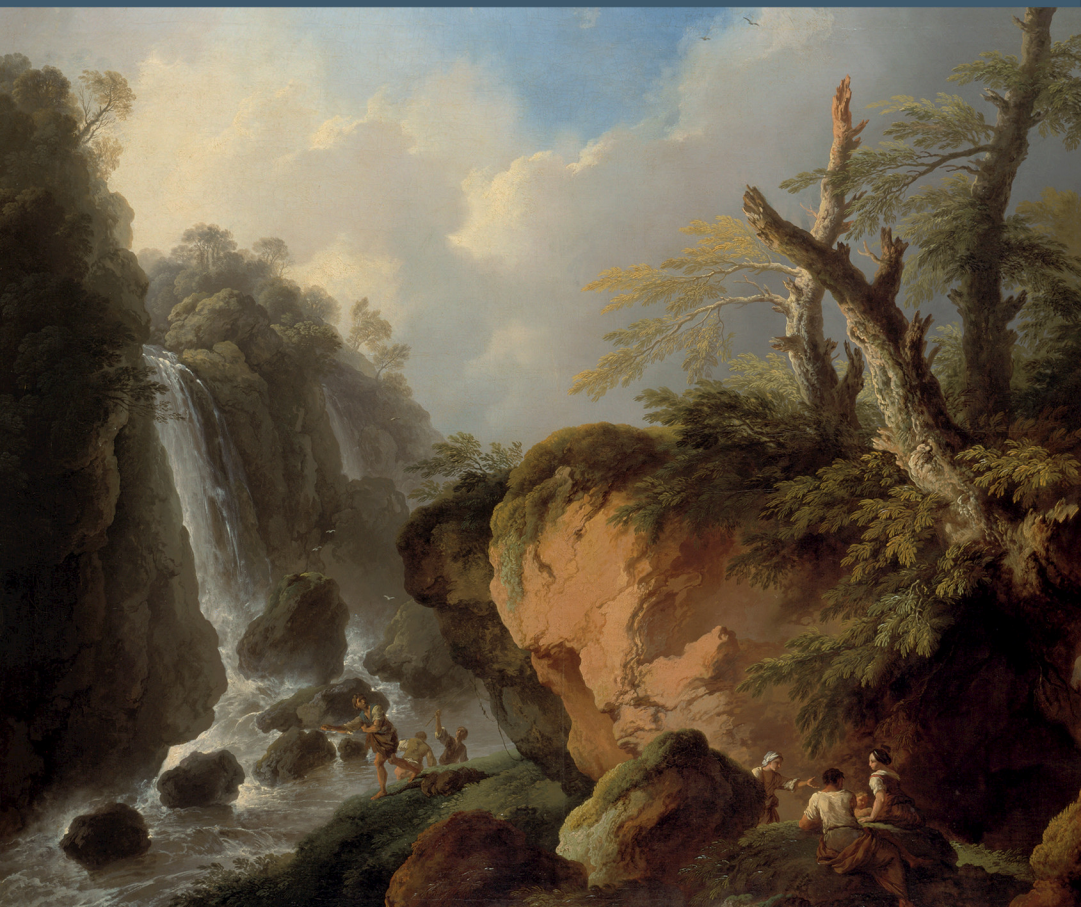
Kant and His German Contemporaries

Volume II: Aesthetics, History, Politics, and Religion

Edited by Daniel O. Dahlstrom



KANT AND HIS GERMAN CONTEMPORARIES

Volume II

Aesthetics, History, Politics, and Religion

Kant's philosophical achievements have long overshadowed those of his German contemporaries, often to the point of concealing his contemporaries' influence upon him. This volume of new essays draws on recent research into the rich complexity of eighteenth-century German thought, examining key figures in the development of aesthetics and art history, the philosophy of history and education, political philosophy, and the philosophy of religion. The essays range over numerous thinkers, including Baumgarten, Mendelssohn, Meier, Winckelmann, Herder, Schiller, Hamann, and Fichte, showing how they variously influenced, challenged, and revised Kant's philosophy, at times moving it in novel directions unacceptable to the *magister* himself. The volume will be valuable for all who are interested in this distinctive period of German philosophy.

DANIEL O. DAHLSTROM is John R. Silber Professor of Philosophy at Boston University. His previous publications include *The Emergence of German Idealism* (1999); *Philosophical Legacies: Essays on the Thought of Kant, Hegel, and Their Contemporaries* (2008); and *Identity, Authenticity, and Humility* (2017).

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Contributors

MICHAEL BAUR is Associate Professor of Philosophy at Fordham University and Adjunct Professor of Law at Fordham Law School, Bronx, NY, USA. He is the editor (with Stephen Houlgate) of *The Blackwell Companion to Hegel* (2011) and the translator of J. G. Fichte's *Foundations of Natural Right* (Cambridge University Press, 2000).

BRIAN A. CHANCE is a member of the Department of Philosophy at the University of Oklahoma, Norman, OK, USA. His work has appeared in the *British Journal for the History of Philosophy, European Journal of Philosophy, Kantian Review, Kant-Studien, Kant Yearbook*, and several edited volumes.

DANIEL O. DAHLSTROM is John R. Silber Professor of Philosophy at Boston University, Boston, MA, USA. His previous publications include *The Emergence of German Idealism* (1999); *Philosophical Legacies: Essays on the Thought of Kant, Hegel, and Their Contemporaries* (2008); and *Identity, Authenticity, and Humility* (2017).

ELISABETH DÉCULTOT is the Humboldt Professor at the Martin Luther University of Halle-Wittenberg, Halle and Wittenberg, Germany. She is the author of *Johann Joachim Winckelmann. Enquête sur la genèse de l'histoire de l'art* (2000) and (with Hans Adler) the editor of Johann Georg Sulzer's *Gesammelte Schriften* (vol. I, 2014).

NIGEL DESOUZA is Assistant Professor in the Department of Philosophy at the University of Ottawa, Canada. He is the author of "The Soul-Body Relationship and the Foundations of Morality: Herder contra Mendelssohn" (*Herder Yearbook*, 2014) and (with Anik Waldow) the editor of *Herder: Philosophy and Anthropology* (2017).

GABRIEL GOTTLIEB is Associate Professor of Philosophy at Xavier University, Cincinnati, OH, USA. He is the editor of *Fichte's "Foundation of Natural Rights": A Critical Guide* (Cambridge University Press, 2016) and the author of "Fichte's Deduction of the External World" (*International Philosophical Quarterly*, 2015).

PAUL GUYER is the Jonathan Nelson Professor in Humanities and Philosophy at Brown University, Providence, RI, USA. He is the author of ten books on Kant, most recently *Virtues of Freedom: Selected Essays on Kant* (2016). He is also the author of *A History of Modern Aesthetics* (3 vols., 2014). He has translated numerous works by Kant and edited five volumes on Kant and one on the philosophy of Stanley Cavell.

MARION HEINZ is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Siegen, Siegen, Germany. She is the author of *Sensualistischer Idealismus. Untersuchung zur Erkenntnistheorie und Metaphysik des jungen Herder (1763–1778)* (1994) and the editor of *Herders "Metakritik": Analysen und Interpretationen* (2013).

IAN HUNTER is Professor Emeritus in the Institute for Advanced Studies of the Humanities at the University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia. He is the author of *Rival Enlightenments* (Cambridge University Press, 2001) and *The Secularisation of the Confessional State* (Cambridge University Press, 2007).

J. COLIN MCQUILLAN is Associate Professor of Philosophy at St. Mary's University, San Antonio, TX, USA. He is the author of *Immanuel Kant: The Very Idea of a Critique of Pure Reason* (2016) and *Early Modern Aesthetics* (2015).

LYDIA L. MOLAND is Associate Professor of Philosophy at Colby College, Waterville, ME, USA. She is the author of *Hegel's Aesthetics: The Art of Idealism* (forthcoming) and *Hegel on Political Identity: Patriotism, Nationality, Cosmopolitanism* (2011).

LAWRENCE PASTERNACK is Professor of Philosophy at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK, USA. He is the author of *Kant's Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason: An Interpretation and Defense* (2014), the editor of *Immanuel Kant's Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals: In Focus* (2002), and the series editor of *Immanuel Kant's Textbooks in Translation* (2016).

KRISTI SWEET is Associate Professor of Philosophy at Texas A&M University, College Station, TX, USA. She is the author of *Kant on Practical Life: From Duty to History* (Cambridge University Press, 2013) and "What Is Philosophical about Kant's Anthropology" (*International Journal of Philosophical Studies*, 2017).

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Abbreviations

Kant's works are cited according to the abbreviations given in the following list (which is derived from that provided in the forthcoming *Cambridge Kant Lexicon*, edited by Julian Wuerth). The abbreviation of the work is followed by the respective volume and page number in *Kant's gesammelte Schriften*, edited by Deutsche (formerly Königlich-Preussische) Akademie der Wissenschaften (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1900–19; De Gruyter, 1920–), abbreviated as "Ak." unless otherwise indicated. Only the German pagination is cited, since the volume and page numbers of the Akademie edition are given in the margins of the respective English translation in the *Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant* ("CE"). When an English translation is lacking, the Akademie edition is cited as "Ak." followed by the respective volume and page number. As is conventional, the *Critique of Pure Reason* is cited according to the page numbers in the first ("A") and/or second ("B") editions. Whenever available, English translations are taken from the following list. The abbreviation "tm" means that a translation has been modified by the author of the chapter.

Abbreviations of Kant's Works

Anth	*Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* (CE *Anthropology, History, and Education*, pp. 227–428; Ak. 7: 117–333)
CBHH	*Conjectural Beginning of Human History* (CE *Anthropology, History, and Education*, pp. 160–75; Ak. 8:107–24)
CF	*The Conflict of the Faculties* (CE *Religion and Rational Theology*, pp. 233–328; Ak. 7:1–116)
Corr	*Correspondence* (CE *Correspondence*; Ak. 10–13)
CPJ	*Critique of the Power of Judgment* (CE *Critique of the Power of Judgment*; Ak. 5:165–485)

CPR	*Critique of Pure Reason* (CE *Critique of Pure Reason*; Ak. 4: 1–252)
CPrR	*Critique of Practical Reason* (CE *Practical Philosophy*, pp. 133–72; Ak. 5:1–163)
DSS	*Dreams of a Spirit-Seer Elucidated by Dreams of Metaphysics* (CE *Theoretical Philosophy, 1755–1770*, pp. 301–59; Ak. 2: 315–73)
G	*Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (CE *Practical Philosophy*, pp. 37–108; Ak. 4:385–463)
IUH	*Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim* (CE *Anthropology, History, and Education*, pp. 107–20; Ak. 8:15–31)
IC	*Inquiry concerning the Distinctness of the Principles of Natural Theology and Morality* (CE *Theoretical Philosophy, 1755–1770*, pp. 243–75; Ak. 2:273–301)
JL	Jäsche Logic (CE *Lectures on Logic*, pp. 517–640; Ak. 9:1–150)
LB	Blomberg Logic (CE *Lectures on Logic*, pp. 1–246; Ak. 24: 7–301)
LDW	Dohna-Wundlacken Logic (CE *Lectures on Logic*, pp. 425–516; Ak. 24:687–784)
LPh	Philippi Logic (Ak. 24:303–496)
LV	Vienna Logic (CE *Lectures on Logic*, pp. 249–377; Ak. 24: 785–940)
MH	Metaphysics Herder (CE *Lectures on Metaphysics*, pp. 3–16; Ak. 28:1–166, 843–931)
ML1	Metaphysics ML_1 (CE *Lectures on Metaphysics*, pp. 19–106; Ak. 28:167–350)
MM	*The Metaphysics of Morals* (CE *Practical Philosophy*, pp. 353–604; Ak. 6:203–493)
MoC	Moral Philosophy Collins (CE *Lectures on Ethics*, pp. 37–222; Ak. 27:237–471)
NE	*A New Elucidation of the First Principles of Metaphysical Cognition* (CE *Theoretical Philosophy 1755–1770*, pp. 1–45; Ak. 1:385–416)
NF	*Notes and Fragments* (CE *Notes and Fragments*, Ak. 15–19)
OCS	*On the Common Saying: That May Be Correct in Theory, but It Is of No Use in Practice* (CE *Practical Philosophy*, pp. 273–310; Ak. 8:273–313)
OPA	*The Only Possible Argument in Support of a Demonstration of the Existence of God* (CE *Theoretical Philosophy, 1755–1770*, pp. 107–201; Ak. 2:63–163)

Pro	*Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics That Will Be Able to Come Forward as Science* (CE *Theoretical Philosophy after 1781*, pp. 29–170; Ak. 4:253–383)
Rel	*Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* (CE *Religion and Rational Theology*, pp. 39–216; Ak. 6:1–202)
RGH	*Review of Gottlieb Hufeland's Essay on the Principle of Natural Right* (CE *Practical Philosophy*, pp. 109–18; Ak. 8:125–30)
RHe	*Review of Johann Gottfried Herder's Ideas for the Philosophy of the History of Humanity*, Parts 1 and 2 (CE *Anthropology, History, and Education*, pp. 121–42; Ak. 8:43–66)
RP	*What Real Progress Has Metaphysics Made in Germany since the Time of Leibniz and Wolff?* (CE *Theoretical Philosophy after 1781*, pp. 337–424; Ak. 20:253–351)
RL	*Lectures on the Philosophical Doctrine of Religion* (CE *Religion and Rational Theology*, pp. 335–452; Ak. 28:988–1126)
UNH	*Universal Natural History and Theory of the Heavens, or An Essay on the Constitution and Mechanical Origin of the Entire World Edifice Treated According to Newtonian Principles* (CE *Natural Science*, pp. 182–308; Ak. 1:215–368)
WA	*An Answer to the Question: What Is Enlightenment?* (CE *Practical Philosophy*, pp. 11–22; Ak. 8:33–42)
WDO	*What Does It Mean to Orient Oneself in Thinking?* (CE *Religion and Rational Theology*, pp. 1–18; Ak. 8:131–48)

Introduction

Daniel O. Dahlstrom

Kant's commentators have long stressed the influence of French, English, and Scottish philosophical traditions on his philosophy. In this respect they take their cues from Kant himself, who publicly acknowledges that Hume awakened him from his "dogmatic slumber" and that Rousseau "set him right" on the absolute importance of human respect. Yet, if the importance of British and French traditions has long been recognized, the same cannot be said for works written in German. To be sure, German authors of the eighteenth century are often seen as emerging from the long shadows cast by Descartes, Rousseau, and Diderot no less than those of Newton, Locke, and Hume. Even the incomparable Leibniz himself, who died in 1716, writes mostly in French and Latin. Not surprisingly perhaps, a generation ago Anglo-American researchers tended to overlook eighteenth-century German authors other than Kant both in their own right and in their importance for his thinking, leaving the impression that – at least until Kant – Germany had no counterparts to the eminent thinkers just listed. One of the aims of this volume is to correct that impression.

The essays collected in this volume address works of eighteenth-century German thinkers who variously influenced, challenged, and revised Kant's philosophy, at times moving it in novel directions unacceptable to the *magister* himself. There is more than one reason for this relative neglect. Certainly the force of Kant's arguments, the scope of his thinking, and his enormous gifts as the creator of a new kind of philosophical prose (remarkable for its enormous staying power) have much to do with this neglect. But, as the editors of the first volume of *Kant and His German Contemporaries* – Corey Dyck and Falk Wunderlich – suggest, so, too, does Kant's deliberate break with his more immediate forebears in the critical philosophy that he hammers out in the 1780s. Kant's own perspective on the historical course of philosophical maturation also contributed to the diminished stature often accorded those whose thinking differed from his. "To my eyes," as he puts it on the final pages of the *Critique of*

Pure Reason, previous efforts present "only buildings in ruins." More than simply alternatives to his method, dogmatism and skepticism are marks of a pre-critical thinking, unenlightened and unsophisticated, lacking philosophical nerve and candor. "The critical path alone remains open."

Yet the days of the *Aetas Kantiana* when this perspective held sway have, of course, long passed. Particularly over the past several decades, the complexity of the eighteenth-century German intellectual context and Kant's deep indebtedness to it have become ever more evident to scholars. The old neglect increasingly gives way to a felt need to explore this context on its own terms and situate Kant's thought within it rather than vice versa. This burgeoning interest has brought with it, too, a new respect for the richly distinctive character of eighteenth-century German thought. In their Introduction, the editors of the previous volume amply document this trend in scholarship, a trend splendidly furthered by the essays in their volume.

The present volume aspires to emulate these efforts, albeit in regard to a different topical set. Whereas the first volume of *Kant and His German Contemporaries* focuses on the areas of logic, the mind, epistemology, science, and ethics, this volume examines eighteenth-century German thought in aesthetics, history, politics, and religion. The eighteenth-century German figures whose work comes into question here fall into three distinct chronological groups: Kant's immediate *predecessors*, defined as having birth dates before 1724 (Kant's birth date); his *peers*, those born after Kant who did not survive him; and his earliest *successors*, including students and intellectual heirs who survived him. By way of introduction, I identify these figures in the next paragraphs and, in broad terms, some of the achievements for which they are known.

The immediate predecessors of Kant whose work is examined in this volume are Johann Jakob Moser (1701–85), Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten (1714–62), Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1717–68), and Georg Friedrich Meier (1718–77). Moser, a Swabian law professor and a councilor, not only contributed immensely to the development of German legal thinking in the eighteenth century but also did so in a way that marks a clear alternative to Kant's own approach to the philosophy of law. Baumgarten and Meier (Baumgarten's student), professors at the universities of Halle and Frankfurt, both championed the Wolffian philosophical tradition but are best known for extending its reach to aesthetics. Indeed, Baumgarten's *Aesthetica* (1750) first introduces a "science" by this name, famously rejected by Kant in the opening pages of the "Transcendental Aesthetic" in the *Critique of Pure Reason*.

Winckelmann's name is synonymous with the beginnings of German art history. His *History of the Art of Antiquity* (1764) inaugurates a tradition of studying art as part of the entire fabric of a culture in its time and place, without shying away from making evaluations about the comparative beauty of the art of different cultures.

As for Kant's peers, this volume examines the works of three authors with whom he engaged in lively polemical exchanges (both private and public): Moses Mendelssohn (1729–86), Johann Georg Hamann (1730–88), and Thomas Wizenmann (1759–87). Mendelssohn, a leading member of a group of Berlin thinkers dedicated to promoting the Enlightenment, wrote influential works on metaphysics, aesthetics, and political philosophy. A friend and collaborator with Lessing, he becomes embroiled with F. H. Jacobi in the so-called Pantheism Controversy when, following Lessing's death, Jacobi insists on Lessing's endorsement of a Spinozistic pantheism. In addition to responding to Jacobi's charge with an account of a "refined" pantheism in *Morning Hours* and other works in his final years, Mendelssohn also authors *Jerusalem* (1783), a defense of tolerance based on sharply demarcating temporal and spiritual concerns. The author of two influential works at the center of the Pantheism Controversy, Wizenmann challenges, among other things, Kant's contention that reason has any need to assume the existence of God. Hamann is the Lutheran subversive of the era. With rapier wit and nonpareil rhetorical skills, he challenges regnant interpretations of enlightened reason, in the form of Mendelssohn's commonsense rationalism as well as Kant's critical philosophy.

Finally, the works of three of Kant's successors – Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803), Friedrich Schiller (1759–1805), and Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762–1814) – are the focus of studies in this volume. Of these three, Herder alone was Kant's student in the classroom, although all three corresponded with Kant. The author of important studies on the origin of language, aesthetics, folk songs, and the "spirit" of Hebrew poetry, Herder is probably best known for developing a philosophy of history and humanity that directly challenges Kant's critical philosophy. One of Germany's foremost playwrights and poets, Schiller is also a critic who, like Herder, grounds his criticism in historical and philosophical reflections on art's ethical components and political promise for humanity. In a famous correspondence on the topics of grace and dignity, he offers an influential challenge to Kant's moral theory. In a parallel way, Fichte initiates the first of German Idealism's alternatives to the critical philosophy's sharp distinction of theoretical and practical reason as well as its rejection of an

intuition into the ultimate, self-conscious foundation of things. Both building on Kant's insights and also innovatively departing from them, he fashions ethical, political, and religious doctrines in terms of the development of human self-consciousness.

Like the first volume of *Kant and His German Contemporaries*, this volume aims to build on and augment research that documents how robustly Kant's philosophy is tied to the perspectives of his German contemporaries. It can succeed only by demonstrating his contemporaries' own compelling, often differing insights. The following summaries are meant to provide a prevue of how each essay in this volume pursues that end.

The concept of aesthetic perfection is central to the German science of aesthetics developed by Baumgarten and Meier as the part of the empirical psychology concerned with perfecting sensory cognition. In "Baumgarten, Meier, and Kant on Aesthetic Perfection" (Chapter 1), J. Colin McQuillan demonstrates how Kant's critical engagement with this concept informs his views of aesthetics, early and late. McQuillan calls attention to Kant's focus, in his logic lectures, on an epistemic – rather than metaphysical – conception of aesthetic perfection (aesthetically perfect cognition) by way of contrasting its subjective, empirical character with the objective, rational character of logically perfect cognition. It is this contrast that underlies Kant's rejection of the idea that aesthetics can be based on "general rational principles." Kant's later acknowledgment of purposiveness as an a priori principle governing reflective judgments in aesthetics (the purposiveness of the harmonious free play of the imagination and the understanding) contributes, McQuillan notes, to an even more critical stance toward aesthetic perfectionism, given Kant's sharp bifurcation of cognition, where the concept of perfection has a home, and feeling, where it does not (but aesthetics does).

Kant's refusal to countenance a role for the concept of perfection in aesthetics puts him prima facie at odds with a thinker such as Mendelssohn, who defines art as a representation of "a sensuous perfection." In "Mendelssohn, Kant, and the Aims of Art" (Chapter 2), Paul Guyer argues that the thinkers' approaches to aesthetics are, nonetheless, not so far apart. Both thinkers, he points out, locate the source of aesthetic pleasure in the mind's activity. For this reason, among others, Kant's conception of aesthetic judgments as expressions of subjective purposiveness has demonstrable affinities with Mendelssohn's appeal to the perfection of the soul's powers to explain aesthetic experience. Much like

Mendelssohn, moreover, Kant distinguishes the representation from what is represented to explain how artworks can be beautiful while depicting what is otherwise repulsive. So, too, Kant's distinction between sensory gratification and the disinterestedness of aesthetic satisfaction seems to echo Mendelssohn's differentiation of gratifying pleasures from those attending approval in the absence of desire. Despite his gloss on these and other similarities, Guyer does not fail to note that real differences between them remain, as evidenced by Mendelssohn's clear insistence on aesthetic experience's emotional character and on the importance of an artwork's purely sensory, nonformal features for that experience.

What, by Winckelmann's own account, differentiates his history of art from that of his predecessors is his insistence on entering into the "essence" of art by means of it. Winckelmann moves beyond concerns for the historical record or book-learning to a concern for art as something that is relevant to our very vocation as human beings. For Winckelmann, the ancient Greeks are the unquestioned models here, and we learn what art truly is – and, not least, what it is to produce art – through our imitation of the Greeks. In "Winckelmann's Greek Ideal and Kant's Critical Philosophy" (Chapter 3), Michael Baur recounts Winckelmann's reasons for looking to the Greeks, beginning with their distinctive form of freedom and the natural conditions (environmental, hereditary, and the like) that favored its development. As for the seeming difficulty besetting the maxim of imitating the Greeks (since the Greek world is long gone and since imitating appears to be slavish), Baur points out that imitation for Winckelmann is very different from mere copying. Borrowing from Proclus, Winckelmann argues that imitation entails a kind of idealization, or a projection in the understanding, that can generate something novel and unique. Precisely because beauty consists of the harmony or wholeness of diverse parts, and because unified parts in nature are more disconnected than they are in an artwork, Winckelmann holds that beauty in artwork (especially ancient Greek artwork) teaches us how to observe beauty in nature, and not the other way around. Because imitation, for Winckelmann, involves an idealizing intellectual activity that allows us to apprehend beauty as it is "in itself," Winckelmann implicitly endorses the view that we humans are capable of a kind of intellectual intuition, a view that Kant himself strenuously rejected.

In her essay, "Eighteenth-Century Anthropological and Ethnological Studies of Ancient Greece: Winckelmann, Herder, Caylus, and Kant" (Chapter 4), Elisabeth Décultot demonstrates Winckelmann's distinctive explanation of the freedom that, in his view, sets the Greeks – and their

art – apart from the rest of antiquity. While indebted to Montesquieu's account of its political manifestation, Winckelmann regards it as atavistic, a matter ultimately of nature not nurture. Nature in this respect includes both climate and heredity, but they are far from equals. Despite drawing heavily on Dubos' theory of climate's influence, Winckelmann contends that, contrary to Dubos' theory, heredity trumps climate. This emphasis on superior "bloodlines" goes hand-in-hand with an "autarchic" model of civilization's history as the unfolding of a nation's innate potential, independently of other nations. Décultot shows how Winckelmann, following Shaftesbury, sees this model exemplified by the Greeks (who are supposedly imitated but never imitate) and in this way opposes the border-crossing model of historical development espoused by his contemporary, the French expert on ancient art, Anne-Claude-Philippe, Comte de Caylus, and later defended by Herder. Décultot concludes this tour de force with a review of Winckelmann's widely neglected influence on Kant's aesthetics and anthropology.

Like Winckelmann, Friedrich Schiller insists on addressing questions of aesthetics from a historical point of view. Schiller's specific concern, however, is aesthetics' role in educating humanity and promoting its progress, in the light of its history. Addressing this concern requires the development of a conception of human history – no small task or, better, a conjectural task, given the fact that the conclusion is still unwritten. In her essay, "Conjectural Truths: Kant and Schiller on Educating Humanity" (Chapter 5), Lydia L. Moland explains how Schiller's efforts in this regard belong to a modern tradition of such speculation, from accounts drawing on differing conceptions of a human being's natural state (Hobbes, Rousseau) to accounts looking to Scripture for the moral of human history (Lessing, Herder) to, finally, Kant's own conjectures about an "unsocial sociability" propelling human history. As Moland points out, Kant comes to accept that culture and religion can mitigate humanity's unsocial, sensuous tendencies but supposedly only by mastering them. Here Schiller breaks with Kant, she adds, by recognizing the need for reason to coordinate with those tendencies rather than subordinate them. This coordination occurs in the *creative and transformative* experience of beauty, an experience demonstrating that the perfection of rational and sensuous human drives, individual and social, lies in their harmony.

Although scholars have addressed many aspects of Kant's highly critical reviews of Herder's philosophy of history, less attention has been paid to a main target of Kant's criticisms. The target is precisely the way that

Herder grounds history in a conception of force akin to a conception that Kant himself had once embraced. In "Herder's Theory of Organic Forces and Its Kantian Origins" (Chapter 6), Nigel DeSouza demonstrates not only the conception of the unfolding forces in nature that underpin Herder's philosophy of history but also how that conception draws on his reading of Kant's pre-critical writings, even as it moves beyond them. Crucial to his development beyond Kant and other predecessors is, DeSouza shows, his insistence on a parallel between the soul's relation to its body and God's relation to his creation. Just as the soul animates and organizes the body while interacting with it, so God realizes and externalizes himself in the universe. In both cases, an invisible force and a visible form interpenetrate. Herder contends, moreover, that when it comes to understanding nature at any level, our only recourse is to analogy with the soul's operations. Based on this analogy, he reasons that organic forces pervade all of nature and the history that supervenes on it. The notion that these forces are all organic hearkens back to Leibniz's notion that "all things are full of life," yet it does so, as DeSouza observes, with a crucial difference, since Herder refuses to accept Leibniz's differentiation of a realm of efficient causes from final causes. While acknowledging that Herder, from a Kantian perspective, is guilty of doing "dogmatic metaphysics," DeSouza suggests in conclusion that there are patent advantages to taking on the arduous challenges presented by Herder's alternative approach.

This past year marks the five-hundredth anniversary of Martin Luther's initiation of epoch-making events that would profoundly transform Germany and, with it, the rest of Europe. In "Kant and Mendelssohn: Enlightenment, History, and the Authority of Reason" (Chapter 7), Kristi Sweet demonstrates that the hold of Luther's thinking on German philosophy is no less profound. Precisely by taking his stand against the Roman Catholic authorities as a matter of conscience, Luther opens up issues of the dominion of Church and State in matters of morality. Toward the end of the eighteenth century, these issues come to a head, as Sweet points out, in the question, "What is Enlightenment?" Despite sharing their age's investment in reason, Kant and Mendelssohn offer different answers to the question based on diverging conceptions of reason's authority. The authority that Kant assigns to reason is radical and novel, no longer simply discerning measures but originally and unconditionally setting them, not only for the individual but also for politics, religion, and history. This commitment to reason's absolute authority extends, as Sweet shows, to Kant's conception of enlightenment and the amenability of nature and

history to the moral progress that he believes it to entail. Whereas Kant locates all authority ultimately in practical reason's self-legislating alone, Mendelssohn conceives reason as our access to measures outside ourselves, including, preeminently, duties to God. In this respect, as Sweet relates, theoretical reason in the form of the truth about God's existence serves as a constraint on morality in a way that it does not for Kant. It also provides the backdrop for Mendelssohn's distinction between the culture needed by citizens and the enlightenment needed by human beings. For Mendelssohn, enlightenment is the theoretical knowledge required by human beings to realize the felicity that is their moral destiny as individuals, regardless of historical events. For Kant, it is part of the historical movement, mandated by reason, of progressively transforming the world into something rational.

In his study entitled, "Johann Jakob Moser and Immanuel Kant on Public Law and the German Religious Constitution" (Chapter 8), Ian Hunter begins by describing the constitutional order of the eighteenth-century German Empire. This order, Hunter notes, had arisen from a vast and loose array of treaties, agreements, and conventions among the Empire's constituent "estates" – states, principalities, bishoprics, and cities – whose contested rights and obligations were recorded and adjudicated in imperial public law (*jus publicum, Staatsrecht*). After the splitting of the Imperial Church in the sixteenth century, the estates divided along religious lines, resulting in religious wars, and in public law treaties that modified the constitution to permit a plurality of imperial religious confessions. While the religious constitution guaranteed the right of rival absolute religions to coexist, it, too, was contested and unsettled. This meant, as Hunter puts it, that there was "no common 'public' understanding of religion and church, or their relation to law and politics." As an imperial jurist and state councilor, Moser responded to this situation by compiling and empirically describing the various public law treaties, agreements, and conventions with a view to locating their normative force in the historical record of their enactment. For example, the legal recognition and rights of the three imperial religions – Lutheranism, Catholicism, and Calvinism – were grounded not in any religious or metaphysical truth but solely in the relevant historical agreements. Hunter demonstrates how decidedly Kant's approach differs from Moser's. By locating the normative ground of public law in a transcendental principle of justice (accessible through a process of moral self-reflection and supposing a community of rationally self-governing beings) and by opposing the constitutional entrenchment of

an array of public confessions (as an obstacle to the free philosophical pursuit of truth), Kant's approach puts him at odds with the relativism and pluralism of the religious constitution. Yet this anticonstitutional stance can be traced, Hunter submits, to Kant's own endorsement of an absolute truth, that of "the pure religion of reason" (*reine Vernunftreligion*).

In "A Family Quarrel: Fichte's Deduction of Right and Recognition" (Chapter 9), Gabriel Gottlieb demonstrates how Fichte's derivation of the concept of right emerges from a "family quarrel" among contemporary Kantians about the grounds for the concept of right. Kantian "perfectionists" attempt to ground the concept by combining Kantian universalizability with a Wolffian conception of human perfection laid down by nature. "Pure" Kantians, by contrast, insist on deriving the concept from purely moral considerations (such as those outlined in Kant's *Groundwork* and *Critique of Practical Reason*). And "theoretical" Kantians look to ground it in theoretical considerations of rational consistency as well (notably, agents' mutual recognition of reciprocal demands). As Gottlieb shows, Fichte steps decisively outside this family quarrel by jettisoning their common presumption that any derivation of the concept of right must appeal to morality. In its place Fichte develops a theoretical conception of social interaction founded on mutual recognition that underwrites individual self-consciousness and, with it, relations of right between individuals.

Because Kant argues in the *Groundwork* that reason can be practical without incentives drawn from anywhere else, he appears no longer to have need for the motivational roles that he assigns in the "Canon" of the *Critique of Pure Reason* to a belief in God and immortality as the sole assurance of the ultimate coincidence of happiness and morality (the "highest good"). As Brian A. Chance and Lawrence Pasternack show in "Rational Faith and the Pantheism Controversy: Kant's 'Orientation Essay' and the Evolution of His Moral Argument" (Chapter 10), Kant's response to the Controversy leads him to give new purpose to these doctrines. Kant's somewhat vague formulation of them in his "Orientation" essay becomes the target of criticism by an overlooked but key player in the Controversy: Thomas Wizenmann. Wizenmann charges that Kant's appeal to a "need of reason" is confused, that it runs afoul of Kant's own conclusions in the "Transcendental Dialectic," and that even if reason had the need Kant claims, it would not be satisfied by belief in God. Pasternack and Chance demonstrate how, in the *Critical of Practical Reason*, Kant responds to these charges by conceiving the need for happiness as a need, not for unqualified happiness, but rather happiness

distributed in proportion to morality (i.e., the "highest good"). Morality leads to rational faith because it is only by adopting the highest good and its postulates that we mitigate or remove the hindrance to morality that the incentive to happiness otherwise presents.

Kant's doctrine of the postulate of immortality is also addressed by Marion Heinz, this time in terms of Herder's repudiations of it. In "Reason and Immortality: Herder versus Kant" (Chapter 11), Heinz demonstrates how the two thinkers' differing conceptions of immortality (Kant's conception of a postmortem continuance of the soul alone and Herder's idea, modeled on palingenesis, of the ongoing activity that is distinctive of humanity, making itself into the image of God) are paired, respectively, with different conceptions of reason (theoretically unproductive, purely practical reason and reason as a linguistically and historically constituted, divine and creative force of nature). While Kant postulates immortality as a necessary condition for the realization of the ultimate end of pure practical reason beyond nature, Herder understands immortality in terms of unrelenting metamorphoses in nature, on which human history and culture seamlessly supervene. Heinz shows how Herder contests Kant's very idea of a critique of reason (the idea that reason, despite being a natural capacity, could be inherently flawed and as though, despite being flawed, it could reliably criticize itself). Echoing some of Wizenmann's concerns, he also challenges the validity of postulating, for practical reasons, what theoretical reason has proven fictional. Kant makes belief in God and immortality dependent on an end (the "highest good"), but, in addition to proving the necessity of neither the end nor God's status as the alleged means, Kant has, Herder charges, effectively degraded God. What he has done, with his debunking of rational theology, his grounding of moral philosophy in pure practical reason, and his reduction of any meaningful concept of God to a postulate, is remove – quite disastrously, from Herder's point of view – an objective basis for morality.

Early in the past century, scholars of eighteenth-century German thought widely regarded Johann Georg Hamann as one of the few champions of irrationalism in his era. The title of my essay, "Reason within the Limits of Religion Alone" (Chapter 12), is meant to flag the fact that far from dismissing reason, Hamann renders it coextensive with reality, conceived as the historical unfolding of God's incarnate gift of himself to his creation. The essay also attempts to illustrate how this incarnational understanding of reason takes shape in Hamann's criticisms of Kant's pretensions to a reason "pure" of the historical determinacy of experience and language.

PART I

Aesthetic Perspectives

CHAPTER 1

Baumgarten, Meier, and Kant on Aesthetic Perfection

J. Colin McQuillan

1.1 A German Science

The eighteenth century has been called the "century of taste."[1] Indeed, during this period, interest in questions about art, beauty, and taste was so pervasive in European philosophy that it would be difficult even to count the number of works devoted to taste (in English), *le goût* (in French), and *der Geschmack* (in German). The difficulties involved in collecting, collating, and comparing all these works make it even harder to establish the specificity of aesthetics, which was introduced as a new philosophical science by Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten and Georg Friedrich Meier in Germany in the middle of the eighteenth century.[2] There are, however, a number of features that mark aesthetics as a distinctly German science.

Baumgarten and Meier conceived of aesthetics as a part of metaphysics, and, more specifically, a part of psychology, the part of metaphysics that is concerned with the soul. They regarded aesthetics as a part of empirical psychology, which "deduces its assertions based upon experience that is nearest to hand," rather than rational psychology, which "deduces its assertions based upon the concept of the soul through a longer series of arguments."[3] What is more, Baumgarten and Meier identified aesthetics as the science of the confused cognition of the lower cognitive faculty, sensibility, as opposed to the higher cognitive faculty, the understanding.[4] Aesthetics was to guide the confused, sensible cognition of the lower

[1] See, for example, Dickie 1996.

[2] For a survey of eighteenth-century theories of art, beauty, and taste and some of the differences between German aesthetics and the critique of taste in Britain and France, see McQuillan 2015.

[3] Alexander Baumgarten, *Metaphysica* (Halle: Hemmerde, 1739); *Metaphysics*, ed. and trans. Courtney Fugate and John Hymers (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), §503 (hereafter "Baumgarten 2013"); G. F. Meier, *Anfangsgründe aller schönen Wissensschaften* (Halle: Hemmerde, 1748) (hereafter "Meier 1748").

[4] See Alexander Baumgarten, *Meditationes philosophicae de nonnullis ad poema pertinibus* (Halle: Grunert, 1735), ed. and trans. Karl Aschenbrenner and William Holther as *Reflections on Poetry* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1954), §§115–16 (hereafter "Baumgarten 1954");

cognitive faculty to a perfection that was quite different from the perfection of the clear and distinct cognition of the higher cognitive faculty. Unlike other eighteenth-century reflections on art, beauty, and taste, then, aesthetics was introduced in Germany as a distinct part of philosophy, understood in a specifically academic sense as a systematically articulated science. Baumgarten and Meier also assigned aesthetics a very particular role within that system – guiding sensible cognition to perfection – that other theories of art, beauty, and taste were not expected to perform.

Another remarkable feature of the history of aesthetics in Germany is how quickly and how vigorously other German philosophers contested Baumgarten's and Meier's conception of aesthetics.[5] Immanuel Kant was one of the most important parties to the early debates in Germany about what aesthetics was and should be. And while he was certainly aware of other contributions to the critique of taste, particularly the works of British authors such as Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, Addison, Home, and Burke, it is apparent from the transcripts of his lectures during the pre-critical period that Kant's views on aesthetics were developed by critically engaging with Baumgarten's and Meier's works and views. It is this ongoing exchange with his German contemporaries that eventually led Kant to the critical conception of aesthetics that he articulates in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (1790).

In what follows, I argue that Baumgarten's and Meier's conception of aesthetic perfection played a crucial role in the development of Kant's pre-critical aesthetics and critical aesthetics, a role that has not been sufficiently appreciated by Kant scholars. I begin with a sketch of the epistemic conception of aesthetic perfection that Kant found in Baumgarten and Meier and how it differs from a metaphysical conception of beauty. After that, I survey Kant's discussions of the aesthetic perfection of cognition in the transcripts of his logic lectures, the critique of Baumgarten's and

Baumgarten, *Aesthetica* (Frankfurt an der Oder: Kleyb, 1750/1758), ed. and trans. Dagmar Mirbach as *Aesthetica/Ästhetik* (Hamburg: Meiner, 2007), §14 (hereafter "Baumgarten 2007"); and Baumgarten 2013, §535. Sensible cognition was considered "confused" because of a tradition dating back (at least) to Leibniz, who maintains in his *Meditations on Knowledge, Truth, and Ideas* (1684) that ideas derived from the senses are necessarily confused and cannot be distinct because the senses cannot perceive each of the elements of a sensation distinctly; see G. W. Leibniz, *Philosophical Writings*, trans. Roger Ariew and Daniel Garber (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1989), 27. I discuss the appropriation of this view by Wolff and Baumgarten, as well as Kant's objections to it, in McQuillan 2017.

[5] Alessandro Nannini provides a fascinating account of the perspective of two of Baumgarten's contemporaries, Georg Conrad Winckelmann and Georg Andreas Will, who (more or less) accepted Baumgarten's and Meier's conception of aesthetics; see Nannini 2015, 629–51. For ways in which Mendelssohn, Lessing, Herder, Kant, Schelling, and Hegel contested Baumgarten's and Meier's conception of aesthetics, see McQuillan 2015, 109–22.

Meier's conception of aesthetic perfection that emerges in those discussions, and the role that Kant's own view of aesthetic perfection plays in his pre-critical aesthetics. Then I consider Kant's most forceful arguments against the concept of aesthetic perfection in the third *Critique*, their relation to his earlier critique of Baumgarten and Meier, and the difference between his own pre-critical aesthetics and the "Critique of Aesthetic Judgment" that we find in the third *Critique*. I conclude by arguing that Kant's critique of aesthetic perfectionism should be regarded as an internal critique of German rationalist aesthetics. While Kant was always critical of Baumgarten's and Meier's conception of aesthetic perfection, he developed his own views on aesthetics by critically engaging their position.

1.2 Metaphysical, Epistemic, and Aesthetic Perfection

Before discussing the positions Kant took during his pre-critical and critical periods, there are two alternative conceptions of aesthetic perfection that need to be distinguished. The first conception is metaphysical, because it focuses on the perfection of beautiful things; the second conception is epistemic, because it concerns the perfection of beautiful cognition. Kant was almost certainly familiar with both conceptions of aesthetic perfection, though most of his objections are directed against the epistemic conception.

The metaphysical conception of aesthetic perfection can be found in the definition of beauty Christian Wolff proposes in his *Empirical Psychology* (1732). Wolff contends that beauty consists in "the perfection of a thing, insofar as the very power of this thing is apt for producing pleasure in us."[6] He then offers a more formal definition: "Hence beauty can be defined as that which is the aptitude of a thing for producing pleasure in us, or, that which is observable of perfection: for it is in this observability that this aptitude consists."[7] Similar formulations can be found in Baumgarten's *Metaphysics* (first published in 1739), where beauty is defined as "the perfection of an appearance, or the perfection observable by taste in the broader sense."[8] Each of these definitions refers to the perfection of an

[6] Christian Wolff, *Psychologia Empirica* (Frankfurt/Leipzig: Libraria Rengeriana, 1732), cited from the edition by Jean École et al. in Christian Wolff, *Gesammelte Werke*, II. Abteilung., vol. 3 (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 2001), §544 (hereafter "Wolff 2001"); see the translation by Fugate/Hymers in Baumgarten 2013: 240. For an analysis of Wolff's definitions, see Beiser 2009, 60–64.

[7] Wolff 2001, §545; see the translation by Fugate/Hymers in Baumgarten 2013: 240.

[8] Baumgarten 2013, §662. This translation is based on the fourth edition of Baumgarten's *Metaphysica*, published in 1757.

object, which produces pleasure in us when it appears or is observed. That perfection consists in the agreement of the parts or characteristics of the object, which is established by its sufficient reason or determining ground. So a perfect object is beautiful and a source of pleasure because the agreement of its parts and characteristics is apparent to an observer.

The epistemic conception of aesthetic perfection is also found in Baumgarten, though not in his *Metaphysics*. In *Reflections on Poetry* (1735), Baumgarten defines philosophical poetics as "the science guiding sensible discourse to perfection" and then notes that this science presupposes, first, "a lower cognitive faculty" in the poet and, second, another science that will "direct the lower cognitive faculty in knowing things sensibly."[9] Baumgarten denies that logic is capable of directing the lower cognitive faculty because he thinks logic is solely concerned with the distinct, intellectual cognition of the higher cognitive faculty. So he introduces aesthetics as a new science that will guide to perfection the confused cognition of the lower cognitive faculty of sensibility. Baumgarten does not discuss the nature of this perfection in any detail in his *Reflections on Poetry* or his *Metaphysics*, though the distinction he introduces in these works between (1) the extensive clarity ("greater clarity due to the multitude of marks") of confused sensible representations (poetics, aesthetics) and (2) the intensive clarity ("greater clarity due to the clarity of marks") of distinct intellectual cognition (logic) sets the stage for his formal identification of the perfection of sensible cognition as "beauty" ("the perfection of sensible cognition as such") in his *Aesthetics* (vol. I: 1750; vol. II: 1758).[10] Following Baumgarten, Meier proposes a similar definition of aesthetic perfection in his *Foundations of All Beautiful Arts and Sciences* (*Anfangsgründe aller schönen Wissensschaften*, 1748–50) and in his *Excerpt from the Doctrine of Reason* (*Auszug aus der Vernunftlehre*, 1752). In the first sections of his *Foundations*, Meier explains that aesthetics is concerned with beautiful cognition, which is beautiful because of its agreement with the rules of perfection.[11] He provides a slightly different explanation of aesthetic perfection in the *Vernunftlehre*, where he distinguishes the perfections of distinct and indistinct cognition. Distinct

[9] Baumgarten 1954, §115.

[10] On the distinction between intensive and extensive clarity, see Baumgarten 1954, §§16–17, and Baumgarten 2013, §§531–32. For the identification of beauty as the perfection of confused sensible cognition, see Baumgarten 2007, §14.

[11] Meier 1748, §§1, 4.

cognition is logically perfect, while indistinct cognition is beautiful or aesthetically perfect.[12] All of these definitions are epistemic, because they identify aesthetic perfection with the perfection of a particular kind of cognition.

Although he mentions beauty at several points in his metaphysics lectures, Kant does not address the metaphysical conception of aesthetic perfection that one finds in Wolff's *Empirical Psychology* or Baumgarten's *Metaphysica*. In the *Metaphysik Herder* (ca. 1762–64), Kant says beauty and ugliness are "merely in our sensation," because "all sensation of bodies outside us is merely *in* us."[13] And he insists that beauty is "not the relation of cognition to the object, but rather to the subject" immediately before introducing Baumgarten's and Meier's distinction between the logical and aesthetic perfections of cognition in *Metaphysik* L_1 (ca. 1770s).[14] These remarks suggest that Kant's critique of aesthetic perfection is a critique of the epistemic conception of aesthetic perfection, because he does not even consider the possibility that beauty could be a property of objects that exist independently of our sensation or cognition. That he identifies beauty as something "merely *in* us" and associates it with the relation between cognition and the subject in his metaphysics lectures also suggests that he was primarily concerned with the epistemic conception of aesthetic perfection. To confirm that this is the case, and to find more substantial engagement with Baumgarten's and Meier's epistemic conception of aesthetic perfection, we must now turn to the transcripts of Kant's logic lectures.[15]

1.3 Logic, Aesthetics, and Cognitive Perfection

Kant devoted a great deal of attention to the distinction between the logical and aesthetic perfections of cognition in his logic lectures. In the transcripts of these lectures, most of the passages in which Kant discusses the distinction between the logical and aesthetic perfections of cognition are intended to clarify the nature of logic by contrasting it with aesthetics. He

[12] G. F. Meier, *Auszug aus der Vernunftlehre* (Halle: Gebauer, 1752), §22; see also Ak. 16.

[13] MH 28:42. [14] ML1 28:247.

[15] Additional evidence of Kant's engagement with Baumgarten's and Meier's epistemic conception of aesthetic perfection can be found in Kant's *Reflexionen zur Logik* (Ak. 16) and the Jäsche Logic (Ak. 9), the latter of which was published by Gottlob Benjamin Jäsche as *Immanuel Kant's Logic: A Manual for Lectures* (*Immanuel Kants Logik: Ein Handbuch zu Vorlesungen*, 1800). Unfortunately, these sources are notoriously difficult to interpret, as noted in Boswell 1988, 193–203; Pozzo 1998, 300; and Lu-Adler 2015, 137–41. Because the *Reflexionen* cannot be reliably dated and Jäsche's editorial practices conflate Kant's views from the pre-critical and critical periods, I have excluded these sources from consideration here.

adopted this strategy very early in his career, as is evident from the announcement of his lectures during the winter semester of 1765–66, where Kant explains that he will include some remarks about aesthetics in his logic lectures because "the rules of the one at all times serve to elucidate the rules of the other" and "defining the limits of the two is a means to a better understanding of them both."[16] It was in the process of comparing and contrasting logic and aesthetics in his lectures that Kant began to develop his critique of Baumgarten's and Meier's conception of aesthetic perfection.

When Kant introduces the distinction between the logical and aesthetic perfections of cognition in the transcript known as the *Logik Blomberg* (ca. 1770s), he criticizes Meier for discussing perfection in his *Vernunftlehre*. Kant complains that "the concept of perfection actually belongs to *metaphysica*, and here it is introduced in the wrong place."[17] Yet that does not stop him from elaborating on Meier's distinction at some length. He notes, for example, that "all the perfections of cognition are 1st aesthetic, and consist in agreement with subjective laws and conditions. 2nd logical, and consist in agreement with objective laws and conditions."[18] The distinction between subjective and objective laws and conditions is not found in Baumgarten's or Meier's discussions of cognitive perfection, so it seems to be original to Kant. The same can be said of an alternative formulation Kant proposes in the next paragraph of the transcript, where he says "with cognition there are two sorts of perfections: (1). that it agrees with the constitution of the thing. 2nd that it has an effect on our feeling and our taste." "The former," he continues, "is a logical perfection, the latter an aesthetic, but both are formal. We have one logic that makes and can make our cognitions logically perfect, another that makes and can make our cognition aesthetically so."[19] The idea that logically perfect cognition agrees with the constitution of the thing, while aesthetically perfect cognition agrees with our feeling and tastes is not found in Baumgarten or Meier, so it would also seem to be original to Kant. These two novelties are not explicitly related to one another in the transcript of Kant's lecture, but it seems reasonable to assume that agreement with the constitution of the thing is what Kant means by agreement with objective laws and conditions in his first definition of logical perfection, while agreement with our feelings and tastes is what he means by agreement with subjective laws and conditions in his first definition of aesthetic perfection.

[16] DSS 2:311. [17] LB 24:50. [18] LB 24:43. [19] LB 24:44.

It is also worth noting that Kant places a much greater emphasis on feeling in his discussion of the aesthetic perfection of cognition than either Baumgarten or Meier do. While Baumgarten and Meier insist that beauty is the perfection of sensible cognition, Kant insists that its perfection "consists in the effect on our feeling."[20] He does not explain at any point in the *Blomberg Logic* how sensation and feeling differ, but he does not seem to use the two terms synonymously. While he defines sensation as "the representation of our present condition insofar as it originates from the presence of a certain object," Kant always associates feeling with the subjective experience of pleasure or pain, which has less to do with the presence of an external object or the representation of that object than it does with the way the subject is affected by it.[21] This suggests that he thinks aesthetic perfection has more to do with the way a cognition affects us than its origin in the lower cognitive faculty, as Baumgarten and Meier had claimed.

Kant also discusses the distinction between the logical and aesthetic perfections of cognition in the *Logik Pölitz* (ca. 1780–1782). He asserts that there are, in fact, three perfections of cognition. The first is logical, the second is aesthetic, and the third is practical. Kant excludes any discussion of the practical perfection of cognition from his logic lectures, since logic "deals with the cognitive faculty and not with the will."[22] He also recognizes that a discussion of the aesthetic perfection of cognition is not entirely appropriate to a logic lecture, though he incorporates a discussion of aesthetic perfection "to better explicate the logical [perfection of cognition] by contrast."[23] To show the usefulness of this contrast, Kant notes how the logical and aesthetic perfections of cognition differ with respect to their quantity, quality, relation, and modality. He provides two accounts of the logical perfection of cognition. He notes first that it is (1) universal (quantity), (2) perspicuous (quality), (3) true (relation), and (4) necessary (modality) but he also adds that it is (1) general (quantity), (2) distinct (quality), (3) true (relation), and (4) certain (modality). By contrast, the aesthetic perfections of cognition have (1) subjective truth, "which is not the truth of a thing in itself, but of the thing as it appears to us and affects our senses," (2) subjective distinctness or "distinctness in intuition, which is achieved through examples," (3) aesthetic generality, also known as "popularity" or "that which pleases everyone and is suitable for every understanding," and, finally, (4) aesthetic necessity and certainty, which is necessary because it is "based on cognition from our senses" and

[20] LB 24:48. [21] LB 24:48, 235. [22] Ak. 24:516. [23] Ibid.

"confirms experience."[24] Kant's claim that aesthetically perfect cognition is merely subjectively true and subjectively distinct is important because it suggests that logically perfect cognition is objectively true and objectively distinct; however, his claim that aesthetically perfect cognition is only aesthetically general and aesthetically necessary is even more important because it is the basis of his subsequent claim that there can be no science of the beautiful. No such claim is to be found in Baumgarten or Meier, who regarded aesthetics as the science of sensible cognition, whose perfection is beauty. But Kant denies that aesthetics can be a science because "taste cannot be brought under any rules."[25] Stepping back from the radical implications of this statement, Kant clarifies that taste cannot be brought under any rules (*Regeln*) such as the rational laws (*Gesetze*) that govern judgment in logic. He even includes a more general discussion of the concept of science immediately after his treatment of the distinction between the logical and aesthetic perfections of cognition, which has no correlate in Meier's *Vernunftlehre*. The implication of this discussion is that science not only must be systematic but also must be based on the kind of "general rational principles" (*allgemeinen Prinzipien der Vernunft*) that one finds in logic but not in aesthetics.[26]

Similar discussions of the logical and aesthetic perfections of cognition are to be found in the transcript of the *Logik Wien* (ca. 1782). There Kant introduces Meier's distinction by saying "there are two kinds of perfection of cognition: 1. Perfection according to the laws of sensibility, aesthetic perfection. 2. Perfection according to the laws of the understanding, logical perfection" and again adds a third perfection of cognition – "practical perfection," which is "concerned with our desires, through which activity is effected" – a few paragraphs later. Moving on, he notes that logically perfect cognition is intellectual and aesthetically perfect cognition is sensible before reiterating the claim that "logical perfection rests on the agreement of cognition with the object, aesthetic perfection on agreement with the subject."[27] Kant insists that the laws of agreement with the object must be universal and necessary but equivocates about whether the laws of agreement with sensibility are universal. At first he says "aesthetic perfection rests on the particular laws of human sensibility, and it is thus not universal for all creatures," but then he says "there must also be universal necessary and universal laws of sensibility" because "objects are represented not only through concepts but also through intuition."[28] Later Kant specifies that aesthetically perfect cognition is subjectively universal and

[24] Ak. 24:516–17. [25] Ak. 24:518. [26] Ak. 24:519. [27] LV 24:806. [28] LV 24:806–7.

subjectively necessary. After noting that logically perfect cognition is universal, distinct, true, and necessary and providing rather standard definitions of its quantity, quality, relation, and modality, Kant says that aesthetically perfect cognition is subjectively true, subjectively distinct, subjectively universal, and subjectively necessary. Subjective truth is established in relation to the experience of the subject so that even "appearances of ghosts" can be aesthetically true.[29] Subjective distinctness has to do with the intuitiveness and vividness of an example, which must be "quite lively" to be aesthetically perfect.[30] Subjective universality is "popularity," which requires us to presuppose that cognition is "suited for the *sens commun*" and judge according to "the way everyone else can judge."[31] Finally, the subjective necessity of aesthetically perfect cognition is to be understood as "custom" because "the experience and voices of all men confirm it."[32] Drawing out the implications of the subjectivism of aesthetic perfection, Kant concludes that "one must pass judgment on the beautiful more from its effect on sensibility than from the understanding … since beauty is agreement with sensibility, but the understanding alone is the faculty of rules."[33] The logical laws of the understanding are not sufficient to determine whether an object is beautiful, so Kant maintains that "the rules of taste are empirical," which implies that "taste … cannot in any way be treated as a science."[34]

At this point it is helpful to recall that Baumgarten and Meier introduced the concept of aesthetic perfection in order to specify the object of the new science Baumgarten had proposed in his *Reflections on Poetry*. Aesthetics was to be the science guiding sensible cognition to its perfection, yet Kant insisted during the pre-critical period that aesthetically perfect cognition is entirely subjective, that it is empirical, and that it cannot be the subject of a science. This view finds expression in the famous footnote to the "Transcendental Aesthetic" in the first (A) edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781), where Kant says, "the Germans are the only ones who now employ the word 'aesthetics' to designate that which others call the critique of taste" and traces the origin of this terminological idiosyncrasy to "a failed hope, held by the excellent analyst Baumgarten, of bringing the critical estimation of the beautiful under principles of reason and elevating its rules to a science."[35] Kant's subsequent claim that Baumgarten's hope failed because "the putative rules or criteria are merely empirical as far as

[29] LV 24:810. [30] Ibid.
[31] Ibid. On the relationship between popularity, subjective universality, and the aesthetic perfection of cognition, see González 2015, 47–60.
[32] LV 24:810. [33] LV 24:811. [34] LV 24:812. [35] CPR A21.

their sources are concerned, and can therefore never serve as *a priori* rules according to which our judgment of taste must be directed" becomes much clearer when it is placed in the context of his lectures on logic and the objections he raised against Baumgarten and Meier's conception of aesthetic perfection in that context. Indeed, he is merely announcing in print what he had already told the students who attended his lectures in the preceding decade. Kant thinks a science of aesthetics is impossible because beauty is subjective and the rules governing judgments of taste are empirical.

1.4 The Third Critique and the Critique of Aesthetic Perfectionism

It is well known that Kant revised the footnote in the "Transcendental Aesthetic" in the second (B) edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1787), qualifying the objections he had raised against Baumgarten's futile attempt to make aesthetics a science. Rather than insisting that the rules or criteria of aesthetics are "merely empirical as far as their sources are concerned," Kant now says they are empirical only insofar as their "most prominent" sources are concerned.[36] And instead of denying that there are any a priori rules "according to which our judgment of taste must be directed," he holds only that there are no "determinate" a priori rules directing judgments of taste.[37] The reasons for these changes can be found in a letter Kant sent to Karl Leonhard Reinhold at the end of the same year, in which he announces his discovery of "a new sort of *a priori* principles."[38] These principles are "different from those heretofore observed" because they are principles pertaining to "the faculty of feeling pleasure and displeasure."[39] Kant had thought there were no a priori principles of feeling, but he tells Reinhold that his discovery of those principles revealed a "systematicity" that put him "on the path to recognizing the three parts of philosophy, each of which has its *a priori* principles, which can be enumerated and for which one can delimit precisely the knowledge that may be based on them."[40] And he assured his correspondent that he would soon complete a work called *The Critique of Taste* based on the new principles he had discovered.

Kant's revisions to the footnote in the first *Critique* and the discovery he describes in his letter to Reinhold mark an important turning point in the development of his aesthetics. The revisions to the footnote in the first *Critique* show that Kant was willing to revise an understanding of aesthetics that he had long held and that he had articulated in lectures throughout the 1770s and 1780s. His letter to Reinhold reveals how eager

[36] CPR B35. [37] Ibid. [38] Corr 10:514. [39] Ibid. [40] Ibid.

Kant was to bring his views on aesthetics into line with the critical philosophy he had begun to articulate in the *Critique of Pure Reason* and the *Critique of Practical Reason*. The emphasis he places on the "systematicity" of philosophy, the unity of its three "parts" (theoretical philosophy, practical philosophy, and teleology), and their relation to the three "faculties of the mind" (the faculty of cognition, the faculty of feeling pleasure and displeasure, and the faculty of desire) in his letter also provides a clue to the problem that he sought to resolve in the *Critique of Taste* that he told Reinhold he was about to publish.[41] His pre-critical views on aesthetics suggested that there was a kind of judgment, and a domain of experience, that was not governed by a priori principles, while his critical philosophy insisted that everything in nature and morality could be determined through a relatively small set of a priori principles. If there were a priori principles "mixed in" to experience and that served as the "supreme principle" of morality, then why should judgments of taste be entirely subjective and thoroughly empirical? The *Critique of Taste* that Kant describes in his letter suggests that they are not; reading Kant's letter, one assumes they are determined by the a priori principles of the faculty of feeling pleasure and displeasure in the same way that judgments about objects are determined by the a priori principles of the faculty of cognition and that moral judgments are determined by the a priori principles of the faculty of desire.

When he finally publishes his "Critique of the Aesthetic Power of Judgment" in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, Kant treads rather more lightly than one might expect from his letter to Reinhold. Instead of asserting that aesthetic judgment is determined by a priori principles such as the ones found in theoretical and practical philosophy, he distinguishes between the determining and reflecting powers of judgment.[42] Explaining the difference between these two "powers" in the initially unpublished "First Introduction" to the third *Critique*, Kant says that "the power of judgment can be regarded either as a mere faculty for *reflecting* on a given representation, in accordance with a certain principle, for the sake of a concept that is thereby made possible, or as a faculty for *determining* an

[41] Ibid.

[42] Although Kant's distinction between the *bestimmende* and *reflektierende Urtheilskraft* is often translated as a distinction between "determinant" and "reflective" judgment, and appears frequently in this form in the scholarly literature, I have adopted the literal translations ("determining" and "reflecting" power of judgment) used in the Guyer and Matthews translation of the third *Critique*. On the significance of this translation, see the editor's introduction by Guyer in CPJ xlvii.

underlying concept through a given empirical representation."[43] In the paragraphs that follow, he argues that the reflecting power of judgment "requires a principle just as much as does determining, in which the underlying concept of the object prescribes the rule to the power of judgment and thus plays the role of the principle" and that "empirically determinate *concepts*" can be found for every object in nature because "all reflection would become arbitrary and blind, and hence would be undertaken without any well-grounded expectation of its agreement with nature" if these principles and concepts could not be found.[44] Still, he admits that the reflecting power of judgment sometimes requires "a special and at the same time transcendental principle for its reflection" in cases where a concept must be found for "a particular law of nature" because it is not immediately given.[45] This special principle holds that "*nature specifies its general laws into empirical ones, in accordance with the form of a logical system, on behalf of the power of judgment*."[46] It is thus permissible for the reflecting power of judgment to assume that a particular object is consistent with the rest of the natural world and proceed "in accordance with the general but at the same time indeterminate principle of a purposive arrangement of nature in a system," even when the concept determining the object is not immediately given.[47]

Kant's distinction between the determining and reflecting powers of judgment is important for his new conception of aesthetics, because he insists that aesthetic judgment must be an expression of the reflecting power of judgment. Kant denies that aesthetic judgment can be a function of sensibility, because judgment is the work of the understanding. Yet he also distinguishes aesthetic judgment from other kinds of judgments, since it does not determine an object through a concept. While he admits that aesthetic judgment is often "related to an object" and may even be an "effect" of the cognition of an object, Kant thinks it actually pertains to "the subject and its feeling."[48] Aesthetic pleasure does not arise directly from the sensible intuition of a beautiful object or from the cognition of that object; instead, it derives from the harmonious relation between the subject's understanding and imagination when "one helps or hinders the other in the very same representation and thereby affects the *state of mind*."[49] The reflecting power of judgment "holds the imagination (merely in the apprehension of the object) together with the understanding (in the presentation of a concept in general) and perceives a relation of the two

[43] CPJ 20:211. [44] CPJ 20:212. [45] CPJ 20:213 [46] CPJ 20:216. [47] CPJ 20:214.
[48] CPJ 20:223. [49] CPJ 5:189; CPJ 20:223.

faculties of cognition which constitutes the subjective, merely sensitive condition of the objective use of the power of judgment in general (namely the agreement of those two faculties with each other)," but it does not perceive this relation the way one might cognize an object.[50] The relation between the faculties that is associated with aesthetic pleasure is perceived through feelings of pleasure and displeasure instead of being determined by a concept. The validity of this relation is secured by the principle of purposiveness, which serves as the a priori principle governing aesthetic judgment and the faculty of the feeling of pleasure and pain in general. Or, at least, that is what the initially unpublished "First Introduction" and the shorter, published "Introduction" to the third *Critique* would have readers believe. There is still a remarkable lack of consensus about the nature of the reflecting power of judgment and the significance of the principle of purposiveness for the "Critique of the Aesthetic Power of Judgment" in the scholarly literature.

Even if his account of the reflective power of judgment is obscure and the validity of the principle of purposiveness is unclear, Kant's new approach to aesthetics leads him to be even more critical of aesthetic perfectionism in the third *Critique* than he had been in his logic lectures. At the end of the section "On the Aesthetic of the Faculty of Judging" in the "First Introduction," Kant includes a lengthy "Remark," in which he denounces the concept of perfection as "an ontological notion, which is the same as that of the totality (allness) of something composite (through coordination of the manifold in an aggregate, or at the same time its subordination as grounds and consequences in a series), and has not the least to do with the feeling of pleasure and displeasure."[51] Here he seems to have shifted the target of his objection from the epistemic conception of aesthetic perfection found in Baumgarten and Meier back to the metaphysical conception of beauty found in Wolff's *Empirical Psychology* and Baumgarten's *Metaphysics*; yet his insistence that "the faculty of aesthetic reflection judges only about the subjective purposiveness (not about the perfection) of the object" could be extended to the epistemic conception of aesthetic perfection as well.[52] Because aesthetic judgment is concerned with feelings of pleasure and displeasure, and not the perfection of an object or the perfection of the cognition of that object, Kant does not think there is any reason to think beauty is the perfection of sensible cognition. His objections to the epistemic conception of aesthetic perfection are even more explicit in section 15 of the "Critique of the Aesthetic Power of

[50] CPJ 20:223–24. [51] CPJ 20:228. [52] CPJ 20:229.

Judgment," where Kant declares that "the judgment of taste is entirely independent of the concept of perfection."[53] In addition to his objections to the "ontological" conception of the perfection of objects, Kant indicates that aesthetic judgment "affords absolutely no cognition (not even a confused one) of the object."[54] The difference between cognition and feeling, which began to take shape in Kant's comments on Meier's *Vernunftlehre*, now serves as a reason to reject his predecessors' conception of the aesthetic perfection and the significance of the concept of perfection for aesthetics in general.

1.5 The Critique of Perfectionism and the Sources of Kant's Aesthetics

By now it should be clear that Kant's earliest reflections on aesthetics emerge in his lectures, where he was engaged in a dialogue with his German contemporaries about the prospects of the new science they had proposed. Kant initially conceived of aesthetics in epistemic terms adopted from Baumgarten and Meier, who regarded aesthetics as the science that would guide the confused, sensible cognition of the lower cognitive faculty to its perfection; however, he took issue with this conception of aesthetics during the 1770s and 1780s, when he used the difference between aesthetics and logic as a way to define the subject matter of his logic lectures. Kant insisted that the aesthetic perfection of cognition was subjective, that it was concerned with feeling, and that its principles were empirical. These objections led him to conclude that aesthetics could never be the science Baumgarten and Meier hoped it would become. And though he frequently expressed this view in his lectures and in a footnote to the "Transcendental Aesthetic" of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant soon came to reject the view that the principles of aesthetic judgment were empirical. His concern for the systematicity of his critical philosophy led him to reflect upon, and ultimately to claim to have discovered, the a priori principles of judgments of taste. However, because he saw aesthetic judgments as expressions of the reflecting power of judgment, Kant continued to reject metaphysical and epistemic conceptions of aesthetic perfection in the third *Critique*. Beauty remained something subjective and affective for Kant, so he had little use for the idea that beauty is the perfection of an object or of the cognition of an object.

[53] CPJ 5:226. [54] CPJ 5:424.

If the account of the development of Kant's aesthetics I have sketched is accurate, then scholars will have to acknowledge Kant's debt to his German contemporaries in aesthetics as well as in logic, metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, and the philosophy of religion. His pre-critical view of aesthetics as something subjective, affective, and empirical was not drawn from British or French sources but came about through a critical engagement with Baumgarten's and Meier's accounts of the aesthetic perfection of cognition. His rejection of aesthetic perfection in the third *Critique* was motivated by the same critical engagement with Baumgarten and Meier, even though the alternative conception of aesthetics he defends is notably different from the one he described in his lectures and in the first *Critique*. There might very well have been additional concerns motivating the development of the critical aesthetics Kant presents in the third *Critique*, including the influence of British and French sources that I have not discussed in this chapter, yet it would be a mistake to overlook Kant's debts to his German contemporaries.[55] His lectures and published works from the pre-critical and critical periods show that Kant continued to engage with Baumgarten and Meier, to comment on claims that were central to the new science they had tried to introduce, and to define his critical philosophy in relation to them.

[55] John Zammito argues that the origins of the third *Critique* are to be found in Kant's "bitter rivalry" with Herder, while Paul Guyer characterizes the work as a "protracted argument" with Hume. See Zammito 1992, 9; Guyer 2008, 199–200; and Guyer 2006, 539.

CHAPTER 2

Mendelssohn, Kant, and the Aims of Art

Paul Guyer

2.1 So Near Yet So Far

Mendelssohn claims that "the essence of the fine arts and sciences consists in an artful, sensuously perfect representation or in a sensuous perfection represented by art."[1] Kant insists that "[t]he judgment of taste is entirely independent from the concept of perfection" (CPJ §15, 5:226).

Mendelssohn claims that "[t]hrough different senses, poetry, rhetoric, beauties in shapes and sounds penetrate our soul and dominate all our inclinations. They can make us happy, then sad at will. They can arouse our passions and tame them in turn, and we willingly submit to the power of the artist who has us hope, fear, become irate, be soothed, laugh, and then pour out our tears" ("Main Principles," PW 170, JubA 1:428). Kant states that "[t]aste is always still barbaric when it needs the addition of **charms** and **emotions** for satisfaction, let alone if it makes these into the standard for its approval" (CPJ §5:223).

