**The Usefulness of the Kantian Philosophy**

How Karl Leonhard Reinhold’s Commitment to Enlightenment Influenced his Reception of Kant

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Reading committee’s copy

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# Acknowledgements

When I decided to apply for the PhD-position that resulted in the present study, I knew little more about Reinhold than Reinhold knew about Kant when he decided to write against Kant on Herder’s behalf in 1785. Like Reinhold, I was tempted by a job opportunity to engage with the writings of a philosopher I was not yet familiar with. And like Reinhold, I fancy that I have been able to make an interesting contribution to the field because of my outsider perspective. (Although of course I do not expect it to have the far-reaching impact that Reinhold’s work on Kant has had.)

During the past four and a half years I not only learnt a lot about Reinhold and some of his contemporaries. I also learnt how to process heaps of source material and how to develop and present my own views about it. Since I could not have done this without the help and support of others, it is only right that some should be thanked here.

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# Abbreviations

*AA Immanuel Kant: Gesammelte Schriften*. Edited by the Royal Prussian (later German) Academy of Sciences. Berlin: Reimer (later Walter de Gruyter), 1900-. (Volume:page)

*ALZ Allgemeine Litteratur-Zeitung*, Jena, 1785-1804, edited by Christian Gottfried Schütz. (Date (issue), year, column)

*Anzeiger TM Anzeiger des Teutschen Merkur*, trimonthly review supplement of *Der Teutsche Merkur*. (Month, year, page)

*CPR* Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*. Translated by Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood. Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant in Translation. (Page)

*BM Berlinische Monatsschrift*, Berlin, 1783-1796, edited by Johann Erich Biester, Friedrich Gedike. (Month year, page)

*Beyträge I* Reinhold *Beyträge zur Berichtigung bisheriger Mißverständnisse der Philosophen. Erster Band, Das Fundament der Elementarphilosophie betreffend*.Jena: Mauke, 1790. (Page)

*Beyträge II* Reinhold, *Beyträge zur Berichtigung bisheriger Mißverständnisse der Philosophen. Zweyter Band, die Fundamente des philosophischen Wissens, der Metaphysik, Moral, moralischen Religion und Geschmackslehre betreffend*.Jena: Mauke, 1794. (Page)

*Briefe I Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie. Erster Band*. Leipzig: Göschen, 1790. (Page)

*Briefe II Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie. Zweyter Band*.Leipzig: Göschen, 1792. (Page)

*JF Journal für Freymaurer*, Vienna, 1784-1786, edited by Aloys Blumauer. (Year, volume, page)

*KrV* Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*. Riga: Hartknoch, 1781 (A)/ 1787 (B). Cited in the usual manner, referring to the A and B pages where appropriate. I have consulted the modern edition (Hamburg: Meiner, 1998), which reproduces the page numbers of both the A and B edition.

*Letters* Reinhold, *Letters on the Kantian Philosophy*. Edited by Karl Ameriks, translated by James Hebbeler. Cambridge: CUP, 2005. (Page)

*Merkur*-‘Briefe’ Reinhold, ‘Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie.’ *TM* 1786 August, 99-141 (‘Erster Brief’, ‘Zweyter Brief); 1787 January, 3-39 (‘Dritter Brief’); February, 117-142 (‘Vierter Brief’); May, 167-185 (‘Fünfter Brief’); July, 67-88 (‘Sechster Brief’); August, 142-165 (‘Siebenter Brief’) and September, 247-278 (‘Achter Brief’). (Page)

*NTM Der Neue Teutsche Merkur*, Weimar, 1790-1810, edited by Christoph Martin Wieland. (Month, year, page)

*PP* Kant, *Practical philosophy*. Translated by Mary J. Gregor. Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant in Translation. (Page)

*RLW* Reinhold, Ernst. *Karl Leonhard Reinhold’s Leben und litterarisches Wirken nebst einer Auswahl von Briefen Kant’s, Fichte’s, Jacobi’s und andrer philosophirender Zeitgenossen an ihn*. Jena: Friedrich Frommann, 1825. (Page)

*RK* *Karl Leonhard Reinhold Korrespondenzausgabe der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*.Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann Holzboog, 1983 –. (Volume:page)

*RZ Realzeitung*, Vienna, established 1770, edited by Aloys Blumauer from 1782-1784. (Year, date [page according to the photomechanical reprint in Batscha, *Karl Leonhard Reinhold. Schriften zur Religionskritik und Aufklärung 1782-1784*])

*TM Der Teutsche Merkur*, Weimar, 1773-1789, edited by Christoph Martin Wieland. (Month, year, page)

*Versuch* Reinhold, *Versuch einer neuen Theorie des menschlichen Vorstellungsvermögens*. Jena: Widtmann and Mauke, 1789; photomechanical reprint Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1963. (Page)

# Note on citation and translation

All page references are to the original, unless indicated otherwise. Citations are taken from the original in all cases except in the case of the *Beyträge*, which is cited from the editions by Fabbianelli, in which case a reference to the pagination of these editions is included in the reference. The references to the Introduction of the edition of the *Versuch* by Onnasch were taken from the proofs; the pages therefore appear in brackets.

From Reinhold’s works cited in the present study, only the second and third installments of ‘Gedanken über Aufklärung’ and the *Merkur*-‘Briefe’ are currently available in an English translation. Translations other than from these two works (or form Kant) are my own. I have aimed for functional, rather than for literal or literary translations. For the translations from the *Versuch* I was able to compare my translations with those of Professor Tim Mehigan of the University of Otago, New Zealand, of whose forthcoming translation of the *Versuch* I consulted a preliminary version.

In citing I have maintained the emphasis of the original. In the *Versuch*, emphasis is indicated by italics, which is maintained in citation and translation. In Reinhold’s other works, which are printed in *Fraktur*, emphasis is indicated either by using a slightly different font or by spacing, both of which are rendered bold in the citation, and italic in the translation.

mainmatter

# Introduction

Nachdem also von den Reichen und Mächtigen in der gegenwärtigen philosophischen Welt für das neue Evangelium der reinen Vernunft so wenig zu hoffen ist. (…): so glaubte ich meine eigene Mittelmässigkeit viel eher für ein Merkmal als für ein Hinderniß des Berufes ansehen zu müssen, den ich (…) zu fühlen anfieng: die Gründe meiner innigsten Überzeugung von der *Realität* und *dem ungemeinen Nutzen* dieser Wissenschaft, meines Gleichen (…) vorzulegen.[[1]](#footnote-1)

[Since nothing much was to be expected from the high and mighty in the philosophocal world with respect of the new gospel of pure reason, I considered my own mediocrity to be a characteristic, rather than an obstacle with regard to the calling I began to feel: to present to my peers the grounds for my innermost conviction of the *reality* and *the incredible usefulness* of this science.]

Although he was an influential figure in his own day, Karl Leonhard Reinhold’s (1757-1823) contribution to the German reception of Kant’s Critical project was obscured for a long time. It is only in the last couple of decades that his works have become the subject of scholarly attention on a significant scale. The present study is a contribution to this rising interest in Reinhold’s philosophy, aiming to add a new perspective by focusing on the development of Reinhold’s practical philosophy before and during the time when he saw and presented himself as a supporter of the Kantian philosophy. This focus is reflected in the title *The Usefulness of the Kantian Philosophy* which is based on Reinhold’s description of his plans regarding this new philosophy laid down in a letter to Christian Gottlob von Voigt (1743-1819) dating from the beginning of November 1786, a passage from which is cited above. Reinhold projects two volumes, the first of which is to discuss the *Nutzen*, that is, the usefulness of the Kantian philosophy. With regard to volume on the *Realität*, or the inner grounds of this philosophy, nothing is specified. The external grounds, however, relating to its usefulness, are presented in an overview and can be traced in his published work. These external grounds are not to be taken from the Kantian work, “but rather from the current state of philosophy and the most urgent scientific and moral needs of our time.”[[2]](#footnote-2) Thus Reinhold sets out to promote the Kantian philosophy on the basis of grounds that are to be found outside it, in the wider philosophical and cultural context. The main thesis of the present study is that Reinhold’s efforts to propagate the Kantian project in this manner, that is, on the basis of these external grounds, are not only expressed in his ‘Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie’ (1786-1787), but also in his *Versuch einer neuen Theorie des menschlichen Vorstellungsvermögens* (1789) and in the second volume of the book edition of the *Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie* (1792). Although these works differ in subject, size and projected audience, I will argue that they are the result of Reinhold’s initial reception of Kant. This is not the case for some of his other works from the same period, such as the two volumes of *Beyträge* (1790 and 1794), which are the result of Reinhold’s reactions to criticism his *Versuch* received. As will be clear from the following, this is a novel approach.[[3]](#footnote-3) It seeks to present Reinhold’s philosophy from the point of view of his own philosophical development. In order to understand why this approach is new, it will be useful to look at how his philosophy came to be obscured for a long time, and how it was rediscovered in the last couple of decades.

The relatively obscure status of Reinhold in the history of philosophy is at least partly due to his own attitude towards philosophy, which was characterized by a tendency to keep an open mind towards new theories. As we shall see throughout the present study, he had definite ideals of what philosophy should accomplish and spent his life searching for the system that would achieve these goals. The net result of his open attitude was that he did not develop one system to which he held on for the rest of his life, but rather tried to achieve the aims of philosophy in reaction to the philosophical systems available at a given time. Due to his own philosophical development, but to a large extent also due to the rapid changes occurring in German philosophy at the end of the eighteenth century, Reinhold shifted allegiance several times. This, in the end, earned him the reputation of a philosophical lightweight, whose preferences changed with the weather.[[4]](#footnote-4)

In actual fact, Reinhold had the fortune of living and working in a period when philosophy was constantly developing, in which developments he played an active and in many respects crucial role. During the last two decades of the eighteenth century Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) was publishing his Critical project, which was soon to be overturned by the German Idealists. Since Reinhold’s philosophy was itself part of the philosophical turmoil resulting from the reception and critical development of the Kantian philosophy, it is not hard to understand how his contributions got obscured. In order to make sense of this short period in which so many developments took place, and in which the sheer amount of philosophical works grew tremendously because of the rise of scholarly journals and reviews,[[5]](#footnote-5) historians of philosophy have had to make their choices. Nothing was more natural than to try and understand the period from the point of view of one of the philosophical perspectives which had maintained their influence well into the nineteenth century. This means that the end of the eighteenth century was either interpreted from a (neo-) Kantian perspective, or from the point of view of the later Idealists. With regard to this, Alexander von Schönborn has stated that “Reinhold has been the victim of philosophical myth-building.”[[6]](#footnote-6) From the Kantian perspective, Reinhold represents the first move away from Kant, a move away that is more radically represented by the philosophies of Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762-1814), Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling (1775-1854) and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831). From this perspective, Reinhold’s contribution is not viewed positively, since it did not live up to Kantian expectations. From a Hegelian point of view, it has been all too easy to rebuke Reinhold for not going far enough and ignore his importance altogether.[[7]](#footnote-7) From both perspectives, the story of the philosophical developments in late eighteenth-century Germany could be presented without needing to pay special attention to the role of Reinhold. His influence at the time, though, is not only relevant for a more complete understanding of his own philosophy, but is also important with regard to our picture of later German philosophy. It is not uncommon to present the post-Kantian philosophy as a single line from Kant, via Fichte, to Schelling and Hegel, with a small role for Reinhold between Kant and Fichte. It is important to realize, however, that there are, in fact, two lines of reception of the Kantian philosophy here. Fichte found his own way to Kant and then built on Reinhold’s thoughts to criticize it. Schelling and Hegel, on the other hand, first became acquainted with the Kantian philosophy through Reinhold’s ‘Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie’ (1786-1787) and *Versuch einer neuen Theorie des menschlichen Vorstellungsvermögens* (1789), which gives them a different starting-point for the reception of the Critical Philosophy.[[8]](#footnote-8)

Thus, Reinhold came to be regarded as merely a minor figure, whose philosophy was rightly forgotten. Fortunately, this fate has changed over time, first slowly and almost unintentionally, with an edition of his *Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie*, appearing in 1923 to mark the first centenary of his death. This edition, however, was expressly undertaken to contribute to Kant’s glory, rather than to initiate a ‘Reinhold Renaissance’.[[9]](#footnote-9) Apart from a few early monographs,[[10]](#footnote-10) interest in his work has only developed gradually from the 1960s onwards. After the edition of the volumes of the *Briefe*, other works have been made available to a more general public by means of annotated edition or reprint. Reinhold’s main work, *Versuch einer neuen Theorie des menschlichen Vorstellungsvermögens,* was reprinted in 1963, followed by the early writings on Enlightenment in the monograph of Zwi Batscha in 1977.[[11]](#footnote-11) These were followed by a partial reprint of the so-called *Fundamentschrift* in 1978[[12]](#footnote-12) and the first volume of the scholarly edition of Reinhold’s correspondence in 1983, of which the second volume was published only recently.[[13]](#footnote-13) The fundamental bibliography of Reinhold’s published works by Alexander von Schönborn has made a crucial contribution to unlocking the corpus of Reinhold texts. A further important impetus behind Reinhold scholarship has been Martin Bondeli’s monograph on the problems of deduction in Reinhold’s works from the *Versuch* up to 1803.[[14]](#footnote-14) More recently, Faustino Fabbianelli has edited the two volumes of *Beyträge zur Berichtigung bisheriger Mißverständnisse der Philosophen*, written by Reinhold in reaction to criticism regarding the *Versuch*.[[15]](#footnote-15) Another significant contribution to the availability of Reinhold’s works has been made by the English translation of the ‘Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie’. Apart from making these crucial articles available in English, this translation notes the most significant additions and changes in the first volume of the *Briefe* with respect to the original articles.[[16]](#footnote-16) Currently, Reinhold’s *Gesammelte Schriften* are being published; the new editions of the volumes of the *Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie* by Martin Bondeli recently appeared as the first results of this project.[[17]](#footnote-17) A modern edition of the *Versuch,* by Ernst-Otto Onnasch, is forthcoming,[[18]](#footnote-18) as well as an English translation.[[19]](#footnote-19) Of some of Reinhold’s works, his *Fundamentschrift*,[[20]](#footnote-20) his *Verhandlungen über die Grundbegriffe und Grundsätze der Moralität* (1798)[[21]](#footnote-21) and his ‘Gedanken über Aufklärung’,[[22]](#footnote-22) parts have been translated into English. Reinhold’s philsosophy has also been studied in France and Italy, with the result that (partial) translations into the French and Italian have also been published in the last couple of decades.[[23]](#footnote-23)

The editions mentioned have not only contributed to the wider availability of Reinhold’s works, they have also made significant contributions to Reinhold scholarship by means of introductions and annotations. Parallel to these scholarly works directly related to Reinhold texts, there has also been an important increase in monographs and articles dedicated to Reinhold’s philosophy and its place within the philosophical field of late eighteenth-century Germany. The initial impetus behind the surge of scholarly activity concerning Reinhold has come from the circle of Fichte scholars, most notably Reinhard Lauth, who initiated wider interest in Reinhold by editing a collection of articles and by starting the annotated edition of Reinhold’s correspondence.[[24]](#footnote-24) The Fichtean background of the scholars first interested in Reinhold has had important consequences for the focus of the research being undertaken initially. The phase of Reinhold’s philosophical development called ‘*Elementarphilosophie*’ (between 1789 and 1794) received primary attention. Usually this phase is considered to comprise Reinhold’s *Versuch*, the two volumes of *Beyträge* and the *Fundamentschrift*, with a focus on the latter work, which is considered “der bündigste Ausdruck und die sicherste Form der Elementarphilosophie.”[[25]](#footnote-25)In these works Reinhold aims to establish philosophy upon a (single) fundamental first principle. It is in this effort and its failure that his main relevance for philosophy is seen.[[26]](#footnote-26) In the introduction to the aforementioned collection of essays, Manfred Zahn identifies two reasons for which Reinhold’s philosophy is of interest. The first reason is that Reinhold played a decisive role in the dissemination of Kant’s philosophy. Secondly, his most important accomplishment is “daß er als erster auch den entscheidenden Mangel in der systematischen Durchführung des transzendentalphilosophischen Programms durch den Kritizismus gesehen hat und durch seinen eigenen *Versuch einer neuen Theorie des menschlichen Vorstellungsvermögens* zu beseitigen suchte.”[[27]](#footnote-27) This view on the place of Reinhold in the philosophical field of his day implies that the way in which Reinhold prefigured Fichte is the most promising line of inquiry. Indeed, most of the early research on Reinhold relates to his position between Kant and Fichte, identifying the points of dissatisfaction with Kant’s philosophy and the points that became more prominent in Fichte’s.[[28]](#footnote-28) In another, more recent, line of inquiry regarding Reinhold’s philosophy followed by Manfred Frank, Reinhold’s position between Kant and the German *Frühromantik* plays a central role. This approach also focuses on Reinhold’s *Elementarphilosophie*, and especially on the consequences drawn by his students from its collapse in 1792.[[29]](#footnote-29) Frank’s research is based on the results of the massive research program of Dieter Henrich, focusing on the historical circumstances in Jena and the *Tübinger Stift* that brought about this collapse.[[30]](#footnote-30)

Without questioning the legitimacy and value of these approaches, it must be noted that they are significantly limited in two ways. First, they focus on a relatively short period of Reinhold’s philosophical activity, roughly the years around 1790. Reinhold, however, was a prolific writer both before and after this time. Since his philosophical development was not limited to a single system of thought, focusing on a specific period always carries the risk of ignoring important factors that lie outside this period. Both the earlier and later works contain important clues as to Reinhold’s ideas of what philosophy is and the direction he believes it should take.[[31]](#footnote-31) Although the phase of *Elementarphilosophie* may be the period of Reinhold’s greatest influence on his contemporaries,[[32]](#footnote-32) we need to go beyond this period to understand how Reinhold came to be such a leading figure. Secondly, the interest in the phase of *Elementarphilosophie* has implied a thematic emphasis on system, foundation and theoretical philosophy in general,[[33]](#footnote-33) at the expense of religion, morality and practical philosophy in general. A premise of scholarship centering on the *Elementarphilosophie* is that the main and most interesting point of Reinhold’s philosophy is “daß Kants Philosophie (…) so lange unbegründet bleiben muß, wie ihre Sätze sich nicht als Konsequenz eines in sich evidenten obersten Grundsatzes rechtfertigen lassen.”[[34]](#footnote-34) The focus is thus on Reinhold’s attempt to deduce the totality of philosophy from one first principle. Again, this attempt and its failure may be one of the more influential aspects of Reinhold’s philosophy, yet this perspective overlooks the circumstance that his authority did not derive from his thoughts on the foundations of the Kantian philosophy, but rather on his presentation of the Kantian results in a practical context.

With the general increase in scholarly work on Reinhold, however, the interest in especially Reinhold’s early philosophical development and in his practical philosophy has also increased. It is no longer the case that Reinhold’s philosophy is mainly studied with Kant or Fichte in mind. With regard to the importance of Reinhold’s early philosophical development, and especially his Masonic engagement, the work of Gerhard Fuchs deserves to be mentioned for showing that this engagement has significantly impacted Reinhold’s philosophical writings, throughout his life.[[35]](#footnote-35) Alessandro Lazzari has shown that the focus on theoretical philosophy in the literature does not do justice to Reinhold’s idea of the task of philosophy, which is of a practical nature.[[36]](#footnote-36) With these developments, important gaps in our understanding of Reinhold are being filled in. The broadening of the perspective on Reinhold is also apparent from the collections of papers of several *Reinhold-Tagungen*.[[37]](#footnote-37)

The present study relates to this filling of the gaps in our understanding of Reinhold’s philosophy. Rather than looking at the details of the *Elementarphilosophie*, this study concentrates on Reinhold’s way toward it. By focusing on the development of Reinhold’s understanding of the Kantianizing term ‘practical reason’ his initial and later understanding of the Kantian philosophy will be investigated. This leads to a picture that is very different from the one mentioned above, according to which Reinhold’s main merit lies in pointing out some of the weaknesses of the Kantian system and trying to repair them. In the present study, Reinhold’s theory of the faculty of representation appears as a way to present the unique and important discoveries made by the critical philosophy, rather than as an attempt to remedy its faulty foundation. Although my findings will have a bearing on how we are to view Reinhold’s *Elementarphilosophie*, the foundational aspect of his work in the early 1790s falls beyond the scope of this study. Rather, this study provides a background against which the need to do foundational work arose.This perspective is a result of bringing the strong continuity between Reinhold’s pre-Kantian writings and his efforts on behalf of the Kantian philosophy to the fore. Reinhold’s frame of reference is not so much Kant, but rather his Enlightenment ideal of what philosophy should do for mankind. In order to substantiate this claim, the present study starts with investigating Reinhold’s thoughts on philosophy before he knew about Kant, after which it shows how this determined his reception of the Kantian philosophy and how it gave rise to the need to come up with a solid foundation of it. This means that although the focus of the study is on aspects of Reinhold’s philosophy in its ‘Kantian phase’, the relationship of Reinhold’s presentation of the Kantian philosophy to the actual letter and spirit of the master himself is a sideline in the investigation. Rather than showing Reinhold as criticizing Kant, he is presented as creatively employing the Kantian philosophy within his own Enlightenment framework.

This intention, to show Reinhold’s authentic development as a spokesman on behalf of the Kantian philosophy, has implications for the methodology employed in this study. Of course, if we really want to know what Reinhold’s intentions and motivations were in dealing with the Kantian project in the way he did, we would have to ask him and hope for a thruthful answer. As in all history of philosophy, or history in general, this is unfortunately not possible. However, studying Reinhold’s texts from different periods, before and after he became acquainted with the Kantian philosophy, reveals that there are some persistent continuities in Reinhold’s thought. These enable us to understand why, initially, Reinhold read Kant with a strong interest in morality and religion and why, later, he chose to present the new philosophy from the point of view of a theory of the faculty of representation. This approach requires a methodological focus on the sources, Reinhold’s writings, rather than on previous interpretations of these writings. Rather than providing an explicit discussion with the available literature, the present study aims to provide an interpretation that is guided by what Reinhold himself thought interesting (as evidenced by his writings). I believe this interpretation will be a useful addition to existing interpretations.

One of the premises of the present study is that in order to understand how Reinhold came to interpret the Kantian project in the way he did, it is imperative to understand his background, the tools with which he worked his way into an understanding of the Kantian philosophy. **Chapter 1** presents the first, factual, building blocks that are needed for a proper understanding of Reinhold’s background. It sketches his life from his education in Vienna up to his move to Kiel in 1794. During this twenty-year journey Reinhold stopped over in Leipzig, Weimar and Jena. Yet his journey to Kiel did not only take him to different geographical places. He also travelled from Catholicism to Protestantism, from being a monk and priest to being an *Aufklärer*, a ‘Kantian’ and an *Elementarphilosoph*, from writing poetry, reviews and Masonic speeches to publishing a 600-page monograph and many articles dealing with the results of the Kantian philosophy. This remarkable journey will serve as the backdrop against which the argument of the present study will unfold. Apart from introducing Reinhold as an historical figure, the first chapter also briefly introduces his works in so far as they originate in the period discussed. The aim of introducing Reinhold and his works in this manner is to present a preliminary account of his interests and activities during the period investigated.

The remainder of the study is organized chronologically. Thus, **Chapter 2** investigates Reinhold’s earliest works, that is, the works predating his acquaintance with the Kantian philosophy. Reinhold produced a great variety of writings during this period, ranging from reviews and Masonic speeches to articles and small books. A common theme of these writings is their interest in *Aufklärung*, Enlightenment.[[38]](#footnote-38) Since Reinhold was among the very first authors in the German speaking world who addressed the question ‘What is Enlightenment?’, it is clear that he had definite ideas about the nature and tasks of Enlightenment; ideas that were at least partly shaped by the context of his education in the Vienna of Empress Maria Theresa and her son Joseph.[[39]](#footnote-39) The first step towards understanding Reinhold’s engagement for Enlightenment consists of an investigation of his efforts on behalf of clarifying the concept of Enlightenment, that is, answering the question ‘What is Enlightenment?’ The chapter then proceeds thematically, presenting Reinhold’s thoughts on, first, the role of history, and, secondly, the importance of involving both mind and heart, both reason and the senses in order to achieve Enlightenment. It is clear that Reinhold’s thoughts on both these subjects are related to his involvement in Freemasonry and the Order of Illuminati. Further, this chapter addresses the consequences of Reinhold’s views on Enlightenment. It will be shown how the two themes mentioned above are related to his criticism of blind, superstitious forms of religion and how he thinks these problems may be remedied. In the end the chapter will provide an evaluation of the compatibility of his sometimes radical statements on the nature of religion with his statements elsewhere that true Enlightenment will not harm true religion. In this manner the chapter presents a multi-faceted account of Reinhold’s views on Enlightenment, which considers different kinds of writings and approaches the subject from different angles.

For a proper understanding of Reinhold’s interpretation of the Kantian project, however, it is not enough to concentrate on his philosophical background; there is also an important historical question that needs to be investigated, as to how and why Reinhold started studying the Kantian philosophy. This will be dealt with in **Chapter 3**.Unfortunately, this question does not admit of a straightforward answer, since we lack conclusive sources regarding the historical facts concerning Reinhold’s ‘conversion to Kantianism’. By presenting several plausible stories of how the Viennese refugee became interested in Kant, the chapter seeks to show that, although we do not have all the facts we would like to have, we can still put together a reasonably plausible picture if we compare the different perspectives. One of these perspectives focuses on the indirect influence of Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803), with whom Reinhold got acquainted through his benefactor in Weimar, Christoph Martin Wieland (1733-1813). Reinhold reviewed Herder’s *Ideen*; so did Kant. Reinhold then sought to defend Herder against Kant’s objections, yet the way in which Kant responded may well have interested Reinhold for his criticism of metaphysics. Another perspective focuses on the letter Reinhold produced about a year and a half after the skirmish with Kant, in November 1786, to Christian Gottlob von Voigt, in which he presents his plans with regard to the Kantian philosophy. The story emerging from that letter strongly suggests that Reinhold had political reasons to be involved in the Kantian philosophy. These reasons are wholly absent from the third perspective, the account that Reinhold gives of his conversion to Kant in the Preface to his *Versuch*. This stylized account presents the story of an intellectual and religious crisis, which was solved by the Kantian philosophy. Evaluating these three stories, the chapter aims to bring them together by taking a closer look at the first letter Reinhold wrote to Kant, and noting the influence of the reviewing activities of Christian Gottfried Schütz (1747-1832) in the *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung.*

The consequences of the way Reinhold most likely made himself familiar with the Kantian philosophy will become clear in **Chapter 4**, which discusses the first products of his pen dedicated to the Kantian philosophy, the ‘Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie’, appearing in *Der Teutsche Merkur* in 1786 and 1787. The chapter presents these articles in their historical context, which is dominated by the pantheism controversy about correspondence between Moses Mendelssohn (1729-1786) and Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi (1743-1819) regarding the alleged Spinozism of the late Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729-1781). The analysis of the contents of Reinhold’s articles in this chapter shows that they are strongly related to his pre-Kantian writings. Having thus presented the *Merkur*-‘Briefe’ in their historical context and as a continuation of Reinhold’s previous interests, the chapter turns to his employment of Kantianizing terminology in them. Although his use of the terms ‘practical reason’ (*praktische Vernunft* ) and ‘pure sensibility’ (*reine Sinnlichkeit*) suggests a strong influence of the Kantian philosophy, Reinhold in fact employs these terms in a way that profoundly differs from anything found in the writings of Kant up to that point. Strikingly, he employs both terms to call attention to the feature of the Kantian philosophy that is most relevant to him: the necessity of combining or unifying reason and sensibility, or the spontaneous and receptive capacities in the human cognitive faculty. ‘Practical reason’ is presented as the way in which reason and sensibility come together to provide a rational ground for the crucial religious conviction that there is a God. ‘Pure sensibility’ plays a more indirect role in a similar argument regarding the rational ground for the conviction that the human soul will have a continued existence after the body has died. The term represents the unity of the receptive and spontaneous capacities needed for human cognition. Reinhold’s use of this Kantianizing terminology goes hand in hand with the historical way of arguing that was the hallmark of his writings on Enlightenment.

Reinhold’s reception of Kant took on a new shape in his substantial monograph *Versuch einer neuen Theorie des menschlichen Vorstellungsvermögens*, published in 1789, when he was already teaching at the University of Jena. **Chapter 5** will present the work in its historical context and analyze its structure. It will be shown that Reinhold’s efforts to provide a theory of the faculty of representation as a premise for the Kantian theory of cognition are strongly related to the project of the *Merkur*-‘Briefe’, in which the most relevant feature of the Kantian philosophy was deemed to be its potential for understanding the receptive and spontaneous cognitive capacities as producing cognition as a result of their unified activities. The theory of the faculty of representation as presented in the Second Book of the *Versuch* states that in any representation both the receptivity and the spontaneity of the capacity for representation must be involved. Since any cognition is a form of representation, this also holds good for all forms of cognition. According to Reinhold, presenting a theory of the faculty of representation as a premise for the Kantian theory of cognition should help people to understand the Kantian philosophy better. His efforts to increase the acceptance of the Kantian philosophy are no longer presented with the Kantianizing terms ‘practical reason’ and ‘pure sensibility’ but in Reinhold’s own terms of a theory of a faculty of representation. By 1789, Reinhold’s previous use of especially ‘practical reason’ could no longer seriously serve the function it had in the *Merkur*-‘Briefe’, namely that of signaling the potential of the Kantian philosophy for forging a connection between rationality and sensibility. In the meantime Kant had published his second *Critique*, which stressed the purity of practical reason and warned against the influence of sensibility. The fact that, at the very end of his *Versuch,* Reinhold does discuss ‘practical reason’ is, as will be argued in this chapter, strongly related to the appearance of the second *Critique*, and especially to its review by August Wilhelm Rehberg (1757-1836). Reinhold’s answer to this review in his *Versuch* shows that his theory of the faculty of representation causes tension when it is also to be the basis of practical philosophy. The premise that the basic actions of the human mind always involve some level of both receptivity and spontaneity does not combine well with Reinhold’s need, fuelled by Rehberg’s review of the second *Critique*, to establish absolute freedom, or pure spontaneity.

