

REVIEW OF ROBERT KÖNIG'S  
*INTERIMSLIEBE: DIE EINHEIT VON  
SYLLOGISTIK, DIALEKTIK UND  
MYSTIK*<sup>1</sup>

Rainer Guggenberger<sup>2,3</sup>

rainer@letras.ufrj.br

In his remarkable work, *Interimsliebe: Die Einheit von Syllogistik, Dialektik und Mystik*, Robert König undertakes the attempt to not only intrinsically connect three essential authors of philosophy but also to show that their separation is a post-classical misunderstanding. König, whose writing is characterized by both precision and profundity, guides the reader through a complex web of historical analyses, theoretical discussions, and critical reflections.

### Thematic Innovation and Historical Depth

One of the most outstanding features of König's work is his approach to detailing and reinterpreting the historical development of each of the three areas – syllogistic, dialectic, and mysticism – from innovative perspectives. Through careful analysis of texts from antiquity to modern times,

---

<sup>1</sup> Recebido: 15-08-2024/ Aceito: 21-10-2024/ Publicado on-line: 11-12-2024.

<sup>2</sup> É professor na Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ), Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, Brasil.

<sup>3</sup> ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0543-2606>.

König demonstrates how these disciplines can be understood as parts of a coherent system of philosophical thought. His ability to draw connections across centuries not only highlights forgotten or overlooked aspects of philosophical tradition but also encourages reflection on contemporary philosophical practices.

### **Methodological Strengths and Weaknesses**

König's methodological approach is undoubtedly professional and refreshing. However, it should be noted that the book's theoretical development can sometimes be dense and somewhat inaccessible. The use of highly specialized terminology, while necessary for precise argumentation, assumes a level of prior knowledge that not all readers may possess. On the other hand, the didactic author repeatedly – without becoming repetitive – returns to the same point (the essence of the work to be conveyed) from various angles, which helps to keep the thread in the intellectual maze visible. Like other modern philosophical works, König's faces a certain tension: the need to communicate complex ideas precisely and the perhaps latent desire to reach a broader audience.

### **Interdisciplinary Perspectives and Forward-Looking Approach**

Particularly noteworthy is König's commitment to an interdisciplinary approach. By specifically blending analytical methods from the history of philosophy and classical philology, he expands the horizon of what is possible in the humanities in the treated field. Thus, the originality and

significance of König's work for future research are to be emphasized.

## Overview and Detailed Discussion

*Interimsliebe* – the title is a quote taken from the band *Einstürzende Neubauten* and refers to the movement of the “interim” (König, 2021, p. 5) – essentially consists of three parts, with the second, just over one page long part named “Interim” serving as a kind of hinge that separates and simultaneously unites the other two parts, presenting a “short discussion on verbalizing” (König, 2021, p. 8) the author's logos. While the first part mainly gives space to the author's own interpretative and research impulses on the sometimes quite idiosyncratically but certainly innovatively interpreted topics of syllogistic, dialectic, and mysticism, as well as the associated insights of Aristotle, Plato, and Socrates, the third part focuses mainly on the research situation regarding these authors and the philosophical phenomena and practices discussed in the first part. Before the first part, a foreword contextualizes the place of *Interimsliebe* in Robert König's oeuvre, hints at what the reader can expect, and quickly introduces the concept of mirabilistics<sup>4</sup>, which is more comprehensively treated in the introduction to the concept of “wondering” inserted between the foreword and the first part. It should be noted that *thaumazein*, as a pivotal point, is repeatedly mentioned throughout large parts of the

---

<sup>4</sup>“Die Mirabilistik ist keine neue Wissenschaft, sie ist, mit Sokrates, Platon und Aristoteles als Wissenschaft des thaumazein eben die *arché*, die älteste und erste philosophische Wissenschaft und wurde stets und immer von den Philosophierenden betrieben” (König, 2021, p. 569).

work, as it is or should be inherent in philosophy as the main methodological principle or process<sup>5</sup>.