Kant's rejection of the concept of perfection in the judgment of taste and of emotions in aesthetic experience, especially the experience of art, appears to be a repudiation of everything to which Mendelssohn was committed. Kant never mentions the name of Mendelssohn in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, so even though the second edition of Mendelssohn's *Philosophical Writings*, including his main pieces on aesthetics, had appeared in 1771, just one year before Kant began regularly discussing aesthetics in his lectures on anthropology, it would be speculative to say that Kant's position was intentionally directed against Mendelssohn. But, while there are obvious differences between the two theories, there are also

[1] Moses Mendelssohn, "*Über die Hauptgrundsätze der schönen Künste und Wissenschaften*" [1757], in *Philosophischen Schriften* (Berlin: Voss, 1761); *Gesammelte Schriften: Jubilaeum Ausgabe*, ed. Fritz Bamberger et al., continued by Alexander Altmann (Stuttgart-Bad Canstatt: fromann-holzboog, 1929–), vol. 1:431 (hereafter "JubA"); "Main Principles of the Fine Arts and Sciences," in *Philosophical Writings*, trans. D. O. Dahlstrom (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 173 (hereafter "PW").

deep affinities.[2] On the one hand, even though the conceptual frameworks or what we might call the "meta-aesthetics" of the two theories seem to differ so greatly – Mendelssohn using the language of perfection and Kant rejecting it – their core conceptions of aesthetic experience – Mendelssohn's insistence that aesthetic pleasure must be grounded in "positive powers of the soul" and Kant's theory that it is grounded in the "free play" of imagination and understanding – are not so different. In his own account of fine art, moreover, Kant presupposes Mendelssohn's distinction between artistic *representation* and what is *represented*. On the other hand, Mendelssohn uses his contrast between perfections of representation and of objects to explain, above all, the mixed *sentiments* that we have in response to the artistic representation of unhappy events – the context of Mendelssohn's theory of mixed sentiments is the eighteenth-century debate about why we take pleasure in tragedy – while Kant apparently insists on the exclusion of sentiment from the proper response to beauty altogether. Kant's reasons for his rejection of emotion as central to aesthetic response are not trivial: he may see emotion as idiosyncratic and thus as a threat to the "universal subjective validity" of aesthetic judgment on which he insists. Since he wants aesthetic response to support morality without being reducible to it but sees emotion as a threat to morality, he might want to exclude emotion from aesthetic response for that reason as well. In the end, though, we will see that Kant's account of fine art explicitly leaves some room for the expression of emotion and thus implicitly for the experience of emotion. Under pressure of reality, we might say, Kant's initially purist formalism is forced to acknowledge the wisdom of Mendelssohn's more pluralist aesthetics, in which the experience of emotion plays such a large role.

2.2 Mendelssohn's Pluralist Aesthetics

Mendelssohn's first essay in aesthetics was the collection of letters, "On Sentiments."[3] Mendelssohn was an adherent of Leibnizo-Wolffian philosophy, but he was by no means uncritical, and "On Sentiments"

[2] This is not to say that Mendelssohn's theory is "proto-Kantian," an interpretation to which Frederick Beiser vehemently objects (Beiser 2009, 198–99), but rather that Kant retains more of the substance of Mendelssohn's approach to aesthetics than their terminologies would suggest – except, as I will argue, on the centrality of "sentiment" or emotion to aesthetic experience, an aspect of Mendelssohn's approach that in my view Beiser underestimates.

[3] Moses Mendelssohn, *Über die Empfindungen* (Berlin: Voss, 1755), also appearing in *Philosophischen Schriften* (1761).

begins by repudiating a central idea of Leibnizo-Wolffian aesthetics, namely that pleasure, including aesthetic pleasure, can be adequately characterized as a clear but confused cognition of some objective perfection.[4] This view is presented by one of Mendelssohn's characters, Euphranor, who states that "*[b]eauty rests*, in the opinion of every philosopher, *on the indistinct representation of a perfection*" ("On Sentiments," Second Letter, PW 12, JubA 1:240). But he is corrected by the older and wiser Theocles, who writes back that our pleasure in beauty cannot be explained in merely negative terms but that "the pure gratification of the soul must be grounded in the positive powers of our soul and not in its incapacity, not in the limitation of these original powers" (Fourth Letter, PW 19, JubA 1:248). What is crucial is that we perceive a beautiful object as a whole, not that our perception of its parts is imperfect.

> I contemplate the object of the pleasure, I reflect upon all sides of it, and strive to grasp them directly. Then I direct my attention at the general connection among them; I swing from the parts to the whole. The particular distinct concepts recede as it were back into the shadows. They all work on me but they work in such a state of equilibrium and proportion to one another that the whole alone radiates from them, and my thinking about it has not broken up the manifold, but only made it easier to grasp. (Third Letter, PW 15, JubA 1:243)

The indistinctness of the perception of the parts is only an accommodation to our human powers of comprehension that makes it possible for us to grasp the whole, but the latter is a positive accomplishment, and pleasurable for that reason.

Mendelssohn's assignment of the grasp of a whole to the human faculty of *imagination* (*Einbildungskraft*) could have been influential for Kant's conception of the relation between imagination and understanding – Theocles states that "[t]he imagination is able to confine the smallest and the largest object to the appropriate limits by extending the parts as far as possible or drawing them together until we are able to grasp the requisite manifold all at once" (Third Letter, PW 15, JubA 1:243) – and his reference

[4] Thus I regard Beiser's interpretation of Mendelssohn as defending the "rationalist legacy" against the "empiricist aesthetics of Dubos and Burke" (Beiser 2009, 196) as too simple; rather, he is making room for the experience of emotion, emphasized by these "empiricists," within a rationalist conceptual framework. I have argued that Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten and Georg Friedrich Meier, the supposedly paradigmatic aesthetic rationalists, were in fact doing the same thing; see Guyer 2014, vol. I, 318–41. Anne Pollok interprets Mendelssohn's aesthetics as setting "rationalism and empiricism . . . into a mutual, fruitful contraposition" (Pollok 2010, 170). I believe that this is the basis for a more balanced interpretation of Mendelssohn's significance in the history of aesthetics.

to the "proportion" of concepts in the experience of beauty could also have been influential for Kant's explication of this conception (see CPJ §21, 5:238).

Through Theocles, Mendelssohn expands on these statements in subsequent letters. In the Fifth Letter, he makes the still general statement that "[t]he sameness, the oneness in a manifold [*Die Gleichheit, die Einerley im Mannigfaltigen*] is a property of the beautiful object. They must exhibit an order or otherwise a perfection which appeals to the senses and, indeed, does so effortlessly" (PW 22, JubA 1:250). But he differentiates aspects of the perfection of the object that are grasped by the imagination as a positive power of the soul. In the Eleventh Letter, Theocles argues that the source of pleasure is "threefold," including "*sameness* [*das Einerley*] *in the manifold*, or beauty, *harmony* [*Einhelligkeit*] *in the manifold*, or intellectual perfection, and finally *the improved condition of the state of our body*, or sensuous gratification [*Lust*]" (PW 48, JubA 1:280). In this remark, Mendelssohn is essentially distinguishing a property that makes the grasp of a whole by the senses easy and is thus a perfection of *perception* relative to the powers of our senses and imagination; a perfection that is grasped by the intellect, something that we might think is a perfection in its own right, something valuable in the *object*; and a third factor, not previously mentioned, the beneficent effect of aesthetic perfection on the *body*, a "feeling of the improved condition of the body," explained as the pleasing stimulation and harmonization of the nerves and fibers of the body in the perception of something beautiful.[5]

In fact, Mendelssohn describes a two-way traffic between the mental and the physical in which one aspect of the feeling of pleasure in a beautiful object is a perception of the beneficial effects of the perception of the object on our sense organs and the rest of our body, but in which the more mental cognition of perfection, presumably of some perfection recognized more by the intellect than by the senses, has a beneficial effect on the body as well: "If now it is true, in addition, that each sensuous rapture, each improved condition of the state of our body, fills the soul with the sensuous representation of a perfection, then every sensuous representation must also, in turn, bring with it some well-being of the body." A beautiful representation arranges "the fibers of the brain into an appropriate tone," and the "brain communicates this harmonious tension to the nerves of the other parts of the body, and the body becomes comfortable; the human

[5] See also Pollok 2010, 172–76. She concludes that Mendelssohn's "connection to the philosophy of perfection is far from so one-dimensional as one might think" (ibid., 194).

being acquires a pleasant emotion" – or vice versa (Twelfth Letter, PW 53, JubA 1:285). This aspect of Mendelssohn's model is interesting because Kant is at such pains to keep the merely physiological, what he calls the "agreeable" (*das Angenehm*) out of a properly aesthetic response, for which he will, in turn, be criticized by his own student Herder.[6] Kant might have done better to have *added* the free play of the imagination to a more purely physiological aspect of aesthetic experience rather than having insisted on contrasting them.

Mendelssohn expands the model thus far introduced in the 1757 essay entitled, "Main Principles of the Fine Arts and Sciences," in a supplementary "Rhapsody" added to the letters on the sentiments in the 1761 *Philosophical Writings* and in a number of other texts. The "Rhapsody" clarifies the twofold nature of representation, namely that it both represents an object other than itself and that it is itself a state of the mind (and, as we just saw, of the body as well), with each aspect constituting a potential source of perfection and hence pleasure but with the twofold structure of representation also creating the possibility for the pleasurable representation of unpleasant objects, in other words, for mixed sentiment. "Each individual representation stands in a twofold relation," Mendelsson writes, "related, at once, to the matter before it as its object (of which it is a picture or a copy) and then to the soul or the thinking subject (of which it constitutes a determination" ("Rhapsody," PW 132, JubA 1:384). A representation can be enjoyed, then, because it *represents* a perfection but also because it *is* itself a perfection, since there is something enjoyable about it as a representation apart from what it represents.

Mendelssohn further analyzes our pleasure in the representation itself as due to its engagement of *two* positive powers of the soul, namely "the mental powers of knowing and desiring," or the abilities to know an object on the one hand and to approve or disapprove of it on the other, to evaluate it as either good or evil (PW 133, JubA 1:385). In more Kantian terminology, in aesthetic experience we can enjoy the exercise of our capacity for theoretical judgment but also of our capacity for moral feeling and judgment.

The involvement of both our cognitive capacities and our capacities for moral approbation and disapprobation in aesthetic response is the conceptual framework within which Mendelssohn argues that emotions make

[6] See Johann Gottfried Herder, *Kalligone: vom Angenehmen und Schönen* (Leipzig: Hartknoch, 1800), German edition; J. G. Herder, *Schriften zur Literatur und Philosophie 1792–1800*, ed. Hans Dietrick Irmscher (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1998), 673–77. For discussion, see Guyer 2014, vol. I, 509–26, esp. 515–19.

up a great part of our response to art and even to nature. He states this with particular clarity in the sixty-sixth of the *Letters concerning the Latest Literature*, a letter on the work of Johann Georg Sulzer on the topic of "ideal beauty." Here Mendelssohn remarks that "[t]he aim of drama is to represent the actions and mental inclinations [*Gemüthsneigungen*] of humans in accordance with life, and to arouse social passions [*Leidenschaften*]. Its ideal beauties are thus those characters that are best suited to the attainment of these goals, and see! the perfectly virtuous characters are by no means these." The argument is that our own passions, as audience, are best aroused by imperfect characters, great but flawed, who "provide more opportunity for actions, who arouse strong passions, whose invention has cost the poet a greater effort of the spirit" (JubA 5.1:98–101, at 99). Without using the word "imagination," Mendelssohn asks how "imitations" can interest us and responds by saying that the artist "takes the illusion so far that we believe ourselves to see the thing itself, not the imitation." He then argues that it is the arousal of our emotions that puts us in this state: "Only how is this happy deception to be achieved? Only through the artful arousal of passions. Only these are more powerful than the senses, and seduce the soul into taking the deceptive representations for real" (JubA 5.1:99–100). In other words, it is not a strictly cognitive state of illusion that produces emotions in response to art; it is the powerful emotions aroused by artistic representations that can induce a cognitive state of belief in what is in fact only fiction. We will see in a moment that Mendelssohn's view of the cognitive state created by fiction is a little more complicated than this, for he really holds that the conviction in the reality of the characters that goes along with our emotional response to them is compatible with an underlying recognition of the fact that they are fictions. But now our concern is only with his assumption that art is aimed at and does arouse a wide range of human emotions.

Another place where this assumption is evident is in the essay "On the sublime and naïve in the fine sciences," also included in the 1761 *Philosophical Writings*.[7] There will not be room here to discuss Kant's account of the sublime, which he thinks is not an experience capable of being engendered by art. But Mendelssohn's account is crucial for our purposes because the thinks art can be sublime and emphasizes the emotional character of the artistic sublime: "[I]f one wanted to describe the sublime in terms of its effect, then one could say: *It is something sensuously*

[7] Originally published as "Betrachtungen über das Erhabene und das Naive in den schönen Wissenschaften," *Bibliothek der schönen Künste und Wissenschaften* 2/2 (Leipzig: Dyck, 1758), 229–67.

perfect in art, capable of inspiring awe" ("Sublime and Naive," PW 195, JubA 1:458). In particular, art presents sublime *characters* rather than immense or powerful natural *objects.* Such characters produce a complex of emotions: "If we love the object of which we are in awe or if it deserves our sympathy because of an undeserved agony, the awe alternates with the more familiar sentiment in our mind. We wish, hope, and fear for the object of our love or our sympathy and admire his or her great soul that is beyond such hope and fear" (PW 198–99, JubA 1:462). The purpose of the depiction of such characters is precisely to arouse a wide range of human emotions in us. This is a fundamental aim of art.

Most important, Mendelssohn's division of the positive powers of the soul engaged by artistic representations into the cognitive and the evaluative allows him to explain our pleasure in the aesthetic representation of objects that in reality would be unpleasant. First, "many a representation can have something pleasant about it although, as a picture of the object, it is accompanied by disapproval and a feeling of repugnance," and second, even when we disapprove of the object, we can approve or take pleasure *in* our disapproval of the object, thus enjoying the proper exercise of our faculty of approbation and disapprobation (PW 132, JubA 1:384). That is, we can disapprove of the object of a representation, say a crime or a catastrophe, approve of the representation of it because it is beautiful, for example, harmonious for our cognitive powers, and also approve of our disapproval of the object, as a proper exercise of our faculty of approbation and disapprobation. Thus, though we can sometimes both approve of the object and enjoy the representation of it, we can also disapprove of the object, enjoy our representation of it, and enjoy our disapprobation of it, and the sum of the latter two enjoyments can easily outweigh the pain of the first disapprobation. This is what Mendelssohn calls "mixed sentiment" and is the key to our enjoyment of tragedy: "On the side of the object and in relation to it, we feel, to be sure, discontent and disfavor in the intuitive knowledge of its deficiencies. But on the side of the mind's projection, the soul's powers of knowing and desiring are engaged, that is to say, its reality is enhanced and this must of necessity cause pleasure and satisfaction [*Lust und Wohlgefallen*]" (PW 136, JubA 1:389).[8]

[8] Leah Hochman glosses Mendelssohn's theory of mixed sentiments as arising from a contrast between the "Beautiful and the Ugly" (Hochman 2014, 47). But the hypostatization of the whole variety of aspects of both representations and what is represented to which we may have positive or negative emotional responses into the two categories she capitalizes is too reductive, especially masking the fact that much of what we respond to negatively in the negative aspect of mixed sentiments is *morally* repellent, not perceptually so.

Mendelssohn's account of the mixed emotions induced by art leads to the introduction of the concept of what later became known as "aesthetic distance" but specifically as a condition of the possibility of mixed sentiment. We cannot be too close to the object, for then our awareness of the object would totally dominate our awareness of our representation of it, nor can we be too far from the object, for then our awareness of our own representation would dominate our awareness of the object; in order to enjoy a mixed sentiment, we have to be able to remain aware of both object and representation. We have to make sure that "subject and object" do not "collapse, as it were, into one another" (PW 134, JubA 1:386). We may have to keep a certain distance from an object in order to enjoy its appearance without being overwhelmed by other features of it. But such distance is not created just by spatial distance between the object and the observer. It can be created by the media of artistic representation, such as by the difference between marble and flesh, by the proscenium arch and its conventions, and so on. Thus:

> Another means of rendering the most terrifying events pleasant to gentle minds is the imitation by art, on the stage, on the canvas, and in marble, since an inner consciousness that we have an imitation and nothing genuine before our eyes moderates the strength of the objective disgust and, as it were, elevates the subjective side of the representation . . . The difference between the material of the imitation and the material of nature, the marble and the canvas are the most obvious sensed features which, without damaging the art, call the attention back from the illusion whenever necessary. (PW 138–39, JubA 1:390–91)

A characteristic feature of artistic representation is the way in which it puts an object before our own mental representation (the painting is one representation, our representation of the painting another) yet allows us to have both the represented object and the features of the representation in mind, and to respond to both, with unalloyed sentiment or with mixed sentiment, as the case may be.

Mendelssohn's recognition that the right distance from an aesthetic object allows us to keep both our cognitive and approbative faculties in play, specifically by both acknowledging the fictionality of what a work of art represents but yet responding to it emotionally, is also emphasized in his brief return to the topic of aesthetics in Lecture VII of the *Morning Hours*, his final philosophical work and that closest in time to Kant's

composition of his third *Critique*.[9] Here Mendelssohn introduces a threefold rather than twofold distinction among mental powers, separating what was previously lumped together as the faculty of approbation or disapprobation into the separate faculties of approbation (*Billigungsvermögen*) and desire.[10] This allows him to make the crucial claim that we can approve of something and take pleasure in it without desiring it. As he puts it,

> between cognition and desire lies approbation, or acclamation, which is the mind's own sense of pleasantness, which is actually far removed from desire. We contemplate the beauty of nature and art with delight and satisfaction but without the slightest fluttering of desire. Indeed, it seems that it is a particular feature of the beautiful that we contemplate it with quiet satisfaction and that we enjoy it even when we do not count it as one of our possessions or have any desire to possess it. (*Morgenstunden*, JubA 3.2: 61–62; *Last Works* 53)

Mendelssohn's introduction of the faculty of approbation without desire in the *Morning Hours* has sometimes been taken as the source of Kant's introduction of the faculty of judgment between the faculties of cognition and desire in the organization of the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. Given everything that Kant asks the faculty of judgment to do in the third *Critique*, particularly in his theory of teleological judgment, this is implausible. But what we will find is that Mendelssohn's concept could have helped Kant in his exposition of his concept of disinterestedness, since Mendelssohn explains how emotional response is possible in the face of knowledge of the fictional status of artistic characters and does so precisely by demonstrating that our faculty of approbation can become involved even when our faculty of desire is not.

When "truth is the goal of our desire," then "every other consideration, however dear or important it may be to us, must yield to this goal," but under some circumstances we can set our concern for truth aside and let our approbative faculty – our emotions – play without concern for truth. This can happen when a real tragedy occurs about which we can do nothing practical but only respond emotionally. But it can also occur when we are creating or experiencing a work of fiction for the sheer

[9] Moses Mendelssohn, *Morgenstunden oder Vorlesungen über das Dasein Gottes* (Berlin: Voss, 1785); *Last Works*, trans. Bruce Rosenstock (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2012).

[10] Beiser treats Mendelssohn's late three-faculty theory as replacing an earlier one-faculty theory (Beiser 2009, 240–43). It does not seem correct to treat Mendelssohn's earlier theory as a one-faculty theory because Mendelssohn clearly recognized the role of both cognition and (moral) judgment in aesthetic response; his late innovation is rather to separate approbation from desire.

pleasure of exercising our faculty of emotional response without either cognition or desire.

> It is another matter, however, when we intend to exercise our faculty of approbation and thereby bring it to greater perfection. In this regard a person loves fiction [*Erdichtung*]. He reimagines things so that they are in accord with his inclination, so that they set his satisfaction and dissatisfaction into agreeable play [*angenehmes Spiel*]. He does not want to be instructed, but to be moved. He gladly allows himself to be deceived, and lets things be presented as real that are not in accord with his better conviction and with truth. His reason remains silent as long as he would merely pleasantly occupy his inclinations. (*Morgenstunden,* JubA 3.1:64; *Last Works* 56, translation modified)

What is crucial here is that Mendelssohn does not suppose that a person enjoying emotional response to a fiction is actually deceived by it; his reason knows the truth, in this case the falsehood of what is represented, but in the aesthetic context reason remains silent, or steps back, to let the emotions play. What makes this possible is the techniques of "aesthetic distance," the difference between marble and flesh in a statue or the proscenium arch in a theater: these devices allow reason to step back from its knowledge of the literal falsehood of the fiction and prevent normal desire, for example, the desire to save Desdemona from Othello (*Morgenstunden*, JubA 3.1:65), from kicking in, while allowing us to enjoy the emotional response that we would have to the depicted situation if it were true and that we actually do have to the fiction. For Mendelssohn, aesthetic distance and emotional response (to a work of art) go hand-in-hand. With regard to Kant, the point is that we do not have to draw an obscure difference between the representation of an object and its existence; it is rather the difference between the faculty of approbation and that of desire that creates space for the disinterested – but hardly unemotional – character of aesthetic pleasure.

By way of summary, we can stress that Mendelssohn's approach to aesthetics is inclusive rather than restrictive. He contrasts representation and what is represented but lets both play an essential role in aesthetic experience. This is summed up in the formula with which we began: "[S]ince the final purpose of the fine arts is to please, we can presuppose the following principle as indubitable: the essence of the fine arts consists in an artful, sensuously perfect representation or in a sensuous perfection represented by art" ("Main Principles," PW 172–73, JubA 1:431).

Coming from Kant, we might have been tempted to interpret this as a contrast between the *form* of what is represented and the *content* that is

represented. But Mendelssohn also makes it clear that the perfections of the representation are not restricted to form alone. In a review of Georg Friedrich Meier's *Extract from the First Principles of All Fine Arts and Sciences* (*Auszug aus den Anfangsgründen aller Schönen Künste und Wissenschaften*) of 1757, Mendelssohn first objects that the Baumgartian approach is not sufficiently general but really applies only to "poetry and eloquence." He writes that

> Aesthetics should really contain the *science of beautiful cognition* in general, the *theory of all fine arts and sciences*; all of its explanations and doctrines must therefore be general enough to be applied to every fine art in particular. For example, if one explains in general aesthetics what the *sublime* is, then the explanation must be able to be applied as well to the sublime style of writing as to sublime contour in painting and sculpture, sublime passages in music and sublime architecture.

He continues:

> If one explains what *beauty in objects* is, then this explanation must resemble a general algebraic formula to which one has only to add some further determinations in order to be able to explain in more detail the different kinds of beauty in thoughts, in language, in figures, lines, and motions, and finally in tones and colors. This is rightly demanded of an *aesthetics*, a *theory of beauty in general*.

He then complains that if one considers

> the aesthetics of Professor *Baumgarten*, or the *First Principles* of Herr Meier (for the latter is nothing but an extended development of the former), then it seems as if in the whole plan of the work they have had only the fine sciences, i.e., poetry and eloquence, in view. (JubA 4:196–201, at 197–98)

The crucial point here is the contrast between thought on the one hand and lines, figures, colors, and tones on the other. The former can clearly stand for the content of a work, whether a poem or a painting, whereas the latter can stand for the sensorily accessible properties of both artistic representations and the mental representations of artistic representations, both in cases where these two have intellectual content but also in cases such as (instrumental) music or architecture, where it is much harder to maintain that the object has intellectually accessible content at all and pleases in virtue of that. The charge against Baumgarten and Meier is that in spite of their claims to generality, they focus on intellectual content of the kind most characteristic of poetry (from which indeed all their examples are drawn), standing in for literature more broadly, alone.

(Had Mendelssohn lived to respond to Kant's aesthetics, he could have made the same objection to it, especially to Kant's failure to discuss drama and thus the paradox of tragedy.)

The same point is made in the "Main Principles."

> [E]verything capable of being represented to the senses as a perfection could also present an object of beauty. Belonging here are all the perfections of external forms, that is, the lines, surfaces, and bodies and their movements and changes; the harmony of the multiple sounds and colors; the order in the parts of a whole, their similarity, variety, and harmony; their transposition and transformation into other forms; all the capabilities of our soul, all the skills of our body. ("Main Principles," PW 172, JubA 1:431)

Anything that can count as a perfection that can be presented *to or through* the senses can engage the powers of our soul and produce aesthetic pleasure. This can include particular sensory properties, such as sounds and colors, perceived by the senses; relations among such properties, such as variety and harmony, which we might say are perceived and transformed by the imagination; and content, represented characters, actions, or more abstract ideas, cognized by our cognitive capacities and approved or disapproved by our faculty of approbation and disapprobation. Mendelssohn's account of potential aesthetic properties is inclusive rather than restrictive.

As we will see, Kant's account of the proper objects of taste initially appears opposed to that of Baumgarten but no less restrictive than it – as though Kant's account focused on form to the exclusion of all else instead of content to the exclusion of all else. But in fact we will see that this impression is not sustained by Kant's account of fine art, which is closer, although not identical, to Mendelssohn's in its breadth.

2.3 Kant's Monistic Aesthetics

Kant initially presents his aesthetic theory as primarily a theory of our response to and judgment of the beautiful and sublime in nature, and only toward the end of his exposition does he focus on fine art, whereas for Mendelssohn the case of art is primary. Kant also identifies the free play of imagination as central to all aesthetic experience, while Mendelssohn attributes pleasure to the positive powers of the soul without explicit use of the concept of free play. But these are not really substantial differences between them. The chief difference is rather that Mendelssohn allows a full range of sensory, cognitive, and emotional responses to art, whereas Kant

minimizes the importance of purely sensory qualities such as color on the one hand and "charm and emotion" on the other. Kant's theory has an advantage over Mendelssohn's in its identification of the free play of the imagination as the core of all aesthetic experience, linking the apparently different cases of natural beauty, functional beauty, and artistic beauty, but Mendelssohn's inclusive approach to sources of aesthetic pleasure is more attractive than Kant's at least initially restrictive approach.

Kant begins his "Analytic of the Beautiful" with the claims that a judgment of taste is "aesthetic," that is, based on the subjective feeling of pleasure in its object (CPJ §1, 5:203–4), but yet "without any interest," which he explicates by stating that it is concerned only with the judge's response to the *representation* of the object of aesthetic judgment and not to its *existence*: "[i]f someone asks me whether I find the palace that I see before me beautiful . . . One only wants to know whether the mere representation of the object is accompanied with satisfaction in me, however indifferent I might be with regard to the existence of the object of this representation" (§2, 5:204–5) (although Kant will claim that only judgments of natural beauty are "pure," his first *example* is actually a work of art, indeed, an example from the complex art of architecture). In this regard, Kant claims, judgments of taste about beauty differ from judgments about the "agreeable" and the "good," both of which are connected with interest in the existence of the object. A judgment that something is agreeable (e.g., that this glass of wine tastes good) depends entirely on physiological contact with the object, in this case on drinking it, and in this sense depends on the actual existence of the object, and also generates an interest in the existence of like objects: having found this glass of wine good, I will (likely) want to drink it again and thus have (more of) it available to me – that is, more of the wine, not just a further or repeated representation of it. In the case of anything that I judge to be good from the point of view of either mere instrumental (prudential) or pure (moral) practical reason, my judgment is a judgment that the object of my representation ought to exist, thus connected to an interest in the existence of the object. From the disinterestedness of judgments of taste Kant also infers that they are not based on any determinate concept of their objects, although this would seem to imply that proper judgments of taste are not based on any concept of their objects *as good for some particular purpose*, whether of consumption (as in the case of the agreeable) or some other prudential or moral purpose (as in the case of judgments of the good), not that they are independent of all concepts whatsoever. Kant concludes that "**[t]aste** is the faculty for judging an object or a kind of representation

through a satisfaction or dissatisfaction **without any interest**" and that "[t]he object of such a satisfaction is called **beautiful**" – note that the *object* is called beautiful, even though the judgment is based solely on the *representation* of the object. From the philosopher who claimed that existence is not a predicate, all of this is somewhat opaque, and Mendelssohn's claim that a beautiful object engages our approbation but not our desire seems more straightforward.

The second moment of the "Analytic of the Beautiful" expounds the thesis that "[t]he beautiful is that which, without concepts, is represented as the object of a *universal* satisfaction" (CPJ §6, 5:211). Kant clarifies that a judgment of taste is not an empirical assertion that everyone does or will find beautiful what one has oneself found beautiful but is rather a conditional judgment that *if* one's own pleasure in an object is in fact a genuine response to its beauty, then everyone else could reasonably be expected to find the object beautiful under optimal circumstances (CPJ §19, 5:237). Kant's argument is, then, that one's pleasure can be independent of the subsumption of its object under a concept, particularly a concept of its purpose, yet valid for all only if it is due to a special relation between the cognitive powers of imagination and understanding. That special relation consists in a "free play" between them in which "no determinate concept restricts them to a particular rule of cognition" but in which they are pleasurably "facilitated" and "enlivened" (*belebt*) through "mutual agreement" (CPJ §9, 5:217, 219). Kant presents this key to his aesthetic theory in the subsequently written Introduction to the third *Critique* thus:

> If pleasure is connected with the mere apprehension (*apprehensio*) of the form of an object of intuition without a relation of this to a concept for a determinate cognition, then the representation is thereby related not to the object, but solely to the subject, and the pleasure can express nothing but its suitability to the cognitive faculties that are in play in the reflecting power of judgment, insofar as they are in play, and thus merely a subjective formal purposiveness of the object . . . If . . . the imagination . . . is unintentionally brought into accord with the understanding . . . through a given representation and a feeling of pleasure is thereby aroused, then the object must be regarded as purposive for the reflecting power of judgment . . . That object the form of which (not the material aspect of its representation, as sensation) in mere reflection on it (without any intention of acquiring a concept from it) is judged as the ground of a pleasure in the representation of such an object – with its representation this pleasure is also judged to be necessarily combined, consequently not merely for the subject who apprehends this

> form but for everyone who judges at all. (CPJ, Introduction, §VII, 5: 189–90)

Kant's argument is that a "free play" between imagination and understanding will be pleasurable because it constitutes "subjective formal purposiveness," that is, the satisfaction of every cognitive subject's underlying aim for harmony among its cognitive powers but without the usual guarantee of such harmony provided through subsumption of the representation of the object under a determinate concept (see §VI, 5:187), and then that such pleasure can be considered "subjectively universally valid" just because everyone's cognitive faculties of imagination and understanding must work the same way. Kant attempts to support the last step of this inference by the further argument that he calls the "deduction of judgments of taste," the argument that everyone's cognitive faculties must work the same way in aesthetic contexts because they must work the same way in ordinary cognitive contexts (§§21 and 38). Kant claims that this is a synthetic a priori principle. But this deduction is deeply problematic because it is not obvious, at least not evidently true a priori, that everyone's cognitive faculties must work the same way in ordinary cognition nor that even if they do so in ordinary cognition that they must also do so in aesthetic contexts.[11] Mendelssohn does not commit himself to such an assumption.

In the third moment of the "Analytic of the Beautiful," Kant argues that free play, which is "subjective" and "formally purposive" in the sense of being achieved without a concept, is *also* formal in the sense of being triggered by and directed at the (represented) *form* of the object, as contrasted with the *matter* of the representation, sensation, on the one hand, and any conceptual *content* or meaning of the object, on the other. Thus Kant goes from the claim that the purposiveness of the free play of the cognitive powers is "formal" to the claim that beauty "should properly concern merely form" (§13, 5:223). This is where Kant stakes out his fundamental differences with Mendelssohn, for it is here that he claims that "[i]n painting and sculpture," for example, "indeed in all the pictorial arts . . . the **drawing** is what is essential . . . not what gratifies in sensation," i.e., not "the colors that illuminate the outline" but the outline itself, "merely what pleases through form," and that in music, it is not "the agreeable tones of instruments" but only the "composition," the formal structure of the music, presumably what is captured by the bare notes of

[11] For an extended argument for this assessment, see Guyer 1979/1997, chaps. 8 and 9.

the score rather than by the timbres and overtones of any particular instrumentation (§14, 5:225). (Again, although Kant is still supposedly analyzing a form of judgment paradigmatically directed toward natural beauty, his examples come from the arts.) Kant likewise here makes his claim that "[t]aste is always still barbaric when it needs the addition of **charm** and **emotion** [*Reiz und Rührung*] for satisfaction" (§13, 5:223). In §14, Kant specifically connects charm with sensation, saying that the "colors that illuminate the outline" in painting or the "agreeable tones of instruments" have charm (5:225), and we might suppose that some elements that we might consider more formal than material, such as a piece of music being composed in a minor rather than a major key, could also have an emotional impact. But it might be more natural to suppose that the major part of the emotional impact of works of art will be produced by their content, in the case of works that do have content, such as historical or devotional painting, music with text rather than absolute music, and, of course, most forms of literature. Thus, when Kant excludes charm from the proper response to aesthetic objects, he derives the exclusion from the restriction of that response to the form of such objects, and it is natural to suppose that the exclusion of emotion is similarly derived.

But it is clear that Kant is also being moved by a further thought, namely that the response to mere form is universally valid in the way requisite for judgments of taste but that the response to other possible aspects of aesthetic objects, their material (like colors and tones) on the one hand and their content (in the case of works of art that may have content) on the other, is not universally valid in the same way. He explicitly states that "it cannot easily be assumed that the agreeableness of one color in preference to another or of the tone of one musical instrument in preference to another will be judged in the same way by everyone" (although he is prepared to concede that the *purity* of colors or tones might be a formal feature of the vibrations of light or sound that cause our perceptions of them and thus properly universal) (CPJ §14, 5:224). And although Kant does not explicitly assert that people vary in their emotional responses to the content of art in the same way that they vary in being charmed by colors or tones, his acceptance of the traditional doctrine of humors (that some people are by nature sanguine, others phlegmatic, and so on) in his anthropology lectures suggests that he would make this assumption as well.[12] So he is clearly moved to exclude charm and emotion from proper

[12] See Kant's *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, 7:285–91.

aesthetic response because of the danger that they could introduce idiosyncrasy rather than intersubjective validity into aesthetic judgment.

Kant takes pains to distinguish his conception of subjective purposiveness as the essence of aesthetic response from any theory that the *perfection* of objects is the basis of such response. Kant claims that "[t]he judgment of taste is entirely independent from the concept of perfection" because "**[o]bjective** purposiveness can be cognized only by means of the relation of a manifold to a determinate end, thus only through a concept," and from the fact that judgments of taste have as their ground "a merely formal purposiveness" but no concept, it follows that they are not judgments of perfection. In particular, although as usual Kant names no names, he rejects the account of sensory judgment developed by Leibniz and Wolff and applied to the case of aesthetic judgments by Baumgarten and Meier, according to which judgments of this sort are "confused" but still conceptual judgments (CPJ §15, 5:226–27). But even though Mendelssohn also uses the language of perfection, Kant's criticism could well mask a fundamental affinity between his theory and Mendelssohn's: while Kant claims that aesthetic judgments are not masked judgments about the perfections of *objects*, his theory that they are expressions of *subjective* purposiveness is similar to Mendelssohn's theory that our pleasure in beauty is grounded in positive powers *of the soul*. Kant's conception of free play can be considered a version of Mendeslssohn's approach rather than a rejection of it.

Kant concludes the "Analytic of the Beautiful" with a fourth moment on the "exemplary necessity" rather than "subjectively universal necessity" of judgments of taste. The difference between the two requirements is hard to find, and the section only strengthens Kant's emphasis on the intersubjective validity of such judgments. I omit further discussion of this section,[13] as well as of Kant's discussion of the distinction between the beautiful and the sublime (the latter of which he in any case thinks of as an experience triggered by nature but not by art)[14] so that I may focus on his explicit theory of fine art.

Kant presents his account of fine art in the form of a theory of genius, that is, of the production of art. The heart of this theory is that a work of art "can be quite pretty and elegant, but without **spirit**" and that "**spirit**, in an aesthetic significance . . . is nothing other than the faculty for the presentation of **aesthetic ideas**," by which he means "representation[s] of the imagination that occasion . . . much thinking without it being possible

[13] For discussion, see Guyer 1979/1997, chap. 4. [14] See Guyer 1993, chap. 6.

for any determinate thought, i.e., **concept**, to be adequate to it, which, consequently, no language fully attains or can make intelligible." He continues that "[o]ne readily sees that it is the counterpart (pendant) of an **idea of reason**, which is, conversely, a concept to which no **intuition** (representation of the imagination) can be adequate." The ideas of reason he has in mind are intellectual ideas, above all moral ideas, so that "[t]he poet ventures to make sensible rational ideas of sensible beings, the kingdom of the blessed, the kingdom of hell, eternity, creation . . . envy and all sorts of vices, love, fame, etc." (CPJ 5:314). In other words, the artistic genius creates an *aesthetic* idea by the free play of his imagination with a *rational* idea.

> Now if we add to a concept a representation of the imagination that belongs to its presentation, but which by itself stimulates so much thinking that it can never be grasped in a determinate concept, hence which aesthetically enlarges the concept itself in an unbounded way, then in this case the imagination is creative, and sets the faculty of intellectual ideas (reason) into motion. (CPJ 5:315)

Kant thus assumes that an inspired work of art has content, not just form, that content being some moral idea or ideas, yet that the imagination of the artist presents that idea in a way dictated neither by the idea itself nor by any other rules of art, necessary as those rules are for giving the work of art body, i.e., incorporating it in some durable medium (even the medium of words). Thus art involves a free play between imagination and reason, representation and content. Some rules for conceiving of various sorts of objects as well as the rules of the relevant artistic medium must be followed, to be sure, and rule-following is the characteristic province of the understanding. Yet the artist's state of mind and what is to be communicated to the audience will, nonetheless, typically be a free play of imagination, understanding, and reason.

Two further aspects of Kant's theory of art may be mentioned. First, just before presenting his theory of genius, Kant had observed that "[b]eautiful art displays its excellence precisely by describing beautifully things that in nature would be ugly or displeasing. The furies, diseases, devastations of war and the like can, as harmful things, be very beautifully described, indeed represented in painting" (CPJ §48, 5:312). Here Kant is relying on the distinction that Mendelssohn had cast as that between the perfections of the representation and what is represented without using Mendelssohn's terminology of perfections and without making any other basis for the distinction clear. He may be tacitly relying on Mendelssohn here.

Second, Kant proposes a systematic division of the arts based on the following premise:

> [I]f we wish to divide the beautiful arts, we can, at least as an experiment, choose no easier principle than the analogy of art with the kind of expression that people use in speaking in order to communicate to each other, i.e., not merely their concepts, but also their sentiments [*Empfindungen*]. – This consists in the **word**, the **gesture**, and the **tone** (articulation, gesticulations, and modulation). Only the combination of these three kinds of expression constitutes the speaker's complete communication. For thought, intuition, and sentiment are thereby united and conveyed simultaneously to others. (CPJ §51, 5:320)

Kant borrows this scheme from Batteux, not from Mendelssohn. But there is also a potential link to Mendelssohn here, at least if Kant's word *Empfindungen* should indeed be translated as "sentiments" and not merely "sensations." How the term should be translated is indeed problematic. Kant uses the same word when he comes to what he calls arts of pure play, namely music and an art of "the play of colors," and there it seems as if he is talking about what we would call, in contemporary English, mere sensations: hearing sounds of a particular frequency, seeing particular colors, and so on. But poetry, for example, will not typically convey sensations in this sense, although perhaps in some cases it can – words in a poem might make us think of the color of a violet or the smell of fresh-turned earth. But it would be much more common to think of poetry as communicating what we would now call sentiments, that is, feelings, how someone might feel *about* something, even about a sensation such as the smell of fresh-turned earth. It seems natural to think of Kant's model of "complete" communication as holding that speakers typically communicate both some content (in Kant's terms, thought) to others through the particular words used but also how they feel about that content, through their gesture and tone. Since the latter seem better fitted to communicating feelings than communicating concepts, Kant seems to be suggesting that complete communication, inside as well as outside the arts, involves the communication of feelings as well as thoughts. And it would, in turn, be natural to suppose that *communicating* feelings as well as thoughts requires *stimulating* feelings as well as thoughts in the audience for the communication. This would bring Kant's view into the proximity of Mendelssohn's. Kant does not admit this outright. But once he has adopted Batteux's position, his difference from Mendelssohn also diminishes.

2.4 From Pluralism to Monism and Back

In spite of Kant's rejection of perfectionism in aesthetics, there is considerable affinity between Mendelssohn's conception of the subjective *perfections* of the mind in aesthetic experience and Kant's conception of the subjective *purposiveness* of aesthetic response. That Kant is willing to allow purposiveness as long as it is subjective almost signals that he is accepting this side of Mendelssohn's account, even if he is rejecting the objective side. Mendelssohn had used verbs of mental activity in claiming that in "the mind's projection, the movement and stirring which is produced in the soul by unpleasant representations cannot be anything else but pleasant" and has called these "movements of the mind" (*Gemüthsbewegungen*) (PW 137, JubA 1:389). The subjective perfection of the mind thus consists of its activity.

Kant similarly placed great emphasis on the *activity* of the mind as the source of our pleasure. This was evident in the conclusion of the second moment of the "Analytic of the Beautiful," when Kant stated that "[t]he animation [*Belebung*] of both faculties (the imagination and the understanding) to an activity that is indeterminate but yet, through the stimulus of the given representation, in unison, namely that which belongs to a cognition in general, is the sensation" – of pleasure – "whose universal communicability is postulated by the judgment of taste" (CPJ §9, 5:219). This emphasis on activity is also apparent in the third moment when he characterized our feeling of pleasure in beauty as "[t]he consciousness of the merely formal purposiveness in the play of the cognitive powers of the subject . . . because it contains a determining ground of the activity of the subject with regard to the animation of its cognitive powers" (CPJ §12, 5:222). The formal or, as he also calls it, "subjective purposiveness" (CPJ §11, 5:221) of the mind in aesthetic experience is nothing other than the pleasurable consciousness of the mind's activity, just as it is in Mendelssohn's account of subjective perfection. In this case there does not seem to be much difference between "purposiveness" and "perfection."

Thus Kant's core conception of aesthetic experience seems deeply Mendelssohnian. To be sure, there are differences between the two accounts as well. Kant has emphasized that the mental activity in aesthetic experience is *free play* and he has also *restricted* it to the *cognitive* powers of imagination and understanding. Mendelssohn does not use the phrase "free play," but Kant's own use of the phrase is deeply metaphorical. What he means by free play has to be cashed out, and the only way in which it is plausible to cash it out is as a harmony between imagination and

other cognitive powers arrived at without the ordinary use of concepts or rules. Yet Mendelssohn, too, allows only a limited role for rules in art, as "preparations by means of which the poet [or other artist] should be putting himself and the object to be worked over into a state where the beauties are shown in their most flattering light" but that should not "disturb" the "virtuoso" "in the heat of the work itself" (Fourth Letter, PW 18, JubA 1:246–47). Mendelssohn suggests that rules can never be more than necessary, not sufficient conditions for the creation of beauty (and presumably, *mutatis mutandis*, for the reception of it). More concretely, Mendelssohn describes a number of ways in which artists exercise their imaginations and, again presumably, the imaginations of their audiences in response to their work.

The real difference seems rather that Mendelssohn stresses that the free play of the imagination, although he does not call it that, heightens our emotional involvement with a work of art, whereas Kant suppresses this fact. Thus, in a not entirely fair criticism of Batteux, who did not actually think otherwise, Mendelssohn argues that an artist does not simply imitate nature but "must accordingly elevate himself above common nature, and, since beauty is his sole, final purpose, he is free to concentrate this beauty everywhere in his works so that it might move us all the more intensely" ("Main Principles," PW 176, JubA 1:435). Mendelssohn's connection between imagination and emotion is also reflected in his conception of aesthetic distance. While Kant's conception of the role of imagination in aesthetic experience remains highly metaphorical, Mendelssohn's is more concrete. Our imagination, aided by the techniques of art, allows us, Mendelssohn contends, to have an emotional response to the depiction of a character or an action even when with one part of our mind we know perfectly well that what is being presented is fiction, not fact. But the whole point of such a use of imagination is to allow us to enjoy emotional experience, not to set it at arm's length. This is a fact that Kant continually suppresses, even when he concedes that the paradigmatic content of art is ideas, such as those of heaven and hell, virtue and vice, with which human beings in fact have strong emotional associations – until at last he recognizes that art involves the expression of sentiment as well as the communication of thought.

A second fundamental difference that we have found is that between Kant's restrictive formalism, at least in the second moment of the "Analytic of the Beautiful," and Mendelssohn's more inclusive account of the possible perfections of representation. Mendelssohn criticized Meier and Baumgarten for focusing entirely on the "thoughts" expressed in works

of art while neglecting the entire range of sensory properties in their account of beauty, color, and tone, but even what would be from a Kantian point of view formal properties such as line, figure, and perhaps movement. Kant went to the opposite extreme, holding that only formal properties properly enter into beauty, to the exclusion of more material sensory properties such as color and tone and at least initially intellectual content as well. In the end, though, Kant was forced to admit that in art we play with ideas as well as with form, and he finally even admitted that there could be arts of pure play with sensations, such as in music and the art of color (CPJ §53, 5:328–29). Mendelssohn's position has the advantage of being up front about the full range of potential materials for artistic representation, not backing into such a recognition, not being grudging about it, and not downgrading play with tone or color by thinking of it in isolation from play with form and content rather than in conjunction with them.

Mendelssohn's enthusiastic endorsement of aesthetic pluralism against Baumgarten and Meier seems more appealing than Kant's grudging acceptance of it under the influence of Batteux and perhaps of Mendelssohn himself. No doubt Kant had his reasons for his attempt to suppress as long as possible the inevitable recognition of the importance of emotions in the experience of art. Perhaps the deepest of these would be the fact that he downplays the role of emotion in moral motivation, while Mendelssohn takes emotion to be a central part of moral motivation as well as of the experience of art. But on this score too Kant may ultimately move in a Mendelssohnian direction. Alas, unpacking this claim would be work for another occasion. Here we will have to content ourselves with the conclusion that although Kant's prominent rejection of perfectionism in the third *Critique* could seem to include Mendelssohn as well as the rest of the Leibnizo-Wolffians in its sweep, the affinities between the aesthetics of Königsberg and those of Berlin are greater than initially meets the eye.

CHAPTER 3

Winckelmann's Greek Ideal and Kant's Critical Philosophy

Michael Baur

Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1717–68) was not a philosopher. In fact, Winckelmann had a strong interest in distancing himself from academic philosophy as he knew it. As Goethe reports, Winckelmann "complained bitterly about the philosophers of his time and about their extensive influence."[1] Still less was Winckelmann a Kantian philosopher; the first edition of Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* did not appear until 1781, thirteen years after the fifty-year-old Winckelmann was shockingly murdered in Trieste. Nevertheless, many of Winckelmann's ideas were philosophically rich and suggestive and interestingly relevant to the philosophical problems that were later to be addressed by Kant and his philosophical contemporaries. It is no wonder, then, that Winckelmann's influence can be detected in the works of some of the most important philosophically oriented thinkers of Germany in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In addition to Kant himself, these thinkers included Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729–81), Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744–1803), Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832), Friedrich Schiller (1759–1805), Friedrich Hölderlin (1770–1843), Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling (1775–1854), and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831).

3.1 Winckelmann's Contribution: His Precursors and His Innovations

Winckelmann is widely regarded as the inventor of what we now call "art history." To be sure, there were others before Winckelmann who sought to analyze great artworks against the backdrop of their historical settings, but such predecessors tended to focus on the lives of the individual artists who

[1] Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Winckelmann und sein Jahrhundert* (Tübingen: Cotta, 1805); cited here from *Schriften zur Kunst, Sämtliche Werke*, ed. Erich Trunz, vol. 12 (Munich: DTV, 2008), 119.

produced the art in question (as in the work of Giorgio Vasari[2]), or else they tended to compile facts about artworks from the past, without, however, developing a fuller account of the broader aesthetic, cultural, and ideological contexts that informed and made possible the particular artworks in question. One of Winckelmann's innovations was to develop a way of doing "art history" that was vastly more comprehensive in scope and more systematic in its aspirations than the previous work of "art historians" had been. With his major contribution to art history – his *History of the Art of Antiquity* (*Geschichte der Kunst des Altertums*) – Winckelmann was able to illuminate the history and character of entire cultures, and he did so through the lens of aesthetic taste, since – for Winckelmann – a people's aesthetic sensibility permeates and manifests itself in all forms of cultural expression.

In the Preface to his *History of the Art of Antiquity*, Winckelmann announces that his own endeavors in art history will go well beyond the aims of those that preceded him: "The history of the art of antiquity that I have endeavored to write is no mere narrative of the chronology and alterations of art, for I take the word *history* in the wider sense that it has in the Greek language and my intention is to provide an attempt at an instructional edifice [*ein Versuch eines Lehrgebäudes zu liefern*]."[3] In summarizing the broader aim of Winckelmann's *History of the Art of Antiquity*, Elisabeth Décultot explains: "This work, more than a strictly artistic history of antiquity, purports to be a history of the political, climactic, social, sociological, and historical conditions that accompanied the development of art in the ancient world. In short, the *Geschichte der Kunst* purports to be the history of a culture."[4]

In some respects, Winckelmann's broader "cultural-historical approach" to art and art history was not entirely new. One among other precursors to Winckelmann's broader approach was Anne Claude Philippe de Tubières, comte de Caylus (1692–1765). Through his work (most famously through his *Recueil d'antiquités égyptiennes, étrusques, grecques et*

[2] Vasari's most famous work is *Le Vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori, e architettori* (Fiorenza: Lorenzo Torrentino, 1550). Expanded in 1568, it is available in a contemporary and abridged English translation as *The Lives of the Artists*, trans. Julia Conaway Bondanella and Peter Bondanella (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

[3] Johann Joachim Winckelmann, *Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums*, ed. Adolf H . Borbein, Thomas W. Gaehtgens, Johannes Irmscher, and Max Kunze (Mainz am Rhein: Philipp von Zabern, 2002), "Vorrede," p. xvi (hereafter "GKA"). A contemporary English translation can be found in *History of the Art of Antiquity*, trans. Harry Francis Mallgrave (Los Angeles, CA: Getty Publications, 2006), "Preface," p. 71 (hereafter "HAA").

[4] Décultot 2000, 261.

romaines[5]), Caylus was able to show how an understanding of the entire character and culture of a people could be derived from an aesthetically informed appreciation of the artworks they left behind. For Caylus, a people's way of thinking, or "turn of mind," was made manifest in their aesthetic sensibility and their artistic expressions no less than it was made manifest in their more deliberate, written self-expressions. Caylus explains:

> By re-examining the precious remains of the ancients, you are able to conceive a sure idea of their taste. The arts carry the character of the nations that have cultivated them; you sort out their beginning, their infancy, and the point of perfection where they have been taken by every people. If it is permitted to speak in this way: one is no better able to distinguish the taste of these people, their customs, their turn of mind, in the books that they have left us, than in the works of painting and sculpture that have survived until our time. A glance cast rapidly over one of those cabinets, where such treasures are assembled, embraces in a way the picture of all the centuries.[6]

And just as it is possible to obtain an understanding of a people's entire culture and character by developing an aesthetically informed appreciation of their artworks, so too it is possible to rely on that aesthetic-cultural understanding to arrive at a fuller and more precise theoretical knowledge about those artworks, including knowledge about their place of origin and their chronological dating. For Caylus, there is something like a "law of nature" according to which the artworks deriving from a particular time and place will naturally manifest a certain distinctive character or mind-set. And so an aesthetically astute modern-day scholar can include "taste" among the various research tools that might be used for the purpose of accurately locating older artworks within their proper historical time period and geographic place. In other words, the scholar need not be a scholar alone and need not rely only on the explicit writings or inscriptions of ancient peoples but could be a connoisseur-scholar whose sense of taste could be used in the service of research and scholarship. Referring to the "law of nature" that can be used to establish linkages between the qualitative, aesthetic character of artworks and their quantifiable placement within space and time, Caylus observes:

[5] See Anne Claude Philippe de Tubières, comte de Caylus, *Recueil d'Antiquités, Recueil d'antiquités égyptiennes, étrusques, grecques, et romaines*, 7 vols. (Paris: Desaint & Sailant, 1752–67); volume 3 bears the title *Recueil d'Antiquités, Recueil d'antiquités égyptiennes, étrusques, grecques, romaines, et gauloises*.

[6] Caylus, *Recueil,* vol. 2, p. i.

> This constancy, or this law that nature seems to impose more or less on all nations, must be seen as an advantage; without it posterity would not be able to distinguish either the period or the place of origin of monuments; and the means of recognition would be confined solely to inscriptions.[7]

The work of Caylus (among others) marks an important step in the development of modern art history because it represents an attempt at combining the seemingly disparate endeavors of aesthetic connoisseurship, on the one hand, and antiquarian scholarship, on the other, or, one might say, it represents an attempt at closing the traditional gap between the more qualitative, aesthetic, evaluative dimensions of art history and the more quantitative, nonaesthetic, descriptive dimensions. But even Caylus's work fell short of the larger systematic and normative imperative that suffused Winckelmann's work and made it so unique and attractive to his audience.

We might begin to appreciate how Winckelmann's work was so innovative and so appealing to his audience if we consider one of his more seemingly outlandish statements regarding the art historians that preceded him. At the beginning of his *History of the Art of the Antiquity*, Winckelmann claims that "[s]ome writings with the title *History of Art* have appeared, but art has played only a negligible part in them."[8] It seems genuinely outrageous to say that art has played only a "negligible part" in previous works on the history of art. After all, even pre-Winckelmannian works in the history of art (despite the many other shortcomings that they may have had) really do seem to have been substantially (not just negligibly) about art. But Winckelmann goes on to explain himself: even if previous histories of art have, in some measure, been about art, they have failed to tell us what art itself is about. That is to say, they have failed to address art precisely as art. The problem with such prior art histories, says Winckelmann, is that "[t]heir authors were insufficiently conversant with art and could communicate only what they gleaned from books or hearsay. Almost no one has guided us into the essence and towards the interior of art [*in das Wesen und zu dem Innern der Kunst*], and those who have dealt with antiquities have only raised points on which they could display their learning."[9]

If a genuine history of art should guide us "into the essence" and "towards the interior" of art, then what might this mean in concrete terms? And what, after all, is the "essence" or the "interior" of art? Winckelmann does not address these questions with philosophical directness or precision, but he begins to suggest what he has in mind when he

[7] Caylus, *Recueil*, vol. 5, p. 92. [8] HAA 71; GKA xvi. [9] Ibid.

tells us about his interest in art and the art of the ancient Greeks in particular.

> The art of the Greeks is the principal concern of this history, and it requires – as the most worthy object for observation and imitation [*als der würdigste Vorwurf zur Betrachtung und Nachahmung*] insofar as it has preserved itself in countless beautiful monuments – an elaborate investigation: one that consists not in pointing to imperfect qualities and in explanations from the conceited, but rather in a lesson on what is essential [*sondern im Unterricht des Wesentlichen*]; a lesson which conveys not mere skills for the sake of knowledge [*nicht bloβ Kenntnisse zum Wissen*], but rather also teachings for the sake of practice [*sondern auch Lehren zum Ausüben*]. The discussion of the art of the Egyptians, the Etruscans, and other peoples can broaden our concepts and can lead to correctness in judgment; but the discussion of Greek art should seek to determine itself on the basis of the one and the true, with the aim of establishing a rule for judging and doing [*auf eins und auf das Wahre zu bestimmen, zur Regel im Urteilen und im Wirken*].[10]

One might say that what Winckelmann proposes in his *History of the Art of Antiquity* is to do art history in a way that is guided by our very vocation as human beings. For Winckelmann, our interest in art is connected to our interest in the "most worthy object" that we can observe and imitate, and this interest does not find its satisfaction merely in book-learning or in knowing for the sake of knowing. It pertains rather to our very own activity insofar as we engage in acts of judging and doing, and this activity cannot be properly oriented unless it is guided by a concern for "the one and the true." In short, Winckelmann's suggestion is that our interest in art (and in ancient Greek art especially) is intimately bound up with our very nature as human beings because as human beings – as doers as well as knowers – we cannot be indifferent to the one and the true.

If one of Caylus's primary contributions to art history consisted of the move toward narrowing the gap between connoisseurship and scholarship (between qualitatively oriented art appreciation and quantitatively oriented research), then perhaps it is accurate to say that one of Winckelmann's primary contributions consisted in the move toward narrowing the gap between what we know and what we do in our encounters with art, between what we see and what we become in the midst of our seeing, between our vocation as knowers and our vocation as doers, between theoretical reason and practical reason, and – ultimately – between the past, seemingly defunct world of ancient Greece, and our

[10] HAA 186; GKA 128.

own present, seemingly living modern world. The stunning vision that Winckelmann puts forward in his *History of the Art of Antiquity* – and elsewhere – is a vision that suggests that the modern world is more fragmented and dead and the remnants of the ancient Greek world more pregnant and alive than we moderns realize and that if we pay attention to the ancient Greeks and their artwork, we stand to learn a great deal about our own nature and vocation as human beings.

Hegel was speaking for a large number of thinkers in his generation when he observed that Winckelmann's interest in art was an interest that touched on the "highest interest of humanity." According to Hegel:

> *Winckelmann* was inspired in such a way that he opened up a new meaning for the observation of art, and he wrested art away from the perspectives belonging to coarse aims and to the mere imitation of nature, and he provided a powerful impetus towards finding the idea of art in works of art and in the history of art. For Winckelmann is to be regarded as one of those men who, in the field of art, knew how to open up a new organ for spirit [*für den Geist ein neues Organ*] and an entirely new way of observing.[11]

Like Winckelmann before him and Hegel after him, Kant also recognized that an interest in art and aesthetic taste is not a merely "academic" or "specialized" interest but an interest that is exceedingly relevant to our deepest interests as human beings. And like Hegel, Kant also praised Winckelmann for having taken important steps beyond a merely "sensualistic" account of aesthetic taste. According to the sensualistic view, when a person makes a judgment of taste (when a person judges that this or that is "beautiful"), that person is essentially doing nothing more than declaring that the allegedly "beautiful" object happens to give satisfaction to him or her, thanks to the particular, contingent, individual-relative desires or interests that happen to condition his or her feeling of satisfaction. But just as a judgment about contingently connected perceptions is not really a judgment about any "object" as such,[12] so too a judgment about how one happens to be physiologically affected by a thing is not really a judgment about beauty or a judgment of taste. A judgment of taste is not only about what is idiosyncratically or physiologically agreeable to a person but also about something that calls for – even if it does not and cannot bring about – intersubjective agreement or recognition from others. In a set of

[11] G. W. F. Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 13: *Vorlesungen uber die Aesthetik I*, ed. Eva Moldenhauer and Karl Markus Michel (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1970), 91.

[12] For more on this, see Kant's distinction between "judgments of perception" and "judgments of experience" in his *Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics*, §§18–20 (Pro 4:298–301).

unpublished notes, Kant gives credit to Winckelmann for having recognized this much about beauty and aesthetic taste.

> By means of taste I judge of the object, whether my state is much or little affected by it. If I call it beautiful, I do not thereby declare merely my own satisfaction, but also that it should please others. We are ashamed when our taste does not correspond to that of others. In matters of taste one must distinguish charm from beauty; the former is often lost in this or that, but the beauty remains. The decorated room always remains beautiful, but it has lost its charm with the death of the beloved, and the lover chooses other objects. This concept of beauty, says Winckelmann, is sensual, i.e., one does not distinguish the charm from the beauty.[13]

3.2 Winckelmann on the Greek Ideal and Imitation of the Greeks

What, for Winckelmann, does beauty reveal to us that addresses our very vocation as human beings? And why does Winckelmann regard the Greeks as especially important for showing us how we ought to relate to beauty, and to our own selves, through beauty? Winckelmann's suggested answers to these questions are widely dispersed throughout his writings, and they are not always developed with complete clarity and rigor. But one can begin to appreciate Winckelmann's thinking on these topics by considering why he regarded the ancient Greeks as such unique and compelling models of human excellence.

> It was by means of freedom that the thinking of an entire people rose up, like a noble branch from a healthy trunk. For just as the spirit of an individual accustomed to thought tends to rise higher in a wide field or on an open path or at the top of a building than it does in a low chamber or in any restricted place, so also the way of thinking among the free Greeks must have been very different from the concepts of dominated peoples . . . Greeks in their prime were thinking beings: they were already thinking twenty years or more before we generally begin to think for ourselves, and they fostered their spirit when it was most fired up by the liveliness of the body, whereas with us the spirit is ignobly nourished until it falls into decline.[14]

Two things are especially noteworthy in this passage. First, Winckelmann suggests that the Greeks were able to think more naturally, more readily, more nobly, and more freely than we moderns are currently able. And second, their more excellent freedom and nobility of thought were not simply a function of their own doing or their own achievement.

[13] NF 15:280–81. [14] HAA 188; GKA 233.

The Greeks were able to become the exquisitely free, noble-thinking beings that they had become because they were surrounded by an especially freedom-conducive condition that they themselves did not choose and could not have chosen. In paraphrasing Winckelmann's point, one might say that just as the mind of a man accustomed to reflection tends to rise higher in a wide field than in any restricted place, so too the minds of the Greeks tended to rise higher than our own modern minds because the Greeks – unlike us moderns – were gifted with natural, unchosen conditions that favored and made possible their noble free-thinking. Winckelmann is well known for his argument (an argument that is indebted to similar arguments in Dubos and Montesquieu[15]) that the ancient Greeks' exceptional freedom of action and thought were what we might call a "situated" or "environmentally conditioned" freedom. The Greeks would not have become the people they did become if it were not for the natural and unchosen conditions (including the geographic, climatic, hereditary, ethnic, and physicobiological conditions) into which they were born.

In one of his most famous and oft-quoted statements, Winckelmann tells us that "[t]he only way for us to become great or, if this be possible, inimitable, is to imitate the ancients."[16] But one may well ask, How can we become great by imitating the ancient Greeks if their greatness consisted (at least in part) in their exercise of a most excellent form of freedom that is superior to our own and if imitation (by its very nature) seems to entail a kind of slavishness or following, which is the very opposite of being free? Furthermore, how can we become inimitable by imitating the Greeks when our imitation of them would imply that they are not inimitable (after all, they will have been imitated by us)? And so it seems that if we were to imitate the Greeks, then we ourselves – like them – would also not be inimitable.

Winckelmann's overtly paradoxical language takes on a more subtle, revealing character if one considers what Winckelmann has in mind when he talks about "imitation" (*Nachahmung*). In various works of his, Winckelmann points out that "imitation" for him is not the same thing

[15] See especially Jean-Baptiste Dubos's 1719 work, *Critical Reflections on Poetry and Painting* (*Réflexions critiques sur la poésie et sur la peinture*), and Montesquieu's 1748 work, *On the Spirit of the Laws* (*De l'Esprit des lois*).

[16] J.J. Winckelmann, *Gedancken über die Nachahmung der Griechischen Wercke in der Mahlerey und Bildhauer-Kunst* (1st edn, 1755), in *Kleine Schriften: Vorreden, Entwürfe*, ed Walther Rehm (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1968), 27–59, here 29 (hereafter "GNGW"). An English translation can be found in *Reflections on the Imitation of Greek Works in Painting and Sculpture*, trans. Elfriede Heyer and Roger C. Norton (LaSalle, IL: Open Court, 1987), 5 (hereafter "RIGW").

as copying. For example, in his "Reminder about the Observation of Works of Art," Winckelmann distinguishes between artistic production, which is based on genuine thinking, and that which is based on mere copying. In accordance with this distinction, Winckelmann advises would-be connoisseurs: "With regard to the maker of the work you are observing, pay attention to whether he himself engaged in thinking or instead only copied [*selbst gedacht oder nur nachgemachet hat*]; whether he knew the noblest aim of art, beauty, or instead only depicted things in accordance with the commonplace forms known to him."[17] Winckelmann goes on to explain:

> What I oppose to one's own thinking is copying, not imitation [*Gegen das eigene Denken setze ich das Nachmachen, nicht die Nachahmung*]. Copying is what I understand to be slavish following [*die knechtische Folge*]. But with imitation, what is imitated, if it is done with reason, can take on another nature [*eine andere Natur annehmen*], so to speak, and can become something in its own right [*etwas eigenes werden*].[18]

The argument seems to be that when something is properly imitated, there is a sense in which the thing being imitated takes on another nature, and in taking on another nature, it becomes something in its own right; that is, it becomes something that is not merely a replication but is instead novel ("another nature") and unique ("something in its own right"). But how can imitation generate something novel and unique? For Winckelmann, the answer has to do with the fact that imitation consists of a kind of idealization, or a kind of "projection" that takes place within the understanding.

> In the masterpieces of Greek art, connoisseurs and imitators [*Kenner und Nachahmer*] find not only nature at its most beautiful but also something more than nature [*sondern noch mehr als Natur*], namely certain ideal forms of its beauty, which, as the ancient interpreter of Plato teaches, are made from depictions projected only in the understanding [*von Bildern bloβ im Verstande entworfen, gemacht sind*].[19]

[17] *Erinnerung über die Betrachtung der Werke der Kunst*, in Johann Joachim Winckelmann, *Kleine Schriften: Vorreden, Entwürfe*, 2nd edn (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2002), 149–56, here 149 (hereafter "EBWK"). For an English translation, see "Recalling the Observation of Works of Art," in *Johann Winckelmann on Art, Architecture, and Archaeology*, trans. David Carter (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2013), 129 (hereafter "ROWA").

[18] EBWK 151; ROWA 130.

[19] GNGW 30; RIGW 7. Along similar lines, Winckelmann observes a bit later in his *Reflections* that "[t]hese frequent opportunities to observe nature prompted the Greek artists to go even further: they began to form certain general concepts of the beauties of the individual parts as well as of the overall proportions of bodies, beauties which were to be elevated above nature itself; their archetype was

With his mention of "the ancient interpreter of Plato," Winckelmann is thinking about Proclus and his commentary on Plato's *Timaeus*. In that commentary, Proclus refers to Phidias's making of the famous statue of Zeus and offers an interpretation of the metaphysical views presented in Plato's *Timaeus*. According to Proclus, the demiurge is the maker of the world, and the sculptor is the maker of the statue, but the beauty that is manifest in the world or in the statue does not come merely from the maker (whether this maker be the demiurge or the sculptor) but rather from the model (*paradeigma*) or the Platonic idea.[20]

For Winckelmann, "imitation" of the beautiful in art and nature clearly has something to do with Platonic ideas and with the way in which such ideas are apprehended through a kind of "idealization" or "projection" in the understanding. Winckelmann's suggestion is that it is only by means of "idealization" or "projection" that what is beautiful or true in nature can make its appearance to us in the first place. Along these lines, Winckelmann explains that a draftsman "who wants to give the character of truth to his academic studies will not achieve even a shadow of the true" if he is incapable of going beyond what is merely given, and "if he does not provide his own substitute [*ohne eigene Ersetzung*] for what the art-model's unmoved and indifferent soul fails to feel."[21] In a similar vein, Winckelmann says that it is the beauty that is made and observed in artwork (i.e., an imitated, idealized, and projected beauty) that teaches us how to observe beauty in nature and not the other way around. Even "the great Bernini," who wrongly held that beauty is to be apprehended primarily in nature and only secondarily in art, learned to observe beauty in nature because he had first observed beauty in art: "So it was the Venus [of Medici] that taught [Bernini] to discover beauties in nature – beauties which previously he had believed could be found only in nature and which, without the Venus, he would not have looked for in nature."[22]

There is a twofold explanation for why beauty in art teaches us how to observe beauty in nature and not the other way around. First of all, for Winckelmann, the beautiful as such (whether in nature or in artwork) consists in a kind of unity-in-diversity or (what amounts to the same thing)

a spiritual nature which was projected only in the understanding [*ihr Urbild war eine bloss im Verstande entworfene geistige Natur*]" (GNGW 34; RIGW 15).

[20] The standard source for material from Proclus' commentary on the *Timaeus* is the Teubner edition, which allows for citations of volume number, page number, and line number: *Procli in Platonis Timaeum commentaria*, ed. E. Diehl, 3 vols. (Leipzig: Teubner, 1903–6). The material referenced here comes from Proclus' commentary at I.265.18–26.

[21] GNGW 33; RIGW 13. [22] GNGW 37; RIGW 19.

a diversity-in-unity. The beautiful "consists in the harmony of parts"[23] or in "manifoldness within the simple [*bestehet in der Mannifaltigkeit im Einfachen*]."[24] And second, the harmony-in-complexity, or unity-in-diversity that constitutes the beautiful, is manifested more perfectly in great artwork than in nature because in nature the elements of the beautiful are more fragmented and dispersed; thus "the beauty of Greek statues is . . . more moving, and not so dispersed but rather more united in one, than the beauty of nature."[25] These considerations also explain why, for Winckelmann, great artists are great precisely to the extent that they are able to reveal more by means of less (they are able to show greater complexity by means of greater simplicity). As Winckelmann explains:

> it is more difficult to indicate much by means of a little [*viel mit wenigem anzuzeigen*] than it is to do the opposite, and good sense prefers to bring about its effects with less rather than more effort; similarly, it is possible for a master-artist to make use of a single figure as the venue for all of his art.[26]

This is why great artists thrive on displaying their complex and multifaceted abilities by working with just one medium or one particular shape; by contrast, inferior artists think that they can more impressively display their craft by throwing together a variety of different gimmicks and techniques. If a joke requires too much explanation, then it is not a good joke; similarly, if an artwork tries to show too much by doing too much, then it is not a good artwork. This helps us to understand why Raphael's depiction of Plato (in his *School of Athens*) is so beautiful; Raphael gently points us in the direction of Plato, who, in turn, with just a simple movement of one finger indicates a world of difference.[27]

In further elaborating on what he means by "imitation," Winckelmann distinguishes between, on the one hand, an inferior kind of imitative activity that focuses only on the empirically given individual instances and, on the other hand, a superior kind of imitative activity that starts with individual instances but goes beyond them in the direction of generalization and universalization (unification and oneness).