The subsequent development of Reinhold’s practical philosophy, culminating in the publication of the second volume of *Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie,* shows that the ad hoc solution presented regarding practical reason and the freedom of the will in the *Versuch* was not satisfactory. In the years following the publication of the *Versuch* Reinhold not only defended and revised his *Elementarphilosophie* but also developed a theory of the freedom of the will in several articles. This development of Reinhold’s position on the freedom of the will is presented and analyzed in **Chapter 6*.*** It starts with the position in the *Versuch*, through the articles that appeared in *Der Neue Teutsche Merkur* up to the second volume of the *Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie*, which was published in 1792 and contains, apart from new material, adapted versions of the earlier articles. In his efforts to establish a free will, Reinhold comes to distinguish sharply between practical reason and the will. By 1792 it is clear that the mediation between reason and sensibility is no longer situated in ‘practical reason’ (as it was in the *Merkur*-‘Briefe’) but rather in the freedom of the will, which is situated in the capacity to choose between following the moral law or the natural law of desire, whenever it is confronted with the question whether to satisfy a particular desire. This understanding of the kind of freedom that is needed for morality, the freedom to choose the morally right or the morally wrong way, was Reinhold’s pre-Kantian starting-point on freedom.

# Reinhold’s life and works

The present study aims to shed light on Reinhold’s appropriation of the Kantian philosophy from his personal and philosophical background. Therefore, this chapter is devoted to introducing the man and his work in such a way as to contribute to the understanding of the relevant writings. It does not aim to be a full biographical account,[[40]](#footnote-40) since it only considers Reinhold’s life up to his departure from Jena to Kiel. This does not imply that Reinhold’s life or philosophical development after that move does not deserve our attention; it simply falls outside the scope of this investigation. The biographical details included and the works briefly introduced in this chapter are important within this framework because they are relevant to the argument that is presented in this study. The information serves as a backdrop against which the story of Reinhold’s philosophical development will unfold in the following chapters.

## Vienna (1757-1783)

There has been a long tradition of mistaken accounts of Reinhold’s early life, starting with the biography[[41]](#footnote-41) written by his son, Ernst Reinhold, and, in a sense, with Reinhold himself. Karl Leonhard himself apparently believed he was born on October 26, 1758 in Vienna, but nowadays, as a result of the work done by the editors of Reinhold’s correspondence, we know that the year was in fact 1757.[[42]](#footnote-42) Reinhold grew up in Vienna as the eldest son in a middleclass family, his father being a military official who had been given a desk job after having sustained an injury.[[43]](#footnote-43) According to Ernst Reinhold, young Karl’s character was formed by his pious mother, who instilled a sense of religiosity into him, of the kind that lives “not in a fanciful mind, but in a loving heart.”[[44]](#footnote-44) Ernst Reinhold here apparently refers to his father’s writings on religion and Enlightenment, in which a warm and loving religion is valued, and for which the religious education Karl received from his mother was to be a recurring source of inspiration. It was an important factor in his decision to join the Jesuit order as a novice at the age of fifteen. Ernst Reinhold states that his father’s Jesuit grammar-school teachers would have had no trouble winning over the smart pupil with his susceptible mind.[[45]](#footnote-45)

Reinhold’s Jesuit career was broken off within a year, with the dissolution of the Jesuit order in 1773, which occasioned him to write to his father, thereby leaving us the only primary source regarding his life with the Jesuits. This letter shows two important things. First of all, the young novice is apparently being educated in an atmosphere of penance. Severely shocked, Reinhold views the abolition as a punishment for the immorality of the world in general and the lack of enthusiasm (*Lauigkeit*, lit. ‘tepidity’) of the novices.[[46]](#footnote-46) Placing the blame on the novices may seem exaggerated, but it makes sense to the extent that special prayers and penances had been ordered to avert the dissolution by the spring of 1773, but to no avail.[[47]](#footnote-47) Secondly, the letter shows that although he is willing to do what it takes in order to be a proper monk, Reinhold is clearly struggling to fulfill the requirements imposed on him by his own piety. He feels guilty about thinking of his relatives too much and interprets his attachment to them as tricks of the devil trying to bind him to the world. In passing he mentions having had similar problems in the beginning of his monastic life.[[48]](#footnote-48) Since he is told to wait half a year before joining another order, Reinhold asks permission to return to the parental home, where he requires a separate room so that he will not have to meet any women, not even his sisters.[[49]](#footnote-49) The monastic life has clearly led to tensions for Reinhold. Especially the requirement to distance himself not only physically from his loved ones but also in thought causes anxiety. The reunion with them under the same roof seems to give him more pain than joy, which indicates that he took his commitment to monastic life very seriously at this time.

It is no great surprise, therefore, that he was not to stay with his natural family for a long time. Contrary to the Jesuit instruction, he joined the Barnabite order within two months. Like the Jesuits, the Barnabites, or Clerics Regular of St. Paul, were a reformation order, established as a reaction to the Reformation and focused on well-educated clerics and apostolic work. Reinhold’s choice for an order concentrating on learning and a practical form of Christianity, instead of a contemplative, closed order tells us that he was eager to learn and intent on putting the knowledge acquired to good use. After his probation, Reinhold studied philosophy and theology at the Barnabite college of St. Michael in Vienna.[[50]](#footnote-50)

Probably the most important figure in his life at this time was his philosophy teacher and friend Paul Pepermann (1745-1784), with whom he kept in touch after he left Vienna.[[51]](#footnote-51) Pepermann not only taught the standard curriculum, but also encouraged Reinhold to go beyond the textbooks. In his letter to Reinhold dated November 5, 1786, Pepermann expresses some dissatisfaction with regard to the material he had to teach. He disapprovingly mentions the textbook writers Storchenau and Bertieri[[52]](#footnote-52) and regrets that his own knowledge of metaphysics does not go much beyond Malebranche and Wolff.[[53]](#footnote-53) Wolff can be considered standard in this context, since Wolffianism was indeed en vogue in Vienna after the dissolution of the Jesuit Order.[[54]](#footnote-54) The choice of Malebranche seems less obvious, as both his *De la recherche de la verité* (1674-1675) and his *Traité de la nature et de la grace* (1680) were on the Catholic Index of prohibited books and he was accused of Spinozism and atheism. Apart from this, Pepermann, who had spent his youth in Britain, also introduced Reinhold to the English language, and “the classical philosophers, poets and historians of that nation.”[[55]](#footnote-55)

Although in his later writings he would not be very positive about monasticism in general, Reinhold used the term “unmönchisch” to describe the Barnabite order. He says that not only was there no obstruction on his way to intellectual education; he “even found encouragement and reward.”[[56]](#footnote-56) He would eventually become a teacher himself, first in Mistelbach and from 1782 at St. Michael’s in Vienna,[[57]](#footnote-57) which activity he would later describe as follows.

Drey Iahre hindurch hatte er philosophische Vorlesungen nach dem leibnitzischen Systeme gehalten, und die Schriften des grossen Stifters desselben, so wie seines würdigen Gegners *Locke*, waren ihm keineswegs nur aus den neuern philosophischen Produkten unsrer Landesleute bekannt. (*Versuch*, 51-52)

[For three years, he had lectured according to the Leibnizian system, and the works of its great founder, as well as those of his worthy opponent Locke, were by no means only known to him from the recent philosophical products of our compatriots.]

Reinhold’s knowledge of Leibniz and Locke in the original is a further indication that his education and possibly his teaching as well went beyond the traditional textbooks.[[58]](#footnote-58) However, he was to enjoy the life of a Vienna philosophy teacher only for about a year, as on November 10, 1783, he was sent to the Barnabite college of St. Margaret in Moos, to replace the priest there. This employment was truly short-lived. Without the consent of his superiors he left for Leipzig on the 19th with the help Christian Friedrich Petzold (1743-1788), professor of philosophy at the University of Leipzig. There are at least two (second-hand) sources stating a love affair as one of the main reasons for Reinhold’s departure.[[59]](#footnote-59) If we are to take Ernst Reinhold’s word for it, his father had been planning to leave Austria for some time, and took action when Petzold visited Vienna on family business in the summer of 1783.[[60]](#footnote-60)

In order to explain his stealthy departure, we need to focus on the extracurricular activities Reinhold had been undertaking from 1782, the time of his return to Vienna as *Novizenmeister*. Born and bred in Vienna, Reinhold had many friends and acquaintances in the capital. Some of his former fellow Jesuit novices had not entered another order but were pursuing secular careers, serving the reformist government.[[61]](#footnote-61) After leaving Vienna, Reinhold kept in touch with several of these friends, notably Aloys Blumauer (1755-1798), Johann von Alxinger (1755-1799) and Gottlieb Leon (1757-1832). Serving the Austrian government in those days was tantamount to being involved in Enlightenment activities. From 1780 Emperor Joseph had continued, in a more radical way, the reforms begun by his mother, Maria Theresa. In 1781 he granted freedom of religion to Christian denominations other than Catholicism and extended the freedom of the press, which led to an enormous increase in pamphleteering activities. The reforms were aimed at a rationalization and centralization of government and included the formation of an intellectual elite in state service, on the basis of merit instead of birth. Apart from university professors this new elite included many of Reinhold’s friends, so that he made a number of new acquaintances, like Joseph von Sonnenfels (1732-1817), who, as an important scholar of Law, was one of the principal advisers at the Habsburg court.[[62]](#footnote-62) Another important figure was the mineralogist Ignaz von Born (1742-1791), a former Jesuit and adviser to the court on mining and the mint. Through his contacts with such persons, Reinhold became part of Austria’s intellectual elite.

Members of this elite frequently belonged to Masonic Lodges, another place where merit was more important than rank or birth. In 1783 Reinhold wrote to Blumauer requesting to be admitted to the Freemasons, and from that letter we can gather that he felt oppressed by his ecclesiastical status.

Schliessen Sie daraus, wie heftig meine Begierde seyn müsse, mich als ein durch einen unüberdachten Schwur von der Kette der Menschheit abgerissenes Glied, an diese Gesellschaft, und durch sie an den edelsten Theil der Menschheit wieder anzuschliessen, (…).[[63]](#footnote-63)

[Please infer from this the ardor of my desire to connect myself, as a member torn off from the chain of humanity by an ill-considered oath, to this society [Freemasonry], and through it to the noblest part of humanity again.]

Strikingly, in this passage Reinhold returns to a metaphor he had used earlier in the letter to his father. There he wrote that “the attachment to flesh and blood is (…) one of the strongest chains (*Kette*) with which Satan binds us to earth.”[[64]](#footnote-64) It is clear that at fifteen and still intent on being a monk, Reinhold made every effort to break the devilish chains, whereas ten years later he regrets having been in a position that required him to be cut off from the rest of humanity. As he could no longer blindly believe everything he had been told to believe when he aspired to be a monk, it was only natural to give in to the desire not to shut out the world. What he sought in Freemasonry was what he had missed in his early days as a novice, being away from home in the Jesuit College, a sense of being connected to the rest of the world, to those who mattered to him. As is clear from the letter to his father, he found a way to deal with this distress, interpreting it as a devilish trick to bind him to the world. A couple of years later, through his friends in Freemasonry, Reinhold sought to reconnect to the world. Within a Masonic Lodge all the worldly differences in status and wealth would fall away, which explains Reinhold’s conviction that by becoming a Freemason he would be able to reconnect to mankind, even if he was a monk, that is, formally disconnected.

After his admittance as a member of the Vienna Lodge *Zur wahren Eintracht* on April 30, 1783, Reinhold not only frequented its meetings, he also participated in a more active manner by writing and reading speeches.[[65]](#footnote-65) From the letter to Blumauer just cited it is already apparent that by joining Freemasonry Reinhold in a way distanced himself from the monastic ideology.[[66]](#footnote-66) One of his early speeches for the Lodge refers to the trickery of monks to recruit youngsters, confirming that monastic life had proven different from what he had expected it to be.[[67]](#footnote-67) At the same time he adopted the Enlightenment ideology of his friends. This is most apparent from his contributions to a periodical that Blumauer edited at the time, the Vienna *Realzeitung*, “the organ of the Viennese Enlightenment elite around Born.”[[68]](#footnote-68) In October 1782, when Reinhold started as a reviewer, Blumauer had just taken over the editorship of the *Realzeitung* and had introduced a new section, in which most of Reinhold’s reviews were published, on ‘Theologie und Kirchenwesen’.[[69]](#footnote-69) Most of the reviews are short and of little philosophical interest. They show that religion was much debated in Austria at this time in a wide range of publications. The reviews bear the distinct stamp of Enlightenment. Authors who claim Enlightenment endangers religion are severely criticized by Reinhold, whereas books and pamphlets that are critical of the Baroque Catholicism of late eighteenth-century Austria are welcomed, usually with some critical notes on readability.[[70]](#footnote-70) In the following chapter the contents of some of these reviews will be dealt with.[[71]](#footnote-71)

Reinhold’s move from monasticism to Freemasonry was of vital importance to his development as a philosopher, although it must not be forgotten that his education primed him for Enlightenment with Leibniz, Wolff and Locke.[[72]](#footnote-72) His new Enlightenment environment[[73]](#footnote-73) was especially encouraging him to read and think and write. The Lodge *Zur wahren Eintracht* held special meetings, the so-called *Übungslogen*, where members discussed scientific topics on which one of them had lectured. Reinhold’s speeches were also intended to be read on these occasions.[[74]](#footnote-74) One of them, ‘Über die Pflicht des Maurers sich zu freuen’, is lost; of two others ‘Über die Kunst des Lebens zu genüssen’ and ‘Der Wehrt einer Gesellschaft hängt von der Beschaffenheit ihrer Glieder ab’, an edition is forthcoming.[[75]](#footnote-75) With its ‘exercise’-meetings, the Lodge *Zur wahren Eintracht* was especially suited for the education of its members. Moreover, it was connected to the secret society of Illuminates, which had been established in 1776 in Bavaria by Adam Weishaupt (1748-1830). Several members of *Zur wahren Eintracht*, including Reinhold, were involved in the Illuminate order.[[76]](#footnote-76) While Freemasonry meant a retreat from society and its prejudices, Illuminatism took a more active perspective and aimed at changing society in the direction of a universal brotherhood of man. More important, however, than political influence was the education of young, bright students.[[77]](#footnote-77)

A speech written in 1782 by the founder of the Illuminate order himself, Adam Weishaupt, provides a glimpse of what the Illuminates taught these students (including our Reinhold). This ‘Anrede an die neu aufzunehmenden Illuminatos dirigentes’[[78]](#footnote-78) was meant to be read to those who were admitted to the degree of *Illuminatus dirigens* (leading illuminate).[[79]](#footnote-79) As will be seen in the following Chapter, themes that occur in Reinhold’s Enlightenment writings render it highly probable that Reinhold was aware of this text by Weishaupt, or at least of Illuminatist texts of a similar substance. It depicts ‘real Masonry’ as the salvation of mankind, retrieving man’s original innocence and happiness. Weishaupt describes the natural state of man as innocent and happy, as man’s needs were small and easily met. However, this paradise was not to last; it rather serves as an indication of man’s destiny (van Dülmen, 170). According to Weishaupt, humanity’s needs are the driving force for the development of humanity and society (169). With the evolution of society new needs come into being and man drifts away from the state of nature, at the expense of original freedom and equality. However, the darkest hour is just before dawn and as the situation worsens, the need for freedom becomes stronger (177). This need can be met through morality, which will teach people to live like a family again. This morality can only be achieved by means of “secret schools of wisdom” (179). Man has to learn to desire in a rational way, has to be enlightened about his own situation. According to Weishaupt, Enlightenment should be more than words, more than abstract, speculative knowledge that has no effect on the heart. Rather, it is knowledge of oneself and of the dependence on the assistance and goodwill of others (183). Christian doctrine is introduced as exemplifying the morality needed to change society. Christianity is presented as a significant progression from Judaism, since the concept of God as a Father and humanity as His children makes morality easy to practice (187). However, humanity was not saved by Christianity, because religion was soon used for despotism. Pure Christianity was kept secret within the organization of Freemasonry (190). Now that Freemasonry itself has become corrupted, it is up to the chosen few to try and establish true morality in their circles (191-192). From this brief summary it will be clear that the Illuminatist vision of human history is designed to show the importance of and the need for its own organization and activities, the main goal of which is to make people free and equal again. Reinhold was to be profoundly influenced by this view on human history, particularly by the imagery used regarding Christianity. Especially the role played by the metaphor of family, conveyed by Christianity, would come to be of importance in his philosophical work. Further, the thought that human needs are the driving force behind the development of societies would return as part of Reinhold’s views on the history of philosophy.

As shown above, the adoption of Enlightenment ideology entailed a rejection of the monastic way of life for Reinhold. Yet, since leaving your order was a crime, he had no real choice but to remain in the Barnabite order, while writing against monks and being a member of that other society, the Freemasons. This combination does not necessarily require a split personality. Reinhold’s correspondence with Pepermann shows that the former’s later statement that his order was *unmönchisch* is probably close to the truth. At any rate, the order was open enough for its teachers, like Pepermann, to provide their pupils with more than just the standard textbook philosophy. It was apparently also open enough for Reinhold to visit the Masonic meetings almost weekly and to denounce monastic life before a general audience. However, though the practice of the Barnabite order was friendly, Reinhold may still have felt oppressed by the monastic system which, at least in theory, prevented him from leading a normal life, that is, a life in accordance with human nature. In another of his Masonic speeches he portrays monasticism as aimed at disciplining human nature, by denying its members the rights of freedom, property and procreation by means of the vows of obedience, poverty and celibacy.[[80]](#footnote-80) The letter to Blumauer shows that Reinhold regretted taking these vows. He clearly distances himself from monastic theory, while enjoying the freedom the order allowed him in practice. Thus, it was the openness of the Barnabite order that enabled Reinhold’s escape. By teaching him philosophy in an open atmosphere, it loosened the grip of blind faith and thus in a way already enlightened him. By allowing him to meet his friends it opened the door for new contacts and another social network, in which freedom of thought was common. In the end it was this Masonic network that physically enabled Reinhold to leave, because it provided him with the contacts necessary for his survival as a refugee.

## Leipzig (1783-1784)

Since leaving a monastic order without dispensation from one’s vows was a criminal offence, Reinhold was in fact a fugitive, not just a refugee, in need of assistance. Here the Masonic organization proved to be very useful indeed. It has already been shown that his flight was facilitated by Petzold. While in Leipzig, where he attended the philosophical lectures of Ernst Platner (1744-1818) and others, Reinhold was financially supported by the Vienna Lodge *Zur wahren Eintracht*, both directly and indirectly, through payments for the material he supplied for the *Journal für Freymaurer*.[[81]](#footnote-81) This magazine was distributed only among other Lodges, so censorship did not apply to it in the same way as it did to normal publications.[[82]](#footnote-82) Of the speeches Reinhold delivered himself, only one, ‘Ueber den Hang zum Wunderbaren’, was published.[[83]](#footnote-83) His other publications in the *Journal für Freymaurer*[[84]](#footnote-84) were either read out by somebody else or were adaptations of texts written by others, as is clear from his correspondence with Born in 1784.[[85]](#footnote-85) It is therefore likely that they were written when Reinhold had already left Vienna. It is unclear to what extent Reinhold is to be regarded as the author of the article on scientific Freemasonry. It does not appear to be typical of his work and it lacks the indication ‘von Br. R\*\*’ in the title. It appears in the same issue as the article on the Kabirian mysteries – which we know is Reinhold’s – yet a letter from Blumauer to Bertuch suggests that there is only one piece by Reinhold in that issue.[[86]](#footnote-86) Thematically, the speeches and articles are diverse, but the subject is usually in some way connected to Freemasonry. In ‘Mönchthum und Maurerey’, Reinhold compares the monastic and Masonic orders ‘with regard to Enlightenment’. In ‘Ueber den Hang zum Wunderbaren’ he is concerned for the moral and emotional education of Masons, from an Illuminatist point of view.[[87]](#footnote-87) In several other articles he discusses the mysteries of the ancient world, which were believed to be the origin of Freemasonry.

Apart from his Masonic activities, Reinhold attended Platner’s lectures Although the extent to which this influenced his later philosophy is not clear, there are certain features of Platner’s philosophical outlook that deserve to be highlighted here, because they suggest that some aspects of his philosophy may indeed have been important for Reinhold’s philosophical development. Platner can be described as an adherent of the Leibnizian-Wolffian school, who placed great emphasis on the notion of representation and the power of representation (*Vorstellungskraft*). This is striking in the light of Reinhold’s later theory of the faculty of representation, which also has the notion of representation at its centre. Platner was also partly an *Aufklärer*, who saw more in morality than in religion. His lectures in Leipzig were very popular among students, most probably with Reinhold as well. In the winter semester of 1783/1784, the time of Reinhold’s stay in Leipzig, Platner lectured on the basis of his own *Philosophische Aphorismen*.[[88]](#footnote-88) This work is not only concerned with the systematic development of philosophical concepts, but also with their history. Platner took a special interest in the history of philosophy and aimed at systematically relating historical doctrines.[[89]](#footnote-89) In his presentation Platner shows signs of being influenced by *Popularphilosophie*, a development within the Leibnizian-Wolffian tradition, seeking to apply philosophy to real life, outside academia.[[90]](#footnote-90) However, Reinhold was not to adopt Platner’s philosophy for good, as in his *Versuch* he counted him among the many philosophers who had misunderstood Kant (cf. *Versuch*, 155).[[91]](#footnote-91)

Reinhold remained in Leipzig for half a year (November 1783-May 1784). His stay at a Protestant university had become known in Vienna, obstructing the negotiations of his friends to bring about his return without fear of prosecution. Therefore he was instructed to go to Weimar as the protégé of the famous poet Christoph Martin Wieland, who was held in great esteem, if not adored, in Vienna.[[92]](#footnote-92)

## Weimar (1784-1787)

Maybe the friendly reception by Wieland and his family[[93]](#footnote-93) and the possibility to make a living in Weimar inspired Reinhold to convert to Protestantism, and he was formally accepted in the Protestant church by Herder, who was the General Superintendent of the Lutheran clergy at the Weimar court. If his stay in Leipzig had frustrated his friends’ attempts to secure his safe return to Vienna, converting to Protestantism made his possible return no longer an issue and entailed a final break with the Catholic Austrian environment in which he grew up, although, as mentioned earlier, he did keep in touch with Pepermann and his Masonic friends. The topics of his correspondence vary, from issues concerning the Lodge and his contributions for the *Journal für Freymaurer* to the latest news and gossip. He still received more than just moral support from Vienna. As he stated later, at the time of his arrival in Weimar he depended on the kindness of Wieland and Blumauer.[[94]](#footnote-94)

The reception of Reinhold as a friend and later a member of the Wieland family was warm and kind. His new situation also provided him with a new livelihood, as he started writing for *Der Teutsche Merkur* almost immediately upon his arrival in Weimar, his first review appearing in June 1784, in the *Anzeiger*, the review section of the *Merkur*.[[95]](#footnote-95) This monthly periodical had been established in 1773 by Wieland after the example of the *Mercure de France*, as a literary magazine. Among the early subscribers was Sonnenfels in Vienna.[[96]](#footnote-96) When Reinhold arrived in Weimar the *Merkur* was gradually recovering from a downfall in the early 1780s. Wieland had entered into a partnership with Friedrich Justin Bertuch (1747-1822), who, being more of an entrepreneur than Wieland, had the money and a plan to get the *Merkur* up on its feet again. Bertuch attracted new authors, who gradually disappeared after Reinhold became an important author for the magazine.[[97]](#footnote-97) When Reinhold married Wieland’s eldest daughter Sophie on May 16, 1785, Wieland helped the young couple financially by raising the remuneration for reviewers by two-thirds, from which Reinhold benefited most.[[98]](#footnote-98) As the relation between Wieland and Bertuch worsened, the former wanted to see the *Merkur* in family hands, again to help Reinhold out financially. In July 1786 Reinhold took Bertuch’s place, as fellow editor, not as investor, of course.[[99]](#footnote-99) He would remain active for *Der Teutsche Merkur* until 1788, when other projects demanded his attention. During this period he wrote many reviews and articles, the earliest of which clearly reflect that he started feeling at home in the Protestant North, which he often compares favorably to the situation in Austria, where Enlightenment clashed with the Catholic Church. According to Ernst Reinhold, his father almost filled the review section (*Anzeiger*) of the *Merkur* by himself.[[100]](#footnote-100) Most of these reviews have not been officially attributed to Reinhold, and apart from the review of Herder’s *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*, of which more will be said in Chapter 3, they are of little philosophical interest and will not be discussed here. Apart from the reviews already attributed to him,[[101]](#footnote-101) the one of Born’s *Iohannis Physiophili Specimen Monachologiae* is most probably also by his hand.[[102]](#footnote-102) It need not be discussed in great detail here, since it mainly contains praise of the author for having discovered a new, unnatural animal species, the monk. Further, it provides an opportunity for ridiculing Patritius Fast, which strengthens the case for Reinhold’s authorship.[[103]](#footnote-103) The citations of Fast run parallel to text used by Reinhold earlier in the *Realzeitung*,[[104]](#footnote-104) which renders Reinhold’s authorship even more likely.

From July 1784 onward, articles by Reinhold’s hand appeared in the *Merkur* as well. The first piece is the rather short ‘Die Wissenschaften vor und nach ihrer Sekularisation. Ein historisches Gemählde’.[[105]](#footnote-105) It is clear that Reinhold’s interest here lies with the main lines of history, not with the correctness of the details. The next article, ‘Gedanken über Aufklärung’ is much more elaborate; starting in the issue of July, it is continued in the August issue and concluded in the September issue of 1784.[[106]](#footnote-106) It is one of the first attempts to give some theory of Enlightenment. It was published before Kant’s ‘Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung?’ [[107]](#footnote-107) which explicitly reacted to the question posed by Johann Friedrich Zöllner (1753-1804) in his ‘Ist es rathsam, das Ehebündnis nicht ferner durch die Religion zu sanciren?’[[108]](#footnote-108) Kant’s answer is dated September 30 and mentions only Mendelssohn’s answer[[109]](#footnote-109) to the same question, not Reinhold’s pieces for the *Merkur*. Although Reinhold does not refer to Zöllner, his efforts to understand and determine the concept of Enlightenment suggest that he aimed to answer Zöllner’s question. In the first installment Reinhold determines the concept of Enlightenment negatively, paying special attention to those who claim to promote Enlightenment, without knowing what it is. In the second part of his article, Reinhold gives a more positive determination, explaining ‘Enlightenment’ with regard to individuals and nations. Finally, he shows that it is not an empty concept by explaining the rational capacity of human beings in general and their need for Enlightenment, given the history of society. Reinhold’s ‘Ueber die neuesten patriotischen Lieblingsträume in Teutschland’, published in August and September 1784, is explicitly based on his knowledge of the situation in Vienna.[[110]](#footnote-110) The subtitle reveals that Christoph Friedrich Nicolai’s (1733-1811) *Reisebeschreibung*[[111]](#footnote-111) occasioned this article, which aims at providing a more realistic perspective on the Enlightenment in Germany. Reinhold’s next article, ‘Schreiben des Pfarrers zu \*\*\* an den H[erausgeber]. des T[eutschen]. M[erkurs].’ provided the first occasion for Reinhold to react to Kant.[[112]](#footnote-112) Although, as we shall see below (Chapter 3, section 1) Reinhold was not familiar with the Kantian philosophy at that moment in time, he reacted to Kant’s negative review of Herder’s *Ideen*, which he himself had reviewed positively. Another major article from his pre-Kantian period was the tripartite ‘Ehrenrettung der Reformation’, which was a reaction to a book on German history.[[113]](#footnote-113) Next to some smaller articles reacting to other publications,[[114]](#footnote-114) Reinhold also published an article on the history of religion, entitled ‘Skizze einer Theogonie des blinden Glaubens’.[[115]](#footnote-115) Since this article was the last to be published before the ‘Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie’, a project started in August 1786, yet also figures as a part of the ‘Zwölfter Brief’ in the 1790 book edition (*Briefe I*), it is indicative of a continuity between Reinhold’s pre-Kantian and Kantian phases.[[116]](#footnote-116)

Apart from his writing for the *Merkur* and the *Journal für Freymaurer* Reinhold also produced his first book(let) in his pre-Kantian period, albeit anonymously.[[117]](#footnote-117) The *Herzenserleichterung zweyer Menschenfreunde* was written before he started studying Kant. It has been argued by Reinhard Lauth that this reaction to Johann Caspar Lavater (1741-1801), a philosopher from Switzerland, is connected to Reinhold’s contacts with fellow Illuminate Johann Joachim Christoph Bode (1730-1793).[[118]](#footnote-118) The work is written as a dialogue between Lichtfreund and Wahrmund, who discuss matters of religion. Lavater is criticized severely by both participants in the dialogue, who appear to differ mainly on the question whether they should be seriously worried by Lavater’s publications. While discussing Lavater in particular, and matters of religion more generally, the booklet also provides an evaluation of Enlightenment in much the same way that Reinhold would later do again in his ‘Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie’.

Appearing in installments in *Der Teutsche Merkur*, Reinhold’s ‘Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie’ (1786-1787) discuss the Kantian philosophy in relation to Enlightenment. They open with a discussion between Reinhold and a fictional correspondent, who is depressed by the lack of progress made by Enlightenment in northern Germany. Reinhold, however, interprets the widespread confusion in metaphysics as a sign that a reformation of philosophy is near. Diagnosing the confusion as a misunderstanding among philosophers about the conception of reason, he introduces Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* as the solution. By specifying what speculative reason can and cannot achieve and by assigning a special role to practical reason, Kant has found the proper conception of reason, which relegates the previous misconceptions to the past, or so Reinhold claims (without really bothering to prove it). His argument for this interpretation of Kant mainly consists in historically arguing for the correctness of his own diagnosis of the problem of metaphysics. The ‘Briefe’ not only made Reinhold famous overnight, but also put the *Merkur* in the frontline of journals that propagated Kantian philosophy, like the *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung* and the *Berlinische Monatsschrift*, although Wieland never became a Kantian.[[119]](#footnote-119)

## Jena (1787-1794)

After the success of the ‘Briefe’ Reinhold became extraordinary professor of philosophy at the University of Jena in 1787, to which town he moved in the summer of that year. Both Voigt and Herder supported his appointment, although Reinhold did not possess any formal qualification. In September he asked the philosophy department if they would be so kind to grant him the title of *Magister*, now that he would be lecturing at a university.[[120]](#footnote-120) Thus, Reinhold’s appointment appears to be somewhat strange, as his main merit in philosophy at the time consisted in the first few ‘Briefe’ in *Der Teutsche Merkur* and a handful of other articles. It has been suggested by Kurt Röttgers that Reinhold’s appointment had more to do with politics than with philosophical merit.[[121]](#footnote-121) Reinhold was indeed acquainted with both Voigt and Herder, possibly even with Karl August, Duke of Saxony-Weimar-Eisenach himself, who was an Illuminate, like Reinhold.[[122]](#footnote-122) From Reinhold’s correspondence with Voigt it is clear that the former has hopes of professional advantage by discussing the situation of Kantian philosophy with Voigt. The letter in question will be discussed in Chapter 3. Reinhold started his academic activities in Jena in the winter term of 1787/1788, although his first lectures had not been included in the official catalogue of the university. From that time on he would lecture in Jena up to the winter term of 1793/1794, after which period he moved to Kiel as an ordinary professor. During this six-year span Reinhold would lecture on Kant’s first *Critique* almost every term, albeit under varying titles.[[123]](#footnote-123) Apart from this he also lectured almost every term on Logic and Metaphysics, first according to Platner’s handbook,[[124]](#footnote-124) later on the basis of his own notes. A further recurring subject is Aesthetics, first according to Eberhard’s handbook,[[125]](#footnote-125) later again based on his own notes. In the beginning he also lectured on *Oberon*, a poetic work by his father-in-law, Wieland. By the winter term 1789/1790 this subject is being replaced by the ‘History of Philosophy according to his own propositions’. The fact that Reinhold gradually abstains from lecturing on the basis of textbooks of others shows that as a lecturer he gradually acquired the confidence to teach his own views.

