

The dynamic unity of form and matter. The Kantian Schematism as condition of the meaning of categories and its revision in more recent theories

La unidad dinámica de forma y material. El esquematismo kantiano como condición del significado de las categorías y su revisión en varias teorías recientes

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The book of Lidia Gasperoni “*Versinnlichung. Kants transzendentaler Schematismus und seine Revision in der Nachfolge*” focuses on one of the obscurest doctrine of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, namely Schematism. The reasons of the difficulties of the Kantian passages are manifold and have generated debates and contrasts among the interpreters. Besides the incongruences and obscurity of the variety of definitions Kant provides of the notion, one of the most relevant accusation concerns the consistency of problem it aims at solving: if Schematism deals with the application of categories to intuitions, it sounds redundant since the question has already been solved through the transcendental Deduction. Moreover schemes, if seen as temporal translations of categories aiming at solving the heterogeneity between intuitions and concepts, have often been interpreted as mere abstract and artificial constructions to connect them.

Deepening into the Kantian obscure passages, Gasperoni wants not only to illustrate her interpretation of the text, but also to consider how the notion of schema has been developed in more recent times. The book, indeed, is divided into two main sections: the first is devoted to the notion of Schematism in Kant, while the second to its interpretation and revision in some of Kant’s successors.

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More in detail, in the first chapter the author presents the chapter of Schematism as aiming at finding a medium between different faculties involved in cognition that work always together and are separated only in the philosophical research on the conditions of possibilities of knowledge. Knowledge, far from being interpreted as a static *adaequatio* between representations and intuitions, mind and world, is described as a process, a dynamic activity. In this way one of the main difficulties in interpreting Schematism, namely, the one focusing accusing his abstractness and artificiality, is solved by Lidia Gasperoni by interpreting the Kantian method in a heuristic sense: Kant proceeds through a procedure which isolates the heterogeneous functions of cognition and he did so, not in order to underline their ontological distinction, but rather to give evidence to the specificity of their proper functions. Consequently, Schematism doesn't provide a static and fictitious link between sensibility and intellect, but rather deals with the transcendental condition of their connection. In this sense, it is regarded as the systematic condition of the emergence of the meaning through a dynamic activity held through the faculty of judgement, whose purpose consists in the application of concepts intended as rules. This processual synthesis might be of three kinds, insofar as it involves empirical concepts, pure intuitions or pure concepts. The first one deals with the subsumption of intuitions and empirical concepts that are expressed in sensible images. The second is proper of geometrical figures such as a triangle, which is the construction in a pure intuition of a concept. The third one, on which actually focuses the chapter of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, regards the process of synthesis that allows the application of categories to intuitions, based on the mediating function of time, which, given its universality and its connection to sensibility can serve as middle term. In this way Kant shows how the realm of cognition is restricted as well as realized through experience. Different, although somehow analogous to schemes, are symbols, seen as sensible expression of the non-sensible, and signs through which language develops. By referring to these further functions Lidia Gasperoni proposes a reading of the Kantian text as presenting three ways (proper schemes, symbols and signs) in which the process of *Versinnlichung* (sensualisation of the meaning) that works through Schematism might be realized as process through which the whole experience is structured and provided with meaning.

This interpretation of the doctrine of Schematism as a *Versinnlichung* illuminates the transcendental importance of the chapter of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, since it focuses on the process through which concepts are provided with realization and uses in the experience.

As anticipated, the second part of the book is devoted to the revision and development of the use of the notion of schema after Kant. In particular, the author drives attention to Maimon, Hamann, Herder, Humboldt and Hegel. Maimon proposes a unification of a rational Dogmatism and empirical scepticism in which the notion of reality is wider as the Kantian one, as it includes ideas to which it is possible to come close in an indefinite process that implies the symbolical processual operation of imagination. Also Hamann proposes a symbolical account of rationality, which, differently from Maimon, is strictly

material as he considers language as a sensible function of the significance theologically grounded. In Herder the use of the notion of schema is more explicitly linked to his interest in language rather than in the Kantian inquiry on the transcendental conditions: he develops indeed a *metaschematism*, seen as a *Gestaltungsprozess* process of development of the form, in which language and perception cannot be isolated from one another since form and matter, activity and receptivity are always already connected. This *metaschematism* is a sort of self expression of senses and spontaneity, which are united in a constitutive *synesthesia* and are separated only in the philosophical analysis.

After focusing on Humboldt and Hegel's interpretation of the processual realization of the thinking through language, the author puts Schematism in connection to the thought of Plessner and the modern theory of the Embodiement. In this way the author underlines the actuality of the problem of Schematism: as it consists in a process of *Versinnlichung*, an active process of the formation and sensible structuration of the meaning, it is close to the topic of the recent debates about cognition and the mind-body problem.

To conclude, the work of Lidia focuses on one of the most controversial topic in the critical contemporary literature on the Kantian works. It provides an original interpretation of Schematism as *Versinnlichung* not only by inquiring the text but also by referring to its influence on later thinkers. If on the one hand the author provides a deep critical analysis and interpretation of the notion of schema in some of the followers of Kant (such as Maimon, Herder, Hegel), on the other it encourages to go further in this research. There are several authors, indeed, whose psychological inquires on behaviour, perception and cognition are considerably related to the Kantian notion of a schema. For instance, Piaget, Bartlett and the cognitive psychologists in which schema is regard as a core notion to explain and describe the structures of cognition. For sure, the number of philosophers and psychologists who refer to the Kantian Schematism is almost uncountable and that is one of the reason that might discourage to publish researchers on this theme. Each inquire on this topic is and cannot but appear as partial and incomplete. But accepting this risk and far from pretending to give a conclusive and a definitive interpretation of the topic, the researches of Lidia Gasperoni demonstrates once again how the philosophy of Kant can still provide seeds to the flourishing of the inquiry on the understanding of the complexity of the grounds of cognition and experience.