> The imitation of the beauty of nature either is directed at an individual model, or else it gathers observations from different individual models and

[23] J. J. Winckelmann, *Abhandlung von der Fähigkeit der Empfindung des Schönen in der Kunst*, in *Kleine Schriften*, 211–33, here 219 (hereafter "AFES"). For an English translation, see "Treatise on the Capacity for Sensitivity to the Beautiful in Art and the Method of Teaching It," in *Johann Winckelmann on Art, Architecture, and Archaeology*, trans. David Carter (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2013), 155 (hereafter "TCSB").

[24] EBWK 152; ROWA 131. [25] GNGW 37; RIGW 19. [26] EBWK 150; ROWA 129.

[27] See EBWK 149; ROWA 129.

> brings them into oneness. The former means making a copy based on likeness, or a portrait [*eine ähnliche Kopie, ein Porträt machen*]; this path leads to the Dutch way of making forms and figures. But the latter path is the path to what is universally beautiful and to idealized depictions of the universally beautiful; and this is the path that the Greeks took.[28]

For Winckelmann, the Greeks were truly excellent at imitating nature in the superior sense of the word "imitation," and we moderns can learn from them precisely by imitating their imitation (or idealizing their idealization). In trying to learn about beauty and oneness, we moderns should not turn directly to nature but rather to the Greeks. Our imitation of the Greeks

> can teach us to be knowledgeable more quickly, because here in one object can be found the essence of that which is dispersed throughout nature, and what is more it can teach us how far the most beautiful nature can go in boldly yet wisely rising above its own self [*wie weit die schönste Natur sich über sich selbst kühn, aber weislich erheben kann*].[29]

But even as we look to the Greeks and try to imitate them, we must not lose sight of the fact that there is a significant difference between them and us.

> The difference, however, between them and us is this: the Greeks could obtain these depictions – even if they were not taken from the more beautiful bodies – through the opportunity that they had every day to observe the beauty of nature, which, however, does not show itself to us every day, and rarely in the way that the artist wishes.[30]

For Winckelmann, the Greeks were superior at imitating the beauty of nature because the unity, harmony, and wholeness that constitute the beautiful as such were already more actual and evident in the natural conditions that surrounded them. Once again, these natural conditions included conditions that were not and could not have been deliberately chosen by them (e.g., geographic, climatic, hereditary, ethnic, and physicobiological conditions) – and such unchosen and unchoosable conditions are what made it possible for them to enjoy a superior freedom of action and thought.

From Winckelmann's point of view, the common (modern) notion that such "natural conditioning" must be opposed to genuine freedom is itself a symptom of a modern, alienated, fragmented way of thinking, a way of thinking that fails to recognize that beauty in things outside the observer (e.g., in nature) is inseparable from beauty within the observer (within the

[28] GNGW 37; RIGW 21. [29] Ibid. [30] Ibid.

embodied, thinking, free human being). Recall that, for Winckelmann, beauty consists of a kind of harmony of parts (a unity-in-diversity). If a harmony of parts within the human observer allows the human observer to act and think in a more capacious and more open-minded (less fragmented and less constrained) way, then perhaps it becomes possible to begin comprehending how the human observer can be genuinely free, even while this freedom remains conditioned by (inseparable from) a harmony of parts outside the observer (e.g., in nature). And then, in turn, perhaps it also becomes possible to begin comprehending how we moderns can imitate the ancient Greeks, even if we can never copy or replicate the unique freedom they enjoyed.

3.3 Winckelmann and Kant on Art and Beauty

Like Winckelmann, Kant recognized that art aims to do more than merely copy or replicate what can be empirically observed in nature as immediately given. But Kant's thinking about art and aesthetic judgment also diverged from Winckelmann's in important ways. For Kant, a key aim of art is to induce in the observer a kind of "free play" among the observer's faculties of mind (including the sensory faculty of imagination and the thinking faculty of the understanding). Because it induces this "free play" of faculties in the observer, art provides the observer with a kind of sensuous presentation that facilitates and enriches the observer's thinking about (1) how it is that the human observer's faculties are perhaps suited or outfitted for apprehending and relating to a causally governed natural world that seems alien and externally given to the observer and also (2) how it is that a natural, causally governed world that seems to be morally indifferent and even inhospitable to the human observer's aspirations as a knower and as an agent is perhaps suited or outfitted for conforming or accommodating itself to those aspirations.

Kant saw the need for art to play this quasi-mediating role, since his critical philosophy had led him to conclude that we finite human knowers are limited to obtaining knowledge of objects of possible experience and perennially disbarred from apprehending things as they are in themselves (including the things that constituted the traditional objects of special metaphysics: mind, world, and God as they are in themselves). Along these lines, Kant writes that "there is an incalculable gulf fixed between the domain of the concept of nature, as the sensible, and the domain of the

concept of freedom, as the supersensible."[31] Because of this gulf, Kant held that it was impossible for us humans to arrive at theoretical knowledge regarding how it is that the human being's empirically uncaused activity as a knower and as an agent might be related to the natural, causally governed sensuous world as it appears to us within experience. Thus Kant states that it is impossible for us, by means of theoretical reason, to effect any kind of "transition" from the realm of freedom to the realm of nature.[32] However, Kant also realized that we are embodied rational beings who seek to live within the context of a sensuously given, causally governed natural world, and so we live and act with the hope and expectation that this sensuously given natural world is ultimately conformable to our human ends and that our striving to know and to change that world for the better are not foolish and futile. Even if we cannot know (as a matter of theoretical reason) whether and how a transition from "freedom" to "nature" is to be achieved, we inescapably live in accordance with the idea that such a transition *ought* to be achieved. On Kant's view, art provides us with a means for living, acting, and thinking in accordance with this "ought," and so for Kant, as for Winckelmann, the making and the observing of art are deeply bound up with our very vocation as human beings.

In contrast with Kant, Winckelmann offers what is arguably a more radical view of what art is for and what art can do in the service of our vocation as human beings. Even if art induces in us what Kant calls a "free play" of the faculties, Winckelmann holds that art can do more than that by enabling us to "see" the world altogether differently, and in enabling us to "see" the world altogether differently, it can emancipate us to "be" in the world altogether differently. Furthermore, Winckelmann suggests that if we are to "be" in the world differently, then we must be willing to question and possibly give up the view that our activity as knowers and doers occurs through the operation of faculties that are somehow found or discovered by us as already fragmented and separated from one another. Perhaps, Winckelmann suggests, the appearance that our faculties (e.g., our sensuous and intellectual faculties) are already fragmented and separated from one another (as a matter of "natural" or "transcendental" necessity) may itself be a function of our own activity, a function of the way that we ourselves (apart from any "natural" or "transcendental" necessity) continue to "see" and to "be" in the (modern, fragmented) world.

[31] "Introduction," §II, CPJ 5:175–76. [32] "Introduction," §II, CPJ 5:176.

One might say that Winckelmann's primary aim is not just to get us to *see* more in artworks but also to get us to *be* more by means of our seeing. And for Winckelmann, the more we *see* the unity-in-diversity that is beauty (e.g., beauty in ancient Greek artworks), the more we ourselves can *be* the unity-in-diversity that is beauty. Furthermore, we do not come to *be* this unity-in-diversity (this beauty) simply by means of a deliberate choosing, judging, or mastery of concepts; we can come to *be* this unity-in-diversity only by letting ourselves be addressed by a unity-in-diversity that is beauty outside of us. Conversely, our letting ourselves be addressed by the beautiful outside of us cannot simply be a matter of allowing ourselves to be passively, or empirically, or physiologically affected; instead, it also requires our own thinking activity. As noted earlier, Winckelmann believes that beauty can be perceived only by means of our own "projection" in thought or understanding; without such an idealizing projection, beauty (even merely natural beauty) cannot even make its appearance in the first place.

Kant would agree with Winckelmann's idea that if we are to appreciate beauty at all (whether in nature or in artworks), we cannot be merely passive, sensuously determined beings but must also be active, in some sense, as thinking beings. But Kant differs from Winckelmann on the question of what we are capable of achieving as thinking beings, and this difference leads Kant to diverge in important ways from Winckelmann's views on art and aesthetic judgment. Unlike Winckelmann, Kant is committed to the view that our thinking activity is "bounded on the outside," so to speak, by what is external to it. This view is implicit in Kant's belief that our very own cognitive faculties (e.g., our sensory and our thinking faculties) are to be found or discovered by us as separate and "bounded on the outside" relative to one another. And because our thinking activity is bounded on the outside by what is external to it (and what is "external" here includes not only the nature that is outside of our bodies but also the non-thinking bodily, natural determinations of our very own sensory and imaginative faculties), Kant holds that our thinking activity is disbarred from apprehending being as it is "in itself" and is limited to apprehending being only as it is "for us." Accordingly, Kant also holds that we cannot really say that our appreciation of beauty is an appreciation of anything that is genuinely beautiful (or one or true) "in itself"; in the final analysis, Kant's explanation of our appreciation of beauty is not an account of what is "in itself" but rather an account of a "free play" of faculties within us.

Recall now what Winckelmann says about the "essence" or the "interior" of art: art fundamentally has to do with our interest, as human beings, in "the one and the true." And when Winckelmann talks about "the one

and the true," he means (unlike Kant) the one and the true as they are "in themselves" and not merely "for us." Winckelmann thus holds that our judgments of taste and our appreciation of beauty really are about what is genuinely beautiful (or one or true) "in itself." Recall also that, for Winckelmann, it is not possible for us to apprehend the beautiful (not even the beautiful in nature alone) if we ourselves do not engage in a certain kind of thinking activity: the activity of "imitation," whereby we bring about a certain kind of idealizing "projection" in thought or understanding. But how can Winckelmann coherently hold that we are able to apprehend what is beautiful "in itself," even though this apprehension takes place only by means of a thinking activity (a "projection" or "idealization") that we ourselves actively undertake? Why isn't it the case for Winckelmann (as it is for Kant) that our own thinking activity ends up barring us from apprehending the beautiful (or the one or the true) as it is "in itself"?

The answer is that for Winckelmann, our thinking activity of "imitation" or "projection" does not have to be construed as a merely subjective or one-sided activity, or as an activity that emanates merely from us, and so it does not have to be construed as an activity that operates as an external, deforming sort of imposition on some already-given "know-not-what" that gets distortedly apprehended by us. For Winckelmann, there is no "naturally" or "transcendentally" compelling reason why the intellectual activity of "imitation" or "projection" cannot *also* be the activity of what is thoughtfully apprehended, just as it is the activity of the thoughtful apprehender. For Winckelmann, if we learn properly from the Greeks (if we first imitate their imitation rather than imitate nature directly), we may eventually come to see how our own activity of imitating nature can be understood – truly – as being nothing other than the activity of nature "rising above its own self."[33] If we look to the Greeks, we may come to see how our own imitative, projective, idealizing depictions of nature are not merely arbitrary, distorting, subjective impositions of our own doing but rather depictions of nature as nature in itself "demands to be depicted."[34]

[33] GNGW 38; RIGW 21.

[34] GNGW 39; RIGW 23. The full passage here reads as follows: "Nothing would more clearly show the advantage of imitating the ancients over imitating nature [*den Vorzug der Nachahmung der Alten vor der Nachahmung der Natur*] than if one were to take two young people with equally beautiful talent, and have one of them study antiquity and the other study only nature. The latter would depict nature as he found it [*Dieser würde die Natur bilden, wie er sie findet*] . . . but the former would depict nature as it demands to be depicted [*jener aber würde die Nature bilden, wie sie es verlanget*]."

Winckelmann's argument seems to be, then, that the actualization of our own projective, idealizing, thinking activity (our activity of "imitation") is not to be understood as something that is separable from the actualization of what is genuinely true and beautiful (what is a genuine harmony of parts or a unity-in-diversity) "in itself." So Winckelmann seems to be claiming that it is possible for us to engage in some version of what Kant would have called "intellectual intuition": a nonsensory, intellectual kind of intuition by means of which the activity of thinking apprehends that which is "in itself" even though that which is "in itself" does not have any being (not even any hidden, unknowable being "in itself") apart from the thinking activity that apprehends it.

Kant famously denied that we finite human knowers are capable of intellectual intuition.[35] Winckelmann, by contrast, suggests that we must engage in acts of intellectual intuition if we are to apprehend the beauty "in itself" that we seek. So Winckelmann argues that one must take risks in one's search for the beautiful. As Winckelmann explains, there is nothing given to our thinking activity, in advance of the thinking activity itself, that can tell us whether or not our thinking activity (our imitative, projective, idealizing activity) will or will not lead to the apprehension of the beautiful (the one and the true, the unity-in-harmony) that is sought. And this frightening lack of any prior givenness (this lack of any previously given, determinately available guideposts or criteria or concepts) has led some people to "err out of caution," for it has led them to refrain from the attempt at projecting or idealizing. But to refrain in this way is to commit a mistake, says Winckelmann, because without taking the risk of projecting and idealizing (without venturing on the basis of one's own "biases" [*Vorurtheile*]), it becomes impossible for a person to find the beauty that might be found. And furthermore, suggests Winckelmann, it becomes impossible even for the beauty that is found to be the beauty that it really is in itself.[36]

Winckelmann's account of "imitation," insofar as it implies the possibility of some kind of "intellectual intuition," also implies that it is necessary for us to think about the relation between mind and world, subject and object, knower and known in a way that departs from the more common (modern) way in which this relation is understood. For Winckelmann, the unity-in-diversity that is beauty need not be restricted to the unity-in-diversity (harmony of parts) that is observed in nature or in

[35] See, for example, B 72. [36] HAA 214; GKA 185–86.

artwork outside of us. And it need not be restricted to the unity-in-diversity (harmony of parts, including parts that are faculties of the mind) that is apparently found or discovered within us. Instead, for Winckelmann, the unity-in-diversity that is beauty might also exist as an all-comprehensive unity-in-diversity of mind and world (subject and object, knower and known), where mind and world are parts of a larger whole and where this larger whole – precisely because there is no mind outside of it – cannot be apprehended as any kind of determinate, object-like thing at all. Furthermore, if mind (i.e., if our own thinking activity) is an essential part of this all-comprehensive unity-in-diversity (if mind is a part without which this harmony of parts cannot be what it is), then even this all-comprehensive unity-in-diversity (this all-comprehensive beauty) cannot be what it is apart from mind (apart from thinking activity). Winckelmann seems to be pointing in the direction of such an all-comprehensive, non-object-like unity-in-diversity of mind and world when he says that, for him, knower and known (person and thing) are not really two things but one: "The capacity for feeling the beautiful in art is a concept that at once encompasses within itself both the person and the thing, both that which contains and that which is contained, but which are things that I regard as one [*ein Begriff, welcher zugleich die Person und Sache, das Enthaltende und das Enthaltene in sich faßt, welches ich aber in eins schließe*]."[37]

Finally, Winckelmann's account of imitation (along with his implicit account of intellectual intuition) entails a rather anti-Kantian notion of freedom. For Winckelmann, human freedom is not primarily about "autonomy" or "independence"; instead, human freedom consists primarily of a kind of dual or twofold (inner and outer, spiritual and natural) activity. Although Winckelmann himself never would have expressed it in such ugly philosophical language, human freedom for him consists of the dual activity of (1) the nonviolent (i.e., natural and not externally imposed) harmonization of a given multiplicity of parts of some natural thing seemingly external to the agent doing the harmonizing, where this harmonization (precisely because it is not externally imposed) is the actualization of the very being of the natural thing that appears to be external to the agent doing the harmonizing, and (2) simultaneously the nonviolent harmonization of a given multiplicity of parts internal to the agent doing the harmonizing, such that this "internal" harmonization is the actualization of the very being of the agent doing the harmonizing. Winckelmann would agree with

[37] AFES 212;TCSB 149.

Kant that art is deeply relevant to our vocation as free, thinking beings, but from Winckelmann's point of view, the "free play" of faculties that Kant discusses (the unity-in-diversity of faculties within the finite knowing subject) is really only a partial, one-sided, fragmentary, idiosyncratic (and uniquely modern) expression of a more genuine and more freedom-conducive unity-in-diversity: the unity-in-diversity that is beauty in itself.

PART II

Historical Perspectives

CHAPTER 4

Eighteenth-Century Anthropological and Ethnological Studies of Ancient Greece
Winckelmann, Herder, Caylus, and Kant

Elisabeth Décultot

Winckelmann is widely known as the author, and for some maybe the first author ever, of a proper art history. The main focus of the *Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums* (*History of the Art of Antiquity*) is clearly on art, its title highlighting the word *Kunst* in the singular form for the first time in the German language – and other European languages for that matter. Winckelmann confirmed this focus in the foreword, where he drew a clear distinction between his own practice of history and two rival models: the *Vite*, which study the biographies of artists in the wake of Vasari's works, and antiquarian scholarship, lacking both a global historical perspective and a sense of beauty.[1] The *Geschichte der Kunst* claims to be the first true history of art, which is firmly based on a clear chronology of styles and a taxonomy of beautiful forms.

Yet it also broaches on a variety of topics beyond art, including extensive descriptions of the cultural mores of the ancients, their costume, their climate, their trading practices, and their different types of government. Indeed, for Winckelmann, art results directly from a combination of several factors: political, social, cultural, anatomic, and climate-related. And so, beyond its panorama of ancient art (narrowly conceived as a review of works of art according to their style), the *Geschichte der Kunst* paints a particularly striking portrait of ancient peoples – at once exhaustive, dense, and complex. Winckelmann's work encompasses all ancient peoples from the Egyptians to the Romans, the Phoenicians, the Etruscans,

[1] J. J. Winckelmann, *Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums*, ed. A. H. Borbein, T. W. Gaehtgens, J. Irmscher, and M. Kunze (Mainz: Philip von Zabern, 2002), Vorrede, et seq. The page numbers for the *Geschichte der Kunst* (hereafter "GKA") quoted here and in the rest of this chapter correspond to the first edition published in 1764. For an English translation, see *History of the Art of Antiquity,* trans. Harry Francis Mallgrave, with an Introduction by Alex Potts (Los Angeles, CA: Getty Publications, 2006) (hereafter "HAA").

and the Greeks. For each of them, and especially for the Greeks, he studied the various factors at play in their artistic evolution: sociocultural traditions, climatological causes, biological features, and political structures. He describes these peoples individually and then compares them, paving the way for a nomenclature of the laws presiding over the general evolution of peoples. Art history is thus linked to two other sciences that appeared in the second half of the eighteenth century: anthropology and ethnology. The *Geschichte der Kunst* shares with those two budding scientific fields not only the same type of investigation but also the same sources.[2]

We aim here at analyzing the anthropological and ethnological dimensions of the *Geschichte der Kunst*, as well as its reception until the end of the eighteenth century between Herder and Kant. Winckelmann referred to a wide range of explanatory factors to draw his panorama of ancient peoples, but their relative weight remains unclear at first. This is particularly true in his account of the Greeks, on whom he focused most of his attention because he deemed them artistically superior to all the other ancient peoples. Was it because of their political system, based on freedom and reverence for the mother country (at least among the Athenians), that Greek art remained unrivaled? Or is the perfection of their art due to their respect for their gods, to their temperate climate, to their physical and intellectual education, or to the native qualities of their "blood"? The answers Winckelmann brought to these core issues nourished vivid discussions among his readers from very early on.

4.1 Nature and Culture: The Complex Nomenclature of Greek Characteristics

When one considers Winckelmann's entire body of work, and especially his two main publications, *Gedancken über die Nachahmung der Griechischen Wercke* (*Thoughts on the Imitation of Greek Works*) (1755) and *Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums*, one finds an extensive range of explanatory factors which conditioned the specific development of art among the Greeks. In his first publication, the *Gedancken*, and in the annexes he added in 1756, Winckelmann first underlined the key influence exerted by cultural mores and social organization. The Greeks were unique in the emphasis they placed on sports and competitive physical games (going to the gymnasium or the Olympics, entering beauty contests), the comfort of their clothes (choosing materials and draping them in a way that enabled free motion), and their relation to nudity – all

[2] See Duchet 1995.

features that contribute to the typically Greek celebration of the body.[3] In addition to these cultural preferences, the temperate climate of Greece plays a crucial role. Due to its geographic location halfway "between heat and cold," it benefits from luxuriant vegetation, which is the key to healthy food, strong and well-developed bodies, and handsome and harmonious features.

> Under a sky so temperate, nay balanced between heat and cold, the inhabitants cannot fail of being influenced by both. Fruits grow ripe and mellow, even such as are wild improve their natures; animals thrive well, and breed more abundantly. "Such a sky, says Hippocrates, produces not only the most beautiful of men, but harmony between their inclinations and shape [*Gestalt*]."[4]

Another factor that shaped the Greek character is its "blood," its native features – in other words, hereditary biological traits that pertain to ethnic atavism. Despite some miscegenation – for instance, through contacts with Turkish populations in Greek modern history – Winckelmann was adamant that "the present-day Greek bloodline [*das heutige Griechische Geblüt*] is still noted for its beauty."[5]

> From their fine complexion, which, though mingled with a vast deal of foreign blood [*Geblüt*], is still preserved in most of the Greek islands, and from the still enticing beauty of the fair sex, especially at Chios, we may easily form an idea of the beauty of the former inhabitants, who boasted of being Aborigines, nay, more antient than the moon.[6]

[3] J. J. Winckelmann, *Gedancken über die Nachahmung der Griechischen Wercke in der Mahlerey und Bildhauer-Kunst* (1st edn, 1755), in *Kleine Schriften: Vorreden, Entwürfe*, ed. Walther Rehm (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1968), 27–59, here 31–33. For the English translation, see *Reflections on the Painting and Sculpture of the Greeks with Instructions for the Connoisseur, and an Essay on Grace in Works of Art*, trans. Henry Fusseli (= Johann Heinrich Füssli) (London: Millar, 1765), 1–64, here 5–11.

[4] J. J. Winckelmann, *An Answer to the Foregoing Letter and a Further Explication of the Subject*, trans. Henry Fusseli (London: Millar, 1765), 145–247, here 151–52. For the original text, see J. J. Winckelmann, *Erläuterung der Gedanken von der Nachahmung der griechischen Werke in der Malerey und Bildhauerkunst; und Beantwortung des Sendschreibens über diese Gedanken* (1st edn, 1756), in *Kleine Schriften*, 97–144, here 100: "Unter einem so gemässigten, und zwischen Wärme und Kälte gleichsam abgewogenen Himmel spüret die Creatur einen gleich ausgetheilten Einfluß desselben. Alle Früchte erhalten ihre völlige Reife und selbst die wilden Arten derselben gehen in eine bessere Natur hinüber; so wie bey Thieren, welche besser gedeyen und öfter werfen. Ein solcher Himmel, sagt Hippocrates, bildet unter Menschen die schönsten und wohlgebildetesten Geschöpfe und Gewächse, und eine Uebereinstimmung der Neigungen mit der Gestalt."

[5] HAA 119; GKA 21. We are moving away from the English version of HAA, which translates 'Geblüt' as 'race.'

[6] *Reflections on the Painting and Sculpture of the Greeks*, 7–8; *Gedancken über die Nachahmung*, 32: "Das schöne Geblüt der Einwohner der mehresten Griechischen Inseln, welches gleichwohl mit so verschiedenen fremden Geblüte vermischet ist, und die vorzüglichen Reitzungen des schönen Geschlechts daselbst, sonderlich auf der Insel Scios, geben zugleich eine gegründete Muthmaßung von den Schönheiten beyderley Geschlechts unter ihren Vorfahren, die sich rühmeten, ursprünglich, ja älter als der Mond zu seyn."

Finally, one should take into account the political factor, hinted at in the *Gedancken über die Nachahmung* but only fully analyzed in the *Geschichte der Kunst*: the Greeks are unique in the value they place on freedom, a fertile soil for a blossoming of the arts.

> With regard to the constitution and government of Greece, freedom was the chief reason for their art's superiority.[7]

All those factors – sociocultural, climate related, biological, and political – may seem at first to have been collected at random rather than chosen according to their logical connection one to another; a hurried reader may deplore a certain lack of systematics. Nonetheless, Winckelmann's nomenclature of Greek characteristics follows a stable set of rules. First among them is what one could call the "naturalization of Greek culture." Indeed, it would be difficult to distinguish clearly among the factors aforementioned which ones pertain to the natural order and which arise from cultural development, which from nature and which from nurture. Though climate and heredity obviously fall within the category of natural causes, on closer investigation one notes that for Winckelmann cultural factors such as morals and politics, i.e., the nurture set, are intimately linked to nature.

This is particularly true for his political concept of freedom, which held so much sway over the French revolutionaries and informed much of Winckelmann's reception in France during the eighteenth century.[8] Indeed, one theory recurs throughout the whole body of his works: the Greek nation is enthralled by freedom, and that factor alone explains the unrivaled blossoming of arts in this civilization. The reason Greek art could reach such heights of perfection lies in this continued care and nurturing of freedom, and the best illustration of this relation is to be found in the heyday of Athenian democracy during the fifth century.

> Through freedom, the way of thinking of an entire people sprang up like a fine branch from a healthy trunk . . . Herodotus showed that freedom alone was the reason for the power and majesty that Athens attained, since previously, when the city had to recognize a ruling lord, it could not keep pace with its neighbors. For the same reason, rhetoric first began to flourish in the enjoyment of full freedom among the Greeks; hence the Sicilians attributed to Gorgias the invention of rhetoric.[9]

[7] HAA 187; GKA 130: "In Absicht der Verfassung und Regierung von Griechenland ist die Freyheit die vornehmste Ursache des Vorzugs der Kunst."

[8] Pommier 1989, 9–20; also, Pommier 1991; Décultot and Dönike 2017.

[9] HAA 188; GKA 132–33: "Durch die Freyheit erhob sich, wie ein edler Zweig aus einem gesunden Stamme, das Denken des ganzen Volks . . . Herodotus zeiget, daß die Freyheit allein der Grund gewesen von der Macht und Hoheit, zu welcher Athen gelanget ist, da diese Stadt vorher, wenn sie einen Herrn über sich

Winckelmann also listed negative examples that prove *a contrario* his line of argument. Thus the despotic regimes that prevailed among the Egyptians, the Persians, and the Phoenicians hindered all flourishing of the arts.[10]

The concept of freedom recurs frequently in Winckelmann's notebooks, a copious set of manuscripts in which Winckelmann copied excerpts throughout his life. He even dedicated a whole section entitled "Libertas Græciæ" to it.[11] Winckelmann's sources on that topic rely both on ancient authors, notably Pausanias, and modern thinkers, especially Montesquieu.[12] It is quite telling that Winckelmann copied in full in his notebooks the chapter of *De l'Esprit des lois* entitled "Idée du despotisme." The following sentence encapsulates the gist of it: "When the savages of Louisiana want to have some fruit, they cut the tree down to the root, and gather the fruit. There you have it: despotic government."[13] He also copied the following account of the crimes committed by Persian despots: "Artaxerxes put all his children to death for conspiring against him."[14] The tyrants of Egypt or ancient Persia Winckelmann mentions in the *Geschichte der Kunst* do bear some resemblance to the ancient and modern tyrants described in *De l'Esprit des lois*.

Although the *Geschichte der Kunst* is clearly politically indebted to Montesquieu, it cannot be reduced to it. Winckelmann considered the order of freedom to be only superficially connected to the political regime of democracy as part of the nurture set. He held this view because for him the Greeks did not *become* free, they were *born* free. They did not conquer their freedom through the willful emancipation of reason and the design of an appropriate political regime; they owned it from *birth* – independently of the type of government in place. Proof of this lies in the fact that the native spirit of

erkennen müssen, ihren Nachbarn nicht gewachsen seyn können. Die Redekunst fieng an aus eben dem Grunde allererst in dem Genusse der völligen Freyheit unter den Griechen zu blühen; und daher legten die Sicilianer dem Gorgias die Erfindung der Redekunst bey."

[10] HAA 150; GKA 78.

[11] This section, which compiled excerpts from Strabo, belongs to the *Collectanea ad historiam artis* collected by Winckelmann as source material for this *Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums* (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Département des manuscrits, Allemand, vol. 57, fol. 215v; in this chapter, all references to this archival collection are designated by the acronym "BN All"). Winckelmann's notebooks also include a section entitled, "Liebe der Griechen zu ihrem Vaterlande" (The Greeks' Love for their Fatherland), that compiles quotes from Pausanias (BN All. vol. 57, fol. 203). To check how these quotes were used, see, for instance, HAA 190; GKA 137. The reader will find an extensive analysis of the role of these notebooks in Winckelmann's works in Décultot 2000.

[12] Winckelmann copied a dense set of excerpts from *De l'Esprit des lois* (BN All. vol. 69, fol. 39–40v).

[13] BN All. vol. 69, fol. 40; Montesquieu, *De l'Esprit des lois*, ed. V. Goldschmidt, 2nd edn (1st edn, 1979), 2 vols. (Paris: Flammarion, 1993–94), vol. 1, 185: "Quand les sauvages de la Louisiane veulent avoir du fruit, ils coupent l'arbre au pied, et cueillent le fruit. Voilà le gouvernement despotique."

[14] BN All. vol. 69, fol. 40; *De l'Esprit des lois*, vol. 1, 189: "Artaxerxès fit mourir tous ses enfants pour avoir conjuré contre lui."

freedom was already prevalent in Greece under the aristocratic and oligarchic regimes that preceded Athenian democracy and that it survived the reigns of tyrants. In the *Geschichte der Kunst*, the equation between Greece and freedom holds whatever the nature of the political regime and works as well during the age of Pericles as under the rule of nondemocratic governments.

> Freedom always had its seat in Greece, even beside the thrones of the kings, who ruled paternally before the enlightenment of reason allowed the people to taste the sweetness of full freedom; and Homer called Agamemnon a "shepherd of the people" to indicate the latter's love for them and concern for their welfare. Though tyrants installed themselves soon after, they succeeded only in their native lands, and the entire nation never recognized a sole ruler.[15]

Greek democracy in the fifth century is thus nothing but the strongest expression of an atavistic feature of the Greeks through a coherent political system: the Greeks, by nature, love freedom.

Not only did nature play an important role in Greek political history, but it also influenced their language and their way of thinking, two key components of their identity. Because it enhances the elasticity of flesh, the perpetual balminess of Greek climate is conducive to a greater refinement of the vocal tract – hence the abundance of vowels, which accounts for the remarkable beauty of the Greek language. The mild climate of Greece explains the harmony to be found in Homer's works and the innumerable Greek works it inspired.

> [I]n cold countries the nerves of the tongue are necessarily stiffer and less rapid than they are in warmer lands. And if the Greenlanders and various peoples in [North] America lack certain letters, it must be attributed to this very reason. Thus it happens that all northern languages are more monosyllabic and are more burdened with consonants whose inflection and pronunciation other nations find difficult, at times even impossible.[16]

[15] HAA 187; GKA 130: "Die Freyheit hat in Griechenland allezeit den Sitz gehabt, auch neben dem Throne der Könige, welche väterlich regiereten, ehe die Aufklärung der Vernunft ihnen die Süßigkeit einer völligen Freyheit schmecken ließ, und Homerus nennet den Agamemnon einen Hirten der Völker, dessen Liebe für dieselben, und Sorge für ihr Bestes anzudeuten. Ob sich gleich nachher Tyrannen aufwarfen, so waren sie es nur in ihrem Vaterlande, und die ganze Nation hat niemals ein einziges Oberhaupt erkannt."

[16] HAA 118; GKA 19–20: "[I]n kalten Ländern [müssen] die Nerven der Zunge starrer und weniger schnell seyn . . . als in wärmeren Ländern, und wenn den Grönländern und verschiedenen Völkern in America Buchstaben mangeln, muß dieses aus eben dem Grunde herrühren. Daher kommt es, daß alle Mitternächtige Sprachen mehr einsylbige Worte haben, und mehr mit Consonanten überladen sind, deren Verbindung und Aussprache andern Nationen schwer, ja zum Theil unmöglich fällt."

Winckelmann deftly reunites here two aspects of voice usually distinguished in German: the anatomic meaning of *Zunge* and the linguistic meaning of *Sprache*. The characteristics of Greek language are derived from a specific physical condition: the flexibility of the vocal tract, itself dependent on the latitude at which people live. From there on, one could say that, through language, all the political and cultural defining features of a given people are directly linked to climate. The fiery language of the Egyptians and the Persians is rooted in the sweltering Eastern heat, which also accounts for their religious fanaticism and their taste for despotism. On the contrary, the mild climate of Greece explains their preference for measure, be it in religion, art, or politics.

4.2 Conflicting Determinisms: Heredity versus Climate

The four main factors identified by Winckelmann as defining Greek character (sociocultural features, climate, bloodlines, and political organization) are not all equal. Climate and bloodlines, the two factors most directly linked to nature, prevail over the others. Their relation thus deserves a thorough investigation.

As noted earlier, Winckelmann appears to be a staunch supporter of the theory of climates, deeming them to be crucially influential in many domains (physical condition, languages, political systems, etc.). To back his point, he liked to quote the main ancient proponents of that theory: Polybius, Cicero, Hippocrates, and Lucian.[17] In reality, he drew much of his line of argument from a specific modern source: the *Réflexions critiques sur la poésie et sur la peinture* by Abbé Dubos, which features prominently in his notebooks.[18] Contrary to what is commonly believed, Winckelmann's theory of climates is more indebted to Dubos's work than to Montesquieu's.[19] From the *Réflexions critiques sur la poésie et sur la*

[17] HAA 118–21; GKA 19–23.

[18] The reference for these excerpts from *Réflexions critiques sur la poésie et sur la peinture* by Jean-Baptiste Dubos is to be found in BN All. vol. 61, fol. 48–61v, and vol. 72, fol. 192. While staying in Germany (judging from the quality and the watermark on the paper he used), Winckelmann copied all eight sections devoted by Dubos to the issue of climate. Jean-Baptiste Dubos, *Réflexions critiques sur la poésie et sur la peinture* (Paris: Jean Mariette, 1719; 2nd edn, 1733; 3rd edn, 1740), ed. D. Désirat (after the 1740 edition) (Paris: École nationale supérieure des beaux-arts, 1993), 218–74 (§§13–20 of the second part). Dubos was only later translated into German: J.-B. Dubos, *Kritische Betrachtungen über die Poesie und Mahlerey, aus dem Französischen des Herrn Abtes Dü Bos*, trans. G. Funcke, 3 vols. (Kopenhagen: Mummische Buchhandlung, 1760–61).

[19] Reading *De l'Esprit des lois* was definitely a turning point for Winckelmann's political ideas, as we have shown, but nothing in the notebooks indicates that he even read Montesquieu's thoughts on the theory of climates. However, he copied Dubos's thoughts on this topic.

peinture, he kept two principles that shaped his nomenclature: strong meteorological determinism and the privilege of a mild climate. For instance, he copied the following sentences from Dubos: "Excessive cold freezes the imagination of most people" and "the temperature of hot climates . . . enervates the spirit as well as the body"[20] – statements that feature almost literally in the *Geschichte der Kunst.*[21]

Although he borrowed the three-climates axiom – cold, hot, and temperate – from Dubos, Winckelmann differed from him on a key issue: What is the influence of bloodlines on Greek identity? Dubos's thesis is quite clear: "In every era the observation is made that climate is more powerful than blood and origin."[22] For him, climate, the environment in which an individual grows up, is therefore a much more powerful force of natural determinism than biological heredity. The author of *Réflexions critiques* provides a wealth of evidence to back this strict climatic determinism.

> After several years, the Macedonians who settled in Syria and in Egypt became Syrians and Egyptians, and, degenerating from their ancestors, they preserved only the language and the standards. By contrast, the Greeks who settled at Marseille acquired, in the course of time, the audacity and contempt for death peculiar to the Gauls.[23]

For Dubos, civilizations are not different from plants or animals: their character is less determined by the qualities of the seed than by the soil in which they grow.[24]

Winckelmann, who copied meticulously all these arguments in his notebooks, took up a very different line of thinking in his own works. The notion of *Geblüt* ("blood" or "bloodlines") gradually becomes a crucial element in his descriptions of the identity of peoples. The competing

[20] BN All. vol. 61, fol. 57v, 58v; *Réflexions critiques*, 250: "Le grand froid glace l'imagination d'une infinité de personnes"; ibid., 264: "la température des climats chauds . . . énerve l'esprit comme le corps."

[21] On cold countries (Greenland), see HAA 118; GKA 19–20; on hot countries (Persia, Egypt), see HAA 120–21; GKA 25–26; on temperate countries (Greece, Asia Minor), see HAA 120; GKA 23–25.

[22] *Réflexions critiques*, 257: "C'est de tout temps qu'on a remarqué que le climat était plus puissant que le sang et l'origine."

[23] Ibid. (excerpt copied by Winckelmann in BN All. vol. 61, fol. 58): "Les Macédoniens établis en Syrie et en Égypte y devinrent au bout de quelques années des Syriens et des Égyptiens, et, dégénérant de leurs ancêtres, ils n'en conservèrent que la langue et les étendards. Au contraire les Grecs établis à Marseille contractèrent avec le temps l'audace et le mépris de la mort particulier aux Gaulois."

[24] *Réflexions critiques*, 258; excerpt copied by Winckelmann in BN All. vol. 61, fol. 58.

influences of climate and bloodlines are mentioned in the second edition of the *Gedancken über die Nachahmung* as soon as 1756. Later on and according to what became his custom, Winckelmann used a comparison between ancient and modern Greece (about which he assiduously collected information, from travel narratives, for instance) to raise the issue of biological heredity.

> Notwithstanding all the devastations, the forlorn prospect of the soil, the free passage of the winds, stopped by the inextricable windings of entangled shores, and the want of almost all other commodities; yet have the modern Greeks preserved many of the prerogatives of their ancestors. The inhabitants of several islands (the Greek race being chiefly preserved in the islands), near the Natolian shore, especially the females, are, by the unanimous account of travellers [*sic*], the most beautiful of the human race.[25]

In other words, the presence of the "most beautiful" human beings in countries that were colonies of the ancient Greeks is due to the persistence of Greek bloodlines until the modern era.

Ethnic atavism is only mentioned passingly in the first opus but comes up more frequently in the *Geschichte der Kunst*. The reason why modern Egyptians are not as worthy as the ancients, though they live under the same skies, that is, the same climate, is because they "are of a foreign stock."[26] In spite of Turkish occupation, modern Greeks have kept part of their specific bloodline, which accounts, among other things, for their remarkable physical beauty. The argument of ethnic atavism is sometimes even more explicitly stated. For instance, the Etruscans should have reached the same heights of artistic achievement as the Greeks, with whom they share a climate and a form of political organization. All seemed to concur: their love of freedom and their geographic proximity to Greece,

[25] *An Answer to the Foregoing Letter*, 163; *Erläuterung der Gedanken von der Nachahmung*, 105: "Bey aller Veränderung und traurigen Aussicht des Bodens, bey dem gehemten freyen Strich der Winde durch die verwilderte und verwachsene Ufer, und bey dem Mangel mancher Bequemlichkeit, haben dennoch die heutigen Griechen viel natürliche Vorzüge der alten Nation behalten. Die Einwohner vieler Inseln, (welche mehr als das feste Land von Griechen bewohnt werden) bis in klein Asien, sind die schönsten Menschen, sonderlich was das schöne Geschlecht betrift, nach aller Reisenden Zeugniß." In his footnotes Winckelmann quotes the travel narratives of Belon and Le Brun. Pierre Belon, *Observations de plusieurs singularitéz et choses mémorables trouvées en Grèce, Asie et Judée* (Paris: Corozet, 1553–55); Corneille Le Brun, *Voyages au Levant, c'est-à-dire dans les principaux endroits de l'Asie Mineure* (Delft: Kroonevelt, 1700).

[26] HAA 118; GKA 21: "ein fremder Schlag von Menschen."

under a temperate latitude. But contrary to the Greeks, the Etruscans are congenitally prone to bouts of deep spleen and relish in violent images and representations of death.[27] Blood determinism here clearly outweighs climatic determinism.

4.3 Originality and Miscegenation: The Question of Greek Autarchy

Although biological heredity progressively gains traction in his description of the Greeks, Winckelmann still gives considerable credit to the other, aforementioned explanatory factors. He thus allows for two very different readings of the history of civilizations and seems to uphold successively two contradictory ethnographical models: the autarchic model, based on the unfolding of each nation's biological potential, and a cross-border model, based on the principle of fruitful bilateral exchanges.

Although these two contradictory models are equally featured in the *Geschichte der Kunst*, they are not presented on a par. Winckelmann favors the principle of cultural autarchy as the ideal model. "Every people has found within itself the first seeds of necessity," he argued at the beginning of his art history.[28] Hence each civilization *should* find in itself alone the resources needed for its blossoming. In other words, and if one keeps to the ideal model, art is not meant to cross borders. One nation's art should feed only from the sap of its people and grow organically, ignoring foreign influences. Winckelmann quoted numerous examples of this cultural autarchy. For instance, the Egyptians, the Phoenicians, and the Persians reached the height of their development in strict isolation one from another.

> In their periods of flourishing, these three peoples [the Egyptians, the Phoenicians, and the Persians] probably had little contact with one another. We know this to be the case for the Egyptians, and the Persians, who achieved a foothold on the Mediterranean coast late, could have had only limited trade with the Phoenicians prior to that. The written languages of these two nations were also completely different from each other. The art of each must also have been peculiar to each country.[29]

[27] HAA 160; GKA 83.
[28] HAA 111; GKA 4: "Den ersten Saamen zum Nothwendigen hat jedes Volk bey sich gefunden."
[29] HAA 150; GKA 78: "Diese drey Völker [die Ägypter, die Phönizier und die Perser] hatten in ihren blühenden Zeiten vermuthlich wenig Gemeinschaft unter einander: von den Aegyptern wissen wir es, und die Perser, welche spät einen Fuß an den Küsten des Mittelländischen Meers erlangeten, konnten vorher mit den Phöniciern wenig Verkehr haben. Die Sprachen dieser beyden Völker

Cultural exchanges do exist in that ethnographical system, but as mishaps of history. They signal a deficiency, a lack of autonomy, in other words, the inferiority of a civilization that can only be remedied by appealing to the other. Art does cross borders according to Winckelmann, but only because of unfortunate circumstances. For instance, the Egyptians tried to soften their dry rigidity by borrowing from the Greeks, but to no avail because beauty cannot be learned: the artistic history of Egypt remained a "large desolate plain" on which only a few monuments stand out.[30] The same holds for the Etruscans and the Romans, who copied their way into absolute decadence. Such exchanges are always associated with some deficiency, some lack – the primary and unredeemable inferiority of a civilization.

Greece is the exception in this panorama of ancient peoples thanks to its artistic energy, infinitely superior to that of its neighbors. It never had to borrow from others and was able to achieve feats of unsurpassable beauty on its own. Winckelmann judged Greek art to be fundamentally autarchic. The *Geschichte der Kunst* opens on the following axiom:

> Among the Greeks, art began much later than in the Eastern lands but with the same simplicity, such that the Greeks appear, as they themselves report, not to have gathered the first seeds for their art from another people but rather to have been its original inventors.[31]

In matters of art, the Greeks proved to be pure "inventors" – and that originality explains their absolute preeminence. Winckelmann managed in his account of the beginnings of Greek art to avoid mentioning possible foreign influences by dint of a rather imprecise chronological approach of periods. He admitted that the Egyptians had already produced vast numbers of works of art when Greek art was only in its infancy. But the Greeks "would have had little chance to learn anything from Egyptian art [because] Egypt was closed to all foreigners prior to the reign of Psammetichos [Psamtik I], and the Greeks already practiced art before that time."[32]

waren auch in Buchstaben gänzlich von einander verschieden. Die Kunst muß also unter ihnen in jenem Lande eigenthümlich gewesen sein."

[30] HAA 145; GKA 68: "Die Geschichte der Kunst der Aegypter ist, nach Art des Landes derselben, wie eine große verödete Ebene."

[31] HAA 112; GKA 5: "Bey den Griechen hat die Kunst, ob gleich viel später, als in den Morgenländern, mit einer Einfalt ihren Anfang genommen, daß sie, aus dem was sie selbst berichten, von keinem andern Volke den ersten Saamen zu ihrer Kunst geholet, sondern die ersten Erfinder scheinen können."

[32] HAA 113; GKA 9: "Es hätten auch die Griechen nicht viel Gelegenheit gehabt, in der Kunst etwas von den Aegyptern zu erlernen: denn vor dem Könige Psammetichus war allen Fremden der Zutritt in Aegypten versaget, und die Griechen übeten die Kunst schon vor dieser Zeit."

Winckelmann is probably among the first writers to promote with such strength the axiom of Greek originality and autarchy, but he did not invent it. Rather, he based his radical theory of the individuation of Greek identity on the works of Shaftesbury, a writer who features prominently in his notebooks.[33] Winckelmann excerpted the following passage from the *Miscellaneous Reflections* by Shaftesbury.

> *Thus Greece*, tho' she exported arts to other nations, had properly for her own share no import of the kind. *The utmost which cou'd be nam'd wou'd amount to no more than raw materials, of a rude and barbarous form. And thus the nation was evidently original in art; and with them every noble study and science was self-form'd, wrought out of nature and drawn from the necessary operation and course of things*, working as it were of their own accord and proper inclination.[34]

According to Shaftesbury, Greece may have been imitated, but it never imitated others. Its art was exported to foreign lands, but it never imported foreign productions. The fact that Winckelmann underlined this passage – a very rare gesture throughout his notebooks – is a clear mark of his keen interest. He saw in Shaftesbury a crucial thinker of Greek "originality."

In the *Geschichte der Kunst*, Winckelmann specified a set of conditions attached to the principle of Greek autarchy and notably the fundamental rule of miscegenation. If the Greeks owe the magnificence of their art to their sole bloodline, then the migrations that bring about miscegenation have an adverse influence on art. Winckelmann's appraisal of Greek art is based on one constant: the radical (etymologically speaking) link uniting a people, art, and place. Greek art is rooted in a given place and people and cannot depart from them without loss. Any form of hybridization, any geographic translation will cause it to decline. From the *Gedancken über die Nachahmung* to the *Geschichte der Kunst*, Winckelmann accumulated

[33] Shaftesbury is frequently quoted in Winckelmann's notebooks. Cf. BN All. vol. 62, fol. 7 ("Characteristics"); vol. 66, fol. 17–18v, 20–21v, 30–31 ("Characteristics"); fol. 26 ("Letter concerning the Art or Science of Design"); fol. 33–35v ("Treatise IV, An Enquiry concerning Virtue or Merit"); fol. 35v ("Treatise V, Upon the Moralists, a philosophical Rhapsody"); fol. 37–43 ("Treatise VI, Miscellaneous Reflections"). Winckelmann seems to have read Shaftesbury when staying in Nöthnitz and Dresden. The paper he used to copy these excerpts bears a Dutch watermark, "I Villandry," which is characteristic of that period.

[34] BN All. vol. 66, fol. 40v (excerpt from Shaftesbury, "Treatise VI. Miscellaneous Reflections"; the passages underlined by Winckelmann in his manuscript are presented in italics here).

evidence to prove this theory, as can be seen in the following quote from *Brutus* by Cicero:

> "As soon," says Cicero, "as eloquence set out from the Athenian port, she plumed herself with the manners of all the islands in her way, adopted the Asiatick luxury, and forsaking her sound Attick expression, lost her health."[35]

Moving away leads to a weakening of the blood, whereas going back home triggers a renewal of strength. For instance, after Alexander's death, the Greek artists who left Greece to work for the Seleucid dynasty in Asia or the Ptolemy in Egypt paved the way for artistic decadence, increasingly lacking in sensitivity as they grew into consummate scholars.[36] Only when they came back to Greece, around the beginning of the second century BC, did they regain their creativity.[37]

4.4 A Historiographical Conflict: Winckelmann, Caylus, and Herder

To assess the originality of this historical scheme, one can compare it with another contemporary theory, devised by Caylus, which Winckelmann knew very well. Caylus's reading of ancient history, outlined in his *Recueil d'antiquités*, published from 1752 onward, is quite different from Winckelmann's. To the latter's vertical model of a *sui generis* development of peoples and their artistic heritage, Caylus opposes a horizontal model based on cross-cultural exchanges. To him, civilizations do not thrive solely on their own roots but mostly through cross-fertilization. Caylus gives an eloquent account of artistic migration in the opening pages of his *Recueil d'antiquités*, a large part of which Winckelmann copied in his notebooks.

> One . . . sees [the arts] formed in Egypt with all the character of greatness. One sees them passing from there into Etruria where they acquire much detail but at the expense of that greatness, only to be transported then into Greece where knowledge, joined with the noblest elegance, has led them to their grandest perfection. Finally, one sees them at Rome where their luster is completely dependent upon the help of foreigners and where, having

[35] *An Answer to the Foregoing Letter*, 160–61; *Erläuterung der Gedanken von der Nachahmung*, 104: "So bald die Beredsamkeit," sagt Cicero, "aus dem atheniensischen Hafen auslief, hat sie in allen Inseln, welche sie berühret hat, und in ganz Asien, welches sie durchzogen ist, fremde Sitten angenommen, und ist völlig ihres gesunden attischen Ausdrucks, gleichsam wie ihrer Gesundheit, beraubet worden."

[36] HAA 317–18; GKA 357–60. [37] HAA 321–22 ; GKA 365–66.

> battled for some time against barbarism, they bury themselves in the debris of the Empire.[38]

Of course, the external structure of Caylus's opus is still based on ethnic divides. Quite like the *Geschichte der Kunst*, the *Recueil d'antiquités* is organized around nations: the Egyptians, the Etruscans, the Greeks, the Romans, and the Gauls. And Caylus stressed the differences between national aesthetic preferences.[39] Yet, from the first volume, these ethnic divides are subverted by miscegenation, which considerably blurs the lines. Caylus remarked that a number of motifs (winged lions, various inscriptions) appear both in Egypt and in Etruria, thus attesting to the intimate and creative mingling of the two formal heritages.[40] Caylus believed that art stems first and foremost from cultural hybridization.

Winckelmann was aware of this; he copied precisely from the *Recueil d'antiquités* the most explicit remarks from Caylus about the reciprocal exchanges of nations. Winckelmann's attention was drawn to one specific example: two Egyptian cylinders reproduced in the *Recueil d'antiquités* and on which one finds Persian figures, although the cylinders are clearly of Egyptian origin. "How come Persian figures are represented alongside Egyptian hieroglyphs?" Caylus wondered in a passage that was copied by Winckelmann, before suggesting an answer equally collated in the notebooks by Winckelmann.

> To resolve this question, it is necessary to observe that the Persians had been masters of Egypt for 135 years; that during this interval of time they had adopted several usages of the people they had subdued, and that they preferably employed workers of this nation.[41]

[38] Anne Claude Philippe de Tubières, comte de Caylus, *Recueil d'antiquités égyptiennes, étrusques, grecques et romaines*, 7 vols. (Paris: Desaint et Saillant, 1752–67), vol. 1 (1752), ix–x (excerpt copied until the word "Grèce" by Winckelmann in BN All. vol. 67, fol. 46): "On . . . voit [les Arts] formés en Égypte avec tout le caractère de la grandeur; de-là passer en Étrurie, où ils acquièrent des parties de détail, mais aux dépens de cette même grandeur; être ensuite transportés en Gréce, où le sçavoir joint à la plus noble élégance, les a conduits à leur plus grande perfection; à Rome enfin, où sans briller autrement que par des secours étrangers, après avoir lutté quelque temps contre la Barbarie, ils s'ensevelissent dans les débris de l'Empire."

[39] *Recueil d'antiquités*, vol. 1 (1752), viii.

[40] On this "commerce réciproque entre les Egyptiens & les Etrusques," see the *Recueil d'antiquités*, vol. 1 (1752), 78; copied by Winckelmann in BN All. vol. 67, fol. 46v–47.

[41] *Recueil d'antiquités*, vol. 1 (1752), 55, commentary of plate XVIII, 1 and 2; copied by Winckelmann in BN All. vol. 67, fol. 46v: "Mais par quel hazard des figures Persanes sont-elles représentées avec des hiéroglyphes Egyptiens? Pour résoudre cette question, il faut observer que les Perses ont été maîtres de l'Égypte pendant 135 ans; que dans cet intervalle de temps, ils ont adopté plusieurs usages du Peuple qu'ils avoient soûmis, & ont employé par préférence des ouvriers de cette nation."

As he perused the *Recueil d'antiquités*, Winckelmann realized how much Caylus's vision of history and his own diverged. Caylus held that art progressed through trade and exchanges between nations; Winckelmann thought it relied on the historical dynamic proper to each nation.

In a cross-border model, the hierarchy between artistic nations changes. Caylus still ranked Greece at the very top of the pyramid: "The Greeks are to my eyes the most pleasant people to have inhabited the earth."[42] Yet their leadership rested on the creative influence of Egypt. Caylus stressed that Greek art originated in Egypt and that the Greeks forgot that debt for "love of glory."[43] Contrary to Winckelmann's Greeks, Caylus's Greeks had been talented imitators for many years – a characteristic shared with most other ancient peoples. In the primitive age, the Egyptians, the Greeks, the Etruscans, and the Phoenicians abundantly borrowed, copied, and shared one from the other. Winckelmann's vertical and national model of ancient history and the horizontal, cross-border model of the French antiquarian differ at core, a rift that did not escape contemporary readers such as Herder.

Young Herder deeply admired the *Geschichte der Kunst*, which he read seven times and which nurtured his meditations. Despite his enthusiasm and praise, he distanced himself from Winckelmann's thought on a number of issues, slightly at first and then more profoundly. Herder pointed out the cause of their disagreement as soon as 1767, in the aforementioned axiom placed by Winckelmann at the beginning of the *Geschichte der Kunst*: "Every people has found within itself the first seeds of necessity."[44] Herder could not agree with this statement because it ran contrary to what he deemed to be a key element of history in progress: the concatenation of peoples, that "chain of transmission" which binds nations together and invalidates a strictly vertical reading of civilizations.[45] The winding ways of heritage never cease to require detours by neighboring cultures. According to Herder, there is no such thing as a civilization blossoming by dint of its sole roots – not even the Greeks.

[42] *Recueil d'antiquités*, vol. 5 (1762), 127: "Les Grecs me paroissent la plus agréable Nation qui ait habité la terre."

[43] *Recueil d'antiquités*, vol. 1 (1752), 117–18: "L'amour de la gloire."

[44] HAA 111; GKA 4, quoted in J. G. Herder's *Kritische Wälder, Älteres Kritisches Wäldchen*, in J. G. Herder, *Schriften zur Ästhetik und Literatur 1767–1781*, ed. Gunter E. Grimm (Frankfurt/Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1993), 11–55, here 24.

[45] *Älteres Kritisches Wäldchen*, 25: "Kette der Mitteilung."

> Even according to what the Greeks report, obsessed with originality as they were, there are, indeed, ample traces of the fact that in the course of making their discoveries, foreigners often preceded them, awakening the culture in them, and accelerating it in its early progression with repeated impulses. From whom did they receive Gods, laws, science, arts? The oldest Greek history is full of that.[46]

The Greeks cannot bear to "recall *foreign* origins," notes Herder in his commentary on the *Geschichte der Kunst*. To him, Winckelmann is wrong to write his art history from the perspective of Greece, to let himself be contaminated by the Greek *Originalsucht*.[47] Thus Herder resolutely takes sides with Caylus against Winckelmann, supporting one of the prominent authors in the eighteenth century to have effectively resisted that Greek "obsession for originality." The debate on the origins of Greek art thus precipitated core historiographical divides.

4.5 Kant and Winckelmann

Kantian scholars have long underplayed Winckelmann's influence on the Königsberg philosopher, if not denied it altogether. During the nineteenth century, it was understood that Kant barely knew Winckelmann's work.[48] Around the turn of the twentieth century, Victor Basch and Alfred Baeumler pointed out that the Kantian notions of form and genius may have been inspired by Winckelmann's thought.[49] But, although they were influential voices, their insight remained sketchy and seems to have been overlooked by subsequent research on Kant's sources. Winckelmann is never even mentioned in the *Materialien zu Kants Kritik der Urteilskraft* directed by Jens Kulenkampff.[50] Only a handful of more recent works, such as a short study by Piero E. Giordanetti, have identified these shortcomings and tried to remedy them.[51]

There are no explicit references to Winckelmann in Kant's works; he is mentioned neither in Kant's letters nor in printed material intended for publication. The only time Kant himself mentions Winckelmann is in his

[46] *Älteres Kritisches Wäldchen*, 28–29: "Selbst nach dem, was die Griechen, die Originalsüchtigen Griechen selbst berichten, sind ja Spuren gnug, daß in dem Lauf ihrer Erfindungen Fremde ihnen oft vorgetreten, Fremde bei ihnen die Kultur erweckt, und in den ersten Zeiten des Fortganges mit wiederholten Stößen beschleuniget. Von wem bekamen sie Götter, Gesetze, Wissenschaften, Künste? Die älteste griechische Geschichte ist voll davon."

[47] *Älteres Kritisches Wäldchen*, 31: "Das Andenken an einen *fremden* Anfang."

[48] Rosenkranz 1840, 233; Goldfriedrich 1895, 20; Richter 1876, 18–43.

[49] Baeumler 1967, 105–08; Basch 1896, xxiv–xxvi.

[50] Kulenkampff 1974.

[51] Giordanetti 1995, 463–71.

handwritten notes about anthropology, and they attest to the influence of the *Geschichte der Kunst* on Kant's concept of beauty.[52] In a key passage of his art history, Winckelmann distinguished the notion of *Reitz* (charm) from that of *Schönheit* (beauty).

> The difference of opinion shows itself still more in judgments between beauties portrayed in art and those found in nature itself. For, because the former provokes us less than the latter, the former will – when it is formed in accordance with concepts of higher beauty and is more serious than frivolous – please the unenlightened [*unerleuchtet*] mind less than a commonly pretty appearance that can talk and act [in certain ways]. The occasion for this lies in our desires, which in most people are aroused at the first glance, and the senses are already satiated when reason is seeking to enjoy beauty: then it is not beauty that captivates us, but lust. Given this, young people, in whom the desires seethe and ferment, will see goddesses in countenances evincing a languishing and ardent allure even if they are not truly beautiful, and they will be less affected by a truly beautiful woman with the appearance and majesty of Juno whose gestures and actions display breeding and wealth.[53]

So, according to Winckelmann, a real person, "pretty" but common, who can talk and act in certain ways could please "unenlightened" senses more than a work of art designed after the highest standard of beauty. This is due to the strong and instant power of attraction exerted by nature, when pleasant, on sensibility – a form of arousal entirely linked to sensory pleasure. Contrary to this arousal, beauty in art produces a form of pleasure that is not linked to the senses but to a judgment proceeding from the faculty of understanding.

[52] NF 15:280 (*Reflexionen zur Anthropologie*, no. 640); LPh 24: 350 (*Logik Philippi*). There is a philological and archeological reference to Winckelmann in a letter to Kant from Iohann Erich Biester (Corr 10: 416, 420; letter from 11/8/1785). It discusses the etymology of the word *Sophronister Stein*, a stone to which Winckelmann alludes in the *Geschichte der Kunst*.

[53] HAA 192 (slightly modified translation); GKA 143: "Diese Verschiedenheit der Meynungen zeiget sich noch mehr in dem Urtheile über abgebildete Schönheiten in der Kunst, als in der Natur selbst. Denn weil jene weniger, als diese, reizen, so werden auch jene, wenn sie nach Begriffen hoher Schönheit gebildet, und mehr ernsthaft als leichtfertig sind, dem unerleuchteten Sinne weniger gefallen, als eine gemeine hübsche Bildung, die reden und handeln kann. Die Ursache liegt in unseren Lüsten, welche bey den mehresten Menschen durch den ersten Blick erreget werden, und die Sinnlichkeit ist schon angefüllet, wenn der Verstand suchen wollte, das Schöne zu genießen: alsdenn ist es nicht die Schönheit, die uns einnimmt, sondern die Wollust. Dieser Erfahrung zufolge werden jungen Leuten, bey welchen die Lüste in Wallung und Gährung sind, mit schmachtenden und brünstigen Reizungen bezeichnete Gesichter, wenn sie auch nicht wahrhaftig schön sind, Göttinnen erscheinen, und sie werden weniger gerühret werden über eine solche schöne Frau, die Zucht und Wohlstand in Gebehrden und Handlungen zeiget, welche die Bildung und die Majestät der Juno hätte."

As shown by the quote (no. 640) from Kant's *Reflexionen zur Anthropologie* cited in the preceding paragraph, he had carefully read the *Geschichte der Kunst*, to which he referred explicitly to distinguish between the notions of *Reitz* and *Schönheit* in matters of *Geschmack*.[54] In his later writings he kept true to this distinction, which was then new in his work and directly linked to this reading of Winckelmann. In the *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, the definition of the pure judgment of taste (*reines Geschmacksurteil*) makes no explicit reference to Winckelmann but contains the crucial opposition between *Reiz* and *Schönheit* Kant read in the *Geschichte*.

> Taste is always still barbaric where it needs a mix of *charms* [*Reize*] and *emotions* for satisfaction, indeed, even more so if it makes these the measuring-sticks of its approval . . . A judgment of taste on which charm and emotion have no influence (although they can be combined with satisfaction in the beautiful), thus having merely the purposiveness of the form as its determining ground, is a *pure judgment of taste*.[55]

In his *Abhandlung von der Fähigkeit der Empfindung des Schönen in der Kunst* (Essay on the Capacity of the Feeling for the Beautiful in Art) (1763) – a text he wrote at the same time he worked on the *Geschichte der Kunst*, though it was published a year before – Winckelmann returned to the dual concepts of *Reiz*/*Schönheit*, but from the point of view of sexual identity. His line of argument is based on the idea, stated quite explicitly, that "the greatest beauties" of Greek art are to be found in representations of male rather than female bodies. This enables Winckelmann to account for elements he repeatedly observed when acting as a guide for the monuments of ancient Rome: those who "only pay attention to female beauty" and "hardly notice, or even remain impervious to" male beauty are usually not sensitive to "beauty in art."[56] These people can hardly grasp the full beauty of Greek art because they do not respond to its most exquisite achievements, the

[54] NF 15:280: "In Sachen des Geschmaks muß man den Reitz von der Schönheit unterscheiden"; NF 15: 81–282: "Es ist schweer, diesen Reitz von der Schönheit abzusondern; aber man darf nur alle unsere besondere bedürfnisse und privatverheltnisse, darin wir uns von anderen unterscheiden, weglassen, so bleibt das kaltsinnige Geschmaksurtheil übrig."

[55] CPJ 5:223.

[56] J. J. Winckelmann, *Abhandlung von der Fähigkeit der Empfindung des Schönen in der Kunst* (1st edn, 1763), in *Kleine Schriften* 211–33, here 216: "Da ferner die menschliche Schönheit, zur Kenntnis, in einen allgemeinen Begriff zu fassen ist, so habe ich bemerket, daß diejenigen, welche nur allein auf Schönheiten des weiblichen Geschlechts aufmerksam sind und durch Schönheiten in unserem Geschlechte wenig, oder gar nicht, gerühret werden, die Empfindung des Schönen in der Kunst nicht leicht eingebohren, allgemein und lebhaft haben. Es wird dasselbe bey diesen in der Kunst der Griechen mangelhaft bleiben, da die größten Schönheiten derselben mehr von unserm, als von dem andern Geschlechte, sind. Mehr Empfindung aber wird zum Schönen in der Kunst als in der Natur

representations of male bodies. There are blatant homosexual overtones in this passage from a text dedicated to Friedrich Rudolph von Berg, with whom Winckelmann was openly in love. But Winckelmann, true to his distinction between *Reitz* and *Schönheit*, refutes the notion of a specifically homoerotic understanding of Greek art. Beauty in art "requires more sensibility than natural beauty" because it is "lifeless, as the tears of an actor are painless." The "sense of beauty in art" literally cannot be based on sexual attractiveness or it would turn into *Reitz*. This passage, where the dual concept of *Reiz*/*Schönheit* overlaps the male/female divide, was picked on by Kant, who quoted it in his Philippi Logic, where he drew a similar conclusion as to the hierarchy between male and female beauty.[57] Kant wrote in the *Reflexionen zur Anthropologie*, "[f]eminine beauty is only relative, masculine is absolute."[58] In addition to these more or less explicit references to Winckelmann, one could say that the author of the *Geschichte der Kunst* inspired a series of Kant's remarks on the primacy of delineation over coloring[59] and on the characteristics of Greek sculpture aesthetics, such as the perpendicular profile of statues and their *Ruhe*.[60]

Yet Winckelmann's influence on Kant extended beyond sole references to beauty and aesthetics. Kant's views on ancient Greece presented striking similarities with Winckelmann's views on Greek culture and history in the *Geschichte der Kunst*. In his *Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht*, much like Winckelmann, Kant investigated what caused the blossoming of Greek culture and history from antiquity to the modern era. Like Winckelmann again, he identified a number of explanatory factors for the rise and subsequent decline of this culture: climate, political organization (democratic freedom in ancient Athens versus recent oppression by the Turks), or innate, natural features ("blood").[61] Again like Winckelmann, the hierarchy between these causes is rather muddled. Finally, one should mention another common point, key to Winckelmann's vision of Greece and central to the reception of his theories by many of his contemporaries, among them Caylus and

erfordert, weil jenes, wie die Thränen im Theater ohne Schmerz, ohne Leben ist, und durch die Einbildung erwecket und ersetzet werden muß."

[57] LPh 24:350: "Winckelmann zeiget, daß der männliche Bau des Körpers viel schöner sey als der weibliche. Der Reiz macht es, daß man diesen jenem vorziehet."

[58] Ak. 15:572: "Die weibliche Schonheit ist nur relativ, die Männliche absolut."

[59] CPJ 5:225; HAA 195; GKA 147.

[60] Anth 7:297; HAA 210, 313; GKA 177–78, 348–49.

[61] Anth 7:319–20.

Herder. Much as Winckelmann had formulated the principle of an absolute originality of Greek art based on artistic cultural autarchy, Kant argued that the Greeks were the first among all ancient peoples to practice philosophy in his *Kurzer Abriß einer Geschichte der Philosophie* (*Short Outline of a History of Philosophy*).[62] For Kant and Winckelmann, the Greeks are "originals."

[62] JL 9:27: "Unter allen Völkern haben also die Griechen erst angefangen zu philosophiren. Denn sie haben zuerst versucht, nicht an dem Leitfaden der Bilder die Vernunfterkenntnisse zu cultiviren, sondern in abstracto; statt daß die andern Völker sich die Begriffe immer nur durch Bilder in concreto verständlich zu machen suchten."

CHAPTER 5

Conjectural Truths
Kant and Schiller on Educating Humanity

Lydia L. Moland

An effective philosophy of education requires nothing less than an accurate assessment of human nature. Knowing how to educate humans involves speculation about our essence and how that essence can be corrupted or perfected. It demands a diagnosis of what humans currently are and what we should be. Getting human education right might help us achieve our potential; getting it wrong threatens to ruin that potential, perhaps irrevocably. In the context of the Enlightenment's emphasis on education as the key to human progress, the need for a definitive theory of education in the eighteenth century was urgent. Kant's call in "An Answer to the Question: 'What Is Enlightenment?'" for self-education – for humans to reject their tutors and dare to be wise – also complicated matters. How could uneducated humans educate themselves? What about humans made such an endeavor conceivable, not to mention obligatory?

Kant and his contemporaries were also interested in a broader question, namely whether humanity itself could be educated. Could humanity progress as a species, becoming, in successive generations, more moral, more noble, more liberated? This question, in turn, prompted speculation about history. Where have humans as a species come from, and where are we going? What facts could we turn to in pursuit of these questions, and what would the status of those facts be? What might our history tell us about what it means to be human? Are we closer to the beginning of our species' development or to reaching its end? How will we know when we have achieved our historical potential or when our education is complete? And who will teach us?

In response to these questions, eighteenth-century philosophers including Lessing, Herder, and Kant authored what Kant called "conjectural" (*mutmaßlich*) histories: explicitly speculative accounts of humans' distant past for which no definitive proof could be given. Nevertheless, these authors agreed, the stories mattered: they could help humans conceptualize

their past, understand their essence, and identify their teachers. The right story, by accurately interpreting human nature, could help humans reach their potential. But, in the context of the Enlightenment's call for rational thinking and self-education, sometimes understood in contrast to myth and religious narrative, the status of these stories was also tenuous. In an increasingly rational world, what could be the value of a conjectural history?

Late in the century, Friedrich Schiller produced a conjectural history that both echoed his predecessors' stories and challenged their explanations of the stories' value. As the immediate popularity and enduring influence of his dramatic oeuvre suggest, Schiller was himself a master storyteller. His playwriting debut, moreover, had been credited with extraordinary influence on a pivotal moment in humanity's education. In 1792, the nascent French Republic conferred honorary citizenship on Schiller for the revolutionary commitment to liberty, equality, and fraternity they believed his first drama, *The Robbers*, had inspired.[1] But the French Revolution's descent into the Terror called the truth of its story into question. Schiller's 1795 treatise, *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man*, is, among other things, his attempt to right the narrative again: to put the Terror into context and, by telling a new story, educate humanity toward its real potential. His conjectural history builds on those that preceded it; it also makes use of Kant's theory of aesthetic judgment to reorient humans toward their creative capacities as evidence of their autonomy. Schiller's account ultimately affirms narrative as central rather than derivative in humans' education and confirms humans' responsibility for their own education.