Reinhold’s lectures on Kant’s first *Critique* formed a substantial part of his academic activity. According to his letter to Kant, dated January 19, 1788, he approached the work from a historical perspective, elucidating the situation of philosophy immediately before the *Critique* was published and the “necessity of overcoming the misunderstanding that has divided the philosophical world in four parties.”[[126]](#footnote-126) Moreover, he announces that he is planning to publish his efforts in this field in order to “provide the *Critique of Pure Reason* with better prepared readers.”[[127]](#footnote-127) Within two years, however, Reinhold was not to publish an introduction to Kant’s philosophy, but his *Versuch einer neuen Theorie des menschlichen Vorstellungsvermögens*, which one may translate as *Essay on a New Theory of the Human Faculty of Representation*. By choosing this title, Reinhold places his book in the tradition of Locke and Leibniz, who both wrote *Essays* on human understanding.[[128]](#footnote-128) These *Essays* in a way exemplify the conflict in early modern philosophy, since Locke had presented an empiricist vision of human understanding, while Leibniz’ *Nouveau essais* were composed as a refutation of Locke. We have seen earlier that in the introduction to his *Versuch* Reinhold presents himself as a reader of Locke as well as Leibniz. He stresses his knowledge of Locke in the original by citing from Locke’s *Essay* in English. Apart from suggesting erudition, the reference to Locke and Leibniz also serves to call attention to Reinhold’s perspective on the recent history of philosophy. The opposing Essays by Locke and Leibniz can be seen as symptoms of the general lack of determination of what is to be understood by ‘human understanding’. With his *Versuch* Reinhold proposes nothing less than to end this deadlock once and for all by providing the philosophical public with a theory of the faculty of representation. In his lectures, Reinhold presented logic and metaphysics following a similar scheme, as he announced ‘Logic and Metaphysics according to Leibniz, Locke and others’.[[129]](#footnote-129)

In the First Book of the *Versuch*, concerning the need for a theory of the faculty of representation, Reinhold claims that philosophers cannot reach an agreement on the precise determination of possible human knowledge, because they do not have the same concept of knowledge. In order to remedy this, the concept of knowledge needs to be explicitly derived from the concept of representation, on the basic features of which everyone agrees, or should agree, as far as Reinhold is concerned. It is clear that for Reinhold this is not only a matter of philosophical importance. As long as the question what we can know cannot be answered in a manner satisfactory for all, the most important questions concerning religion and morality cannot be answered. In the Second Book, Reinhold develops a theory of the faculty of representation on the basis of universally accepted (*allgemeingeltend*) premises. ‘Representation’ and its conditions are analyzed according to the two essential components ‘material’ (*Stoff*) and ‘form’ (*Form*). The Third Book then proceeds to derive the most relevant ‘results’ of Kant’s philosophy from the theory of the faculty of representation just established. It analyzes the faculty of knowledge by focusing on a theory of sensibility’, theory of understanding and theory of reason.

As Reinhold’s efforts to provide the Kantian project with a secure foundation inspired mixed reactions in the philosophical community, Reinhold’s literary activities in his Jena years were mainly related to the *Versuch* and its subsequent defense, a phase in his work which is now known as *Elementarphilosophie*. In response to criticism, two volumes of *Beyträge zur Berichtigung bisheriger Mißverständnisse der Philosophen* were published in 1790 and 1794, relating to theoretical and practical philosophy respectively. His shorter *Über das Fundament des philosophischen Wissens* was published in 1791 and is considered the most accessible presentation of the *Elementarphilosophie*.[[130]](#footnote-130) Reinhold also continued the project of the ‘Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie’, by publishing two volumes, the first of which (1790) contains the ‘Briefe’ that had appeared in the *Merkur* in 1786-1787, albeit in a revised and expanded version. The second volume of *Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie* (1792) is more related to practical philosophy proper and contains the development of Reinhold’s own position on the freedom of the will, which deviates notably from Kant’s.

Reinhold’s activities in Jena, however, were by no means limited to writing books and articles, although it is obvious from the above summary that writing and editing must have taken up much of his time. The remainder of his time was invested in his academic life, and with considerable success. His lectures were well attended and were supplemented by *privatissime* lectures at his house. Reinhold also participated in a lecturers’ society, building relations with his colleagues as well as with his students. When he traded Jena for Kiel in 1794, to take up an ordinary professorate, his students were so sorry to see him go that they tried to convince him to stay.[[131]](#footnote-131) Reinhold was, of course, deeply touched by the gesture, but moved to Kiel anyway, where he would remain until his death in 1823.

# Reinhold’s Enlightenment

Although he had hardly received a formal academic education in philosophy, Reinhold was by no means a philosophical *tabula rasa* when he got to know Kant’s philosophy. Not only had he been thoroughly trained in theology and philosophy to become a Barnabite priest, he had also become acquainted with Enlightenment philosophy as embodied in Freemasonry and the ideology of the Illuminates. The present chapter will focus upon the themes that together comprise Reinhold’s field of interest during the period in which his first writings were published. This field of interest can be labeled ‘Enlightenment’, with a focus on humanity and religion. The specific issues that are of interest to him can easily be connected with his own situation: Enlightenment, Freemasonry and religion were all part of his own experience and education. His interest in Enlightenment is reflected in his writings on its nature and its relation to established religion, many of which originate from his Masonic/Illuminatist context. It must also be kept in mind that Reinhold’s Enlightenment engagement originated from a political environment in which the Austrian government was trying to enhance state power at the expense of ecclesiastical institutions with Enlightenment as its ideology.[[132]](#footnote-132) Reinhold’s engagement was thus focused on the concrete application of Enlightenment in society and religion, which finds expression in his early writings. At this stage of his career, he clearly did not seek an academic career in philosophy, and expressed no special interest in the theoretical branches of philosophy, such as metaphysics.

The disentangling of Reinhold’s pre-Kantian field of interest is of crucial importance for the later chapters, since it will provide an insight into his background and preconceptions. This in turn will help to appreciate his reception of Kant in more depth. The current chapter will approach Reinhold’s views on Enlightenment from different perspectives. The first section will discuss Reinhold’s own use and description of the term ‘Aufklärung’, along with its general implications. Borrowing the phrase coined in the 1790’s by Thomas Paine,[[133]](#footnote-133) we can say that Reinhold views Enlightenment as an ‘Age of Reason’. That is to say, by stressing its historical aspects he presented Enlightenment as an ‘age’ in human history, regarding is the historical period in which ‘reason’ was came into its own. Following this structure, section two will focus on the historical aspect of Reinhold’s views of Enlightenment, while section three will elaborate on Reinhold’s understanding of human reason in the context of Enlightenment. The fourth section of this chapter will link these ideas of Enlightenment to another favorite theme of his pre-Kantian work, the criticism of established religion. Three of his works on this subject will be discussed. The first, ‘Ueber den Hang zum Wunderbaren’ (1784) is the published version of a Masonic speech written and delivered by Reinhold when still in Vienna.[[134]](#footnote-134) The second work concerning religion and Enlightenment, *Herzenserleichterung zweyer Menschenfreunde* (1785) was written to denounce Lavater’s religious views.[[135]](#footnote-135) The third of the works to be dealt with, ‘Skizze einer Theogonie des blinden Glaubens’, appeared only two months before the ‘Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie’ and is Reinhold’s last publication without any obvious Kantian influence.[[136]](#footnote-136) The chapter will conclude with an evaluation of Reinhold’s views on religion and Enlightenment.

## Determining the concept ‘Enlightenment’

When trying to understand Reinhold’s conception of *Aufklärung*, it is first of all important to look at the closest thing to a definition he gives. Although at the end of the first part of ‘Gedanken über Aufklärung’ (1784) he claims that a theory of Enlightenment is out of the question, he does believe it is possible to determine the concept more precisely.[[137]](#footnote-137) Reinhold aims at analyzing the concept in a descriptive way and finding the middle ground between the various normative views on Enlightenment.

Wenn ich den Begriff der, meiner Meynung nach, dem Worte **Aufklärung** entspricht, auseinanderzusetzen versuchte, so würde ich mich begnügen die Wahrheit zwischen den Meynungen derjenigen, welche die Aufklärung für eine sehr leichte, für eine unmögliche, für eine gefährliche, u.s.w. Sache halten, mitten inne gefunden zu haben. (21)

[If I were to try to explain the concept which, in my opinion, corresponds to the word ‘Enlightenment’, I would be satisfied to have found the truth in the middle between the opinions of those who think Enlightenment is something ‘very easy’, ‘impossible’, ‘dangerous’ etc.]

Although this ambition appears to be modest, Reinhold does have a normative agenda of his own. He is convinced that Enlightenment is a good thing and hopes that the proper conception of Enlightenment will turn its honest opponents into friends and its false friends into proper enemies, and thus contribute to Enlightenment itself (cf. 21-22). Thus, Reinhold’s descriptive analysis of the concept ‘Enlightenment’ is intended to further the cause of Enlightenment.

The second part of the article links up perfectly with this end of the first part, as it opens with Reinhold’s more precise determination of ‘Enlightenment’. “I think that enlightenment means, in general, the making of rational people out of people who are capable of rationality.”[[138]](#footnote-138) In this still very general description Reinhold presents Enlightenment as an action performed on people from the outside, as it were. Reinhold’s ‘making of rational people’ does not carry the individualistic overtone of the definition that Kant would present just a couple of months later.[[139]](#footnote-139) This difference may be related to the different forms Enlightenment had taken in Austria and Prussia. In Austria, Enlightenment was strongly connected to centralized state-building, resulting in a focus on reforming religious institutions top-down, whereas Prussia at the time was one of the most modern states in Europe, with a relatively free press and freedom of religion already in place. Reinhold’s definition concentrates on the transition of a capacity into an actual state of rationality, whereas Kant’s focuses on the act of thinking for oneself and the importance of political freedom.[[140]](#footnote-140) Another possible influence, pointed out by Sauer, is that of Herder, who in his *Ideen zu einer Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*, which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, similarly speaks of making the transition from ‘Vernunftfähigkeit’ to ‘Vernunft’.[[141]](#footnote-141)

Reinhold specifies his definition in a classical way reminiscent of the Wolffian school philosophy. He starts with describing the capacity for becoming rational as rooted in human physiology (again reminiscent of Herder), an approach that would lead to a very general conception of Enlightenment indeed. In a narrower sense, the capacity for becoming rational is the condition of the mind when it is fit for having distinct concepts (cf. 123), leading to the description of Enlightenment in a narrow sense as “the application of the means that lie in nature to elucidate confused concepts into distinct ones” (123 [65-66]). Reinhold adds the following remarks to his basic definition. First of all it is important to note that not everyone who happens to have some arbitrary distinct concepts is to be called ‘enlightened’. This term is reserved for those who have achieved a sufficient degree of distinction among the concepts that are of importance for human happiness (cf. 124-125). Further, the term can also be used for nations, but only for those that are already civilized and are intent on developing rationality at a higher level (cf. 125-126). Finally, Reinhold sets out to explain how people obtain distinct concepts, by distinguishing an artificial distinctness of concepts from a natural distinctness of concepts, the former belonging to philosophers, whereas the latter is available to all (cf. 127). Reinhold clearly distinguishes between these two ways of having distinct concepts.

Die Fähigkeit des Pöbels zu deutlichen Begriffen ist mehr leidend als wirkend; die des Philosophen mehr wirkend als leidend; der Philosophy lehrt; der Pöbel lernt; der Philosoph zergliedert den Begriff; der Pöbel fasset den zergliederten auf. (128)

[The capacity of the masses for distinct concepts is more passive than active; that of the philosopher is more active than passive. The philosopher teaches; the masses learn. The philosopher analyzes the concept; the masses apprehend that which has been analyzed.] (67)

Thus, the philosopher forms his own distinct concepts, whereas the common man can only receive them from the outside, for instance, from the philosopher. Reinhold uses an example to clarify the process of communicating distinct concepts to the masses. It concerns the concept of God’s justice, which is commonly seen as a reason to resent God rather than to love Him, but the philosopher, who has a distinct concept of God, knows better. He can communicate his distinct concept to the common man by introducing the mediating concept of a good and wise father.

Gott ist ein weiser Vater, wird der Philosoph anfangen; und der Pöbel wird es ihm sogleich einräumen; der Philosoph wird fortfahren: ein weiser Vater strafet nur aus Güte; und der Pöbel wird ihm mit dem Schlusse zuvorkommen: Gott strafet nur aus Güte. Es wird ihm nun sehr begreiflich seyn, wenn ihm sein Lehrer die Gerechtigkeit als eine Eigenschaft Gottes vorstellt, die eben so liebenswürdig ist als die Güte selbst. (131)

God is a wise father, the philosopher begins, and the masses immediately grant him that. [The philosopher proceeds: a wise father punishes only out of mercy; and the masses anticipate him with the inference: God punishes only out of mercy. It now will be easily understood, if the masses are taught that this justice is a quality of God, which is as lovable as mercy itself.] (69)

It is important to note that the mediating concept here is one that is common to mankind as such, as everyone has a father. This allows philosophers, who are, after all, human beings, to communicate their distinct concepts to others, who are not able to create their own artificial distinctness.

In the second part of ‘Gedanken über Aufklärung’ Reinhold developed his more or less determinate concept of Enlightenment. The most important features of this concept are his emphasis on education of the common man and the use of common human concepts to achieve this. In this, Reinhold’s concept of Enlightenment is strongly reminiscent of the Illuminatist conception of Christianity as it surfaces in a speech written by the founder of the Illuminati, Adam Weishaupt, introduced in more detail in the previous chapter. This speech was to be read to members of the rank of *Illuminatus dirigens*, or leading Illuminate. Whether or not Reinhold actually had risen to that rank at the time, the similarities between his thoughts on the history of mankind and this speech strongly suggest that he was familiar with the text. Among other things, it presents Christianity as a way in which morality could be accessed by the masses, as it uses the metaphor of family to clarify moral concepts in a way that made it easier for people to act upon them.[[142]](#footnote-142) Reinhold’s conception of Enlightenment as laid down here is not only inspired by the general form Enlightenment had taken in Austria, but also by the more specific Illuminatist views on history and Christianity.[[143]](#footnote-143)

The article on *Aufklärung* is, however, not the only place where Reinhold comes close to giving a definition of Enlightenment. The description given in ‘Mönchthum und Maurerey’[[144]](#footnote-144) is different in its formulation, but has a similar focus on the education of mankind.

Indessen wird uns eine nur sehr kurze Betrachtung sowohl in dem einen als in der anderen [monasticism and Masonry] zwo der wichtigsten Anstalten gewahr werden lassen, deren sich die Vorsehung zur Erziehung eines beträchtlichen Theiles des menschlichen Geschlechtes bedienen wollte, Anstalten, bey welchen sie nichts geringeres als unmittelbare Entwickelung unsrer höheren Geisteskräfte, vollkommner Bearbeitung unsrer nöthigsten Kenntnisse, allgemeinere und schnellere Verbreitung der uns angelegensten Wahrheiten, mit einem Worte, **Aufklärung** zum Zwecke hatte.[[145]](#footnote-145)

[In the meantime, a very brief consideration will allow us to perceive in both monasticism and Masonry two of the most important institutions that providence wanted to employ for the education of a considerable part of mankind. The purpose of these institutions was nothing less than the immediate development of our higher mental powers, the more perfect processing of the cognitions that are needed most, the more general and quicker dissemination of the truths that matter most to us, in one word ‘Enlightenment’.]

As in ‘Gedanken über Aufklärung’, this description focuses on the making of rational people. Reinhold here speaks of the “education of a considerable part of humankind.” In both articles the development of reason is not related to any object or to theoretical speculation, but rather to the things that matter most to us as human beings. According to ‘Gedanken über Aufklärung’ the term ‘enlightened’ was only to be applied to someone who has “brought sufficient distinctness to those concepts which have a considerable influence on human happiness.”[[146]](#footnote-146) In the passage from the article on monasticism and Masonry cited above Reinhold refers to the “cognitions that are needed most” and the “truths that matter most.” Thus, from Reinhold’s descriptions of Enlightenment it is already clear that he does not view rationality as something purely intellectual and detached from mundane interests. Rather, from the start his conception of Enlightenment includes a regard for human nature with its interests and needs in the world. In keeping with Reinhold’s thought that it will be possible to enlighten the masses by means of concepts that are common to mankind as such, he appears to assume that the readers will understand what those concepts and cognitions and truths are that are of such high interest to us.

Even his earliest works, the reviews for the Viennese *Realzeitung*, show that he is not enthusiastic about a rationality that focuses on breaking down the old structures, without building up new and better ones.[[147]](#footnote-147) Nevertheless, some demolishing has to be done, which explains the resistance to Enlightenment. It will take considerable didactical skills to convince those who cling to a misunderstood religion and therefore fear a misunderstood Enlightenment, but Reinhold is optimistic.

Seine Religion ist ihm der Fels, der ihn wider die Bedrängnisse dieses und des künftigen Lebens in Schutz nimmt – wie muß sich der Arme ängstigen, wenn er manche Trümmer davon losreissen sieht, die er für Stücke seines Felsens bisher gehalten hat? Man zeige ihm, daß es lockere Erde – Aberglauben ist – Koth – den der Strom der Zeiten, da er noch vor kurzem so dicht und trübe daherzog, daran nothwendig zurückelassen mußte, und den nun die helleren, und reineren Fluthen hinwegspülen; und er wirds mit Dank erkennen, daß ihm und manchem seiner Brüder der Weg dahin gesäubert und gesichert ist.[[148]](#footnote-148)

[His religion is like a rock to him, protecting him from the difficulties of this life and the life to come – how anxious must the poor man be, when he sees the debris being torn off which he had believed to be pieces of his rock? When it is shown to him that it is only loose earth – superstition – rubbish which was necessarily left behind by the stream of time, when, only recently, it flowed densely and darkly and which is now washed away by brighter and purer waters, he will acknowledge thankfully that the way is now clean and safe for him and many of his brothers.]

It is only natural, according to Reinhold, for people to cling to the religion they have been brought up with – as he himself may have done. The cause of Enlightenment can only be furthered when it becomes clear that this religion consists of very different parts; there is rock,[[149]](#footnote-149) and there is rubbish. The removal of the rubbish is a purification of religion, rather than its demolition. As seen in the later article on *Aufklärung*, Reinhold has high hopes of being able to provide a more precisely determined concept of Enlightenment that will provide insight into the cleansing nature of Enlightenment. The following sections will shed more light on the way in which Enlightenment is to undertake this purification of religion.

It is clear from Reinhold’s statements on Enlightenment that he considers himself among its friends, devoting himself to its dissemination. As we have just seen, in the Vienna reviews as in the later article on *Aufklärung*, he believes that a properly clarified concept of Enlightenment is needed. An important part of his exertions consists in determining the concept of Enlightenment more precisely, with the aim of showing that Enlightenment is not to be feared. In order to argue this successfully, Reinhold has to show that instead of demolishing cherished beliefs, Enlightenment purifies and thus strengthens the core of these beliefs. From the outset this means that the rationality propagated and achieved by Enlightenment is not the abstract theoretical rationality of the philosophers, but rather a rationality that incorporates and clarifies basic human beliefs, most importantly religious beliefs. The rationality of the philosophers is no goal in itself; it is needed to clarify the chaotic, irrational beliefs of the masses. From the example regarding God’s justice cited above, it is apparent that Reinhold envisages the education of the masses as taking place through mediating concepts that are common to both the masses and the philosophers, such as the concept ‘father’. Apart from being a common concept (as everyone has a father) it is also appealing, as it is close to the heart. In the third section of the current chapter we will investigate the relation between mind and heart further.

## History and Enlightenment

Reinhold did not merely rely on conceptual clarity in his efforts to disseminate Enlightenment. Part of his strategy is to present Enlightenment as the final stage in the necessary development of human rationality in general, thus adding a dimension of historical inevitability to his advocacy of Enlightenment. This historical dimension has two aspects that are connected by the thought that human reason in general develops over time, a thought encountered earlier (Chapter 1) in Weishaupt’s description of human history. The first aspect concerns the concrete consequences of the development of human reason: institutions that were rational or met the needs of humankind adequately at a given time in history may lose their rationality or fail to meet the needs of humanity at a later stage. This historical aspect of Reinhold’s early works on Enlightenment is especially clear in his Vienna reviews and his Masonic articles. Secondly, there is the more general question as to the actual development reason has undergone throughout human history. From this point of view Reinhold can present Enlightenment as a necessary result of historical developments and thus argue with more force in favor of Enlightenment. The first part of this section (2.1) will discuss the first historical aspect of Reinhold’s earliest works. The second part (2.2) will relate his discussion of the development of reason to his advocacy for Enlightenment

### The rationality of institutions over time

As the origin of Freemasonry was not very clear, Masons generally took a keen interest in understanding their own history and the origins of the secrets in their society.[[150]](#footnote-150) Reinhold contributed to this interest by publishing an article on the ‘*kabirische Mysterien*’ for the *Journal für Freymaurer* which contains a detailed overview of what was known about the Kabeiroi, their religion and their mysteries.[[151]](#footnote-151) It is, however, unclear to what extent this article is Reinhold’s own work, as it is an adaptation of an adaptation.[[152]](#footnote-152) Although the way the article deals with history does thus not necessarily exactly correspond to Reinhold’s view, it must have been sufficiently close to his own convictions to have it published as his work. The origins of Freemasonry are sought among the mysteries of the ancient inhabitants of Greece, the so-called Kabeiroi. This results in a search for similarities ‘proving’ the ancient origin of Freemasonry, thus presumably contributing to the respectability of this secret society. Many striking similarities are noted, but the author is also critical of too much enthusiasm for the ancient mysteries.

Allein man darf bey der Vergleichung der kabirischen Mysterien mit den unsrigen nie vergessen, daß wir in aufgeklärteren Zeiten zu leben das Glück haben.[[153]](#footnote-153)

[In comparing the Kabirian mysteries with ours, one must, however, never forget that we have the fortune of living in more enlightened times.]

A remark like the above hints that Enlightenment affects our understanding of ‘mysteries’. The way in which the Kabeiroi interpreted their mysteries is outdated, no longer adequate to the current understanding. In this, the ancient mysteries may be like the practices of worship of the Kabeiroi, which were called ‘superstitious’.[[154]](#footnote-154) In more Enlightened times, mysteries should not lead to superstition anymore. Hence, comparing Masonic mysteries to their ancient counterparts should be done with caution. This is clearly a point Illuminates like Reinhold would support, for they intended to reform Freemasonry and fought superstition within it as they fought it in society as a whole.[[155]](#footnote-155) What was once good and useful may now be deemed superstitious and should be shunned.

This general attitude towards traditional institutions is also applied outside the Masonic context, in Reinhold’s reviews for the Vienna *Realzeitung*. Again, Reinhold need not have invented the arguments from history himself, as they may well have been taken from the books he reviewed. In that case he at least cites them with approval. Moreover, arguments from history offered for the abolition of monastic orders resemble the argumentation used in government circles. Reinhold’s approval of them shows his support for Emperor Joseph’s policy. The general line of these arguments from history is as follows. In the early days of Christianity a certain practice or institution, for instance monasticism, was absent. Therefore, this practice or institution does not belong to the core of Christianity and has been introduced at a particular time in history to fit the needs of that time. When nowadays the practice can be proven useless or even harmful, there is every reason to abolish it. Another example is the use of Latin in public Mass, which has, according to Reinhold, “lost its reasonable cause, but not yet its existence.”[[156]](#footnote-156) Showing that the introduction of a certain practice is closely connected to a historical situation also involves interpreting parts of the Bible in their historical context. The command of Jesus that his followers leave their homes can easily be cited in favor of monasticism, but given the historical context of the missionary works of the apostles, there appears to be no reason to believe that this command was to be followed by ordinary Christians and result in a life of seclusion.[[157]](#footnote-157)

Apart from placing the origin of traditional institutions in a determinate historical context,[[158]](#footnote-158) historical argumentation for the abolition of these institutions also involves showing that they have become useless or harmful in contemporary society. Regarding monasticism and religious intolerance one can argue that these practices are harmful to the state, because, for instance, they prevent marriages and thus population growth.[[159]](#footnote-159) With arguments like these the Austrian Chancellor, Fürst Kaunitz, had been working on the reduction of the monastic orders and their members from the late 1760’s onwards. Interestingly, his arguments are close to those used over a decade later in the books and pamphlets reviewed by Reinhold. In a report Kaunitz used both historical and economic arguments. Apart from the fact that entering a monastery made young people useless for the state’s economy, their capital is lost to society as well, for they produce no heirs. Moreover, the monasteries and the Church are generally less burdened with taxes than laymen, with the result that a considerable part of the country’s wealth does not contribute to the wealth of the state. The argument from history is put forward with force. Early Christianity, which was still pure and perfect, did fine without monasticism. Therefore, the reduction of monasticism will not harm this core of Christianity.[[160]](#footnote-160)

It is very clear that the advocates of this kind of argument measure by different standards when it comes to the contextuality of the past. Although, for instance, the supremacy of the Pope, monasticism and the excessive veneration of saints or the Sacred Heart are condemned as at least outdated, because they belong to another historical context, Christianity itself is never considered subject to the historical context of its origin. The arguments used in late eighteenth-century Vienna are based on the assumption that there is an eternal and indestructible core to Christianity, corresponding to the early Church, and it has to be found again by peeling off the layers of later additions that have been determined by their respective historical contexts. Again, there appears to be a strong relation here to Illuminatist thought. From Weishaupt’s ‘Anrede’ it is clear that he regarded the Illuminate Order as the heir to the secret core doctrine of Christianity. This core doctrine boiled down to the idea that, as children of God, all humans are to be regarded as brothers and sisters.[[161]](#footnote-161) As we have seen earlier, Reinhold believes that this core of Christianity would be compatible with Enlightenment and that only the rubbish that has been introduced in the course of history would have to be washed away.

### The development of human reason

A less concrete aspect of Reinhold’s historical orientation in his early writings is his presentation of Enlightenment as a necessary stage of the development of human reason. He explores this theme mainly in two essays published almost simultaneously in the *Merkur*, ‘Gedanken über Aufklärung’, which we have encountered earlier, and ‘Die Wissenschaften vor und nach ihrer Sekularisation. Ein historisches Gemählde’. Both articles present a historical exposition on the development of the sciences. It must be noted that Reinhold does not conceive of ‘the sciences’ primarily as the natural sciences. He uses the term ‘Wissenschaften’ to denote philosophy, or the totality of knowledge. In the following the term ‘sciences’ is used to denote this understanding of ‘Wissenschaften’. In both articles the point of departure is the condition of human knowledge in the Middle Ages. The hegemony of the Church over philosophy resulted in types of knowledge that were both useless and incomprehensible.[[162]](#footnote-162) The first part of ‘Gedanken über Aufklärung’ shows us the harmful consequences of this hegemony for the condition of reason.

Die Religion kündigte der Vernunft ein Verderbniß an, das der Mensch eben darum für unheilbar ansehen mußte, weil es ein unwiderrufliches Urtheil der göttlichen Gerechtigkeit seyn sollte; sie nöthigte der Vernunft fast nichts als unbegreifliche Sätze auf, deren Anzahl sich beynahe ins Unendliche vervielfältigte, und gewöhnte sie nicht nur durch die unaufhörlichen Unterwerfungen an ein sclavisches Stillschweigen, sondern erhob die Unterdrückung aller ihrer Wirksamkeit unter dem Namen des Glaubens zum ersten und beynahe einzigem Bedingnisse des Seelenheils.[[163]](#footnote-163)

[Religion announced to reason a damnation which man had to believe to be incurable, because it supposedly was an irrevocable judgment of divine justice. Religion forced nothing but incomprehensible doctrines on reason, the number of which was multiplied almost to infinity, and not only did it accustom reason to servile silence by means of incessant subjugations, but even, under the name of faith, elevated the suppression of all its activity to the first and almost only condition of salvation.]

This oppression of reason was not beneficial to the sciences in any direct way. However, in the essay on the sciences Reinhold claims that the hegemony of the Church of Rome was preparing its own downfall, by taking the oppression to the point where reason had no other choice but to fight back.

Der Druck des Elendes zwang endlich die Layen mit Gewalt zum Selbstdenken, und so ergriffen sie nach und nach dies einzige Mittel ihrer Rettung.[[164]](#footnote-164)

[The pressure of misery finally violently forced the laymen to think for themselves, and thus they slowly but surely got hold of this only way to save themselves.]

