Marburg School

The Marburg School is a term used to describe a group of Neo-Kantian philosophers at the University of Marburg in the second half of the nineteenth century and early part of the twentieth century. The New Criticism, as neo-Kantianism was also called, was skeptical of nineteenth century materialism and naturalism. Friedrich Albert Lange (1828-1875) called for a return to Kant and his distinction between aprioristic and empirical knowledge. The classical Kantian metaphysical realism (“thing in itself”) was nevertheless rejected in the Kantian renaissance. The key figures of the new critical and transcendental idealism at its zenith were Hermann Cohen (1842-1918) and Paul Natorp (1854-1924). Cohen developed a rigorous transcendentalism and an epistemological basis for ethics from the standpoint of critical idealism. Natorp provided an account of an objective transcendental logic in epistemology. Later he focused on the aprioristic foundations of the sciences and the principle of unity. From the younger generation, Ernst Cassirer (1874-1945) developed the philosophy of science, modern conceptions of human freedom and theories of culture in which man is the *animal symbolicum* (symbolic animal).

Bibliography: Klaus Christian Köhnke, *The rise of neo-Kantianism: German academic philosophy between idealism and positivism* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1991).

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