5.1 A Short History of Histories

Conjectural histories have their own history, ranging from Hindu Vedas to the myth of Prometheus. Hobbes' state of nature sets the modern stage, speculating backwards from contemporary civil war to the solitary, nasty, and brutish human nature such war implied. True, Hobbes admits, "[i]t may peradventure be thought, there was never such a time, nor condition of warre as this," but international relations, recent conflicts, and existing primitive tribes, he argues, all point to the plausibility of his speculation.[2]

[1] See Koepke 2005, 285.

[2] Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (London: Crooke, 1651), 63; for a modern edition, see *The Leviathan* (London: Penguin, 1968), 187–88.

Rousseau fights conjecture with conjecture, replacing the mythical war of all against all with the equally mythical noble savage. Hobbes had, in Rousseau's view, not extended his story far enough into the past, mistaking heartless selfishness for human nature when it is actually a symptom of the modern world's corruption. Rousseau also acknowledges the tenuousness of his evidence: "[I]t is no light undertaking [he admits] to have a proper understanding of a state which no longer exists, which perhaps never existed, which probably never will exist, and yet about which it is necessary to have accurate notions in order to judge properly our own present state." Nevertheless, the philosopher has little choice but to speculate in the interest of posterity: "[A]s long as we are ignorant of natural man, it is futile for us to attempt to determine the law he has received or which is best suited to his constitution."[3]

To the already significant uncertainty of such endeavors, eighteenth-century German intellectuals added a preoccupation with the status of the Bible.[4] In his 1780 essay, "The Education of the Human Race" (*Die Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts*), Lessing argues that Hebrew and Christian Scriptures had been indispensable guides in humanity's moral education. Although the moral law can be reached by reason alone and does not require revelation, humanity had not, in its earliest stages, been ready for that law. God, Lessing suggests, had thus sent Moses to educate the Hebrews who, in turning from polytheism to monotheism, achieved the first intimation of this law. The Hebrews thus became the first "educators of the human race" and their holy texts its first "primer" (*Elementarbuch*; EM 18, 26).[5] But the God depicted in these Scriptural narratives was a jealous God: the Israelites feared rather than loved him, proving, Lessing concludes, that theirs "was simply not the correct concept that we should have of God" (EM 34).[6] Jesus' message, enshrined in the Christian Scriptures, became a second primer, guiding humans toward following the moral law for its own sake, not from fear of punishment.

[3] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discours sur l'origine et les fondemens de l'inégalité parmi les hommes* (Amsterdam: Rey, 1755); for the translated sentences cited here, see "Discourse on the Origins of Inequality," in J. J. Rousseau, *The Basic Political Writings*, trans. Donald A. Cress (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1987), 34–35.

[4] On Lessing's involvement in these debates, see Arno Schilson 2005, 157–83.

[5] Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Die Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts* (Berlin: Voss, 1780); cited here and hereafter as "EM," based on G. E. Lessing, *Werke in Sechs Bänden*, vol. 6: *Philosophie/Theologie*, ed. Fritz Fischer (Zurich: Stauffler, 1965), translation mine. Citation is by section number.

[6] That Lessing's thinking about Judaism was progressive as compared with many of his contemporaries is well established. It is nevertheless also true that comments such as these played into a derogatory and pernicious attitude toward Judaism that continued well beyond Lessing's lifetime. See Goetschel 2005.

Humanity's education thus mirrors an individual's education: children respond to stories rather than argument; they first do right out of fear of punishment rather than knowledge of right and wrong. Ultimately, they learn to reason for themselves and do good for its own sake.

Given humans' developing rationality, however, Lessing argued that such "primers" were becoming unnecessary. Just as children should become independent of stories as prompts for their moral development, humans should become less dependent on the New Testament as well. Enlightened humans need revealed truths only until reason can derive those same truths "out of its other established truths" (EM 72). The creativity necessary to fashion these truths into narratives was no longer needed. Humans would soon be able to appreciate facts about God and morality better through reason than through stories.

Nevertheless, the stories persisted. In 1784, Johann Gottfried Herder published the first volume of his *Idea for the Philosophy of the History of Humanity* (*Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*). In Book 10 of this sweeping account of natural and human development, Herder turns to the Genesis story. His goal, however, is not to assess its value as a provisional primer but to praise it as offering the most truthful of all origin stories. Herder calls the author of Genesis a "primitive naturalist, to which the comprehension of very few in our own times is equal."[7] Among the insights achieved by this early naturalist is the idea that humans were originally peaceful, created to thrive in a paradise where their every need was met. Humans' fall from this paradise is ingeniously portrayed through Adam and Eve's desire to know the difference between good and evil or, as Herder puts it, through "ambiguous striving after knowledge not suited to us" (SWS 13:434). However noble this temptation was, its effects are a "fiery wheel under which we groan, and which still constitutes nearly the whole circle of our life." Our thirst for knowledge triggers reason, which is, Herder then suggests, both a gift of Providence and the source of much misery. Reason makes possible the "[e]ducation, art, [and] cultivation" that were "indispensable" to humans from the beginning, but Herder, himself a critic of the Enlightenment's emphasis on rationality, adds that it is also the source of the toil and corruption that characterize much of human history (SWS 13:435). "Every degree of wildness in the human race is a degeneracy, to which man has been impelled by necessity,

[7] Johann Gottfried Herder, *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit,* Erster Theil (Riga/Leipzig: Hartknoch, 1784), cited here from *Sämmtliche Werke*, vol. 13, ed. Bernard Suphan (Berlin: Weidmann, 1887), 422 (hereafter "SWS 13").

climate, or the habitual sway of some passion," Herder concludes. "Wherever this impulse ceases to act, men live more peaceably, as the history of nations shows" (SWS 13:430–31).

5.2 Education through Conflict: Kant on Unsociable Sociability

Also in 1784, Kant published an essay entitled, "Idea for Universal History with Cosmopolitan Intent" (*Idee einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltbürgerlicher Absicht*), in which his disagreements with Herder are already evident. Contrary to Herder's claim that humans are essentially peaceful, Kant postulates an "unsociable sociability" given to humans specifically to propel their advancement. Unable to bear being alone, we form societies; unable to tolerate others' desires, we compete; competition fuels progress. Here there is no hint of Herder's gentle regret at humans' prelapsarian tranquility. Instead, Kant writes:

> Thanks be to nature, therefore, for the incompatibility, for the spiteful competitive vanity, for the insatiable desire to possess or even to dominate! For without them all the excellent predispositions in humanity would eternally slumber undeveloped. The human being wills concord; but nature knows better what is good for his species: it wills discord. (IUH 8:21)

This discord, in turn, necessitates government and eventually a federation of states. The resulting international body will only be accomplished "very late, and after many fruitless attempts" – in other words, after wars that, through their devastations and upheavals, convince humans to give up their "brute freedom" in exchange for "tranquility in a lawful constitution" (IUH 8:23–24).

But when Kant wished to sharpen his critique of Herder, he too pitted narrative against narrative. In his 1786 essay, "Conjectural Beginnings of Human History" (*Mutmaßlicher Anfang der Menschengeschichte*), Kant gives an unorthodox reading of Genesis that disputes Herder's interpretation by reiterating the value of unsociable sociability.[8] Like its predecessors in the genre, "Conjectural Beginnings" includes an opening disclaimer acknowledging its speculative status: "Surely it is permissible [Kant writes] *to insert* conjectures into the *progression* of a history in order to fill out gaps in the reports, because what precedes as a remote cause and what follows as an effect can provide a quite secure guidance for the discovery of the intermediate causes, so as to make the transition comprehensible." Kant

[8] For a brief history of Kant's disagreement with Herder as documented in these essays, see Allen Wood's Introduction to "Conjectural Beginnings" (CBHH 160–63).

then asks his readers' permission to use "a holy document as a map" (CBHH 8:109, tm).

In Kant's adaptation of Genesis, the first humans live harmoniously in the garden until "reason began to stir [*regen*]" (CBHH 8:111) and showed them their ability to act against instinct – a moment symbolized by Eve's eating of the apple.[9] From their independence from instinct, several revolutionary realizations follow, each of which tracks an aspect of the Genesis story. Adam and Eve's disobedience triggers the punishment that justifies life's struggles and explains our fear of death. Cain's failed sacrifice and fratricide parallel the birth of commerce. The corruption that prompted God to destroy most of humanity with a flood provides an analogy with the "soulless luxury" now to be avoided (CBHH 8:120).

Two moments in Kant's use of Genesis are of special note. First, shame prompted Adam and Eve to cover themselves with fig leaves; hiding their nakedness prompts the realization that desire can be intensified by imagination and delay. In addition, shame prompts the development of decency (*Sittsamkeit*), which Kant defines as "an inclination by good conduct to inspire respect for us in others (through the concealment of that which could incite low esteem)." Decency, Kant then says, is "the genuine foundation of all true sociability [and] gave the first hint toward the foundation of the human being as a moral creature" (CBHH 8:113, tm). Decency is in other words a product of our ability to repress desire and provides the basis of "true," apparently as opposed to "unsocial," sociability.

Second, as God ejects Adam and Eve from the garden, he clothes them in animal skins. Again, Kant interprets this moment in terms of reason's development. Through the animals' sacrifice, Adam understood himself to be "the genuine *end of nature*"; "he saw within himself a prerogative that he had by his nature over all animals" (CBHH 8:113–14). "*Nature* [he says to the vanquished animal] *has given you the skin you wear not for you but for me.*"[10] But the import of this moment does not stop here: "This representation includes (however obscurely) the thought of the opposite: that he must not say something like this to any *human being*, but has to regard him as an equal participant in the gifts of nature" (CBHH 8:114). From this follows an early glimmer of the categorical imperative: "And thus the

[9] For a fascinating analysis of Kant's use of the Genesis story as well as an account of the tensions between these two historical essays, see Gniffke 1984, 593–608.

[10] Italics in original. For an attempt to elucidate Kant's anthropomorphized use of "nature" in this context, see Eldridge 2016, 61–63. See also Kant's own later description of "nature" in his revised interpretation of Genesis at Rel 6:32.

human being had entered into an *equality with all rational* beings . . . namely, in regard to the claim of *being himself an end,* and also being esteemed as such by everyone else, and of being used by no one as means to other ends" (CBHH 8:114).[11] The revisionist content of Kant's narrative is striking; despite equating reason with the serpent, Kant lauds reason for leading us to two things that make us human: our potential for decency and our ability to recognize each other as ends in ourselves.

Kant concludes "Conjectural Beginnings" by acknowledging that we might be tempted to curse the state of war to which our unsociable sociability has condemned us and long to return to Eden, but he exhorts his readers against complaint. Reason, he says, is the source of inequality and so of "so much evil, but also of all good" (CBHH 8:119). War, he argues, is needed in order to compel governments to respect their citizens (CBHH 8:121). And eventually, Kant repeats, humans' unsocial sociability will be moderated by exhaustion; humans will become so tired of war that they will renounce it and transform into more sociable creatures. Kant, in effect, suggests that Rousseau had stopped his narrative too early. Perhaps it is true, as Rousseau says, that men are currently killing each other without knowing why. But reason will, Kant suggests, ultimately educate us through war toward peace.

5.3 Education through Arts and the Church Triumphant: Kant on Culture and Religion

As the capacity that allows humans to act against instinct and progress as a species, reason is, Kant suggests, humans' defining characteristic and what will ultimately lead us to our fulfillment. But Kant elsewhere isolates another capacity that is both unique to humans and has the potential to lead us beyond unsociable sociability to the moral behavior predicted in humans' early intimation of the categorical imperative. That capacity is aesthetic judgment. We already differentiate, Kant says, between descriptions of subjective pleasure that apply only to us and descriptions of objective beauty with which we expect others to agree. We already, in other words, make aesthetic judgments. But what about us makes these judgments possible?

Ordinary cognition, Kant argues in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, occurs when the faculty of imagination "combine[s] the

[11] For a comparison of this moment of mutual recognition in Kant's account as opposed to Hegel's, see Moland 2002, 4.

manifold of intuition" into a unity and the faculty of understanding subsumes that intuition under a concept (CPJ 5:217). Interestingly, in his 1792 lectures on logic Kant describes these faculties in terms reminiscent of the unsocial sociability he describes in his lectures on history. "Imagination and understanding are two friends who cannot do without one another but cannot stand one another either [he says] for one always harms the other. The more universal the understanding is in its rules, the more perfect it is, but if it wants to consider things *in concreto* then [it] absolutely cannot do without the imagination" (LDW 24:710).[12]

When these faculties, despite their essential opposition, are brought into simple harmony – when the imagination's manifold is subsumed under the understanding's concept – cognition results.[13] A different experience is produced, however, when no simple subsumption is possible, and the process of subsumption itself is suspended, leaving the imagination and understanding in a state of vacillation. When such a suspension of our faculties' usual procedure is "based on a feeling of pleasure or displeasure," as Henry Allison puts it, the judgment is aesthetic.[14] An object's beauty, in other words, prevents us from simply subsuming it under a concept and moving on. Kant accordingly describes aesthetic experience as a result of the "state of *free play* of the cognitive powers" (CPJ 5:217). Although what exactly causes this pleasure is much contested, it remains clear that aesthetic experience for Kant involves a kind of freedom: a suspension of the coercive power of the understanding over the imagination.

Later in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, Kant transitions from judgments of beauty generally to a discussion of the arts in particular. In this context, he amends his claim that humans educate themselves to peace through violence. He suggests instead that culture has the potential to free humans from the "absurd *natural predispositions* [that] put others of his own species in great misery through oppressive domination, barbaric wars, etc." (CPJ 5:430). More specifically, Kant here writes of an aspect of culture he calls the "discipline of our inclinations."[15] Included in this discipline are the fine arts and the sciences, which enable us to "make great headway against the tyranny of man's propensity to the senses, and so prepare him for a sovereignty in which reason alone is to dominate."[16]

[12] Quoted in Allison 1990b, 48. [13] See ibid., 49. [14] Ibid., 54.

[15] The discipline of the inclinations is one part of culture; the other part Kant calls the "culture of skill," which, like Kant's earlier concept of unsociable sociability, leads to increased efficiency and progress but generates inequality. See Deligiorgi 2005, 116.

[16] How Kant's description of our aesthetic experience of nature transfers to a philosophy of art is another highly contested topic that I leave aside for the purposes of this chapter.

Through culture, in other words, nature "strives to give us an education that makes us receptive to purposes higher than those that nature itself can provide" (CPJ 5:433). The fine arts, as Katerina Deligiorgi puts it, allow us to "exercise some *control* over our unsociable characteristics."[17] Or, as Allison says, art shows that the tyranny of the senses "may at least be mitigated by something like an aesthetic education." Kant's view of human nature as presented in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* thus "actually culminates in an account of the function of taste as helping to bring about the required transformation of human nature."[18] Building on his early suggestion that humans' shame at their nakedness prompts the sublimation of desire, the development of decency, and the beginnings of culture, Kant here suggests that culture helps educate humanity toward the fulfillment of the categorical imperative first intimated in the garden.

So, in the end, does religion. In his 1793 *Religion within the Boundaries of Pure Reason*, Kant suggests that the triumph of good requires "the setting up and diffusion of a society in accordance with, and for the sake of, the laws of virtue" (Rel 6:94).[19] To assist in establishing this society, Kant envisions a "true (visible) church that displays the (moral) kingdom of God" (Rel 6:101). Like Lessing, Kant praises Christianity for coming closest to this moral kingdom through its postulation of a "human being morally pleasing to God," namely Jesus.[20] The prototype Jesus represents, Kant says, can be found already in our reason, but he also admits to a "natural need of all human beings to demand for even the highest concepts and grounds of reason something that *the senses can hold on to*." To address this need, "some historical ecclesiastical faith or other, usually already at hand, must be used" (Rel 6:109). In other words, stories of Jesus' life – the narrative material at hand – can assist in creating a society that educates humanity toward morality. But, Kant continues, "the final purpose of even the reading of these holy books, or the investigation of their content, is to make better human beings; whereas their historical element, which

[17] Deligiorgi 2005, 116.

[18] Allison 1990b, 212. For a description of Kant's evolution on the question of historical moral progress especially as it regards his anthropological writings, see also Mensch 2014, 185–204.

[19] Eldridge lays out the metaphysical difficulties this range of claims produces as well as a range of scholarly attempts to resolve them; see Eldridge 2016, 77–80. On tensions between Kant's philosophy of history and his general architectonic, see also Beiser 2005, 219.

[20] Kant also gives a revised interpretation of the Genesis story in *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, together with a short commentary on origin stories generally; see Rel 6:18–20. Here it needs to be said that despite Lessing's demeaning characterization of the Hebrew conception of God as cited earlier, his view of Judaism is much more progressive than Kant's, as found in *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*; see, for instance, Rel 6:125.

contributes nothing to this end, is something in itself quite indifferent, and one can do with it what one wills" (Rel 6:111). The hope, as Eldridge puts it, is that humans will "increasingly 'dispense [with] the vehicle[s]' of ecclesiastical faith"; "sacred texts are to be read and understood not literally, but as aiming symbolically at the promotion of moral understanding."[21] As Kant himself says: "The leading-string of holy tradition, with its appendages, its statutes and observances, which in its time did good service, become bit by bit dispensable, yea, finally, when a human being enters upon his adolescence, turn into a fetter" (Rel 6:121). There will be, then, a "gradual transition from ecclesiastical faith to the universal religion of reason," which will, given humans' sensuous needs, never be complete but that millennia of education will at least bring closer (Rel 6:115). As was the case with Lessing's primers, the goal is to use the story to shed the story.

Both culture and religion, then, enable us to resist the tyranny of the senses in favor of embracing our rational essence. While there is ample evidence that Kant thought some education of human nature was possible, humans are in his view fundamentally divided both internally and socially; our faculties war with each other, and humans, in turn, war with each other. Progress happens through antagonism, and culture is achieved only if nature is subdued.[22] The education of humanity is ultimately achieved by overturning the tyranny of the senses.

5.4 Harmony through Beauty: Schiller and the Diagnosis of the Human Condition

Schiller began his professional academic life persuaded of Kant's theory of progress through antagonism. In his 1789 inaugural address as Professor of History at the University of Jena, Schiller proclaimed that "[t]he egoistic man may indeed pursue baser ends, but he unconsciously promotes splendid ones."[23] But the Terror convinced him otherwise. Schiller is, in effect, unwilling to justify the Terror as the latest and perhaps worst iteration of humans' unsocial sociability, itself only the next step on the path to progress. The culture that produced the Terror was, he instead concludes, itself a product of the Enlightenment's overemphasis on reason and the depiction of humans fundamentally at war with themselves and so

[21] Eldridge 2016, 93. [22] Deligiorgi 2005, 146.

[23] NA17: 375. "NA" (followed by volume and page number) refers to the *Nationalausgabe* (national edition) of Schiller's works: Friedrich Schiller, *Werke*, ed. Julius Petersen et al. *Nationalausgabe* (Weimar: Hermann Böhlaus, 1943–). For the translation of this page, see *Friedrich Schiller: Poet of Freedom*, trans. Caroline Stephan and Robert Traut (Washington, DC: Schiller Institute, 2015), 271.

with others. Although Schiller remained fundamentally convinced by central claims in Kant's moral philosophy, his *Aesthetic Letters* articulate a criticism of Kant reminiscent of Rousseau's criticism of Hobbes: that Kant's conjectural history, like that of Hobbes, had portrayed as human nature what was actually a symptom of modernity.[24]

The scathing denunciation of this modern condition with which the *Aesthetic Letters* begin rivals Rousseau's diagnosis in both rhetoric and scope. What first and foremost characterizes the modern condition, Schiller finds, is division. An excess of feeling has corrupted half the population into following "crude, lawless instincts"; an excess of cultivation has corrupted the other half into a "repugnant spectacle of lethargy" (NA20: 320/E 96).[25] Humans are divided within as well, living lives in which "enjoyment [is] divorced from labor, the means from the end, the effort from the reward" (NA20: 323/E 100).

Again following Rousseau, Schiller subsequently undertakes to trace backwards from this modern condition to a more accurate definition of human nature. The fact that these divisions occur on the individual, social, and political levels is itself evidence, he claims, of two drives present in the human psyche: the sensuous drive and the formal drive.[26] The sensuous drive "proceeds from the physical existence of man, or his sensuous nature" (NA20: 344/E 118). "Man in this state is nothing but a unity of quantity, an occupied moment of time"; he is limited and passive (NA20: 345/E 119). The formal drive proceeds from humans' rational nature. It affirms "his person among all his changes of condition" (NA20: 346/E 119) and provides universal laws for both knowledge and action. It is active and infinite.

So far Schiller's diagnosis resembles Kant's depiction of humans as divided between reason and instinct. His break from Kant comes in his claim that the sense drive should not be subordinated to the formal drive. Humans can, in fact, be just as enslaved to the formal drive and its moral law as they can be to the sense drive. "The first appearance of reason in man does not necessarily imply that he has started to become truly human," Schiller says. "This has to wait upon his freedom" (NA20: 390/E 158). Freedom, Schiller thus implies, is not synonymous with reason or with the

[24] Deligiorgi 2005, 134. The *Aesthetic Letters* were first published as *Über die aesthetische Erziehung des Menschen in einer Reihe von Briefen* in the January, February, and June 1795 installments of the second volume of Schiller's monthly, *Die Horen.*

[25] "E" (followed by page number) refers to the translations in Schiller, *Essays,* ed. Daniel O. Dahlstrom and Walter Hinderer (New York: Continuum, 1993).

[26] On Schiller's use of "drives," see Roehr 2003, 1; and Deligiorgi 2011, 496.

moral law but instead implies humans' ability to *choose* the moral law.[27] Freedom, in other words, means being constrained by neither instinct nor reason.

Instead of inferring from these two diametrically opposed drives that humans are fundamentally divided, Schiller argues that their presence suggests the existence of a third drive that can hold them in balance. Should there, Schiller postulates,

> be cases in which [the human] were to have this twofold experience *simultaneously*, in which he were to be at once conscious of his freedom and sensible of his existence: cases in which he could, at one and the same time, feel himself matter and come to know himself as mind; in such cases, and in such cases only, would he have a complete intuition of his human nature, and the object that afforded him this vision would become for him a symbol of his *accomplished destiny*. (NA20: 353/E 126)

This destiny is in fact accomplished in what Schiller calls the "play drive."[28] In the play drive, the formal and sensuous drives "act in concert"; in so doing, they "annul all constraint . . . and set man free both physically and morally" (NA20: 354/E 127). The idea of play as balancing sense and reason clearly has roots in Kant's description of aesthetic judgment as the "free play" of understanding and imagination in response to beauty. Indeed, Schiller goes on to claim that while the object of the sense drive is life and the object of the formal drive is form, the object of the play drive is beauty. Because beauty makes freedom possible and freedom differentiates humans from other animals, human nature is, in a sense, coextensive with beauty; "as soon as reason utters the pronouncement: let humanity exist, it has by that very pronouncement also promulgated the law: let there be beauty" (NA20: 354/E 129). "[R]eason also makes the pronouncement: with beauty man shall *only play*, and it is *with beauty only* that he shall play" (NA20: 359/E 131). "For, to mince matters no longer," Schiller concludes, "man only plays when he is in the fullest sense of the word a human being, and *he is only fully a human being when he plays*" (ibid.).[29]

[27] Kant himself makes a similar distinction in *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, but Schiller seems here to be objecting to Kant's earlier identification, in the second *Critique*, of the moral law with freedom; see Beiser 2005, 219–20.

[28] For a history of play within Schiller's thought and further connections to Kant's theory of play, see Sdun 1966, 4.

[29] Italics in original. Schiller was not always consistent in equating beauty and the play drive with human nature. He sometimes instead suggests that the highest human potential is achieved either through sublime resistance to nature or through a combination of the sublime and the beautiful. In the essay "Concerning the Sublime," for instance, he suggests that "[o]nly if the sublime is

5.5. Schiller and the Conjectural History of Play

Given play's status as humans' essence, what can we conclude about where humans as a species are and where we are going? How will the freedom achieved by play allow us to educate ourselves toward our highest perfection? Schiller addresses these questions in Letters 24–27 with his own conjectural history.

Like Lessing, Schiller divides the history of humanity into three stages. In the initial "physical" state, the human merely suffers "the dominion of nature" (NA20: 388/E 156). Everything is interpreted in terms of means and ends; "nothing exists for him except what furthers his own existence" (NA20: 388/E 157). Interaction with other humans, "far from enlarging him into a representative of the species, only confines him ever more narrowly within his own individuality" (NA20: 389/E 158). Schiller thus relegates the equivalent of Kant's "unsociable sociability" to humans' most primitive stage.

Kant, we remember, suggested that reason's stirring was the moment at which humans' essence was established in contrast to the natural world. True to his claim that reason can itself be tyrannical, Schiller's account of reason's first effects is less triumphant. Reason demands the absolute or that "which is grounded upon itself and necessary." Since this demand cannot be met in the physical world, the human is forced "to ascend out of a limited reality into the realm of ideas" (NA20: 390/E 158). Although this ascent is theoretically elevating, its initial effects are disastrous: "it can, through a misunderstanding . . . be directed toward physical life, and instead of making man independent plunge him into the most terrifying servitude" (NA20: 390/E 158–59).

What is the "misunderstanding" that causes such terror? Lessing had suggested that early humans could not recognize monotheism as a product of their own reasoning; Providence had been obliged to send them stories externalizing that idea into an independent, vengeful God appropriate for their developmental stage. Without referencing scripture specifically, Schiller makes a similar suggestion: "Even what is most sacred in man, the moral law, when it first makes its appearance in the life of sense, cannot escape such perversion. Since its voice is merely inhibitory, and against the interest of his animal self-love, it is bound to seem like something external to himself." As long as the voice articulating the moral law seems external,

married to the beautiful and our sensitivity to both has been shaped in equal measure" do humans meet their highest potential (NA20: 53/E 84).

the human feels only its fetters: "Without suspecting the dignity of the lawgiver within, he merely experiences its coercive force and feels the impotent persistence of a powerless subject" (NA20: 392/E 160). Because his senses are more familiar to him than his nascent rational powers, he projects physical existence onto the moral law: he "assigns to the law of necessity a beginning in time too, a *positive origin*" (ibid.). In so doing, he "forfeits his humanity by seeking a Godhead" outside of himself. "His concern is not with a holy, but merely with a powerful being"; his attitude toward this power is fearful and degraded (NA20: 393/E 161).

Humans are, then, in need of something to rescue them from this misunderstanding. Schiller's solution, again, is beauty. Beauty is not strictly reason or form; neither is it strictly sensuous matter. It is, as Schiller puts it, living form; it combines reason and the senses without allowing either to dominate. In achieving this synthesis, beauty proves that morality and nature need not be opposed. Beauty is "triumphant proof that passivity by no means excludes activity, nor matter form, nor limitation infinity – that, in consequence, the moral freedom of man is by no means abrogated through his inevitable dependence upon physical things" (NA20: 397/E 164). We can, beauty shows us, be free of both morality and nature by having both balanced and so suspended.

How, then, do we become conscious of beauty? Who is the teacher who puts its harmonizing powers at our disposal? Schiller's answer is our own senses.[30] The earliest humans relied primarily on touch, he suggests. "The object of touch is a force to which we are subjected"; there is, in other words, no imagination or creativity involved in touch. "The object of eye and ear," by contrast, requires "a form that we engender" (NA20: 400/E 167). Things we see and hear are "set at a distance from us. What we actually *see* with the eye is something different from the *sensation we receive*; for the mind leaps out across light to objects" (ibid.). So, while the most primitive human passively enjoyed by means of "tactile senses alone," he soon becomes aware of his own participation in the conversion of visual sensations into objects. In so doing, he becomes conscious of his own creative abilities. He experiences this conversion as evidence of his power because "in order to be object at all" – in order to be synthesized into a manifold rather than being raw intuition, to use Kant's terminology – the visual object "must be subjected to the power that is his" (NA20: 395/E 162–63). "From the moment man *sees an object*" as opposed to only sensing

[30] For a history of this kind of distinction among the senses and its philosophical relevance to Schiller's theory of semblance, see Wilkinson and Willoughby 1967, 284–85.

an unknown force, Schiller writes, "he is no longer in a merely physical state" (NA20: 394/E 162).

Once he becomes conscious of this creative power, "he is already aesthetically free and the play drive has started to develop" (NA20: 400/E 167). He begins to delight in objects purely for the sake of sight, an enjoyment evident "in his first crude attempts at *embellishing* his existence" (NA20: 405/E 172). He begins imitating nature, reproducing it in a way that shows his consciousness of his new, created reality, or what Schiller calls "semblance [*Schein*]" (ibid.).[31] Semblance gives the human a sphere in which he is sovereign and so gives him a sense of his autonomy: "The reality of things is the work of things themselves; the semblance of things is the work of man" (NA20: 399/E 166–67). The early human, in other words, avails himself "of the undisputed rights of ownership when he reclaims semblance from substance, and deals with it according to laws of his own" (NA20: 400/E 168).

The consequences of this aesthetic freedom and its corresponding play drive are profound. The human can now mediate nature's power over him by conceptualizing it; he realizes that he is "more than a match for any of nature's terrors once he knows how to give it form and convert it into an object of his contemplation." He recognizes that the fearful gods commanding adherence to the moral law are nothing but his own creation: "Now they cast off those ghastly masks that were the anguish of his childhood and surprise him with his own image by revealing themselves as projections of his own mind" (NA20: 395/E 163). He can now assert his dignity "vis-à-vis nature as force, and with noble freedom rises in revolt against his ancient gods" (ibid.). Schiller attributes the most momentous instance of this transformation to the ancient Greeks: the "monstrous divinity of the Oriental, which rules the world with the blind strength of a beast of prey, shrinks in the imagination of the Greeks into the friendly contours of a human being," and "the empire of the Titans falls" (ibid.).

At the same time as it allows him to domesticate his gods, the play drive allows the early human to ennoble his instincts. He begins to collect more than he needs and, through this "compulsion of superfluity" or "physical play," begins to loosen the relation between means and ends (NA20: 406/E 173). His imagination is initially limited to associating images familiar from his physical life, but it then "makes the leap to aesthetic play," explicitly associating ideas for the sake of creativity and constructing a new realm of meaning. The human now sees the world as giving him material "*for*

[31] Tauber traces the roots of Schiller's use of *Schein* to Kant's aesthetic philosophy in Tauber 2006, 27.

possible shaping" (NA20: 408/E 174). He seeks objects "not because they give him something to enjoy passively, but because they provide an incentive to respond actively" (ibid.). Activity for the sake of beauty transforms functional objects; weapons must be not only deadly but also adorned. The play drive transforms behavior as well. Leaps of joy become dance, involuntary movements are honed into gestures, cries of emotion "begin to obey the laws of rhythm, and to take on the contours of song" (NA20: 409/E 175).

The transition from passivity to activity prompts a parallel evolution in the early human's self-conception. "Soon [Schiller writes] he is no longer content that things should please him; he himself wants to please" (NA20: 408/E 174). Initially he desires to please through "that which is *his*" but "finally through that which *he* is" (ibid.); he develops a sense of his personhood and of the respect he deserves. Kant, we remember, located dawning consciousness of the categorical imperative at humans' first use of animal skins. Schiller instead locates it at the moment that desire is converted into love. Once he wants to please through who he is, the early human is no longer driven only by passion. Instead, "soul looks deep into soul, and out of a selfish exchange of lust there grows a generous interchange of affection" (NA20: 409/E 175). He knows he can satisfy his sexual desires by force, but he prefers to inspire love: "[L]ust he can steal, but love must come as a gift" (ibid.). "From being a force impinging upon feeling [Schiller concludes] he must become a form confronting the mind: he must be willing to concede freedom, because it is freedom he wishes to please" (NA20: 409/E 176). From this revolutionary moment of mutual recognition of freedom follows the development of social virtues such as justice, magnanimity, and forgiveness (ibid.).

The fact that Schiller conceives of freedom as most fully realized in this aesthetic state does not compromise his Kantian conception of the third "moral" state.[32] Morality is still universal and impersonal; it makes demands regardless of an individual's experience or preference. Once the moral sphere is freed from its initial contamination by the sensual sphere – once humans resist infecting the idea of the divine with sensual, temporal imagery – humans will be able to see the moral law, including its impersonal dictates, as a product of their own reasoning. They will then be able to obey its prescriptions autonomously. Our consciousness of our autonomy

[32] In his 1793 essay, "On Grace and Dignity" (*Über Anmut und Würde*), Schiller had described himself as "completely of one mind with the most *rigorous moralists*" (NA20: 283); see *Schiller's "On Grace and Dignity" in Its Cultural Context*, ed. Jane Curran and Christoph Fricker (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2005), 149.

also teaches us that we can transcend nature when necessary by acting according to the moral law against self-preservation. Schiller writes: "Man in his *physical* state merely suffers the dominion of nature; he emancipates himself from this dominion in the *aesthetic* state, and he acquires mastery over it in the *moral*" (NA20: 388/E 156). But this mastery should not characterize our daily experience. Moments when mastery over nature is required are exceptional, given to us, Schiller sometimes suggests, as a reminder that we are also capable of something higher. But true human freedom occurs at the level of beauty.

As a corrective to modernity's divisiveness, then, Schiller prescribes art. Viewing *Juno Ludovisi* can put us "at one and the same time in a state of utter repose and supreme agitation" (NA20: 359–60/E 132), a state of "naught" that contains all actions "*in potentia*" and makes us ready to act in whatever way is required. The perfectly executed idyll, Schiller argues in "On Naïve and Sentimental Poetry" (*Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung*), can "lead us forward to our maturity" by emphasizing the "pastoral innocence in those subjected to culture" (NA20: 472/E 232). When tragedy inspires awe for heroes who pursue principle over self-preservation, it prepares us to act with dignity in our own lives (NA20: 51/E 82). In "On the Art of Tragedy" (*Über die tragische Kunst*). Schiller suggests that tragedy can also teach us to "lose our miniscule selves in the context of a larger whole" and thus put us "in the position of treating ourselves as we do others" (NA20: 151/E 4). In general, however, art can minimize our struggle with our self-love by teaching us to "desire *more nobly*, so that [we] may not need *to will sublimely*" (NA20: 388/E 156). We will be called on to resist our desires less often if we allow art to educate them first.

As a consequence of this vision of individual human education, Schiller rejects Kant's hope for both political education through war and moral education through a church triumphant. He imagines instead an aesthetic state in which beauty produces harmony in the individual and so in the society. The perfect balance of reason and sensuousness will prevent humans from reverting to privilege and autocracy. Through exposure to beauty, both duty and desire will be moderated, allowing citizens to live together peacefully (NA20: 411–12/E 177–78). Beauty alone, he concludes, "can confer upon [humans] a *social character*" (NA20: 410/E 176). In response to the question of whether such a state can actually exist, Schiller suggests that "as a realized fact, we are likely to find it, like the pure

church and the pure republic, only in some few chosen circles."[33] The aesthetic state, it seems, is a kind of conjectural future – a story we must tell ourselves in order to come as close as possible to its realization. Even if it cannot be achieved, its conceptualization already facilitates our development by showing us that art can educate both the individual human being and humanity itself.

Like other conjectural historians before him, Schiller is careful to circumscribe the aspirations of his account. The progress of human development he described in these letters "is not, I admit, to be found exactly as I have presented it here among any particular people or in any particular age. It is purely an idea; but an idea with which experience is, in certain particulars, in complete accord" (NA20: 389–90/E 158). But Schiller's claim that aesthetic creation is at the foundation of human nature gives his disclaimer new significance. Schiller agrees with his predecessors that conjectural histories can help us understand ourselves, but we need not see the lack of concrete evidence as a weakness. Stories are not mere heuristic devices to be discarded once human reason can conceptualize their truth rationally. On the contrary, creatively transforming historical evidence in the interest of self-interpretation is precisely the kind of exercise that highlights our creative essence. It prevents us from seeking "only the real" and so neglecting our autonomous capacities (NA20: 399/E 166). Schiller's conjectural history is, in other words, deeply consonant with the rest of his philosophy. Narrating our own history while acknowledging our active role in that narration achieves a level of truth in Schiller's philosophy precisely because our ability to convert "the real" into a higher, more autonomous truth in the realm of semblance is what makes us who we are.

Schiller shares with his predecessors the belief that the right story will bring us to the right description of ourselves – in Schiller's case to a description of ourselves as storytellers, as constructors of our own history and guarantors of our own value. We are, fundamentally, creatures who play. Artists can teach us, but our own playful essences, when allowed to develop and thrive, can allow us to educate ourselves. The play's the thing. Once humans realize this, our education is almost complete.

[33] In a footnote that suggests his influence on Hegel's dialectic, Schiller claims that what is true at the world-historical level is also true at the level of perception. The physical, aesthetic, and moral stages, he says, are to be found whether we are considering "the development of mankind as a whole, or of the whole development of a single individual." But all three stages are "also to be distinguished in each single act of perception, and are, in a word, the necessary conditions of all knowledge that comes to us through the senses" (NA20: 394/E 162).

CHAPTER 6

Herder's Theory of Organic Forces and Its Kantian Origins

Nigel DeSouza

Anyone familiar with the relationship between Immanuel Kant and Johann Gottfried Herder will, of course, know that Kant wrote two highly critical reviews, in 1784 and 1785, of the first two parts (1784, 1785) of Herder's most important work, *Ideas for the Philosophy of the History of Humanity*.[1] In his reviews, Kant takes issue both with Herder's substantive philosophical claims, which he sees as dogmatic, and with Herder's style and methodology, which he characterizes as poetic rather than strictly philosophical (RHe 8:54–55, 60). While the criticisms make sense in light of the fact that it is the *critical* Kant who is making them, the differences between the two men in fact date back many years. In a letter to Herder from May 1768, Kant speaks highly of Herder's first major work, *On recent German literature* (1767–68),[2] but expresses the desire that Herder should rein in his "fertile mind" in order to "achieve that gentle but sensitive tranquility which is the contemplative life of a philosopher, just the opposite of the life that mystics dream about" (Corr. 10:73–74). At the same time, Kant also expresses the hope, based on a poem of Herder's in which he put some of Kant's ideas to verse, that he might see Herder "become in time a master of that sort of philosophical poetry in which Pope excels," which seems to intimate that he sees Herder as more of a poet than a philosopher (Corr. 10:73). In his reply, from November 1768, Herder modestly belittles his first work as "little more than a youthful first step" and proceeds to discuss some of the philosophers Kant had mentioned in his letter (Montaigne, Hume) as well as others (Rousseau, Shaftesbury), all of whom had inspired him in his own "favorite

[1] Johann Gottfried Herder, *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*, Part I (Riga/Leipzig: Hartknoch, 1784); Part II (Riga/Leipzig: Hartknoch, 1785).

[2] *Über die neuere Deutsche Litteratur*, in J. G. Herder, *Sämmtliche Werke*, vols. 1 and 2, ed. Bernhard Suphan (Berlin: Weidmann, 1877), vol. 1, 131–531; vol. 2, 1–108 (hereafter this standard edition is cited as "SWS" followed by the volume and page numbers).

occupation" that he claims to share with Kant, namely "human philosophy [*Menschliche Philosophie*]" (Corr. 10:78). Despite this common interest, however, Herder is not shy about making it known to Kant that he does not necessarily share the latter's approach or views, claiming that he has "misgivings about several of [Kant's] philosophical hypotheses and proofs" on this subject (Corr. 10:78). These differences, of which both Kant and Herder were aware from very early on in their relationship, came to a head in Herder's *Ideas* and Kant's reviews.

That relationship began at the University of Königsberg, where Herder attended Kant's lectures on metaphysics, ethics, physical geography, physics, logic, and mathematics from 1762 to 1764, from which Herder's often instructive notes have been preserved.[3] Herder was also an avid reader of Kant's treatises from this period and prior to it. He assimilated so many of the pre-critical Kant's ideas that his most famous biographer, Rudolf Haym, referred to him as having been and having remained a "Kantian from the year 1765" (Haym 1877:41). Thus Kant's reviews of Herder's *Ideas* did not, in fact, simply derive from enduring differences in their approach to philosophy; the picture is more complicated than that. As we shall see later, Kant also saw in Herder's thought some of his very own earlier, often dogmatically metaphysical pre-critical ideas reflected back at him, ideas that the critical Kant had long since abandoned. But Herder, *pace* Haym, incorporated these ideas into his own novel approach to philosophy that went far beyond what he appropriated from the pre-critical Kant. Against the backdrop of this complicated and long-standing relationship between Kant and Herder, I want in what follows to provide the reader of Kant's reviews, whom I assume to be well acquainted with Kant's philosophy and considerably less well acquainted with Herder's, a reconstruction of some of the key ideas in Herder's *Ideas* that are the object of Kant's criticism in his reviews (especially the first). While there has been excellent scholarly attention paid to Kant's disagreements with Herder (both in his reviews and in his other writings on the philosophy of history) over the cultural, moral, and political questions one more naturally associates with the philosophy of history,[4] I wish to focus here on Kant's criticisms of those

[3] There are several volumes (24, 27, 28, and 29) of the *Akademieausgabe* of Kant's collected writings that contain Herder's lecture notes, but they are not without editorial problems. Steve Naragon is carefully revising Herder's notes from Kant's metaphysics lectures, and Werner Stark is editing Herder's notes from Kant's physical geography lectures. Both projects can be accessed via the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy's Kant webpage: kant.bbaw.de.

[4] See, e.g., Piirimäe 2017; Wood 2009; Beiser 2011, chap. 3; Sikka 2011, chap. 2; and more generally on Herder and the pre-critical Kant, Zammito 2002.

ideas of Herder's that *underpin* these more familiar aspects of his philosophy of history, in particular his conception of organic forces and how they unfold in the natural world. My objective here is to lay out for the reader the foundations of Herder's radically naturalistic approach to the philosophy of history that is so very much at odds with Kant's approach to this subject. The central underlying issue here is that of interaction or, more broadly, the relationship not just between soul and body, but also between forces and matter.

The most fitting way into our consideration of these ideas of Herder's is the "human philosophy" mentioned earlier. In that same letter to Kant, Herder explains that it is precisely because this philosophy was his favorite occupation that he assumed his "spiritual office" (as a Lutheran clergyman, but he was also a teacher at a school in Riga following his studies in Königsberg): "I knew (and I confirm it every day with new experience) that . . . I could use this position most effectively to bring culture and human understanding to the noble segment of human beings that we call the people [*Volk*]" (Corr. 10:78, tm[5]). But all this practical activity only made clearer to Herder how much he still needed to learn and think about the deeper philosophical issues that informed it. Many of his writings during this period, especially his *Diary of my Voyage in the year 1769*, written after he finally resigned his position in Riga, testify to this same passion for *Bildung* (education) that he expressed to Kant. Even more numerous, however, are his myriad plans for working out the proper philosophical basis of any practical projects of *Bildung*. Two common threads to these plans are the study of the human soul and the study of history.

> The human soul, in itself and in its appearance on this earth, its sensuous tools [*Werkzeuge*] and weights [*Gewichte*] and hopes and pleasures, and everything that can make human beings happy here is my first prospect . . . For this I want to collect data in the history of all periods: each one is to furnish me with the image of its own mores [*Sitten*], uses, virtues, vices, and joys [*Glückseligkeiten*].
>
> If I could be and were permitted to be a philosopher; a book on the human soul, full of observations and experiences, that should be my book! I would write it as a human being and for human beings! It should instruct and shape [*bilden*]! Contain the principles of psychology, and according to the development of the soul also ontology, cosmology, theology, physics! It should become a living logic, aesthetics, historical science and theory of art! From every sense develop a fine art! And from every power [*Kraft*] of the soul would emerge a science! And from all a history of erudition and science

[5] I use the abbreviation "tm" for "translation modified" throughout this chapter.

> in general! And a history of the human soul in general, in periods and peoples! What a book![6]

Herder sought to understand both the nature of the human soul ("in itself") and the various cultural forms it assumed over the course of history ("in its appearance"). His main framework for the first was the metaphysics of Wolff and especially Baumgarten that he learned under Kant, but this he supplemented with his own study of Kant, Leibniz, Spinoza, Hume, Shaftesbury, and others. But this study was not alone sufficient for developing a practical project for *Bildung*, for no universal and timeless moral principles could be simply derived from its theoretical basis (cf. DeSouza 2014, 155–57). Rather, equally important here is an understanding of how any culturally productive soul is itself anchored in a cultural setting at a particular point in space and time (cf. DeSouza 2017, 67–69). Over the course of the 1760s and 1770s, Herder works out many of his ideas on both these topics in several short philosophical sketches[7] and in a few major treatises, including *This too a Philosophy of History for the Formation of Humanity* (1774) and *On the Cognition and Sensation of the Human Soul* (1778).[8] All these reflections and writings, as we shall have occasion to see later, can plausibly be viewed as preparatory work for Herder's magnum opus, *Ideas for the Philosophy of History of Humanity*, which in so many ways is the coming to fruition of the overarching project of a book on the human soul and its history that Herder speaks of so passionately in the *Diary*. In Parts I and II of *Ideas*, however, Herder goes far beyond the nature of the human soul and its cultural appearances. He develops a radically naturalistic view of human history by embedding the latter within a broader, novel account of nature and life and their historical development on Earth.

[6] J. G. Herder, *Werke*, vol. 9/2: *Journal meiner Reise im Jahr 1769. Pädagogische Schriften*, ed. Rainer Wisbert with assistance from Klaus Pradel (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1997), 30, 33–34.

[7] See, e.g., *Plato sagte: daß unser Lernen bloß Erinnerung sei* (1766/1768), in Heinz 1994, 175–82; *Über Leibnitzens Grundsätze von der Natur und Gnade* (1769) and *Grundsätze der Philosophie* (1769), in J. G. Herder, *Werke,* vol. 2: *Herder und die Anthropologie der Aufklärung*, ed. Wolfgang Pross (München: Hanser, 1987), 49–56 (hereafter "HWP 2").

[8] J. G. Herder, *Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschheit: Beytrag zu vielen Beyträge des Jahrhunderts* (Riga: Hartknoch, 1774); *Vom Erkennen und Empfinden der menschlichen Seele: Bemerkungen und Träume* (Riga: Hartknoch, 1778); both works can be found in J. G. Herder, *Werke*, vol. 4: *Schriften zu Philosophie, Literatur, Kunst und Altertum, 1774–1787*, ed. Jürgen Brummack and Martin Bollacher (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1994), 9–107, 327–93 (hereafter "FA 4").

6.1 The Pre-Critical Kant and the Origin of Herder's Concept of Organic Forces

Both in the Preface and in the first chapter of Book I of *Ideas*, however, Herder's Spinozism is made clear; this radical naturalism notwithstanding, he wishes the reader to be under no illusions as to his starting point: "Let no one be misled, therefore, by my occasionally employing the term nature, personified. Nature is no independent entity; but *God is all in his works*" (*Ideas* 17/ix, tm).[9] Now, to be sure, this is not a Spinozism that aims to be interpretatively accurate; rather, Herder makes use of ideas he takes from Spinoza in order to develop his own, dynamic conception of nature, as he will also work out in his 1787 treatise *God: some conversations* (Herder informs us himself of this plan in the Preface).[10] Fundamental to this dynamic conception of nature is the concept of force, or *Kraft*,[11] which Herder employs as ontologically basic, effectively abandoning the substance ontology of the so-called Leibniz-Wolffian school philosophy (*Schulphilosophie*) he had learned via Baumgarten's *Metaphysica* (used by Kant as a textbook in his metaphysics lectures; cf. Heinz 1994, xxiii, 102). Herder rejects any dualistic conception of nature or the universe as consisting of thoroughly ontologically distinct thinking and extended substances. And he rejects any notion of matter according to which it is conceived of as dead and inert. Rather, as Herder explains in the Preface and in Book I, Chapter 1, God's creation begins with a single force that self-divides or unfolds into a system of forces. Just as Rousseau had begun his famous *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* with the address "O Man, whatever Land you may be from, whatever may be your opinions, listen; Here is your history such as I believed I read it, not in the Books by your kind, who are liars, but in Nature, which never lies," Herder goes even further, in returning to the very creation of the universe.[12] This may seem excessive, not to mention excessively ambitious, but, like Rousseau, Herder

[9] All references to *Ideas* include two page references: number(s) before the slash refer to pages of *Werke,* vol. 6, ed. Martin Bollacher (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1989) and number(s) after the slash refer to pages of J. G. Herder, *Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of Man*, trans. T. Churchill (London: J. Johnson, 1800).

[10] *Ideas* 17/ix–x; J. G. Herder, *Gott: einige Gespräche* (Gotha: Ettinger, 1787). Herder's involvement, through *Gott*, in the *Pantheismusstreit* is discussed in Bell 1984; Beiser 1987; and Heinz 2016. We will not consider this work here for reasons of space and because it appears *after* Kant's two reviews.

[11] I shall almost always translate this term as "force," although occasionally I will use "power." The reasons for this choice will hopefully become evident in the course of this chapter.

[12] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discours sur l'origine et les fondemens de l'inégalité parmi les hommes* (Amsterdam: Rey, 1755); for the translated sentences cited here, see J. J. Rousseau, *The Discourses and Other Early Political Writings*, ed. Victor Gourevitch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 133; for Rousseau's profound influence on Herder, see DeSouza 2012a.

is combining (conjectural) history with ontology here. Just as Rousseau uses history in the form of the pure state of nature to reveal what uncorrupted human nature is really like, Herder is providing a conception of the universe as a system of forces because human beings themselves, as we shall see, are to be fundamentally understood within these terms.

Long before human beings enter onto the scene, however, the divine creation begins with the universe itself and with the formation of our solar system and planet Earth, which forms the subject of Book I of *Ideas*. Herder's main source for his understanding of how this process of formation occurs and by means of which primordial forces arise is none other than Kant, in a work from 1755 that Herder studied and that he explicitly cites and praises at the beginning of Chapter 1, namely Kant's *Universal Natural History and Theory of the Heavens*. The instructive subtitle of this work reads, "Essay on the constitution and the mechanical origin of the whole universe according to Newtonian principles." Kant's hypothesis (which came to be known as the "Kant-Laplace nebular hypothesis") is, briefly, that the universe and the formation of its various bodies, including our solar system, can be explained by the action of the forces of attraction and repulsion on an initial material chaos and the laws of motion that result from these forces (UNH 1:225–27). These laws of motion were not specifically chosen by God according to the "Principle of the Best," as Leibniz believed,[13] but were rather, as Kant maintained in another treatise with which Herder was intimately acquainted,[14] "non-morally dependent" on God, i.e., necessarily contained in the very concept of matter (but still demonstrative of a divine providence that chose to create matter, given the order to which these laws would give rise) (OPA 2:100, 99). Herder has all this in mind when he opens Chapter 1, Book I with the assertion: "Our philosophy of the history of humankind must begin from heaven, if it is in any measure to deserve that name" (*Ideas* 21/1, tm). He proceeds to give a brief summary of Kant's account in the *Universal Natural History*, in which he speaks of the "heavenly forces that pervade the whole universe" and the "simple, eternal, and perfect laws of the formation [*Bildung*] and motion of the planets" (*Ideas* 21–22/1, tm). Herder emphasizes that it is one

[13] See G. W. Leibniz, *Discours de métaphysique,* §19, and *Principes de la nature et de la grace,* §11, in *Die philosophischen Schriften*, ed. C. I. Gerhardt (Hildesheim: Olms, 1965), vol. IV, 444–45; vol. VI, 603.

[14] OPA 2:63–163; Herder's *Versuch über das Sein* (*Essay on Being*, 1763) critically engages with this text and maintains that the concept of being is (ostensibly oxymoronically) the most sensuous concept and that it is susceptible to no philosophical proof but is rather known and experienced with sensuous certainty; J. G. Herder, *Werke*, vol. 1: *Frühe Schriften: 1764–1772*, ed. Ulrich Gaier (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1985), 9–21 (hereafter "FA 1").

and same force that permeates both the smallest and largest entities, from the grain of sand to the sun. Further, turning to a wholly different level, the force that thinks in him, he says, is "as eternal as that which holds together the sun and the stars … as eternal as the mind of God" (*Ideas* 24/3). The laws of the universe and the laws through which one exists, both mentally and physically, are all eternal, all deriving from the same fundamental force. Herder expresses this in the following way at the end of the chapter:

> For all being is alike, an indivisible concept [*Begriff*]; in the greatest, as well as in the smallest, founded on the same laws. Thus the structure of the universe confirms the eternity of the core of my being, of my intrinsic [*inneres*] life. Wherever or whatever I may be, I shall be, as I now am, a force in the universal system of forces, a being in the immeasurable harmony of a world of God. (*Ideas* 24/3, tm)

Herder is reflecting here a view he worked out in his early philosophical sketches according to which the universe is the external manifestation in space, time, and force of the one, divine thought or concept.[15] Clearly going beyond anything the pre-critical Kant himself claimed, his inspiration here is rather his particular interpretation of Spinoza, according to which God alone fills every part of the universe (*Ideas* 22/2). As he explains in a letter to Jacobi from February 1784, God is "the highest, most lively, most active *One* [*lebendigste, tätigste* Eins] – not *in* all things, as though they were outside him, but rather *through* all things."[16] God thus does not stand outside and above his creation but is rather immanent in and identical to it (cf. Bollacher 1989, 948).

Starting from this conception of a single, divine force that permeates the created universe, Herder explores in Parts I and II of *Ideas* the way this force unfolds itself and gives rise to the diversity of the inanimate and, especially, animate world. The force unfolds *itself* in virtue of its own dynamic nature, the first example of this being the organized universe as produced by the independent activity on an initial chaos of the forces of attraction and repulsion and the laws of motion to which these give rise. On Earth too, Herder writes, "[n]ature pursues her grand course, and produces the greatest variety from an infinitely progressive simplicity … [t]he mass of active forces and elements, from which the Earth was formed, contained, probably, as

[15] See *Grundsätze der Philosophie* (HWP 2:52–56); *Plato sagte: daß unser Lernen bloß Erinnerung sei* (Heinz 1994, 175–82); *Zum Sinn des Gefühls* (HWP 2:233–42). For analysis of these texts, see Heinz 1994; DeSouza 2016a.

[16] J. G. Herder, *Briefe: Gesamtausgabe 1763–1803*, vol. 5, ed. Wilhelm Dobbek and Günter Arnold (Weimar: Böhlaus, 1986), 29 (hereafter "DA 5").

a chaos, all that was to be, and could be, on it" (*Ideas* 30–31/8, tm). The crowning glory of this process will be the appearance of human beings, all the previous stages of development on the planet having laid the necessary foundations for their existence.[17] It is important to remember that although Herder is trying to give a genetic and developmental account of the history of Earth and life on it, he does not propose anything like a Darwinian theory of evolution because he still believes in a chain of being. The creative force unfolds into different forces that give rise to different stages, which form a logical sequence with each being necessary for the next but without necessarily directly evolving out of each other. The scale of beings that Herder refers to several times in *Ideas* proceeds from stones to crystals, metals, plants, animals, and human beings. Whereas in his early philosophical sketches, which were often concerned with the soul-body relationship, Herder had spoken primarily of the material forces of attraction and repulsion and of the soul's sensuous forces and force or power of thought or representation,[18] in *Ideas* he follows along the same lines he began to take in the 1778 edition of *On the Cognition and Sensation of the Human Soul* and speaks consistently of all forces as living or organic.[19] This even extends to *in*animate nature, in which Herder observes an obscure but powerful drive to organization, a forming force that manifests itself in salts and crystals (*Ideas* 105/63).

Now this conception of organic forces, which is so foundational to Parts I and II of *Ideas*, has, despite the novelty of its scope in this work, deep roots in Herder's philosophical development. Herder's most revealing expression of this conception in *Ideas* reads as follows: "The active forces of nature are all, in their own way, living: there must be something in their interior [*Innern*] that corresponds to their effects without; as Leibniz assumed and as the entire analogy seems to teach us" (*Ideas* 100–1/59, tm). In his earlier philosophical sketches and treatises, Herder had drawn on Leibniz's concept of force or entelechy in general, his concept of the monad with its inner derivative active and passive forces, and, especially, his analogical reasoning from our own experience of such an inner force (i.e., our mind) to the positing of such forces in other substances or in bodies.[20] But, in order eventually to arrive at his particular conception of nature as a living, dynamic whole, one fundamental modification needed

[17] Herder attempts to show the extent to which an allegorically interpreted Genesis story matches this natural history of the planet and the emergence of life on it in Book 10 of *Ideas*. Kant's *Conjectural beginning of human history* is in part a satire on this attempt.

[18] See the texts cited in footnotes 7 and 15.

[19] See FA 4:329–31; HWP 2:187–89.

[20] See, for example, G. W. Leibniz, *Philosophical essays*, ed. Roger Ariew and Daniel Garber (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1989), 161.

to be made to this Leibnizian inheritance: the rejection both of the windowlessness of monads and of Leibniz's distinction between real metaphysical forces and bodies as well-grounded phenomena and the replacement of these doctrines with a new conception of interaction between forces and matter.

And it was, again, none other than Kant who had pointed the way for Herder. In the context of what has been seen as his pre-critical project to reconcile Leibniz and Newton (cf. Friedman 1992, 1–52; Schönfeld 2000), Kant developed the hypothesis, in his 1756 *Physical Monadology* (as also presented in his metaphysics lectures), that an unextended monad's impenetrability, and hence its spatial extension and solidity, is derived from the activity of its repulsive forces (Ak. 1:480–82; MH 28:44–46). This hypothesis offered a way to conceive of the relationship between metaphysical forces and physical bodies or matter that also allowed for the physical reality of the latter, as sensuously experienced. It inscribes itself in the same line of thought initiated by Wolff when he expressed his doubts to Leibniz about *all* monads having the same kind of force, that is, a force of representation, and asked whether the element of bodies should not rather have a "force of bodies" that shows itself in movement.[21]

The next step involved conceiving of how the soul could interact with the body. While Kant had entertained hypotheses about soul-body interaction or physical influx throughout the pre-critical period (cf. Ak. 1:21; NE 1: 415ff), his discussion both in the metaphysics lectures that Herder attended and in the 1766 *Dreams of a Spirit Seer* had the greatest influence on Herder, as Herder's instructive review of the latter reveals.[22] In *Dreams*, Kant's starting point is a dualist one. We have two kinds of experience, he believes: on the one hand, we have internal experience of our own thinking and willing that we can attribute to the activity of an immaterial substance such as our soul or spirit that has a power of thought; on the other, we have external, spatial experience of material substances as impenetrable bodies, which possess the forces of attraction and repulsion, and of their movement and interaction as governed by the laws of motion that derive from

[21] Christian Wolff, *Anmerckungen zur Deutschen Metaphysik* (Frankfurt am Main, 1740), 369; and *Vernünfftige Gedancken von Gott, der Welt und der Seele des Menschen, auch allen Dingen überhaupt* (Halle im Magdeburg, 1751[4] [1719[1]]), 370–71 (superscripts refer to the ordinal number of the edition); reprint: Hildesheim: Olms, 1983. Wolff's misgivings were duly noted by Herder; see HWP 2:32; cf. DeSouza 2012b, 778.

[22] J. G. Herder, "Rezension von *Träume eines Geistersehers*" (1766), in SWS 1:125–30. In what follows, I am drawing on analysis presented in DeSouza 2016b.

these forces. We do not have external experience of spirits, however, because they do not display the only form of experience we have of activity in space, which is that of bodies (DSS 2:320–22). As far as the soul-body relationship is concerned, Kant concludes the treatise by warning that while we may recognize the *phenomenon* of our thinking and willing moving our body, we cannot understand it, for all judgments that try to explain how this occurs can only ever be fictions (*Erdichtungen*) because, given our two types of experience, there is no way for us to conceive of soul-body interaction short of inventing (*dichten*) relations of cause and effect, e.g., by inventing "fundamental forces" (*Grundkräfte*) to explain it (DSS 2:371).

However, in the first part of the treatise, to which Kant himself gives the title "dogmatic," he entertains some hypotheses about how this might occur. After imagining the existence of two parallel material and immaterial/spiritual worlds operating according to two sets of causal laws – laws of contact and impact and pneumatic laws, respectively – Kant also entertains another role for immaterial beings: they are, he writes, "the ground of *life* in the universe" (DSS 2:329). Kant had earlier explained that while it is hard, but not unintelligible, to imagine a spirit-substance occupying a space, when it comes to the soul, its location is easier to specify: "Where I feel, it is there that *I am*" (DSS 2:324). Kant gives several examples of how one can feel oneself in different parts of one's body and concludes that the soul *permeates* the body: "*My soul is wholly in my whole body, and wholly in each of its parts*" (DSS 2:325). This experience and that of the natural world, especially of animals, lead Kant to claim that he is very inclined to assert the existence of immaterial natures, such as his soul, which are principles of life.

But Kant is also keenly aware of the difficulty this poses with respect to conceiving the interaction between immaterial and material substances, a problem to which he immediately turns his attention. His proposal is as follows:

> It seems that a spirit-being is present in the matter, with which it is combined, in the most intimate fashion; and it seems not to act on those forces which inhere in the elements in virtue of which they are related to each other; it seems rather to operate on the inner principles of their state. For every substance, including even a simple element of matter, must after all have some kind of inner activity as the ground of its producing an external effect, and that in spite of the fact that I cannot specify in what that inner activity consists. (DSS 2:328)

Kant appends a footnote to the last sentence of this passage in which he explicitly discusses Leibniz (as his obvious source) and his thesis with respect to the power of representation (*Vorstellungskraft*) as the inner ground of all of a substance's external relations and their changes. What Kant seems to be envisioning here is that in the case of both souls or soul-monads and physical monads, each has an inner state that consists of both representations of varying degrees of obscurity/clarity and inner activity—analogous to both the series of perceptions and the appetition that governs their change that Leibniz attributes to the monad— and that the soul's inner principle should be able to affect the inner principle of physical monads, whose external activity is that defined by their attractive and repulsive forces, namely impenetrability, motion, and so on. The serious interpretative problems with this account for a Leibnizian notwithstanding, it evidently greatly appealed to Herder as a potential explanation of soul-body interaction. We also see the same proposal Kant makes here repeated in Herder's metaphysics lecture notes (cf. MH 28:146). But our best evidence of its influence on Herder is in his review of *Dreams*. After dismissing Kant's two-world hypothesis in that review, Herder turns to this proposal: "[T]he soul can be most inwardly present to the body such that it has an effect on [*würkt*] the inner principle of its matter: and this inner state we can think of in nothing but representations" (SWS 1:128). Herder immediately adds: "These are the author's new and very attractive hypotheses" (ibid.).

Herder would go on to assimilate and modify these ideas, developing his own conception of the soul-body relationship in further philosophical sketches from the late 1760s. One key modification is his rejection of Kant's starting point of the idea of the soul as a spirit or as a substance entirely distinct from the body, which remained a valid proposal for Kant even if he had intended his dogmatic musings in *Dreams* about pneumatic laws and a spirit-community (*Geistergemeinschaft*) to be taken tongue in cheek (DSS 2:350). Rather, Herder agrees with Leibniz that our only knowledge of souls is of souls as joined to bodies, but he will claim that the soul and the body, given their ontological identity insofar as they both ultimately are constituted by forces, should naturally be able mutually to influence one another. In "On Leibniz's Principles of Nature and Grace" (1769), Herder explicitly rejects the windowlessness of monads, insisting, with Leibniz, that the soul represents the outside world but, against Leibniz, that these representations, far from being entirely internally generated by the soul's appetition, are rather directly caused by the body and its senses. Similarly, Herder accepts Leibniz's assertion that the soul is

the principle of life and organization of the body (insofar as the dominant soul-monad is the principle of unity of the mass of an infinity of monads surrounding it that constitute its organic body), but he resolutely rejects the doctrine of preestablished harmony according to which the soul and the body act according to their own sets of laws and thus only appear to interact.[23] Rather, as Herder explains here and works out in several other short pieces from the 1760s,[24] just as God realizes himself in the universe qua external manifestation of his one divine thought, the soul with its one thought or thought-force is the principle of life and source of the organization of the body insofar as it realizes itself by actually building a body for itself – by harnessing the forces of attraction and repulsion in matter – through whose senses it is then able to engage with the outside world. This very process of the soul's forming power, an idea Herder originally drew from Shaftesbury, whom he deeply admired, is in fact one to which we, in principle, have access.[25] As Herder explains in "On the Sense of Touch" (1769), although we are too scattered outside ourselves by our privileging of the sense of sight to do so, a blind person might be able to remember, via the sense of touch, how their soul constructed a body for itself, for it is this sense that, as it were, bridges the thought-force or power of representation of the soul and the material forces of attraction and repulsion of matter.[26] This theory is also repeated in *Ideas*, and when Herder claims there that the soul builds itself a body, he makes sure to clarify that he does not mean "the rational soul" or "the faculty of reason"; rather, he explicitly aligns himself with what he calls "the most ancient philosophy on Earth" (among whose advocates he names Aristotle), which understands the soul to be the "principle of life [*Lebensprincipium*]" (*Ideas* 172/111–12, 273/178–79). The faculty of reason only comes later and remains connected to the whole body on which it remains dependent (*Ideas* 273/179).

[23] *Über Leibnitzens Grundsätze von der Natur und Gnade*, in HWP 2:49–51; cf. DeSouza 2012b, 2016a, 108–11.

[24] E.g., *Grundsätze der Philosophie, Plato sagte: daß unser Lernen bloß Erinnerung sei*.

[25] Anthony Ashley Cooper, Earl of Shaftesbury, *Characteristicks of men, manners, opinions, times: In three volumes,* the second edition corrected (London: Darby, 1714); see the recent edition by Lawrence E. Klein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 302–4; J. G. Herder, *Briefe: Gesamtausgabe 1763–1803*, vol. 1, ed. Wilhelm Dobbek and Günter Arnold (Weimar: Böhlaus, 1984), 119, 217.

[26] *Zum Sinn des Gefühls*, in HWP 2:244.

6.2 Herder's Theory of Organic Forces

Now all these ideas about the nature of the soul-body relationship form the essential background to Herder's conception of organic forces in *Ideas*, a conception that, however, goes far beyond soul-body interaction by greatly extending what is meant by such interaction, for Herder does not speak here only of the force or power of thought/representation (*Gedankenkraft* or *Vorstellungskraft*) and forces of attraction and repulsion. As we saw earlier, he posits a forming force in inanimate salts and crystals. However, corresponding to more of the scale of beings we encountered earlier (i.e., stones, crystals, metals, plants, animals, human beings), Herder also posits forces based on what he gleaned from the physiology of his day and, above all, from Albrecht von Haller, namely forces associated with the elasticity of fibers, irritability of muscles, and sensitivity of nerves (*Ideas* 86/48–49). Haller was clear that while he had demonstrated these properties of muscles and nerves, he made no conclusions as to their causes.[27] But, for Herder, these properties were evidence of one underlying force in nature that was manifesting itself in these particular ways at these particular levels of natural organization (*Ideas* 86/48–49).[28] This is a point that Herder makes repeatedly and in different ways throughout Parts I and II of *Ideas*. Here is how he first formulates it, from the very beginning of Book II:

> However chaotic and fragmentary everything within the bowels of the Earth appears to us, because we are not able to survey the original construction of the whole; yet we perceive, even in what we suppose the smallest and most unfinished things, a truly fixed being [*Dasein*], a form [*Gestaltung*], and formation [*Bildung*] dependent on eternal laws, which no will of man can alter. These laws and forms we observe: but their inner forces we know not; and what we express in certain general words, e.g., connection, extension, affinity, gravity, convey to us ideas of external relations only, without carrying us one step nearer to the internal essence of things. (*Ideas* 55/26, tm)

We are able to observe and take note of the variety and complexity of forms that we see in both the inanimate and animate realms, Herder is claiming here, forms that, as he goes on to say, "descend from the creator"

[27] Albrecht von Haller, *Anfängsgründe der Phisiologie des menschlichen Körpers, Fünfter Band*, trans. Johann Samuel Haller (Berlin: Voss, 1759), 122.

[28] See Buchenau 2017 and Pross 2016. The latter is a brief but useful exposé of Pross's much more extensive analysis and commentary as contained both in his "Nachwort" to his German edition of Herder's *Ideas* (vol. 3/1) and magisterial full volume of accompanying commentary (vol. 3/2); see J. G. Herder, *Werke*, vols. 3/1 and 3/2: *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*; Textband und Kommentarband, ed. Wolfgang Pross (Munich: Hanser, 2002).

in an "immeasurable chain," but we are not equipped to see the true source of these forms: the inner forces that give rise to them (*Ideas* 55/26). The distinction Herder is making here relies on his interpretation of a related distinction that has a long history in German philosophy, from Leibniz's distinguishing between nominal and real definitions in *Meditations on Knowledge, Truth, and Ideas* (1684), which Herder knew and studied,[29] to the pre-critical Kant's distinction between mathematics, which proceeds from synthetic concepts that it defines itself, and philosophy, which must rely on given concepts (e.g., space, time) that it analyzes by separating out the characteristic marks (*Merkmale*) of those initially confused, given concepts in order to arrive at a nominal definition (MH 28:8; IC 2:276–77, 284). Kant's teachings on this matter had a deep influence on Herder and are echoed not just in the preceding quote but throughout *Ideas* and in earlier writings, where he speaks of the difference between limited human language that can only depict how things appear, i.e., "according to their form," and a fully philosophical and divine language that would observe (*zusahen*) how things "were formed" (*sich bildeten*; FA 1:655; cf. DeSouza 2016a, 77).