In this way, the oppression of reason generates it own dynamic and the worst circumstances carry the seeds of the end of oppression.[[165]](#footnote-165) The thought that ‘the darkest hour is just before dawn’ is not uncommon in Reinhold’s early work. In his ‘Mönchthum und Maurerey’, he assessed the negative contribution of monasticism to Enlightenment, namely by suppressing reason, which made the need to liberate reason all the more pressing. This view is again close to the Illuminatist way of viewing history.[[166]](#footnote-166) In the article on the sciences the means to the mental salvation of the laymen is situated in the discovery of the ancient classics. It is not entirely obvious which authors Reinhold has in mind here. He speaks of the ‘Greek sciences’ and claims that its teachers taught “only things that were understandable” and “convinced people that there was also happiness for them on this side of the grave.”[[167]](#footnote-167) Later, in his ‘Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie’, Reinhold would distinguish four main currents in antiquity: Platonism, Aristotelianism, stoicism and Epicureanism.[[168]](#footnote-168) The term ‘ancients’ in general probably refers to the main exponents of these systems. According to Reinhold, this Renaissance discovery of the classics broke the monopoly of the monks, which resulted in sciences that were based on common sense; a philosophy of the laymen.[[169]](#footnote-169) Reinhold very quickly and with broad strokes links the rediscovery of the Classics to the rise of the sciences and does not provide a historical account in the modern sense of the word. Yet it must be remembered that Reinhold is not aiming to be either neutral or detailed; his essay on the sciences consists of only eight pages. According to his picture the Renaissance is followed smoothly by the Reformation, when reason came to its rights even in matters of religion, and the sciences became free as a result of this freedom.[[170]](#footnote-170) Again, this is Reinhold’s interpretation of the importance and the effect of the Reformation, colored by the significance he attaches to the independent use of reason in Enlightenment. The picture he sketches is more related to neological currents in late eighteenth-century protestant theology than to the early Reformers themselves. The freedom of the sciences that Reinhold presents as the beneficial effect of the Reformation resulted in sciences that are truly useful to all kinds of people and to society as a whole.[[171]](#footnote-171) Thus, Reinhold’s essay on the sciences presents a straight line of progress from the Middle Ages through the Renaissance and Reformation into his own time. In situating the root of the freedom of the sciences and of Enlightenment in the circumstance that laymen started to think for themselves, Reinhold’s view of Enlightenment is, in this respect, related to that of Kant, who, as we have seen, advocated thinking for oneself as one of the major characteristics of Enlightenment.[[172]](#footnote-172)

The positive and uncomplicated perspective on the progress of the sciences from the Renaissance onwards as sketched above is given a nuance in the first part of ‘Gedanken über Aufklärung’, appearing in the same month as the essay on the sciences. The article opens with a similar account of the oppressed position of the sciences in the Middle Ages. The subsequently established freedom of reason resulted in elaborate doctrinal structures (*Lehrgebäude*). Unfortunately, this was not all that was needed. The *Lehrgebäude* turned out to be no more than the scaffolding, so that the apparently finished building had in fact hardly been begun.

Die gelehrten Baumeister konnten gar nicht begreiffen, wie so mancher Einwohner ihrer Gebäude durch den Fußboden, den sie mit allem Fleiße gezimmert hatten, durchfallen; wie sich so mancher über die Ungemächlichkeiten der Witterung beklagen konnte, der er von allen Seiten ausgesetzet blieb. Man kann diese Herren, die sich ihrer Mühe und Geschicklichkeit bewußt waren, auch nicht verdenken, daß sie das höchlich Wunder nahm; denn sie hätten sich ehe alles in der Welt einfallen lassen, als daß sie von dem Gebäude, welches die Menschen gegen Aberglauben und Despotismus in Schutz nehmen sollte, weiter nichts als das **Gerüste** fertig hätten.[[173]](#footnote-173)

[The learned architects could not understand at all why so many inhabitants of their buildings fell through the floors that they had built with great care; why so many complained of the inconveniences of enduring the weather to which they were exposed from all sides. These gentlemen, being aware of their industry and their talents, cannot be blamed for being surprised, for they would have thought of anything in the world before they would understand that they had only finished the **scaffolding** of the building that was supposed to protect people from superstition and despotism.]

It is again obvious that Reinhold is by no means a neutral commentator on the story of the *progress* of the sciences. His account is based on a specific view of their *purpose*. In this particular instance, philosophers are compared to construction workers that are building a structure that will protect the people from the threats of superstition and despotism. Naturally, the ‘building’ metaphor would appeal to any Freemason. The point of the citation is that the structure thus built is not fit to protect the people, as it is only the scaffolding. Now, the question is why philosophy does not succeed in fulfilling its aim and protecting the people from superstition and despotism. Reinhold blames the abstractions carried out by the philosophers, resulting in a science that has come to be disconnected from human reality.[[174]](#footnote-174)

Der Gelehrte der seine Analyse wissenschaftlicher Begriffe immer weiter hinauf verfolgte, verlohr in eben dem Verhältnisse jeden andern der noch nicht wissenschaftlich war aus dem Gesichte. Er fand die Ideen die er mit dem gemeinen Manne gemein hatte, zu unbedeutend, um sie seiner Bearbeitung zu würdigen. Indessen wurden selbst die allgemeinen Notionen fürs menschliche Leben in eben dem Grade unbrauchbar, als sie sich von den individuellen Empfindungen, den Triebfedern aller Thätigkeit des Menschen, entfernten, und mit der ganzen übrigen Ideenmasse ungleichartig wurden.[[175]](#footnote-175)

[The scholar who carried his analysis of scientific concepts ever further, to that extent lost sight of any other concepts that were not yet scientific. He considered those ideas that he had in common with common people not worthy of his attention. In the meantime even the general notions lost their use for human life to such an extent that they became distanced from individual impressions, the incentives of all human activity, and dissimilar to all the rest of the ideas.]

In the first section of this chapter it has been shown that the ideas that philosophers and common men have in common are central to Reinhold’s conception of Enlightenment, functioning as mediating concepts that are needed in order to communicate the distinct concepts of the philosophers to the rest of society. The lack of attention for this kind of ideas is precisely the cause of the problem that Enlightenment is supposed to solve. Philosophy has lost touch with the concrete world in which human beings live, with sensations, with incentives. Therefore, philosophers are unable to eliminate the threats that real humans face, because they are not properly related to the reality in which these threats exist. Enlightenment is presented as the solution to the problem by reconnecting the scientific progress to the world of the common man.

Man stieg nun vom Allgemeinen immer mehr aufs Besondere herab, und berichtigte nun auch Begriffe, die von kleinerem Umfange, aber desto größerer Wichtigkeit waren, denn sie wurden die Brücke zwischen Spekulation und Handlung. Diese neuere wissenschaftliche Begriffe paßten nun den wirklichen Gegenständen in der Welt viel besser an, näherten sich den gemeinern Fähigkeiten, leuchteten den Wirkungskreisen aller Stände, und wirkten jene Revolution, die als sie anfieng merklicher zu werden, mit dem Namen **Aufklärung** bezeichnet wurde.[[176]](#footnote-176)

[They descended more and more from the general to the particular and also corrected those concepts that had a smaller extension, yet were all the more important, for they became the bridges between speculation and action. These newer scientific concepts were much better suited to the real objects in the world, they approached more common capacities, illuminated the spheres of action of all classes and effected that revolution that was to be called ‘Enlightenment’ when it began to be noted]

Only the last stage of the development that can be traced back to the end of medieval science can properly be called Enlightenment, when the fruits of reason are reconnected to human reality. Reinhold’s historical account of Enlightenment shows that there are at least two conditions that need to be fulfilled, as far as he is concerned. First of all, reason needs to be released from the limitations set by the Church. Secondly, it must be (re)connected to human reality, so that it can influence man’s actions and thus be of practical use. In this way, the historical presentation of Enlightenment contributes to the more precise determination of the concept that was discussed in the first section of this chapter. It explains what is needed to make rational people out of those who are merely capable of being rational. Moreover, it shows how the situation in which some people require assistance from philosophers in order to become rational is a result of the inevitable development of human reason throughout history. It is becoming clearer in what way Reinhold’s conception of Enlightenment differs from Kant’s cited earlier, now that we have seen that Reinhold insists on the importance of thinking for oneself in the first stage of the emancipation of reason. He would therefore probably agree with Kant that thinking for oneself is a crucial ingredient for Enlightenment. However, to him it is not an unproblematic ingredient, since he believes that the newly found freedom of reason will lead to an overenthusiastic use of reason, overlooking the vital importance of the real world in which reason is actually employed. It may well be for this reason that Reinhold initially was to think of Kant as an old-fashioned metaphysician, as will be shown in more detail in Chapter 3.

## Human reason

From Reinhold’s own description of Enlightenment and his use of the term discussed in the first section it has become clear that already in his early writings he had a specific understanding of what reason is and what it is not. One aspect of Reinhold’s thoughts on reason has been discussed in the previous section, namely the historical development of human reason in general. The present section focuses on another characteristic of Reinhold’s conception of human reason, namely his insistence that in its proper use reason is not severed from sensibility and that the philosophical use of reason is not to be separated from its use in daily life. Starting from the final point of the previous section, that the connection of reason to the daily reality of human life is a crucial component of the Enlightenment as propagated by Reinhold, the current section first investigates Reinhold’s views on the relation between reason and sensibility (3.1). Secondly, it discusses the intimate connection that Reinhold sees between human nature and human reason (3.2).

### Reason and sensibility in matters of religion and superstition

Although it may appear as if Reinhold’s preoccupation with the gap between the abstract thinking of the philosophers and the needs of the masses first occurs in his ‘Gedanken über Aufklärung’, it actually dates back to his Vienna reviews and is implied in Reinhold’s view of Enlightenment as *Volksaufklärung*. Indeed, the abstractness of the philosophers’ concepts is only problematic insofar as it hinders the newly established clarity from setting in where it is most needed, in the unclear and superstitious thinking of the masses. What is called for is a rationalization of religion that does not carry its abstractions to the extreme. In Reinhold’s reviews for the *Realzeitung*, the main focus is on the first part of that requirement, the rationalization of religion. After his move to the Protestant North, Reinhold started showing more interest in the potential difficulties of rationalizing too much. In his new, Protestant environment, he appears to have found a new enemy in the philosophers of the schools, who rationalize to the extreme, and he consequently stresses the need for reconnecting the abstract systems to the concrete, real world.[[177]](#footnote-177) However, even in some of the Vienna reviews Reinhold already shows some awareness of the needed connection between abstract speculation and concrete action that was to become so prominent in his ‘Gedanken über Aufklärung’.

We find a prime example of this awareness in Reinhold’s review of a work on the veneration of the sacred heart of Christ (January 1783). The nature of the venerated object was, and still is, subject to debate: is it the actual heart of Christ, the heart as a symbol for His love, or this love itself, through the symbol of the heart? In the book under review, the author criticizes even symbolic veneration for its danger to the masses, that is, the possible lapse into superstition. The veneration of sensible objects is part of the unenlightened religion that Reinhold opposes. Yet he does not advocate a religion without any sensible objects. He agrees that even symbolic veneration would be superfluous for the enlightened believer, and adds that an enlightened believer’s need for sensation is already satisfied by the sensible objects presented to him by the general Church.[[178]](#footnote-178) Enlightened believers do need sensible objects in their religion, but they do not need to venerate sensible objects. The Church as it is fulfils their need for sensation in religion. In the opening paragraph of the review Reinhold had already discussed the importance of sensibility in a more general context. This passage develops thoughts that foreshadow Reinhold’s later philosophical themes.

Der kennt die Menschen nicht, der den Gebrauch der Bilder und Symbolen aus dem Gebiethe der Religion verbannt wissen will, und nicht begreifen kann, wieviel die Wahrheit durch die sinnliche Hülle gewann, in welche sie von den ersten Gesetzgebern und Völkerlehrern eingekleidet wurde. Auch in dem hellsten Kopfe eines Weisen müssen sich die abgezogenen Begriffe in sinnliche Bilder zusammendrängen, bevor sein erhabenster Gedanke zur That reift; er braucht sichtbare Merkstäbe sogar in seiner Ideenwelt, braucht Erinnerungen von aussen an Gegenstände, die in der Reihe seiner Begriffe von innen nicht so oft vorkommen würden, als es ihres wohlthätigen Einflusses halber zu wünschen wäre.[[179]](#footnote-179)

[He does not understand people, who wants to banish the use of images and symbols from the domain of religion and who cannot understand how much truth has gained from the sensible cover in which it was dressed by the first legislators and instructors of the nations. Even in the brightest mind of a wise man the abstracted concepts must be compressed into sensible images before his most elevated thought bears the fruit of action. Even in his world of ideas he needs visible marks, needs external reminiscences of objects that do not occur in his train of thought as often as it would be wished for the sake of their beneficial influence.]

Even the abstract concepts of the wise need to be translated or converted into sensible images in order to have any effect upon their actions. The concepts can only have a beneficent influence when they are connected to sensibility. Here, as in ‘Gedanken über Aufklärung’ we find theoretical speculation on the one hand and action on the other. The thought that reason must be connected to sensibility in order for its activity to have any concrete result in action is also encountered in this early review. The ultimate goal is neither action nor reason on their own, but rather action guided by reason. The abstract thinking of the wise is associated with an inner world, while sensible objects are located in the outside world. It is clear that abstract speculation needs to be linked with this outside world of the senses in order to have any beneficial effects in the real world. Without this connection, the wise man will be a stoic sage, detached from the world. The remainder of the opening paragraph, not cited here, focuses on the other side of the problem. Not only does reason need to be connected to sensibility in order to be effective, but sensibility also needs to be connected to reason in order to be properly guided. Excessive attention to sensation leads to misunderstanding and misdirected veneration, in other words, idolatry and superstition.[[180]](#footnote-180) Although the early instructors of the Church needed to dress the truth for the senses, the dress should not be the primary focus of religious attention. The sensible objects presented by the general Church (*allgemeine* *Kirche*, with the original meaning of ‘katholikos’ in mind), are likely to be the ‘sensible cover’, instituted at an early stage of Christianity. They are the concrete manifestation of religion in daily life, with buildings, prayers and services. As these are deemed sufficient for the enlightened believer, Reinhold’s view on religion as expressed here again shows that he regards early Christianity as an ideal to which the contemporary Church should return. His criticism is directed at overemphasizing the sensible objects associated with religion to the point where the veneration of these objects takes the place of religion itself.

We can take another example to show that Reinhold’s interest in combining reason and sensibility dates from his early days in Vienna. The theme was not only expressed in reaction to the established religion, but also with regard to Freemasonry, in one of his earliest extant works, a speech, read in the Lodge *Zur wahren Eintracht*. In his speech ‘Der Wehrt einer Gesellschaft hängt von der Beschaffenheit ihrer Glieder ab’ (September 1783), he portrays true Freemasonry as a society of men of both healthy minds and good hearts.

Die einzigen Merkmale, durch die der Freymäurer den Charakter seines Ordens ankündigen darf und muß, sind der Adel und die Güte seines Geistes und Herzens, Merkmale die eben darum den Thoren, und den Bösewicht aus unsrem Kreise ausschliessen, weil sie ihnen Geheimnisse bleiben, den würdigen Mann aber desto gewisser zu uns einladen, weil sie ihm so ganz verständlich sind.[[181]](#footnote-181)

[The only characteristics through which the Mason may and must announce the nature of his order are the nobility and goodness of his mind and heart; characteristics that precisely for this reason exclude the fool and the villain from our circle, because these things remain secrets to them. They do invite the worthy man all the more to us, because they can be fully understood by him.]

Neither fools nor villains have a place in Freemasonry, for they have no access to the nobility of mind and heart that is at its centre. They will view these characteristics as the Masonic secrets. For the worthy man, however, the character of this secret society is anything but hidden, as he has insight into the most important traits of the Order. A proper understanding of Freemasonry and especially the status of its secrets was of the highest importance to Reinhold, because of his Illuminatist views. The Illuminates not only worked toward social and political reform throughout society, they were also aiming at reforming the Masonic society from within. Regarding Freemasonry, Reinhold warns against both superstition and non-belief, as he did with regard to established religion. In the speech we also find a passage similar to the introduction to the review cited above, focusing on the need for reason to be connected to the senses (here *Empfindung*) in order to have a beneficial influence on action.

Allein kan ich deßwegen die für die Menschheit so traurige Thatsache läugnen, daß eben dasselbe Licht der Aufklärung, welches den Verstand eines Mannes erleuchtet, sein Herz kalt läßt, und daß die Menschheit durch das Herz manches ihrer Söhne vielleicht mehr einbüßte, als sie durch seinen Geist gewann. Die Frucht der deutlichsten und mühsamsten Überzeugung der herrlichste Gedanken eines grossen Geistes verunglücket nur gar zu oft auf dem Wege zur That den er durch die Empfindung nehmen muß. Da erwartet ihn eine Menge ungleichartiger Vorstellungen der Sinne, und droht ihn im Gedränge zu ersticken. Nichts kan ihn retten als eine besondere Lebhaftigkeit, die er nicht so viel der angebohrene Grösse des Geistes, als einer durch anhaltende Übung erlangten Fertigkeit zu danken hat. Diese Fertigkeit ist Tugend, Güte des Herzens, Adel der Seele.[[182]](#footnote-182)

[This is no reason for me to deny the sad fact for mankind, that the same light of Enlightenment that illuminates the understanding of a man leaves his heart cold and that humanity may have lost more by the heart of some of its sons than it gained by their minds. The fruit of the most distinct and most difficult conviction of the most elevated thought perishes too often on the way to deeds that it has to take through sensation. There, a manifold of dissimilar sense representations awaits and threatens to stifle it in the jostling. Nothing can save it but a particular liveliness, for which he does not have to thank an innate magnanimity, but rather a skill acquired by constant exercise. This skill is virtue, goodness of the heart, nobility of the soul.]

One of the most interesting elements of this passage is the connection assumed between the senses and the heart. At first, there appears to be an opposition between the heart and the mind (*Verstand/Geist*), as apparently the condition of the heart can prevent clarity of mind from spreading the beneficial influence of Enlightenment throughout humanity. However, it soon becomes clear that the real problem is the incapability of the mind to concert its thoughts into action without virtue, or a good heart. It is not very clear what Reinhold means with this ‘goodness of the heart’, he obviously situates it in a proper relation between elevated thoughts and sensibility, so that those thoughts can bear the fruit of action.

These two examples cited from Reinhold’s earliest works show that his preoccupation with the connection between abstract concepts and concrete action predates ‘Gedanken über Aufklärung’, in which it became the prominent issue of Enlightenment. From the start of his commitment to Enlightenment, Reinhold is clear on the point that it has to be a *Volksaufklärung*, which means that action will be needed alongside thought, since the intellectual elite is called on to correct some of the evils in society and religion. On several occasions he expresses concern for the process of the connection of thoughts to action. If this process fails, even the most elevated and potentially beneficial thoughts or ideas do not lead to the proper actions in the sensible world, because the motivational system, the heart, is not in it. Rational action, needed for Enlightenment, can only take place when mind and heart work together. We can compare the process through which the heart helps the thoughts become active in the sensible world of action to the process through which the philosopher leads the common man to clear and distinct concepts, as described in the first section of this chapter. The latter process may also be seen as one in which the heart plays a decisive role, as the philosopher uses a concept that is close to the heart, that of a wise and loving father, to exemplify, or make concrete and sensible, the distinct concept of God’s justice.

Although the primary focus of the current section has been Reinhold’s conviction that reason needs to connect to the concrete world of sensibility and the heart, he was just as convinced that in action and sensibility rationality must play a role to prevent excesses like idolatry and superstition. This means that already in his earliest works Reinhold stresses the complexity of human nature, consisting of several elements that need one another to function properly, although they are not consistently distinguished and analyzed at this stage of his philosophical development.

### Human reason and human nature

Above we have seen that Reinhold, at this early stage of his development, distinguishes several human capacities such as reason, sensibility, thought, mind and heart but at the same time stresses the importance of connecting these elements in the context of Enlightenment in order to realize its goals in real life. As there is not yet a single account of the precise relations between these elements, it will be worthwhile to look at his views on human nature in general and the role of reason in human nature.

As already stated, according to Reinhold, man’s functioning properly depends on his ability to connect his mind to his heart, his theories to his actions. For Reinhold, this theme was closely related to Freemasonry as is even clearer from another speech, ‘Mönchthum und Maurerey’, cited earlier in this chapter, about the contrast between the institutions of monasticism and Freemasonry. According to Reinhold the essence of monasticism consists in disciplining human nature by debasing all (natural) inclinations and potentials of humanity.

Der (…) Endzweck des Mönchthums ist – **Züchtigung** der menschlichen Natur. Sie haben dieser seit Adams Apfelbisse abgesagte Feindinn Gottes eine ewige Fehde zugeschworen, und glauben den heiligsten Willen des Menschenvaters zu erfüllen, wenn sie die Menschheit in allen ihren Trieben, Neigungen und Wünschen **quälten**, und in allen ihren Vorzügen, Kräften und Fähigkeiten **erniedrigten**.[[183]](#footnote-183)

[The final goal of monasticism is *disciplining* human nature. They have sworn an eternal feud with this refused enemy of God since Adam ate the apple, and they believe they fulfill the most holy will of the Father of Man when they *torment* mankind in all its drives, inclinations and wishes and *humiliate* it in all its merits, powers and capacities.]

This degradation of human nature manifests itself on the one hand in the way of living of the monks themselves, who, because of their vows cannot take part in common human activities: they cannot own property, they cannot procreate and they have sworn obedience to their order. As Reinhold puts it in one of his reviews this is a violation of human rights. For why should God have given man certain abilities if not using them at all is considered superior to using them wisely?[[184]](#footnote-184) Although the monks can only place such restrictions on themselves, not on others, they have sought to make the whole of Christianity abstain from the use of reason, by bringing it under the yoke of faith (cf. 172).

It will come as no surprise that Reinhold conceives of Freemasonry as the exact opposite of monasticism. Masons value human nature and especially its most particular characteristic, reason, “the noblest of human distinctions” (177). The rationality of human nature is highly appreciated by Masons, whereas it is evaluated negatively by monks. Next, Reinhold discusses the respective constitutions of monasticism and Freemasonry. By depriving its members of the exercise of fundamental human rights, monasticism severs them from humanity, thereby thwarting their human nature.

Eine Zunft von Menschen, welche die süssesten, stärksten, und heiligsten Bande, die den Menschen an die Menschheit knüpfen, zerrissen haben, kann **die** vom allgemeinen Menschensinne **mehr** beherrschet werden als jedes vom menschlichen Körper abgetrenntes Glied von der Seele? Was soll die Vernunft denen nützen, die da aufgehöret haben Menschen zu seyn? (180)

[A kind of people who have torn the sweetest, strongest and holiest ties that bind human beings together, can *such* a kind of people be *any* *more* controlled by common human sense than any limb torn from the human body could be controlled by the soul? What use is reason for those who have stopped being human?]

Freemasonry advocates the exact opposite. Not only are members allowed to remain connected to their worldly goods and their familiar and civil attachments, this is even stimulated, for to be a true Mason one must have learned to be a good human, that is, a good husband and citizen.[[185]](#footnote-185)

Vermöge ihrer Verfassung läßt sie [Freemasonry] nicht nur jedem von uns seine Freyheit, seine Güter, seinen Rang, sein Weib, und seine Kinder, überhaupt alle seine natürliche und bürgerliche Ansprüche; sondern sie lehret, erleichtert, und schärfet jedem den vollkommensten Gebrauch davon ein, und erkennet keinen für ihren ächten Sohn, der nicht ein guter Gatte, Bürger, und Unterthan seyn gelernet hat. (183)

[Because of its constitution, Masonry not only allows each of us his freedom, goods, rank, wife and children, and all of his natural and civil claims in general; moreover, it teaches, facilitates and impresses upon each the most perfect use of these and does not acknowledge anyone as its true son who has not learned to be a good husband, citizen and subject.]

Whereas the monkish vows of obedience, poverty and chastity sever humans from humanity by depriving them of the need to use reason, Freemasonry stimulates its initiates to be active members of human society. It is in the field of human relations that people develop the kind of reason that Masons value. Thus, this Masonic speech shows a particular conception of the use of reason that is closely related to being truly human, connected to others, practicing precisely those natural human activities that monastic life has sought to discredit. In this sense Reinhold’s understanding of human reason is practical, since human nature, epitomized by human reason is closely connected to the social and civil aspects of human activities. This is, of course, not only associated with Reinhold’s Masonic, but also with his Illuminatist engagement, as the latter organization sought to establish a social and political reform on the basis of morality.

The connection of reason with human relations brings to mind the first two of Reinhold’s extant letters, to his father and to Blumauer, both cited in Chapter 1. There, we saw that the connection to the rest of humanity and especially to his family was important to Reinhold, as he felt cut off from them being a monk. As a Mason Reinhold understood human relations as belonging to human nature and as something to be cherished by human reason, and thus placed them in a rational and positive context. The unpublished speech on the ‘Wehrt einer Gesellschaft’ cited earlier, in the first part of this section, also uses family relations to exemplify the first stage of moral behavior.

Die niedrigste Menschenseele ist immer diejenige, welche nicht über die Spanne hinaussieht, die ihr Körper auf dem Erdboden einnihmt, und ihre eingeschränkte Kraft geht ganz für thierische Bedürfnisse darauf. Über sie raget die Geisteskraft hinaus die wenigstens nahe umherstehende Gegenstände erreichet, und dem gewöhnlichen Menschen das Wohl seiner Familie wichtig genug finden läßt. Von einen viel grösseren Höhe wirkt der nützliche Bürger aufs Wohl vieler tausend Famillien herab, und ist Wohlthäter seines Vaterlandes. Gebet seinem Geiste noch stärkere Flügel, und er wird sich zu einer Höhe emporschwingen, von welcher er den Erdenkreis umfasset. Nichts geringeres als das Wohl der Menschheit wird nun die Beschäftigung seyn die seiner Thatkraft angemessen ist.[[186]](#footnote-186)

[The lowest human soul is always that one that does not see beyond the space its body occupies on earth and whose limited power is entirely used for animal needs. Higher than this rises the strength of mind that stretches at least to objects that are close at hand, and which makes the well-being of his family sufficiently important for ordinary people. A useful citizen works from a greater height for the well-being of many thousands of families and becomes a benefactor of his country. If his spirit has even stronger wings, it will climb to the height at which its effects encompass the whole world. Nothing less than the well-being of mankind will be the occupation that is fit for his powers.]

Thus, human relations to others and the natural feelings involved in these relations are crucial to human nature. Ordinary people will direct their will to do good to their next of kin. The more strength of mind (*Geisteskraft*) someone has, the wider the circle of people to which he can extend his ability to do good. In a way, those at the highest stages of this moral ladder have the abilities to treat all their fellow citizens or even the whole of mankind as an ordinary man would treat his family. Therefore, it can be no surprise that the example of the philosopher helping the common man to have a distinct concept of God’s justice uses the idea ‘father’, because this idea is common to both of them, as they are both human beings.[[187]](#footnote-187) Moreover, it is ordinarily connected to a set of positive feelings that the philosopher would like the common man to extend to God. By presenting God as the father of mankind there is indeed an opening to regard the rest of humanity as family. Reinhold’s inspiration for this view may well be related to his Illuminatist engagement.[[188]](#footnote-188)

## Reinhold’s Enlightenment versus blind faith: ‘Ueber den Hang zum Wunderbaren’, Herzenserleichterung zweyer Menschenfreunden and ‘Skizze einer Theogonie des blinden Glaubens’

In the previous three sections different aspects of Reinhold’s views on Enlightenment have been discussed, on the basis of a representative cross section of his early writings. We saw that Reinhold sought to further the dissemination of Enlightenment by clarifying the term ‘Enlightenment’ and to explain the phenomenon ‘Enlightenment’ by referring to history. The history he described is the history of the development of human reason. It is of crucial importance to understand that Reinhold’s view on human reason is closely connected to his view on human nature, which entails that the ideal or complete use of reason includes a connection to sensibility. On the one hand this is to ensure that the abstract concepts of reason are still meaningfully connected to concrete experience. Without such a connection good ideas can not be turned into good actions. On the other hand, sensibility needs to be guided by reason so that it will be less prone to superstition.

All of the above-mentioned elements of Reinhold’s views on Enlightenment come together in his criticism of certain features of established religion. This criticism also applies to certain tendencies within Freemasonry, for that matter. It is closely related to the attitude of the Illuminates, who tried to infiltrate Masonic Lodges and reform them for their own purposes. The main point of Reinhold’s criticism concerns the tendency within Freemasonry to allow superstition and mysticism to take root in the organization and is expressed in the speech ‘Ueber den Hang zum Wunderbaren’, held in the Vienna Lodge *Zur wahren Eintracht*, just before his move to Leipzig in 1783. Published in 1784, this Masonic piece is thematically close to his final pre-Kantian work published in *Der Teutsche Merkur*, ‘Skizze einer Theogonie des blinden Glaubens’ (June 1786), which is of a more general nature, dealing with the development of religion. Since the ‘Skizze’ is thematically related to Reinhold’s earlier work, while in time it is close to the beginning of his Kantianizing period, discussing it will be helpful in assessing Reinhold’s way of thinking at the time when Kant became an important philosophical influence. It must be noted that this essay also marks the continuity in Reinhold’s thought, as it was recycled, with minor changes, as a part of the ‘Zwölfter Brief’ in the first volume of Reinhold’s *Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie*.[[189]](#footnote-189)

Although the circumstances in which and the audience for which Reinhold wrote ‘Ueber den Hang’ and ‘Skizze’ are quite different, the essays have similar subjects and show a similar structure. Both offer an explanatory account of the origin of blind faith or superstition, by looking at the original state of humanity, and especially the relation of man to nature. In ‘Ueber den Hang zum Wunderbaren’ Reinhold sets out by describing the ‘tendency for the miraculous’ against which he wants to warn as an “illness of the soul” that has wrought havoc in both the Christian and the Masonic traditions.[[190]](#footnote-190) Reinhold’s diagnosis that the Masonic world is not immune to this illness shows his Illuminatist allegiance. The view on human history presented in both ‘Ueber den Hang’ and ‘Skizze’ appears to be very close to the view expressed by the founder of the Illuminati, Adam Weishaupt in his ‘Anrede’. In ‘Ueber den Hang’ Reinhold describes the problem in the following manner.

Sie [this illness of the soul] äussert sich in dem Geschmacke am Uebernatürlichen, das sie überall an die Stelle des Ausserordentlichen setzet, sie wittert allenthalben ausserordentliche Einflüsse, vermenget das Unbekannte mit dem Unbegreiflichen, schaft sich Geisterwelten, und glaubet dem Urheber der Natur viel Ehre zu erweisen, wenn sie ihn überall unmittelbar wirken läßt, und ihn alle Augenblicke herausfordert, sein vollkommenes Werk zu verbessern.[[191]](#footnote-191)

[This illness of the soul expresses itself in a taste for the supernatural, which it inserts wherever it finds something extraordinary; it senses extraordinary influences everywhere; mixes the unknown with the incomprehensible; creates worlds of spirits for itself and believes that the author of the universe is highly honored when it lets Him immediately work everywhere and summons Him every second to improve His perfect creation.]

