362/). There are some problems with German language and translation, for example, it should be *Auflage der Geschichte des Materialismus*, not *Auflage des Geschichtes des Materialismus* (p. 83), *Jahrhundert*, not *Jahr hundert* (p. 145), *der alles Zermalmende* (!) means the all-crushing, not the "old destroyer" (p. 208), *zweite Auflage* instead of *Zweiter Auflage* (p. 312), and so on. A bigger difficulty might be the index of names which is incomplete and so the reader cannot find important figures like Marx, Engels, or Zimmermann that are mentioned in a book. Concerning the physical aspects of the hardcover volume, the binding seems reliable and the design of the dust jacket stands out among the editions of the Oxford University Press.

It can be safely concluded that the positive aspects greatly outweigh the flaws of professor Beiser's book which will become unavoidable for anyone who wants to understand not only the neo-Kantian movement but also much of modern philosophy which emerged from the ruins of speculative idealism in the second half of the 19th century.

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