Through his conception of force, Herder clearly sought to break free from the strictures Kant had placed on philosophy, both as he had been personally taught them in Kant's metaphysics lectures and as he had seen them expostulated in the *Inquiry Concerning the Distinctness of the Principles of Natural Theology and Morality* (1764) and in *Dreams*, as we saw earlier, where Kant rejected as fictions all judgments that sought to explain soul-body interaction. Rather, Herder sees a close connection between form and force. After having explored in detail the various forms of inanimate and animate organization through the scale of beings all the way up to human beings, Herder begins Book V, Chapter 1, entitled, "A series of ascending forms and forces prevails in our earthly creation," in the following way: "From stones to crystals, from crystals to metals, from these to plants, from plants to animals, and from animals to man, we have seen the form of organization ascend, and with this the forces and drives of the creature have become more various" (*Ideas* 166/107, tm). Herder then recounts how throughout the series a principal form (*Hauptform*) of organization can be detected that becomes more pronounced as we approach human beings (cf. Nassar 2017) and how a series of powers

[29] G. W. F. Leibniz, *Meditationes de cognitione, veritate et ideis*, in *Die philosophischen Schriften*, ed. C. I. Gerhardt (Hildesheim: Olms, 1965), vol. IV, 422–26; for evidence of Herder's familiarity with this work by Leibniz, see Irmscher and Adler 1979, 198.

(*Kräfte*) and drives can also be seen such as nutrition, propagation, motion, perception, and so on,[30] all the way up to reason (*Ideas* 166–67/107–8). Herder then states his conclusion in the form of a choice:

> Either we must consider these things to be games of Nature (and intelligent [*verstandreich*] Nature never senselessly plays) or we shall be led to admit a kingdom of invisible forces [*Reich unsichtbarer Kräfte*] that stands in just the same precise connections and imperceptible transitions that we perceive in the external forms [*Bildungen*] of things. The more we learn of Nature, the more we observe these in-dwelling [*inwohnenden*] forces. (*Ideas* 166–67/108)

Herder is obviously not positing here something like Kant's hypothesis in *Dreams* of two parallel spirit and material worlds. Rather, in line with his belief in divine immanence, that God is through all things, he is claiming that force and form interpenetrate each other. This relationship between invisible force and visible form is even reminiscent of that between primary and secondary qualities; while we see only the external forms that we classify like children, God alone sees and holds in his hands the chain of underlying forces (*Ideas* 168/108–9). Indeed, in the letter to Jacobi quoted earlier, Herder explains – echoing his earliest philosophical sketches (SWS 1:176) – that we see God through things sensuously but that "if our soul had the clarity of its own concept and body that God has: then it would be so advanced that the body would no longer be for it a coarse body but rather it [i.e., the soul] itself, operating in such and such forces and according to such and such ways" (DA 5:29). That is, the soul would no longer see rough, external bodily forms but rather the underlying forces themselves, clearly and distinctly.

Now the epitome of this relationship between form and force had been Herder's first object of study, as we saw earlier, namely the soul-body relationship, which represents the highest self-conscious form of such an interpenetration and that is thus unique insofar as it is the only one to which we have inside access (as Leibniz emphasized on several occasions). It would thus be wrong to suggest that it is because of his theism that Herder arrived at this position; it is rather what he took to be the self-evidence of this position, both from our phenomenological experience and from our observation of nature, that led him to this particular version of (pan)theism. Speaking of the "organically operating omnipotence" that we see in the undeniable powers of even the lowest creatures such as moss and fungi, as well as in the animal that can reproduce and can briskly move in

[30] These last two are mentioned in the longer, original discussion in Book III, Chapter 1 of *Ideas*.

virtue of its muscles' irritability, Herder observes: "We know not where this begins, or where it ends: for where there is effect in the creation, there is force, where life manifests itself, there is inner life" (*Ideas* 168/108, tm). These forces are all organic because Herder fully agrees with Leibniz's bold claim that "all things are full of life," but, unlike Leibniz, he refuses to see this life as distributed between two realms of efficient causes and final causes, according to which, in Herder's eyes, one ends up with the wildly implausible view that the so-called living body grows, acts, and dies entirely according to a series of exclusively mechanical causes and the soul only appears to be the cause of all this (HWP 2:50–51).

Herder was keenly aware of the skepticism with which his theory might be greeted. It is perhaps not a coincidence, then, that he presents it in the context of *Ideas*, i.e., of an extended and detailed exploration of the natural world, which includes human beings, and its history and development, for he must have felt that the only way he could combat such skepticism would be by illustrating his theory in action. As he writes in the Preface to *Ideas*, "[W]hen I speak of the organic forces of creation: I do not imagine that one will see them as occult qualities, since we see their manifest operations before us, and I know not how to give them a more definite and clearer name" (*Ideas* 17/ix, tm). Herder is not thereby arrogating to himself the ability to understand that fully philosophical and divine language we saw earlier whereby he would fully see how things arise. But he is also not content to accept what he sees as explanations that remain within the framework of mechanical causality where only the form or observed laws are described, as Kant would have him remain. Rather, our experience of our soul and our observations justify our providing some further explanation of the underlying causes at work.

But how? The key methodological tool here is analogy.

> Either the operation of my soul has no analogy [*Analogon*] here below; in which case I can comprehend neither how it acts upon the body, nor how other objects are able to act upon it: or it is this invisible, celestial spirit of light and fire, which penetrates every living thing, and unites all the forces of nature. (*Ideas* 174/112–13, tm)

This "spirit of light and fire" is a characterization of the organic force that runs through nature through which all the forces of nature operate and is linked to Herder's discussion of the fundamental connection between warmth and life. It is through what Herder calls the "great analogy of nature" that we are able to posit forces analogous to the soul operating at all levels of nature (*Ideas* 16, 17/ix). Herder emphatically distinguishes these

forces from any notion of a pure spirit, of which we have no knowledge whatsoever (*Ideas* 171/110; cf. SWS 1:129), and in justification of the analogy of nature, he insists that we know only of forces as operating through organs. "Wherever we perceive a force to operate, it of course operates in some organ [*Organ*], and in harmony with it: without this it becomes, at least to our senses, invisible; but with it, it is all at once there, and if we may trust the continuous analogy of nature, it [i.e., the force] formed it [i.e., the organ] for itself" (*Ideas* 171/110–11, tm).

This point returns us to original idea of the soul as building itself a body that Herder generalizes as a forming drive or forming force (*bildende Kraft*) that we see the effects of, namely the forms and forms of organization, at all levels of nature, both inanimate and animate. From the "organic, blind drive" of crystallization or the vegetative growth of a plant, to the mechanical art of the bee building its honeycomb or the spider spinning its web, all the way up to the capacities for reason, freedom, and humanity of human beings, Herder sees a continuous and close connection between the invisible, organic, and forming forces, on the one hand, and the visible forms of organization, on the other, as well as a progression both from necessity to freedom and from lesser to greater interiority.

> The more, namely, the one organic principle of nature, that we call here forming [*bildend*], there driving [*treibend*], here sensitive [*empfindend*], there artificially constructing [*künstlichbauend*], yet which is at bottom but one and the same organic force, is subdivided into several organs and various limbs; and the more it has in each of these a world of its own . . . so much the weaker is its drive, so much the more is it subject to the command of the will, and therefore of error. (*Ideas* 104/62, tm)

While a stone falls with necessity, a human being has the capacity for freedom, and yet it is the same force, unfolded differently, that underlies the dynamic capacities of these two beings. While a stone has very little interiority (it has some inner essence that gives rise to its particular attractive and repulsive forces, from which, in turn, its impenetrability derives), human beings possess the highest degree of interiority in the natural world as we know it, in the form of self-consciousness, and unlike the stone, plants, or some animals, it lacks a fully determinate instinct and must instead learn how to survive and flourish, how to feel and reason.

Within the scale of living beings, Herder also posits various forms of interiority, even going so far as to say that whatever inner state plants possess, we have no word for it simply because we use the word "sensation" (*Empfindung*) only for that inner state that the nervous system grants us

(*Ideas* 101/59). He warns us of the error of interpreting the natural world according only to our five human senses, insisting that each animal, which each has "a world of its own," also has correspondingly different senses such that bees, for example, do not work together, feed the young, kill drones, and construct cells according to "mere mechanism [*der bloße Mechanismus*]" or some "developed mathematical-political reason" but rather that they possess a particular inner "bee-sense [*Bienensinn*]" and "bee-feeling [*Bienengefühl*]" which we obviously cannot fathom (*Ideas* 103/61, tm). Whatever sense or force we posit, however, it always remains tethered to the observations of a living, organized nature and the forms we perceive in it.

Herder's ultimate goal was to provide the foundations for a naturalistic account of human nature and human history, the linchpin of which was the interaction between force and matter and the constitutive relationship between force and form. While the story I have told here has barely even reached the discussion of human beings themselves (which would take another chapter, at the very least; see, e.g., Pross 2016; Waldow 2017), everything turns on that linchpin, which, in turn, informs the very different approaches of Herder and Kant to that "human philosophy" with which we began. Kant recognized this and made it a key target of his criticism in his first review of Herder's *Ideas*. The entire purpose of this chapter has been to provide a response to this particular criticism, which I now quote in full.

> [W]hat is one to think in general about the hypothesis of invisible forces, effecting organization, hence about the endeavor to want to explain what one does not comprehend from what one comprehends even less? At least with respect to the former we can become acquainted with its laws through experience, although their causes will remain unknown; but with respect to the latter we are deprived of all experience, and now what can the philosopher adduce here in justification of his allegation, except the mere despair about ever finding the disclosure in any cognition of nature and the decision he is forced into of seeking for it in the fruitful field of his poetic power? Also this is metaphysics, indeed even a very dogmatic one, however much our writer denies it because that is what the fashion wills. (RHe 8:53–54)

There is no question that Kant was vexed by Herder's failure to have heeded the strictures he had placed on philosophy – not just in the *Critique of Pure Reason* but also in the conclusion of *Dreams*, as we saw earlier.[31]

[31] Kant would return to these themes, following the publication of Herder's *God: some conversations*, in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, Part II: "Critique of Teleological Judgment"; see Zammito 1992: 243–45.

In positing this realm of invisible forces, Herder was certainly guilty of the charge, from a Kantian perspective, of doing "dogmatic metaphysics." But from the perspective of an attempt to do systematic justice both to our phenomenological experience of soul-body interaction and to our observations of nature and life, which employs the methodological tool of analogy that permits us to see the wholes of forms of organization that mere mechanism does not, Herder's theory inscribes itself in a tradition that begins with Aristotle's *De Anima* and that extends on through Hegel[32] and up to our own day in the work of Evan Thompson,[33] a tradition that rejects what it sees as the easy, but inadequate, way out of dualism, under its many guises, and strives rather for an account that is harder, perhaps unattainable, but that aims to be more satisfying.

[32] See, e.g., Kondylis 1981/2002, 576–78; Baum 1993; and the collection of papers discussing Herder's relationship to German Idealism in Heinz 1997.
[33] See Thompson 2007.

PART III

Political Perspectives

CHAPTER 7

Kant and Mendelssohn
Enlightenment, History, and the Authority of Reason

Kristi Sweet

What is enlightenment? In the late eighteenth century, scholars and civil servants alike were grappling explicitly with this question. For them, it was not simply a question about defining the radically changing epoch to which they belonged. They were not seeking merely to name and describe their age but rather principally to define what it means for a human being to become enlightened; from there, then, debates regarding possible means of achieving enlightenment would follow. The question "What is enlightenment?" has persisted because much twentieth- and twenty-first-century European philosophy continues the legacy of answering to the demand of this question. Folded into our own, more recent attempts at discerning what it means to be enlightened, however, are considerations of what the Enlightenment – the Age of Enlightenment – *was*. That is, our own continued efforts to become enlightened take shape, in part, as efforts to appropriate, undo, or transform the successes and failures of our predecessors' attempts at defining and reaching enlightenment. I note this legacy to draw our attention to the continued relevance of the issues that Kant and his contemporaries were debating. As I hope to show in this chapter, in part, the central questions to which their writings and discussions attended are questions that, for us, still remain live.

What were the central questions around which the issues of becoming enlightened took shape? As I will outline here, the principal question of becoming enlightened was one of *authority*. Authority, though, has many guises: epistemic and scientific, religious, political, moral. The changing landscape of how these aspects of human life are related – ontologically as well as practically – defines the movements of philosophy for the centuries we now refer to as "the Enlightenment." It is under the auspices of this question of authority that we can, I suggest, best understand what emerges and remains for us as one of the Enlightenment's core legacies, namely a commitment to the idea of historical progress. It was on this issue that

two prominent voices of enlightenment diverged; Kant and Mendelssohn held opposing views on the question. Their opposition on this question, though, betrays the deeper difference between them and casts new light on our way of thinking of enlightenment solutions to the problem of authority.

For Kant, moral progress in human history is necessary in virtue of the absolute authority of human reason. There is, for Kant, no limit on the authority of reason itself; it extends not only over each individual but also over the church, the state, and the entire trajectory of the human species. Mendelssohn, by contrast, limits the authority of conscience to the individual and restricts reason to speculative pursuits. Mendelssohn will also still maintain another source of authority: God. It is ultimately this divergence from the absolute authority of reason espoused by Kant that leads Mendelssohn to deny a progressive view of history – there is, for him, no authority to which history must be subject. Indeed, historical progress may undermine the moral destiny of individuals.

This chapter will unfold in three parts. In the first part, I articulate the problem of authority as inherited by Kant, Mendelssohn, and their Enlightenment milieu. I will do this principally by way of a discussion of Martin Luther as emblematic of the dissolution of the moral authority of the Catholic Church. The dissolution of the moral authority of the Church represented in Luther opened up entirely new possibilities and problems for establishing moral, religious, and political authority. The possibilities and problems of the Enlightenment can best be understood in the context of a kind of vacuum created by the Reformation. In the second part, I turn to Kant's understanding of enlightenment as constituted, at least in part, by moral progress in history. I develop his idea out of his commitment to the absolute authority of reason, highlighting this commitment as it governs moral life, politics, and religion. In the third part, I examine Mendelssohn's views on enlightenment and history. While in one regard Mendelssohn follows the Lutheran legacy of conscience, for Mendelssohn the authority of conscience has dominion only over the inner life of the individual. With this, Mendelssohn's views of enlightenment, historical progress, and the relation of church and state are oriented by the *individual*.

7.1 Luther and the Dissolution of Authority

In 1517, Martin Luther tacked his "Ninety-Five Theses" on the door of the church at Wittenberg. This moment stands in our collective historical

imagination as the birth of the Reformation and the initiation of a new, modern world order in Europe.[1] This moment and its aftermath are emblematic of a profound shift in thinking and being that opened up entirely new pathways for human life in modernity. Perhaps even more significantly, though, these possibilities were inextricably attended by a whole new suite of questions and problems that were not present in medieval, Catholic Europe. My aim here is, in broad strokes, to articulate the emergence of the new questions and problems brought into existence by Luther's Reformation; these problems form the horizon in which Kant, Mendelssohn, and their interlocutors ultimately found themselves. It is in Luther's challenge to the *moral authority* of the Catholic Church that we find the germ of the central problematic that would come to dominate – and perhaps still does dominate – philosophy on the Continent. Luther's Theses undermined the central moral, political, and scientific authority that had reigned for more than a millennium. It is not so much what the Church taught on these matters; rather, what was of crucial import is that the Church served as the ultimate arbiter and author of the law with respect to moral life; its moral authority then lent it authority over political life and investigation into the natural order.

Prior to the Reformation, the Catholic Church functioned as a centralized and unified source of authority. The cosmology it endorsed supported the moral and political order it enforced; the transitions among metaphysics, epistemology, morality, and legality were relatively seamless, organized by the Church's moral authority. The problems that occupied philosophical discourse were within the larger unity of these aspects of human existence and under the dominion of the prescriptions of the Church. What Luther did was fundamentally to undermine the moral authority of the Church and thereby overturn the entire system of thought and legitimacy this moral authority supported. While we remember Luther's opposition to indulgences on moral grounds, it is his assertion of the dominion of *conscience* that ultimately undoes the central tenet of the authority of the Catholic Church. When Luther asserts the privilege of conscience, he establishes an *inner measure* of moral righteousness and goodness, one not subject to sanction or measure by an external entity. This is evident with the opening salvoes of the "Ninety-Five Theses": "1. When our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, said 'Repent,' he called for the entire life of believers to be one of penitence. 2. The word cannot be

[1] To what extent this moment and its effectiveness were conditioned on and even expressive of other historical, religious, economic, and political forces of the time will not orient the focus of this inquiry.

properly understood as referring to the sacrament of penance, i.e., confession and satisfaction, as administered by the clergy."[2] Although Luther goes on to name the proper role of the Church in penitence, also noting the need for outward expressions of it, his point is hard to miss: repentance cannot be fully determined in the sacraments and rituals of the Church. It is, rather, something that one must do oneself.

Luther's claim against indulgences in relation to the practice of penance stands for a larger movement in his life and thought. Luther's large corpus, as well as his own stand against the Church in the face of his persecution, further attests to his insistence on locating the measure of the moral in inner life. By December of 1517, the "Ninety-Five Theses" had reached Rome and promptly elicited a response. In October of 1518, Luther met with a papal legate in Augsburg to face interrogation for his views, with the expectation he would recant. There he presented his responses to the charges against him and the directives to disavow his statements about indulgences and the Church with a written statement, citing Scripture as his evidence. He wrote: "As long as these scripture passages stand, I cannot do otherwise, for I know that one must obey God rather than men . . . *I do not want to be compelled to affirm something contrary to my conscience*."[3] As the commentator Dillenberger sums up Luther at this point in his trajectory, "[w]hen Luther heard he was under a papal ban, he proclaimed that the papacy had no ultimate power with respect to a man's relation to God."[4] This relationship would be governed only by a human being's own conscience. Over the course of the rest of his life, Luther would further develop his concepts of conscience, faith, and grace.

Luther's insistence on the independence of the human being's authority over himself or herself in moral matters dissolves the moral authority of the Catholic Church. The dissolution of its moral authority is at the same time the destruction of the ground of its political and epistemic authorities. With this, an entirely new set of questions comes to the fore. A new field of inquiry opens up with respect to methodology in the natural sciences: Giordano Bruno, Francis Bacon, René Descartes, Isaac Newton. Likewise, the lack of identity between moral and political authority leads to questions

[2] Martin Luther, "Ninety-Five Theses," in *Selections from His Writings* (New York, NY: Anchor Books, 1962), 490.

[3] Martin Luther, "Proceedings at Augsburg," in *The Annotated Luther,* vol. 1: *The Roots of Reform* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2015), 147, my italics. For longer accounts of this turning point in the Reformation and in Luther's life, see Roper 2016, 110–24; and Kostlin 1883, 204–38.

[4] John Dillenberger, ed., "Introduction," in *Martin Luther: Selections from His Writings* (New York, NY: Anchor Books, 1962), xxi.

about the foundation of the state and the legitimacy of its rulers. These problems give birth to the theory of the divine right of kings and, ultimately, to the social contract tradition beginning with Thomas Hobbes.

Once the moral authority of the Catholic Church is undone in the Reformation, those left in its wake are bequeathed the task of rethinking the relationship between morality, the state, and the Church. It is into this broader constellation of questions regarding the relationship between morality, Church, and state that Kant and Mendelssohn found themselves answering the question, "What is Enlightenment?" The famed essay question was keyed to questions about the dominion of Church and state regarding moral matters. It was put forward by the *Berlinische Monatsschrift* in December 1783 by Johann Friedrich Zöllner, a member of the *Mittwochgesellschaft* (the Wednesday Society). Zöllner's question was posed in response to an essay that considered whether or not marriage should be a religious or civil institution.[5] It is into this debate and set of questions about morality, Church, and state that both Kant and Mendelssohn took up the task of defining what Enlightenment was and a potential path to achieving it. As Schmidt characterizes a lecture given at a Wednesday Society meeting, the Enlightenment's goal was "rooting out the most serious deficiencies in public reasoning and promoting those truths which are necessary for the public's well-being."[6] While the milieu into which both made their forays with answers to this question most certainly emphasized the sovereignty of reason as the touchstone for truth, Kant and Mendelssohn ultimately diverge with respect to the role and shape that reason plays in the task of enlightenment.[7] For Kant, reason is practical and absolute; for Mendelssohn, it remains speculative.

7.2 Kant

That Kant takes reason to exert and demand absolute authority seems clear enough. While those who follow in his philosophical footsteps may be critical of the apparent lack of a ground for such a view, that he holds it

[5] For a full and detailed account of the contemporary milieu of Kant and Mendelssohn, see Schmidt 1989, 269–91. Colin McQuillan argues for a more substantial relationship between the two thinkers' essays in McQuillan 2014. In this chapter I am less concerned with the historical influences than I am with the philosophical outlines of their positions. This is why, in part, I do not offer an interpretation of Mendelssohn's commitment to conscience as part of his program to reconcile Judaism with a more modern, secular society.

[6] Schmidt 1989, 275.

[7] A good account of the emphasis on the authority of reason during this period can be found in Beiser 1987.

seems evident. In this section I unfold the substance of his view as it pertains to his understanding of enlightenment and moral progress in history. Here I will trace how the absolute authority Kant believes reason to have over our individual will, i.e., conscience, extends all the way out into the world and, ultimately, into the sphere of human history. That is, the inner measure of goodness that Luther initiates is, for Kant, what also provides the measure for everything *external* as well.

At the center of Kant's philosophy stands the authority of reason over the individual. This authority takes shape in two principal regards. First, insofar as it is practical, reason is the author of the moral law to which we are subject; second, reason has the capacity fully to determine the will to action. These two commitments form the main and interweaving threads of Kant's *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*. This text, he suggests, "is nothing more than the search for and establishment of the supreme principle of morality" (G 4:392). As we learn, too, the setting out of this principle will be intimately bound up with the fact that reason can, of its own accord, fully determine the will to action. In many ways, this is the revolutionary insight of Kant's moral theory: the principle of reason can be what moves us to act on it.

Perhaps the clearest statement Kant makes about the absolute authority of reason in the will can be found in his famed opening salvo of the *Groundwork*: "[I]t is impossible to think of anything at all in the world, or indeed even beyond it, that could be considered good without limitation, except a good will" (G 4:393). The good will, as Kant defines it, is a will that acts from duty alone; the good will is a will that is moved to act solely for the sake of and through the representation of the good. Kant is clear about the exclusivity of this as the movement of a will that is genuinely and unconditionally good.[8] Over and over again in the *Groundwork* he insists that the determining ground of a good will is the moral law. The absoluteness of reason's ability to determine the will to action is not, for Kant, in question: "[A]n action from duty is to put aside entirely the influence of inclination and with it every object of the will; hence there is left for the will nothing that could determine it except objectively the law and subjectively pure respect for this practical law, and so the maxim of complying with such a law even if it infringes upon all my inclinations" (G 4:401).[9]

[8] For discussions about the goodness of the good will, please see Atwell 1974; Guyer 2000; Sweet 2013; and Wood 2006.

[9] Readers and commentators have long rejected this Kantian commitment, beginning, perhaps most famously, with Schiller's critique that in order to do one's duty to one's friends, one must first despise

Moreover, the moral law to which the will must make itself subject in acting from duty is given to us through reason. About this, too, Kant is consistent and unequivocal: "[I]t is clear that all moral concepts have their seat and origin completely a priori in reason" (G 4:412). The import of this for the history of philosophy is hard to overstate. Prior to Kant, philosophers traditionally argued that the work of reason was to join the human being to something outside of itself. Reason was thought of as the faculty that was able to discern the external measure of the good, in God, in the cosmos, or in the ethos of the community. For Kant, however, it is reason that gives both the law and the unconditional worth that can be found in the cosmos. "The will," he writes (which is nothing other than reason insofar as it is practical), "is thought as a capacity to determine itself to acting in conformity with the representation of laws" (G 4:428). And because these laws are given through reason itself, Kant goes on to argue that "the human being and in general every rational being exists as an end in itself" (ibid.). With this master stroke, Kant takes Luther's commitment to conscience a step further. Conscience is no longer about the individual's dominion over himself or herself with respect to their relationship to God. Rather, conscience is about our relationship to ourselves and the law we ourselves authorize. Conscience, for Kant, is what consistently calls us to remember that we are fully capable of determining our will to act through reason alone. While we may never have knowledge that we have done so, the structure of the human will as practical reason yields the possibility that reason may be enacted as the full and sole author of our actions.

Reason not only has unconditional authority over the individual human being. Reason, Kant argues, also has authority over our political lives, religion, and history. Reason authorizes how we are to live together by way of providing a measure for the laws that govern the state and for the organization of a church.

The authority of reason in the state takes shape in two principal ways. First, the structure of a state must reflect that of the will – Kant argues for a representational republic wherein it is ultimately the people who authorize the laws under which they stand. While this is, in some sense, a fairly standard version of what has come to be called "social contract theory," Kant grounds the legitimacy and necessity of the polis on reason itself.[10] It is reason alone that demands we enter into a civil condition for Kant; our

them. See Friedrich Schiller's "Die Philosophen" (*Xenien*), published in Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Werke*, vol. 1, ed. Erich Trunz (Munich: Beck, 1982).

[10] For a very good overview of the state of the debates about the relationship between Kant's political thought and his moral theory, see Willaschek 2009.

"Duties of Virtue" and our "Duties of Right" are two spheres of duty that fall under the auspices of the moral law.[11] Kant is not merely paying lip service when he argues that the concept of a right – "the capacity for putting others under obligation" (MM 6:239) – is explicated on the basis of the moral imperative. On the contrary, while the laws of a state are limited in governing our external actions only, they nevertheless originate in a will: "So it is only a will putting everyone under obligation, hence only a collective general (common) and powerful will," that assures us of the free and rational use of our wills. Second, the form of the law in the state is subject to the measure of reason in its universality. Kant writes: "The touchstone of whatever can be decided upon as a law for a people lies in the question: whether a people could impose such a law on itself" (WA 8:39). The moral imperative of the form of positive laws is evident: we must not make exceptions of ourselves; laws must treat all of those subject to them equally.

Perhaps most strikingly, Kant believes that religion, too, ought to be subject to the authority of reason. He seeks, as the title of his essays on the matter suggests, to constrain religion to what is properly rational. The purpose of religion, as Kant sees it, is to support us in our efforts to be fully determined to act from the moral law alone. Religion itself does not offer any further instruction beyond what our conscience tells us we ought to do. What God wants, according to Kant, is for us to follow our conscience and act from duty. Kant announces this idea in the opening of the Preface to his essays on *Religion*: "[So] far as morality is based on the conception of the human being as one who is free but who also, just because of that, binds himself through his reason to unconditioned laws, it is in need neither of the idea of another being above him in order that he recognize his duty, nor, that he observe it, of an incentive other than the law itself" (Rel 6:3). He maintains this view throughout his writings on religion; when Kant writes of biblical interpretation, he favors "authentic" interpretation over "doctrinal" because authentic interpretation finds "what teaching reason can ascribe (a priori), for the sake of morality, to a biblical text" (CF 7:67). And when Kant writes about belief in God, and faith in Jesus, these are both oriented by the weakness of the human being to except himself or herself from the moral law: the idea of God can buttress our sense that the moral law is absolute, and Jesus offers

[11] While he does suggest that we could come to such an arrangement through the machinations of nature, the context and substance of the "Doctrine of Right" make it clear that the political is a species of the moral.

a prototype of someone who unequivocally acts from duty. Worship and belief, for Kant, are not constitutive of what it means to be morally good.

Kant's concept of enlightenment is likewise governed by the absolute authority of reason. His conception of enlightenment – both its meaning and the process by which to get there – unfolds as a dialectic between the authority of reason in individuals and the authority of reason in the state. In his answer to the question posed by the *Berlinische Monatsschrift*, Kant opens with this definition: "Enlightenment is the human being's emergence from his self-incurred immaturity [*Unmündigkeit*]" (WA 8:35). He goes on to explain that much of humanity freely chooses to live under the direction of others – that is, gives up the authority we have over ourselves and yields it to another. Enlightenment is defined as the full establishment of reason's authority over us, in the face of our failure to make it sovereign. We perpetually render ourselves as minors (*unmündig*), he contends, due to a "lack of resolution and courage." But Kant also notes that others take advantage of this and encourage our cowardice and feed our laziness for their own gain. "That by far the greatest part of humankind (including the entire fair sex) should hold the step toward maturity to be not only troublesome but also highly dangerous will soon be seen to by those guardians who have kindly taken it upon themselves to supervise them" (WA 8:35). Enlightenment in individuals, for Kant, is influenced by enlightenment in the state. While the ultimate responsibility for following reason is on each person, the state may contribute to our own propensity to avoid thinking for ourselves.

The key to bringing about a "true reform in one's way of thinking" is, Kant argues, the "freedom to make public use of one's reason in all matters" (WA 8:36). What Kant means by this is relatively straightforward. It is the right to speak freely about matters pertaining to the laws that govern us. Kant believes that we must maintain this freedom to criticize the government as part of our efforts to bring laws further into conformity with universality. The freedom to speak publicly is meant for "a scholar" (or *expert*) to point out the "inappropriateness" or "injustice" of the law as it is. One must bring a reasoned case against the status quo, thereby bringing the norms of reason to bear on the way things are; in this, the right to speak freely is undergirded by reason's authority. The public sphere is not a "marketplace of ideas" where varying preferences are negotiated and worked out. Rather, the right to exercise one's reason publicly is the right to make a moral claim against the state. It is through this process of speaking freely that Kant believes progress can be made in bringing about a more just and rational civil condition; free speech is the

means by which the authority of reason is exercised in the political sphere. It is through the public use of reason that the *inner measure of conscience* is made the measure of what is external in the state and religion.

Kant does, however, restrict the free use of reason in what he calls the "private" sphere. Here Kant is thinking principally of persons who have civil or religious posts. Those with such posts, he famously asserts, are subject to the following dictum: "*Argue* as much as you will and about whatever you will, *but obey*!" (WA 8:37). In this he means that police officers, for example, must enforce all the laws and statutes of the jurisdiction to which they belong. If they disagree, say, with the justness or feasibility of a specific law, they must still enforce it. What they can do, though, is to bring their expertise on the issue to bear on the law publicly, as a citizen. The same is true of members of the clergy; they may not deviate in the pulpit from the doctrine of the church, but they may question it in an attempt to bring it closer to reason, however, in a public forum.

The reason Kant has for establishing a right to free speech is consanguine with the reason for limiting it in the private sphere: successful progress in bringing about a more just society. Because of this, there is no conflict between these two. Limiting speech in the private sphere is meant to ensure an "artful [artificial] unanimity, for the sake of being oriented to public ends or at least for the sake of preventing the destruction of them" (WA 8:37, translation modified). Were police officers to choose which laws they wish to enforce, civil society would be destabilized. Were soldiers to carry out only orders with which they agreed, a nation could not successfully defend itself nor prosecute a war. In short, if those in civil posts do not perform their functions consistently, there is no prospect to move forward because what good has already been achieved would be undermined. The purpose of ensuring the public use of reason is also to bring the human race forward successfully, toward a more conscionable arrangement; even though some laws may be unjust, widespread injustice would surely ensue if individuals were free to exercise their reason in the sphere of civil service. In conjunction with this general principle of how to effect change, Kant famously argues against the right to revolution (MM 6:320*ff*). He also makes a pragmatic case against it; a revolution will not, he believes, lead to actual reform. While a despot may be overturned, he suggests, the new ruling class will simply employ "new prejudices . . . to harness the great unthinking masses" (WA 8:36). What the freedom of speech allows is for the public to transform its way of thinking, as well as to promote the conformity of law with universality.

Kant's commitment to enlightenment and to the moral progress he believes it to entail is a feature of his distinctive view about the absolute authority of reason. The necessity for moral progress in human history runs in two interrelated directions for Kant – it is both about working for a better future and about understanding the past. The absolute authority of reason demands, for Kant, that *what is* be transformed into *what ought to be*. That is, the way that things are must be able to become, through the efforts of human reason, the way that they ought to be, namely rational and moral. Conscience functions as the measure of what is outside of us. Thus we must commit ourselves to the idea that things can and will get better through our efforts to make them so. Kant goes so far as to suggest that if this is not the case, the entire moral enterprise is lost. His strongest and most forceful articulation of this argument is in the "Dialectic" of the *Critique of Practical Reason*. There Kant argues that if the moral law cannot bring about the highest good in the world, then the moral law "must therefore itself be false" (CPrR 5:114). Kant repeats the form of this argument throughout his practical writings, based on the core commitment to the nature of reason: inherent in reason's authority is the notion that reason must also be efficacious in its sovereignty not only in the inner life of human beings but also in the external world. It is this commitment that necessitates enlightenment as a process of establishing the rule of reason in the world across human history and into the future.

With this commitment to reason's efficaciousness, Kant also argues that nature itself must be amenable to the ends of reason. It is under these auspices that Kant offers an account of moral progress in human history, or an "Idea for Universal History." The history of human beings is, as Hegel suggests after Kant, a slaughter bench.[12] Our natural relations with each other are those of war and strife. Were this the final word, Kant suggests, we would have no reason to believe that reason would be able to prevail on the natural order of human relations and effect a transformation there. While Kant addresses this issue repeatedly throughout his practical writings, we can look to the Ninth Proposition in "Idea for Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim," as well as to the section in "On the Common Saying" where he explicitly addresses Mendelssohn.[13] In these texts, he defends the following: "A philosophical attempt to work out universal world history according to a plan of nature that aims at the perfect civil

[12] See G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History, Introduction: Reason in History*, trans. H. B. Nisbet (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 69.

[13] In addition to McQuillan's treatment of Kant's direct response to Mendelssohn, please see Flikschuh 2007.

union of the human species, must be regarded as possible and even as furthering this aim of nature" (IUH 8:29). His defense of this idea takes shape as a necessary "justification of nature," without which we would turn "our eyes away in disgust and, in despair of ever encountering a completed rational aim in it, to hope for the latter only in another world" (IUH 8:30). We are therefore able to discern in human history, even in its most awful moments, a hidden hand of reason at work. War, he argues, eventually leads us to establish more lasting institutional relations of peace, for example (OCS 8:310). Kant's most sustained effort at demonstrating that nature is amenable to the ends of reason, however, can be found in the third *Critique*. The purpose of the text is to articulate how it is that nature is, of its own accord, capable of conforming to reason's ends. He writes: "[T]he concept of freedom should make the end that is imposed by its laws real in the sensible world; and nature must consequently also be able to be conceived in such a way that the lawfulness of its form is at least in agreement with the possibility of the ends that are to be realized in accordance with the laws of freedom" (CPJ 5:176). For reason fully to realize its absolute authority, nature must always already be amenable to what reason demands; it must be capable of being brought into accord with what is conscionable.

History, for Kant, is the proving ground for reason's absolute authority over not only the inner life of human beings but also what is external, namely their relations to each other. For Kant, it is not enough that we act from duty; rather, our duty entails making the world a better place. History is the site for this process of bringing humanity to its destiny in enlightenment. History, as our view of the past, is where we look for evidence of the efficacy of reason's authority in the world.

7.3 Mendelssohn

At first glance, Mendelssohn appears to share Kant's commitment to the absolute authority of reason. But Mendelssohn's view, and its resulting consequences, highlights a key difference between them and ultimately comes to bring into view the radicality of Kant's practical philosophy. In this section I will trace out Mendelssohn's views about reason and authority, drawing out how his articulation of enlightenment and his views on history follow. Here we will see that Mendelssohn's investment in reason is primarily theoretical or speculative; his divergent practical commitments get tangled up in this investment, and in the end, the multiple sources of authority he attempts to lay claim to render his

philosophy closer to that of his predecessors than to Kant. Many commentators have noted that Mendelssohn seems to have contradictory or, at least, irreconcilable commitments.[14] In this section I will not address these thorny questions, nor try to make Mendelssohn consistent. My principal aim is simply to highlight how he answers the question of authority with respect to its articulation in his age and how this differs from Kant's answer to the same question. What will emerge is that his concept of conscience, which has authority over the inner life of individuals, does not provide the measure of what the external world must conform to.

Mendelssohn introduces *Jerusalem* with explicit reference to the apparent conflict between church and state that has opened up since the Reformation and led to "extraordinary confusion" in the civil and ecclesiastical spheres.[15] Their conflict, as he conceives it, revolves around the division of the human being, as a social being with varied moral relations, into separate moral entities overseen by each institution. As he describes it, both church and state seek to stake out their territory over these moral relations. Thus far, he writes, "the extent of these different provinces and the boundaries dividing them have not yet been accurately fixed" (*Jerusalem* 33). In consequence, the thing of highest value, and the condition for the possibility of felicity in human life, risks being trampled: *liberty of conscience*. When church and state are opposed properly, he believes, liberty of conscience maintains its space to flourish. His concern is the photographic negative of Kant's. Where Kant wishes for conscience to rule over church and state, Mendelssohn is concerned that church and state wish to rule over conscience.

Mendelssohn argues that the purpose of the state is to aid us in our pursuit of felicity by providing the context in which we are better able to fulfill our moral duties. Providing this context is not the limit of the role the state plays; rather, Mendelssohn believes that the state must be more active in drawing one's attention to moral duties and in encouraging citizens to be moral. In short, Mendelssohn's state is educative. "Under all circumstances and conditions, however, I consider the infallible measure of the excellence of a form of government to lie in the degree to which it achieves its purposes by morals and convictions; in the degree, therefore, to which government is education itself" (*Jerusalem* 42). He goes so far as to

[14] The most thorough and influential accounts of Mendelssohn, especially on this score, can be found in Altmann 1973, 1982; Arkush 1994; and Beiser 1987.

[15] Moses Mendelssohn, *Jerusalem oder über religiöse Macht und Judentum* (Berlin: Maurer, 1783); *Jerusalem: Or on Religious Power and Judaism*, trans. Allan Arkush (Hanover, NH: Brandeis University Press, 1983), 34 (hereafter "*Jerusalem*").

argue that the state ought to aim at being governed solely by the moral convictions of its constituents. It is only, he asserts, a failure in this regard that the state must function according to "public measures, coercive laws, punishments of crime and rewards of merit" (*Jerusalem* 43). Governments, then, do well to cultivate moral goodness in their citizenries. Even while the state has a right to coerce actions through laws, etc., the measure of its success is, in effect, the dissolution of its need to do so.

Insofar as the principal effort of the state can be found in its facilitation of providing context for enacting one's duties, Mendelssohn argues that religion has a significant role to play in civic life. "It is the business of the church to convince people in the most emphatic manner, of the truth of noble principles and convictions"; it does this, he argues, by showing "them that duties toward men are also duties toward God, the violation of which is in itself the greatest misery; that serving the state is true service of God" (*Jerusalem* 43). He reiterates this further on, too, arguing that "[i]n the system of human duties, those toward God form, in reality, no special division. Rather, all of men's duties are obligations toward God" (*Jerusalem* 58). With this, Mendelssohn locates the source of moral authority and obligation in something outside the human being.

Because the source of moral authority lies not only in the individual's conscience but also externally, in God, Mendelssohn does not give conscience full dominion over church and state, as Kant does. While in one regard Mendelssohn proposes a robust morally educative role to both the state and religion, conscience, in the end, marks a hard limit on the reach of each of these. Neither, he argues, may extend so far as the individual's convictions. "The right to our own convictions is inalienable, and cannot pass from person to person" (*Jerusalem* 61). Because of this, neither state nor church "may reward or punish, compel or bribe" in attempts to coerce conviction. In this, neither church nor religion can touch the authority of conscience over the individual. The authority of conscience, though, does not extend out beyond the individual such that it compels the state or religion to reform.

Consonant with this commitment is Mendelssohn's more traditional take on the role of reason. While Kant elevates reason, and its effect in conscience, above all things on Earth, Mendelssohn maintains reason's long-held role in the history of philosophy as that which grants the human being access to something outside of itself, to which we must be subject. Mendelssohn's turn here, however, has a theoretical or speculative intervention. He holds fast to religion as integral to human morality because of his view that our duties are duties toward God. This view, in turn, requires

that we have some kind of "proof" of the existence of God, of that thing to which our obligations are owed. At stake in this proof is nothing short of "our entire well-being."[16] At the opening of Lecture VIII of *Morning Hours*, whose context is Mendelssohn teaching his son about rational knowledge of God, he confesses the following:

> Shall I share with you how deeply I feel about the importance of this subject and the influence it can have on the happiness and peace of humanity? In all honesty, for me, were I to lose the sureness of my conviction about this, life itself would have no pleasure, and all of my good fortune would give me no joy . . . Without God, providence, and immortality, all the good things of my life are in my eyes worthless and contemptible, and my existence here on earth seems to me, if I may make use of a well-known and often misused comparison, like wandering all day in wind and storm without the consolation of coming at nightfall to the refuge and shelter of a hostel.[17]

In these passages Mendelssohn insists that when it comes to the "existence of a supreme being," we must seek the truth. The truth of the existence of God is found by reason. While I will not detail here how he defends this view, it is important to note that reason, in its theoretical and speculative capacity, is integral to moral life. Indeed, it will be Kant's criticism of Mendelssohn that he remains wedded to the theoretical or speculative authority of reason in these matters.

When Mendelssohn writes his essay in response to the *Berlinische Monatsschrift* question, he draws from these two prongs of his philosophical views. He seeks principally in this piece to outline the two aspects of education we named earlier – the practical and the theoretical. The former he identifies as culture; the latter, properly as enlightenment. In his account, enlightenment refers "objectively – to rational knowledge and – subjectively – to proficiency at rationally reflecting on things of human life, in terms of their importance and influence on the vocation of the human being."[18] His premise is unmistakable: theoretical enlightenment is necessary to the moral vocation of human beings. Enlightenment is the name given, he thinks, to the dissemination and proliferation of theoretical insights; in this, enlightenment is a universal project that will divest people

[16] Moses Mendelssohn, *Morgenstunden oder Vorlesungen über das Dasein Gottes* (Berlin: Voss, 1785); *Morning Hours, or, Lectures on the Existence of God* in *Last Works*, trans. Bruce Rosenstock (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2012), 63.

[17] Ibid., 61.

[18] Moses Mendelssohn, "On the Question: what does 'to enlighten' mean?," in *Moses Mendelssohn: Philosophical Writings*, ed. Daniel Dahlstrom (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 314 (hereafter "PW").

of their prejudices.[19] A further distinction he makes in the essay between the human being qua human being and human being qua citizen supports his view: "The human being as a human being is not in need of a culture, but is in need of enlightenment" (PW 314). While culture is needed for us to live in society, i.e., as citizens, theoretical enlightenment is necessary for our vocation as human beings, i.e., to be moral.

Mendelssohn goes on in the essay to highlight a conflict between the theoretical enlightenment of human beings as human beings and as citizens.[20] In our capacity as citizens, enlightenment must be keyed to one's class, standing, and profession. Universal enlightenment, then, may not be of benefit to one with respect to one's duties as a citizen. "Certain truths which are useful to the human being as human being, can at times be harmful to him as a citizen" (PW 315). Such a gap between what is essential to us as humans and what is essential to us as citizens is possible only because the authority of conscience has dominion only over the individual and not, in the end, the state. This stands in contrast to Kant, for whom there is no conflict – unless a state is not yet in conformity with conscience.

He further points to potential conflict between the spheres of culture and enlightenment. Too much advancement in one may undermine the other, he argues. "Misuse of enlightenment enfeebles moral feeling and leads to hardheartedness, egoism, irreligion, and anarchy. Misuse of culture engenders lasciviousness, hypocrisy, flaccidity, superstition, and slavery. Where enlightenment and culture proceed at the same tempo, they are together the best means of defense against corruption" (PW 316). The *process* of enlightenment, then, for Mendelssohn, would appear to be the attunement of these multiple spheres to each other to leave space for the liberty of conscience. Enlightenment requires discerning how much and how quickly to proceed in each domain in order to keep a harmonious balance. Enlightenment must be carried out with reference to the specific context and culture so as not to undermine our shared project of living together in society.

That enlightenment for Mendelssohn is not about achieving any progress or reaching any specific end is consanguine with the explicit rejection of moral progress in history found elsewhere in his thought. Becoming enlightened is not an absolute value – indeed, it may be dangerous and must be approached in a stratified and pragmatic way. Mendelssohn

[19] Willi Goetschel emphasizes the difference between Kant and Mendelssohn, in part, as one of practice and theory; see Goetschel 2011.

[20] For a good account of Mendelssohn's restriction of theoretical enlightenment, see Erlin 2002.

introduces the question of history in *Jerusalem* in the context of a discussion about the power of human reason to discern the "eternal truths which are indispensable to human felicity" (*Jerusalem* 94). In this he means to emphasize that "all the inhabitants of the earth are destined to felicity; and the means of attaining it are as widespread as mankind itself" (ibid.). It is precisely because of this transhistorical equity with respect to felicity that Mendelssohn denies moral progress. While the state and the church may provide context for achieving felicity and education with respect to duties, it is ultimately up to the individual to make good on his or her obligations with respect to conscience. Goetschel sums it up this way: "The relationship between church and state is neither antagonistic nor completely complementary. Rather the two exist in a complex arrangement that provides a feasible framework for human existence."[21]

Mendelssohn's commitment is squarely to the path each *individual* takes. He writes:

> Progress is for the individual man, who is destined by Providence to spend part of his eternity here on earth. Everyone goes through life in his own way. One man's path takes him through flowers and meadows, another's across desolate plains, or over steep mountains and past dangerous gorges. Yet they all proceed on their journey, making their way to the felicity for which they are destined. But it does not seem to me to have been the purpose of Providence that mankind as a whole advance steadily here below and perfect itself in the course of time. (*Jerusalem* 96)

In a letter to August von Hennings, Mendelssohn goes even further with this argument. He suggests in this letter that were the human race to make the kind of progress both Kant and Lessing advocate for, it may even undermine the possibilities that individuals have to make their own way. "If mankind were to progress continuously and corporately, new arrivals on earth would find no opportunity to make use of their own faculties, to develop their highest potential. Yet this would appear to be nature's true purpose."[22] Mendelssohn's argument here highlights his commitment to conscience and its dominion as solely over the individual. In fact, while he argues for a role for the state to provide a context for us that makes it possible for us to realize our duties, his argument here would seem to place a limit on it. If a perfectly constituted civil society were to come about, he

[21] Goetschel 2007.

[22] Letter to August von Hennings, June 25, 1782, in *Moses Mendelssohn: Selections from His Writings*, ed. Eva Jospe (New York, NY: Viking Press, 1975), 168.

seems to suggest, then individuals would not have the opportunity to exercise their own conscience and develop their faculties fully.

Mendelssohn thus commits himself not only to the inevitability of strife in society – the conflict between culture and enlightenment will not be resolved, for instance – but also to the necessity of strife for human beings to be most fully what they are. His argument lands, then, on the idea that both the state and the church ought to provide a certain level of support for us in order to make fulfilling our duties possible. But he also believes that they cannot stand in for us doing what we ought and, with this, must also be the occasion for us to grow and develop our faculties.

Mendelssohn, then, embraces two otherwise divergent strains of the period, both of which Kant's practical philosophy rejects. In one regard, Mendelssohn represents a certain kind of what has come to be called "classical liberalism" and the basic structure of much social contract theory. In this, he believes that the role of the state is to provide a context for the individual to flourish *qua individual*. His view of conscience – its scope and limits – means that he does not believe that the outer world must come into conformity with what conscience demands. The authority of conscience extends only as far as the individual; the moral authority of conscience over the individual, then, provides a limit to the roles that both church and state should play in our lives. With this, we find that his commitment to the individual qua individual shares deep sympathies with a thread that continues through much of the *Bildung* tradition. This thread is the call for human beings fully to develop their faculties and capacities through overcoming. While this call takes shape in multiple forms, especially in literature that keys off of Kant's third *Critique*,[23] the basic claim we can discern in Mendelssohn (and others) is that human beings must develop themselves into dynamic, capable beings. Perhaps the paradigmatic call for this is Wilhelm von Humboldt's *The Limits of State Action*, in which he argues for a limited role of the state in human life in order for individuals to be able better to cultivate free, spontaneous activity.

Mendelssohn, then, acknowledges the authority of conscience over the individual. Neither church nor state may intervene in one's convictions, even if they may offer necessary context and guidance for fulfillment of our duties and pursuit of felicity. Mendelssohn also acknowledges the role of reason in moral life, although it is exclusively theoretical in its function, offering proof of a God who is the ultimate source of authority for our obligations. His view of conscience as having dominion only over the

[23] In particular, Schiller's *Letters on Aesthetic Education*.

individual means that he emerges as a kind of classical liberal, where the liberty of conscience of the individual forms a limit to state and religious authority. The question of the authority with respect to church and state is left to be continually determined and worked out in efforts to minimize their conflict with others and their propensity to overstep into the inner lives of individuals. Following this view of the authority of conscience as exclusively over the individual, he rejects a progressive view of history.

Kant and Mendelssohn, then, form two separate threads in the history of philosophy and political thought that arise in response to the crisis of authority presented by the Reformation. While each takes a broadly "Lutheran" point of departure in naming the conscience the sole moral authority over individuals, they differ profoundly in what it is that conscience demands and the scope of its authority outward. For Kant, as we have seen, conscience demands nothing less than the transformation of the natural order – our individual natural inclinations, natural human relations, and our natural history – into something rational. Enlightenment, for Kant, then, is the process by which this transformation progresses and names both the moment in and movement of history toward this end. For Mendelssohn, by contrast, conscience names the space that limits the reach of state and church, culture and enlightenment, into the lives of individuals. The notion of progress in history, too, undermines the *telos* of individual beings to flourish, to fulfill their conscience, and to cultivate their faculties to the greatest extent possible.

CHAPTER 8

Johann Jakob Moser and Immanuel Kant on Public Law and the German Religious Constitution

Ian Hunter

Johann Jakob Moser (1701–85) was one of eighteenth-century Germany's leading public law jurists, whose voluminous writings included important works on public law and the German religious constitution. Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) was, of course, one of that century's leading philosophers who, in addition to his epistemology and ethics, published important works on the philosophy of law and the philosophy of religion, including commentary on the religious constitution. Despite their contemporaneity, however, the relation between these two leading figures is noteworthy for the cultural chasm that separates them. Not only does neither ever refer to the other, but the approaches that they exemplify on crucial questions of public law and the religious constitution do not speak to each other, except across the gulf that divides them, each in order to declare the irrelevance of the other.

It is this very disjunction and divergence, however, that turns out to richly reward scholarly investigation. This is in part because the disposition of a thinker or field can be shaped no less powerfully by what they repudiate than by what they affirm. But it is also because the disjunction between Moser and Kant points to an even more profound underlying fissure: one between juridical and philosophical cultures that had been opened by the religious constitution itself. In order to shed light on the mutually disparate ways in which Moser and Kant approached public law and the religious constitution, then, it is first necessary to clarify how the constitutional order had partitioned their respective juridical and philosophical cultures in a manner that led to their mutual incomprehension.

8.1 Public Law and the Religious Constitution

In addition to being subjects of the German Empire, Kant and Moser were also subjects or citizens of two of its constituent polities, Kant being

a citizen and academic civil servant of the Kingdom of Prussia (Stark 1994, 1995) and Moser a subject and judicial civil servant of the Duchy of Württemburg (Walker 1981, 189–218). The Empire itself was a composite polity, or juridical-political conglomerate, composed of a complex array of political and jurisdictional entities (Wendehorst 2015b). These included the emperor and imperial court, the demisovereign electoral princely states (so-called because they elected the emperor), and a complex array of imperial estates: cities, bishoprics, nobilities, and knights-circles (Friedeburg and Seidler 2008; Whaley 2012a, 17–49).

Imperial public law (*jus publicum, Staatsrecht*) was the constitutional cement that held this conglomerate together. It provided the overarching political and juridical institutions – the *Reichstag*, or imperial estate parliament, and the *Reichskammergericht* (Imperial Chamber Court), or imperial high court – and the juridical-political instruments through which the interests, entitlements, and obligations of the states and estates were recognized and disputes among them adjudicated (Whaley 2012a, 457–61). Rather than being grounded in an agreed-upon body of constitutional principles, the imperial constitution was agglomerated over centuries from a variety of disparate normative sources – feudal customs and conventions, *jus commune*, treaties among the estates, and enactments of the *Reichstag* – only taking shape as a written body of statutes and commentaries during the middle of the sixteenth century (Härter 2013). And rather than being an instrument for regulating the relations between a "state" and its citizens, the imperial public law constitution was a diverse body of customs, treaties, and enactments for integrating a variety of corporate estates within the imperial conglomerate, with individual rights and freedoms depending on membership in various kinds of corporations, including religions.

The religious constitution under which Moser and Kant lived first emerged with the Augsburg Religious Peace of 1555 (Heckel 1989b). Augsburg was an agreement between and among the emperor and the empire's Protestant and Catholic estates – later formalized as the *Corpus Evangelicorum* and the *Corpus Catholicorum* – and it was intended to end the religious wars that had followed the unprecedented splitting of the imperial "universal" church in the early decades of the century (Whaley 2012a, 255–336). The religious focus of the treaty was registered not just in its official title – as the Augsburg Religious Peace (*Augsburger Religionsfriede*) – but also in its central articles, where the conflict between the opposed religious parties was identified as threatening the dissolution of the Empire itself (Zeumer 1913, 343–44). Ratified through the *Reichstag*

and administered through the *Reichskammergericht* and (from 1559) the *Reichshofrat* (Imperial Aulic Court), Augsburg was an imperial public law treaty at the center of which lay a decisive strategy: the extension of the purely political and juridical measures of the Perpetual Public Peace of 1495 – initially instituted to juridify feudal conflict – to cover conflict between warring religious estates (Whaley 2012a, 323; Zeumer 1913, 345). Turning away from earlier attempts to reestablish religious unity under the existing constitution through theological colloquies and diets, Augsburg moved in a new direction: it transformed the constitution itself into a biconfessional juridical order whose core objective was to establish conditions of political coexistence for the two opposed confessional blocs, thereby giving rise to the unprecedented phenomenon of two imperial religions, Catholic and Protestant (Heckel 1989a, 134–70).

The new order quickly assumed the Janus-faced character that would shape the entire history of the German religious constitution. On the one hand, together with the manner in which the treaty was negotiated, the set of measures that it introduced into the restructured imperial high courts resulted in the emergence of a "secular" public law framework in which the two religions were viewed relativistically – that is, independently of their theological or metaphysical truth-claims – as equally legitimate public law associations. Central among these measures were those for ensuring parity of treatment and access to offices for the two confessions within the high courts and *Reichstag*, the suspension of (episcopal) religious jurisdiction and de facto acceptance of permanent religious division at the imperial level, the suspension of incendiary questions of theological truth within treaty negotiations and juridical deliberations, and the displacement of peace as *pax Christiana* (requiring papal approval) with a secular understanding of peace as political modus vivendi (Heckel 2007, 10–14). Augsburg also witnessed the progressive relegation of theologians as treaty negotiators in favor of public law jurists who, in their juristic persona, were the bearers of the new political-juridical relativistic understanding of religions and the political understanding of religious peace that had arisen within the subculture of imperial public law (Hammerstein 1986).

On the other hand, the theology and ecclesiology of the juridically relativized confessions remained wholly internal to the churches themselves, each committed to the absolute truth of its theology and metaphysics and each understanding itself as the one true religion (Heckel 2007, 15–16). In this regard, it is crucial to understand that the biconfessional constitution was not the product of a foundational secularist philosophy working hand-in-glove with an "instrumental state" bent on secularizing

religion and society. To the contrary, the new religious constitution emerged from a series of improvised treaty-based public law arrangements executing a political compromise between the two confessional parties and was aimed at ensuring the survival of the two religious confessions as imperial public law corporations. No less important for the bifurcated character of this first iteration of the religious constitution was the fact that Augsburg's biconfessional juridical framework established religious pluralism only among estates and states at the imperial level, not within estates and states at the territorial level. States and estates thus were left free to pursue radical "confessionalization" within their own territories and cities, in accordance with the treaty's *jus reformandi* – the right of religious reform granted to territorial rulers – as encapsulated in the slogan *cuius regio eius religio* ("whoever's realm, theirs is the religion") (Reinhard 1983). In effect, Augsburg superimposed the new constitutional division between a relativistic juridical framework and theologically absolute confessions onto the old political division between the Empire and its estates, thereby unintentionally triggering the intensification of rival confessional movements within imperial territories and facilitating the emergence of an array of mutually hostile confessional estates and states (Heckel 1983, 67–79).

Following the Thirty Years War to which they helped to give rise, the (Westphalian) Treaty of Osnabrück of 1648 altered these arrangements in several important regards: by recognizing three imperial religions (Lutheranism, Catholicism, and Calvinism), by mandating this recognition within territorial states not just (as previously) at the imperial level, and by establishing the instrument of the *Normaljahr* – the standard or normative year – according to which the distribution of religious properties, populations, and jurisdictions nominally holding at a particular year (1624) would be used as the status quo ante and as the norm for judging religious disputes before the high courts (Fuchs 2010; Whaley 2012a, 619–31). At the same time, even if foreign states (France and Sweden) were now among its signatories, Osnabrück remained a treaty-based public law arrangement for achieving a political compromise between the warring imperial religious estates. Most important, Osnabrück maintained the crucial and consequential double-sided architecture of the Augsburg constitution, namely a pluralist and relativist (and in this limited sense "secular") public law framework acting as the carapace for a plurality of rival absolute religions.

The fissure that this Janus-faced constitutional architecture opened in the German intellectual landscape holds the key to understanding the incommensurate understandings of law and religion that characterize

Moser's and Kant's approaches to public law and the religious constitution. The separation that Augsburg and Osnabrück effected between imperial public law and the theology and metaphysics of the churches meant that henceforward there would be no common "public" understanding of religion and church or their relation to law and politics (Heckel 1983, 116–22; Lehmann 2013, 1–22). The jurists and statesmen who staffed the multiconfessional constitutional courts and diet learned to view religions as a plurality of equally legitimate public law associations. These associations were understood to teach a variety of conflicting absolute theological truths about which the jurists could have no view in their official persona, even if they remained devout believers in such truths when worshipping. Inside this relativistic imperial public law framework, however, particularly within the universities of the confessionalized states to which it had given rise, theologians, metaphysicians, and some jurists understood religion quite differently, namely as the singular true mode of divine communication established by God for man's salvation and preserved in the doctrines and sacraments of the one true church (Heckel 1989c). It was also in this context that two distinct forms of public church law emerged: a relativistic, confessionally neutral imperial church law (*Staatskirchenrecht*) and a series of confessionally divided forms of territorial church law, including, of course, canon law within Catholic territories (Heckel 1989b, 375–82).

It might be said that in suspending rival confessional truth-claims in order to arrive at a political compromise, the treaty-based religious constitution had separated the historical existence of the religions from their theological and metaphysical truth. Crucially, this was not in order to debunk or secularize the confessions but rather to ensure their continued existence and to allow each to determine its absolute truths unmolested by the others. The unintended cultural consequence of this unplanned constitutional regime, however, was that the religious constitution became almost unintelligible to the theologians and metaphysicians whose activities it recognized and protected, for it was central to their outlook that the historical existence of both religion and law manifested a divine truth or that it was grounded in transcendental reason. This meant that a historical religious constitution lacking such true normative foundations – as revealed in divine law or acceded to through natural law and human reason – could only be regarded as illegitimate and pro tem. From its very inception, then, the German religious constitution enacted a profound and consequential division between a juridical-political culture that viewed the suspension of metaphysical truth as a condition of

constitutional legitimacy and a variety of constitutionally protected theological-philosophical cultures that regarded this suspension as a sign of the constitution's fundamental illegitimacy. This was the historical gulf across which Moser and Kant would speak past each other.

8.2 Moser, Public Law, and the Religious Constitution

Moser was born into a family of Swabian civil servants, studied law at Tübingen University, and during the 1720s obtained positions as a law professor and Württemberg state councilor by seeking patronage at the Württemberg ducal court and the imperial court in Vienna (Walker 1981, 9–61). To understand Moser's relation to public law and what it meant to be an imperial public lawyer (or *Reichspublizist*), two preliminary observations are required. First, there was no consolidated body of basic laws that established the constitutional order of the German Empire – the rights, entitlements, freedoms, and obligations among its multiplex constituents. Rather, the legal foundations of the Empire consisted of a mass of laws, ordnances, treaties, agreements, traditions, and customs – between and among the emperor, electoral princes, nonelectoral princes (such as the Württemberg dukes), bishoprics, and cities – that had agglomerated over centuries, lacked a consolidated written form, and contained contradictory, contested, or simply forgotten elements (Härter 2013). For Moser, a key task of the *Reichspublizist* thus was to gather together the main collections of public laws, to winnow out their contradictory and superseded elements, to bring them up-to-date in accordance with the most recent enactments and treaties, and thus to render them usable and teachable.[1]

Second, in undertaking this task, public lawyers had to deal with the fact that there was no general agreement regarding constitutional norms, of the sort that might be imagined to be reached by rational individuals, or mutually respectful communities, and then enacted in a constitutional convention. Rather, the normative disposition of the imperial constitution was unsettled and contested, owing to the fact that its normative sources – the various enactments, treaties, agreements, traditions, and conventions – were in fact the product of interest-driven arrangements among various imperial states and estates and only held sway where and when these arrangements held fast (Whaley 2012b, 169–83). Ongoing conflicts

[1] Johann Jacob Moser, *Grund-Riß der heutigen Staats-Verfassung des Teutschen Rechts*, 6th edn (Tübingen: Cotta, 1748): 1–13.

between the Empire's two main religious estates – the *Corpus Evangelicorum* and the *Corpus Catholicorum* – thus meant that even the Augsburg and Westphalian treaties, agreed to by all the estates, failed to provide an uncontested normative base because the pope had refused to sign them and they were interpreted differently by the Catholic and Protestant estates (Moser 1748, 26–29).

It was this remarkable historical-intellectual state of affairs that imbued Moser's voluminous public law works with their particular discursive character and intellectual demeanor. In responding to the absence of an agreed public law textual canon or corpus, Moser's works combined compilation, redaction, commentary, and advice in a descriptive format aimed at presenting the core historical sources that might be held to constitute the present constitutional order (Stolleis 2002). After reminding his readers that the Empire possessed no single written basic law or constitution, Moser thus declared that its constitution had been formed through the overlayering of a series of purely historical treaties, agreements, conventions, enactments, and laws. According to Moser, the most important of these were the Golden Bull of 1356 (which had established the rights of the electoral princes), the *Landfriede* (or Perpetual Peace) of 1495 (a measure for ending private armies and feudal violence), the religious peace treaties of Augsburg in 1555 and Westphalia in 1648 (discussed earlier), the execution ordinances of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (through which the *Reichskammergericht* and the *Reichshofrat* were serially restructured to permit parity of legal representation and adjudication for the conflicting Protestant and Catholic estates), and the emperor's electoral "capitulations" (election agreements made between the emperor and the electoral princes regarding the conduct of his government) (Moser 1748, 20–33).

Despite its descriptive and compilatory character, however, Moser's extraordinarily detailed exposition of this core group of public law sources was itself a normative undertaking with a particular political and religious disposition. This is so because in declaring that the norms of the public law constitution were the products of purely historical agreements, conventions, and treaties, Moser was deliberately and explicitly displacing a rival construction of the normative sources of public law, namely one that viewed "civil" law as grounded in transcendental norms – of divine or human reason – as accessed via a natural law inscribed in human nature and then enacted by the prince in history and society (Haakonssen 2006; Hunter 2011). This rival normative construction of public law – which declared the illegitimacy of laws not grounded in transcendental norms of

divinity, sociability, and rationality – had been particularly influential in the universities of the pre-Westphalian Protestant and Catholic confessional states, although by the middle of the eighteenth century most Protestant jurists and many Catholic ones shared Moser's purely historical view of the constitution (Fritsch 2007).

The definitive treatment of the German religious constitution that Moser published in 1774 fully exemplifies his approach. Moser thus begins his discussion of the "general norm in German religious and ecclesiastical matters" by providing a book list of the key primary and secondary sources pertaining to the religious constitution. He poses the question of whether the Bible and associated forms of natural law might provide the required general norm but declares that this is not possible because the Protestant and Catholic estates cannot agree on the fundamental truths of these sources, a disagreement that has led to the suspension of such truths in political and juridical matters.

> Since we Germans must still live with each other, and this grievous religious division has brought so much misery to Germany for so long, it was finally acknowledged that wherever religious and ecclesiastical matters arose, no other means remained than to wholly abstract from the truth and falsehood of any given religion, and simply to consider how to get along with others in external common life and intercourse, as also in political and juridical affairs.[2]

The instrument and effect of this transformation, Moser continues, had been the acceptance of a specific series of imperial treaties, agreements, and conventions as the source of general norms for dealing with religious and ecclesiastical matters. The religious constitution is thus grounded in the treaties of Passau, Augsburg, and Westphalia and in a whole series of lesser eighteenth-century treaties and enactments of the imperial high courts and the *Reichstag*. Demonstrating the religious divisions shaping this series, Moser declares that the treaties of Ryswick (1694) and Baden (1714) could not be accepted as basic imperial laws because of their rejection by the Protestant estates, and neither can papal concordats that have often contained attempts to abrogate the Augsburg and Westphalian treaties. In fact, Catholic *Reichspublizisten* such as Bavarian jurist Freiherr von Kreittmayr (1705–90) had supported the pope's protests against these treaties, using the distinction between the outer and inner forums to claim that the treaties are only outwardly binding, thereby threatening to reinstate

[2] Johann Jacob Moser, *Von der Teutschen Religions-Verfassung* (Frankfurt/Leipzig, 1774), 11.

theological truth within the juridical domain and overturn the entire constitutional order (Moser 1774, 12–22).

Moser then treats this series of treaties, agreements, and enactments as supplying the norms capable of regulating the religious structure of the Empire and of settling a myriad of religious disputes. With regard to the crucial question of religious pluralism, for example, he declares that the question of how many religions are permitted in the Empire is determined by the treaty of Augsburg and the (Westphalian) treaty of Osnabrück and by a number of ancillary enactments and statutes pertaining to the status and visibility of the three imperial religions in particular places (Moser 1774, 23–33). The more difficult and interesting question here, however, is whether in addition to the legally recognized imperial religions a larger array of sects and religions might be tolerated: specifically, Judaism, Anabaptism, and Weigelianism. For Moser, this question pertains not to religious truth or value but to the jurisdictional structure of the Empire. Members of these religious minorities thus cannot ask for toleration before the *Reichskammergericht* because their sects were not recognized under the terms of Osnabrück, which means that the court lacks the relevant jurisdiction. Demonstrating the multijurisdictional character of the imperial constitution, however, Moser observes that these and other religious minorities have indeed been granted toleration through the enactments and decrees of territorial rulers and estates. While these rulers were bound by Osnabrück to recognize the three imperial religions within their territories, they could also exercise a demisovereign constitutional right of toleration (*jus tolerandi*) within their own jurisdictions, as Brandenburg-Prussia had done in a series of religious edicts (1749, 1772, and 1788) that extended toleration to the "Jewish nation," Herrnhuter, Mennonites, and Bohemian Brethren.[3] The constitutional norm of religious pluralism thus was determined in the first instance by the great imperial treaties but secondarily by their interaction with the enactments and decrees of the territorial rulers and cities.

In a striking discussion of religious freedom, Moser argues that this too is governed by norms arising from the particular treaty-based arrangements and measures embedded in the constitution. Rather than being based in such theological absolutes as Luther's "priesthood of all believers" or in Lockean doctrines of the freedom of rational individuals to pursue their own religious truth, constitutional religious freedom in Germany consisted of the right to choose to belong to one of the three imperial religions or,

[3] See Heinrich 1981; Hunter 2005; and Schaufele 2000.

depending on territorial enactments, one of the tolerated sects (Heckel 1997; Hunter 2014). Displaying his usual sangfroid, Moser thus declares that insofar as it is understood as the right to act as one wishes in matters of religion, regardless of civil or ecclesiastical authorities, freedom of conscience is incompatible with the German constitution (Moser 1774, 36). Rather, the scope and limits of religious freedom were determined by the multiconfessional architecture of the Augsburg and Osnabrück treaties and the associated religious edicts of territorial states and estates.

On the one hand, this meant that individuals were free to enter or leave the legally recognized confessions (Moser 1774, 51–65). It was thus illegitimate for Jews to be compelled to baptize their children in one of the Christian confessions, although Jews could not prevent their children from becoming Christians once they had reached adulthood. Christians, too, whether they belonged to secular or religious estates, were constitutionally permitted to enter and leave a public confession of their choosing. The attempt to interpret Osnabrück in a manner that precluded Catholic clergy and monks from converting to Protestantism – by arguing that they were not "immediate" imperial subjects – was thus unacceptable because the treaty supported no such interpretation, leaving clergy free to change religion, on the condition that they relinquished their office and income. This meant that edicts by the emperor that attempted to criminalize apostasy from Catholicism were also contrary to the constitution.

On the other hand, Moser declared that the religious constitution did not permit the members of a religion or indeed the religious parties themselves to alter the theological basis of their religion or transform it into a new one (Moser 1774, 41–50). Apparently it had been argued that religious reformers were free to change the theologies of the public confessions on the grounds that the treaty-based constitution applied only to the "external" juridical order of the churches, leaving their "inner" theologies open to change. Moser rejects this as unconstitutional, arguing that even though the constitution suspends the truth of competing confessional theologies, it is precisely these theologies that determine the juridical recognition and rights of the religious parties to the constitutional treaties. It is thus contrary to the constitution for the members of a confession to alter its core doctrines in a way that results in a new religion in part because constitutional religious rights pertain only to the corporate churches and religious parties constituted by those theological doctrines and in part because the constitution forbids the introduction of new religions into the Empire.