The dangerous tendency thus consists in preferring supernatural explanations to natural ones combined with an image of the direct and repeated divine influence upon creation. In the ‘Skizze’ Reinhold attributes a similar tendency to see the invisible hand of God everywhere to the only partial development of reason in the earlier days of man.[[192]](#footnote-192) In ‘Ueber den Hang’ he describes the psychology of man in this early stage of development in more detail. When reason had hardly developed, man’s mind was fully occupied with sensations. Therefore, his image of nature entirely consisted of “his experiences up to that moment heaped together.”[[193]](#footnote-193) The occurrence of extraordinary events was not understood and their causes were sought outside nature, in a supernatural world. This, according to Reinhold, was all excusable in the case of early humanity,[[194]](#footnote-194) which implies that he believes that people should know better now, since reason has progressed as well as our knowledge of nature. However, due to the activities of those who claim to speak on behalf of the divine power, this progress has been significantly hindered.[[195]](#footnote-195) The class of priests has sought everywhere to preserve its position and serve its own interests by stimulating superstition among the masses. As in ‘Mönchthum und Maurerey’ Reinhold blames the monks for presenting nature as God’s enemy.[[196]](#footnote-196) The ‘Skizze’ shows a similar diagnosis: through the influence of the representatives of established religion, God and nature are being understood as opposites. People began to attribute everything “extraordinary, terrifying and big” to God, while nature was only credited with the small, ordinary things and the normal order of events.[[197]](#footnote-197) The thought that man would not be able to fulfill God’s will with his natural powers and was always in need of supernatural assistance, was just around the corner. From there, everything that went easy or was pleasant was thought of as only natural and therefore against God’s will and it was thought that painful sacrifice was needed in order to do God’s will.[[198]](#footnote-198)

Even if in Reinhold’s days the progress of the natural sciences had become clearly marked and the room for supernatural explanations accordingly diminished, the danger of superstition and blind faith still remains, so both essays warn the audience. In ‘Ueber den Hang’ this persistent danger is attributed to the natural circumstance that miraculous stories are often more engaging for the mind,[[199]](#footnote-199) because they are more appealing to the senses.[[200]](#footnote-200) The remnants of the taste for the miraculous in culture and society continue to spell danger, even for those who claim that they are the representatives of the Enlightenment. Therefore the Masons in particular must be on their guard, lest they should seek the same miracles in Masonry as they have freed themselves from when rejecting monkish superstition.[[201]](#footnote-201) In the speech on the ‘Wehrt einer Gesellschaft’ discussed earlier in this Chapter, Reinhold proposed that the mysteries of Freemasonry are to serve as a test.

Es gehört unstreitig *Geisteskraft* dazu um durch die manigfaltigen Hüllen der Sinnbilder bis zu jenen Wahrheiten hindurchzudringen, welche die vorsichtige Klugheit erleuchteter Vorfahren als eine Hinterlage für scharfsichtige Enkel zurückeließ. [[202]](#footnote-202)

[Strength of mind is undoubtedly needed in order to penetrate the manifold covers of sensible images to those truths that the cautious prudence of inspired ancestors left as a deposit for sharp-sighted descendants.]

Those who take these mysteries to be either merely a game or a reference to supernatural hidden truths have no place in true Masonry, that is, Illuminatism. In ‘Ueber den Hang’ Reinhold, arguing that Masonry and superstition are incompatible, exhorts his audience to stick to nature, which sufficiently occupies reason – not unlike the general Church mentioned in the review discussed above in section 3.1. There is no need at all to go beyond.[[203]](#footnote-203) In his attempt to explain man’s taste for the miraculous and the supernatural by means of natural psychological mechanisms and in his recommendation to stick to nature, Reinhold can be called a naturalist, especially with regard to the supernatural aspects of religion.

Outside of the direct Masonic context, the ‘Skizze’ takes a dim view of the current situation of mankind as a result of blind faith. Notwithstanding the progress that has been made in the sciences, which has dealt severe blows to the importance of the supernatural in explanations, the opposition between God and nature and as a consequence between God and reason endures with regard to morality.[[204]](#footnote-204) The only consolation offered by the ‘Skizze’ is the larger picture of human history, which learns that ‘blind faith’ is but a passing phase in the course of human development, which will only last as long as the mental powers (*Geisteskräfte*) of man are not yet fully developed.

Es war eine Zeit, da die Geisteskräfte der Menschen zu schwach, – und es kömmt eine Zeit, da sie zu stark seyn werden – das Joch des **blinden Glaubens** zu ertragen.[[205]](#footnote-205)

[There was a time when the mental powers of man were too weak – and there will be a time when they will be too strong – to bear the yoke of *blind faith*.]

The period of blind faith is the transitional period in which man’s mental powers have developed to a certain extent, but not fully. Reinhold pays special attention to the period that went before and the one that will come after the phase of blind faith. In the early period, before reason had begun to develop, the relation between God and mankind was immediate and uncomplicated. Man could not “distinguish God from nature, the only organ through which He could become visible to him.”[[206]](#footnote-206) The original relation between man and God was thus a harmonious one, and divine law was followed spontaneously. Here, the problem of a discrepancy between the mind and the heart does not arise. As this situation is characterized as ‘innocent’, it can be regarded as the philosophical version of Eden. This paradise was lost because of the development of reason in answer to population growth.[[207]](#footnote-207) The incomplete development of reason leads to blind faith, but once reason will be fully developed, man will learn “to will from *free**choice*” the same things he had spontaneously wanted in his original state of innocence.[[208]](#footnote-208) Enthusiastically, Reinhold sketches man’s situation in those times to come.

Die unendliche Macht, Weisheit und Güte, die durch ihre vereinigte Würkung sein kindliches **Herz** gelenkt hatte, tritt dann als reines **Ideal der höchsten Vollkommenheit** aus dem Chaos seiner verworrenen Begriffe hervor, und wird der höchste leitende **Grundsatz seiner Vernunft**, so wie die vornehmste **Triebfeder seines Herzens**.[[209]](#footnote-209)

[The infinite power, wisdom and goodness that had steered his childish *heart* with their unified activity then appear as pure *ideal of highest perfection* out of the chaos of his confused concepts and this becomes the highest leading *principle of his reason* as well as the most important *incentive of his heart*.]

The vision sketched here entails the return of the original harmony between God and man, but on another, higher level, understood by reason. This makes the period of blind faith and superstition only a transitional phase in the history of the relation between God and humanity. The use of the term ‘Triebfeder’ here places this article firmly in the context of Reinhold’s pre-Kantian Enlightenment writings. In section 3.1 of the present chapter we saw that he, both in his Masonic speech and in a review, attached great importance to the link between intellectual efforts and our motivational system. In the ‘Skizze’ the highest stage of human development is described in terms of an ideal that is at once the highest principle of reason and the most important incentive for action. Another passage, comparing the original harmony with the expected outcome of the development of human reason, can be called emblematic for Reinhold’s views on Enlightenment.

Es gehören Jahrtausende von vielfältigen und meistens traurigen Erfahrungen dazu, bis der **freygelassene** Zögling der Natur mit **freyer Wahl** wollen lernt, was er **im Stande der Unschuld** aus **unvermeidlichem Triebe** gewollt hatte, und in der Gesellschaft als **Bürger** durch **Vernunft** findet, was ihm als **blossen Menschen** in seinem engen Familienkreise durch **Instinkt** eingegeben worden war.[[210]](#footnote-210)

[It takes millennia of various and mostly sad experience until the *released* pupil of nature learns to want by means of his *free choice* that which he, *in the state of innocence*, had wanted from *inescapable drive*, until he finds as a *citizen* in society by means of *reason* that which, in the small circle of his family, had been given to him as a *mere human being* by means of *instinct*.]

All key elements of Reinhold’s views on Enlightenment are contained in this passage. First of all, it presents man as a natural being who develops reason over time; that is, human beings are historical beings, whose reason develops throughout history. Secondly, the passage points to a parallel between moral behavior in society on the one hand and natural human behavior in smaller social units such as the family on the other. Moral behavior is presented as the rational extrapolation of the behavior that comes naturally to human beings as members of a family. Finally, the development of reason that makes this extrapolation possible is by no means a straightforward and easy process; things go wrong along the way.

In both ‘Ueber den Hang’ and ‘Skizze’ the presumed state of innocence has not endured because a misguided form of religion has obscured the understanding of the relation between God and nature, between God and mankind. The opposition between God and nature, forged by the defenders of blind faith, is understandable in light of the development of reason, but it hinders a proper understanding of nature and a proper religion. A new, rational state of harmony can be achieved through knowledge of and reverence for nature.

As it is the task of Enlightenment to oppose blind faith and bring humanity closer to the more elevated state in which God and nature will be reconciled, it is worthwhile to take a closer look at Reinhold’s *Herzenserleichterung zweyer Menschenfreunde*. This booklet is not so much a philosophical as a polemical work. It warns against the religious views of Johann Caspar Lavater, which may seem compatible with Enlightenment, but according to Reinhold are not. In a wider sense, the book deals with blind faith, the origins of which are described in the works discussed previously, in the context of the progress of Enlightenment. Published anonymously in 1785, it was written as a fictitious exchange of letters between Lichtfreund and Wahrmund, the latter of whom probably represents Reinhold’s own views most closely. Reinhard Lauth has placed this work in an Illuminatist context, by pointing out Reinhold’s contacts at this time with Joachim Christoph Bode, one of the main Illuminates in Saxony. Lauth claims Bode instructed Reinhold to write the *Herzenserleichterung* to warn against certain mystic tendencies in (French) Freemasonry and the crypto-Catholicism of for instance Lavater, which was also thought to be stimulated by secret societies, other than the Illuminates.[[211]](#footnote-211) Unfortunately, Lauth provides no evidence that Bode indeed inspired or instructed Reinhold to write this work. Nevertheless, the aim Lauth claims it served is clearly present in the text, which evolves as a discussion on the progress of Enlightenment. Lichtfreund represents a very optimistic outlook on the way Enlightenment has progressed thus far and has high hopes for the time to come, whereas Wahrmund presents a more realistic outlook, warning that there is still a lot of work to be done before victory can be claimed.

It will not be necessary here to go into details concerning the precise arguments of the discussion, in order to understand Reinhold’s views on the struggle between blind faith and Enlightenment. For this it will suffice to look at a few telling passages. Lichtfreund’s optimistic view on the progress that is being made is obvious from the following passage, claiming that opposite systems may peacefully coexist in one person.

Ja, mein Freund, Orthodoxie und Aufklärung, die festeste Anhängigkeit an einem Systeme mit der sanftesten Schonung aller übrigen, der feurigste Bekehrungseifer mit der uneingeschränktesten Duldung, der entschiedentste Wunderglauben mit der bedächtlichsten Ueberzeugung, die verworrensten Begriffe von übernatürlichen Gnadenwirkungen mit den hellsten psychologischen Einsichten, und *theologischer* Haß mit *philosophischer* Liebe der Natur![[212]](#footnote-212)

[Indeed, my friend, orthodoxy and Enlightenment, the strongest attachment to one system with the gentlest treatment of all others, the most passionate zeal to convert with the most unlimited tolerance, the most resolute belief in miracles with the most carefully considered convictions, the most confused concepts of the effects of supernatural grace with the clearest insights of psychology and *theological* hatred with *philosophical* love of nature!]

Such is Lichtfreund’s optimistic observation of Lavater, in whose views he sees a sign that even in those who clearly belong to the world of orthodoxy, new and enlightened ideas find some foothold. Note that, as in the essays discussed above, the world of blind faith is linked to a religious hatred of nature, while the enlightened point of view entails the love of it.[[213]](#footnote-213) Notwithstanding Lichtfreund’s enthusiasm, Wahrmund cannot share the optimism regarding Lavater. By analyzing Lavater’s views on Christianity and tolerance he shows that Lavater endangers Enlightenment, rather than promoting it. In the end, the friends conclude that Lavater “would turn out to be an instrument of Enlightenment, in the sense in which the popes and monks were such for Germany, because they went too far for our ancestors!”[[214]](#footnote-214) We have encountered a similar attitude to the mechanisms of history in Reinhold’s essay on the sciences, presented in section 2.2 of the present chapter. There, he presented the downfall of medieval science as precipitated by its own oppressive character. The way in which the *Herzenserleichterung* presents Lavater’s work as a contribution to Enlightenment in a negative sense is also strongly reminiscent of Reinhold’s evaluation of monasticism in ‘Mönchthum und Maurerey’ which was discussed in section 3.2.

Looking at Reinhold’s pre-Kantian works regarding the history of religion, it is obvious that his views in this field are strongly connected to his allegiance to Enlightenment, especially in its Illuminatist version. He opposes blind faith and superstition not only in society in general, but also in Masonic circles. His views on the origins of these shortcomings of the religion of his day are clearly inspired by Illuminatist writings such as Weishaupt’s ‘Anrede’. Although a substantial part of Reinhold’s criticism of established religion was presented in the relatively private context of Freemasonry, the present section has shown that the themes he discussed in his Masonic writings did not fail to find their way into his works aimed at a more general public. The way in which Reinhold criticizes tendencies in established religion and in Freemasonry from a historical, developmental point of view is definitely linked to his more general thoughts on the development of human reason and the place of Enlightenment in it.

## Evaluation

As shown in the first section, Reinhold’s efforts on behalf of Enlightenment partly concentrated on providing the proper conception of Enlightenment, as he believed this to be of crucial importance for its dissemination. Naturally, this theme is most clearly present in Reinhold’s works concerning Enlightenment itself, such as ‘Gedanken über Aufklärung’. We have also seen that his efforts on behalf of Enlightenment were closely connected to his Masonic engagement, for instance in ‘Mönchthum und Maurerey’. Clearly, his Enlightenment thought concentrated on discussing the practical means of Enlightenment as well as on conceptual clarity. Regarding the contents of Reinhold’s conception of Enlightenment, it has become clear in the second and third sections of this chapter that it is closely related to his views on the historical development of humanity and on human nature. This was exemplified in the fourth section, where Reinhold’s criticism of the ‘blind faith’ opposed to Enlightenment was taken as a prime example to show how these general characteristics of his conception of Enlightenment are expressed when it comes to a subject that was very important to him, religion and its abuses. He was critical of blind faith and superstition in society and Freemasonry alike. Moreover, the three works discussed in the previous section provide a rough idea of the ultimate goal after which Reinhold’s Masonic/Illuminatist Enlightenment strives, and show how this goal is connected to his ideas on history and human nature discussed earlier.

In all three works discussed in section four the opposition of God and nature, as presented by blind faith, is supposed to be remedied by Enlightenment. Nature is not something to hate, but is rather to be loved and investigated, as man is a part of it. In undoing the evils of blind faith, Enlightenment will rid religion of all things mystic and supernatural. This is clearly a rather radical conception of the goals of Enlightenment, based on a naturalistic view of religion. Based on Reinhold’s own later statements, there was a time in which he was committed to materialism, which according to Lauth is strongly connected to his Illuminatist ideas.[[215]](#footnote-215) Especially the emphasis he puts on the abolition of the opposition of God and nature and the view that nature is the organ of God,[[216]](#footnote-216) point in the direction of identification of God and nature, associated with a form of Spinozism. A naturalistic outlook on religion is easily taken to entail atheism or materialism. Based on Reinhold’s early works on religion it is justifiable to say that he went through a phase of materialism/atheism. His naturalism links him on the one hand, as we have seen, to the Illuminatist views on the history of man, and on the other to Herder, in whose *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (1784)he started taking an interest after he had moved to Weimar, as we shall see in the following chapter.

There appears to be some tension, however between this naturalism and Reinhold’s own description of Enlightenment discussed in the first section of the present chapter. His clarification of the concept of Enlightenment was undertaken to make people understand that it is a good thing, that true Enlightenment does not harm true religion.[[217]](#footnote-217) Those who fear that Enlightenment will destroy religion are portrayed as having either a mistaken conception of Enlightenment or of religion and quite possibly of both. Accordingly, Reinhold claims that the aim of Enlightenment with regard to religion is purification, instead of destruction. This involves an image of religion as consisting of several parts, of which some belong to the core, and others can easily be taken away without damage to the core of religion, which in Reinhold’s thought corresponded to early Christianity. This way of thinking about Enlightenment and religion conveys the impression of a moderate Enlightenment, which does not attack religion, but rather aims to improve it by getting rid of the bad habits that have developed over time.

In the first section of this chapter we also saw that Reinhold, in his article on Enlightenment, stresses the importance of enlightening not just the intellectual elite, but also the common people, which were more likely to cling to the traditional religion that they had been brought up with. In order to reach them, Reinhold suggested that the abstract concepts of the philosophers should be explained in more concrete terms, using concepts that are familiar (literally) to everyone, such as ‘father’. The process of a *Volksaufklärung* will have to take the intellectual capacities of the common people as a guideline. If they tend to cling to traditional religion, Enlightenment will have to take these religious sentiments seriously in order to deliver the message. All in all, Reinhold’s view on Enlightenment as expressed in ‘Gedanken über Aufklärung’ is very considerate towards religion as such, reassuring the public that Enlightenment will not endanger religion, but will rather fortify the important core, as it gets rid of the now superfluous rubbish.

So, how can the view that Enlightenment and established religion are compatible be combined with Reinhold’s more naturalistic views on religion, which leave little room for the revelation and the supernatural. If the chronology of the different pieces is considered, it turns out that the more radical and the more moderate view of Enlightenment coexist peacefully. We can, however, clearly distinguish a private and a public view. Many of the more radical thoughts are found in the more or less private context of Reinhold’s Masonic and Illuminatist writings, whereas the more moderate view is predominantly present in reviews and essays intended for a more general public. All of Reinhold’s statements that suggest an identification of God and nature are found in his Masonic works. From the works discussed in the fourth section ‘Ueber den Hang’ especially addresses a Masonic audience, while *Herzenserleichterung* probably has Illuminatist origins and was published anonymously. The ‘Skizze’, being the most public of the texts, is less explicitly naturalistic.

In combination with Reinhold’s enthusiasm for a *Volksaufklärung* and his education in Josephite Vienna, we can understand his idea of Enlightenment as elitist and looking for a top-down approach.[[218]](#footnote-218) The members of the intellectual elite discuss radical ideas with far-reaching consequences for society amongst themselves, as Reinhold does in his Masonic works. In the meantime, they prepare the rest of society, which lags behind, for Enlightenment. The ideas of the intellectual elite, however, cannot be introduced out of the blue, as the rest of society is not sufficiently educated to understand them. Instead, many people feel comfortable with traditional religion. Reinhold’s suggestion for communicating enlightened concepts by means of natural concepts that everyone is familiar with, such as ‘father’, points in the direction of educating the masses in a way that is especially tailored to their mindset. So even though the ultimate goal of the Illuminates was an egalitarian society without a ruler, the means of achieving this were quite autocratic, not involving any conscious consent of those educated in this way. This education is not meant to introduce radical ideas, but rather to take preliminary steps towards a new social order and to protect the common people from superstition.

Reinhold would have found support for such an elitist approach to the Enlightenment of the masses in the Illuminatist ideology. In the speech ‘Der Wehrt einer Gesellschaft’, cited in section 3.2 of the present chapter, he presented a moral hierarchy according to which those who work towards the general good of humanity (read: the true Masons or Illuminates) cannot but be society’s best hearts and minds. We have also seen that Reinhold viewed their ‘mysteries’ as an important instrument to make sure that their work is not hindered by those of lesser capacities. Clearly, the Illuminates were confident that they knew what society needed and how to fulfill those needs. Their ideas on Enlightenment and religion were more radical than could be shared with a general public, which brings us to the question of the status of Reinhold’s more moderate statements about the compatibility of Enlightenment and religion. It is important to keep in mind that the crucial element of the claim that Enlightenment and religion are compatible is Reinhold’s stress on determining the proper concept of Enlightenment. He is not claiming that any version of Enlightenment is compatible with any version of religion, only that Enlightenment properly understood is compatible with true religion. At the end of section 2.1 it was shown that this true religion was widely identified as the core of Christianity, historically located with the first Christians. Now, from Weishaupt’s ‘Anrede’, which presents a history of man as well as a historical justification for the existence and the aims of the Illuminates, we know that they saw their society as the keeper of this all-important core, which in the Church had become corrupted over the ages. As we have seen in the previous section, Reinhold’s accounts of the history of this corruption in ‘Ueber den Hang’ and ‘Skizze’ are clearly inspired by an Illuminatist perspective. The phases of the history of the human religion as presented in the ‘Skizze’ neatly correspond to Weishaupt’s views as presented in the ‘Anrede’. The true religion that Reinhold speaks about may thus well be the naturalistic religion of the Illuminates; in this case his more moderate pieces would be read differently by his fellow Illuminates than by the general public. To Reinhold and other Illuminates, however, the difference between their naturalistic conception of religion and the religion of the common people may not have appeared as big as it may appear to us. In the end, they do have room for some sort of religion in their system, but it appears to be based on morality rather than on supernatural events. They believe the germs of morality are natural to mankind. It can be developed by building upon the natural loving relation between members of a family.[[219]](#footnote-219) Although there is no need to doubt that the Illuminates considered their strategy to contribute to the good of all mankind and to be justified by their perspective on human nature and human history, we still may regard it as a strategy of popular deception.

The above exposition shows why Reinhold put such emphasis on the historical aspects of Enlightenment (see the second section), that is, its place in the inevitable development of human reason. Both his moderate and his more radical statements are clearly inspired by the Illuminatist view on human history and the place of their organization in it. The difference in tone between the more private Masonic writings and his more public essays and reviews can be easily explained by this view of human history, which entailed an elitist view of Enlightenment and a sharp distinction between esoteric and exoteric doctrine. Reinhold’s work on the Hebrew mysteries exemplifies the uses of such an elitist approach.[[220]](#footnote-220) The premise of that work is that the Egyptian mysteries contained a monotheistic esoteric doctrine with pantheistic features (the one God is described as ‘all that is’). Initiation into this doctrine involves the revelation of the falsity of the polytheism that is taught at lower levels (lesser mysteries). The legislation of Moses made this monotheism the *exoteric* doctrine of the Hebrews, by means of a wholesale initiation of the Hebrew people into the falsity of polytheism. However, revealing a doctrine to a whole people that was originally reserved for the happy few is a risky business. Reinhold accordingly interprets the extensive rites and regulations of the Hebrews as remnants of their customs in Egypt, adapted in a way that would satisfy the religious appetites of the masses to the extent that they would not return to polytheism.[[221]](#footnote-221) We can see a parallel here with the situation of the Illuminates, who need to adapt their views in a way that does not alienate the general public, while trying to keep it from superstition. We have seen that their ultimate goal involved radical ideas not socially acceptable at the time, such as a naturalistic explanation of religion, which may be close to the pantheistic monotheism that Reinhold describes as the esoteric doctrine of the Egyptian mysteries that in time became the source of Judaism and of Christianity.

Apart from their radical tendencies, Reinhold’s ideas regarding the final stage of the development of human reason give us valuable insights into his pre-Kantian views on the constitution of man’s mental capacities. In several of his works discussed throughout this chapter we have seen that the final stage of human development, identified as Enlightenment, is characterized as a period in which sensibility/feeling/heart is successfully combined with reason/understanding/mind. The first complex of concepts is associated with the concrete world of everyday life, whereas the second set relates to abstract and universal cognition. Since Reinhold is not yet presenting a *system* of his own, his discussion of this theme does not involve a set of clearly defined concepts, but rather a complex of related terms placed in contradistinction to one another. In accordance with such a description of the final stage, the earlier phases in the history of humanity are characterized as periods in which one or the other of these two had the upper hand. In the ‘Skizze’ we have witnessed how the original state of humanity is associated with the spontaneous or instinctive use of sensibility, in harmony with God’s will, without interference from reason. Since the development of reason, there has been a struggle to recover that harmony, which is only to be instituted with the completion of the development of reason, including a balanced relation to sensibility. We have also seen that the incomplete development of reason is attributed to the hindrances instituted by blind faith in ‘Ueber den Hang’ and in the essay on the sciences.[[222]](#footnote-222) Elsewhere, it has become clear that the full development of human reason not only involves its freedom from blind faith, but also entails a reconnection to the sensible world. In section 3.1 this has been shown by means of two very early works, the review on the veneration of the Sacred Heart and the speech on ‘Der Wehrt einer Gesellschaft’. It is also clear from the example Reinhold gives in ‘Gedanken über Aufklärung’, discussed in the first section of this chapter. This view on the completion of the development of human reason was also apparent from the ‘Skizze’, where it was also explicitly claimed that, by means of reason and sensibility, man would come to regain what had been lost when reason had only partially developed.[[223]](#footnote-223) The combination of head and heart is central to Reinhold’s conception of Enlightenment, both in its public and in its more private expression. In *Herzenserleichterung* Lichtfreund expresses his optimism regarding the progress of Enlightenment accordingly, apparently convinced that the final dawn has already broken.

Das Licht, das den Verstand erleuchtet, erwärmet nach und nach auch die Herzen; unsre besten Köpfe werden zugleich unsre besten Menschen, und auf diese Art sowohl willig als geschickt, von ihren Einsichten nicht immer den glänzendsten, sondern den gemeinnützigsten Gebrauch zu machen.[[224]](#footnote-224)

[The light that illuminates the understanding, starts to warm the heart slowly but surely; our best minds at the same time become our best men, who are in this way both willing and able to employ their insights not in the most splendid way, but in the way that is most useful to everyone.]

As has been clear throughout the present chapter, the emphasis on the combination of intellectual and sensible capacities of man is one of the main characteristics of Reinhold’s view on Enlightenment. The above citation confirms that he was by no means only a theorist of Enlightenment, but rather sought to bring about Enlightenment by participating in the activities of the intellectual elite and by producing reviews and articles to guide a wider audience. Through the works regarding blind faith discussed in section 4 we have seen that this characteristic is strongly connected to Reinhold’s Masonic and Illuminatist background. This background also helps us to understand how he reconciles a radical, almost Spinozist view on God and nature with the publicly expressed view that Enlightenment poses no threat to religion at all.

The key to this reconciliation is to be found in Reinhold’s conception of reason. As we have seen, he believes reason to be an elevated part of human nature, which has developed throughout human history. It is not primarily associated with abstract speculation, but rather with the rational direction of human social enterprise in the real and concrete world. In its full development, it will not harm religion because it will have come to understand religion properly. This is possible because the supernatural religion as it is practiced has only developed because human reason was not fully developed yet. Once reason is fully developed, the religion it prescribes will be the fulfillment of the natural and original harmony between God and man. It is important to keep these characteristics of Reinhold’s conception of Enlightenment in mind, for we shall see in the following chapters that they were crucial for his reception of Kant.

# Reinhold’s Way to Kant

In the first and second chapters we have established that Reinhold’s early philosophical interests were closely connected to the life he led as a monk, and then as a Freemason and an *Aufklärer*. Although in this early period he did not put forward a systematic philosophical theory of his own, his reviews, articles and speeches are by no means a random collection of opinions. They show a coherence that indicates that he had definite ideas about man and society and especially the role of history and religion. This means that when he became acquainted with the Kantian philosophy, his understanding of it was inevitably influenced by his previous philosophical concerns. Before presenting the evidence of the importance of that influence in the following chapters, the present chapter aims at establishing the circumstances under which Reinhold came into touch with Kant’s philosophy and his initial reaction to it. In order to evaluate properly Reinhold’s reception of Kant it is important to understand what his motivation for studying the Kantian philosophy was in the first place.

After Reinhold’s first introduction to the Kantian philosophy in the summer of 1785,[[225]](#footnote-225) it took roughly a year before he publicly endorsed this novel philosophy in his ‘Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie’, the publication of which started in August 1786. During this year, he studied Kant, although this left no obvious traces in his works or his correspondence of that time. Considering his activities in this period, one may even wonder where he found the time and energy required to study such a demanding work as Kant’s first *Critique*.[[226]](#footnote-226)Reinhold did not only marry Sophie Wieland, he also worked hard to make a living, translating the French *Bibliothèque universelle de dames* (*Allgemeine Damenbibliothek*), and contributing to both *Der Teutsche Merkur* and the *Journal für Freymaurer*.[[227]](#footnote-227) Although we lack direct sources that can tell us in detail how Reinhold managed to juggle those balls and at the same time find the time and peace of mind required for studying Kant, there are other ways to shed light on the process by which he got acquainted with Kant’s philosophy. First, there is the salient fact that Reinhold, before studying Kant, found himself attacking him in defense of Herder’s *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (1784), which Kant had reviewed in the *ALZ*.[[228]](#footnote-228) As the minor controversy between Reinhold and Kant involves wider philosophical issues, such as the relation between metaphysics and empirical inquiry, it can help us gain some insight into Reinhold’s views on metaphysics on the eve of his introduction to Kant’s philosophy proper. Moreover, it provides a clue as to how the Kantian philosophy may have come to interest Reinhold. Secondly, there is Reinhold’s plan for two volumes on the Kantian philosophy as expressed in a draft of a letter to Christian Gottlob von Voigt, written when only the first two of his ‘Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie’ had been published. This letter can help us assess Reinhold’s original view on Kant’s philosophy and the circumstances under which it was developed. Finally, Reinhold himself provided an elaborate account of his turn of Kant in the Preface of his *Versuch*. Although this account, serving a specific purpose, may lack objectivity, it does tell us how Reinhold liked to see and present himself with regard to Kant’s philosophy.

The current chapter is devoted to carefully assessing the sources presented above regarding Reinhold’s earliest reception of the philosophy of Kant. The first section will focus upon the Herder reviews. It will be established that Reinhold’s praise of Herder is closely related to his earlier thoughts on Enlightenment and that this precisely opens up the possibility for a later sympathetic reading of Kant, as Reinhold’s criticism turns out to be misplaced. The second section of this chapter is devoted to Reinhold’s letter to Voigt. Based on his own information we will be able to determine how much Reinhold knew and understood of Kant at the time, when he was working on the ‘Briefe’ as well. Moreover, since Reinhold presents the outlines of a plan for a work on Kant’s philosophy, it will be possible to compare this to his actual works regarding the Kantian project, and thus put these in a framework of his original intentions regarding to Kant’s philosophy. The third section critically presents Reinhold’s own *post factum* statements regarding his Kantian turn, as presented in the *Versuch*. The fourth and final section will evaluate these different accounts and bring them together.