The first part begins with an introductory definition of the concept of “interim” and its philosophical position and significance: “The interim, in its middle-ness, precisely because it is middle and between [...] itself (interim), has already received many names [...] In Plato, for example, the interim appears in the much-considered *methexis*, often translated as ‘participation’” (König, 2021, p. 31). This introduction is followed by three sections: 1) the True – the logic, 2) the Beautiful – the mythology, 3) the Good – the mysticism. The first section mainly deals with the essence of the syllogism and its various figures – primarily its first and most important one – beyond and with Aristotle, while the second discusses (apparent) opposites such as immanence-transcendence, logos-mythos, as well as other terms that emerged from the (sometimes incorrect: see theory of ideas) interpretative handling of Plato, and especially deals with dialectic. The last section of the first part turns to the (mainly Platonic) Socrates and the critique of writing associated with his name, mysticism, virtue teaching, *paideia*, and finally the learning to die.

In the third part, the action of thinking Plato and Aristotle in a united form is particularly fascinating – one could almost speak of a speculative philosophical marriage (and as in almost every marriage, the couple is not one-

---

<sup>5</sup> As an introduction to the significance of *thaumazein*, Thomas Stölzel’s “Exkurs zum Staunen” (1998) is recommended, though it is not listed in the bibliography of *Interimsliebe*.

minded in each occasion, which, above all, may be due to a methodological decision by Aristotle<sup>6</sup>). Plato

allows in his philosophy to think what Aristotle just rejects [...] Aristotle has given Platonic philosophy [...] its logic and logified this logic completely with its self-immanent paradox. He thus very well brings Plato to the point and remains an eternal Platonist in that his syllogistic justifies why Plato had always gone beyond a first-figure reduced syllogistic. [...] Plato had yet to become Aristotle to always already be Plato beyond Aristotle. [...] reading both in the closest relationship to each other has its undeniable justification (König, 2021, p. 447).

## Conclusion

*Interimsliebe* is a profound and challenging work that invites readers to question the implications of syllogistic, dialectic, and mysticism as well as their philosophical relationships and references. Despite certain intellectual challenges in terms of accessibility and practical relevance (which may be due to the author's preference – not only for the great ancient thinkers but also for Kant and especially for Hegel's style of thinking and writing), the book is an important contribution to modern philosophy that starts from the works of great ancient thinkers and simultaneously leads back to them, challenges existing discourses, and opens new avenues for future research. It is to be hoped that König's visionary approach will find recognition not only in

---

<sup>6</sup> “Aristoteles [hat] Platon nicht etwa missverstanden [...], sondern eine *Entscheidung* für den Primat der ersten Figur getroffen [...], der folgerichtig die ‘Ideen’ zu denjenigen ‘Objekten’ machte, die er foran kritisierte. Im Sinne der modernen Forschungsgeschichte ist von hier aus Harold Cherniss [1946] [...] Recht zu geben, der darauf hinweist, Aristoteles hätte sich gleichsam durch bewusste Missdeutungen seine philosophischen Vorgänger gerne so aufgebaut, dass er im Verlauf seiner Abgrenzung von diesem konstruierten Aufbau seine eigene Philosophie demonstrieren könne” (König, 2021, p. 342).

academic circles but also beyond and contribute to re-illuminating the unity of philosophy in all its diversity and depth. *Interimsliebe* is not only to be understood as an academic exercise in connecting historical and conceptual philosophical threads but also as a plea for a holistic view of philosophical questions. A highlight is Robert König's ability to unite often separately treated philosophical disciplines in a coherent framework and make them reciprocally fruitful, motivating the reader to both reconsider forgotten or “buried” ways of thinking and explore philosophical problems anew.

## **Bibliography**

KÖNIG, R. *Interimsliebe: Die Einheit von Syllogistik, Dialektik und Mystik*. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2021.

STÖLZEL, T. Exkurs zum Staunen. In: *Rohe und polierte Gedanken: Studien zur Wirkungsweise aphoristischer Texte*. Freiburg im Breisgau: Rombach, 1998. p. 244-252.