

Imagination in Action. The Case of Historical Epistemology¹.

One of the important problems of the contemporary philosophy of science is its collaboration with historical studies. Philosopher's reference to the field of history of science in post-positivism has proven to be constructive. However, historians remain mostly indifferent to philosophy of science, having no tendency to philosophical conceptualizations and seeking for no methodological guidance from philosophers. The well-known formula by I. Lakatos forms this asymmetric collaboration: "History of science without philosophy of science is blind; philosophy of science without history of science is empty". According to this statement, which refers to Kant's interpretation of the Imagination as a faculty that subsumes a representation under the concept of the Object, a historian only provides matter for the spontaneity of the Understanding, whereas the conceptual synthesis belongs to the domain of a philosopher.

The role of the Imagination, for Kant, is not limited to schematism, as described in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. In the *Critique of Judgment*, he contends that the Imagination also schematizes without any concept and, thus, he speaks of its freedom. This second interpretation of the Imagination determines another kind of interaction between history and philosophy of science, in which history shares the active role.

Contemporary historical epistemology has already explored this kind of interaction (L. Daston, H.-J. Rheinberger, J. Renn, etc.). Ascending to the tradition of French epistemology (G. Bachelard, G. Canguilhem, etc.) and post-positivistic research, historical epistemology emerges in the context of the crisis of scientific representations. The criticism of science as a theoretical activity, which creates conceptual representations, indicates that crisis (R. Rorty, I. Hacking, N. Cartwright, etc.) and emphasizes a practical side of science, related to empirical objects and their images, giving way to the Imagination schematizing without a concept. Thus, a new historical approach to the study of science emerges. Being no subject to concepts assigned by philosophy, it creates and reassembles them anew.

Historical epistemology focuses mainly on various scientific practices and images – empirical representations of objects. Dealing with images, science and art intersect and, accordingly, do the histories of science and art. Even when science begins to demarcate itself from art (from the 19th century on), it asserts a special status of its images in opposition to those of art. I am going to demonstrate that the linkage of scientific and artistic imagery in historical epistemology creates a new philosophical conceptual representation of scientific objects. These objects lose their invariance; acquire incompleteness and openness to various studies.

I will emphasize, in conclusion, that the linkage between science and art, in the field of historical epistemology and in specific interdisciplinary projects, creates a new image of science as such both in the eyes of scientists and of the public. A few examples will demonstrate the contribution of this linkage to the popularization of science, public engagement in science, and formation of open and *enlarged* thinking, i.e. understanding that not science alone gives access to reality.

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