## The controversy surrounding Herder’s Ideen: a story of a polemical exchange

Reinhold’s work for *Der Teutsche Merkur* started almost immediately upon his arrival in Weimar in May 1784 with a review[[229]](#footnote-229) of Herder’s *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*, which had just come from the press.[[230]](#footnote-230) In this book Herder aims at establishing the place of man in the world by adducing empirical material enabling a classification of creatures, and showing how geological, climatological and biological facts are related to the special plan God/Nature has had for mankind. Reinhold’s positive opinion is not only obvious from his actual judgment, but also from his introduction and his treatment of quotations from the work. Two striking remarks deserve our special attention. First, Reinhold describes Herder as someone who sees “all in one and one in all,”[[231]](#footnote-231) which may indicate that Reinhold felt attracted to the Spinozist thoughts of Herder. As pointed out in the previous chapter Reinhold entertained Spinozist ideas at some point. Herder’s philosophy of nature, according to which God and Naure were almost identified, would have attracted him.[[232]](#footnote-232) In his ‘Ueber den Hang’ he called upon his fellow Masons to study nature in order to discover the destination of man implied in it.[[233]](#footnote-233) He may also have been attracted to Herder’s humanism and his way of linking human behavior in society to human nature and human reason. As we have seen in section 3.2 of the previous chapter, Reinhold had attempted something similar in his ‘Mönchthum und Maurerey’, written before Herder’s *Ideen*.[[234]](#footnote-234) We have also seen that his description of Enlightenment may be related to Herder’s thoughts on turning *Vernunftfähigkeit* into actual *Vernunft*.[[235]](#footnote-235) Reinhold’s positive opinion is thus associated with his own philosophical pre-occupations at the time. The analysis of Reinhold’s counter review below (1.2) will show that Reinhold was also interested in Herder’s emphasis on empirical evidence, which he contrasts to the Kantian a priori approach to history. A second remark worth mentioning in Reinhold’s original review is a critical note regarding the status of the ‘organic forces’ (*organische Kräfte*)introduced by Herder. Reinhold hopes that Herder will explain this in more detail in the parts to follow.[[236]](#footnote-236) This point is especially interesting since Kant was overtly critical of these forces and their status within Herder’s theory as well, presenting this as one of his main objections to Herder’s project. Unlike Kant, Reinhold was clearly attracted to the content of that project, although he did express some reservation with regard to the clarity of its method.

Owing to Kant’s negative review of the *Ideen*, the work became controversial. According to Herder, Kant’s campaign against him also included Kant’s own history of philosophy, as published in his ‘Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltbürgerlicher Absicht’ in the *Berlinische Monatsschrift* of November 1784.[[237]](#footnote-237) Herder reacted by supporting the counter-review by Reinhold, to which Kant reacted in turn. The current section discusses the dispute between Reinhold and Kant regarding Herder’s *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* as a means of determining Reinhold’s views on metaphysics and philosophical method on the eve of his introduction to the Kantian philosophy. First, Kant’s criticism of Herder’s philosophy of history will be assessed, followed by Reinhold’s defense of Herder in his counter review against Kant. Since Kant’s reply to the counter review ended the dispute in a way that may explain why Reinhold would all of a sudden be interested in the Kantian project, it will be briefly discussed as well.

### Kant versus Herder

Although Kant’s criticism of Herder is expressed most directly and clearly in his review, it will be worthwhile to take a brief look at his ‘Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte’ as well, if only because Herder felt the two pieces were part of one Kantian campaign against him.[[238]](#footnote-238) Kant himself, however, does not mention Herder’s book at all in the article and explicitly claims that a notice in the *Gothaische gelehrte Zeitungen* of February 1784 occasioned it.[[239]](#footnote-239) Nevertheless, Herder’s book may have inspired Kant to go public with his vision on human history, without being prepared to acknowledge this openly.[[240]](#footnote-240) The similarity of the titles and Kant’s ignoring Herder’s efforts are conspicuous in this respect.

The article opens with a definition of history as the account of human action, which, on a large scale, shows regularities.[[241]](#footnote-241) Kant thinks that human behavior is to be understood as following natural laws and serving a hidden goal, as if there were a plan of nature. However, it is impossible to write a systematic (*planmäßig*) history, because human actions are neither actually planned on a large scale nor purely instinctive, like animal behavior (Kant, ‘Idee’, *AA* 8:17). Therefore, the philosopher should try to discover a guideline (*Leitfaden*) to understanding history, so that others will be able to use it to actually write a history of mankind (*AA* 8:18). Immediately, the crucial difference between Kant’s and Herder’s ideas on history stands out. Whereas Herder attempts to derive the special status of man from nature in general, Kant instead assumes this special status and aims at figuring out the fitting plan behind it. Kant and Herder thus move in opposite directions. At the end of the article Kant returns to his proposed method for the study of history guided by an idea of the plan of nature and warns against claiming knowledge of the actual elements of this plan, which again can be taken as a criticism of Herder’s method, which is directed at obtaining knowledge of the plan of nature (cf. *AA* 8:29). According to Kant the idea of a plan should only be taken as a *Leitfaden* to seek the plan in history. [[242]](#footnote-242) Instead of replacing the empirical study of history, philosophical history, with an idea as a *Leitfaden*, will assist it.

Whereas Kant’s own perspective on history seems to make a statement by completely ignoring Herder’s attempts in the same field, his review of the first part of the *Ideen* makes abundantly clear that he and Herder differ when it comes to the question of the relation between the a priori and the empirical in the study of human history. Kant opens his critical discussion with what he understands to be Herder’s aim of this first part of the *Ideen*.

While avoiding all metaphysical investigations, the spiritual nature of the human soul, its persistence and progressions in perfection are to be proven from the analogy to natural formation of matter, mainly in its organization.[[243]](#footnote-243)

Kant is disturbed by the way Herder proceeds to achieve this aim. Herder needs to “assume” spiritual forces and an “invisible realm of creation” (*AA* 8:52), which, naturally, does not agree with Kant’s demands for proper science, since these forces and this realm escape experience. Apart from his reservations with respect to ‘assuming’ non-material forces and an invisible realm of creation, Kant finds Herder’s idea of a gradual progress among the different species shocking. Although Kant is aware of the striking similarities between species, he is much more comfortable with the thought that these are simply due to the great abundance of species, rather than to an intimate relation between them, since the assumption of a “single original species” leads to “monstrous” ideas, from which reason will recoil (*AA* 8:54 [132]). The nature of these tremendous ideas is not exactly clear, nor is the way in which they will “wreak great devastation among the accepted concepts” (*AA* 8:54; [133]). The objection focuses on the idea of the unity of organic forces and especially the use Herder makes of this idea, which is, according to Kant, beyond the capacity of human reason. Given Kant’s own philosophical point of view, the objection against Herder’s speculative use of ideas implies that Herder cannot achieve knowledge of the things he speaks of. Herder is guilty of the mistake introduced in ‘On the Regulative Use of the Ideas of Pure Reason’, which is characterized by wanting to go “beyond every given experience” (*KrV*, A 644-645/B 672-673; *CPR*, 591). Although Herder claims that his account of the history of humanity is based on empirical evidence, his conception of organic forces leads him well outside the field of empirical knowledge. The idea of these organic forces is not merely a regulative ideal, guiding inquiry, but rather constitutive for the knowledge supposedly gained. From Kant’s point of view, this use of ideas is illegitimate. Moreover, Kant has little patience with things that are principally beyond experience; they cannot be used to explain anything (cf. *AA* 8:53). The method employed by Herder is not that of serious, responsible philosophy and can, according to Kant, at best be called dogmatic metaphysics (cf. *AA* 8:53-54). This criticism must have been especially hard to swallow for Herder, who, in his earnest attempt to be scientific, claims that his philosophical history of humanity starts from empirical facts and nothing else. This claim, however, was not only contested by Kant, but also caused confusion for Reinhold, who, in all other respects, appeared to be perfectly pleased with the work. It is clear, then, that the method of Herder’s attempts in the field of the philosophy of human history was novel and, to put it mildly, not entirely transparent to his contemporaries.

Kant’s strong wording of “monstrous ideas” that would “wreak devastation” among our concepts may also carry a more general reproach. He may be trying to associate Herder’s ideas with the undesirable consequences of materialism or Spinozism by speaking strongly against those ideas of Herder that suggest a primacy of the material organization of nature and the unity of a universal power or species grounding the manifold of natural species. The most obvious suggestion of materialism can be found in Kant’s discussion of the relation between Herder’s organic forces and the human soul. According to Kant, Herder connects the “thinking principle in the human being” too strongly to the material organism, which clears the way for understanding the human soul not as a substance, but rather as the “effect on matter of an invisible and universal nature that works within it and animates it” (*AA* 8:53; [132]). Kant’s hesitation to attribute this position to Herder indicates that he believes it to be untenable. Indeed, it could be perceived as a version of Spinozism, according to which the only substance is nature, determining the lives and actions of everything including man.

Kant’s strategies in discrediting Herder’s project of a philosophy of the history of man are intimately connected to the strategies of his own critical philosophy. Claiming to use only facts, or empirical data, Herder makes a grave mistake in assuming unperceivable organic forces. This point of Kant’s criticism is linked to his own theory of knowledge, which does not allow knowledge of things that are outside the realm of possible experience. Further, also from his own critical perspective, Kant objects to Herder’s illegitimate use of ideas, going beyond the proper limits of reason that Kant has set in his *Critique of Pure Reason*. As we have gathered from his ‘Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte’, Kant is not averse to the project of a philosophical history; it is just that he believes that Herder has chosen the wrong method for the subject. We have seen that Kant thinks that the empirical method Herder claims to use is not at all empirical, as the latter introduces the idea of invisible forces. Herder’s use of ideas, however, is not up to the Kantian standard, which triggers Kant’s objection that Herder commits dogmatic metaphysics. Kant’s alternative, as published in the *Berlinische Monatsschrift*, is supposed to show the right way of dealing with ideas when studying history. Finally, Kant objects to Herder’s insistence on the empirical, which carries the strong suggestion of materialism, regarded as unwanted by Kant.

### Reinhold versus Kant

Herder and his friends regarded Kant’s article on history and the review of Herder’s *Ideen* as an unfair attack on his work, especially because the criticism came from his former teacher.[[244]](#footnote-244) In response to Kant’s review and probably encouraged by Wieland and/or Herder, Reinhold produced his ‘Schreiben des Pfarrers zu \*\*\* an den H[erausgeber]. des T[eutschen]. M[erkurs]. Ueber eine Recension von Herders Ideen zur Philosophie der Menschheit’, in which he seeks to discredit the anonymous reviewer (Kant).[[245]](#footnote-245) Upon seeing a draft Herder expressed his gratitude and suggested some changes.[[246]](#footnote-246) As his instructions appear to have been followed (some almost literally), the article can be regarded as Herder’s opinion on Kant as he was prepared to express in public.[[247]](#footnote-247) The picture of the anonymous reviewer (Kant) emerging from Reinhold’s article is that of an old-fashioned metaphysician who is neither willing nor able to think beyond his own system, and thus cannot properly judge Herder’s effort in this novel field.[[248]](#footnote-248) As the philosophical background of the reviewer is put forward only as a hypothesis, Reinhold’s article does not reflect Herder’s anger to its full extent and may be seen as a contribution towards reconciliation, a “*Versöhnungsversuch*” as Kurt Röttgers has called it.[[249]](#footnote-249)

Reinhold starts his counter-review by describing the contemporary situation in metaphysics as preoccupied with analyzing “traditional abstractions” and keeping experience at a distance (‘Schreiben des Pfarrers’, 152). Of course, Reinhold had already made this point in his article on Enlightenment, as shown in the first section of the previous chapter. Metaphysics should not be rejected entirely, of course, but we need to be aware that it may not be the only form of true knowledge (cf. 154). After this introduction Reinhold uses his hypothesis that the reviewer is a metaphysician of the kind described above to argue that the reviewer cannot have understood Herder properly (cf. 157-158). He believes it is no wonder that the metaphysician and Herder differ when it comes to the meaning of ‘philosophy of history’, since Herder’s attempt arises from dissatisfaction with the traditional a priori view on history and seeks to fill the “tremendous gap” between experience and speculation (159). Reinhold points out that metaphysics is not the proper science for the subject matter of history. The actual course that history has taken cannot be established a priori; rather, the actual course of history is prior to historical speculations showing that humanity has necessarily become what it is. History needs facts (cf. 159-160). The primary value of the *Ideen* should be seen precisely in its collection of facts for the sake of a future philosophy of history. Judging this work fairly, according to Reinhold, entails judging the facts, instead of ignoring them (cf. 161). The first conclusion he draws is that the reviewer cannot possibly appreciate Herder’s work because of his preconception of philosophy, in which facts are irrelevant. He then focuses on the freedom of thinking that Kant, with mixed feelings, attributed to Herder, reading this hesitation as a sign of metaphysical orthodoxy (cf. 164). For Reinhold, there is no reason to be afraid of freethinking or its results. He clearly interprets Kant’s suggestion of reason recoiling from certain ideas as a sign of clinging to old ideas.

All in all, Reinhold’s hypothesis that the reviewer is an old-fashioned metaphysician results in the judgment that the latter cannot fully appreciate the value of Herder’s work, as he is too attached to his own system to understand Herder’s plan, which threatens his own position and doctrine when it comes to the history of man. The hypothesis explains the negative tone of the review and at the same time shows Reinhold’s ignorance of Kant and his inability to value Kant’s criticism properly. As Kant criticized Herder from his own perspective, so Reinhold attacks Kant from his. This becomes clear when looking at the final passages of the article, in which Reinhold presents his own views on the proper relation between metaphysics and history. He is convinced

daß wir ohne Metaphysik so wenig eine Philosophie, als ohne Erfahrung eine Geschichte haben würden. Philosophie im engsten und Geschichte im weitesten Verstande sind die Beiden Pole des gesammten menschlichen Wissens. (173-174)

[that without metaphysics we would not have philosophy just as we would not have history without experience. Philosophy in the narrowest and history in the widest sense are the two poles of the totality of human knowledge.]

Reinhold clearly distinguishes the two sciences of philosophy and history with regard to the sources of their knowledge, metaphysics and experience, respectively. Although earlier he presented these sciences as opposites, because of these different sources, his final statements unambiguously state that we should not focus exclusively on either one.

Ich verlange sie [philosophy and history] auch nur in so ferne als sie das [poles of the totality of human knowledge] sind, einander entgegen zu setzen. Nur muß man nicht vergessen, daß die Gegenden die zwischen beyden liegen die ergiebigsten sind, und daß ein ewiges Reisen um den einen herum nie eine Reise um die Welt werden kann. (174)

[It is only in so far as philosophy and history are the poles of the totality of human knowledge that I wish to oppose them to one another. It must not be forgotten that the regions lying in between the poles are the most fertile and that continuously circling one of them will not constitute a trip around the world.]

This passage can be easily connected to Reinhold’s ideas on philosophy and human nature as discussed in the previous chapter (section 3.2). In his early works Reinhold time and again stressed the importance of the connection between man’s rational capacities and his sensibility. In his Masonic writings the necessary connection was strongly linked to the idea that thoughts can only be transformed into actions through sensibility, or the heart, as he calls it in the context of acting. Likewise, in his essay on Enlightenment, the connection of abstract concepts to sensibility was advocated because of its practical value. In his ‘Schreiben des Pfarrers’, however, the practical angle is absent, and the focus is on philosophy (metaphysics/a priori knowledge of the Leibnizian variety) and history (empirical knowledge) as the poles of human knowledge. This development in Reinhold’s thought confirms that his pre-Kantian views express a single coherent view of man and world, so that he can easily employ the rationality-sensibility distinction in the theoretical field of epistemology next to his earlier use in a more practical context. The new focus brings with it some new terminology, as Reinhold refers to rational, a priori cognition as philosophical and to empirical cognition as historical. Nevertheless, we find the same stress on the thought that there is no real opposition between man’s empirical and rational capacities and on the thought that ideally the two capacities should work together in unison. In the context of a theory of knowledge this means that all human knowledge should ideally be a combination of the a priori and the empirical somewhere in between those poles. Formulated in this manner, it is not at all hard too see why Reinhold, once he became more closely acquainted with Kant’s philosophy, came to be interested. After all, Kant also stresses that we can only have cognition when the a priori structure of the mind and the given manifold are combined, when sensibility and the understanding work together.

At the time, however, Reinhold found the balance between metaphysics and experience in Herder’s work rather than in his image of Kant, whose criticism he tries to eliminate by simply portraying Kant as a relic of old-fashioned metaphysics. For Kant the issue was more complex, for on the one hand, he wanted history based on an idea, while on the other hand he set strict limits upon the legitimate use of ideas. Reinhold ignores such complications and presents a simple picture. Metaphysics, or a priori philosophy, is indeed limited, but experience can supplement philosophy here. This is especially true for the field of history. In the ideal situation, metaphysics and experience work together. Although his judgment of Kant is mistaken in the sense that Kant is not quite the old-fashioned metaphysician that Reinhold takes him to be, he is right in judging that Kant is criticizing Herder from his own philosophical point of view. In his reply, Kant clarifies this position.

### Kant versus Reinhold

Although a counter-review could have been disadvantageous to Kant, Reinhold’s was not. Kant could not help but replying, since the reputation of being an old-fashioned metaphysician was not at all what he was looking for. In his reaction to the ‘Schreiben des Pfarrers’, published in March 1785 in the *ALZ*,[[250]](#footnote-250) on the invitation of Schütz,who had revealed the identity of the ‘Pfarrer’ as well,[[251]](#footnote-251) Kant was in a position to restate his views on Herder’s *Ideen* in a less aggressive way, while dismissing the misdirected criticism. Since Reinhold’s ignorance of Kant’s actual philosophy was obvious, it was not difficult for him to do so. Almost immediately, Kant declared that he wholeheartedly agrees with Reinhold’s negative picture of the metaphysician.

In his article, the pastor quarrels much with a metaphysician whom he has in mind, and who, as he imagines him, is wholly spoiled for all instruction through the paths of experience, or where they do not complete the matter, for inferences in accordance with the analogy of nature, and who wants everything to fit his last of fruitless scholastic abstractions. The reviewer can well tolerate this quarrel, since in this he is fully of one opinion with the pastor, and the review itself is the best proof of that. (*AA* 8:56 [134])

Since the attack is directed at the wrong target, which Reinhold could have known, his article is refuted with a simple: read before you write. Kant is now in a position to restate his original arguments showing that Reinhold’s criticism does not affect them.

First, Kant agrees with Reinhold on the unfitness of metaphysics as a historical method. Instead of praising Herder for collecting biological and geological facts, he introduces an alternative basis for human history, namely human *actions*.

But since he [i.e., the reviewer/ Kant] believes himself rather well acquainted with the materials for an anthropology, and likewise somewhat with the method of their use in attempting a history of humanity in the whole of its vocation, he is convinced that these materials may be sought neither in metaphysics nor in the cabinet of natural history specimens by comparing the skeleton of the human being with that of other species of animals; least of all does the latter lead to his vocation for another world; but that vocation can be found solely in his *actions*, which reveal his character. (*AA* 8:56 [134])

Thus, Kant appears to differ from Herder mainly with regard to the domain of human history, that is, the *kind* of empirical facts deemed relevant. Understandably, as his reviewing activities were anonymous, Kant does not refer to his own essay on history, which, as we have seen, also takes human actions to be history’s subject matter. There, it also became clear that Kant relates history exclusively to the development of humanity, already assuming its special position in nature, whereas Herder seeks to deduce this special position from facts of nature, which are not primarily related to human activity. Herder’s preference for biological facts was understood by Kant as an attempt to reduce human properties like reason to material characteristics. Apart from presenting his ideas on the subject matter of human history, Kant warns against making the empirical the sole basis of our historical knowledge, as experience has its limits, being unable to warrant any necessities by itself (cf. *AA* 8:57). Like the original review, Kant’s reply to the *Pfarrer* is clearly connected to his own philosophy. This also holds good for his reply to Reinhold’s charge that recoiling from certain ideas is a sign of metaphysical orthodoxy.

It is merely the *horror vacui* of universal human reason, namely to *recoil* where one runs up against an idea in which *nothing at all* *can be thought*, and in this regard the ontological codex might well serve as a canon for the theological, and indeed precisely for the sake of tolerance. (*AA* 8:57 [135])

Again, Kant criticizes Herder from the perspective of his own philosophy, which does not allow crossing the borders of possible experience and employing ideas of objects that cannot be known by human reason.

Kant defends himself by restating those points of his review that were both critical of Herder and of traditional metaphysics, thus proving Reinhold’s hypothesis wrong. In this way, possibilities for a connection between Kant and Reinhold open up,[[252]](#footnote-252) as Kant, like Reinhold, assumes a position in the middle between purely rational metaphysics and purely empirical history. Thus, the controversy concerning Herder’s *Ideen* may have played an interesting role in Reinhold’s philosophical development. He was not yet familiar with Kantian philosophy, but the Kantian criticism of Herder may have aroused Reinhold’s interest in Kant. Kant’s position in this controversy was likely to attract Reinhold’s attention, since the final outcome of the discussion and the position that Kant assumed in his reply to him may actually have been quite close to his own views. As we have seen above, he had already expressed an interest in finding a method that would involve both ‘poles of human knowledge’. Moreover, Kant’s insistence on human actions as the basic facts of a history of humanity would have opened up possibilities for a connection to the practical interests predominant in his earlier writings. Thus in the story emphasizing the role of the Herder controversy in Reinhold’s conversion to Kant coincidence and friendship play an important role. More importantly, it emerges that the first point of contact between Kant and Reinhold is their insistence that sensibility and reason must work together in the production of knowledge.

## Voigt’s request and Reinhold’s plan: a story of political and economic interests

Through Wieland’s contacts and his own productivity for *Der Teutsche Merkur*, of which his review and counter-review of Herder’s *Ideen* were only examples, Reinhold soon became a well-known author in Weimar. His articles for the *Merkur* had shown his enthusiasm for Enlightenment and his role in the Herder controversy indicates that he was appreciated in the humanist circle to which Wieland and Herder belonged, along with other members of the Weimar court, such as Goethe. Moreover, if Ernst Reinhold is right about his father writing most of the reviews for the *Anzeiger* (*RLW*, 25), Reinhold would have proven himself capable of processing heaps of written material with remarkable speed. These circumstances may have been on Christoph Gottlob von Voigt’s mind when he asked for Reinhold’s opinion regarding Kant’s philosophy. Apart from being an advisor to the Weimar court, Voigt was also curator of the University of Jena, where Kantianism was advancing.[[253]](#footnote-253) This university was a joint venture of several principalities, one of which was Saxony-Weimar-Eisenach. The humanist court circles in Weimar, which included Herder, were none too pleased with Kantianism. They were, however, pleased with Reinhold, who might therefore play a mediating role between the Kantian university and the humanist Weimar court.[[254]](#footnote-254) As Kurt Röttgers indicates, the university may have had a definite interest in employing the young talented author as well, because the authorities depended on attracting students from abroad. Reinhold would indeed prove to be a major asset in this respect.[[255]](#footnote-255)

The situation sketched above shows that political factors may well have been of importance with regard to Reinhold’s introduction to the Kantian philosophy. As shown in the previous section, he may have taken a personal interest in the novel philosophical system as well, after the public exchange with Kant, whose mild reaction to his counter-review of Herder’s *Ideen* may first have drawn his attention to Kant, which prompted Voigt to request Reinhold’s views on the new philosophy. We do not know the precise timing of this request; hence it is not possible to establish with certainty whether Reinhold was already interested in Kant and Voigt reacted to that, or that the latter acted in a more pro-active way, by putting Reinhold on the Kantian track.[[256]](#footnote-256) All we know is that he did, at some point, request Reinhold to report on the “*Einfluß der Kantischen Philosophie*,” for in the beginning of November 1786, Reinhold wrote to him in response to this request. Today, we have only a draft of this letter, which is not even complete.[[257]](#footnote-257)

The letter has the form of a small treatise, with different sections covering different aspects of the influence of the Kantian philosophy and Reinhold’s own plans regarding it. It is introduced by a brief note showing that Reinhold’s answer to Voigt’s request means more to him than just providing someone with information on the Kantian philosophy. Reinhold, whose first child has just been born, appears very eager to provide Voigt with the information he needs, for he is aware of the latter’s intentions.

Der Gedanke an die *Absicht* IhrerFrage stärkt mich in meinem Kampfe gegen eine, bisher mir unbekannte, Ängstlichkeit, die mich bey jeder Wahrnehmung des Misverhältnisses zwischen meiner gegenwärtigen häuslichen und politischen Lage befällt. Aber auch jeder Anblick meines Kindes legt mir meine alte Neigung zur Philosophie näher ans Herz, und nöthiget mich in ihr eines der nächsten Mittel zu wünschen und zu hoffen, wodurch ich den Staat, der mich bisher aufgenommen und geschützt hat, auch zu jener thätigen Unterstützung, die mir nun immer unentbehrlicher wird, bewegen könnte. (*RK* 1:145)

[The thought of the *purpose* of your question encourages me in the struggle against an anxiety that I did not yet know, coming over me whenever I perceive the discrepancy between my current private and political situation. Yet every look at my child also brings me closer to my old inclination towards philosophy and forces me to wish and hope to find in it the means by which I could move the state that has currently accepted and protected me to that active support that I can less and less do without.]

From this touching picture, it is clear that Reinhold has reason to hope that his report on the influence of the Kantian philosophy will help him provide for his family. Voigt may have suggested that he might be able to find Reinhold a place at the University of Jena, that is, of course, upon the condition that Reinhold, who possessed no official academic qualifications, proved himself worthy of such a job.[[258]](#footnote-258) Both the letter and the ‘Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie’, resumed in January 1787, could be such a qualification.

In a move comparable to his ‘more precise determination’ of the concept ‘Enlightenment’ in his ‘Gedanken über Aufklärung’,[[259]](#footnote-259) Reinhold stresses that we must first determine the proper nature of the Kantian philosophy, or its “characteristic concept” (146). However, being a completely new science, the Critical project is hard to define. Simply giving a “description” of its most important results will not do either, for these cannot be proven without citing the whole *Critique* itself (146-147). The *Critique*, however, has been misunderstood by a number of important reviewers (cf. 148). In listing several reviews and remarks regarding Kant by well-known authors of the day, Reinhold shows off his factual knowledge of the most relevant judgments on the Kantian project.[[260]](#footnote-260) He claims that all these professional philosophers have misunderstood Kant, referring to Kant himself in the *Prolegomena*,[[261]](#footnote-261) and to Eberhard’s remark that the *Critique* is “obscure and incomprehensible” [[262]](#footnote-262) (148-150). Nevertheless, he, the inexperienced refugee, claims to have understood Kant. He argues that it is precisely because he was not already committed to an academic position and a philosophical system, that he was able to appreciate the new philosophy (cf. 153). After having read Kant’s first *Critique* “three times” he claims to have felt a calling to share the grounds for his “most intimate conviction of the *reality* and the *incredible utility* of this science” with philosophically interested readers (153). In order to carry out his plan, Reinhold suggests a two-phase strategy. First, the “external grounds” (*äußere Gründe*) for accepting the Kantian philosophy are to be discussed, which, as the name suggests, cannot be found in the *Critique* itself, but are related to the moral needs of the time (153). Reinhold also calls these grounds the “usefulness” (*Nutzen*) of the Kantian philosophy. Discussing the external grounds of the Kantian philosophy will lead to a better appreciation of this philosophy since it will be presented as the answer to some of the most pressing contemporary questions regarding religion, morality and philosophy in general. The letter breaks off at the discussion of the “internal grounds” (*innere Gründe*) or “actuality” (*Realität*) of the Kantian philosophy. Although the precise meaning of the term ‘internal grounds’ is unclear, Reinhold paraphrases it as “organization of the Kantian system itself” (153). In contrast to the external grounds, the internal grounds must be related to the Kantian philosophy itself. They provide reasons for accepting the Kantian system by appealing to the force of Kant’s arguments, rather than by pointing out its use with regard to external circumstances.

Such, in a nutshell, were Reinhold’s plans regarding the Kantian philosophy in the late autumn of 1786. In order to gain insight into Reinhold’s way to Kant, it is important to assess the extent to which this plan was carried out. At the time of writing Reinhold had already started his ‘Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie’, as he mentions in the letter to Voigt. These articles appear to be intended to treat the external grounds or results of Kant’s philosophy, as Reinhold would later, in the first volume of his *Beyträge* (1790), also state himself.

Der Plan meiner künftigen Arbeiten hat nun zwei Hauptteile, wovon mich der eine in den *Briefen über die Kantische Philosophie*, der andere in den *Beiträgen* beschäftigen wird. In jenen werde ich die *Folgen*, die Anwendbarkeit, und den Einfluß; in diesen die *Gründe*, die Elemente, und eigentliche Prinzipien der *Kritischen Philosophie* zu entwickeln suchen.[[263]](#footnote-263)

[The plan of my future work now has two main parts, one of which will concern me in the *Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie*, the other in the *Beyträge*. In the former I will seek to develop the *effects*, applicability and the influence; in the latter the *grounds*, elements and the proper principles of the *Critical philosophy*.]

