



Ernst Cassirer and the Critical Science of Germany, 1899–1919

Gregory B. Moynahan

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Reconstructing the relationship between science and politics in Imperial Germany, this book covers the early work of the philosopher and historian Ernst Cassirer (1874–1945) and discusses his relation to the Marburg School of philosophy.

“The increasing interest in Cassirer makes this masterful work necessary reading. By putting Cassirer in the context of the project of the Marburg school and his relation to Leibniz, Moynahan brings out the depth and consistency in Cassirer’s political and social thought, as well as its relation to his technically demanding early philosophy. It will change the way social theorists draw on Cassirer.” —John Levi Martin, Professor of Sociology, University of Chicago

“Moynahan’s study offers deeply researched new insights on Cassirer’s philosophical development. Moynahan shows that Cassirer must be understood from the beginning of his career as an independent mind who combined deep-rootedness in Marburg neo-Kantianism with the ability to theorize and reformulate innovations in the natural sciences at the beginning of the twentieth century. Cassirer’s philosophical writings up to the end of his life were defined by the same combination. By taking careful account of Cassirer’s early work, Moynahan’s work rehabilitates Cassirer as one of most important philosophers of the last 100 years.” —Thomas Meyer, LMU Munich, and author of “Ernst Cassirer: Eine Biographie”

“Gregory Moynahan has written an important book on a thinker whose voice we need to bring back into the conversation of critical theory. It is in Ernst Cassirer’s early works and connection with the challenging philosophy of his teacher Hermann Cohen, Moynahan demonstrates, that his relevance for contemporary debate is particularly evident. This erudite and well-argued text at once illuminates the pre-World War One reform project of the Marburg school and suggests its continued significance in Cassirer’s work.” —Drucilla Cornell, Professor of Political Science, Comparative Literature, and Women’s and Gender Studies, Rutgers University

Recovering a lost world of the politics of science in Imperial Germany, Gregory B. Moynahan approaches the life and work of the philosopher and historian Ernst Cassirer (1874–1945) from a revisionist perspective, using this framework to redefine the origins of twentieth-century critical historicism and critical theory. The only text in English to focus on the first half of the polymath Cassirer’s career and his role in the Marburg School, this volume illuminates one of the most important – and in English, least-studied – reform movements in Imperial Germany.

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