The final, and perhaps most important, example of the manner in which Moser derived the normative architecture of the religious constitution from its constituent treaties and agreements concerns the so-called *Entscheidungsjahre* ("decision-year") clauses of the Osnabrück treaty. After years of protracted negotiations, in 1648 it was agreed that 1618 would mark the onset year for amnesty in relation to war crimes, whereas 1624 – the *Normaljahr* ("normative year") – would be used to settle all cases of restitution and reparation. The *Normaljahr* clause declared that the distribution of religious properties, populations, and jurisdictions nominally obtaining in 1624 would constitute the status quo ante to be returned to in 1648 and thence function as the norm for adjudicating all subsequent disputes brought before the imperial high courts (Fuchs 2015). Citing the relevant clauses of the treaty as his authority, Moser declares that when disputes arise between the confessions over the rights to various religious entitlements, churches, properties, funds, parishes, and hospitals, the question is not that of the justice or injustice of the various claims but simply whether those making them were in possession of the contested rights and properties in the normative year (Moser 1774, 149–52). Needless to say, this distributional norm was not arrived at by rational beings operating from behind a "veil of ignorance" but by fiercely opposed confessional blocs driven to the compromise through mutual attrition and fear and the pursuit of political advantage. Moser observes that religious entitlements and restitutions have nothing to do with religious truth or tradition, or with claims to be the true apostolic church, but are settled solely with regard to the facts of possession in 1624 as these are adjudicated by the *Reichshofrat* and the *Reichskammergericht*. And indeed this proved to be the case in the unending series of disputes brought before the high courts throughout the eighteenth century, testifying to the constitution's successful, if somewhat precarious, juridification of religious conflict.[4]

For Moser, the entire religious order and religious peace of Germany depended on acceptance of the Osnabrück treaty – which cannot be evaded or minimized by appealing to higher or older religious truths – and on unconditional acceptance of and compliance with the *Normaljahr* regulation in particular (Moser 1774, 149–53). This is why Osnabrück made it illegal to question or criticize the treaty itself and the *Normaljahr* regulation in particular. That said, Moser records the fact that the Catholic and Protestant estates had sometimes interpreted this

[4] See Haug-Moritz 1992; Kleinhagenbrock 2010; Luh 1995; and Milton 2016.

constitutional state of affairs rather differently (Moser 1774, 153–62). There had been a tendency among the Catholic estates to question the eternity of the Osnabrück constitution, seeking to treat it as an interim measure within a longer history: that of the universal and eternal church, which might yet return to fulfill its divine mission. For this reason, the Catholic estates also argued that Protestant territories might be re-Catholicized. But the Protestants viewed the religious peace treaties as inaugurating a new phase of history, canceling past traditions, and establishing a new and unsurpassable historical-juridical distribution of religions and their rights and entitlements. Clearly Moser's rendition of the religious constitution is Protestant in this latter regard, although Catholic jurists would increasingly adopt this standpoint as the eighteenth century progressed (Whaley 2000, 183). In any case, this shows not only that the normative disposition of the religious constitution depended on a series of negotiated treaties and agreements but also that its stability depended on the capacity of the imperial political and juridical institutions to keep the opposing parties within the juridified space of the constitution.

8.3 Kant, Public Law, and the Religious Constitution

Like Moser, Kant viewed public law and the religious constitution as normatively grounded. Kant, though, approached the source of the norms, the mode of accessing them, and the norms themselves in a manner completely different from Moser, resulting in a quite different relation to the German constitutional order. Rather than approaching the normative disposition of the religious constitution by compiling and consulting the historical public law treaties and enactments, Kant did so through an act of inner philosophical reflection. Kant and his followers deemed this reflection capable of retrieving the transcendental norms and concepts on which historical public law ought to be based in order to be legitimate.

At this point it is important not to presume that Moser's historical public law constitution possessed transcendental normative grounds of the sort that Kant proposed to uncover. On the one hand, this presumption forgets that Moser was well aware that various parties had prescribed transcendental normative grounds for the constitution – derived from divine law or natural law – but held that the treaties of Augsburg and Osnabrück had suspended such normative truths as the condition of reaching the compromise from which the normative disposition of the constitution arose. On the other hand, this presumption also makes it

difficult to develop a perspicuous comparison between the activities that determined knowledge of public law for Moser and the *Reichspublizisten* – the acts of compilation, redaction, commentary, and citation performed on historical treaties and enactments – and the intellectual activities that determined such knowledge for Kant and the *Reichsphilosophen*. But it is just these latter activities – the acts of reflection, problematization, conversion, purification, and affirmation performed by the philosophers on themselves – that determined Kant's relation to public law and the religious constitution.

Kant's presumption was that public law and the religious constitution are grounded in transcendental norms that can be accessed through acts of free philosophical self-reflection. These self-reflective acts, however, were shaped by a metaphysical anthropology and cosmology that were not themselves grounded in free self-reflection, having been inherited from the tradition of Protestant academic metaphysics.[5] The "man" that looked back at Kant when he reflected on morality and law was thus an intricately specified double-sided figure: a "rational being" (*Vernunftwesen*) capable of free self-determination through pure thought but attached to a passive "sensibility" that subjected rational freedom to the distractions of "sensible inclinations" and robbed it of autonomy by attaching it to objects of sensuous attraction.

> Because of this a rational being must regard himself *as intelligence* (hence not from the side of his lower powers) as belonging not to the world of sense but to the world of understanding; hence he has two standpoints from which he can regard himself and cognize laws for the use of his powers and consequently his actions; *first*, insofar as he belongs to the world of sense, under laws of nature (heteronomy); *second*, as belonging to the intelligible world, under laws which, being independent of nature, are not empirical but grounded merely in reason. (G 4:452)

Encountered through this figure of reflection, Kantian morality thus took shape as the governance of willing through pure thought. This means that all rational beings would will in accordance with a single universal law, were it not for the fact that their sensuous inclinations refracted pure willing through a myriad of individual objects of desire, thereby compelling morality to assume the form of an imperative or command to overcome this sensuous resistance and fracturing (G 4:413). Because the philosopher encounters his moral self through this highly structured act of self-reflection, Kantian ethics is not just a theory of morality but a kind

[5] See Heimsoeth 1967; Hunter 2001, 285–93; Insole 2015.

of spiritual exercise in which its practitioners must learn to relate to themselves as rational beings who are obliged to overcome their sensuous inclinations in order to will in accordance with a universe of rational beings, thereby discovering the ultimate moral law (Hunter 2002).

Kant's legal philosophy and his conception of public law emerged as modifications of this exercise in moral self-reflection. The central change is that in the legal domain, rational beings or intelligences are envisioned as exercising their freedom "externally," in fact to choose to occupy part of the world (MM 6:245–50). According to Kant's cosmology, the fact that the world is a sphere (rather than an endless plane) establishes contiguity between the otherwise scattered intelligences. This allows their "external choices" to come into conflict and thence to be reconciled through the formation of a "common will" among globe-dwelling rational beings (MM 6:262–63). It is from this reflective image of a universe of rational beings being compelled to reconcile their attachments to the finite globe that Kant generates his a priori norm of justice or "principle of right," namely that each individual should exercise their "outer freedom" or external choice in a manner that does not impinge on the exercises of all other individuals (MM 6:230–31). Kant also characterizes this as the principle of universal reciprocal coercion (MM 6:232–33).

Having approached it via this self-reflective path, Kant views public law not in terms of agglomerated imperial treaties and enactments but as the legal regime that is required to realize the transcendental norm of justice or "rightful condition" in a "civil condition" or "state." On the one hand, Kant insists that the norm of justice or principle of right is a priori, already existing in the "state of nature" prior to entrance into the civil condition or state and in fact providing the norm compelling rational beings to enter into this condition (MM 6:264–66). On the other hand, Kant also declares that prior to being brought under a system of public law or constitution capable of conclusively uniting individuals under a single juridical will, the norm of justice or principle of right remains "provisional" (MM 6:312–13).

As a result of its delineation through this intellectual exercise – that is, through inner reflection on its role in actualizing the a priori reconciled "external choices" (or common will) of rational beings – Kant's construction of public law acquires its two central characteristics. First, approached via this path, rather than being determined by the historical treaties and agreements through which opposed confessional blocs juridified their disputes, the normative grounding of public law comes instead from a transcendental or a priori norm of justice – the principle of right understood as the reconciled "external choices" of a universe of

rational beings – that public law or the constitution must actualize. This meant that while Moser and the *Reichspublizisten* viewed the norm of public law in terms of historical treaties and instruments (crucially the *Normaljahr* regulation) that permitted confessional disputes to be juridified and adjudicated before the high courts, Kant and the *Reichsphilosophen* located the norm in another place and in other terms. Despite the fact that some commentators have viewed Kant's *Rechtslehre* as providing a new foundation for constitutionalism (Kersting 1984, 288–304; Stolleis 1988, 326), by treating his constitutional norm as a transcendental principle retrieved through an act of philosophical reflection, Kant in fact provided a powerful means for delegitimizing the constitution, to the extent that it did not realize this transcendental norm. And it was received in this way by such anticonstitutional writers as Hufeland, Feuerbach, and Ruge, albeit in a highly contested and shifting reception field (Rückert 1991).

Second, because this norm or principle of justice had been conceived in terms of the reconciled choices or "common will" of a universe of free rational beings, Kant viewed the legitimacy of public law and state in what would later appear (anachronistically) to be "democratic" terms (Eisfeld 2015, 234–43), that is, in terms of whether constitutional laws and the exercise of sovereignty could in principle have been agreed to by a citizenry understood as a community of rationally self-governing beings (MM 6: 313–16). The wholly a-democratic German constitution thus underwent a kind of sea change when immersed in the waters of Kantian reflection, ceasing to be the result of a series of political compromises between the Empire's corporate estates executed through the institutions and instruments of imperial public law and appearing instead as the form in which a community of rational individuals would exercise the harmonized will that had forged the principle of justice. Kant's conception of public law thus gave rise to two ideas that were inimical to the historical form of German public law: first, that for public law to be legitimate it should be founded on a transcendental norm of justice and, second, that this norm arose from the agreement of rational subjects to whom public law applied, although we have noted that the former idea had been advanced by pre-Westphalian natural law jurists and theologians.

In addition to this transcendental-normative approach to public law, when it came to the religious constitution in particular, Kant's relation to it was shaped by a second, no-less important reflective culture and outlook. This was the Protestant-rationalist view that the constitutionally recognized confessions were obstacles to the free philosophical pursuit of religious truth that, unimpeded, would see the confessional religions displaced

by a moral philosophy of self-regenerative and self-governing rational beings.[6] In his *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, Kant thus declared that as a result of their inculcated doctrines and ritualistic worship, the "statutory" or "ecclesiastical" religions occluded the true source of moral conduct – rational self-governance through pure thought of the moral law – overlaying this with "heteronomous" rewards and punishments and the historical story of Christ's vicarious atonement for human sin (Rel 6:109–24). Assuming the truth of his own metaphysical anthropology of a "sensibly affected rational being," Kant was in no doubt that man's inner rational morality – or "pure religious faith" – would inevitably displace the confessional religions whose merely historical truths applied only to man's empirical nature.

> It is therefore a necessary consequence of the physical and, at the same time, the moral predisposition in us – the latter being the foundation and at the same time the interpreter of all religion – that in the end religion will gradually be freed of all empirical grounds of determination, of all statutes that rest on history and unite human beings provisionally for the promotion of the good through the intermediary of an ecclesiastical faith. Thus at last the pure religion of reason [*reine Vernunftreligion*] will rule over all. (Rel 6:121, translation modified)

Kant thus viewed the constitutional religions from the standpoint of his own supposedly noninculcated metaphysical anthropology, treating their promised rewards, punishments, and vicarious salvation as pandering to man's sensuous desire for happiness at the expense of the rationally self-governing being or "humanity" within. Projecting this moral metaphysics onto a philosophical history and hermeneutics, Kant argued that the story of Christ's vicarious atonement for human sin had been necessary during the period of humanity's spiritual infancy, when the weakness of the inner rational being had required the support of such "external" promises and comforts (Rel 6:60–78). With the progressive purification of man's sensuous nature and desires, though, and the increasing autonomy of his inner rational being, these historical supports that had been provided by the confessional religions were falling away. This meant that Christ could now be understood in fact as only an "outer symbol" of the process of rational moral self-regeneration taking place within humanity, thereby allowing the plurality of constitutional religions to be replaced by a single "pure religion of reason" (Rel 6:107–9).

[6] See Bohatec 1938; Hunter 2001, 337–63; Rossi 2006; Sala 2004.

Approaching it from a double standpoint – in terms of the transcendental-normative view of law and state and in terms of the Protestant-rationalist displacement of the constitutional religions by academic moral philosophy – Kant could declare the German religious constitution to be doubly illegitimate. It was illegitimate in part because, conceived as a community of self-governing rational beings, a "people" could not rationally subordinate itself to a religious constitution that was not an expression of its common legislative will and over which it had no control. But it was also illegitimate because such a community of free, self-governing moral beings could not subordinate itself to a set of "external" religions in perpetuity, when the historical refinement of such moral being would itself lead to the correction of religious "errors" and the overturning of the constitutional religions.

By deriving its norms from principles of moral self-governance retrieved through reflection on inner rational being, Kant thus arrived at an anti-constitutional theory of the religious constitution. These principles meant that the duty of rulers was no longer to adhere to the norm of juridical multiconfessionalism to which they were bound by the constitution but in fact to repudiate this in accordance with "holy" freedom and the providential supersession of the constitutional religions.

> Now it is the duty of rulers not to hinder the public diffusion of these principles; on the contrary, much is risked, and at one's own responsibility, when we intrude upon the way of divine providence by favoring certain historical ecclesiastical doctrines, which at best have in their favor only the appearance of truth to be established by scholars, and, through the offer of withdrawal of certain civil advantages . . . by exposing the subjects' conscience to temptation – all of which, apart from the harm which thereby befalls a freedom which is in this case holy, can hardly produce good citizens for the state. (Rel 6:133–34)

On the basis of the principles of rational self-governance and the "pure religion of reason" that the philosopher found within himself, Kant could thus unhesitatingly declare the illegitimacy of a constitution that entrenched a plurality of confessional religions in perpetuity.

> Thus if the question is . . . Can a law prescribing that a certain ecclesiastical constitution, once arranged, is to continue permanently, be regarded as issuing from the real will of the legislator . . . then it will first be asked: *May* a people itself make it a law that certain articles of faith and forms of external religion, once adopted, are to remain forever? And so: *May* a people hinder itself, in its posterity, from making further progress in religious insight or from at some time correcting old errors? It then becomes clear that an

> original contract of the people that made this a law would in itself be null and void because it conflicts with the vocation and end of humanity; hence a law given about this is not to be regarded as the real will of the monarch, to whom counter-representations can accordingly be made. (OCS 8:304–5)

8.4 Concluding Remarks

This last set of comments marks the point of maximal difference between Kant's and Moser's ways of relating to public law and the religious constitution. It can be recalled that the religious constitution emerged not from the common willing of a community of rational beings but from a series of public law treaties that permitted the political coexistence of irresolvably opposed confessional blocs within the juridified order of the Empire. The resulting Janus-faced constitution – a relativistic ("secular") juridical framework providing the protective canopy for a plurality of opposed absolute religions – had the effect of preserving the three imperial religions in perpetuity. This was so because, in severing the historical and juridical existence of the confessional religions from their competing metaphysical-theological truths, the constitution simultaneously recognized the religions in terms of the confessional truths that they taught. In so doing, the constitution excluded such truths from its own normative grounds while prohibiting members of the churches from changing the confessional articles that secured their constitutional recognition and protection.

Nobody in the eighteenth century had a more comprehensive and intimate knowledge of German public law and the religious constitution than Moser. This was not least because through his extraordinary work of collection, redaction, commentary, and citation he was himself one of the architects of the constitution and has been cited as one of its authorities right up to the present day. It represents a fundamental misunderstanding of Moser and of German public law itself, however, to regard him as a "positivist." On the one hand, rather than signifying his "empiricist" failure to retrieve them, the exclusion of transcendental normative grounds from Moser's exposition of public law resulted from their being suspended by the religious parties who had negotiated the treaties that were the normative ground of the constitution. On the other hand, despite his unwavering commitment to the suspension of theological and metaphysical truth in constitutional commentary, in his religious persona,

Moser was a Lutheran who, in his mature years, gravitated to the Pietists, writing hymns and prayers that leave no doubt as to his personal piety (Lächele 2002; Miersemann 2002). In cultivating a fideistic style of devotion, Moser was not tempted to think that religious faith might be rationally transformed through the recovery of something like humanity's capacity for inner moral self-governance. This, in turn, facilitated his exclusion of such a norm from the religious constitution and fortified his capacity to view confessional religions as public law corporations in his juridical persona (Walker 1981, 138–54). In other words, the compartmentalized manner in which Moser cultivated his juridical expertise and religious comportment allowed him to view both sides of the constitution's Janus face – the relativistic and pluralistic views of religions as juridical corporations and the devotion to a particular true religion – with apparent equanimity, since this allowed him to refuse both the confessionalization of the constitution and the juridical secularization of the confessions.

In turning away from the historical collections of public law and seeking the grounds of the religious constitution through acts of self-reflection designed to retrieve universal moral and legal principles from within his own (and everyone's) rational being, Kant, the great *Reichsphilosoph*, adopted an intellectual stance that was alien and inimical to that of Moser, the great *Reichspublizist*. Kant's self-reflective acts, however, were shaped by a particular metaphysical anthropology and cosmology, according to which man is a free, self-governing rational being whose sensibility and sensuous inclinations impeded his rational autonomy even as they impelled his legal possession of the globe. In shaping and directing his acts of self-reflection, Kant's anthropology and cosmology imbued the inner norms of morality and justice that he found with a crypto-confessional character; since only someone who has been taught that man is a "sensibly affected rational being" will formulate the norm of justice in terms of how a universe of such beings can occupy the globe and will view the constitution as grounded in this norm. Further, in organizing such reflection around the retrieval of a threatened capacity for pure rational self-governance, and in making this retrieval into the key to the normative grounding not only of morality but of law and religion as well, Kant forfeited the capacity to cultivate the multiple personae that were required to view both sides of the Janus-faced religious constitution. Instead, Kant viewed the constitution solely from the standpoint of someone

committed to a single religious truth – that of the "pure religion of reason" – rendering himself incapable of also adopting the relativistic constitutional view of religious and philosophical confessions as equally legitimate public law associations teaching rival absolute truths. In fact, Kant declared this constitution to be illegitimate on the basis of his commitment to one of the rival absolute truths that it protected.

CHAPTER 9

A Family Quarrel
Fichte's Deduction of Right and Recognition

Gabriel Gottlieb

Introduction

J. G. Fichte's theory of recognition as presented in the *Foundations of Natural Right* (1796/2000) remains one of his lasting contributions to social and political philosophy.[1] It is widely acknowledged that Fichte's conception of recognition influenced Hegel, yet scholars have failed to appreciate how the concept of recognition (*Anerkennung*) emerged in his theory of right, even though some have identified historical influences among the major figures in this history of philosophy, including Hobbes and Rousseau.[2] The aim of this chapter is to begin charting the *von* Kant *bis* Fichte story regarding the concept of recognition by examining a family quarrel among Kant's contemporaries and followers. There is a certain oddity here as far as these stories typically go: Fichte's mature theory of right actually precedes, at least in part, Kant's own considered view as published in the *Metaphysics of Morals*.[3] The order of their publications does not mean that we now have a *von* Fichte *bis* Kant narrative, however interesting that might be. For my purpose, the relevant thread leads from Kant's moral philosophy to Fichte's *Foundations of Natural Right*, where the concept of recognition and the corresponding notions of the "summons" and "respect" receive a nonmoral sense. The historical and

[1] J. G. Fichte, *Grundlagen des Naturrechts* (Jena/Leipzig: Gabler, 1796); *Foundations of Natural Right*, trans. Michael Baur (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); hereafter "FNR." No references are given to a German edition because Baur's translation includes page references to the standard source, *Johann Gottlieb Fichte's sämmtliche Werke*, vol. III, ed. I. H. Fichte (Berlin: Veith, 1845).

[2] Siep 1979/2014; Wildt 1982; Pippin 1989; and Williams 1992 include discussions of Fichte's influence on Hegel. See Schottky 1995 for connections between Hobbes, Rousseau, and Fichte. Neuhouser 2000, xxvi identifies Rousseau's *amour-propre* as an influence. For an analysis of recognition in Rousseau, see Neuhouser 2010.

[3] Fichte's *Natural Right* was published in two parts, the first part in March of 1796 and the second part during the fall *Michaelismesse* of 1797. In January 1797, Kant's "Doctrine of Right," the first section of *Metaphysics of Morals* was published.

philosophical details of this story are immense, so I only examine a relatively small part of the story, what I take to be an essential moment.[4]

The importance of this story extends beyond simply appreciating a historical point about the development of Fichte's political philosophy, especially since the concept of recognition has become in many quarters an indispensable category for social, moral, and political reflection and agency. Fichte's *Foundations of Natural Right* (hereafter *Natural Right*) is, in my view, largely responsible for introducing the concept of recognition (*Anerkennung*) into moral and political philosophy. By doing so, Fichte initiated an intersubjective tradition, one that understands the core of selfhood as constituted by relations and interactions between subjects. Hegel's innovations are, no doubt, responsible for the far-reaching influence of this Fichtean idea, but this fact does not diminish Fichte's important insight and contribution. Given the significant place of the concept of recognition in our contemporary normative framework, addressing its emergence in Fichte's thought involves coming to terms with a moment in the genealogy of our moral discourse.[5]

My aim is to begin a contextualization of Fichte's views on recognition by situating his deduction of right and analysis of recognition within the context of a family quarrel among Kantian jurists over the foundations of right. Understanding this context is essential for appreciating why Fichte was moved to consider right to be grounded not in the moral considerations of traditional natural law but in a type of social cooperation he calls "reciprocal recognition" or "mutual recognition" (FNR 117). Fichte realized, I argue, that Kantian moral philosophy and the methodology of Kantian jurists lack the resources for legitimatizing our entitlement to the concept of right and for specifying the normative conditions for social cooperation. In their stead, Fichte's deduction of right and his views on mutual recognition are meant to legitimate the concept of right and to specify the normative conditions for social cooperation.

In *Natural Right*, Fichte acknowledges that his approach to right breaks not only with traditional approaches to natural right that posit relations of right outside the commonwealth (FNR 132–33) but also with related conceptions of right that proceed according to the "usual way of dealing with natural right" (FNR 13). Fichte is not forthcoming about what he

[4] I do not, for instance, comment in detail on Kant's conception of respect or Fichte's initial views on right and their critical reception.

[5] See Honneth 1996 for an example of *Anerkennung*'s employment in social theory and Darwall 2006 for a moral theory influenced by Fichte's model of right and recognition. See also Butler 2012, Taylor 1994, and Fraser and Honneth 2003 for examples of the moral and political discourse of recognition.

means by the "usual way" because he does not identify any natural right theorists who proceed accordingly. It is highly likely, however, that by the "usual way" he has in mind deductions of right that rely exclusively on practical and, more specifically, moral considerations (e.g., a conception of the moral law or good will). The best evidence for this view is that when identifying the "usual way," Fichte contrasts it with the methods of Erhard and Maimon, both of whom provide "some excellent hints" for deducing right by relying on theoretical considerations and by not deriving right directly from morality (FNR 12–13).[6] This is not to say that Erhard and Maimon do not proceed, at least in some respects, according to the usual way; they simply provide "hints" about how one might reject the usual way.

Based on this evidence, I take the "usual way" of addressing right to involve deriving or deducing it from the normative demands laid down by morality and refer to this approach as the "moral view" of right. As I point out later, it was common among Kantian jurists to derive right from a conception of moral obligations authorized by practical reason. For this reason, the moral view amounts to an orthodox approach to natural right. Fichte, in contrast, provides an unorthodox deduction of right that relies on theoretical considerations and avoids deriving right from the moral law (FNR 10). In doing so, he endorses the independence thesis: that the science of right is independent of the science of morality.[7] Right is independent in that it cannot be derived from morality; instead, right and morality identify two irreducible normative domains.[8] Fichte claims to have "found no trace of any philosopher having questioned the usual way of dealing with natural right," except for Kant's remarks on "permissive law" in *Perpetual Peace*, which Fichte reports to have discovered only after completing his own theory (FNR 13).[9]

With the moral view in mind, I propose considering Fichte's deduction of the concept of right (§§1–4) as a transcendental argument meant to refute the orthodoxy and to offer an entitlement to the concept of right and its employment in our social and political relations. While Fichte does not

[6] Kersting 2001 and Clarke 2016 emphasize that one version of the usual way, represented by Hufeland and Fichte (in his initial 1793 writings on right), endorses deontic deductions of right.

[7] Clarke 2016. See also Nomer 2013; Neuhouser 2016; and Kosch 2017.

[8] Their irreducibility does not entail that they are unrelated; see Kosch 2017, 7.

[9] See also Fichte's review of *Perpetual Peace*, where elements of his own theory of recognition and right are discussed; Fichte, "Review of Immanuel Kant, *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch*," trans. Daniel Breazeale, *Philosophical Forum* XXXII(4) (Winter 2001), 311–21. Originally published anonymously in January 1796 in *Philosophisches Journal einer Gesellschaft Teutscher Gelehrten* and reprinted in *Johann Gottlieb Fichte's Sämmtliche Werke*, vol. 8, ed. I. H. Fichte (Berlin: Veith, 1845), 427–36.

present his deduction explicitly as an antiskeptical argument, it resembles such arguments in that it challenges an orthodoxy about how to proceed when addressing the grounds of right, an orthodoxy that appears doubtful about grounding right in a nonmoral premise. Conceiving Fichte's deduction from within a framework that combats skepticism is not entirely novel, since commentators have suggested that his deduction addresses the problem of other minds[10] and the existence of other rational beings,[11] external world skepticism,[12] ethical skepticism,[13] or skepticism about human rights.[14] However, commentators have not adequately recognized that Fichte himself presents the argument as refuting the possibility of grounding the concept of right on moral foundations. In the Introduction to *Natural Right*, Fichte frames his deduction as such a refutation.

> This entire presentation of the concept of right has refrained from refuting in detail those who attempt to derive the doctrine of right from the moral law; this is because, as soon as the correct deduction is given, every unbiased mind will accept it of its own accord, even if the incorrectness of the other deductions has not been shown; but as for biased minds and those who have their own axes to grind, every word uttered for the purpose of refuting them is wasted. (FNR 10)

Fichte's method of refuting the skeptics, at least those nonbiased skeptics, is not to directly show the mistakes in their deductive procedure but to indirectly refute them by supplying a "correct deduction." Such a deduction would be sufficient to establish that the concept of right must be derived without appealing to the moral law because, for Fichte, "there cannot be more than one deduction of the same concept" (FNR 50). In other words, if he can validly deduce the concept of right from nonmoral premises, then a deduction that proceeds from moral premises must be, in some respect, mistaken.

Setting aside Fichte's doubts, there is good reason to endorse a moral view of right. The purpose of a deduction of right is to legitimate or license our entitlement to the concept of right. While many people now, perhaps mistakenly, take for granted the idea of universal or equal rights, it is easy to forget that in the aftermath of the American and French revolutions, the legitimacy of the concept of universal and equal rights remained a matter of debate. Deriving right from moral considerations has the upshot of establishing an inescapable obligation that holds regardless of social or political status. A valid deduction of right from the moral law would pass on, in a norm-preserving way, its normative bindingness to the laws of right.

[10] Franks 2006. [11] Wood 2016. [12] Beiser 2002. [13] Gottlieb 2015. [14] Clarke 2014.

A proponent of the moral view is likely to be skeptical that a nonmoral deduction can explain the normative bindingness of right without appealing to a categorical principle such as the moral law.[15]

One disadvantage of any moral view of right is that acceptance of the conclusion requires endorsing the premise, and if there is moral pluralism, we should expect disagreement and difficulty convincing others who hold opposing moral views. To address skeptics or conservatives about right and equality, it is not advisable to begin with a controversial premise. An advantage Fichte's deduction has over moral views is that the initial premise of his deduction does not presuppose a controversial claim about the moral law. Fichte's initial premise is that "a finite rational being cannot posit itself without ascribing a free efficacy to itself," where what he intends by "free efficacy" is the capacity to self-consciously act in a way to determine material objects within the world. My suggestion is not that Fichte's first premise is noncontroversial but only that it avoids moral controversy. The first premise and transcendental method of Fichte's deduction certainly would not assuage the antirationalist sentiment of any conservatives skeptical about the epistemic power of theory or those dogmatists skeptical of the free activity of the I (Spinozists) or the I's coherence and reality (Humeans). While Fichte targets the skeptic, his skeptic is narrowly conceived. He intends to combat primarily the skepticism of Kantian jurists, a point more easily seen when his argument is contextualized within Kantian debates about the foundations of natural right.

How, then, am I obligated to respect your rights if not for moral reasons? Answering this question requires that Fichte's view of the normativity of right and recognition is clarified. First, I establish that Fichte's conception of recognition emerges from a family quarrel about the foundations of natural right. In conclusion, I address Fichte's views on the normative source of right and recognition.

9.1 The Family Quarrel: On the Moral Foundations of Right

The genetic marker of Kantian jurists who endorse the moral view is a belief that some aspect of Kant's moral philosophy provides a foundation for natural right. In this section, to illustrate their common commitment, I identify three types of moral views circulating between 1785

[15] See Darwall 2005 and Nance 2015 for moralized readings of Fichte's deduction.

and 1795: the moral views of Kantian perfectionists, pure Kantians, and finally, theoretical Kantians.

9.1.1 The Kantian Perfectionists

Two prominent Kantian perfectionists are Gottlieb Hufeland (1760–1817) and Wilhelm Gottlieb Tafinger (1760–1813).[16] I focus only on Hufeland, given the significance of his influence at the time. Hufeland's political writings were some of the first to apply Kant's moral philosophy to questions of natural right. His *Versuch über den Grundsatz des Naturrechts* (*An Essay on the Principle of Natural Right*, 1785) and *Lehrsätze des Naturrechts* (*Theorems of Natural Right*, 1790; revised in 1794–95) were widely read. The *Versuch* was reviewed by Kant in 1785, and Hufeland's *Lehrsätze* is even reported to have been "the most popular natural law book until the publication of Kant's" *Metaphysics of Morals* in 1797.[17] Given the important influence of Christian Wolff on his practical philosophy, Hufeland was not, however, a strict Kantian.[18] In his *Versuch* and his *Lehrsätze*, he combines Kantian moral principles, in particular, the formula of universality, with a Wolffian conception of moral perfectionism.[19]

A chief aim of a theory of natural right, for Hufeland, is to solve the problem of social cooperation: how do we legitimately regulate external action to avoid the collision of rational beings or unjustified interference. The justification of the right to coercion would contribute to solving the problem. The central question of political philosophy becomes, do we have a right to coerce? Hufeland proceeds in Kantian fashion by acknowledging that rational agency is governed by a universalizable law of practical reason. A difficulty Hufeland finds with applying such formal principles is that any normative principle of *action* must posit some end; however, this does not preclude such a principle from being determined according to the "form of

[16] Tafinger, a Kantian jurist who taught in Erlanger and Tübingen, authored *Encyclopädie und Geschichte der Rechte in Teutschland* (Erlangen: Palm, 1789), an attempt to ground right in a combination of Kantian and perfectionist principles. See Jordan 2003.

[17] Achella 2016, 366.

[18] See Rohls 2004, 18–51 for an overview of his academic studies and the influence of Wolffians.

[19] Wolff argues that "nature obligates us to do what makes us and our condition, or (what is the same thing) our inner and outer conditions, more perfect . . . And therefore we have a rule by which we should direct the free actions that we have in our power, namely *Do what makes you and your condition, or that of others more perfect; omit what makes it less perfect*" (Wolff 1990: 336). For the standard German edition, see Wolff, *Vernünftige Gedancken von der Menschen Tun und Lassen zu Beförderung ihrer Glückseeligkeit*, 4th edn. In *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. I.4, ed. Hans Werner Arndt (Hildesheim: Olms, 1976 [1733]).

morality," as required by Kantian ethics.[20] For Hufeland, no higher end, with respect to the ends of humanity, can be thought of other than perfection of humanity, that is, "the highest level of formation [*Ausbildung*] of all the powers of humanity [*Menschen*] in harmony with a whole."[21] The end internal to the moral law, although not the determining ground of moral action, is the perfection of humanity. Hufeland thereby formulates a material principle of morality that provides a requisite end: "Promote the perfection of all humanity [*Menschen*]."[22] Within this material principle lies, according to Hufeland, a principle of natural right that can legitimate coercion: "Prevent that the perfection of all humanity is diminished."[23] Coercion, then, is justifiable insofar it is used to promote human perfection without violating the dictates of morality, such as the formula of humanity.[24] While it may appear that the duties of morality and right are separate and that the former appear to rest on "firmer foundations," Hufeland is clear that "all duties," including duties of right "belong actually to morality."[25] Kantian perfectionism, then, offers a moral view of right.[26] Because Hufeland (along with Tafinger) endorses a teleological conception of morality and right centered on Kantian and perfectionist principles, he defends Kantian perfectionism.[27]

Unsurprisingly, Kant was skeptical about Wolffian moral philosophy. Kant's criticisms of Wolff in the *Groundwork* express his main concern and apply to Hufeland's earliest views: "[T]he authors of that science [Wolffian moral philosophy] . . . do not distinguish motives that, as such, are represented completely a priori by reason alone and are properly moral from empirical motives" (G 4:391). Largely deriving their moral principles from psychology, "they consider motives only in terms of the greater or smaller amount of them, without paying attention to the difference of their sources . . . and this is how they form their concept of *obligation*, which is anything but moral" (G 4:391). From Kant's standpoint, the introduction of happiness and perfection violates a basic tenant of moral philosophy: the idea that our moral duties should be derived independently of natural or empirical considerations. Consider Kant's remarks on Hufeland's 1785 formulation of his perfectionist theory of natural right:

[20] Gottlieb Hufeland, *Lehrsätze des Naturrechts und der damit verbundenen Wissenschaften zu Vorlesungen* (Jena: Cuno's Erben, 1790), 36. I found the account of Hufeland in Maliks 2014, 34 helpful.

[21] Hufeland 1790, 28. [22] Ibid., 39. [23] Ibid., 40. [24] Ibid., 42. [25] Ibid., 27.

[26] See Clarke 2016 for an overview of Hufeland and Fichte.

[27] See Moggach 2009 for a discussion of Wolffian perfectionism in relationship to Kant and Fichte.

"[H]e posits the ground of all natural right and all authorization in a prior *natural obligation*, and that the human being is therefore authorized to coerce others because he is obligated to do so" (RGH 8:128, my italics). Kant is noting that the authorization to coerce, in Hufeland's view, springs from his Wolffian perfectionism, an obligation "laid on us by nature itself" rather than the dictates of pure reason (RGH 8:129). In his *Lehrsätze*, Hufeland attempts to overcome Kant's criticism by grounding his perfectionism in the "form of morality" [*Form der Sittlichkeit*] rather than a natural obligation, yet his argument relies on a questionable stipulation that perfection is the highest end and based on formal features of the moral law.[28]

9.1.2 The Pure Kantians

Reflecting the concerns Kant had about the Kantian perfectionists, the jurist and cameralist Theodor Schmalz, in his 1792 treatise, *Das reine Naturrecht* (*Pure Natural Right*), criticizes Hufeland (and Tafinger) for incorrectly applying Kantian principles to natural right. He is especially critical of their attempts to employ Kant's moral principles "in order to deduce from them the principles of happiness and perfection" as material principles applicable within the domain of right.[29] The very title of Schmalz's work declares his intention to proceed along the lines of "pure" practical reason, avoiding any conflation of the obligations of pure practical reason with natural obligations. Schmalz, in fact, considers himself the first to correctly apply Kantian principles to natural right, precisely because he eschews any appeal to material principles, thereby following a "rigorous scientific method" that deduces right from an analysis of the concept of freedom.[30] Schmalz, partial as he is to Kant's formula of humanity, claims that "[t]he supreme principle of *natural right*, as the epitome of external perfect rights and duties, is thus: *treat the humanity in others never as a mere means*."[31] His reasoning is that the formula of humanity provides "the sole condition under which rational beings could exist in freedom alongside one another" and for this reason offers the grounds of "perfect external right."[32] Schmalz's conception of right offers, in fact, a paradigmatic example of the moral view of right, since he directly grounds right in the moral law as developed in Kant's *Groundwork* and

[28] See especially §§65–73.
[29] Theodor Schmalz, *Das reine Naturrecht* (Königsberg: Nicolovius, 1792), 7. [30] Ibid., 8.
[31] Ibid., 26. [32] Ibid., 27.

Critique of Practical Reason. His moral understanding is also evident in §23, where he concludes that "[m]oral laws, therefore, are nothing other than the determination of rights and duties."[33]

Fichte's earliest writings on natural right, including *Contribution to the Rectification of the Public's Judgment of the French Revolution* (1793) and "Reclamation of the Freedom of Thought from the Princes of Europe" (1793), also defend a moral view of right that reflects the influence of Schmalz's "pure" view of right.[34] Fichte even refers to Schmalz as "the most astute and consistent teacher of natural right."[35] In brief, Fichte's view is that the moral law, which "we find . . . in ourselves" and "purely" or originally in the very form of the I, demands us to act in certain ways and prohibits certain acts.[36] If the moral law permits some action, then as rational beings we have a moral right to act in this way. If the law is silent about some act, then, since the act is not prohibited, it must be permitted. Because rights follow from permission, moral silence licenses a moral right. Right, in Fichte's 1793 view, is grounded directly within the moral law of conscience, a conception he rejects in *Natural Right*.[37]

9.1.3 The Theoretical Kantians

Fichte does not mention Hufeland, Tafinger, and Schmalz in *Natural Right*, yet they represent two versions of the "usual way" of legitimating right. The third version is represented by two philosophers Fichte does cite: Maimon[38] and Erhard, who prompted him to examine an alternative to the

[33] Ibid., 25.

[34] "*Zurückforderung der Denkfreiheit von den Fürsten Europens, die sie bisher unterdrückten*, 1793" and "*Beiträge zur Berichtigung der Urtheile des Publicums über die französische Revolutionn*, 1793," in Johann Gottlieb Fichte's *Sämmtliche Werke*, vol. VI, ed. I. H. Fichte (Berlin: Veit, 1845), 3–35, 39–288.

[35] Ibid., 111–12. [36] Ibid., 58.

[37] Neuhouser 2016 and Clarke 2016 examine his rejection of the 1793 view. One might consider Fichte's early views on social and political obligation a type of Kantian perfectionism, since such language is found in his writings. Addressing Fichte's relationship to perfectionism as a more broadly conceived normative approach is not possible here.

[38] Although I do not discuss Maimon, I consider him a theoretical Kantian because he grounds morality (i.e., a Kantian conception of the moral law) in a drive to the cognition of truth and then addresses natural right in relationship to his theoretically oriented conception of morality. For his views on morality, see "Versuch einer neuen Darstellung des Moralprinzips und Deduktion seiner Realität," in *Berlinische Monatsschrift*, vol. XXIV (1794), 403–53 ("Attempt at a New Presentation of the Principle of Morality and a New Deduction of its Reality," trans. Timothy Sean Quinn, *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* (2018): 1–27); and for his views on right, see "Über die ersten Gründe des Naturrechts," in *Philosophisches Journal einer Gesellschaft Teutscher Gelehrten*, ed. Friedrich Immanuel Niethammer and Ersten Band Zweites Heft (Neu-Strelitz: Hof, 1795), 141–74. See Schottky 1995 for an analysis of his views on right and Baumgardt 1963 for an overview of his ethics.

moral view.[39] Their approach is distinctive in its reliance on theoretical reason.[40] Erhard's "The Devil's Apology" and *On the Right of the People to a Revolution* [hereafter *Revolution*], both published in 1795, are particularly important because Erhard provides an analysis of right that relies on theoretical considerations of rational consistency, even as he considers right *morally* salient.[41] Furthermore, his "deduction of human rights [*Menschenrechte*]" in *Revolution* employs the idea of recognition (*Anerkennung*) as a concept of moral and political philosophy.

In a 1794 letter to Friedrich Karl Forberg, the philosopher whose 1798 essay on religion occasioned the "Atheism Dispute" that ended Fichte's career in Jena, Erhard expresses in a slogan the kernel of his moral view: "Every right springs from only theoretical reason and must be answerable to practical reason."[42] Erhard's position is unorthodox in that he does not *derive* right from morality, yet it counts as a moral view because right's legitimacy depends, in part, on morality.

Erhard's remarks on right suggest that there are two requirements for grounding the normativity of right; one requirement (the orthodox requirement) is moral and grounded in practical reason, and the second requirement (the heterodox requirement) is nonmoral and grounded in theoretical reason. Fichte will ultimately reject the orthodox requirement but endorse the heterodox requirement. According to the orthodox requirement, right is established as depending on morality for its "possibility."[43] Right is answerable to the tribunal of morality by virtue of receiving its "moral sanction" from the moral law. Erhard expresses the dependency of right on morality when he claims that right must be responsive to "a higher condition [that] does not annul the morality in any human being."[44] As Erhard puts it, "*Right in general* is what is morally possible."[45]

With the heterodox requirement, Erhard seeks to establish the "distinguishing characteristics" of right, which are "completely determinable by theoretical reason."[46] Reason, in this case, is theoretical insofar as it determines *consistency* in one's reasoning.

[39] Important to this prompting is Erhard's critical review of Fichte's *Contribution.* See Johann Benjamin Erhard, *Über das Recht des Volks zu einer Revolution und andere Schriften*, ed. Hellmut G. Haasis (Munich: Hanser, 1970), 135–164.

[40] Translations of Erhard's "The Devil's Apology" are from Johann Benjamin Erhard, "Devil's Apology," trans. James A. Clarke and Conny Rohde, *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* (2018): 1–22. Citations are to the Haasis 1970 German edition of Erhard's writings. For the original, see "Apologie des Teufels," *Philosophisches Journal einer Gesellschaft Teutscher Gelehrten*, ed. Friedrich Immanuel Niethammer and Ersten Band Zweites Heft (Neu-Strelitz: Hof, 1795), 105–40.

[41] Johann Benjamin Erhard, *Ueber das Recht des Volks zu einer Revolution* (Jena/Leipzig: Gabler, 1795).

[42] Erhard 1970, 99. [43] Ibid., 131. [44] Ibid. [45] Ibid. [46] Ibid.

> The *principle of right* [*Grundsatz des Rechts*] is the following reciprocal proposition: what has once provided the reason for an action [*Verfahren*] that was recognized [*erkannt*] by me as right [*recht*] (or morally possible), must always provide the reason for my judgment about this action, and what has once provided the reason in another's judgment about my action must always provide the reason for the same. – Thus right arises from the demand for complete consistency [*Konsequenz*] which human beings reciprocally make on each other (*volenti non fit iniuria*).[47]

Rights emerge when an action is morally possible and persons reciprocally demand "complete consistency" from one another regarding their reasons for judging an action as right. The type of consistency Erhard is after is distinct from the consistency found internal to maxims licensed by the moral law. Consistency, rather, is demanded of the reasons involved in one's judgment about one's action, and one's judgment of the action as rightful or not should consistently provide the same reason. Morality offers a license to act, yet that license is legitimated as rightful not by the moral authority of reason alone but also via the reciprocal identification (*Erkennung*) of actions as legitimated by consistently reason-based judgments that are consistently endorsed by others. The constitution of a right by demanding "complete consistency" entails that the result of this interpersonal interaction is a *rule* that is, for a certain reason, binding on one's potential agency. However, this reason need not be a *moral reason* or reference one's moral duty. As Erhard concludes, "right is not derived from morality, but from the possibility of the reciprocal compatibility of the selfish drives of human beings."[48]

Richard Schottky, one of the few commentators to examine Erhard's influence on Fichte, refers to this as a kind of "enlightened egoism [*verständigen Egoismus*]."[49] Enlightened egoism requires that one's self-interest is not at odds with another's self-interest, that the protection of one's own interest does not undermine or harm another's (and likely respects or supports it). Anything that might satisfy only the selfish drive of one party constitutes a wrong or is "unrightful" (*unrecht*). The normative demand to follow a right, then, derives from a theoretical norm of consistency in which subjects expect and demand of each other actions in accordance with rules that allow the satisfaction of intersubjectively compatible self-interest. Rights, therefore, require conditions of reciprocity and theoretical consistency. These two points, reciprocity and

[47] Ibid. The Latin reads "to a willing person, no injury is done." [48] Ibid., 131–32.
[49] Schottky 1995, 285. Batscha 1972 briefly compares Fichte's and Erhard's views on democracy. Maliks 2014 discusses Erhard and Kant on revolution.

consistency, are mutually dependent because if one subject failed to be consistent, there would be a lack of reciprocity. Rights have an irreducible social and second-personal character for Erhard because they are constituted only through a demand (*Forderung*) we "*reciprocally make on each other*" (my italics). Many theories of right are not second personal in this sense. Views that ground obligations of right in a model of dignity as intrinsically worthy conceive of the obligation in non-second-personal terms.[50]

9.2 Fichte's Rejection of Formulaic Philosophy

By 1796, Fichte had come to reject the moral views of right endorsed by Kantian perfectionists, pure Kantians, and theoretical Kantians. In *Natural Right*, he provides two clear reasons for its rejection that rest on incompatibilities between the normative properties of right and morality. The *first incompatibility* is that rights are permissive and the moral law is categorical. The moral law, as Fichte acknowledges, is inescapable and categorical; it "commands unconditionally and thereby extends its reach to everything" (FNR 14); obligations of right are not categorical but follow "from a merely permissive law" that governs a limited "sphere, from which it can be inferred that outside the sphere of the law one is free from it" (FNR 13–14).[51] According to Fichte, deriving a permissive law from the moral law is "absolutely impossible" (FNR 14). Fichte's thought is that if the concept of right were deducible from the moral law, then, like the moral law, it would be inescapable. Right is not inescapable. Therefore, right is not deducible from the moral law. The *second incompatibility* is that right and morality specify, in some instances, conflicting obligations. Claims laid down by the principle of right identify permissions to act in one way or another that remain open to the subject's choice and which are in tension with moral obligations that are not ultimately left to the subject's choice. As a property owner, I have a right to choose to use my property uncharitably, even though the moral law might lay down a duty, even if it is an imperfect duty, to act charitably.[52]

[50] Zylberman 2017 examines this issue and offers a relational model of dignity.

[51] Dictates of right only become categorical once a subject has willed communal life and reciprocal relations of recognition are established. Fichte summarizes this point at the beginning of §8: "It is to be a *law*, i.e. no exceptions to it are to be possible; once it has been accepted, it is to command universally and categorically" (FNR 86).

[52] See Neuhouser 1994, 172–73; see also Taylor 1985, 197 for discussion and criticism of liberal formulations of this point.

In his August 29, 1795, letter to Reinhold, Fichte identifies another important reason for rejecting the moral view, one that suggests – as I argue in Section 9.3.2 – his skepticism that the moral view can, on its own terms, account for our relationship to others. Remarking on his study of natural right during the summer, Fichte concludes that within the literature on right "no deduction of the *reality* of the concept of right exists anywhere."

> All explanations of [right] are merely formal, semantic explanations, which already presuppose both the existence within us of such a concept (as a fact) as well as the meaning of this concept. Such explanations do not even adequately deduce this concept from the fact of the moral law (which fact I am equally unwilling to accept, unless it too is deduced). In this connection, I reread Kant's *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, and found that *here* if anywhere the inadequacy of Kant's principles can be concretely demonstrated, as can his presupposition of higher principles – a presupposition which he himself failed to notice.[53]

Fichte most likely read the writings of Erhard and Maimon during the summer, since in 1795 both published works dealing with the concept of right appeared in the *Philosophisches Journal einer Gesellschaft Teutscher Gelehrten*, the journal edited by Friedrich Immanuel Niethammer.[54] Given Fichte's familiarity with Hufeland and Schmalz, there is reason to think that they are the target of his complaint that natural right philosophers "do not even adequately deduce [natural right] . . . from the fact of the moral law" (FNR 4).[55] What these philosophers have in common is that their explanations "are merely formal, semantic explanations" that fail to deduce the "*reality* of the concept of right."

It is not obvious what Fichte means when he objects that prior conceptions of right are merely formal. A useful clue is found in his Introduction to *Natural Right*, where he explains the distinction between a "formulaic philosophy" and a "real philosophy" (FNR 7). Formulaic philosophy relies on what are essentially arbitrary conceptual formations and stipulations, or the mere semantic analysis of concepts, which may offer a clear definition of a concept or a sense of how

[53] Fichte, *Early Philosophical Writings*, trans. and ed. Daniel Breazeale (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988), 407 (hereafter "EPW").

[54] Erhard's "The Devil's Apology" and Maimon's "On the First Grounds of Natural Right" were published in the second volume of 1795 (see footnotes 38 and 40). Fichte became a coeditor of the journal in 1796.

[55] Hufeland wrote two positive reviews of Fichte's *Attempt at a Critique of All Revelation* and was partly responsible for bringing him to Jena; Schmalz's work, as already noted, is approvingly cited in Fichte's *Contribution*.

a concept is used within a historical moment. Fichte's frustrations with formulaic philosophy may appear polemical or even spiteful: "From the former there emerges *an empty, formulaic philosophy* that believes it has done enough if it has proved that one can think of something at all, without being concerned about the object" (FNR 7). His point, however, is that formulaic philosophy presents as true not what one had to think of necessity but "what [one] was able to think" (FNR 7). Consider Fichte's example of formulaic philosophy of mathematics: one may be able to formulate a concept of squaring the circle, constructing a square whose area is equivalent to the area of a given circle, yet this concept fails to conceive of any object, given that such a mathematical object is "contradictory and impossible in its concept," and thus cannot have any reality (FNR 8). One must, in this case, form the concept independently of the object, since the object is impossible.

Each of the Kantian jurists approach right in a formulaic manner. Hufeland and Tafinger, for instance, synthesize perfectionist and Kantian ideas and present them in a quasi-deductive and systematic manner; their works, however, consist of a series of definitions and clarifications loosely linked together. Schmalz derives his concept of right from a definition of freedom that is merely presented as if the definition is self-evident. In "The Devil's Apology," Erhard does not exactly deduce right as much as provide a definition of right, which itself is not derived from the moral law. In *Revolution*, he begins his deduction of human rights from an analysis of six ways the concept of right is employed in the German language, an analysis that resembles an empirical deduction more than it does a transcendental deduction (B 117).

Fichte clearly places formulaic philosophy in opposition to real philosophy. The mark of real philosophy is that its concepts possess necessity, since "real philosophy presents concepts and the object at the same time, and never treats one without the other" (FNR 7). The concepts of real philosophy are derived from a method of constructing in reason the object of investigation. When one has the "feeling of having to present something *just as* it is presented" – this, as he conceives it, is the criterion of reality – then one must posit that thing as a necessary and real feature of the concept and object (FNR 5). Fichte's complaint is largely methodological; formulaic philosophers gather together their various thoughts on the matter, including ideas received from others, "a goal given to him from without," as Fichte says, and order them in a way that mimics reason's necessary actions (FNR 7). Fichte's philosophical method, in contrast, is one of genetic

construction (akin to mathematical construction) in which the object itself is constituted in thinking, according to the a priori laws of the mind laid out in the *Wissenschaftslehre*. What bestows reality on Fichte's concept of right is that it is the result of the necessary machinations of genetic construction, the construction of the conditions required for individual self-consciousness. To construct in reason the concept of individual self-consciousness, we are required to present, according to a feeling of necessity, the concept of right as a necessary condition of self-consciousness of one's free activity. Furthermore, we are required to deduce mutual recognition as a necessary condition of relations of right and, thereby, a condition of individual self-consciousness.

9.3 Erhard and Fichte on Recognition

With this view of the family quarrel in mind, I'd like to focus on an important connection between Erhard and Fichte, one that distinguishes them from the other Kantians and Kant himself. As others have established, Erhard's views on right significantly influenced Fichte, particularly his separation of right and morality.[56] However, commentators have failed to examine their respective views on recognition and its role in their understanding of right, morality, and theoretical consistency.[57] Erhard's remarks on recognition and theoretical consistency, I suggest, are a historical source of Fichte's view presented in *Natural Right*.[58] For both Erhard and Fichte, through reliable and stable acts of cognitive identification (*Erkennung*) and active recognition (*Anerkennung*) of human beings as right-bearing

[56] The most comprehensive analysis remains Schottky 1995; see also Merle 2001, 1–7.

[57] Fichte and Erhard were by no means close friends, although they were philosophical acquaintances, first meeting in Königsberg in 1791, where Erhard was living and Fichte presented himself and his manuscript, *An Attempt at a Critique of All Revelation*, to Kant (see Haasis' Afterword in Erhard 1970, 226). About the pair, Jens Baggesen, who along with Erhard attended Fichte's Zurich lectures on the *Wissenschaftslehre* at the house of Lavater, reported to his close friend Reinhold: "I know nowhere two more opposite self-thinkers. Fichte is an analytic mind – Erhard a synthetic mind. The first is a philosophical fanatic, the other has a philosophical casualness [*Gleichgültigkeit*] . . . Fichte sets out from a really sterile orthodoxy (what in the world can be more orthodox than his I, the first and last of his series of propositions?), in a straight line forward, without glancing to the left or to the right; Erhard, in contrast, springs in a crisscrossing manner from fruitful paradoxes into the field" (quoted by Haasis in his Afterword to Erhard 1970, 226–27).

[58] Neuhouser is, I think, mistaken to claim that Fichte's *Natural Right* "provides the first extended discussion of the concept of recognition" (Neuhouser 2000, xxvi). One may of course quibble over what is considered an "extended discussion," but my analysis suggests that Erhard's view was extensive enough to influence Fichte.

persons, theoretical consistency is achieved. Yet their views on recognition are not identical; hence a disambiguation is needed.

9.3.1 Erhard on Recognition

In his "Deduction of Human Rights" in the first chapter of *Revolution*, Erhard restates his view on the relation of right to morality: "[T]he ground of right itself lies, therefore, at all times in morality, and only the *allotting and issuing* belongs in the actual doctrine of right."[59] Capturing the same idea conveyed to Forberg, Erhard suggests that the issuing of right belongs to theoretical reason. Distinct from "The Devil's Apology," however, is his consistent use of *Anerkennung* in *Revolution* (rather than mere *Erkennung*).

> Personality is the capacity to determine oneself to act according to self-chosen laws or to act according to maxims. Where this capacity is found personality must be recognized [*anerkannt*]. Since there are human beings [*Menschen*] for whom this capacity is problematic, legislation, which should never put itself in danger of failing to recognize [*verkennen*] morality, cannot justify treating any human being [*Menschen*] other than as a possible person [*mögliche Person*]. Recognition [*Anerkennung*] of human rights is, therefore, a universal condition of the moral validity of legislation.[60]

In this passage, Erhard presents a conception of *moral recognition*, the recognition of a human being as a moral person. Recognition, in this case, is moral because withholding recognition, or failing to "recognize morality," would constitute a moral wrong; for this reason, we "must" recognize human beings as moral persons, even if their personality remains only a possibility, or "problematic," as Erhard puts it and not actual (or assertoric).[61] It is important to notice that moral recognition is not merely cognitive but should be expressed through one's behavior: "I can demand a behavior of the rest of people [*Menschen*] towards me which shows that they recognize my human rights."[62] Erhard continues: "A behavior, which does not express this recognition cannot be tolerated by me, without appearing to forfeit the respect [*Achtung*] others owe my rights."[63]

Moral recognition, then, is a respect-granting activity rather than a constitutive activity. One may respect another as a person, in which case the human rights of that person are recognized. As the formula under which human rights stand, Erhard suggests the following: "No one may treat me as an object of his mere arbitrary will [*Willkür*]."[64] Since the

[59] Erhard 1970, 13 (my italics). [60] Ibid., 17. [61] Ibid., 27. [62] Ibid. [63] Ibid.
[64] Ibid., 17.

essential character of a person is to be self-determining, any foreign will that interferes with or dominates another's self-determination disrespects or violates their human rights.[65] Now moral recognition in which persons are recognized as possessing human rights is a requirement for any legislation to be morally valid. If a law's granting of a right fails to treat subjects as moral persons, thereby misrecognizing them, perhaps recognizing them as "subhuman," as in the case of slavery laws, then the legislation of that system lacks moral legitimacy. Revolution is morally justifiable, for Erhard, when the state abandons its system of right and fails to protect the human rights of its people. There is no need to appeal to a legal right to revolution in such a case because one may appeal to a law that stands above legal right, that is, the moral law.[66] Although rights involve reciprocal relations of demanding from each other consistency with respect to what is identified (*erkannt*) or recognized (*anerkannt*) as a right, Erhard does not conceive of recognition as constituting the status of individuals *as* individuals; moral recognition involves respecting the person as possessing human rights. This will prove to be an important difference between his view of moral recognition and Fichte's own views on recognition.

While Erhard's remarks on recognition entail a moral conception of recognition, he also uses the term *Anerkennung* to characterize legal and political rights, so we might attribute to him a conception of recognition as *political recognition*. Rights, Erhard concludes, are conferred by virtue of laws, but neither the moral law nor a positive law is sufficient for the "recognition of right as a right of a particular person."[67] An additional basis is required, which is "the possibility of the exercise of right." Erhard points out that it would be foolish to grant a right to a being incapable of exercising the right, a point that differentiates political recognition from moral recognition, since the latter only requires that one's personality is problematic. "The acquisition of a right originally occurs," as Erhard remarks, "by proving that one has the capacity to make use of the right."[68] Erhard makes room for a conception of political recognition in which a right is granted by recognizing a moral person as capable of exercising a certain right. Here the demands of consistency and reciprocity are particularly important. In sum, Erhard employs the concept of

[65] Ibid. Erhard provides nine categories of human rights that fall under three general classifications: rights of independence (*Selbständigkeit*), rights of freedom, and rights of equality (ibid., 37).
[66] Ibid., 99. [67] Ibid., 31. [68] Ibid.

recognition to identify (1) moral recognition, recognizing a human being as a moral person possessing human rights, and (2) political recognition, recognizing a moral person as having certain legal or political rights. The latter are ultimately constrained by the former.

9.3.2 *Fichte on Recognition*

Fichte's views on recognition in *Natural Right* were developed in the context of the family quarrel examined earlier. This becomes particularly clear in his letter to Reinhold, where he not only acknowledges the limitations of formulaic philosophy but also criticizes Kant's principles of moral philosophy. Fichte believes that Kant simply *assumed* that morality requires that my maxims should be universally valid rather than "mine alone" (EPW 407).

Fichte claims that a demonstration of this requirement is needed. A justification of the universalizability requirement, since it employs "the concept of the realm of rational beings" beyond oneself, must establish an entitlement to this concept, if it is not to run afoul of presupposing what it aims to prove. In the letter to Reinhold, Fichte's concern is not, first and foremost, about skepticism of other minds, as one might assume, but rather a concern about the nature of Kant's universalizability requirement and whether he is entitled to it. Addressing the issue of entitlement requires him to identify a deficiency regarding the role of other minds in Kant's moral philosophy. A condition of universally extending the moral law to other rational beings is that there is a meaningful distinction we can make theoretically and practically between nonrational and rational beings or, using Fichte's example, between a horse, which I may ride, and a serf owned by a Russian nobleman. It is essential that we can make a distinction that is not merely "supported by general opinion" (and addresses the *quid facti* question), in which case it is merely formal, but is also supported by the necessary demands of reason (and addresses the *quid juris* question), in which case it is realistic (EPW 408).

While the problem Fichte identifies concerns moral philosophy, the concern is amplified if we extend, as was common among the Kantian jurists, the universality requirement to the philosophy of right, where our aim is to identify obligations of right between rational beings. To the extent that Kant has failed to address Fichte's concern, he has merely provided a formulaic account of others that address the question of fact (*quid facti*), a criticism that we can extend to the Kantian jurists, including

Erhard. One may object to Fichte's criticism by arguing that Kant's use of the concept of other rational beings in the various formulations of the categorical imperative is sufficient. This objection, however, does not address the claim that Kant's account of others is merely formulaic and not *realistic*.[69]

To close the gap in Kant's analysis, Fichte is moved to provide an argument that establishes a transcendental connection between the I and the concept of a realm of rational beings beyond the I, thereby justifying our entitlement to the concept.[70] He argues that "I *myself* cannot think of myself without assuming that there are rational beings outside of myself" (EPW 207). The central move of the argument, which captures *in nuce* the argument in *Natural Right* (§§1–4), involves establishing that a certain concept is required to think of myself, but employing this concept requires that there are rational beings to whom the concept is attributed as well. The requisite concept as stated in his letter and *Natural Right* is individuality, a concept that includes within it free self-efficacy, i.e., the "determining [of] a sphere of things which cannot initiate anything (beginning with my body)" (EPW 408). The concept of individuality is what Fichte terms a "reciprocal concept" or a "shared concept" (FNR 45). To ascribe the concept to oneself, it is necessary that someone else attribute the concept to you as well: "[T]his concept can exist in a rational being only if it is posited as *completed* by another rational being" (ibid.).[71] Because a necessary condition of ascribing individuality to oneself is a community of rational beings, Fichte justifies Kant's assumption without, importantly, appealing to moral considerations. It must be noted that when another person "thinks" of me as an individual, the "thought" is constitutively linked to that person's embodied, free activity in that having the "thought" entails that the person treats (or recognizes) my sphere of free activity as exclusively mine. It is exactly this point that allows Fichte to deduce right and recognition as necessary conditions of thinking of oneself as an individual.

Much work has been dedicated to outlining Fichte's deduction of right and the role of the summons in his deduction.[72] I will briefly address his

[69] Van Kirk 1986 addresses the problem of other minds in Kant. Saunders 2016 argues that Kant's transcendental proof of freedom does not permit recognition of others as rational agents. See also Franks 2006 for a discussion of Fichte and other minds and the letter to Reinhold.

[70] Wood 2016, in contrast, argues that the deduction of others is a response to Kant's deduction of the categories.

[71] See Gottlieb 2016b, where I address this point in detail.

[72] Franks 2005; Nomer 2010; Nance 2015; Wood 2016; Franks 2016.

deduction for the purpose of discussing his concept of recognition. As I've just noted, the central move of Fichte's argument involves establishing the existence of other rational beings as a necessary condition of individual self-consciousness, or our consciousness of our free efficacy. Fichte claims that for others to exist alongside each other without negating each other's free efficacy, a unique kind of social interaction is required. He refers to this type social interaction as a "summons," a demand one rational being makes on another to act as a self-determining agent. Through the summons one rational being is "*being-determined to be self-determining*" by the call, request, or demand of another (FNR 31). One may determine another through brute, causal force, without a summons, but doing so would negate the other's agency, undermining their consciousness of themselves as freely efficacious. Fichte considers the summons part of the concept of a rational being and, by extension, the concept of individuality.

By explicating the concept of the summons as a necessary feature of the concept of a rational being, Fichte is positioned to determine the kind of social relationship constitutive of summoning: the relation of right (§4). The relation of right states that "I must in all cases recognize the free being outside me as a free being, i.e. I must limit my freedom through the concept of the possibility of his freedom" (FNR 49). In other words, by not acting with brute force, but by summoning others, I limit my agency to make possible the free agency of others. What is particularly distinctive about Fichte's view of right is that he refers to this embodied activity between subjects with the term "recognition" (*Anerkennung*). The relation of right, however, entails that recognition is not one sided but mutual, a kind of reciprocal interaction in which two subjects mutually recognize each other as free rational beings.

The concept of recognition is introduced in relation to the summons' demand to limit one's agency for the sake of another.

> The condition was that I recognize the other as a rational being (and do so in a manner that is valid for both *him* and *me),* i.e. that I should *treat* him as a rational being – *for only in action does there exist such a recognition valid for both.* Now *I must* necessarily treat him thus, just as *certainly* as *I* posit *myself as* a rational individual in opposition to him – this is true, of course, only to the extent that I proceed rationally, i.e. with theoretical consistency. (FNR 44)

Fichte's conception of recognition endorses three points about recognition Erhard acknowledges: (1) recognition involves cognitively identifying members of the community of right, (2) recognition expresses an attitude

of respect, and (3) recognition is not merely a cognitive activity but requires a kind of treatment or behavior. In this regard, recognition is a practical activity of expressing respect for another, where respect in this context involves, at least for Fichte, seeing the other as a reason to act in accordance with the concept of right by virtue of limiting one's external freedom for the sake of their external freedom. For Erhard, the principle of right demands that one consistently acts on the same reasons, which must be circumscribed by morality, and consider the moral standing of the other. In contrast, Fichte's conception of recognition in *Natural Right* is not moral in character. It specifies a form of political recognition in which the social status of individuality is constituted.

For both Erhard and Fichte, one's recognitive engagement with another involves the relevant forms of respect not simply when the other is "identified" or "cognized" (*erkannt*) as a reason to act in accordance with right but also when one does in fact act as such. Recognition is a type of practical, embodied agency. We can draw an important distinction between two related concepts, *Erkennung* and *Anerkennung* (and their cognates). It is common to translate *Erkennung* as "cognition," "recognition," or "identification." In so doing, what is emphasized is the cognitive, mental, or theoretical aspect of *Erkennung*, the root of which is *kennen* ("to know" or "to be aware of"). Throughout much of the eighteenth century, *Anerkennung* counted as a rough synonym of *Erkennung* and was not employed with much frequency until after 1710. As the century pushed forward, the use of *Anerkennung* expanded, and it began to connote, in addition to cognitive recognition, the recognition of something as praiseworthy or having honor. After the revolutions in America and France, *Anerkennung* becomes more common, and we can see Erhard's and Fichte's employment of the term as an expression of the term's expanded meaning. With these changes, along with his reading of Erhard's political philosophy, we find a conceptual shift in Fichte's philosophy of right. What is particularly distinctive about Fichte's use of the term is his transformation of recognition as *Anerkennung* into a technical concept of social and political philosophy. Erhard's and especially Fichte's emphasis on recognition as a kind of behavior or treatment owed to someone expands the term's meaning, since recognition of a thing's status as praiseworthy, honorable, or deserving respect can involve mere cognition. Yet, in

their view, recognition is constitutively linked with one's practical engagement.[73]

I want to suggest, however, that Fichte moves significantly beyond Erhard in his views on recognition in that he considers recognition to have a constitutive power (a point that has made recognition an important category in contemporary philosophy).[74] What recognition constitutes is one's status as an individual. Individuality is not a given feature of human beings but an achievement of self-determining agency and relations of mutual recognition within a community governed by relations of right, relations in which one recognizes the other person's sphere of free activity excludes oneself from interfering with or dominating it. Individuality does not refer to one's discrete body or numerical identity but to one's standing within a normative relational network of social being. Defining the boundaries of this network, whether a particular being is due recognition or not, is determined by the human form: we are compelled, Fichte argues, "to recognize and respect the human shape everywhere" (FNR 78). The upshot of this view is that it grants an equal status to all humans in community and responds to the prejudicial question of whether recognition is due to "only the white European" or "also the black Negro" (FNR 75).

To conclude, I'd like to address, briefly, the normative framework of Fichte's theory of right and recognition, one that reveals another debt to the family quarrel about the normative basis of right and Erhard's initial view in "The Devil's Apology." The source of right's normative force, Fichte suggests, is not morality or practical reason but theoretical reason and its demand for consistency (FNR 46–47). As Fichte concludes, "[The] source of this obligation is certainly not the moral law: rather, it is the law of thought" (FNR 47). If I commit myself to living in community with other rational beings and recognize another as a rational being, then I'm at minimum committed to the basic norm constitutive of communal life. The relation of right is the basic norm constitutive of communal life. For reasons of theoretical consistency, I am as a rational being, committed to the relation of right. There is no reference to moral obligations or moral considerations as found in the views of Kantian perfectionists, pure

[73] See *Digitales Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache* (available at www.dwds.de/wb/Anerkennung) for a statistical analysis (accessed July 15, 2017). See also Adelung 1808. Krug 1827 connects *Anerkennung* more closely with rights than does Adelung. Ritter 1971–84 strangely lacks an account of *Anerkennung*. Thanks to James Clarke for help with these sources and issue.

[74] Another important difference is that Fichte considers recognition and summoning as central to the upbringing [*Erziehung*] of children and their initiation into the community of rational beings. In Gottlieb 2016b, I refer to this as "elementary recognition."

Kantians, and theoretical Kantians. What is required is simply consistency with respect to my social and theoretical commitments. Summoning, for instance, is a theoretical commitment insofar as I understand right as a basic normative feature of rational beings. Even if, for reasons of enlightened egoism, I decide to commit myself to a community of rational beings, I've not made a moral commitment but have identified a reasonable way to satisfy my enlightened egoism. At most, I've identified a *technique* for living. Given these sets of commitments, for reasons of theoretical consistency, I am obligated to recognize others, to live according to the relation of right and summoning them, rather than employ brute force. If I'd rather reject relations of right, then I must then remove myself, as Fichte acknowledges, "from all human community" (FNR 12). Given this emphasis on theoretical consistency, it is worth acknowledging that what distinguishes Fichte from the theoretical Kantians is his realistic (rather than formulaic) transcendental deduction of right.

Fichte admits that he cannot provide an "absolute reason" why a rational being should be committed to theoretical consistency and, thereby, to reciprocal relations of recognition, yet he can provide a hypothetical reason: If one is committed to a community of free beings, then they must be committed to the law of right (FNR 80–81).[75] The implication of Fichte's view is that if one exits the community of free beings in which relations of recognition constitute one's individuality, then that person ceases to be an individual in the relevant sense and leaves behind a distinctive kind of freedom. The implications of this point are significant, and they have not, unfortunately, been adequately addressed by either Fichte or his commentators.