Although the ‘Briefe’ had already appeared in *Der Teutsche Merkur* when Reinhold made the above announcement in 1790, the future tense refers to the fact that he was publishing an expanded volume of them in the same year, to be followed by a second volume of *Briefe* in 1792. However, not only Reinhold’s later comment on the ‘Briefe’ in relation to his *Beyträge* indicates that they were intended to treat the external grounds for the Kantian philosophy. The structure of the ‘Briefe’ that appeared in *Der Teutsche Merkur* is very similar to the structure of the external grounds as presented in the letter to Voigt. The themes introduced in the first seven points of § 6 of the letter to Voigt appear in the same order in the ‘Briefe’. After an introduction, two problems regarding the philosophy of religion are discussed: What is the role of reason with regard to the conviction that God exists? and What is the role of reason with regard to the conviction that there is an afterlife? Regarding both problems it is argued that philosophy had not been able to solve them satisfactorily, and that Kant’s investigation into the nature of reason has come to the rescue. Since the ‘Briefe’ only cover the first seven of sixteen points listed in the letter to Voigt, it is clear that the original plan was not brought to completion. In the Preface of the *Versuch* Reinhold mentions that he had to stop working on the ‘Briefe’ because of his academic pursuits.[[264]](#footnote-264) This makes sense, for the ‘Briefe’ published in *Der Teutsche Merkur* appear to be an unfinished whole. At the end of the seventh ‘Brief’ Reinhold announces the continuation of the history of the idea of the soul. He does not keep this promise in the eighth ‘Brief’, in which he elaborates instead on Greek philosophy. In the edition of 1790, however, the last (twelfth) ‘Brief’ is an addition, which achieves a kind of conclusion by summarizing the influence of the misunderstood tenets of religion throughout history.[[265]](#footnote-265) As part of this ‘Brief’ had already been published separately as ‘Skizze einer Theogonie des blinden Glaubens’ before Reinhold started to work on Kant (cf. section 4 of Chapter 2), its appearance here in the context of the Kantian philosophy shows the continuity in Reinhold’s thought between his pre-Kantian and his Kantian work. In this respect I share Gerhard Fuchs’s criticism of Röttgers’s contention that Reinhold’s way of responding to Voigt’s request is only explicable as a purely political move, just going for the perspective that would ensure the biggest impact. Although this may have played a role, there is no denying that the moral-religious perspective chosen is very close to Reinhold’s pre-Kantian work. Thus, the thematic choices Reinhold made were by no means purely political.[[266]](#footnote-266)

In order to understand Reinhold’s plan as expressed in the letter to Voigt better we must understand what he means with the phrase ‘result of the Kantian philosophy’. From the letter it is clear that he considers the influence of Kant and the results of the Kantian philosophy predominantly in relation to Enlightenment (cf. 146). He refers to the main results as the “merits regarding our intensive Enlightenment,” indicating that he believes that with Kant Enlightenment has gained depth or intensity (151). In contrast to his first opinion on Kant in the context of the Herder dispute, Reinhold no longer thinks of Kant as an old-fashioned metaphysician, but rather values his influence on Enlightenment especially for his “scattering of the metaphysical delusions” (146). The second section of the letter presents a long list of the “main results,” which can be summarized by the claim that Kant has provided a map of reason’s capacities on the basis of which he has been able to decide important questions regarding religion and morality about which philosophers have been arguing for a long time, by pin-pointing the misunderstanding between them (cf. 146-147). Among other things, these questions concern the existence of God, the soul and human freedom. The main result of the Kantian philosophy is a complete inventory of what can and cannot be decided by reason with respect to these issues (cf. 147). No matter how impressive these results are, they cannot convince anyone of the Kantian philosophy on their own. Anyone wishing to present the results of the Kantian philosophy must “present the *How* next to the *What* simultaneously” (147). This implies that showing the results of the Kantian philosophy in this broad sense involves, at least, indicating the basis of those results, which suggests that they need to be connected to the internal grounds of the Kantian philosophy.

In 1786, however, Reinhold intends to connect the results of the Kantian philosophy to the external grounds, presumably because he first needs to convince people of the relevance of Kant’s project (cf. 153). This is the main objective in the ‘Briefe’. On the other hand, the First Book of the *Versuch* presents the problems of philosophy that may count as external grounds for the Kantian philosophy, but the brute fact of their solution is not put forward explicitly as a ‘result’ of this philosophy. Instead, Reinhold speaks of more specific results, such as the impossibility for speculative reason to prove the existence of God. He apparently uses the phrase ‘result of the Kantian philosophy’ in two different senses. In a very broad sense the phrase is connected to the external grounds for the Kantian philosophy. In this sense, the result of the Kantian philosophy is ‘that it has solved the problems of the philosophy of religion’. In a narrower sense the phrase refers to the more specific results connected to the internal grounds of the Kantian philosophy, such as the exact limits of reason, which are the actual outcome of the investigation of reason. Thus, we might say that while the ‘Briefe’ aimed to present the ‘result’ of the Kantian philosophy in the first sense, the aim of the *Versuch* as a whole is to present the results of the Kantian philosophy in the second sense.[[267]](#footnote-267)

From Reinhold’s letter to Voigt, written to communicate his plans with regard to the Kantian philosophy, we can now draw several conclusions regarding Reinhold’s perspective on Kant at the time of his first public support for the latter’s philosophy. 1) Reinhold had personal interests of a political and economic nature to work on Kant, as he hoped this work would secure him a position at the university, which in turn would enable him to provide for his family to some extent, and be less dependent on his father-in-law. 2) He understood the Kantian philosophy in a context of Enlightenment, which means that for him there was no discontinuity with his earlier philosophical pursuits. 3) He was aware at least of some of the available comments on Kant and of Kant’s *Prolegomena* and *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*. 4) The plan that Reinhold presented to Voigt in 1786 continued to be the framework within which his subsequent works regarding Kant were placed. 5) These works deal with the results of the Kantian philosophy in various ways. On the one hand, Reinhold discussed the results in a general sense, as solutions to contemporary philosophical problems, mainly in the ‘Briefe’. On the other hand, he discussed them more specifically and investigated their internal grounds, bringing forward his own theory of the faculty of representation to provide these grounds, in the *Versuch* and the *Beyträge*. An account story of Reinhold’s way to Kant on the basis of this letter is likely to stress the non-philosophical considerations Reinhold had for turning to Kant. It promised him some financial security and the possibility to be less dependent on the whims of his father-in-law, in short, the opportunity of a lifetime. Nevertheless, it becomes clear from the way Reinhold introduces Kant that his turn to Kant is not a life-changing event, but that his interest in the Kantian philosophy can be understood from the point of view of his previous philosophical interests in Enlightenment.

## Reinhold’s own statements regarding his interest in Kant: a story of religious and intellectual crisis

In the first section of this chapter we have come upon a plausible story telling us that Reinhold’s interest in Kant got aroused by the polemical exchange between them regarding Herder’s *Ideen*. According to that story Reinhold’s first interest in Kant would have been the latter’s way of dealing with the ‘poles of human knowledge’, that is, philosophical/metaphysical and historical/empirical cognition. In the second section another story has been explored according to which Reinhold’s first interest in Kant was triggered by political and economic motives. These stories need not be mutually exclusive, however. It may well have been the case that Reinhold’s philosophical interest at the time coincided with an opportunity to benefit from them financially as well as socially.[[268]](#footnote-268)

One source, which is generally accepted more or less at face value, has not been considered yet: Reinhold’s own statements regarding his allegiance to Kant. Reinhold elaborately justified his endorsement of the Kantian philosophy in a much cited passage from the Preface to the *Versuch*, which will be the topic of this third section. As it is of vital importance to understand the background against which Reinhold presents his study of Kant’s *Critique*, the passage in which he introduces himself and his reasons for endorsing the Kantian philosophy will be cited here extensively.

Er [Reinhold] glaubt, die Vorkenntnisse, die bey einer metaphysischen Lektüre vorausgesetzt werden, besessen zu haben, als er 1785 dieses [Kant’s] System zu studieren anfieng. Zehn Iahre hindurch war speculative Philosophie sein Hauptstudium gewesen, (…) Drey Iahre hindurch hatte er philosophische Vorlesungen nach dem leibnitzischen Systeme gehalten, und die Schriften des großen Stifters desselben, so wie seines würdigen Gegners *Locke*, waren ihm keineswegs nur aus den neuern philosophischen Produkten unsrer Landesleute bekannt.(*Versuch*, 51-52)

[He believes to have been in the possession of the knowledge required for reading metaphysics, when, in 1785, he started to study this [Kant’s] system. For ten years, speculative philosophy had been his main subject of study (…). For three years, he had lectured according to the Leibnizian system and the works of its great founder, as well as those of his worthy opponent Locke were by no means only known to him from the recent philosophical products of our compatriots.]

Reinhold opens his autobiographical paragraphs by introducing himself as someone who knows his philosophy. Obviously, this is important to him, as he is a relatively new appearance on the stage of professional philosophy, who has only received his academic title of *Magister* by courtesy of the University of Jena.[[269]](#footnote-269) The statement quoted above is generally true, although it may be slightly exaggerated as regards speculative philosophy having been his main occupation for the past ten years. Reinhold did teach philosophy at the Barnabite college, presumably according to Wolff, and it is highly probable that he indeed knew original work of both Leibniz and Locke. Even if he had no formal academic education, this familiarity with the major philosophical schools dominating the scene in the 1780s would suffice to establish his credentials. However, he believes that it took more than a well-prepared mind to digest the Kantian philosophy.

Zu dieser Vorbereitung des Kopfes (…), kam bey ihm noch ein dringendes Bedürfniß hinzu, auf einem neuen Wege seinem Herzen die Ruhe wiederzufinden, die er auf dem Felde der Speculation verloren und auf allen ihm bekannt gewordenen Wegen vergebens gesucht hatte. (52)

[To this preparation of his mind (…) was added in his case a pressing need to find, on a new path, the peace for his heart that he had lost in the field of speculation and that he had sought in vain on all the paths known to him.]

These remarks are structured in a way that is strongly reminiscent of Reinhold’s pre-Kantian outlook on Enlightenment and the task of philosophy, as we have seen in the previous chapter. Apart from the philosophical preparation of his *mind*, or rational capacities, Reinhold says his *heart* provided the necessary motivation to study Kant. This heart of his was not satisfied at all by the other current philosophical systems, and he had high hopes that the Kantian philosophy would be able to help him out in this respect, for it was new and different from everything he had encountered before. He continues by presenting the story of how his heart came to lose its peace.

Durch seine Erziehung war ihm *Religion* nicht nur zur ersten, sondern gewissermassen zur einzigen Angelegenheit seiner früheren Lebensjahre gemacht. (52)

[Because of his education, *religion* had become not only the first, but in a sense the only interest of his early life.]

Reinhold’s earliest extant letter, to his father, cited in the first chapter, shows that he is not exaggerating in this case. There had indeed been a time, when he could have been described as a religious ascetic, chastising himself over his own negligence in the face of the imminent suppression of the Jesuit Order. His description of the following steps in his philosophical development is harder to judge, as there are fewer sources to corroborate his own account.

Die philosophische Kritik des Geschmackes (…) verleitete ihn unvermerkt auf das Gebieth der speculativen Philosophie, und er hatte kaum einige Schritte auf derselben zurückgelegt, als er den Grund seiner bisherigen Glückseligkeit mit Schrecken erschüttert fühlte. Vergebens versuchte er sich hinter die Bollwerke der Ascetik zurückzuziehen und dem Kampfe mit den Zweifeln auszuweichen, die ihn drohend und einladend von allen Seiten bestürmten. Es war ihm unmöglich geworden, blind, wie vorher, zu glauben, und er sah sich bald genug gezwungen, sich auf Diskretion den Feinden seiner Ruhe zu überlassen, die ihm mit Wucher wiederzugeben verhießen, was sie ihm genommen hatten. (52-53)

[Philosophical critique of taste (…) seduced him unwittingly into the domain of speculative philosophy, and he had barely taken his first steps in this field as with fear he felt the ground of his past happiness shaking. In vain he tried to retreat behind the bulwarks of ascetics and to avoid the battle with his doubts, which from all sides came to him both inviting and threatening. It had become impossible for him to believe blindly, as before, and soon enough he found himself forced to deliver himself to the discretion of the enemies of his peace, who promise to return with high rates of interest what they had taken from him.]

Although we lack concrete evidence that it was indeed through aesthetics that Reinhold’s interests in philosophy were aroused, the fact that many of his Vienna friends had literary aspirations, as well as Reinhold himself, makes it rather plausible.[[270]](#footnote-270) Of course, he also studied philosophy in the Barnabite college. As we have seen in the first chapter, Paul Pepermann played an important role in encouraging Reinhold with respect to his philosophical studies. The crucial claim that Reinhold makes regarding his first steps upon the path of philosophy is that once he began his studies, his (blind) faith began to crumble and he experienced a serious philosophical crisis, which continued for several years. With regard to the loss of his blind faith, however, his writings show no evidence of such a crisis.[[271]](#footnote-271)

Nun war Metaphysik die Hauptangelegenheit seines einsamen, sorge- und geschäftefreyen Lebens geworden. Allein am Ende einer vieljährigen Periode, während welcher er alle vier Hauptsysteme der Reihe nach angenommen und aufgegeben hatte, war er nur darüber mit sich selbst einig geworden, daß ihm die Metaphysik zwar mehr als einen Plan, sich bald mit seinem Kopfe, bald mit seinen Herzen abzufinden, aber keinen einzigen vorzulegen hatte, der die ernsthaften Forderungen von beyden zugleich zu befriedigen vermochte. (53)

[Now, metaphysics had become the main occupation of his solitary life, free of worries and business. Yet at the end of a period of many years, during which he accepted and rejected all of the four main systems one after the other, the only thing he was sure of was that metaphysics had more than one plan to offer that would allow him to now agree with his mind, then with his heart, but none that was able to satisfy the serious demands of both at the same time.]

In all of his early writings Reinhold is already firmly on the side of Enlightenment and against blind faith and superstition. None of them shows any clear signs of his subsequently accepting and abandoning the four main systems of metaphysics. Earlier in the Preface Reinhold had identified these four systems as “spiritualism, materialism, dogmatic skepticism and supernaturalism” (21). It is clear that in his youth Reinhold had favored supernaturalism, or religious orthodoxy. Given that the term ‘spiritualism’ refers to the Leibnizian philosophy, according to which the basic substances in the world are of a spiritual nature, it is not far-fetched to assume that Reinhold had adopted spiritualism as well at some point. After all, the Leibnizian-Wolffian philosophy formed the basis of philosophical education in Vienna in those days.[[272]](#footnote-272) That Reinhold’s ideals regarding Enlightenment and religion may have been more radical than is apparent from the writings that were intended for a wider audience has been shown in the previous chapter. His Masonic and Illuminatist ideology may have incorporated materialist elements. Thus Reinhold’s own description of his philosophical development appears to be correct. We only lack evidence for the phase termed ‘dogmatic skepticism’, but again, it would not be far-fetched at all to assume that Reinhold was familiar with the works of Hume, probably made available to him by Pepermann.[[273]](#footnote-273)

Although there is evidence supporting the claim that Reinhold was indeed familiar with the four main systems of philosophy and knew them from personal study, there is no compelling evidence indicating that Reinhold indeed had adopted and rejected these systems in succession in a strong sense, except in the case of supernaturalism. His ‘accepting and rejecting’ should be understood in terms of his having evaluated these systems, being aware of their strong points, but also of their limitations. As he did not venture on the field of metaphysics himself, there are no clear signs of his working within a systematic framework or abandoning one system for another. The only clear framework from which he worked, is, as shown in the previous chapter that of his Enlightenment engagement. His writings suggest that he is quite comfortable as an eclectic *Aufklärer*, not committed to any particular system, but rather commenting on current affairs and developments in philosophy from his own point of view. Reinhold, as he appears from his pre-Kantian writings, has more in common with the *Popularphilosophen* of his days than with the main systems he has identified.[[274]](#footnote-274) In the introduction to the *Versuch*, however, he is overly critical of this type of philosophy, making abundantly clear that this is not what he would want to be associated with (cf. 23-24; 122-123; 133-140). Since Reinhold’s writings show no signs of his adopting and rejecting these systems, his account of his philosophical development here may well have been designed to contribute to the goal of dissociating his pre-Kantian philosophical work from the works of the *Popularphilosophen*. Instead, he presents his pre-Kantian development as a kind of quest for a way to satisfy the demands of his mind and his heart.

Der peinliche Gemüthszustand, der bey ihm eine sehr natürliche Folge dieser Ueberzeugung war, und die Begierde, desselben es koste auch was es wolle los zu werden, waren die ersten und stärksten Triebfedern des Eifers und der Anstrengung, womit er sich dem Studium der *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* hingab, nachdem er an derselben unter andern auch den Versuch wahrzunehmen glaubte, die Erkenntnißgründe der Grundwahrheiten der Religion und der Moral von aller Metaphysik unabhängig zu machen. (53-54)

[The painful state of mind that for him naturally resulted from this conviction, and the desire to get rid of it, whatever it would take, were the first and strongest incentives of the industry and effort with which he started to study the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, since he believed to perceive in it, among other things, the attempt to make the grounds of cognition of the fundamental truths of religion and morality independent of all metaphysics.]

Since Reinhold has argued earlier in the Preface that it would be nearly impossible for professional philosophers to understand the new philosophy presented by Kant (cf. 40-41), he can now use his own philosophical predicament and the lack of academic employment to make plausible that he did have the energy and the spare time to study and understand Kant, and the right frame of mind, of course. According to his claim here, the reason for starting his study of Kant was that he saw in it an attempt “to make the grounds of cognition of the fundamental truths of religion and morality independent of all metaphysics.” The reader is left to fill in how this would satisfy both his mind and heart, but it must be something along the following lines. Religion and morality satisfied his heart, but they did not satisfy his head, for their fundamental truths could not be philosophically justified. Several metaphysical systems had promised Reinhold such justification, but had failed to deliver the kind of foundation that would satisfy his heart. Such is the philosophical predicament that Reinhold claimed led him to study Kant’s first *Critique*, in which he saw a possible solution, that is, a non-metaphysical justification of the basics of religion and morality. He relates his efforts and their results.

Bey der ersten äusserst aufmerksamen Durchlesung sah er nichts als einzelne schwache Lichtfunken aus einem Dunkel hervorschimmern, das sich kaum bei der *fünften* ganz verloren hatte. Ueber ein Iahr lang enthielt er sich fast aller andern Lektüre, zeichnete sich die Hauptsätze des Werkes, die er verstanden zu haben glaubte so wohl, als die er wirklich nicht verstanden hatte, besonders auf, und verfertigte mehr als einen mißlungenen Auszug des Ganzen. Alles, was er auf diese Weise Anfangs herausbrachte, waren Bruchstücke, die ihm theils aus andern Systemen entlehnt, theils schlechterdings unvereinbar schienen. Allein so wie er rastlos fortfuhr, einerseits durch wiederholtes Lesen aus dem Werke selbst neuen Stoff auszuheben, andererseits aber das Ausgehobene aneinander zu rücken: ergänzten sich die Bruchstücke allmälich zu aneinander passenden Theilen, verschwanden Dunkelheiten, die ihm vorher unüberwindlich, und Ungereimtheiten, die ihm ganz entschieden deuchten, und am Ende stand das Ganze im vollen Lichte einer Evidenz vor ihm da, die ihn um so mehr überraschte, je weniger er sie seinen vorigen Erfahrungen und Grundsätzen zufolge in der speculativen Philosophie für möglich gehalten hatte. (54-56)

[When he first read it highly attentively, he did not see anything but small singular sparks shimmering from a darkness that had barely resolved upon his *fifth* reading. For over a year he abstained from almost all other reading, made notes of the main claims that he believed he had understood as well as of those that he had not understood at all and produced more than one failed outline of the whole. In the beginning he produced nothing but bits and pieces, which seemed to him partly taken from other systems, partly incompatible with one another. Yet in this way, carrying on without rest, on the one hand collecting new material from repeated reading, on the other hand combining the bits and pieces, the fragments came together as parts belonging together, the problems that had seemed unconquerable and the incompatibilities that had seemed decisive started to disappear, and in the end, the whole was there, in the full light of day, with an evidence that surprised him all the more, since, as a result of his previous experience and principles, he had deemed this impossible.]

The above passage creates a strong image of our lonesome philosophical hero, driven by the need to overcome his philosophical problems, studying feverishly, working very hard to make sense of it all. Even if reading Kant’s first *Critique* five times in little over a year must be considered humanly possible,[[275]](#footnote-275) in Reinhold’s case it would have been a truly remarkable achievement. We already indicated above that he did not really have the leisure he claimed to have had. Marrying and moving out of his in-laws’ house would have been a strain already, but his activities did include other reading and writing.[[276]](#footnote-276) Reinhold wrote to Nicolai that he did not publish much in the *Merkur* of 1785, as he worked on his *Herzenserleichterung* and the *Damenbibliothek*, the translation of which he took on “des lieben Brodes willen.”[[277]](#footnote-277) In the beginning of the following year, he published an article against Schmidt’s *Geschichte der Teutschen*, so he must have read that as well.[[278]](#footnote-278) Although Reinhold does not actually claim that he read the first *Critique* five times in just the first year, we saw earlier that he did state in his letter to Voigt that he read it three times.[[279]](#footnote-279) Reinhold may be given the benefit of the doubt her, but his claim that he has abstained from almost all other reading is, to say the least, an exaggeration. Based on what we know about his personal life and other activities in this period, the best we can say is that it may be true that the *Critique* was the main object of purposeful study; it is certainly not true that his attention was as undividedly devoted to it as he makes out.

From Reinhold’s description of the way he proceeded with his studies, it is clear that making sense of Kant’s *Critique* was by no means easy. As he describes how he kept trying to make summaries and was confused by the combination of things he recognized and things he could not understand, his joy at finally getting some understanding of the new system is not hard to imagine. It is also clear that Reinhold’s access to Kant was mediated by his philosophical experience up to that point.[[280]](#footnote-280) Although he started out identifying the bits in Kant that he knew from elsewhere, the final result of his study was still, in his own words, “unexpected.”

Er begnügt sich also hier zu bekennen: daß ihm durch die neuerhaltenen Principien alle seine philosophischen Zweifel auf eine Kopf und Herz vollkommen befriedigende, für immer entscheidende, obwohl ganz unerwartete Weise beantwortet sind. (…)

Seine eigenen Angelegenheiten waren ins reine gebracht, und es erwachte in ihm der Wunsch etwas beyzutragen, daß ein Gut, in dessen Besitze er sich so glücklich fühlte, auch von andern erkannt und benutzt würde. Er suchte in seinen *Briefen über die Kantische Philosophie* auf die Kritik der Vernunft vorzüglich durch diejenigen *Resultate* aufmerksam zu machen, die sich aus derselben für die Grundwahrheiten der Religion und der Moral ergeben. (56-57)

[It is therefore with pleasure that here he affirms that for him all his philosophical doubts are answered by the newly received principles in a way that fully satisfies his mind and his heart; that is forever decisive, although it was totally unexpected. (…) His own affairs were now sorted and the desire awoke in him to make an effort so that the good he so happily possessed would also be known and used by others. In his ‘Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie’ he tried to get the Critique of Reason noted mainly by means of those *results* that follow from it for the fundamental truths of religion and morality.]

Reinhold’s personal joy at finding a philosophical system that could satisfy both his heart and his mind, combined with the realization that this result had been produced in a way that was different from anything else he had seen up to that point form the ingredients of his desire to share the outcome of his study with a wider audience. Again, his self-presentation clearly serves the purpose of making plausible that he, the relative newcomer on the philosophical stage, has a right to speak on Kant. After all, the philosophical heavyweights of the day had already denounced the Critical philosophy as incomprehensible. The circumstantial evidence regarding his strong motivation to get to the core of it combined with the philosophical credentials presented earlier, and the fact that he was not yet part of the academic establishment with its vested interests, supports the image that Reinhold was the right man to understand the revolutionary potential of Kant’s philosophy. The realization that due to his particular circumstances he was one of the few people who had access to this new way of justifying the truths of religion and morality is presented as his motivation to spread the news. The extraordinary circumstances surrounding the new philosophy called for an extraordinary way of communicating its merits to a wider audience.

Er hatte bald genug eingesehen, daß diese Resultate aus den neuen Principien nur für diejenigen streng bewiesen werden konnten, welche das kantische Werk selbst studiert und durchgängig verstanden hätten. Da er nun dieses Studieren und Verstehen vielmehr erst zu befördern wünschte, als schon voraussetzen durfte, so blieb ihm nichts als der Versuch übrig, diese Resultate unabhängig von den kantischen Prämissen aufzustellen, sie an bereits vorhandene Ueberzeugungen anzuknüpfen, ihren Zusammenhang mit den wesentlichsten wissenschaftlichen und moralischen Bedürfnissen unsrer Zeit, ihren Einfluß auf die Beylegung alter und bisher unentschiedener Zwiste in der philosophischen Welt und ihre Uebereinstimmung mit dem was die größten philosophischen Köpfe über die grossen Probleme der speculativen Philosophie gedacht haben, sichtbar zu machen. (57-58)

[He had understood soon enough that these results from the new principles could only be strictly demonstrated to those who had studied and thoroughly understood the Kantian work themselves. Since he, however, wished to further this study, rather than assuming it, the only thing for him to do was to try and establish these results independently of the Kantian premises, to connect them to convictions already present, to show their relation to the most essential scientific and moral needs of our time, to make visible their influence on the settlement of old and as yet undecided disputes in the philosophical world and their agreement with what the greatest philosophical minds have though regarding the important problems of speculative philosophy.]

As Reinhold has presented himself as one of the very few who have been able to understand Kant, selling the all-important results of his philosophy cannot proceed solely from the basis of that philosophy. The Kantian philosophy was not understood widely and deeply enough to sell itself. Therefore, publicly endorsing the new system meant introducing it independently of the contested *Critique* itself. This, as we shall see in the following chapter, is indeed what Reinhold had done in the ‘Briefe’. He presented reasons for taking the Kantian philosophy seriously that were independent of and external to the *Critique* itself; they were to be found in the historical situation of the philosophical debates of the day.

When valuating Reinhold’s description of his conversion to Kantianism in the Preface to the *Versuch*, it becomes clear that he does not present the whole story. The more mundane interests that must have played a role in his decision to write his ‘Briefe’, as discussed previously are absent. In other respects, the account is not exactly accurate, as the historical circumstances render it highly implausible that he studied Kant with the intensity he suggests. In other words, in this Preface Reinhold does not aim to present the complete factual story of his introduction to and study of Kant. He is deliberately sketching a picture of himself that will both justify his endorsement of Kant and establish his credentials as a philosopher fit to discuss Kant’s philosophy. By recounting his previous activity in the field of metaphysics, Reinhold seeks, first, to make plausible that he has been able to understand Kant and, secondly, to justify the (practical) point of view from which he chose to present the main results of his philosophy in the ‘Briefe’.

## Evaluation: weaving the stories together

While the previous sections have each presented different reasons for Reinhold to go and study Kant, the time has now come to weave those different perspectives together to reach a coherent understanding of the process through which Reinhold came to Kant. First, let us briefly recapitulate the main perspectives that were discussed above. The account of the controversy surrounding Herder’s *Ideen* suggests that Reinhold came upon Kant almost by coincidence. Writing against Kant’s review, Reinhold showed an interest in questions regarding scientific methodology and especially the relation between the empirical and the metaphysical ‘poles of human knowledge’. This theoretical interest can be traced back to the more practical Enlightenment context of his pre-Kantian works. As Kant responded to the criticism mildly and invitingly, Reinhold may have taken up studying his work because he was interested in his solution to this problem of scientific methodology. His allegiance to Herder would have been more of a personal than of a philosophical nature, even if Herder’s Spinozism may have been attractive to him. Although Herder may not have liked his young friend’s resolve to study Kant, their friendship did not hinder Reinhold’s philosophical ambitions, nor, apparently, vice versa.

In contrast to this picture, Reinhold’s letter to Voigt conveys the image of cold-blooded politics. It shows that the context of Reinhold’s public endorsement of the Kantian philosophy was one in which he was invited to do so, with prospects for his financial situation and career. To be sure, Reinhold does express his enthusiasm for the practical results of the Kantian philosophy in the letter, but his plan also bears witness to a marketing strategy, not only for the Kantian philosophy, but also for his own person. He is clearly intent on appearing as someone who is up to date on Kant. Moreover, he seeks to present the one shortcoming for acquiring an academic position, his lack of official academic education, as an actual advantage for understanding the Kantian philosophy. From the letter accompanying the plan it is obvious that Reinhold expected to benefit (socially, financially) from sharing his opinion on the influence of the Kantian philosophy.

This picture again differs from the version that Reinhold presents in the Preface to his *Versuch*, which portrays him as a young hero on a quest to find the holy grail of philosophy, a system that can satisfy both the demands of his mind and of his heart. It has already been shown that in some places at least his claims on the intensity with which he studied Kant in the year preceding his ‘Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie’ are definitely exaggerated. On the one hand the presentation in the Preface of the *Versuch* shares its aim with the letter to Voigt, in that it seeks to present Reinhold as the one thinker in the philosophical field who is in a position to explain Kant’s achievements. Both sources turn his status as an academic outsider into an asset in this respect. On the other hand, however, these two sources do not agree at all on Reinhold’s motivations for studying Kant. The story of the philosophical hero on an all-important quest appears to be at odds with the more mundane considerations presented in the letter to Voigt. Reinhold’s quest was by no means undertaken for merely intellectual goods.

Since the sources are at odds, or at the very least only present partial pictures of how Reinhold came to be a propagator of the Kantian philosophy,[[281]](#footnote-281) our knowledge of his first interest and understanding of Kant is limited. Yet this knowledge is of the highest importance if we want to understand Reinhold’s reception of the Critical philosophy. The relation between the different sources discussed thus far and the relative weight that needs to be attached to the separate pictures they convey can be elucidated by looking at another source of Reinhold’s own hand, his first letter to the master himself, dated October 12, 1787. As we have seen that he is prone to practice ‘self-stylization’,[[282]](#footnote-282) this source needs to be assessed with as much caution as the others.

After revealing himself to Kant as the author of the ‘Schreiben des Pfarrers’ and apologizing for the “unphilosophische Philosophie” of the Pfarrer, Reinhold thanks Kant for bringing about a wholesome revolution in his “Gedankensystem.”[[283]](#footnote-283) He describes his introduction to the Kantian system as follows.

Der von *Ihnen* entwickelte *moralische Erkenntnißgrund* der Grundwahrheiten der Religion, das einzige Morceau das mir aus dem ganzen in der Litteraturzeitung gelieferten Auszuge *Ihres* Werkes verständlich war, hat mich zuerst zum Studium der Kritik d. r. V. eingeladen. Ich ahndete, suchte und fand in derselben das kaum mehr für möglich gehaltene Mittel, der unseeligen Alternative zwischen Aberglauben und Unglauben überhoben zu seyn. (RK 1: 271-273)

[The *moral ground of cognition* of the fundamental truths of religion, developed by *you*, the only bit in the whole overview of *your* work provided in the *Litteraturzeitung* that I could understand, was the thing that invited me to the study of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. I suspected, sought and found in it the means that I barely believed possible to rise above the unholy alternatives of superstition and non-belief.]