[75] Ware 2009 examines the voluntarist features of Fichte's view of recognition. Many thanks to James Clarke, Mike Nance, and Dan Dahlstrom for their feedback on the essay.

PART IV

Religious Perspectives

CHAPTER 10

Rational Faith and the Pantheism Controversy
Kant's "Orientation Essay" and the Evolution of His Moral Argument

Brian A. Chance and Lawrence Pasternack

Of the many eighteenth-century controversies in German letters, none was more dramatic and far reaching than the "Pantheism Controversy." By the time it was over, it had claimed the lives of two of its principal combatants, made Spinozism respectable for the first time in Germany, reshaped the debate between reason and faith, and, as will be our focus in this chapter, influenced the evolution of Kant's conception of rational faith through the 1780s.[1]

That influence can be seen first in Kant's 1786 essay, "What does it mean to orient oneself in thinking?" (hereafter "Orientation Essay"), written in response to the Pantheism Controversy. It continues as well through the *Critique of Practical Reason*, as seen most clearly in its footnote on Thomas Wizenmann's 1787 essay, "To Herr Professor Kant from the author of the *Results of the Jacobean and Mendelssohnean Philosophy*." However, as we will discuss, the salience of the second *Critique* to the Pantheism Controversy extends well beyond just this familiar footnote. For it was not until the second *Critique* that Kant's contemporaries could gain an understanding of the relationship between the highest good and the moral law intended by Kant in the Orientation Essay, a relationship that lies at the heart of its response to the Pantheism Controversy but one that was left vague for more than another year.

Our goal in this chapter is to explore the salience of Kant's treatment of the highest good in the second *Critique* to the Pantheism Controversy with regard to its service both to the Orientation Essay and the issues raised by Wizenmann. We begin with a reading of the "Canon" of the *Critique of Pure Reason.* We then provide a brief overview of the Pantheism Controversy, focusing on how Jacobi and Mendelssohn differ with regard

[1] For a more detailed account of the controversy, see Beiser 1987, 44–126.

to the relationship between faith and reason. Next, we turn to the Orientation Essay and the objections advanced by Wizenmann. We then close with a discussion of rational faith in the second *Critique*.

10.1 Rational Faith in the *Critique of Pure Reason*

Kant examines three distinct approaches to religious assent in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. The first involves the traditional proofs for God's existence, where assent is taken as a matter of theoretical knowledge, which Kant rejects for reasons that are well known. The second approach turns on the question of whether we must presuppose God's existence when exploring the order of nature. While Kant maintains that such a presupposition is necessary, it is only of "heuristic" use (A671/B699), because our scientific inquiries benefit from regarding "every connection in the world . . . *as if* they had all arisen from one single all-encompassing being" (A686/B714). The third – and only – approach to religious assent that Kant accepts as legitimate is developed in the "Canon of Pure Reason" and defended there as grounded on the "practical interest of pure reason" (A803/B831).[2]

Kant's aim in the "Canon" is to catalog "the sum total of the *a priori* principles" of pure reason (A796/B824). As he there explains, however, its principles will be few. The "Dialectic" shows that no such principles obtain for the theoretical use of reason, leaving only reason in its practical use as the source for the principles of a canon of pure reason, and for reasons that we can here bypass, Kant does not include (transcendental) freedom among the principles of practical reason but names only God and the immortality of the soul as parts of reason's canon.[3]

The "Canon" then proceeds to explain why practical reason must adopt these postulates, appealing not to theoretical proofs but to a "practical interest" in whose service we must hold them to be true. Specifically, Kant contends that absent our anticipation of an eventual distribution of "happiness in exact proportion with the morality of rational beings" (A814/B842), one that he claims to be possible only through God's agency and obtaining in a "future life," the "majestic ideas of morality" could not become for us "incentives for resolve and realization" (A813/B841).[4]

[2] Some earlier discussions of moral/rational faith can be found in Wood 1970 and Neiman 1997. Recent years have seen a significant increase in scholarship on the topics, including Stevenson 2003; Chignell 2007; and Pasternack 2011a, 2018.

[3] For an account of why Kant does not include freedom within the "Canon," see Rauscher 2010, 303–4.

[4] On the status of these postulates through the remainder of the critical period, see Pasternack 2017.

The picture of moral motivation found in the "Canon" is thus quite different from the one typically associated with Kant, for it is not until the *Groundwork* that he comes to present pure reason as capable of moving the will without any need for "other incentives that might be taken from elsewhere" (G 4:461). Accordingly, the "Canon" reflects Kant's earlier, pre-critical struggle over how an objective "principle of appraisal and obligation" could be made into a subjective "principle of its performance or execution" (MoC 27:274), and to this end, Kant turns in the "Canon," as he did in his pre-critical lectures on ethics, to the motivational significance of reward and punishment. As Kant states, man "cannot possibly be upright, without hoping at the same time . . . that such righteousness must also be rewarded" (MoC 27:285). But since no such rewards can be expected "by the nature of the things in the world [or] by the causality of [moral] actions themselves" (A810/B838), God and a "future life" are offered to make possible the distribution of happiness in accordance with moral worth.[5]

A question that remains, however, is, why should we affirm these postulates? While Kant tenders them in order to "give effect" (A819/B847) to the moral law, doing so only tells us what role they are to fulfill, not why they should be affirmed. The problem can be put as follows: if we need these beliefs in order to make the *oughts* of morality matter to us, then until we have adopted these beliefs, what would compel us to adopt them? Although Kant declares that anyone who renounces the postulates would become "contemptible" in their own eyes (A828/B856), the picture of moral agency given in the "Canon" leaves its appeal to the so-called *absurdum practicum* as question-begging, for it is only *after* one has adopted the postulates that one can become morally resistant to their renunciation.[6]

Accordingly, if we do not have the doxic commitments Kant regards as necessary for morality to motivate us until we adopt these postulates, the "Canon" leaves us with the appearance of a bootstrapping into morality.[7] Moreover, in light of the changes to Kant's conception of moral agency found in the *Groundwork* and thereafter, the argument of the "Canon" for why a moral faith is needed hardly continues to remain salient once Kant

[5] Although there are passages in the "Canon" that some have taken as suggesting Kant's more mature picture of moral agency, its language overwhelmingly supports what Henry Allison has called Kant's "semi-critical ethics." See Allison 1986, 1990a, 54–70, as well as earlier studies, including Beck 1960, 266–73 and Düsing 1971.

[6] See Wood 1970, 25–34. Wood takes the term from Kant's lectures, e.g., RL 28:1083.

[7] As we will discuss, this problem seems to also be present in the Orientation Essay and is among the issues Wizenmann targets.

comes to see that "pure reason can be practical" without "other incentives that might be taken from elsewhere" (G 4:461).

In fact, when in the *Groundwork* Kant comments on the motivational role of happiness, he notes that we can take an interest in the "mere worthiness to be happy, even without the motive of participating in this happiness" (G 4:450). Similarly, while in both the "Canon" and in works subsequent to the *Groundwork* he presents the highest good as a synthesis of morality and happiness, with the latter distributed in "exact proportion" to the former (A814/B842; CPrR 5:110; CPJ 5:451; Rel 6:8n; etc.), this formulation is conspicuously absent in the *Groundwork,* where the highest good is instead presented as simply the good will (G 4:396), "the law in itself" (G 4:401), and the "idea of moral perfection" (G 4:409).

We thus have good reason to wonder whether the highest good, its postulates, and likewise the rationale used in support of rational faith were, ca. 1785, about to be washed out of Kant's practical philosophy, for the *Groundwork*'s account of moral agency abrogates the rationale of the "Canon" for these doctrines, and, just as one would expect given its new account of agency, it makes no mention of the highest good apart from ones that seem to extinguish the motivational relevance of happiness.

Nevertheless, this circuit of doctrines is not in the end eliminated by Kant, but much to the consternation of many of his interpreters, it reemerges in his 1786 Orientation Essay, albeit in a new framework shaped by the Pantheism Controversy and, more specifically, in response to the debate between Jacobi and Mendelssohn over the relationship between faith and reason. It is to this debate that we now turn.

10.2 Faith and Reason in the Pantheism Controversy

There are many layers to the Pantheism Controversy: whether Spinozism entails pantheism and/or fatalism, whether pantheism is a covert atheism, whether speculative metaphysics (and perhaps the whole of the Enlightenment) ultimately leads to Spinozism, whether Lessing ultimately came to accept (in whole or in part) Spinozism, whether Lessing's alleged Spinozism can be partnered with Lutheran Pietism, whether the only escape from Spinozism is a *salto mortale*, whether this *salto mortale* is just enthusiasm under a different name, and through it all, the gamesmanship of its key players, especially Jacobi and Mendelssohn.

Along with other opponents of the Enlightenment, Jacobi engages in a polemic against reason, challenging its claims to certainty and objectivity and its capacity to generate for us an organon of metaphysical truths. Like

Hume before him, Jacobi associates reason with the power to analyze the relation of ideas, but without either any a priori content of its own or the ability to generate new content through its operations. Reason must instead depend on faculties beyond itself for its material; thus what it is able to demonstrate reflects merely what is already bound within the content that is brought to it.

That content principally arises out of experience, though experience for Jacobi is understood in a manner quite different from Hume and empiricism more generally. Following Hamann, Jacobi regards experience and revelation as one and the same,[8] and thus he holds that our acquaintance with the sensible world comes as a matter of "faith" (*Glaube*). He writes, for example, that it is "[t]hrough faith that we know we have a body, and that there are other bodies and other thinking beings outside us."[9] Faith thus supplies us with the material for thought, and our experience of the real is given with "immediate certainty" (Jacobi 1994, 163).

It should thus be clear that by "faith" Jacobi does not primarily mean a mode of assent, a holding-to-be-true (*Fürwahrhalten*) that is a matter of subjective conviction. Faith is rather his phrasal idiom for an immediate awareness of the real.[10] Accordingly, Jacobi's infamous *salto mortale* is not intended to promote a leap of blind acceptance, although that is precisely how it would appear for one committed to the Enlightenment paradigm. Jacobi is instead driving toward a direct realism, one that treats propositional accounts of assent and representational accounts of experience as philosophical artifices that needlessly stand between us and the real.

If truth is already present for us, already given or revealed, then it takes no act on our part to acquire it, neither through the production of representational intermediaries between the mind and the world nor rational demonstrations that are supposed to validate what, for Jacobi, is already given with immediate certainty. In fact, it is the failure to recognize the revelatory nature of experience that sets philosophy on the road to

[8] J. G. Hamann, *Briefweschel*, ed. Arthur Henkel (Frankfurt am Main: Insel, 1965), 265.

[9] F. H. Jacobi, *Ueber die Lehre des Spinoza in Briefen an den Herrn Moses Mendelssohn* (Breslau: Loewe, 1785); *Concerning the Doctrine of Spinoza in Letters to Herr Moses Mendelssohn*, trans. George di Giovanni (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994), 164 (hereafter "Jacobi 1994").

[10] Faith concerns what is "truly objective, and not merely imaginary"; F. H. Jacobi, Preface to *David Hume on Faith or Idealism and Realism*, trans. George di Giovanni (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994), 61. He also describes faith as universal, "the distinguishing mark of the human race" (ibid., 56).

nihilismus, to the loss of truth and reality, trapped in the intermediaries of its own invention.[11]

Like Jacobi, Mendelssohn allows for a division between two avenues for assent: what he usually calls "speculation" versus "common sense." The two philosophers, however, differ in a number of significant ways. First, where Jacobi sees reason and faith as ultimately in conflict, Mendelssohn regards speculation and common sense as only occasionally and temporarily discordant, for through additional philosophical reflection they can again be brought into harmony. Mendelssohn maintains this optimism in part because of the experienced successes of restoring their harmony.[12] More fundamentally, however, he believes in their harmony because he regards each as an expression of one and the same faculty: reason.

Hence, rather than a common sense independent of reason, Mendelssohn describes the former as merely reason when it "takes rapid strides and goes rashly forward,"[13] requiring the demonstrative powers of reason to eventually catch up. However, when after due effort common sense and speculation fail to align, Mendelssohn proposes that some mistake has crept into one or the other. Because our heads are usually filled with "superstition" and "sophistry" (*Last Works* 34), it can be difficult to separate the content of common sense from this background noise. Likewise, rational demonstration can fall into error either by simple slips of inference (*Last Works* 72) or the incorrect employment of otherwise trustworthy rules (*Last Works* 73).

Mendelssohn thus regards it as naive to think that the question of orientation will be settled through nondiscursive insights, for what we take as a revelatory experience may rather just be a consequence of cultural dogmas or subjective desires. At the same time, he also shuns the far reaches of speculative philosophy, dismissing the denial of the material world, solipsism, and Spinozism as "far-fetched suppositions" that he doubts anyone has "seriously maintained" (*Morning Hours* 79). Instead, he proposes that we should allow each mode of the self-same reason to cooperate

[11] Jacobi offers a vivid metaphor: like the serpent's promises, philosophy teaches that we should be unsatisfied with faith, and that if we were to renounce it, it will be replaced it with something better, with the certainty of knowledge (Jacobi 1994, 56).

[12] Moses Mendelssohn, *Morgenstunden* (Berlin: Voss, 1785); *Morning Hours*, trans. Daniel Dahlstrom and Corey Dyck (Amsterdam: Springer, 2011), 167 (hereafter "*Morning Hours*").

[13] Moses Mendelssohn, *An die Freunde Lessings* (Berlin: Voss, 1786), in *Last Works*, trans. Bruce Rosenstock (Urbana. IL: University of Illinois Press, 2012), 59 (hereafter "*Last Works*").

with the other and expects that the discord that does arise between reason and common sense will be resolved with due time and effort.

What provokes the question of "orientation" for Mendelssohn is the lack of any determinant rule for the path we are to take when common sense and reason disagree. Hence, while he remains confident that all conflict between the two can be overcome, in any particular case it cannot be said whether truth is on the side of speculative reason or common sense. In some instances, we grant "philosophical speculation the task of correcting the claims of common sense and, as much as possible, turning them into rational knowledge" (*Last Works* 67). In others, such as "[w]hen a philosopher finds himself confronted in his speculation with . . . a monstrous assertion . . . it is high time for him to take his bearing and scan his surrounds for simple common sense, from which he has strayed too far" (ibid.). Orientation, for Mendelssohn, is thus a matter of negotiating between these two modes of reason. Neither uniformly has priority over the other. Rather, one's challenge is to determine in any given instance which should lead the way.

It is thus axiomatic for Mendelssohn that all truths are discoverable through reason (see "Lecture VIII" of *Morning Hours*), which is why he ultimately dismisses any need for faith, either as a Jacobean undergirding of reason or even within the sphere of positive religion, for while Mendelssohn recognizes that Christianity contains numerous doctrines that stand outside natural religion, he denies that this is the case with Judaism. Unlike Christianity, Judaism is not a religion of "doctrinal propositions and eternal truths that we are commanded to believe" (*Last Works* 31).

Its core theological commitments are all as "capable of apodictic proof as any proposition in solid geometry" (*Last Works* 32), and beyond these, its concerns are not matters of metaphysics but rules of piety which, according to Mendelssohn, rest on the "reasonable evidence" of biblical testimony. Accordingly, Judaism "requires absolutely no faith in statements of eternal truths, but only in statements of historical truths" (*Last Works* 30).

10.3 Kant's (Provisional) Response: "What Does It Mean to Orient Oneself in Thinking?"

The relationship between the Orientation Essay and the other texts of the Pantheism Controversy is nuanced, for in the Orientation Essay Kant is both navigating through Wizenmann's critique of Mendelssohn in the

Resultate[14] and advancing a further position on the question of orientation distinct from both Jacobi and Wizenmann, on the one hand, and Mendelssohn, on the other. For example, Kant rebuts Wizenmann's charge that Mendelssohn's common sense is nothing more than a camouflaged version of Jacobean faith while also using this and similar rejoinders to Wizenmann's treatment of Mendelssohn to bring out his own views. As a result, the Orientation Essay pursues two different but related goals: defending Mendelssohn against Wizenmann's criticisms and advancing Kant's own response to the Pantheism Controversy, most focally with regard to the relationship between faith and reason.

With Jacobi, Mendelssohn, and Wizenmann, Kant recognizes that a key issue of concern with regard to the relationship between faith and reason is whether there are any truths that fall outside the limits of rational demonstration, and if so, whether we can justifiably hold them to be true. As discussed in the preceding section, Jacobi uses "faith" quite broadly, placing on par our affirmation of both the sensible and the supersensible, both objects of the physical world and theological doctrine. With regard to the former and its insinuations of a direct realism, Kant does not here engage, focusing instead on the need to orient oneself when moving "beyond all the bounds of experience" (WDO 8:136) because that is where, for Kant, the question of faith arises.

Both Jacobi and Mendelssohn, in fact, presumed that Kant would side with them in the Pantheism Controversy (Beiser 1987: 113f), for the first *Critique* shows clearly that he saw religious doctrine as outside the sphere of theoretical reason. Yet this is about as far as their similarities go, given that Kant neither recognizes a role for faith within the domain of experience nor regards faith either as a "transcendental intuition" (WDO 8:134) or as revelations given to us through the "influence of pure spiritual beings" (WDO 8:137).

Instead, Kant tends throughout the Orientation Essay to credit Mendelssohn with a preferable (though still incorrect) position, for Kant concurs that it is "in fact *only* reason – not any alleged sense of truth [or] transcendental intuition under the name of faith" that orients thought (WDO 8:134). Yet, where Mendelssohn sees no

[14] Thomas Wizenmann, *Die Resultate der Jacobischen und Mendelssohnschen Philosophie, kritisch untersucht von einem Freywillilgen* (*Results of the Jacobean and Mendelssohnean Philosophy: Critically Examined by a Volunteer*) (Leipzig: Göschen, 1786). Limitations of space prevent us from discussing this important text in detail, but see Beiser 1987, 107–13.

boundary for theoretical reason and regards the question of orientation as one that merely concerns the relationship between two different paths to rational knowledge (rational "insight" versus demonstration), Kant believes that the question of orientation arises only once one reaches the limits of knowledge and ventures into "the immeasurable space of the supersensible" (WDO 8:137).[15]

Although the first *Critique* has shown that we can have no knowledge of the supersensible, both it and the Orientation Essay describe a "need of reason" by which thought ventures into the supersensible. Whereas he formerly associated the "need of reason" with an illicit quest for the "unconditioned condition" (A309/B365, A451/B479, A614/B642), Kant now presents reason's need as something that can and should be satisfied.

This is not, of course, because Kant's view has changed with respect to the capabilities of theoretical reason but because in addition to its need, which still must be kept in check so that we "remain safe" from error, there is also a further "*need* . . . which makes it necessary to judge" (WDO 8:136). Kant then explains that while the regulative use of reason brings with it a need to connect the order of nature with an "*intelligent cause*" (WDO 8:138), this need is still not one of necessity, for it matters only "*if we want to judge* about the first causes of . . . the order of ends actually present in the world" (WDO 8:139 translation modified).[16]

In contrast, there is a further "need of reason" that is "unconditioned," for it arises not "if we *want* to judge, but because we *have to judge*" (ibid.). Hence, while another of reason's needs would have us venture into the "immeasurable space of the supersensible," there is but one through which "there enters *the right* of reason's *need* . . . for presupposing and assuming something which reason may not presume to know through objective grounds" (WDO 8:137). It is thus again by way of the practical interest of pure reason that we are justified in the adoption of various postulates.

This justification, however, is no longer tied to the problem of how to "give effect" to the moral law, for there is no longer any need for postmortem "promises and threats" in order to secure "the binding authority of moral precepts or the incentives to observe them" (WDO 8:139). Yet, for reasons that are as yet not clearly articulated, Kant still insists that practical reason "*needs* to assume" (ibid.) the postulates of God and immorality.

[15] It is interesting to consider Kant's discussion of the limits to knowledge/room for faith in the B-Preface of the first *Critique* in light of his engagement with the Pantheism Controversy. See, for example, Boehm 2014, 190–236.

[16] For a more detailed discussion of the regulative role of the "Wise Author of Nature," see Pasternack 2011b and Chance and Pasternack (forthcoming).

On the one hand, it is clear that they continue to be seen as necessary for the highest good, so that happiness may be "approportioned" in accordance with moral worth (ibid.). But in what seems a key passage meant to articulate why we have a need to *assent* to the postulates, Kant runs together two different, though apparently related, issues. First, as he explains, reason "*needs* to assume" these postulates "in order to give objective reality to the concept of the highest good, i.e. to prevent it, along with morality, from being taken merely as a mere ideal" (ibid.), but second and more problematically, Kant also has the status of the moral law depend on the status of the highest good.[17]

It is fair to wonder how this could be so because earlier in the same sentence Kant acknowledges that the "binding authority" of the moral law is not in question. Nonetheless, however vaguely stated, it is because the highest good "inseparably accompanies morality" (WDO 8:139) that it and the moral law are bound together.

But what precisely makes the moral law dependent on the highest good? In the "Canon" we did, at least, have a clear accounting of their relationship. But now, in virtue of the *Groundwork*'s revised model of moral agency, a different understanding of how the highest good "accompanies" morality is needed. Unfortunately, none is given in the Orientation Essay, for while Kant does leverage the relationship between the highest good and the moral law in order to secure the "the signpost or compass by means of which the speculative thinker orients himself in his rational excursions into the field of supersensible objects" (WDO 8:142), and while he gives some indication that morality's need for the highest good has something to do with how we, as finite beings, relate to the moral law, the Orientation Essay seems ultimately to tender just a placeholder for a more substantive account, one that perhaps was still in development.

It is perhaps unsurprising, then, that Wizenmann, in his response to the Orientation Essay, focuses precisely on this concern as he struggles to make sense of the interplay between the "subjective" and "objective" features of the need of reason and how these relate to the highest good, the moral law, and somehow thereby underwrite rational faith. We thus turn to Wizenmann's response to the Orientation Essay before closing this chapter with a discussion of the salience of the second *Critique* to these issues.

[17] It is a common misconception in contemporary scholarship that Kant saw the highest good as just an ideal toward which we strive. For a discussion of the early Anglophone scholarship that led to this misconception, see Pasternack 2017.

10.4 Wizenmann

Wizenmann's open letter to Kant, "To Herr Professor Kant from the author of the *Results of the Jacobean and Mendelssohnean Philosophy*," was published in the Leipzig journal *Deutsches Museum* in February 1787, just four months after the Orientation Essay and two months before the publication of the second *Critique*. In it, Wizenmann claims that he had intended to "hold himself completely out of the game" after the publication of the *Resultate* and that it is only Kant's "accusations of blind belief and enthusiasm" that have prompted him to write his riposte.[18] Thus, despite Kant's insistence that Wizenmann does not intend to enable enthusiasm and "dethrone reason," Wizenmann takes Kant to have accused him of precisely this, and he takes great pains to show that whatever else one might say about it, his view does not amount to enthusiasm (Wizenmann 1787:121*ff*, 135*ff*).

Principally, however, Wizenmann's objections are directed at Kant's notion of a need of reason; and these objections break down into three distinct broadsides. First, Wizenmann claims that Kant's logical orientation requires both objective and subjective principles and that the objective principles involved must inevitably be incompatible with Kant's denial of our cognition of supersensible objects. Thus, while Kant believes he has "made room for faith," as he will say in the Preface to the 1787 edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Wizenmann suggests that Kant's conception of orientation runs the risk of making him into as much a dogmatist about speculative reason as his Rationalist forbearers. Second, Wizenmann denies that reason has a need to assume the existence of God for either theoretical or practical purposes. And third, he argues, even on the assumption that reason had the needs Kant describes, belief in God would not satisfy them. In what follows, we elaborate on each of these objections in turn.

While the initial spatial metaphors Kant uses in the Orientation Essay reference both "objective" and "subjective" components, Wizenmann suggests that the former seem to have no role when Kant turns to his philosophical solution to the question of orientation, for if the "need of reason" provides the "subjective ground" for orientation, then Wizenmann wonders whether there is any substance to Kant's preference for Mendelssohn over Jacobi. Although this subjective ground is presented as in some way about *reason*, Wizenmann suggests that this is mere window

[18] Thomas Wizenmann, "An den Herrn Professor Kant von dem Verfasser der Resultate Jacobischer und Mendelssohnscher Philosophie," *Deutsches Museum* I (February 1787), 115–56, here 117 (hereafter "Wizenmann 1787").

dressing for what amounts to precisely the "enthusiasm and blind belief" Kant accuses Wizenmann of endorsing (Wizenmann 1787, 136).

As he puts it, "it is a principle of enthusiasm to allow oneself to be determined to believe a matter on the basis of grounds that have no influence at all on its certification [*Beglaubigung*]" (ibid.). Wizenmann then supplements this accusation with his infamous analogy that compares Kantian rational faith to the need a lover might have to believe his feelings are reciprocated, a belief "for which he lacks all grounds" (Wizenmann 1787, 137). In sum, where knowledge and opinion for Kant find their objective grounds in evidence and demonstration, Wizenmann takes Kant's discussions of faith and the "need of reason" to have no other meaning than that of a holding-to-be-true rooted simply in one's subjective desires. There is, in other words, nothing "rational" about it.

However, to whatever extent objective grounds operate within Kant's treatment of the problem of orientation, Wizenmann presses that these would commit Kant to the sort of demonstrations of speculative reason that are presumably disallowed by the first *Critique*. In particular, Wizenmann comments on Kant's seeming *inference* in the Orientation Essay from the apparent order of nature to the existence of a supersensible cause and asks whether or not in practical reason as well what is going on is an *inference* from the highest good to its postulates (Wizenmann 1787, 134*ff*).

In one respect, Wizenmann is perfectly right that the postulates make possible the highest good's distribution of happiness, and in that regard, they reflect an inference to the conditions that are necessary for some state of affairs to obtain.[19] Moreover, there are a number of vagaries in the Orientation Essay that make it difficult for Wizenmann to distinguish between the "presupposition" of God for the sake of our inquiries into the order of nature and the postulation of God for the sake of morality. Kant not only incautiously depicts the assumption of an "intelligible author" of nature as a "presupposition of its *existence*" (WDO 8:138), but he also, as discussed in the preceding section, runs together the problem of how "to give objective reality to the concept of the highest good" with the danger that both it and the moral law would, if not for the postulates, end up "being taken merely as a mere ideal" (WDO 8:139). In short, it seems to Wizenmann that there is no clear difference between an inference from the apparent order of nature to the "presupposition" of God and the inference from both morality and the highest good to its postulates. Both appear to

[19] See the discussion of this issue in Pasternack 2011a.

be nothing more than rational inferences within the speculative use of reason.

After outlining this dilemma, Wizenmann then dismisses Kant's broader account of reason and its needs. Like Jacobi, Wizenmann maintains a very Humean picture of reason as a faculty concerned merely with the relations of ideas — or as he puts it, "the order and certainty in its concepts" (Wizenmann 1787, 139) — and in no way able to deduce something's existence from the relations of ideas. Likewise, "needs" of reason for Wizenmann simply concern what the faculty requires to carry on its activity of examining the relations of ideas, and what truths reason discovers are merely about such relations, "independent from all existence" (Wizenmann 1786, 174). Reason concerns only the "eternal" and "absolute" truths of conceptual analysis, whereas existential judgments (which can come only from experience) involve only what is "temporal" and "contingently true" (ibid.). Wizenmann thus concludes that Kant "takes the need of reason too far" (Wizenmann 1787, 139). As reason relates merely to conceptual relationships, it cannot – through either an alleged subjective need or a covert objective demonstration – serve as the ground for any claim of existential import.

Lastly, Wizenmann argues that even if one were to grant Kant all that he says about the nature of reason and its needs, his account of how these needs are satisfied would still be inadequate. With regard to the need of theoretical reason that leads from the order and purposiveness in the world to the assumption of an intelligent cause, Wizenmann contends that the latter still does not fulfill theoretical reason's need for the unconditioned condition because reason would still need an explanation of the order and purposiveness within the intelligent cause itself. Thus, Wizenmann claims, the need of theoretical reason can never be satisfied by belief in the existence of God because its questions are thereby only "further delayed" (Wizenmann 1787, 141).[20] With regard to the latter, even if morality somehow is in need of God, Kant ends up contradicting himself when he claims that neither the "binding authority of moral percepts nor the incentives to observe them" depend on the existence of God and that the

[20] Wizenmann is in one sense correct: if Kant were offering a physicotheological proof for God's existence, reason would end up in the antinomic situation of either taking God's nature as self-grounded or require yet a further step of explanation. However, despite the Orientation Essay's sometimes misleading language, this is not Kant's intent. Following the first *Critique*'s "Appendix to the Dialectic," the idea of God serves instead as a "*focus imaginarius*" (A644/B672), a "heuristic" (A671/B699) in service to the regulative use of reason, rather than an objective reality. See Pasternack 2011b and Chance and Pasternack (forthcoming).

postulation of God is necessary to prevent morality "from being taken merely as a mere ideal" (WDO 8:139).

In the end, Wizenmann regards both a "need of reason" and "rational faith" as unstable, mongrel notions. Attempts to understand them on subjective terms result in a collapse into enthusiasm. Attempts to understand them on objective terms make them into the sort of speculative demonstrations incompatible with Kant's critical philosophy. Moreover, for Wizenmann, reason ultimately has no needs of the sort that Kant imagines, and even if he were wrong and Kant was right, the Orientation Essay still fails in its attempts to demonstrate that the object of reason's needs actually obtain.

With Wizenmann's concerns outlined, we will now consider the extent to which the second *Critique* responds to them. While Kant only makes explicit reference to Wizenmann in one footnote, we will see that there is much more in the text that is salient to both Wizenmann's concerns and the completion of Kant's task in the Orientation Essay.

10.5 Rational Faith in the *Critique of Practical Reason*

Kant claims in the "Canon" that the "majestic ideas in the morality" will not become "incentives for resolve and realization" (A813/B841) unless we believe that our moral efforts will ultimately be rewarded in a "future life." The "Canon" thus presents the rationale for religious assent on this basis. However, with the new model of moral agency found in the *Groundwork*, readers of the Orientation Essay face a quandary: although its response to the Pantheism Controversy turns on the highest good's relationship to the moral law, it does not provide us with an updated account of this relationship. For that, they would have to wait until the second *Critique*.

Our aim in this section is thus to show how Kant's treatment of the highest good in the second *Critique* resolves the vagaries of the Orientation Essay and, further, does so in a way that responds to Wizenmann's core objections. To begin, let us move directly to the most famous point of contention between Kant and Wizenmann: what follows from the "subjective" character of the "need of reason"? According to Wizenmann, reason only concerns the relation of ideas, and thus its "needs" pertain only to the challenges involved in conceptual analysis. Further, according to Wizenmann, conceptual analysis never leads to existential claims, and thus, if we are supposed to postulate God and a "future life" out of this "need," it must have its source in something other than reason.

Wizenmann then associates beliefs driven by "need" with wishful thinking, such as what a lover needs to be true of his beloved.

This criticism occasions an important clarification on Kant's part, identifying in what respect the "need of reason" is subjective and in what respect it is objective. With regard to the former, it is in virtue of *us* that practical reason has a need; it is something that is incumbent on us because of the nature of our agency. In other words, the "subjective" aspect of the need of reason is due to what occasions the need. The "objective" aspect of the need, however, is found in how this need is satisfied, *viz.* that rational faith is authorized by way of the moral law. Hence, whereas the beliefs of wishful thinking stem from inclination, it is "the moral law, which necessarily binds every rational being, and therefore justifies him a priori in presupposing . . . the conditions befitting it" (CPrR 5:143n).

This, however, is by no means a complete solution to the issues at hand, for while Kant does in many passages reference our duty to promote the highest good as what grounds rational faith, it must still be understood why we have this duty. Hence, in closing, we address three final concerns: (1) how the nature of our agency generates its "subjective" need, (2) how this need leads to the highest good, and (3) how the idea of the highest good leads to belief, for why not simply grant that the highest good is, like the dialectical constructs of theoretical reason, a transcendental illusion? Concern (3) is, in fact, a worry Kant himself raises at the opening of the second *Critique*'s "Dialectic," for it may be that practical reason is "no better off" than its theoretical counterpart (CPrR 5:108). Accordingly, the completion of Kant's answer to the Pantheism Controversy is one and the same as his way of settling the guiding problem of the second *Critique*'s "Dialectic," *viz.* how the highest good, as the dialectical product of practical reason, does not come to the same fate as the dialectical products of theoretical reason.

Limitations of space permit only a brief treatment of concerns (1) and (2). In many of his discussions of the highest good, Kant asks us to imagine what the world ought to be like from the standpoint of "impartial reason." To see the force of this query, let us first imagine a world comprised only of beings with holy wills. Such beings would without fail observe the moral law, for they would have no competing incentives (nor, from the standpoint of the *Religion*, a propensity

to evil). Hence, in a world where only holy wills exist, there would be no difference between the "supreme" good of morality and the "complete" good, making the highest good for that world, as the total object of pure practical reason, one and the same as the moral law.[21]

That, of course, is not the way things are for beings such as ourselves since we have both morality and happiness as fundamental interests. Hence, while morality often requires that we act contrary to our own happiness, it is not the judgment of an "impartial reason" that our interest in happiness is to be dismissed or ignored; rather, it is to be reconciled with the moral law, with the latter serving as the principle for the former. In other words, if asked "what is the proper moral attitude to have towards one's own happiness?," the answer is that only those who deserve to be happy *should* be happy – and further, that one's degree of happiness ought to be "distributed in exact proportion to morality" (CPrR 5:110).

This, in short, is how morality and the highest good are intertwined: from the moral standpoint, beings in need of happiness who are also worthy of happiness ought to be happy. While this idea is also in the "Canon" of the first *Critique*, where the judgment is given by an impartial reason ("reason free from all private aims" [A813/B841]), we propose that the second *Critique* leverages it in a different way and one that becomes decisive for its new argument for rational faith.

To see this, one must first recognize that the need reflected in concern (1) is not the need for happiness *simpliciter* but a need for happiness tempered through the moral law, for if this need were only for happiness *simpliciter*, an argument for belief based on it would remain susceptible to both Wizenmann's criticisms and the concerns raised earlier with regard to the *absurdum practicum* of the "Canon." Instead, concern (1) is meant to reflect not just one piece of what we need but rather the "whole *object*" of our need as beings who are interested in both happiness and morality.

In other words, it is not just that an impartial reason would will the world as pictured in the highest good, but it is also how *we* would want the world to be. While there would be no such interest for the agents of Kant's pre-critical ethics until *after* they have bootstrapped themselves into morality, post-*Groundwork* agents, because they are both innately interested in happiness and innately moved by the moral law, would will the highest good. This is so

[21] This, in fact, may help to explain why in the *Groundwork* Kant equates the highest good with the moral law, for there it seems that his rejection of the picture of moral agency found in the "Canon" and earlier discussions led him first to the opposite extreme of a purified will rather than, as we see emerging over the later 1780s and though the 1790s, a will that has two fundamental incentives.

because our *subjective* condition is now one that has, for the "whole *object*" of its willing, happiness distributed in exact proportion to morality. This is how concern (1) leads to concern (2) in the second *Critique*.

The final challenge for this chapter is to provide an account of concern (3) that can harness our subjective need for the "whole object" that is the highest good. To do this, we return to Kant's claim that we have a duty to promote the highest good. It would follow, to be sure, from *ought implies can* that if we do in fact have this duty, then its conditions (God and immortality) must obtain. Nevertheless, it remains question-begging to move merely from the duty to the postulates. A derivation of the duty is still needed, one that avoids the sort of circularity that, according to Wizenmann, is to be found in the Orientation Essay's apparent presupposition of the highest good for the sake of morality and at the same time, its appeal to morality for the sake of the highest good. Accordingly, a satisfactory answer to concern (3) requires more than what Kant often seems to do – merely reference our duty to promote the highest good. Our final task is thus to gain clarity about the nature and contents of this duty and show how, without circularity, begging the question, or a collapse into wishful thinking, it can ground rational faith.

First, note that (contrary to much of the recent literature) Kant does not present this duty as one where we are to help distribute happiness (perhaps with God posited to then take up the slack). It should be clear enough that this is a power reserved *only* for God, for (as Kant repeatedly claims) *only* God can determine who deserves happiness and *only* God has the power to guarantee this distribution. Accordingly, it is not simply that we could not do particularly well in our attempts to follow a duty to distribute happiness in accordance with moral worth. It is rather that such a duty is not one that we could even have, for while we can, of course, act in ways that bring happiness to others, we cannot take up a duty for which we lack the power to even begin to enact. Most centrally here, presuming the principle *ought implies can*, it is because we are not in a position to assess moral worthiness (A551/B579; G 4:407; CPrR 5:140; Rel 6:99) that we cannot have a duty to distribute happiness according to such assessments.

Unfortunately, much of the scholarly record on the highest good has made this decisive interpretative mistake, culminating in an array of further difficulties that are not, in fact, on Kant's shoulders but mere artifacts of the secondary literature. Despite what is commonly assumed, Kant does not present our duty in this manner. In fact, in numerous passages, he both explicitly rejects this view and offers a conception of

duty that has been lost to recent scholarship. He claims that it is only with regard to the "first element of the highest good, namely that which concerns morality, [that] the moral law gives . . . a command" (CPrR 5:144). As for the "second part of that object, namely happiness in thorough conformity with that worthiness, there is no need of a command" (CPrR 5:144); that is left for God (see also CPrR 5:124; Rel 6:7n; OCS 8:279, 280n; RP 20:298; etc.).[22]

In one sense, this duty seems susceptible to the familiar emptiness objection, for it might appear to be tautologically prescribing that we have a duty to observe the moral law. However, as we shall see, how the emptiness objection is overcome also shows us how rational faith is warranted. To see this, let us return to Kant's depiction of our subjective condition, as beings who both need happiness but also judge that this happiness ought to be distributed in proportion to moral worth. The "element" or "part" of the highest good that is in our charge is to become worthy of happiness. But rather than taking this as merely just another way of saying that we ought to obey the moral law, it contains a particular content, one that reflects the particular challenge we have as finite rational agents, namely our natures are such that happiness and morality do not align within our wills. Our interest in happiness often directs us one way; morality, another. The duty we have with regard to the highest good, the "part" we play, is to subordinate our happiness to morality such that we thereby become worthy. As expressed in Kant's *Religion*, we are to undergo a "change of heart" whereby we adopt as our supreme maxim one where happiness is subordinated to morality.[23]

But how do we get to this "change of heart"? Here is where rational faith finally comes in. On the one hand, we can recognize God and immortality as necessary for the highest good, but what leads us to adopt these as postulates, to accept them as actual (i.e., as objectively real)? Kant is always cryptic on this point, but consider the following: our inclinations are routinely described as "hindrances" to our moral resolve, and because of this, Kant in the *Groundwork* proposes a duty (at least indirectly) "[t]o assure one's happiness" (G 4:399). Later, however, he seems to recant this duty (CPrR 5:93; MM 6:386) but without ever withdrawing his claim that "one's own happiness is a hindrance to providing the moral law with

[22] For a detailed discussion of the roots of the common misreading of this duty and what Kant instead proposes, see Pasternack 2017. Note that Fichte (accurately) describes this duty in his *Versuch einer Critik aller Offenbarung* (Königsberg: Hartung, 1792). See §3, especially the opening of this section in its first edition.

[23] For a discussion of the "change of heart" and the highest good, see Pasternack 2017.

influence on the human heart" (CPrR 5:156). In the second *Critique*, Kant never quite explicitly makes this point, though it is sometimes intimated (CPrR 5:129–30).[24] Nevertheless, in the *Religion*, he is finally clear that the idea of the highest good "meets our natural need, which would otherwise be a hindrance to moral resolve" (Rel 6:5). The highest good there becomes the "special point of reference for the unification of all ends" because through it the discord between happiness and morality can finally be overcome. This is a commitment, he further claims, that comes out of the "inescapable limitations of human beings" (Rel 6:7n), and it is in this way that "morality leads inevitability to religion" (Rel 6:8n).

Using our earlier enumeration of three steps to Kant's argument for rational faith in the second *Critique*, we may now summarize his argument as follows:

1a. We are finite rational agents with incentives to both morality and happiness.
1b. Our incentive to happiness is often a hindrance to moral resolve.
1c. We ought to strive to fully align our will with morality.
2. While we cannot remove the competing incentive of happiness, we can prevent it from becoming a hindrance to moral resolve if we adopt the highest good and its postulates (for if the highest good were to obtain, our interest in happiness would be satisfied).
3. Because we ought to strive to fully align our will with morality, and this includes finding ways to remedy the hindrances to moral resolve, we ought therefore to adopt the highest good and its postulates.

10.6 Conclusion

Kant's 1786 Orientation Essay marks a crucial moment in the evolution of his conception of the highest good. While his pre-critical lectures illustrate a long-standing interest in the doctrine, its treatment in the "Canon," as we have discussed, is rendered otiose by the new conception of moral agency in the *Groundwork*. The Pantheism Controversy, however, provided Kant with an opportunity to salvage the doctrine by using it as the "signpost or compass" by which we may orient ourselves when venturing into the supersensible.

[24] Fugate (2014, 292–359) contends that Kant explicitly presents this argument in the *Critique of Practical Reason* at 5:130.

Nonetheless, astute readers of the Orientation Essay would have had good reason to be unsatisfied with the manner in which it leverages the doctrine. Not only would anyone who was aware of the implications of the *Groundwork* for the "Canon" account of the highest good be surprised by its reappearance in the Orientation Essay, but the essay itself also offers little guidance as to how the doctrine is there to be understood. For while Kant still grounds rational faith on it, he does not explain how the moral law can once again depend on this doctrine.

Wizenmann was thus appropriately concerned with Kant's treatment of the highest good in the Orientation Essay, for while Kant appeals to it there, he does not explain it, nor could it be explained by any of his accounts to date. It has thus been the aim of this chapter to show how the second *Critique* is able to fill in the Orientation Essay's lacunae. It serves to explain the highest good's role in light of Kant's more mature model of moral agency, completes the Orientation Essay's response to the Pantheism Controversy, and – beyond just one familiar footnote – responds as well to the varied objections in Wizenmann's 1787 *Deutsches Museum* essay.

CHAPTER 11

Reason and Immortality
Herder versus Kant

Marion Heinz

In the early part of the past century, scholars spoke of the late eighteenth century "wrestling with the problem of immortality" and its "crisis over the thought of immortality."[1] They did so with the aim of identifying a point that crystallizes, as it were, the upheavals and uncertainties of the age, the shattering of religious belief, the crisis in metaphysics, doubts about the purpose of human beings, and changes in feelings about life and understanding of the world. Paramount for philosophy in this respect was the loss of a rationally recognized certainty of the postmortem existence of the soul, a certainty of the sort to which dogmatic metaphysics had laid claim. Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* destroys rational psychology, and with that the doctrine of immortality loses its traditional systematic place. In the newly conceived critical metaphysics, the doctrine is excluded from the realm of theoretical knowing and can only be justified subsequently as a postulate, i.e., as an assumption of pure practical reason.[2] This is a substantial break, a caesura in the history of metaphysics, with which post-Kantian philosophers would have to reckon. For Reinhold, this piece of doctrine constituted the essential result of Kant's critique of pure reason, the result toward which the development of philosophy and even of humanity was headed. Any further progress, whether in a theoretical or practical respect, would have to get on board with it.[3]

[1] Unger 1922, 1–2. A shorter version of this essay, translated here by Dan Dahlstrom, appears in *Aufklärung* 28 (2017).

[2] The concept of a postulate first appears in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, where it is characterized as a "necessary presumption" or as a "merely necessary hypothesis" (CPrR 5:11n). Decisive is the fact – and the *Critique of Pure Reason* already teaches as much – that it is a matter of a theoretically certain a priori proposition that is demonstrable not on the basis of theoretical but solely on the basis of pure practical reason. On "postulating," see A633–34/B661–62; on God and immortality (the later postulates), see A797/B825 and A820/B848.

[3] Karl Leonhard Reinhold, *Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie*, 2 vols. (Leipzig: Göschen, 1790–92); see the "Twelfth Letter" in in Karl Leonhard Reinhold, *Gesammelte Schriften,* Kommentierte Ausgabe, vol. 2/1, ed. Martin Bondeli (Basel: Schwabe, 2007), 223–45, esp. 245; see the Editor's Introduction, ibid., ix–xliii, esp. xliii–xlvii.

By contrast, Herder, Reinhold's early mentor and Kant's student, completely rejects the doctrine. For him, this doctrine becomes precisely the proof of the critical philosophy's fundamental perversity, for in the case of these "presumptions" (*Annehmungen*), it is not a matter of progressive, new justifications of belief in God's existence and the soul's immortality. It is instead a matter of the most highly problematic presupposition (*Voraussetzung*) (A818/B846), from which the destruction of the principle of morality ensues – an abysmal consequence that in Herder's view brings to light the untenability of the entire undertaking of a critical metaphysics. From his analyses, Herder concludes that Kant's conception of reason is the foundation of the thinking from which this problematic emerges and from which Herder's attempt at a correction must begin. He accordingly presents his own conception of reason with the claim of being able, like Kant, to justify a critique of metaphysics that, unlike Kant's critique, can preserve the foundations of moral philosophy and put into motion a philosophy that truly provides an orientation for living.[4]

Herder's critical engagement with Kant is ideally suited to cast light on the problem of immortality at the end of the Enlightenment, particularly in connection with the erosions in the understanding of metaphysics – as a science and as an orientation for life. What is also at stake in this regard is the competition between two notions of immortality in the thinking of the Enlightenment: the idea of the postmortem continuance of the soul alone (in Kant's case) and the idea of palingenesis or metempsychosis (in Herder's case).[5] At the bottom of these differences, too, lie different conceptions of reason and of the relation of reason and time. Kant's assertion of postmortem existence in a supratemporal beyond, as a condition of the attainability of moral perfection, stands in contrast to Herder's idea of palingenesis and the attempt to bring reason and time into

[4] On the aim of the orienting, see Johann Gottfried Herder, *Werke*, vol. 8: *Schriften zur Literatur und Philosophie, 1792–1800*, ed. Hans Dietrich Irmscher (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1998), 591, 598n (henceforth "FA 8" followed by page number). Herder's critique of metaphysics is grounded in a philosophy of language. The abstract terms employed in language afford in his view (a view oriented to Berkeley) the starting points for the reifications and hypostatizing of mere figments of thought that one finds in metaphysics. With Herder's philosophy of language, the burden of producing pseudoknowledge is removed from reason; see FA 8:421–28.

[5] "Palingenesis" or "reincarnation" designates a rebirth in which the soul "wanders" into a new body in which it lives further. By contrast, "metempsychosis" is understood as a rebirth in which the soul forms a new body for itself. Herder does not distinguish these concepts sharply. The concept of metamorphosis also appears to characterize the transformations of the soul or the mental life by way of a new embodiment. For more on this subject, see Benz 1957. Benz points out that the pre-critical Kant, treasured by Herder, weighed the idea of palingenesis in the third part of his *Universal Natural History and Theory of the Heavens* (see UNH 1:366).

necessary connection with one another. If one sought at least to sketch Kant's conception of reason, two radical innovations would have to be mentioned: the elaboration of the absolutely new idea of a pure practical reason in the field of practical philosophy and its elimination as an organ for the knowledge of supersensible objects in the field of theory. The implications of these changes for the system of philosophy are considerable: the *metaphysica specialis* of the philosophy of the schools (i.e., Wolff, Baumgarten) is destroyed, and the justification of a critically purified, completed system of philosophy rests essentially on pure practical reason, which is alone responsible for the possibility of determining the last end of the human being and creation.[6]

As a means of presenting the above-mentioned contrasts in the conception of reason at least in outline, it is necessary to point out that, for Kant's theoretical philosophy, the so-called two-stems doctrine (the specific differentiation of sensibility and understanding as sources of intuitions and concepts, respectively [B29]) and knowledge's dependency on intuition entail the restriction of the field of a priori knowledge of objects to the principles of the possibility of experiencing objects. Synthetic a priori knowledge is only possible by means of the categories or pure concepts of the understanding and the transcendental schemata of time; it is, accordingly, knowledge of transcendental, basic principles of objects of experience.[7] By contrast, there can be no a priori knowledge of the objects of transcendental concepts of reason: soul, world, God. Kant can show that underlying the corresponding objects of these concepts are in fact the categories of relation, conceived in an unconditioned way (A334–35/B391–92), for which merely a "field" is to be cleared[8] and thus a realm of objects that can only be thought by means of those categories without being able to be objectively determined a priori (because it is possible for appearances to be determined through pure concepts of the understanding).

In view of the fact that the powers of knowledge legislate in an a priori manner, Kant attributes domains to them. In this manner he distinguishes the domain of nature from that of freedom. "The legislation through concepts of nature takes place through the understanding, and is theoretical. The legislation through the concept of freedom takes place through reason, and is merely practical" (CPJ 5:174). Kant's achievement is to have

[6] See B411 and CPJ 5:450, cf. §§87 and 88.
[7] For the systematic presentation of all synthetic principles, see A159/B198–200.
[8] On the differences between field, domain, and ground for philosophy, see CPJ 5:174–76.

strictly distinguished legislation through pure practical reason from the rules of technical-practical reason. Whereas the latter is always conditioned by instances of positing aims subjectively and rests on theoretical knowledge, the former alone is unconditioned and untied to knowledge of the empirical laws of nature.

As a means of marking the differences between Kant's and Herder's conceptions of reason, it is necessary to stress the "gulf" (*Kluft*), as Kant dubs it, between the domain of nature and that of freedom (CPJ 5:175). If the domain of nature is determined through time and the necessary causal determination of appearances in time, then it is necessary to think the causality based on freedom as lying outside nature. "By means of the theoretical use of reason . . . no transition is possible [between] . . . the concept of nature . . . *as* the sensible and the domain of the concept of freedom as the supersensible . . . just as if there were just so many different worlds" (CPJ 5:175*ff*). It is the task of the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* to bring about a solution for the setting of the problem, posed with this two-world theory, enabling us at least to think "the lawfulness of its [nature's] form" in such a way that "it agrees with the possibility of the ends that are to be realized in it in accordance with the laws of freedom" (CPJ 5:176.) This work is concerned with furnishing proofs for the notion that nature in its pure givenness is compatible with the human mind's prerequisites (i.e., those of empirical and pure capacities of knowing) and that the realization of freedom's ends is possible in nature. Nonetheless, in the "Canon" of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant pursues the aim of "procuring" at least "practical reality" for the transcendental ideas of God and the soul's immortality, irrespective of their loss of validation in the field of theory (CPJ 5:175). He pursues this aim by conceiving them as the necessary conditions for the realization of the ultimate end of pure practical reason.

Herder articulates his idea of reason in the course of criticizing Kant's conceptions of God's existence and the soul's immortality in the *Critique of Pure Reason* – the "postulates" (as Kant later calls them). With this step he develops the foundation not only of his metacritique but also of his philosophy of history and humanity. Those are the central domains of Herder's later writings that are of interest here as the new, systematic place of a doctrine of "human immortality" that is specific to him.[9] In the

[9] To a certain extent, Herder in this regard follows Lessing, who treats the doctrine of the metamorphosis of souls in connection with the philosophy of history on the basis of his *Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts* (*Education of the Human Race*) (Berlin: Voss, 1780). For a concise and informative overview of Lessing's views about the metamorphosis of souls in connection with the conversations about Spinoza, see Fick 2004; for a more extensive account, see Altmann 1976.

construction of the relevant justifications, the ontology of *God* – an ontology that is a philosophy of life – forms the metaphysical foundation for the conception of human reason underlying the anthropology and the philosophies of history and humanity.

Herder's philosophical starting point is thus best characterized as monism and immanentism, also for the contrast with Kant's dualism of worlds and cognitive capacities. After a short sketch of the metaphysics of *God*, the aim here is to present Herder's metacritique of the *Critique of Pure Reason's* moral theology, a part of the work's doctrine that is revised in the *Critique of Practical Reason* and thus, at the time of the composition of the metacritique, has already been overtaken, content-wise.[10] The arguments brought forth by Herder against the earlier version are nonetheless systematically significant, deserving scrutiny for the sake of evaluating their merits as well as understanding the dispute over the correct concept of reason in the late Enlightenment.

In Herder's writings during the 1790s he conceives of immortality in a way that corresponds to the suggested levels of philosophical justification, ranging from the universal metaphysics to the philosophy of humanity.[11] Four concepts of immortality in the broader sense are to be distinguished, corresponding to these hierarchically ordered parts of his philosophy: first, he proposes a metaphysics of indestructible living forces; second, this metaphysics applies that concept of palingenesis as a principle of a world order (thought of in a way corresponding to a philosophy of life); third, this concept emerges as the principle of human becoming and existence in the philosophy of history and humanity; and, finally, in this context the doctrine of a "true, human immortality" (FA 8:207) is developed and, with it, the idea of the self-immortalizing of an individual orienting his thinking and acting according to the measure of humanity.[12]

[10] See CPrR 5:78, where the "respect for the moral law" is named "the sole moral motivation and at the same time the motivation beyond any doubt."

[11] On the theme of immortality in Herder, see (in addition to the work of Unger cited in footnote 1) Ruprecht 1980; Heinz 1992; Markworth 2005; and Keßler 2009. For Mendelssohn and Herder, see Pollok 2010. See, too, Macor 2013.

[12] See *Über die menschliche Unsterblichkeit. Eine Vorlesung* (*On Human Immortality. A Lecture*) (FA 8: 203–19). Also relevant for Herder' s thinking on immortality after the publication of his *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (*Idea for a Philosophy of History of Mankind*) (1784–91) is *Tithon und Aurora* (FA 8:221–39) in which the idea of palingenesis is interpreted from the perspective of the philosophy of history. *Palingenesie. Vom Wiederkommen menschlicher Seelen* (*Palingenesis. On Human Souls Coming Back*) (FA 8:257–82) presents a polemic with Lessing's views of palingenesis in his *Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts*, §§93–100. See, too, Herder's piece, *Vom Wissen und Nichtwissen der Zukunft* (*On Knowing and Not Knowing the Future*) (FA 8:283–96). On his *Zerstreuten Blättern* (*Scattered Pages*) (Gotha: Ettinger, 1785–1797), in which the writings mentioned

The Spinozistic ontotheology of life developed in basic outline in the work *God* (1st edn 1787, 2nd edn 1800) is based in part on experience, in part on a priori premises. For this ontotheology, the assumption of indestructible material forces is fundamental – forces that are designated "organic" insofar as they necessarily unite with a multitude of subordinate forces as their body in order to form the unity of a living individual.[13] This metaphysics of force, based on Leibniz's corresponding theory, nonetheless deviates from his doctrine of monads by positing a *realen influxus* between soul and body as well as between living individuals (FA 4:715–16, 776–77). Essential to Herder's efforts to combine this ontology with Spinoza's monism of one substance is the theorem that the finite forces are an expression of the divine thoughts, appearances of the latter acting upon one another in space and time.

For the understanding of the connection of finite things, the idea of paligenesis is constitutive (FA 4:770–71). "Nothing can pass away, nothing can be annihilated or God would have to annihilate Himself; but everything composite is dissolved, everything that takes up a place and time wanders" (FA 4:771). Only under this presupposition can eternal life be attributed to the nature or the world, and only in this way can the world be conceived as the order of a living totality of what is alive. That the body – the manifold of forces dominated by a higher force – disintegrates means the death of the individual, yet this is in truth a moment of life itself, the transition to new life of the force that incorporates itself again. Life and death, composition and disintegration are the opposed principles, mediating themselves with one another, the principles of a world order that Herder describes as "the ever acting life of the world spirit" (FA 4:770). In creation, there is no genuine death; instead, everything is "in a restless movement, an eternal palingenesis, so that it may always endure and appear ever young" (FA 4:790).

The concept of palingenesis, however, is the principle not only of the coming to be and passing away of finite things but also of change. For Herder's point of departure, the effects of living things on one another are to be thought of as unrelenting metamorphoses, forming and dissolving configurations in the broadest sense, that is to say, as the unity of

first appeared, see Koepke 1992. In three dialogues *Über die Seelenwanderung* (*On the Metamorphosis of the Soul*) (1782), Herder addresses Georg Schlosser's teachings; see Hense 2012.

[13] See Johann Gottfried Herder, *Werke*, vol. 4: *Schriften zu Philosophie, Literatur, Kunst und Altertum, 1774–1787*, ed. Jürgen Brummack and Martin Bollacher (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1994), 774, 679–809, especially the second and fifth dialogues (henceforth "FA 4" followed by the page numbers). See, too, DeSouza 2012b, 2016b.

a manifold of forces, a unity organized and ordered by a higher unity (FA 4:785). The exchange between diverse finite things is implemented as the internalization of the outer and that means as a permanent, transforming acquisition induced by a force of the soul, of what the senses provide. But that also means, vice versa, its implementation as an expression of the soul in the body so that it is perceptible indirectly. In the living character of the world determined by the palingenesis, the opposition of eternal and temporal is superseded. Through the organic forces, conceived as existing thoughts of God, these thoughts actively come to display themselves in the eternally self-rejuvenating, living universe (*Alleben*) and, that means, in the temporal sphere.[14] Without "the apparent death in the creation, everything [would be] *true death*, i.e., an inert stillness, a barren shadow-realm" (FA 4:787).

In this monistic philosophy of life, it is necessary to think of human beings and their efficacious, historical connections as a system that is part of a complete system. The ontology of life accordingly forms the philosophical foundation for Herder's philosophy of history, culture, and humanity, into which the concept of palingenesis is correspondingly transferred.[15] Consideration of reason, the defining character of the human, is required to establish the laws of the human world. The decision is already made, based on the founding relations sketched earlier, that it is impossible in this system to think either of a place outside nature or of an idea of morality that is not supposed to be a natural purpose. Kant, however, picking up on Leibniz's differentiation of realms of nature and of grace (A812/B840), upholds a doctrine of the difference between the world of the senses (standing under natural laws and thoroughly determined by natural causes) and an "intelligible, moral world (*regnum gratiae*)" standing under moral laws of freedom (A816/B844) – a doctrine that is the opposite of Herder's.

Herder – in contrast to the subsequent generation of philosophers – articulated these fundamental oppositions, and it is no coincidence that he presents them in connection with his metacritique of the two main parts of the "Doctrine of Method" – the "Discipline" and "Canon" chapters of the *Critique of Pure Reason*.[16] Dissatisfied with a merely negative use of the

[14] Unger 1922, 23.

[15] Lessing expanded the concept of palingenesis in terms of the philosophy of history – on a foundation different, to be sure, from Herder's – "for the first time since the Renaissance" (Unger 1924, 271). More recent, discourse-theoretical investigations show that this concept was in circulation from the middle of the eighteenth century as a pattern of interpretation, applicable in versatile ways, that promised to do justice to the tendencies toward temporalizing and historicizing; see Hense 2012.

[16] Johann Gottfried Herder, *Verstand und Erfahrung. Eine Metakritik zur Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, 1st edn (Leipzig: Hartknoch, 1799); *Vernunft und Sprache. Eine Metakritik zur Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, 2nd edn (Leipzig: Hartknoch, 1799), in FA 8:303–640.

critical philosophy as a discipline that has "the silent merit of guarding against errors" (A795/B823), Kant attempts to justify the metaphysical parts of the doctrine of rational theology and psychology in a new way, without contradicting his knowledge of the impossibility of these doctrines in the field of speculative metaphysics (A797/B825) which is, indeed, the decisive result of the entire critique. "God exists" and "the soul is immortal" are justified as necessary assumptions of pure practical reason that it declares the crucial conditions of the highest human end of happiness in accordance with worthiness.

The first set of Herder's objections to this doctrine is directed with broad strokes at the "Discipline" and "Canon" chapters as the negative and positive results of the undertaking that makes up the *Critique of Pure Reason*, an undertaking that is, in his view, misguided from the ground up.[17] Reason is for Herder a natural capacity and as such – in contrast to works produced by human beings – cannot be meaningfully criticized.[18] What is implausible, furthermore, is how this same reason, considered as an object, leads to a dialectical illusion but can still be expected to have reliable results as the authority in its self-evaluation (see FA 8:498). For Herder, Kant's construal of reason resides in the "Transcendental Dialectic," where he states that reason is driven "by a proclivity of its nature [to transcendental illusion]" (A797/B825) to an error. From the improper use of this capacity the inference is made to its corrupt nature. To be sure, as a force of nature, reason can be corrupted by culture, but it cannot unavoidably deceive thanks to grounds of "falsehood" lying in reason itself (FA 8:520).

Corresponding to this objection, what also appears misguided to Herder from the outset is Kant's distinction between validating reasons in speculative and in practical metaphysics. In his critical engagement with Kant's critique of rational theology in the "Transcendental Dialectic," Herder puts forward his general objection. "Driven from the domain of reason as an invention, God is subsequently *postulated* as a postulate for practical reason, as if beyond the reason that proscribed this invention, there would still be a second reason that could peremptorily call the banned figment back from the realm of inventions!" (FA 8:534). In the doctrine of the "Transcendental Ideal," Kant sharpened anew the distinction between the

[17] In this way, Herder also opposes Reinhold's *Letters on Kantian Philosophy*, in which the "Canon" chapter is the decisive, positive result of the *Critique of Pure Reason*; see Heinz 2006.

[18] See FA 8:318. For a more detailed treatment of Herder's critique of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, see Baum 1990, esp. 72–73, 2013; see, too, Baum's presentations of Kant's conception of the self-knowledge of reason in Baum 2001.

necessity of a thought and the proof of the existence of the object corresponding to it (see A601–2/B629–30). It is necessary for reason, to be sure, to posit "the concept of the reality of everything" as the basis for determining things generally at all, but it does not demand "that all this reality is objectively given and itself constitutes a thing" (A580/B608).[19] This assumption of an *ens realissimum* (most real being) truly amounts to "a mere invention" (A580/B608). Referring to this passage, Herder's critique reacts against Kant's unequivocal distinction of the grounds for theology that spring from theoretical and practical reason. He charges that the *one* reason is split into positions defending opposite claims and that, with that rupture, Kant provokes a "war" between practical and theoretical reason (FA 8:591). His enfeebling of theoretical reason has disastrous consequences for practical reason.

That no practical reason can take place without theoretical reason (FA 8:580, 591) is the philosophical position of this metacritic who latches onto Spinoza's view that the doctrine of substance is at the same time ethics or that ethics can only be justified in the ontology of the substance that is the same in all. Herder attempts to demonstrate that the moral law is relegated in the *Critique of Pure Reason* to an instrument of the subject's self-respect and thereby obliterated.[20] This effort, to be explicated in what follows, reinforces Spinoza's position *ex negativo* (in a negative way) and substantiates Mendelssohn's talk of Kant as the "pulverizer of everything" (*Alleszermalmer*).[21] Kant leaves behind nothing but a "great desert and emptiness" (FA 8:743) – to demonstrate as much is the aim of the *metacriticus*.

Let us attempt first to reconstruct Herder's argument against the destruction of rational theology and its new establishment as moral theology. From the insight into the fictionality of the concept of God as *ens realissimum*, it follows that insofar as it is a matter of philosophical knowledge, it is already destroyed as a concept of an object (in regard to which simply its existence would be in question) and so cannot fundamentally be rehabilitated – with any status of validity whatsoever. It would mean a kind of schizophrenia if, on the grounds of practical reason, even practical

[19] Klaus Reich's brilliant study shows that these elaborations also concern a self-criticism by Kant directed at his own dogmatic metaphysics, the ontotheology of the *Einzig möglicher Beweisgrund*; see Reich 2001. Herder criticizes this work of Kant in his first composition, *Versuch über das Sein.* See Heinz 2018.

[20] For Herder, the "idea of God" is the "concept of absolute, necessary truth, given by itself" that is the "prototype" of every reason and everything rational (FA 8:560).

[21] For Herder's reference to the "Preliminary Report" of Mendelssohn's *Morgenstunden* (*Morning Hours*), see FA 8:515, and for his comments on it, see ibid., 1170.

validity or necessity were recognized for what has been theoretically proven to be fiction (see B839–41). In his critique of reason, Kant has shown, indeed, that the possibility or even the existence of God as the primal being (*Urwesen*) containing the sum of all reality is inferred, as is the assumption of his existence, from hypostatizing and realizing the logical condition of a sum of all reality, a condition that is required for the general determination of the individuality of things (see B630). From the proof of the fabrication of the being of all beings, Herder concludes that any legitimate use of it in philosophy is rendered null and void.

In order to test this argument, it should be kept in mind, in the first place, that for Kant every noncontradictory concept refers to an object *in sensu logico* (in a logical sense) and that it can only be decided by means of a judgment whether that concept can furnish objective knowledge or not. From the fictionality of a concept, neither its uselessness for knowledge nor the fictionality of the object thought by it follows. Second, in the "Canon" chapter Kant lays claim not to the status of knowledge but instead to that of "articles of belief" for the metaphysical assumptions of God and immortality (B258, 856–59). Finally, attention must be paid to the fact that Kant in no way applies the same concept of God in both places where he presents his doctrine (the "Transcendental Dialectic" and the "Canon" chapter). The concept of the postulated God is that of a "wise author and ruler" (A811/B839) of the intelligible world but not that of a primal being underlying the possibility of things.[22] As paradoxical as it may also appear that the ideal proven in the "Transcendental Dialectic" (i.e., the ideal of God, devoid of existence[23]) can be rehabilitated in the "Canon" chapter because it is demanded by practical reason, a consistent argumentation is sustained.[24]

[22] The "Canon" chapter refers back, to be sure, to the concept of God as ground of the possibility of things, that is to say, as *ens realissimum* (A816/B844), nevertheless, in such a way that this concept is first disclosed on the basis of the "idea of the highest good" set up by pure practical reason and the "ideal of ontological perfection" that follows from this.

[23] Other than in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, where purposiveness is demonstrated as a subjective principle of the power of judgment, Kant in the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* still considers it possible to adduce the idea that is essential for research of nature, namely the idea of "the purposiveness of nature on grounds that must be connected a priori and inseparably with the inner possibility of things and thereby [to adduce] a transcendental theology that takes as its principle of systematic unity the ideal of the highest ontological perfection which connects all things according to universal and necessary natural laws, because all things have their origin in the absolute necessity of one sole primordial entity" (A816/B844).

[24] Worthy of mention, although they cannot be treated in more detail here, are the changes in these parts of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, but above all in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, where Kant demonstrates the physicotheology (still postulated in the *Critique of Pure Reason*) to be insufficient (B844; CPJ §§83–86).

In addition to his critique of Kant's separation of theoretical and practical reason, Herder raises objections that ultimately aim at demonstrating the fatal consequences of this separation for theology and moral philosophy. These objections essentially turn on three arguments: Herder criticizes as "belief for a purpose" (*zweckhaften Glaube*) the notion of construing God, whose existence is theoretically indemonstrable, as the only thinkable "condition under which the end of morality joins together with all other ends" (A828/B856)[25] and secures by this means the "practical validity" of the moral law (FA 8:588–89).[26] In this way Herder directs attention to the dependency of belief in God on an end and to the diminishment of meaning that comes with that dependency. A God degraded to a means is, however, a "non-God [*Ungott*]" (FA 8:790). Thus Herder attacks this element of the doctrine by claiming that Kant has demonstrated neither the end nor the necessity of the alleged means. In this way, he puts in question the validity of Kant's entire argumentation, challenging that he merely presupposes but does not prove what is at issue (see A828/B856). "Whence do you know that your morality is the end of everything? . . . whence do you know that only one *sole* condition is possible under which this end hangs together with all ends *altogether*?" (FA 8:588–89). Herder's explication of the highest end as "your morality" obviously seizes on Kant's formulation: "the highest ends, however, are those of morality, and only pure reason can know how to give them to us" (A816/B844).[27] "Furnished" with them "and their guiding thread," human beings are able, Kant continues, to make a purposeful use of their acquaintance with nature – presupposing the purposiveness of nature itself – in view of their knowledge of it.[28]

Kant's talk of ends of morality that can be known by pure reason signifies the will's positing of ends, limited or modified by the moral law, hence, by pure practical reason; that is to say, it ultimately signifies the highest good as the unification of worthiness and happiness. Herder accordingly wants to reclaim the missing proof in the supposition of the highest good. It is possible that he is basing his case thereby on the idea that the moral law itself, insofar as it serves as the criterion of all morality,

[25] Kant also construes the postulate of immortality under "one sole condition" (A828/B856).

[26] This objection even includes the reproach of instrumentalizing the doctrine of God in the service of the egoistic interest of not leading a virtuous life without reward. Overlooked thereby is the fact that Kant sets up a conditional relation between morality and happiness. The "moral disposition [is] claimed as a condition for the participation in happiness, and the outlook on happiness does not, vice versa, [make] the moral disposition first possible" (B841).

[27] In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the moral law is said to entail the highest good (see A809/B837).

[28] On this hierarchical structure, see also A801/B829.

remains unproven because it is, indeed, definitive for the conception of the highest good. Yet Kant says that he presupposes it – or, better, the laws that enjoin it unqualifiedly – and for its justification he appeals to the enlightened moralists and the moral judgment of every human being (A807/B835). In that case, it would be a matter of Kant taking as his point of departure for the determination of the highest good a principle of morality that he cannot prove. However things sort themselves out with respect to the first part of the attack, the objection is raised in any case that Kant has not solved the problem of recognizing the connection between end and means, and that signifies here the problem of demonstrating the a priori necessity of the condition, for the thought of assuming another condition for attaining the highest good (e.g., a natural order more favorable than the one known to us) is by no means impossible. Thus Kant neglects to prove the impossibility of the opposite, and for this reason, the inference to God and immortality is not compelling.

As the high point and keystone of his metacritique, Herder sets forth the disastrous consequences for the idea of morality that consist of nothing less than the annihilation of just this principle (see FA 8:589). Other than he does a few years later, Kant in the *Critique of Pure Reason* establishes not only the motivational problem on the guarantee of the highest good but even the moral law's claim to be binding, obligatory. Without the assumptions of God and a future life, "the moral laws can be viewed as empty figments of the imagination, since the necessary success of them, which the same reason combines with them, would have to fall away without that presupposition" (A811/B839). Here Kant still teaches what is impossible for him from 1785 on, namely that "without threats and promises" moral laws could not be commands at all (ibid., see, too, A813/B841, A827/B855). And for justification of the prerogatives of moral belief, this means that the moral principles would be "overthrown" without the assumptions of God and immortality. A human being, meanwhile, "cannot forgo" them without loathing herself (A828/B856).[29] Herder saw clearly that a view that makes the validity of the moral law, as a "law that commands without qualification" (A807/B835), dependent on conditions, i.e., God and immortality, leads to a contradiction that cancels its unconditioned validity and character as a law. "If it is necessary without qualification, that you

[29] Herder suspects that one motive for introducing moral theology in the *Critique of Pure Reason* is an accommodation made by Kant to the Christian religion and that this was not irrelevant to the success of his philosophy (see FA 8:590–91). Herder sees himself along with Spinoza and Lessing forming a front against the so-called ethics of reward that connects the question of morality with the Christian notions of the Last Judgment and other-worldly punishment or reward.

follow the moral law in everything since reason commands it and the moral prescription is your maxim, then in it you have, indeed, enough. You must follow it or reason's command is not clear and the maxim is not your maxim. Hence, you abrogate its law if you have . . . to call . . . an entity for help so that that law by this means preserves its practical validity. Precisely with this move you declare it insufficient, i.e., null and void" (FA 8:589).

To the extent that a further goal of Herder's argumentation is to make readers aware that Kant's destruction of dogmatic metaphysics in the field of the theoretical use of reason inevitably has the effect of subjectivizing the principle of morality, he finds a place to start in Kant's recommendations of moral belief. Herder interprets the above-mentioned chain of justification in such a way that Kant not only makes the moral belief dependent on the moral law but also attributes to this law itself the status of an assumption that he then justifies as a necessary means in the service of human self-respect. With this, what truly matters in the case of moral life becomes apparent in unvarnished form: what matters are "smug hair-splittings [*Spitzfindigkeiten, aus Selbstgefälligkeit*]" (FA 8:590). It is clear to Herder that Kant's advocation of God as the guarantor of the highest good has, as its complement, the dedivinization of nature as the object of theoretical metaphysics (FA 8:537). With his destruction of theoretical metaphysics, Kant has pulled away the basis of moral philosophy that thus, not coincidentally, leads simply to a badly concealed utilitarianism and subjectivism. "If reason recognizes no order and harmony in nature, then it has no right to recognize such in moral nature either" (FA 8:590). Hence what is required is a revision of the entire project of a critique of pure reason and the result of it: the separation of theoretical and practical reason.[30]

It is the Spinozistic-vitalistic metaphysics of God-nature, living in everything, that Herder offers against the "wasteland and emptiness" (FA 8:743) of a critical metaphysics that forms itself. For the purpose of setting the stage for Herder's doctrine of immortality insofar as this metaphysics underlies it, it may prove helpful in what follows to enter in more detail into Herder's idea of reason as a natural capacity that he turns against Kant. In contrast to Kant's identification of natural reason's mistaken inferences and antinomies, Herder claims that in the field of speculative reason it is a matter of a capacity that acts, like all natural forces, according to laws inherent to it and, by this means, already fulfills its function. In the field of

[30] Kant saw the problems of his conception of pure practical reason in the *Critique of Pure Reason* and offered different solutions in his later writings, of course, without giving up/revising his critical insights.

practical philosophy, Herder upholds the doctrine, closely connected to Stoic moral philosophy, that the law of nature is given to reason as a principle of morality. It does not entertain any doubt about its dignity and consequently needs no assurance as to whether it is possibly a matter of "empty figments of the imagination" (A811/839).[31] Kant's undertaking of criticizing natural reason and the metaphysics naturally produced by it (correcting the dialectic that thus comes to light and with which metaphysics can be justified as science) appears to Herder as a presumptuous endeavor that has, as a consequence, the perversion of reason into a cleverness guided by subjective interests. As evidence for the suspected hubris, Herder cites Kant's dictum "the critical path alone remains open" (FA 8:591). Correcting Kant's position would require mindfulness of the true conception of reason for which Herder argues metacritically with his explications of reason as a capacity and as a source of knowledge but also as an object. By means of all this, he seeks to determine the limits of reason in a way fundamentally different from Kant (FA 8:592–600).

As is the case for the dogmatic metaphysics before Kant, reason for Herder is in the object as much as it is in the knowing subject. "That the *same* law prevails in me as in nature" (FA 8:598) – this subject-object identity is the founding ontological theorem that "*certifies*" for him the reliability of reason as a natural capacity. It does so, he relates, "because I see that my inner rule is also the rule of the universal world given to me to recognize. Reason, I see, belongs to the object just as the object does to reason; they are *co-ordinated* with one another by one law" (FA 8:598). Herder wants to understand this identity of subjective and objective reason (grounded in the divine substance that is one in everything) in such a way that they are mutually mediating, constitutive parts of the single complex structure of reason. As subjectively rational, the reason recognizing the object as rational becomes objective itself, and for its part, the object, recognized by reason subjectively, presents itself as rational subjectively. Subject and object are construed, in keeping with the model of life, as reciprocally conditioning, constitutive parts of the unity of reason. Because the objective becomes subjective and the subjectively rational becomes objective, each constitutive part experiences itself as given in the other and as conditioned by the other.[32]

[31] For Herder's conception of a law of nature that lies obscurely in us and is illuminated only on the basis of morals handed down to us, see FA 8:208. On the critique of Kant's practical philosophy, see remarks in *Kalligone* (FA 8:908–12).

[32] See Heinz and Clairmont 2009.

Yet, in contrast to the post-Kantian philosophy of German idealism, reason according to Herder is unproductive in the sense that it is not in a position to constitute the objectivity of objects or even these objects themselves. Defining for reason has the structure of recognizing, that is to say, identifying the objectively rational, given from somewhere else, as rational. In accordance with this defining character, Herder conceives reason as the judge who passes judgment on linguistically articulated instances of empirical knowledge, brought to the fore by sensibility and understanding.[33] By means of the rules inherent to it (and those are, for Herder, the laws of logic), reason evaluates through the process of inference, but it does not evaluate only the logical consistency of the thoughts. Instead it relates the abstract terms of the language as predicates to things and by this means makes sure that it is not a matter merely of words, i.e., a universal devoid of objects.[34] These connections (which refer, to a considerable extent, to Berkeley) cannot be pursued further here.[35] Only it is necessary to recognize that the view of the historicity of reason that is specific to Herder ensues from understanding reason as the judge of instances of empirical knowledge that have been laid down in language and universally communicated. Herder displays this character more precisely in the passage that is to be investigated next, the passage about "reason, considered as a source of knowledge" (FA 8:595).

Reason is thought of as an organic force, dependent on something given to it in advance, on which it acts and realizes itself as a force of knowledge. As a spiritual and organic force, it is essential for it to express itself and also to exhibit in sensory form the results of its acting, its knowledge. It is thus a linguistically constituted reason that stands necessarily in a connection of action with others. As a consequence of being doubly bound to language, human reason can only be adequately conceived of as collective and historical reason, that is to say, as at once having become and still becoming, as something that can only exist in unity with the communicated rational utterances of others about language and culture, both utterances lying in advance of it and utterances following on it.[36] Hence the rubric "universal human reason" is for Herder "the *collective* name for what reason as a cognitive capacity has produced and gathered together in several human beings" (FA 8:595).

[33] See FA 8:594; and Heinz 2013.
[34] On the connection of Herder's critique of metaphysics and his critique of language, see Stolz 2013.
[35] See the mention of Berkeley (FA 8:602, 605, 607).
[36] Not only instances of empirical knowledge but also results of reason have entered into the language, results that are as subject to constant evaluation as those instances are.

The Kantian idea of universal human reason is for Herder an abstraction to which nothing actual corresponds. In order to attain a concept of reason that holds up under its own examination, historically real and culturally diverse formations must be taken into consideration. With this application of the earlier developed beginnings of a theory of knowledge – a theory combining empiricist and rationalist elements – to the concept of reason, Herder attacks Kant's doctrine of universal pure reason in two ways. The claim to be able to ground philosophy sufficiently in universal pure human reason, without assessing the exertions of reason by humanity in its history, is a pretentious presumption (*Anmaßung*) paired with a kind of self-deception over the fact that the very reason doing the research is the latest result of foregoing achievements (ibid.).

Against Kant's critique of dogmatic metaphysics and his plan of establishing philosophy anew, on the basis of mere concepts, as a system of synthetic a priori knowledge, Herder insists that pure reason, as Kant construes it, neither has access, insofar as it is theoretical, to its own concepts of things such as God, soul, world[37] nor, insofar as it is practical, can it establish its own a priori principles of acting and willing. Thus, too, the critically restricted metaphysics of the "Canon" chapter is untenable. If reason is, as Herder teaches, an organ guided by logical rules for the examination of linguistically mediated experiences, whose results are written into the language in turn, then it is historical in a twofold sense. As the subject working over the pregiven knowledge of experience, it becomes objective itself only in keeping with the respective stage of development of empirical knowledge,[38] and so it develops itself in various configurations that, for their part, combine in time into a historically effective connection. From this it follows that knowledge of itself is historical knowledge that has to attend to the formations of reason that have become manifest in these configurations (see FA 8:596).

In spite of these objections to the concept of universal human reason, Herder alleges, for his part, a distributively universal concept of human reason. "In me is a twofold I; conscious of myself, I can and must become an object for myself. This prerogative elevates me above animals. It is the *character of our* species." As "the power . . . [on which] every act on the part of my spirit depends," the capability that I "can act on myself" appears to it as well (FA 8:592). And that is to say further that "the thought fashions

[37] Herder apparently fails to note that the transcendental ideas are for Kant nothing but concepts of the understanding, raised to the level of the unconditioned, i.e., concepts that cannot be used for knowledge.

[38] For Herder, metaphysics is consequently post-physics; see Scholz 1993.

forms" (ibid.). With this claim, in regard to epistemology, the following is meant: the knowing subject experiences the objects homologous with it, and by means of the forms given in them, it produces concepts that reason in turn has to relate as abstractions to things in order to be able to contribute to knowledge. In contrast to Kantian dualisms and bifurcations, Herder also wants to interpret knowing as an organic unity of a manifold of functions, as a means of emphasizing the harmony of subject and object. On the side of the subject starting out from the given, an organized, subdivided totality of forms of processing, corresponding to the object, establishes itself, and these forms result in a configuration of thought, i.e., in a universal thought united with the particular (FA 8:368–69, 419). It is characteristic for Herder in his philosophy to conceive the particular not as something thought by means of the conceptually universal (standing under it as part of the extension of the concept) but instead according to the model of the living as the parts combined into the individual, of the same sort as the universal (see, e.g., FA 8:502).

The conception of reason in the first *Metacritique of the Critique of Pure Reason* is the lynchpin of the critique of Kant's doctrine of God and immortality in the "Canon" chapter. It also forms the foundation of the philosophy of humanity and history in the second "metacritique," entitled *Kalligone* and directed at Kant's *Critique of Judgment*. This second metacritique becomes the systematic place of the doctrine of immortality in Herder's philosophy. In the metaphysical anthropology of the *Kalligone*, the human being is conceived of as a "creature of art [*Kunstgeschöpf*]" (FA 8:751).[39] "Nature's artistic product [*Kunstprodukt*] that is richest in gifts should be itself an artist; everything has been ordained for this purpose in his or her case" (FA 8:761). A human being is the most perfect product of nature; it not only obeys, like all other natural entities, nature's principle of formation (*Bildungsprinzip*) – shaping (*Gestaltung*) in the sense of giving bodily expression to something spiritual for the purpose of self-preservation and happiness (see FA 8:750) – but also, as that most perfect product, is able to recognize and, as an artist in the broadest sense of the term, to imitate it. As a rational being, a human being is in a position to apply this principle "self-consciously" (FA 8:752).

Nature in its entirety, as well as the human being himself in his inner and outer nature, is the object of his artistic activity (FA 8:943). In the first respect, he is thought of as "ruler of the world" (FA 8:762); in the second, as the object of his historical and cultural self-production. The highest form

[39] See DeSouza 2017.

of art consists of a human being´s understanding of how to make himself, as nature's most perfect entity, into the prototype for his actions. "Protagoras already called the human being the measure of the universe," Herder admits, "and outside ourselves we have no other measure; no other measure is thinkable."[40] These observations allude to the idea of the harmonization of human beings and nature as the determination of the ultimate purpose of all human art, an idea sketched in outline in the *Kalligone*.[41] Cultivation of nature and human self-formation belong together in Herder's concept of the history of humanity as the mutually enhancing, inherent parts of the perfection of the divine creation by human beings as "art-creators [*Kunstschöpfer*]" – as Herder puts it, drawing on Shaftesbury's dictum about the artist being a "second maker" (FA 8:762).

As interesting as these references (from Herder's second metacritique) to a teleology, intended by him as an alternative to Kant's *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, may be, they do not directly address the theme of immortality. What this theme calls for is closer examination of the conception of the human being's formation of itself into humanity (*Selbstbildung des Menschen zur Humanität*). The crucial point for understanding this conception lies in the paradox of the human being qua creator of art. According to the metaphysical anthropology of the late writings, the human being's task is to produce, in accordance with the model of himself as the highest entity in nature,[42] and, to be sure, to do so in such a way that the model itself is to be worked out first.[43] The human being is the creature that "should become everything *through himself* " (FA 8:762). While all other natural entities live simply in accord with the character of their species, the destiny of human beings lies in the supreme norm of developing the idea of humanity through history. From Herder's ontotheology and its point of departure with things as realized divine thoughts, it follows, to be sure, that "in human nature . . . everything is there potentially [*im Keim*] and only awaits its development."[44] But the

[40] Johann Gottfried Herder, *Sämmtliche Werke*, vol. 20, ed. Bernhard Suphan (Berlin: Weidmann, 1880), 368.

[41] See FA 8:776; for a more detailed treatment, see Heinz and Nachtsheim 2016.

[42] FA 8:753: "Dem Menschen ist also *Menschheit* das Schönste."

[43] Abbt's reflections, clothed in a parable and directed against Mendelssohn, are comparable; see Thomas Abbt, *Zweifel über die Bestimmung des Menschen* (1764), in *Moses Mendelssohn, Gesammelte Schriften, Jubiläumsausgabe,* begun by Fritz Bamberger et al., continued by Alexander Altmann et al. (Stuttgart–Bad Cannstatt 1929*ff*, vol. I, 11*ff*; see, too, Macor 2013, 168–72.

[44] Johann Gottfried Herder, *Werke*, vol. 7: *Briefe zu Beförderung der Humanität,* ed. Hans Dietrich Irmscher (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1991), 34 (henceafter "FA 7" followed by the page number).

idea of humankind becomes "visible" only through the historical activity of human beings such that Herder can characterize the human being as a Pygmalion of itself (FA 8:928, 946). "The being and well-being of the human race are built on art; only through art has he become what he is" (FA 8:774).

In Herder's interpretation of history along the lines of his philosophy of life, the elaboration of the character specific to humankind can indicate, to be sure, the direction or tendency of history (FA 8:218–19), but not as though the ultimate end of history can be thought of as something to be attained at a definite point in time – in analogy somewhat to the introduction of a condition of right (*Rechtszustand*) in Kant's philosophy of history, where the binding character of everything ideal to its sensory appearance in the widest sense follows from his conception of reason. What is ideal is accessible for human beings only as a configuration, i.e., as an imperfect realization in time.[45] Herder polemicizes against Kant's idea of a universal, pure reason and his validation of time-transcending, pure practical laws. In light of this polemic, Herder can refer only formally to reason as the essential property (*proprium*) of a human being[46] or also to the "purely human form" as the "idea and rule inhabiting" the bodily shape of the human being (FA 8:927). With this approach, the problem presents itself for his philosophy of how any sort of normativity of human action and teleology of history can be justified under the presupposition of the temporalizing of reason and the erasure of any sort of world beyond. The idea of the unity of eternity and temporality, spirit and body is constitutive for his Spinozistic vitalism, and his attempt at a solution, for which the idea of human immortality is central, rests on this idea. The idea of immortality affords an answer to the question of the criterion of human action, a criterion to be combined with the identified presuppositions, and by means of this idea, Herder can specify his conception of the destiny or calling (*Bestimmung*) of human beings in combination with the determination of the final end of history.

[45] What is particularly accentuated with the concept of configuration or form (*Gestalt*) is the notion that each thing is the unity of unity and plurality, analogous to the relation of God and world as one and all. What pertains to the spirit or soul presents itself as the ground of the unity in the integrated plurality of the body as such so that it can be known, for its part, from the latter (i.e., the body) through sympathy (see FA 8:750, 796). The concept of configuration is of decisive importance for Herder's epistemology in yet another way. At odds with Kant's separation of philosophical from mathematical knowledge, Herder teaches that human beings can "only think through *configuration* [*Gestaltung*]" (FA 8:752).

[46] See FA 8:948, where Herder describes progress in history as the removal of everything animal, i.e., merely sensible.

It is no more possible to forego human immortality in the sense of the palingenesis for the philosophy of humanity and history (completely integrated into the doctrine of nature as a philosophy of life) than it is to forego it for the order given to nature by *God*. Herder's conception of reason is holistic in the sense that reason in the form of a living, natural thing is "no isolated totality"; instead, it lives; that is to say, it is efficacious as an intrinsic part (*Moment*) of the whole that Herder thus also characterizes as its "*element.*"[47] "His [a human being's] reason is tied so precisely to the reason of others, his moral formation to the behavior of others, his disposition to constitute himself as a free being (individually and with others) to the way of thinking, the judiciousness, and the effective undertakings of so many others that, outside this element, he would necessarily be a fish on dry land, a bird in airless space" (FA 8:230–31). A human being does not live, like an animal, in a purely "natural realm" (FA 8:723). He is the sole entity that fashions his own world for himself with the products of human art and culture, a world in which he is bound up, as a rational being, with others like him and which molds his individual reason (FA 8: 208–9). Herder applies the concept of palingenesis to make this connection of all rational beings intelligible. The concept contains the notion that all expressions of reason are in time and, as such, are subject to change and passing away,[48] but it also contains the thought that they form a "chain of effects" into which the individual rational subjects are integrated, with the result that they are determined by this place in the nexus of all rational beings with respect to the shape of their reason (FA 8:208). The passing of all human accomplishments (that Herder sets forth so intrepidly[49]) is conceived, in analogy with natural things, as a necessary, intrinsic part of an efficaciousness that ceaselessly rejuvenates itself. It is the reciprocity between a spiritualizing appropriation of temporal manifestations of reason by other rational beings and their renewed expression in the sensory domain that enables Herder to describe humankind's history altogether as

[47] FA 8:230; see, also, FA 8:208, where this totality is designated as a medium in order to stress how an individual reason is mediated by it.

[48] This holds, too, for social and political formations such as "institutions, constitutions, classes, corporations" (FA 8:224; see also FA 8:229). If talk of evolutions is preferred in place of the concept of palingenesis, the intrinsic features of dying and rejuvenation, constituting the living in nature and history, are described from the perspective of their goal, as "development of their [natural] forms, genera, and species" (FA 8:229).

[49] See FA 8:208 and *Tithon und Aurora* (FA 8:221–39), in which Herder presents the past of all human institutions, works, and achievements – including those of art and science.

an "ongoing metamorphosis"[50] or – with an accent on the moral – as the "grand palingenesis of the moral dispositions of our race" (FA 8:272).

It does not suffice, meanwhile, to represent the connection among rational beings in a way analogous to that of things in nature to bring to light the "true, human immortality" (FA 8:207). This can only be defined by means of the idea of humanity that is constitutive for the history of humankind (see, e.g., FA 8:218–19; FA 7:123–29). It is differentiated thereby, too, from the immortality of posthumous fame, what is dubbed the "immortality of art."[51] "The sweet dream . . . of passing over with one's name, in one's person and character into posterity and to become an incarnate god" was justified in humankind's youth in ancient Greece, where individuals were able to rise to the level of the divine and the heroic and be immortalized in the splendor of poetic portrayals (FA 8:203). To want to imitate, in one's own prosaic age, these examples, written into humankind's heritage, signifies a fundamental misunderstanding of the way that human beings are tethered to a determinate place in time. In order to be able to form a concept of human immortality that can have, as a concept, the character that is thought by it (namely that of not succumbing to the change of times), it is necessary to return to the supratemporal idea of humanity.

> *Immortal*, namely, *and alone immortal is what lies essentially in the nature of the human race and what it is destined for, in its ongoing activity, in its unbroken path to its goal, the best possible elaboration of its form*. Hence, it is what, in keeping with its nature, must endure, what must also ever recur when suppressed, and what must attain ever greater scope, and efficaciousness through the human being's continued, augmented activity: the *purely true, good and beautiful*. (FA 8:207)

In this exposition of the destiny or calling (*Bestimmung*) of the human race, the process (the path, the ongoing activity) and the goal (the idea or form) are joined with one another in order to do justice to the principle of the binding character of everything ideal to its temporal or spatial appearance. This is Herder's basic thought: that the generic character of humankind is decided by historical action and that a human being's destiny lies in action oriented to this fact. This thought can be viewed as a prelude to an existential humanism – provided, to be sure, that one abstracts from its

[50] Johann Gottfried Herder, *Sämmtliche Werke*, vol. 13: *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*, ed. Bernhard Suphan (Berlin: Weidmann, 1887), 254.

[51] See Plato, *Symposium*, 208d–e; FA 8:203. Herder's late writings, in particular the *Kalligone*, are to be read as self-criticisms of the earlier cult of the genius; see Schmidt 1985, vol. I, 141–49.

theological premises.[52] Taking the place of the notion of individual beings who have climbed into the realm of the perfect are representations of the universally conceived idea that what corresponds in this "ongoing activity" to the norms of the true, good, and beautiful – the universal principles of divine acting and its creation – is truly immortal.[53] If a human being orients himself in thinking and acting to those ideas, he divinizes himself in a manner different from the Greek hero. He "sets aside the mortal husk of the personality" and removes the "private passion" in order to determine himself through the pure forms of the true, the good, and the beautiful and, in this way, to make himself into the image of God (FA 8:211). In this way, a human being validates the eternal in the temporal and renders himself immortal in those of his works that advance the humanizing of humankind (FA 8:210).

As displays of a human reason oriented to divine principles, within the temporal world of appearances, the works, deeds, and thoughts of human beings distinguish themselves by virtue of lasting, communicating themselves universally, and further affecting other rational beings (FA 8:208–12). With respect to time, scope, and efficaciousness, those works, deeds, and thoughts mirror the divine. As something spiritual in the life of reason, they unfold the strongest force for reembodiment, and with that, they make possible for the human being himself a kind of eternal life: "in their institutions [they become] themselves immortal" (FA 8:210). The idea of humanity is the basis for the distinction between the eternal and the transient in a logical and ontological respect. Only the fruits seeded for the "harvest of mankind [are] of an immortal sort, of ever new force, of ever proliferating branches. By contrast, what consumes itself in and with the mortal form descends into the underworld [*Orkus*]" (ibid.). The thinking and acting oriented to the idea of humanity is, however, the basis of the realization of this idea in history. Because the rational as the lasting, fully efficacious "universally validating" is brought into the historically efficacious context, it establishes an inner unification among human beings because the utterances determined by reason have a binding and

[52] See FA 7:153–54: "He [the human being] constitutes himself; together with others he constitutes . . . a human society"; see, too, FA 8:207. The form of humanity itself is worked out.

[53] FA 4:723. The developed human reason that has recognized in many different sorts of manifestations the divine principles expressed in nature arrives finally at the point of seeing the ideas of God underlying finite things, the "laws . . . of the object" and the *maximum perfectionis* of the species; see FA 4:211.

homogenizing effect back on the human spirit as a consequence of their universality.[54]

As for thoughts of humankind that are also normatively used, Herder can only think of them as having a purpose, that is to say, as grounded in the unity of a whole of similar sorts of parts. By means of the idea of humankind, the universal in the sense of the collective of all human beings can be conceived of as united, and this unity, in the twofold sense of the principle and the whole, can be represented as humankind's work and ongoing construction. Thus it is consistent for Herder to picture humankind as a tree (in a way analogous to the universal unity of God and nature)[55] and to identify, through characterization of its appearance in space and time, the eternal and spiritual spheres validated by humankind.

In his metaphor-rich language, Herder sums up the basic features of his humanism, mediating time and eternity, body and spirit.

> Participate, we must; we stand in the stream of time where one wave drives the other; hence, we have no choice but to act on the future in a way that is useful or harmful just as the past acted on us. The cutthroat price of life is that in night and fog we also reach the goal where the wreath hangs, that we strike the chord where melodious consonances chime upwards and downwards to infinity . . . By this means, as we live, we leave the imprint of our image in others who take it up and transplant it. This is how the tree of humanity elevated itself over peoples. (FA 8:212–13)

[54] See FA 8:208–10; Herder can also present this in such a way that the form or law of nature lying in us is developed (see FA 8:208).

[55] FA 8:213; in the *Humanity Letters*, the "multi-form mankind" is named one of the organizations of nature, and in this connection there is the talk of the genius of humankind, which corresponds to the higher force in an actual living thing (see FA 7:700). In a corresponding way, the spirit of humanity is introduced as a principle of the unity of humankind (FA 8:271). On Herder's application of the metaphor of an organism to the concept of a people and humanity, see Heinz 1996. Herder rejects Averroes' notion of the soul of humankind (see FA 7:85). The metaphor of a building (*Bau*) aptly designates the process of producing as well as the result; in this connection, see FA 7:33, 131, 141, 148.

CHAPTER 12

Reason within the Limits of Religion Alone
Hamann's Onto-Christology

Daniel O. Dahlstrom

In the early decades of the last century, scholars largely interpreted Johann Georg Hamann as a singular opponent of the Enlightenment, a "prophet" of irrationalism, and the real force behind the *Sturm und Drang's* repudiation of the alleged prerogatives of rational knowledge.[1] Scholars debated whether some mix of mythology, mysticism, gnosticism, or pantheism accompanied that rejection,[2] but the common thrust of those interpretations set the stage for Isaiah Berlin's influential portrayal of Hamann as a "pioneer of anti-rationalism."[3]

To a certain extent, this assessment can be traced to a deliberately iconoclastic style. Hamann's writings are often "fragments of fragments"[4] laced with irony, parody, and barbs (both friendly and otherwise), replete with expansive, often recondite allusions.[5] His style expresses a patent disdain for fashionable means of expression, especially those that valued "clarity and impersonal demonstration" at the expense of past authorities, not least Scripture, and personal experience.[6] Not surprisingly, in the eighteenth century, even as they marveled at his originality and

[1] Unger 1911, vol. I, 582; Weber 1917; Gundolf 1911, 197; Korff 1923; Stefansky 1923, 146; Burger 1929; for a review of research on Hamann during this period, see Nadler 1937.

[2] Unger 1911, vol. I, 75; Strich 1910, 2, 321–22. [3] Berlin 1993, 4. [4] Cassirer 1916, 109.

[5] See the dedication on page 61 of the second volume of Johann Georg Hamann, *Samtliche Werke*, ed. J. Nadler, 6 vols. (Vienna: Herder, 1949–57); allusions to writings of Heraclitus, Sophocles, Plato, Aristotle, Xenophon, Pope, Shaftesbury, and Edward Young all appear on this one-page dedication. Hereafter "N" stands for this Nadler edition, followed by the number of the volume and page number. See, too, *Briefwechsel*, vols. 1–3, ed. Walther Ziesemer and Arthur Henkel (Wiesbaden: Insel, 1955–57); vols. 4–7, ed. Arthur Henkel (Wiesbaden: Insel, 1959; Frankfurt am Main: Insel, 1965–79); hereafter "ZH" followed by a number indicating the volume of the edition and the page number.

[6] Unger 1911, vol. I, 298–300; *Hamann: Writings on Philosophy and Language*, ed. Kenneth Haynes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), xii. People have become so "daft" (*blöd*) and "deferential" (*sittsam*), Hamann writes, "that one has to insult if one wants to say or hear the truth" (N 2:183); hence the *Socratic Memorabilia*'s first dedication: "to the public or the familiar nobody" (N 2:59).

incisiveness, Mendelssohn and Kant took particular issue with Hamann's style,[7] a sentiment influentially echoed and amplified by Goethe and Hegel in the early nineteenth century[8] (though not shared by Kierkegaard or Nietzsche[9]).

Still, in the past half century, this traditional portrait of Hamann has given way to a more nuanced reading. Scholars observe, for example, that neither "reason" nor *Aufklärung* had a univocal meaning at the time, that Hamann appears on the scene long after the vehement battles between Pietists and key spokespersons for the German Enlightenment,[10] and that, like Lessing and Kant, he is as much a student of the Enlightenment as its critic. Neither has it been lost on students of the history of philosophy how profoundly Hamann anticipates directions philosophy has taken – with reason – over the last two centuries.[11]

Hamann has, furthermore, not merely self-serving reasons for crafting a protreptic style of writing that goes against the currents of the time. At the outset of his "elegy" to Socrates, he speaks of writing "about Socrates in a Socratic manner," with such a confluence of ideas and sensations that the sentences become a group of islands without "bridges and ferries," requiring readers who can "swim."[12] So, too, his writings are, as he puts it, *entre chien et loup*, that period before daybreak when it is not yet possible to make out the difference between a dog and a wolf. Far from being

[7] According to Mendelssohn, Hamann "could have been one of our *best* writers but became one of the most reproachable through a desire to be an original" (*Gesammelte Schriften: Jubilaeum Ausgabe*, vol. 5, 1, compiled by Eva J. Engel (Stuttgart–Bad Canstatt: frommann-holzboog, 1991), 5, 1: 200–6, 441, 558–66. Kant pleads with Hamann to write him "if possible, in the language of human beings, since, poor son of the earth that I am, I am not equipped for the divine language of intuitive reason" (Corr 10:156, no. 86).

[8] Goethe lauds Hamann's holism – countering a rigid division of knowing, acting, and feeling (Mendelssohn, Kant) – but faults him for failing to see that language demands abstraction. (Since Hamann's holism must countenance "gaps and lacks," Dickson argues that "relationality" is a more appropriate term here; Dickson 1995, 320–22). Goethe takes a parting shot at the air of superiority ("more ironic than heartfelt") that he finds Hamann adopting toward his correspondents; see J. W. Goethe, *Aus meinem Leben. Dichtung und Wahrheit*, vol. 3 (Tübingen: Cotta, 1814); *Werke*, vol. XI, ed. E. Trunz (München: Beck, 1981), 512–16. Hegel is even more critical of Hamann's character, tracing his writings' "unintelligibility" and "unpleasantness" to a smug self-absorption, an "abstract interiority," leaving his readers with nothing but style; see "Hamanns Schriften (1828)," in G. W. F. Hegel, *Werke*, vol. XI (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1970), 281, 310, 332; for helpful commentary, see Anderson 2008, xxiv–xxv; and McCumber 1997, 78–81.

[9] Weber 1917; Lowrie 1950, 3–4; Dunning 1979; Gray 2012.

[10] Listening to F. A. Schultz, a major representative of the synthesis of the two movements, one would think, Hippel remarks, that Christ and St. Paul had studied with Christian Wolff; Jørgensen 1968, 163–64; Alexander 1966, 162–63; Dickson 1995, 13.

[11] O'Flaherty 1979, 82–99; Jørgensen 1968, 164; Dickson 1995, 13–19; Betz 2012, 2–7, 15–21; Wohlfart 1984, 402.

[12] N 2:61; Unger 1911, vol. I, 15; Wolfahrt 1984, 400 n. 13.

unintelligible, the image points to what will be possible, readying readers for the task. In both these respects he does stylistic battle not simply against abstract, universal concepts but also against the indifference and disengagement that the indulgence of those abstractions entails.[13]

There are, finally, ample texts where Hamann valorizes reason, deeming it not only indispensable to religion and faith but fully in accord with revelation.[14] Moreover, like any criticism, Hamann's criticisms of reason suppose a particular construal of what is criticized as well as a particular standard for the criticism. Hence it is commonplace today to regard Hamann as a critic not of reason itself but of certain views of reason.[15]

But then what is Hamann's conception of reason? Perhaps more to the point, what conception of reasoning is operative in his thinking generally and in his criticisms of certain uses of reason in particular? Given the overriding importance of religion in his thinking, we should also ask in this connection, what is the place of reason within religion? By examining – in Section 12.1 – some of his key criticisms of Kant's conception of reason, this chapter endeavors to take some steps – in Section 12.2 – toward answering these questions.[16] By exposing a certain naiveté, if not negligence, regarding the topic of language and, in particular, the language operative in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, Hamann succeeds in indicating a potentially serious blind spot in the critical philosophy. Hamann mounts his criticism from an ontological standpoint that is inseparable from his Christology, i.e., an understanding of the Incarnation as the focal point and final meaning of history. This onto-Christological conception of reason is unique, complex, and insightful. Yet students of his thinking, perhaps awe struck by these qualities, generally understate the underdetermined yet pretentious character of that conception, to which I turn briefly in conclusion.

12.1 Reasoning against Pure Reason

Hamann has two discussions, both unpublished, apparently out of deference to Kant,[17] that are devoted to the first edition of the *Critique of Pure*

[13] ZH 5:289–92; ZH 6:295; N 3:410; Unger 1911, vol. I, 9; on verbal imagery (*Wortbild*), cento, fables, and burlesque as the main ingredients of his style, see Nadler 1949, 462–65; Cassirer 1916, 172–73; on the roles of sensuality and passion thereby, see N 2:201 and N 3:234.

[14] N 3:231: "Ohne *Sprache* hätten wir keine Vernunft, ohne Vernunft keine *Religion*"; ZH 7:165: "Glaube hat Vernunft eben so nötig als diese jenen hat."

[15] Dickson 1995, 20 n 59; Bayer 1998 depicts Hamann as a *radikaler Aufklärer*.

[16] For earlier attempts, see O'Flaherty 1979, 82–100; and Dickson 1995, 17–21.

[17] Bayer 2002, 64, 204–6.

Reason, a "Recension" from 1781 (hereafter "Review") and the "Metacritique on the Purism of Pure Reason" (hereafter "Metacritique"), probably completed in 1784.[18]

12.1.1 The "Review"

Hamann's first explicit criticism in the "Review" is directed at the abstractness of the deductions in the *Critique of Pure Reason* and the pretentiousness of its ambitions. After noting that Kant dubs "transcendental" the knowledge that is concerned not with objects themselves but with a priori concepts of objects, Hamann identifies the *Critique of Pure Reason* with "the complete idea of a transcendental philosophy" (N 3:277). The momentousness of this enterprise, if successful, is not lost on Hamann. Under this "new name," he notes, "the age-old metaphysics is transformed all at once from a two millennia battle-field of endless disputes into a systematically ordered inventory of all our possessions through pure reason" (ibid.). This metaphysics propels itself, Hamann adds sardonically, on the wings of "a rather abstract *genealogy* and *heraldry* to the regal dignity and Olympian hope," unique among sciences, of "experiencing its absolute completion." Moreover, it purports to do so – rather preposterously, Hamann insinuates – without recourse to the arts of magic but solely from principles "holier than those of religion and more majestic than those of the law-giver" (ibid.).

Hamann's reference to "a rather abstract genealogy and heraldry" echoes familiar difficulties with Kant's metaphysical and transcendental deductions. Yet, instead of belaboring this point, he presses his criticism of the project's abstractness by questioning the very possibility of metaphysics and the alleged role of reason in establishing that possibility.

R_1 *What* and *how much* can understanding and reason know free from all experience? How much may I hope to establish [*ausrichten*] with reason if all the stuff and help of experience is taken away from me? Is there any human knowledge independent of all experience or, equivalently, any form independent of all matter? (N3, 277–78)

The possibility of this metaphysics turns on the question of the possibility of a priori knowledge. The first question in R_1 is taken, practically verbatim, from the Preface to the *Critique of Pure Reason* (Axvii), though

[18] For the history of Hamann's relationship to Kant, see Weber 1904; Wohlfart 1984, 398–404; Betz 2012, 34–38.

Hamann now raises it as a rhetorical question. The subsequent questions simply call into question the possibility of attaining a priori knowledge, as Kant conceives it. The questions are by no means the rants of a religious zealot. To the contrary, they challenge the intelligibility of such knowledge, allegedly attained through abstracting (*absondern*) and entertaining pure forms of thinking (e.g., the logical forms of judgment as sources of pure concepts of the understanding).

Kant's claims for the possibility of a priori knowledge suppose, furthermore, a difference between the concepts a priori and a posteriori, prompting Hamann to ask, in what does the formal difference between these concepts consist? He is not disputing a difference along these lines as such but precisely the *formal* difference, as though it were accessible or meaningful apart from the content of experience. The implication is not that the difference between the formal and the material is material rather than formal but rather that the source of these differences, to the extent that they are meaningful, is to be found in experience.[19]

Experience, as Hamann understands it here, includes the experience of ourselves and the activity of our minds. He contends that Kant's formally drawn contrasts are not necessary and universal but contingent, rooted and thus combined in that experience.

R_2 Are *prius* and *posterius*, analysis and synthesis, not natural correlates and contingent opposites, yet both grounded, like the *receptivity* of the *subject* to the predicate, in the spontaneity of our concepts? . . . To what end such a violent, unjustified severing of what nature has placed together? Will not the two stems . . . wither through this dichotomy and division of their transcendental root?(N3:278)

In the *Critique of Pure* Reason, Kant appears to take formal logic's necessity and universality for granted, along with the a priori concepts and analytic judgments that it supposedly contains. Yet, even if, as some argue, formal logic is subordinate to transcendental considerations in some sense, Hamann's criticism in this regard remains fundamental, effectively calling into question any privileging of an allegedly a priori, purely formal science. The same applies to the transcendental philosophy's fundamental distinctions (*prius* and *posterius*, analysis and synthesis). By comparing their

[19] Along similar lines Hamann questions, too, the project of a metaphysics of nature (for which the *Critique of Pure Reason* is merely preparatory), given that its "entire content must be nothing but form without content." When he then asks, by comparison, whether there was any schematism "purer" than the syllogistic structure, Hamann is likely appealing to the modern prejudice that the Scholastic, Aristotelian approach to science impeded understanding of nature (N 3:278).

grounding in experience with that of the receptivity of a grammatical subject to a predicate, he suggests that these distinctions have the same standing as grammar, or, more pointedly, they have a grammatical status.[20] In short, Hamann throws down the gauntlet at Kant's contention that rational differences and oppositions are not the products of experience in the broad sense noted earlier (namely including experience of the activity of our minds). This explains, too, his characterization of those oppositions as "natural" and "contingent" (although he may also have in mind the fact that, supposed by reason as they are, those oppositions cannot be founded – short of begging the question – on some sort of rational necessity).

The final two questions in R_2 – iterated with slight changes in the "Metacritique" (N 3:286) – take aim at Kant's allusion to a single unknown root of knowledge's two stems (sensoriness and understanding). Despite, or rather by virtue of, being opposites, the two stems have a natural unity that Hamann locates, as discussed later, in language.

In the "Review," Hamann also depicts the supposed missteps of the "Transcendental Dialectic" as *pudenda* (a word doing double duty for "shame" and "vagina") and the "Paralogism" and the "Antinomies" as *autocheirie*, or "euthanasia." While no doubt meant to shock, the images flag his view not merely that the very idea of transcendental reason is a perversion but that it perverts precisely by eschewing thinking's natural, carnal character. In the process, Hamann also sets up an ironic contrast with the "mystical unity" of pure reason of the "Transcendental Ideal," as he puts it (N 3:279). The barb behind this characterization becomes clear as he adds that Kant's observation about Plato applies to Kant himself. Kant says that he cannot follow Plato's "mystical deduction . . . or the exaggerations through which he, as it were, hypostasizes them" (A314n). While applauding Kant's critique of such deductions and, with them, all speculative theology, Hamann objects to construing God as an idea, a unity that cannot be experienced but is produced by pure reason, hypostasized as the guiding principle for research. "People speak of reason as if it were an actual entity and of dear God as if God were nothing but a concept."[21]

Hamann ends the "Review" by challenging the claim on the *Critique of Pure Reason*'s final page that after dogmatism and skepticism, the critical path alone remains. The claim hearkens back to the Preface's reference to a postdogmatic and postskeptical indifferentism as the forerunner to

[20] "With Luther, I make all philosophy into a *grammar*," signifying only *per analogiam* (ZH 7:169); Bayer 2002, 103–5.

[21] ZH 7:26; 4:293–94.

Kant's critical philosophy: "the mother of chaos and night, in sciences, yet at the same time the origin, at least the prelude to their transformation" (Ax–xii). Yet indifferentism, Hamann submits, toward what no human being can be indifferent to either is "the profoundest hypocrisy" or belongs to "the fatal laziness of the age." The implication that Hamann would have us draw is patent: the critical philosophy fails to achieve its vaunted goal of moving beyond that indifferentism and the resignation, despair, and laziness it entails and it deceives itself into thinking that it does.[22]

12.1.2 The "Metacritique"

The "Metacritique"[23] begins with a quotation from Hume approving Berkeley's assertion that "all general ideas are nothing but particular ones, annexed to a certain term, which gives them a more extensive signification, and makes them recall upon occasion other individuals, similar to them."[24] The "new skepticism," Hamann adds, owes infinitely more to "the old idealism" than this quotation might suggest, such that "without Berkeley, Hume would hardly have become the great philosopher that the *Critique*, from a position of similar indebtedness, alleges him to be."[25]

Kant, of course, is the last person to deny his indebtedness to Hume. Yet, if, as some contend, the point of this opening quotation were primarily to identify his dependency on his British predecessors, it would be a curious choice – curious because it identifies precisely what Kant failed to assimilate from that tradition. "Dependency," moreover, can mean many things. A suspension bridge, for example, depends on materials, anchoring, design, the strength of local winds, and a host of other factors, but while its makeup and viability are, we might say, "constitutively dependent" on its materials and, thereby, on their having been secured from somewhere, it is irrelevant whether they were secured in Ohio or Montana. So, too, the viability of a position or work stands or falls on its own, regardless of the origin of its constitutive features. In other words, if the point of Hamann's opening salvo is to indicate the *Critique of Pure*

[22] N 3:279–80; Wohlfart 1984, 404–5; Bayer 2002, 130–42.

[23] "Metacritique" signifies at once a critique of critique, a self-critique, but also a basis for criticism beyond (*meta-*) that of the *Critique of Pure Reason*; N 2:83; 3:29, 223, 401; the term "purism" is derived from the effort to purify a language of foreign words; see Bayer 2002, 209 n 9.

[24] David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (London, 1739), ed. Selby-Bigge, 2nd edn by P. H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 17.

[25] N 3:283; ZH 4:376; Bayer 2002, 210, 216; Betz 2012, 24.

Reason's dependency on the tradition of Berkeley and Hume, he needs to explain the nature of the dependency.

But he is apparently not interested in doing any such thing. Indeed, the mere mention of Berkeley calls attention to a recent review of the *Critique of Pure Reason* linking it with Berkeley's idealism.[26] Yet, instead of rehearsing any idealism charge, Hamann's opening citation draws attention to a salient difference between Kant and his predecessors across the channel: their nominalism.[27]

So the point of this opening passage is not primarily to acknowledge Kant's dependency on his British predecessors but rather to insinuate that Kant fails to understand Hume because he fails to appreciate the full impact of Berkeley's nominalism on Hume's thought. Kant's response to Hume's skepticism falters, Hamann is suggesting, precisely for this reason. To the extent that the critical response depends on a different, more substantive account of general ideas (i.e., the alleged universality and necessity of pure concepts of the understanding), it is bound to fail.[28]

The following jab at any pretense to profundity (when it comes to the nominalist insight) lends support to this interpretation:

M_1 But as far as [Berkeley's] *important discovery* is concerned, it is apparent and uncovered, without any particularly profundity, in the mere use of language of the most common perception and observation of the *sensus communis*.[29]

In other words, one hardly needs Berkeley's system to recognize that "abuse of language," as Berkeley puts it, seduces us into countenancing "abstract general ideas" as though words have a general use only by reason of referring not to several particular ideas but to one abstract, general idea.[30] The discovery becomes apparent the moment we attend to the way we commonly perceive in tandem with our socially instituted uses of language.

[26] Kant was incensed by the anonymous review (by Garve and Feder), even the original that Garve subsequently sent him, complaining of being "treated like an imbecile" (ZH 5:107; Bayer 2002, 216). Christian Garve and Johann Feder, "Rezension, Immanuel Kant, Kritik der reinen Vernunft," in: *Zugabe zu den Göttingischen Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* (19.1.1782): 40–48.

[27] As is here the case, Hamann's endorsement of nominalism is short on examples, argument, and content. It may also be inconsistent. "Being" and "reason," he claims, are "mere relations . . . no things but pure *Schulbegriffe*" and "realism and idealism" a product of *Schulvernunft*, but he also champions existence and "historical and physical realism"; ZH 7:156–57, 165–73; see, too, ZH 5:264, 271; N 3:106, 191, 225.

[28] To be sure, Hamann faults Kant for his idealism, charging him with the mysticism Kant attributes to Berkeley. But what underlies Kant's idealism is what Berkeley saw past: general ideas.

[29] N 3:283; see Hamann's translation of Shaftesbury's *Sensus communis* in N 4:155–91.

[30] George Berkeley, *A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge* (Dublin: Rhaymes, 1710), ed. Kenneth Winkler (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1982), 17.

The insinuation that Kant does not make this discovery sets the stage for the next major contention of the "Metacritique." Echoing a rebuke made in the "Review" (R_2), Hamann contends that the alleged purity of pure reason is impossible. What renders Kant's project impossible is, Hamann alleges, its pretension to have access to concepts and intuitions "purified" of any experience.

> M_2 One of the *hidden secrets* whose task, let alone solution, supposedly has not entered into the heart of a single philosopher hitherto is the possibility of human knowledge of objects of experience without and before any experience and, after this, the possibility of a sensory intuition before any sensation of an object. The matter and form of a Transcendental Doctrine of Elements and Method is grounded on this twofold impossibility. (N 3:283)

Thus, whereas M_1 flags Hamann's nominalism, M_2 confirms his commitment to a kind of empiricism, as he refers sarcastically to the principles of pure understanding (*Grundsätze des reinen Verstandes*) and the pure intuitions of space and time. Kant's own view, to be sure, is that there is no experience without the former and no sensation without the latter. In Hamann's view, however, the unity of concepts as well as temporal and spatial relations with sensations is fundamental, and on this basis he militates against the ideas that either a priori knowledge or pure intuition is possible. Hamann does not argue for this impossibility, perhaps because he realized the difficulty of doing so. The difficulty is twofold: first, knowledge of objects in advance of their manifestation is commonplace (consider a carpenter's draft of a table), so the nature of the impossibility has to be spelled out to preclude such instances; second, it's one thing to be skeptical of the possibility of something and another thing to claim its impossibility and, indeed, to do so without venturing into metaphysics or, in Kantian jargon, without making synthetic a priori claims.

Yet, while not mounting an argument for the twofold impossibility on which the *Critique of Pure Reason* allegedly rests, Hamann observes that a particular conception of reason motivates Kant to pursue this hopeless task. That conception is related but not identical to a *traditional* conception that Kant also countenances, i.e., reason as the capacity to infer in contrast to capacities to conceive (understanding) and to judge.[31] Reason in this traditional sense can be an object of knowledge, source of knowledge, or type of knowledge. But, for Kant, in addition to this traditional differentiation of reason from other cognitive faculties,

[31] This differentiation of cognitive capacities corresponds to the three traditional parts of logic (*Begriffs-, Urteils- und Schlußlehre*), along which the "Transcendental Logic" divides.

M_3 there is a more universal, sharper, and purer distinction, by virtue of which reason underlies all objects, sources, and types of knowledge; yet is itself none of the three; and consequently needs neither an empirical or aesthetic nor a logical or discursive concept, but consists instead merely in subjective conditions, under which *everything, something,* and *nothing* can be *thought* . . . *given* . . . and *taken*. (N 3:283–84)

This remark, while ignoring qualifications in the *Critique of Pure Reason*,[32] draws on a broad sense of reason sketched in the *Critique of Pure Reason*'s Preface as well as in the opening sections of the *Prolegomena*.

According to the Preface to the *Critique of Pure Reason*, for example, "human reason" raises questions it cannot answer and has recourse to principles that overstep every possible use of experience, principles with which "common human reason" stands in agreement (Avii–viii). An indifference produced by the impasse between dogmatism and skepticism compels reason to take up "the most difficult of all its tasks, namely, that of self-knowledge" with the aim of adjudicating between justified claims and groundless conjectures (anticipating the conclusions of the "Transcendental Analytic" and "Dialectic," respectively).[33] Kant thus assigns to *Vernunft* (no longer qualified as human reason or common human reason) the task of self-critique, indeed, self-critique according to "eternal and unchangeable laws." When he depicts the undertaking as "the *critique of pure reason* itself," it is clear that the genitive is both objective and possessive, i.e., a critique *of* and *by* pure reason. By "critique," Kant adds, he means not a critique of books or systems but a critique of the "faculty of reason in general, in regard to all sorts of knowledge [*Erkenntnisse*] that it may strive for, *independent of all experience*" (Axii). This critique decides, we are told, the possibility or impossibility of a metaphysics altogether while determining its sources and scope from principles.

So Hamann is challenging reason in this broad sense where it occupies the position of being both the object and the subject of the critique, i.e., both the party responsible for judgments and the one passing judgment on them. The reason sketched in M_3 is, to borrow a term from Kant's moral philosophy, autonomous. It sits in judgment by determining the possible objects of knowledge, the sources of knowledge, and the types of knowledge (a priori/a posteriori, analytic/synthetic). But it is hard to see why reason is not then a victim of its own splendid isolation, its purity, because

[32] See, above all, the Introduction to the "Transcendental Dialectic" (A298–309).

[33] In the Preface, Kant also speaks of "the point of reason's misunderstanding with itself," a comment no doubt made with the "Transcendental Dialectic" in mind (Axii, A309)

it is not itself beholden to any of the objects, sorts, or sources of knowledge that it underlies. Reason is supposed to pass judgment but, so construed, lacks any access to a basis for doing so. Hamann exploits this difficulty, exposing the unreasonableness of a concept of reason that is, strictly speaking, neither empirical nor logical nor, for that matter, transcendental (since it sits in judgment of all three uses).[34] The backhanded gloss on Kant's conception of reason in M_3 thus reveals Hamann's own heteronomous conception of reason.

Hamann drives home this criticism of the unreasonableness of the concept of pure reason in the *Critique of Pure Reason* by challenging its "purity" in three respects, namely its alleged independence of

1. A heritage, tradition, and belief (*Überlieferung, Tradition und Glauben*);
2. Experience and its everyday inductions; and
3. Language (N 3:284).

Hamann does not dwell on the first purification, and that is regrettable, given the range of meanings of the three terms (What difference does he hear between *Überlieferung* and *Tradition*? How specifically does he intend his readers to take *Glauben*; i.e., is it meant to range over any or only certain important doxic attitudes? What is the significance of linking it to tradition?). Nevertheless, the import of the challenge is clear: how can it be reasonable to think that reason or, better, reasoning is detachable from the heritage, tradition, and beliefs – in short, the history – that the reasoner lives and breathes?

Each purification is a misstep, but Hamann dubs the second "more transcendent" than the first, probably because the past, too, was once an experience. The term "experience," as Hamann wields it here, is meant to include the entire field of human sensoriness. His insistence on the impossibility of this purification is motivated both by the inseparability of reason and carnal, sensory experience and the indispensability of sensory experience to reason.[35] However, the sort of empiricism that Hamann touts here is quite different from the Humean variety. Far from leading to skepticism or idealism, his empiricism is adamantly realistic, entailing

[34] By dubbing the author of the *Critique of Pure Reason* a *Kunstrichter*, Hamann is not so subtly contesting Kant's claim that criticism, as he uses the term, is not in fact about books (N 3:279).

[35] ZH 5:265: "Erfahrung und Offenbarung sind einerlei, und unentbehrliche Flügel oder Krücken unserer Vernunft, wenn sie nicht lahm bleiben und kriechen soll." N 1:298: "Nicht nur das ganze Waarhaus der Vernunft, sondern selbst die Schatzkammer des Glaubens beruhen auf diesem Stock [auf den 5 Sinne]."

access to objects of external experience.[36] As for the alleged "purification" from experience, he compares the implication of its pretension to that of providing the "infallible philosopher's stone," thus turning the tables once again, as he does in the "Review," on Kant's claim that the relation of the *Critique of Pure Reason* to the metaphysics of the schools is like that of "chemistry to alchemy."[37]

The third purification – the principal focus of the rest of the "Metacritique" – is the most disastrous because it robs reason of its "only (first and last) *organon* and criterion."

> M_4 The *third*, supreme and, as it were, incendiary purism then concerns language, the sole, first, and last organon and criterion of reason, without any other credential [*Creditiv*] than tradition and use [*Usum*] . . . *Receptivity* of *language* and *spontaneity* of *concepts*! From this twofold source of ambiguity pure reason gathers all the elements of its doctrinaire pretensions, addiction to doubt, and institution as critic.[38]

In the final line Hamann substitutes his own colorful, if damning, wording (*Rechthaberey, Zweifelsucht und Kunstrichterschaft*) for Kant's three stages in the history of reason (dogmatism, skepticism, and criticism). According to the *Prolegomena*, if metaphysics is to establish anything in the name of pure reason, then its sole "credential" is the answer to the question of how synthetic a priori judgments are possible (Pro 4: 278). According to M_4, language, not reason, provides the credentials. Hamann adds that Kant, by assigning reason a prerogative beyond linguistic use, not only forfeits its ultimate warrant but also idealizes it to the point of making it into a kind of "idol."[39] Far from being infallible, reason is inherently ambiguous because it draws on a combination of "receptivity to language and spontaneity of concepts."[40] Every utterance of a natural language combines this indebtedness to the tradition and contingent *history* of words with the utterer's own spontaneous *use* of them.

[36] See footnote 27.

[37] The pretension to that stone is necessary to "Catholicism and despotism," Hamann adds, referencing once again Kant's talk of the court of reason to which the holiness of religion and the majesty of lawgiving must submit. On parallels between "the chemical tree of Diana" and Demetrius, see Bayer 2002, 343*ff*.

[38] N 3:284; ZH 5:95: "Without words, no reason – no world." See Bayer 1990, 437.

[39] Hamann juxtaposes *Idol* with the *Ideal der reinen Vernunft*, the divinity as conceived in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (N 3:284); see, too, ZH 5:94; Bayer 2002, 272. ZH 6:163: "Kant macht Gott zum Ideal ohne zu wissen, daß seine reine Vernunft eben dasselbe ist."

[40] The common language of the people (*Volkssprache*) provides the most beautiful image for "the synthetic mysteries of both corresponding and contradictory formations [*Gestalten*] *a priori* and *a posteriori*" (N 3:287).

By challenging Kant's pretension to a reason unfiltered and unfazed by language, M_4 introduces an alternative conception of reason, embedding it in the history of linguistic usage, the source of that usage's tools and criteria. Just as that usage is conjoined with a tradition, so it combines with a certain spontaneity on the part of the person using concepts, even as those concepts and their use depend on the person's receptivity to language.

As evidence of the ambiguity flagged in M_4 (or, more precisely, its "hereditary defect"), Hamann cites the contingency of the term "metaphysics," deriving as it does from an accidental classification of Aristotle's so-named text *after* his physics documents. He insinuates further that Kant exploits that underlying ambiguity by developing a terminology that behaves toward every other language (the language of crafts, the meadow, the mountain, and the schools) "like quicksilver to the remaining metals" (N 3:285). The point of the parallel of Kant's terminology of pure reason, grounded on that fundamental ambiguity, with mercury is precisely the latter's slipperiness and fluidity, the difficulty of getting hold of it, in contrast to the solidity and fixity of other metals. This ambiguity and the idealization that it permits explain, too, the pretension and false promise of taking leave of *Volkssprache* in favor of "a pure language of reason." This artificial language "abuses" language's fitting role in empirical knowledge by treating its words as "nothing but hieroglyphs and types of ideal relations" (ibid.).

After challenging the peremptory character of Kant's conception and language of pure reason, Hamann excuses himself from having to give a deduction to prove "the genealogical priority of language" over the logical functions (on which Kant draws). Instead, he makes the following broader point:

> M_5 Not only does the entire capacity to think rest upon language . . . Language is also the *middle point of reason's misunderstanding with itself*, partly on account of the frequent *coincidence* of the largest and smallest concepts, their emptiness and fullness in ideal propositions, and partly on account of the infinite prerogative of figures of speech over figures of inference, and much more of the same.[41]

While M_4 asserts reason's dependency on language for its tools and criteria, M_5 adds its dependency on language for its missteps. Reason is

[41] N 3:286. Is Hamann shifting attention in this context back to reason as the capacity to infer? Perhaps, but talk of the infinite prerogative of figures of speech can also be read as iterating the highly limited scope of purely formal reason.

inherently prone to fallibility, as Kant suggests in the "Transcendental Dialectic," but it is, Hamann contends, a linguistic fallibility, a fallibility rooted in certain abstract uses (or misuses) of language by reason. In ordinary and efficacious uses of language, terms with supposedly the widest extension, such as those with the supposedly smallest extension, are hardly forthcoming. But in the idealized propositions of pure reason, we entertain such concepts. Herein lies the feeding ground for the seductiveness of abstract words, flagged by Berkeley.

This criticism of Kant's language of pure reason, language purified of its effective use, leads to another positive claim about language itself.

> M_6 Words, therefore, have an *aesthetic* and *logical* capacity. As visible and aural objects, they belong, along with their elements, to *sensoriness* and *intuition*, but in accord with the spirit of their *deployment* and *meaning,* they belong to the *understanding* and *concepts*. Consequently, words are as much pure and empirical *intuitions* as pure and empirical *concepts: empirical*, because sensation of sight and hearing is produced by them; *pure* insofar as their meaning is determined by nothing that belongs to those sensations. (N 3:288)

While the parallel with Kant's terminology is forced, M_6 helps to explain Hamann's insistence on reason's linguistic grounding. Recall that Hamann's initial target (M_3) is reason in the broad yet autonomous sense that, by virtue of underlying all sources of knowledge, is singularly in a position to pass judgment on them. M_4 and M_5 offer an alternative to that account, complete with an explanation for misunderstandings. Echoing observations in the "Review" (R_2), M_6 adds to the alternative by drawing out the rich complexity of language at work in reasoning. In the experience of words, we experience not only intuitions, concepts, and the difference between them but also their original unity in that difference. Reason can seize on and operate with differences that originate in the concrete experiences of language in all its rich variety, not least the coincidence of receptivity and spontaneity in everyday discourse.

12.2 Reasoning within *Synkatabasis*

From the foregoing review, the outline of Hamann's conception of reason emerges. He conceives reason – and deems it necessary to conceive it – within certain nominalist (M_1), historical, empirical (R_1, M_2), and linguistic (M_4) constraints. Thanks to these constraints, reason is heteronomous (M_3), understandably fallible (M_5) yet holistic, replete with natural yet contingent opposites and a capacity to hold them together in their defining

unity (R_2, M_6). In R_2 he implies that, in our spontaneous capacity of conceptualizing, we experience the oppositions on which the *Critique of Pure Reason* rests (*prius* and *posterius*, analysis and synthesis). This observation helps explain, too, as noted earlier, why he characterizes the oppositions as "natural" and "contingent," qualities that cannot be founded on a rational necessity but also have no need of such grounding because they are the qualities of the underlying language itself. While in R_2 Hamann implies that reason depends on an *experience* of the coincidence of certain key oppositions, in M_5 and M_6 he makes an analogous point with respect to its dependence on *language*. In the use of words, we experience a combination of intuitions and concepts, despite their inherent opposition (M_6). Language can lead us astray when, taking leave of its ordinary use, we pretend to entertain concepts in "ideal propositions" (M_4, M_5).

Yet, even if this outline of Hamann's concept of reason is accurate, it is hardly adequate. It leaves unanswered how precisely reason operates in his view. After all, reason's dependency on experience and tradition does not eliminate its distinctiveness, since they are arguably in need of reason as well. Above all, the foregoing outline omits consideration of the most central feature of his conception of reason, namely its place and working within a revealed, religious perspective.

To be sure, allowances must be made for different senses of "reason" within Hamann's writings. Given his nominalism, Hamann has no use, as noted earlier, for the personification – ultimately, the divinization – of "universal human reason," itself "a mere word of art [*Bildwort*]" (N 3:106). He deems the "healthiness of reason . . . the most convenient, high-handed, and shameless [sort of] self-glorification," presupposing everything that is supposed to be proved (N 3:189). Even as he regards trust in reason, so construed, as a "dangerous superstition" and "no way to truth" (ZH 5:95), he is no less critical of "academic reason [*Schulvernunft*]," preoccupied, as it is, with the distinction between idealism and realism (ZH 7:165–76).

Yet, in contrast to this sense of reason, there is "a correct and genuine" reason that knows nothing of this "fabricated distinction" (ZH 7:165). Genuine reason and faith are, he adds, equally in need of each other.[42] These remarks are made thirteen months before his death, but thirty-seven years earlier, as a twenty year old, he expresses the same high regard for reason, deeming it one of the means by which the joy of a Christian soul takes hold (N 4:17). Clearly, he regards reason in some sense as necessary to religion. "Without *language* we would have no reason, without reason no

[42] See footnote 14.

religion, and without these three essential aspects of our nature, neither mind [*Geist*] nor bond of society" (N 3:231). But, if religion depends on reason, it is a reason made possible by the language of God, "the mother of reason and revelation."[43]

The reference to revelation in this last remark holds perhaps the key to understanding Hamann's conception of reason. Placing reason – "the source of all truths and all errors" (ZH 7:172) – within the context of God's revelation underscores not simply its fallibility but also its defectiveness, its use by imperfect, indeed sinful creatures. From this vantage point, the idea of pure reason, capable of sitting in judgment of everything, appears not simply mythical but sacrilegious, a prideful work of fiction, a delusion of grandeur. The delusion is not simply that reason or, better, reasoning is free of experience – including motivations at work in it – but also that those motivations themselves are pure.

Yet, although Scripture explains this pride, reason is the key to recognizing it (the "self-knowledge" that Kant in the Preface calls the "most difficult" of reason's tasks). Herein lies Hamann's reason for dwelling on Socrates in response to his initial encounter with Kant. In a reference to "self-knowledge as the trip through hell," Hamann observes that reason is "holy, right, and good" because it yields "cognition of our thoroughgoing lack of knowledge, brought on by our sinful condition." Fulfilling reason in this sense, philosophy serves, he adds, as the rigorous taskmaster on the road to belief (*Orbil zum Glauben*) (N 2:108). So reasoning is the hallowed way of coming to know ourselves, even as it leads to the recognition of both the limitations of our reasoning capacities (along with our sinfulness) and our need for faith.

But just how exactly does reason do this? What are the tools, means, and ways of reason within this revealed religious context? Once again, answers to these questions begin with the nature of revelation. Revelation is a communication, and the primary task of reason is to interpret and understand what God is communicating (N 1:8–9). Just as Scripture can only speak to us through allegories and metaphors (*Gleichnisse*), so reasoning relies on images of external things, taking them as "allegories and signs" (e.g., in *Agnus Dei*, the lamb serves as an image of divine innocence; the use of *grasp, fassen* – a movement of the hand – to designate an act of knowing). Misuse creeps in when that reliance is forgotten or supposedly foregone.[44] In its reliance on metaphor and parables, reasoning proceeds – it infers – but,

[43] ZH 6:108; see, too, ZH 6:296: "Vernunft und Schrift sind im Grunde Einerlei = Sprache Gottes."
[44] See footnote 27; and N 1:157; N 3:285, 385.

like Socrates, through analogy (*per analogiam*).[45] By regarding A as B ("Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?"), I can consider and potentially infer that some features of B transfer to some degree to A (as in Shakespeare's sonnet). Analogical reasoning does not yield the clarity and distinctness sometimes attributed to mathematical inferences, but a degree of vagueness is perfectly compatible with seeing the truth and essence of things (N 1:112, 302).

Genuine reasoning is accordingly analogical because it attempts to interpret God's signs and understand his words. It is also historical, founded as it is on the ongoing event of creation, incarnation, and salvation. However, it is not historical in the sense of looking for causal connections *within* a particular timeframe. Instead, without taking leave of history, it searches for the significance of those connections or, more precisely, what God is communicating to us historically through them. In this regard, reasoning for Hamann is historical in the sense of being *typological*, a term from biblical hermeneutics signifying a mode of interpretation often contrasted with *allegorical* interpretation. Whereas allegorical interpretations of Scripture look for indications of a time-transcending truth, typological interpretations look for the bearing of actual events on future ones that make up the single history of salvation.[46]

Reasoning has this analogical and typological character precisely because it occurs within the historical context of revelation as the effort to interpret God's communication to us – in nature and in Scripture (N 1:83; N 3:32). In each of these forms of communication, the act of communicating and what is communicated are fundamentally similar. Like the creation and the incarnation – or, better, in continuity with them – the act of communicating is an act of divine love, communicating God's love for humanity.[47] In the act, God lowers himself, communicating with and making himself vulnerable to his creation. Revelation ("every communication of God to reasoning creatures"), like the creation and the incarnation, presupposes this divine act of stooping down with (*synkatabasis*), descending, accommodating (*condescensio, accommodatio*). "God a writer! – the inspiration behind this book is a lowering and descending of God that is just as great as

[45] N 1:112, 157–58; N 2:61; Hamann also reasons "metaschematically," casting light on one set of relationships by juxtaposing it with another (N 2:150; N 3:144); see footnote 20.

[46] N 2:175; Gründer 1958, 138–51; Jørgensen 1968, 170–72; O'Flaherty 1979, 88–89; Fritsch 1999, 31–34, 104.

[47] Carnal elements of this love – embodied, sexual, sensual, aesthetic, and affective – also characterize reason's response to it. A more complete treatment of Hamann's view of reason would have to address these features.

the Father's creation and the Son's Incarnation."[48] Hamann's own reasoning and writing attempt to imitate and be part of this overriding history. This history, centered on the incarnation, is the focal point of every being; thus Hamann's account amounts to a kind of onto-Christology.

If *synkatabasis* is the underlying presupposition of reason within the limits of religion, it is also an expression of a seemingly universal and universally recursive principle in Hamann's thinking: *coincidentia oppositorum*.[49] Hamann takes seriously, much like Hegel after him, not only the presence of contradictions but also their inherent inevitability. Again prefiguring Hegel (at least on certain readings of his metaphysics), Hamann appeals to the coincidence of opposites as the "sufficient reason" for those contradictions (ZH 4:287). But, unlike Hegel, Hamann does not see this coincidence issuing into some supervening unity. The unity is nothing but their coincidence – a historical contingency – and we always find ourselves only on one side of it at any given point in time. I find myself at rest or in motion but not simultaneously at rest and in motion in the same respect, although I only understand myself to be in one state by reason of the opposite as well. The incarnation epitomizes this coincidence – hence the gloss on Hamann's conception of reason within the limits of religion as an onto-Christology.

12.3 Concluding Critical Remarks

Reason within the limits of religion alone is misleading if it suggests that religion confines reason. Hamann's onto-Christological use of reason requires its coextensiveness with religion, in particular, a commitment to the living creation and revelation, centered in the incarnation, where these limits constitute – humming in an ancient key – its perfection, not its impediments.

Still, his conception of reason is problematic in at least two respects. He leaves his thesis about reason's dependency on language (like his nominalism and his insinuation of Kant's historical dependency) underdetermined to a fault. Neither is the claim that "reason is language" helpful, without further ado, because the sentence structure can indicate identity, metonymy, or inclusion (as in "orange is fruit"), to name only a few

[48] N 1:5, 30, 91, 97, 299; N 2:43; and, above all, N 3:27: "*communicatio* göttlicher und menschlicher *idiomatum* . . . ein Grundgesetz und der Hauptschlüssel aller unsrer Erkenntniß und der ganzen sichtbaren Haushaltung"; Blanke 1928, 30–31; Gajek 1967, 58–61.

[49] ZH 5:327; ZH 4:462; N 2:40; N 3:311, 315; Gründer 1958, 150; Metzke 1967, 245.

possibilities. It is one thing to claim that a reason purified of language is an illusion and quite another thing to show how language affects reason.[50]

A final problem concerns the status of the overlapping themes of *coincidentia oppositorum* and *synkatabasis* that frame his onto-Christology. Since these themes act as final constraints on reason, they appear to have an ahistorical status at odds with Hamann's antisystematic pretenses. Given the nature of his invocation of these themes, Hamann appears to overreach in supposing that his thinking is free of pretensions that, in Kantian terms, can only be pretentions of pure reason.

[50] So, too, it is unclear in what sense truth (N 3:191), experience (N 1:298), and tradition (N 3:39) serve as constraints for a particular use of language because it remains unclear how they are distinguishable from a particular use themselves.

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