Like the Preface to the *Versuch*, Reinhold’s first letter to Kant presents the moral and religious perspective on the *Critique* as his first and main point of interest. It was even, he admits, the only bit he understood at first, although it is not made clear whether it was the review alone that sparked his interest in the Kantian philosophy. Given the reference to the ‘moral ground of cognition of the fundamental truths of religion’, Reinhold must refer to the review by Schütz of Schultz’s *Erläuterungen*, which also takes Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* and *Prolegomena* into account. [[284]](#footnote-284) The review, also by Schütz, of Kant’s *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, does not refer to the moral argument at all, but it does present the Kantian philosophy as a beginning of a new era in philosophy.[[285]](#footnote-285) In his book on the importance of Schütz for the dissemination of the Kantian philosophy, Horst Schröpfer discusses these two reviews and some others that are certainly or almost certainly from his hand.[[286]](#footnote-286) Schütz not only sought to present Kant’s works to his readers, but also referred to the Kantian philosophy in reviewing works by others. For our purposes it is relevant to point out that Schütz was very much attracted by the moral theology of Kant, and used the so-called pantheism controversy between Mendelssohn and Jacobi as an excellent opportunity to point out the Kantian solution to the problem.[[287]](#footnote-287) We shall return to this controversy and its role in the formation of Reinhold’s ‘Briefe’ in the following chapter. For now it will suffice to point out that the *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung* in the period in which Reinhold started to study the Kantian philosophy offered several reviews (by Schütz) that stressed the relevance of the new philosophy for questions of morality and religion. These reviews are very likely to have had their influence upon Reinhold’s interpretation and subsequent presentation of Kant.[[288]](#footnote-288)

In his letter to Kant Reinhold presents himself in a way that is similar to the presentation in the Preface of the *Versuch* discussed earlier. The stress in his letter on practical issues was not only confirmed by his ‘Briefe’ but is also very understandable from the point of view of his previous interests, which, as demonstrated in the previous chapter, focused on religion and Enlightenment. It is no wonder, then, that the only *morceau* he could understand at first was related to those interests. In the *Versuch* Reinhold also admits that first he was able to understand only those items in Kant’s philosophy that he was already familiar with (cf. *Versuch*, 55). His stress on the ‘moral ground of cognition’ of religion also goes very well with the direction his own interests in religion were taking. Already in his defense of Herder, Reinhold had confidently asserted that “our morality no longer depends on a metaphysical system of the nature of spirits.”[[289]](#footnote-289) This shows that he was keen on making morality independent of traditional metaphysics, presumably because it could not satisfy the demands of his heart, i.e. his religious and moral feelings. It is no coincidence, then, that the leading question Reinhold poses in his letter to Voigt concerns the influence of the Kantian philosophy in particular on the “scattering of the metaphysical delusions” (*RK* 1:146). Thus, one of the common points behind the different perspectives appears to be Reinhold’s dislike of traditional metaphysics, for which he found support in Kant. Against this background, the perspective centering on the Herder controversy gains plausibility, as the outcome of the debate was that both parties, Kant and Reinhold, were critical of traditional a priori metaphysics. The question still open to Reinhold at the end of the controversy was how to produce the ideal mix of a priori and empirical. Having read Kant, Reinhold probably thought he could now criticize metaphysics more effectively.

If criticizing traditional metaphysics was the prime aim of Reinhold’s first plans regarding the Kantian philosophy, it is easily understandable why Herder, after being offended by Kant, would lend his approval to the proposal to provide Reinhold with an extraordinary professorship, which would entail lecturing on Kant. Apart from wishing his young friend well, Herder must have thought that appointing an avowed anti-metaphysician at the University of Jena was a good idea. However, in his official report on Reinhold, he could not help expressing his doubts about the value of the Kantian philosophy.[[290]](#footnote-290) If we understand that Reinhold’s main interest in Kant was based on his critical attitude towards the metaphysical foundation of religion and morality, it becomes clear that Reinhold indeed could play a reconciling role between Herder and Kant.

Also regarding the aims and methods of Reinhold’s anti-metaphysics his letter to Kant provides a valuable clue to providing a more integrated account of Reinhold’s interest in Kantianism. He stresses that it was the ‘moral ground of cognition’ (*moralische Erkenntnißgrund*) that tempted him to study the first *Critique*, as it was the only thing he could understand in the review of it. We have already seen that, in the letter to Voigt, he already indicated that the solution of the problems with the fundamental truths of religion had to be sought not in the direction of a new metaphysical foundation, but rather in the structures of the human mind. With his adoption of Kantianism, Reinhold thus continues his criticism of traditional metaphysics. Moreover, founding the truths of religion on the structure of the human mind was a move he understood, given his earlier work on the history of religion. The previous chapter has shown how Reinhold repeatedly connects the developments in religion with the developments of the cognitive capacities of human reason. The structure and level of development of the human mind determine the form religion takes at a given time in history. This form can vary in keeping with the capacities of different groups of people at different times. Underlying the idea that the structure of reason plays a large part in determining the shape of religion is Reinhold’s radical naturalist conception of religion, according to which religion can be explained by natural and psychological processes. Of course, this is not what Kant had in mind, as his insights into the structure of reason are meant to be neither psychological nor historical.

With the central passage of Reinhold’s first letter to Kant, acknowledging his authorship of both the ‘Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie’ and the ‘Schreiben des Pfarrers’ the efforts to provide an account for his ‘conversion’ to Kantianism have come full circle. We are now in a position to evaluate the different sources and present a coherent account of the process of Reinhold’s becoming interested in Kant. His own statements regarding this process in both the Preface to his *Versuch* and the letter to Kant are incomplete and at points definitely exaggerated. They serve the specific purpose of conveying that he, Reinhold, is a fit expositor of the Kantian philosophy. He expressly presents his motivations for studying Kant as intrinsically philosophical or even existential; the more mundane incentives that must also have played a role, witnessing his letter to Voigt, are conveniently left out. He further suggests that his efforts to penetrate the Kantian philosophy turned out to be a full-time job for a year, which is incompatible with his other activities at the time. Nevertheless, without taking the intensity of both his crisis and his study too literally, the core of Reinhold’s own claims is that the Kantian philosophy provided a solution to a serious problem he experienced and which clearly emerges from the variety of sources discussed throughout this chapter. Reinhold wants to establish the fundamental truths of religion on a basis that is neither supernatural, nor metaphysical. A long time ago he had departed from the supernaturalism of his youth and now, as pointed out in the previous chapter, he had come to find the metaphysics of his age lacking. Already he must have been already working on alternative foundations, presumably within an Illuminatist framework, which led to a naturalistic conception of religion. However, when it is founded on a metaphysical basis such as Spinozism, this religion cannot sufficiently engage Reinhold’s heart. Again, in the previous chapter, it has become apparent that Reinhold was not aiming at such a metaphysical basis, but tried to ground the historical development of religion on the development of the structure of the human mind. The fact that the ‘*moralische Erkenntnißgrund*’ in the *ALZ*-review of the first *Critique* was presented in a psychological form, from which Kant would soon distance himself,[[291]](#footnote-291) no doubt contributed to Reinhold’s easy understanding of this ‘Kantian’ point. Enthusiasm for facts in order to criticize metaphysics sounds very familiar against the background of Reinhold’s first reaction to Kant in defense of Herder’s *Ideen*.

We can conclude that Reinhold started studying the Kantian philosophy because it interested him and because he (rightly) believed that it could pay off as well. In spite of the high level of self-stylization in his own accounts of the process, they are honest in the sense that Reinhold did indeed see new possibilities in the Critical philosophy. Possibilities, that is, to realize his own goals, shaped by his Illuminatist background. These goals entailed establishing religion on a non-metaphysical basis, taking the structure of the human mind and its development over time as its starting point. Apart from offering a model for doing this, the Kantian philosophy must also have attracted Reinhold because it stressed the importance of the cooperation of our sensible and rational capacities.

# ‘Practical reason’ in the *Merkur*-‘Briefe’

In the previous chapter we have sought to establish the most plausible story behind the interest Reinhold took in the Kantian philosophy from 1785 onwards and we have dealt with the complex of philosophical, personal and political reasons that must have played a role in his decision to study Kant’s first *Critique*. The present chapter will focus on the initial results of this study, as they emerged in the ‘Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie’. This series of articles published in *Der Teutsche Merkur* between August 1786 and September 1787 not only formed the first stage of the plan Reinhold had communicated to Voigt, but also produced some very welcome side effects: he became a celebrity overnight and an extraordinary professor at the University of Jena. The popularity of his ‘Briefe’ can be gathered from the fact that two pirate editions of them appeared not long after their publication in the *Merkur*.[[292]](#footnote-292) Through Reinhold’s efforts the Kantian philosophy was no longer just an incomprehensible curiosity, but became a hot topic. With regard to this stunning success, Karl Ameriks has termed the ‘Briefe’ “arguably the most influential work ever written concerning Kant.”[[293]](#footnote-293) Apparently, then, Reinhold had found exactly the right perspective from which to promote the Kantian philosophy to the German public in the 1780’s.

The present chapter of this study is dedicated to analyzing this perspective and showing how Reinhold’s pre-Kantian interests determined the way in which his reception of the Kantian philosophy took shape. The first section will elucidate the context in which the ‘Briefe’ could make such an impact, the fertile soil, as it were, in which Reinhold’s Kantian seeds landed. The single most important factor determining the fertility of this soil is the so-called pantheism controversy which had erupted in 1785 between Jacobi and Mendelssohn, but which soon involved others as well. On the surface it concerned the question as to the extent of Lessing’s alleged Spinozism, but the real issue at stake was the compatibility of philosophy and religion. The first two ‘Briefe’ place the project firmly into the framework of this controversy with the claim that the Kantian philosophy provides the solution to that pressing issue. The second section of the present chapter will discuss the remainder of the ‘Briefe’, analyzing the way in which Reinhold argues for his bold claim. From this analysis it will be clear that there are strong continuities with his pre-Kantian writings. Finally, the third section will focus on Reinhold’s use of the Kantian concept ‘practical reason’ in the ‘Briefe’, where it plays an important role as the foundation of fundamental religious tenets, such as the existence of God. As the term ‘practical reason’ does not occur in Reinhold’s previous writings, its employment is clearly associated with his interests in Kantian philosophy. Likewise, Reinhold employs the Kantianizing concept ‘pure sensibility’ in a way that is closely related to his use of ‘practical reason’. As shown in the previous chapters, however, Reinhold had a conception of reason of his own, before he became acquainted with the Kantian view. The evaluation will show that his use of the terms ‘practical reason’ and ‘pure sensibility’ is to be regarded as a continuation of his pre-Kantian views on reason.

## The ‘Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie’ and the pantheism controversy: the first two ‘Briefe’ (August 1786)

In order to understand the extraordinary success of the ‘Briefe’ we must regard the context in which they were published. This context is formed by the so-called pantheism controversy or Spinoza controversy.[[294]](#footnote-294) This debate erupted when, in 1785, Jacobi published his correspondence with Mendelssohn without the latter’s consent.[[295]](#footnote-295) The particular subject of the letters Jacobi and Mendelssohn had exchanged in the two years prior to publication was Jacobi’s claim that the late Lessing, German enlightener *par excellence*, had revealed to him, Jacobi, that he, Lessing, was a Spinozist. Jacobi’s cautious disclosure of this information to Mendelssohn, who was working on Lessing’s biography, implied that he believed that this entailed that Lessing had been an atheist. In his *Morgenstunden* (1785) and especially his *An die Freunde Lessings* (1786, posthumously) Mendelssohn, who could boast a long friendship with Lessing, sought to defend him against the more serious suspicion of atheism, by claiming that even if Lessing was committed to Spinozism, it would have been a harmless version, which would not automatically have made him an atheist.[[296]](#footnote-296) Thus, apart from the surface question regarding Lessing’s alleged Spinozism, the underlying issue concerned the consequences of Spinozist metaphysics. In the second chapter, we have seen that Reinhold, in his article on Enlightenment and elsewhere stated that true Enlightenment would pose no threat to religion at all. Jacobi, in contrast, claimed that the consistent use of reason, that is, rationalist metaphysics, resulted in nihilism, a term coined by him to denote a total lack of values that goes with the atheism that inevitably follows from rational metaphysics. This result and the ensuing claim that, apart from empiricist skepticism, the only option left was Jacobi’s own fideism shook the German intellectual world. Apart from the implications for Enlightenment that could be drawn from the controversy, the debate also generated a lot of public interest because of the air of scandal that surrounded it. After all, Jacobi had published private correspondence without his opponent’s consent and Mendelssohn’s death led to speculations pointing to Jacobi as the culprit. Not everyone took Mendelssohn’s side, however. In May 1786, Thomas Wizenmann (1759-1787) published *Die Resultate der Jacobischen und Mendelssohnschen Philosophie kritisch untersucht von einem Freywilligen*,[[297]](#footnote-297) in which he sided with Jacobi on many points. In his ‘Was heißt: sich im Denken orientiren?’ Kant assumed his stance in the controversy, criticizing both standpoints.[[298]](#footnote-298) Kant’s standpoint was foreshadowed by Schütz’s reviews of the works of Mendelssohn, Jacobi and Wizenmann, which employed the Kantian philosophy as a possible way to overcome this controversy.

Undoubtedly, Reinhold was seriously interested in this debate as well. He had, after all, been a supporter of Enlightenment for years, with a special interest in religion. Jacobi’s attack, which was, through Mendelssohn, directed at all the Berlin *Aufklärer*, must have touched Reinhold as well, who would not have been too pleased with the anti-rational fideism that Jacobi presented as the only viable alternative. On the other hand, Mendelssohn’s metaphysics, firmly based on Wolff, was not what he was looking for either. We have seen in the second chapter that Reinhold’s ideal of Enlightenment sought to mediate between the abstract concepts of reason and the concrete world of the senses. Jacobi’s claim that it was ‘either…, or…’ with no possible middle course would have captured his attention. The pantheism controversy sharply showed that there was a tension inherent in Enlightenment, between the pretensions of reason and the concrete results it could produce. Reinhold, in his works on Enlightenment, had shown awareness of this tension before the debate between Jacobi and Mendelssohn actually erupted. It is no wonder, then, that he reacted to the radical standpoints assumed in the discussion. The context of the pantheism controversy undoubtedly played a role in his understanding of Kant and his subsequent presentation of the Kantian philosophy in the ‘Briefe’. The first two ‘Briefe’, both published in August 1786, explore the possible role the Kantian philosophy could play in solving the debate on the status of reason with regard to religion, following from the controversy between Jacobi and Mendelssohn. Reinhold would have found an example of how to employ the Kantian philosophy in this context from the reviews of the main works in the controversy (by Mendelssohn, Jacobi and Wizenmann) that were published in the *ALZ* and were probably the work of Schütz. In his review of Mendelssohn’s *Morgenstunden*, Schütz uses the Kantian criticism of the ontological proof of God’s existence to criticize Mendelssohn.[[299]](#footnote-299) In reaction to Jacobi, Schütz aimed to disarm the attempt to identify the Kantian position on space with Spinozism and further criticized Jacobi for creating confusion by the way he employs the term ‘faith’.[[300]](#footnote-300) Both these reviews were published in the first months of 1786, so Reinhold would have had enough time to take notice of them before his ‘Briefe’ were published. In the following analysis of the ‘Briefe’ we shall see how much he took those reviews to heart.

As we have seen in the letter to Voigt, discussed in the previous chapter, the aim of the ‘Briefe’ is to provide Kant’s *Critique* with a wider readership. The first installment is therefore fittingly titled ‘The need for a Critique of Reason’. Clearly, Reinhold’s aim is to reverse the reception of Kant up until that point, by convincing the readers of the *Merkur* that, although the *Critique* may be difficult to read and to understand, it not only makes sense, but even fulfils a philosophical need. As the general title indicates, the articles have the form of letters to a fictitious correspondent, whom Reinhold addresses as ‘friend’ and whom he seeks to convince of the usefulness of Kant’s new philosophy. This correspondent represents the general reader of the *Merkur*: educated, aware of contemporary debates on philosophy, but not a professional philosopher who would professionally and/or spontaneously indulge in Kant’s first *Critique*. So far, the correspondent has heard nothing but bad news regarding Kant: his philosophy is incomprehensible, and as far as it is comprehensible, it is old news. From the opening of the ‘Briefe’ it is also clear that the correspondent favors Enlightenment and that he has become seriously worried about its success in Protestant Germany. The focus on Enlightenment in relation to Protestantism is something we have encountered earlier in Reinhold’s writings on Enlightenment, in which he presented the Reformation as a crucial first step towards Enlightenment. By 1784 Reinhold had started to distance himself from the Austrian (Catholic) version of Enlightenment. Now, in 1786 he, through the worries of his fictitious correspondent, addresses the question whether Protestant Enlightenment has become complacent and is starting to lose momentum. In a way, this can be regarded as a continuation of the fictitious correspondence presented in the *Herzenserleichterung*, which in a more specific context also concerned the difficulty of judging the progress made by Enlightenment so far.[[301]](#footnote-301) In summarizing his correspondent’s worries, Reinhold provides a picture of the decline of the status of reason after its initial rise associated with the Reformation.

Seit dem (schreiben Sie) der freye Vernunftgebrauch in Religionssachen für seine alten Vertheidiger den Reiz einer verbothener Frucht zu verlieren anfängt, tritt an der Stelle des vorigen Eifers für die Rechte der Vernunft eine Gleichgültigkeit ein. (…) Das Ausschliessende Recht der Vernunft über den Bibelsinn zu entscheiden, dieses Recht mit dessen Anerkennung der ganze Protestantismus steht oder fallt, wird von von protestantische Theologen (… ) angefochten (…). (Erster Brief, 100-101)

[You write: Ever since the free use of reason in religious matters began to lose for its old defenders the charm of a forbidden fruit, the former zeal for the rights of reason has been displaced by indifference (…). The exclusive right of reason to decide on the meaning of the Bible – that right with whose recognition the whole of Protestantism either stands or falls – is being attacked even by Protestant theologians (…). ](*Letters*, 2)

As in ‘Gedanken über Aufklärung’ and the essay on the sciences, the Reformation is presented by Reinhold as the necessary precondition of Enlightenment, because of the freedom to apply reason to matters of religion it advocates.[[302]](#footnote-302) His main worry is that the advances made during that historical period on behalf of the rights of reason are currently being nullified because these rights are no longer zealously defended. This justifies serious worries regarding the status of the science that is most closely associated with reason, metaphysics.

Die Wissenschaft, von welcher alle übrigen ihre Grundsätze entlehnen, die von jeher das eigenthümlichste und angelegenste Geschäft der Vernunft ausmachte, und durch deren Bearbeitung sich die **Leibnize**, die **Wolfe** und **Baumgarten**, um die wahren Vorzüge unsres Zeitalters so sehr verdient gemacht haben, mit einem Worte, die **Metaphysik**, wird auf eine Art vernachlässiget, die mit den Ansprüche unsres Jahrhundertes aur den Ehrentitel des **Philosophischen** den seltsamsten Contrast macht. (…) Warmköpfige Schwärmer, und kaltherzigen Sophisten sind gegenwartig mehr als jemals geschäftig, durch die Trümmer dieser Wissenschaft die alten Systeme des Aberglaubens und Unglaubens neu aufzustutzen (…). (Erster Brief, 101-102)

[The science from which all the other sciences borrow their principles, the science that from time immemorial constituted the most distinctive and important employment of reason, and through whose development Leibniz, Wolff, and Baumgarten have rendered such a great service to the true priorities of our age – in a word, metaphysics – is being neglected in a way that contrasts oddly with the claims of our century to the honorary title of ‘the philosophical’. (…) Out of the ruins of this science, hot-headed enthusiasts and cold-hearted sophists are at present busier than ever propping up anew the old systems of superstition and nonbelief (…).] (2-3)

Together with the status of reason, the status of metaphysics as a science which is very useful use with respect to “the true priorities of our age,” has declined. It is currently being attacked simultaneously from two sides. On the one hand, there are the “hot-headed enthusiasts” who seek to re-establish the old system of superstition, whereas the “cold-hearted sophists” on the other hand aim for a system of non-belief. The useful and important metaphysics of the good old days of Enlightenment is in severe trouble. According to Reinhold’s correspondent, this is a cause for serious worries regarding the success of Enlightenment. The situation as sketched in Reinhold’s summary is clearly related to the controversy between Mendelssohn and Jacobi, and especially to the dilemma that Jacobi had posed. It appeared that the only options left were to become a hot-headed enthusiast, who allows his religious feelings to determine his intellectual position, or a cold-hearted sophist, whose rationalizations fail to have a beneficial effect on his conduct. The two horns of this dilemma, however, are not only inspired by the controversy. We have already encountered them in Reinhold’s earlier works (cf. Chapter 2, section 3), which warned against the danger in one-sidedly stressing either our sensible capacities (which leads to superstition or misguided religion) or our rational capacities (which leads to ineffective, abstract speculation). That the proper use of reason, identified by his correspondent with Leibnizian-Wolffian metaphysics, avoids this dilemma is therefore no news for Reinhold, even if he would not agree that the philosophy of the schools represents this proper use of reason.

Although subscribing to the general analysis of his fictitious correspondent, Reinhold refuses to draw the same pessimistic conclusion. Instead, he interprets the signs optimistically, “as reliable harbingers of one of the most far-reaching and beneficent revolutions that has ever occurred at one and the same time in the scholarly and moral world” (5; Erster Brief, 105). The reason for Reinhold’s optimism is his conviction that the different phenomena adduced by his correspondent to prove that Enlightenment is going downhill are not isolated but rather are symptoms of a common underlying ground. This ground, so Reinhold, is “none other than the old and still persistent misunderstanding, (…) regarding the right and power of reason in matters of religion” (5; Erster Brief, 105).[[303]](#footnote-303) Refraining from immediately discussing this misunderstanding, he proceeds by analyzing the symptoms in order to present the following diagnosis that fits them all.

Daß es den Antworten, welche die Vernuft, oder vielmehr welche man im Namen der Vernunft auf manche der allerwichtigsten Fragen bisher gegeben hat an Evidenz oder Allgemeingültigkeit gefehlt habe, davon ist selbst der uralte immerfortwährende Streit über diese Fragen der überzeugendste Beweis, und die Frage über das **Daseyn Gottes** das auffallendste Beyspiel. (Erster Brief, 106)

[The age-old and never-ending dispute over many all-important questions is itself the most convincing proof that the answers reason has so far given to these questions – or rather, the answers that have been given in the name of reason – lack evidence and universal validity]. (5)

In connection with the subject of Mendelssohn’s *Morgenstunden*, the question of God’s existence is taken as the prime example of a question that metaphysicians have not answered in a universally valid manner, and neither have those who do not rely on reason but rather on supernatural revelation – even if the adherents of both parties themselves believe their solutions are universally valid. However, as the validity of these solutions is questioned by the opposite party, the members of each party can only reiterate the same claims over and over again, drawing attention to their respective weaknesses, for they are not able to convince their opponents. Fortunately, it is precisely this stalemate which opens up the possibility of progress, as it naturally leads to doubts whether a universally valid answer to the problem of God’s existence is even possible. In one of his more metaphorical passages Reinhold describes the current situation of philosophy with regard to this question in the following way.

Dieß Problem ist gleichsam der Punkt, wo sich de beyden Wegen der Metaphysik und Hyperphysik endigen, die sich rükwärts ins Unendliche verlieren und immer weiter vom Ziele abführen – der Punkt, von welchem der einzigen Weg **vorwärts** angeht. Wir haben die beyden Abwegen zurückgelassen: wenn wir uns einmal bey diesem Punkte befinden, und da wir nich stehen bleiben können, so müssen wir den Weg vor uns antreten, oder welches eines ist, wir müssen das Problem auflösen. Die Bedingungen dieser Auflösung **ausserhalb des Gebiethes de Vernunft** aufsuchen, oder dieses Gebieth mit unsrer **bisherigen Metaphysik** verwechseln, würde eben so viel seyn, als rükwärts gehen. Und sich wieder auf einem der vorigen Wege verirren. Es ist also nichts anderes übrig als das **noch unbekannte Gebieth der Vernunft**, auf welche die gedachte Bedingungen liegen müssen, vor allem kennen zu lernen, und der neu betretene Weg, führt zu einem neuen und zweyten Problem: **Was ist durch eigentliche Vernunft möglich**? (Erster Brief, 115-116)

[This problem lies, as it were, at the point where the two paths of metaphysics and hyperphysics come to an end, where both paths trail off backwards into the infinite and lead further and further away from the goal – the point from which the only remaining path is the one that moves forward. Once we find ourselves at this point, we have left both stray paths behind. And since we cannot remain at a standstill, we must take up the path before us – which is to say, we must solve the problem. Seeking the conditions of this solution outside the domain of reason or confusing this domain with our previous metaphysics would be tantamount to moving backwards and losing our way again on one of the previous paths. Thus, there is nothing left to do than to become acquainted, above all, with that still unknown domain of reason in which these conditions must lie. And the newly entered path leads to a new and second problem: What is possible through reason proper?] (11)

In a few steps the problem of the possibility of universally valid grounds for the conviction that God exists has become the problem of the nature and capacities of reason. Of course, precisely these capacities are at stake in the pantheism controversy. It now also becomes clear that the misunderstanding underlying the phenomena collected by Reinhold’s correspondent is one regarding the nature of reason. If we seek to answer the question: How is an answer regarding the question of the existence of God possible? either by looking outside the domain of reason, or by confusing the domain of reason with previous metaphysics, we would be going backwards, on the paths that have been taken before with such little success. In order to move forward, then, a solution has to be found that answers the question on the basis of reason, without, however, confusing this reason with previous metaphysics. At the end of the first installment, Kant is introduced for the first time when Reinhold claims that his new philosophy, despite being condemned as “absolutely incomprehensible” (15; Erster Brief, 124), nevertheless contains the solution to the problem posed, as well as solutions to many problems that follow from the misunderstanding of reason. He intends to make his correspondent familiar with a work

das meiner innigsten Ueberzeugung nach den dringendsten philosophischen Bedürfnissen unsrer Zeit wie gerufen kömmt, und unsren Nachkommen in so vielen Rüksichten eine bessere Zukunft zusichert. (Erster Brief, 125)

[that, according to my innermost conviction, is just what the most pressing philosophical needs of our time call for – a work that secures in so many ways a better future for our descendants.] (16)

Although Reinhold’s enthusiasm for Kant may seem an exaggeration, it is striking to see the neat correspondence between this first installment of the ‘Briefe’ and Kant’s own Preface to the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Kant laments the state of metaphysics as well, especially pointing out the lack of a plan that could count on unanimous support from the metaphysicians and the indifference regarding reason that resulted from the disarray of metaphysics.[[304]](#footnote-304) He also stressed the need to come to a solution and describes his own venture as the only path forward after having found the point where the misunderstanding of reason had started.[[305]](#footnote-305) Reinhold is thus trying to sell Kant to his correspondent on the basis of Kant’s own presentation of his project. However, the terms in which he describes the debate regarding reason differ from those Kant preferred in his Preface. Where Kant primarily describes a conflict between dogmatists and skeptics when it comes to the alleged capacity of reason to judge with regard to objects that cannot be found in experience, Reinhold explicitly relates the conflict regarding reason to the rights of reason to judge in matters of religion. The opponents of the claims of reason are not skeptics, but rather religious supernaturalists, who seek to ground religion in supernatural revelation. Reinhold’s perspective on the debate regarding reason naturally follows from his ideas on Enlightenment, which, as we have seen, stresses the importance of the Reformation, which entails the independent use of reason in matters of religion. Reinhold would have found support for the importance of the freedom of reason to judge in matters of religion in Kant’s essay on Enlightenment, which states that the political authorities should abstain from prescribing the private religious convictions of the citizens.[[306]](#footnote-306) Apart from being related to his own pre-Kantian ideas, Reinhold’s description is also implicitly related to the controversy between Jacobi and Mendelssohn; his description of this problem is soon cast in the familiar terms of the insufficiency of two one-sided approaches, which can be overcome by taking their common ground into account.

The first installment of the ‘Briefe’ can hardly be considered separately from the second, which appeared in the same issue of the *Merkur*. Here Reinhold specifies the claim made earlier, that the Kantian *Critique* contains the solution to the controversy on the role of reason with regard to religion. This specification is already clear from the title of the second installment: ‘The result of the Kantian philosophy on the question of God’s existence’. The problem is described more precisely in the opening paragraph. It is not the conviction that God exists that is the subject of controversy, since this “is pronounced by such universal agreement and confirmed by the equally universal interest of humanity” (18; Zweyter Brief, 127). Rather, the controversy concerns the grounds for this conviction. Given the universal acceptance of the conviction, its grounds must be “irrefutable and universally evident [*allgemeineinleuchtend*]” (18; Zweyter Brief, 127). Since the grounds given until now by metaphysicians and supernaturalists are far from irrefutable and universally evident, these cannot be the true grounds of this conviction. The true, universally evident grounds must have operated in the background, as it were, without having been specified. It is precisely because they have not been specified before, that the role of reason in providing the grounds for the conviction of God’s existence has been contested. It is here that the fundamental contribution of the Kantian investigation of reason is to be found according to Reinhold. Because of this investigation, Kant, in Reinhold’s description, has been able to overthrow the grounds that had previously been put forward by the two rival parties and had thus already decided the pantheism controversy before it had even erupted. This controversy is then cited as exemplifying the misunderstanding of reason by equating reason with traditional metaphysics. Thus, although it needed not have taken place, the controversy has still been useful as it brought to light the long existing tensions in metaphysics (Zweyter Brief, 140).

As we have seen before, Reinhold himself was already aware of the limitations of traditional metaphysics, without at the same time becoming indifferent to reason. For him, as pointed out in our second chapter, the key lay in acknowledging that reason, in order to function properly, must maintain a healthy relation to sensibility. Thus, the domain of reason, conceived of properly, must be wider than the scope of traditional metaphysics which, at least in Reinhold’s description, dealt with abstract, a priori concepts alone. From Reinhold’s early works it is clear that reason has to be understood in this broader sense in order to ensure the progress of Enlightenment in practice. In his brief indication of Kant’s solution to the question regarding the grounds for the conviction that God exists we find a similar move. Reason is presented as including something beyond the demonstrations of traditional speculative metaphysicians. It is in practical reason that the proper grounds for the conviction of God’s existence are to be found.

Indem sie [the new answer] den von der praktischen Vernunft gebothenen Glauben festsetzt, stürzet sie die Lehrgebäude der **apodiktischen Beweise** und des **blinden Glaubens** um, und stiftet durch die glückliche Vereinigung der geläuterten Hauptgründe ven beyden Lehrgebäuden ein neues System, in welchem die Vernunft anmassend, und der Glaube blind zu seyn aufhören, und anstatt sich, wie bisher, zu widersprechen, in ewiger Eintrach sich wechselseitig unterstützen. (Zweyter Brief, 134-135)

[In so far as the new answer is founded on a faith that is commanded by practical reason, this answer topples the doctrinal structures of both apodictic proofs and blind faith and establishes a new system through a most successful union of the clarified principal arguments of both doctrinal structures. In the new system, reason ceases to be presumptuous and faith ceases to be blind, and instead of opposing one another as before, they mutually support one another in perpetual harmony.] (22;

Although Reinhold does not as yet supply more details regarding this answer and system, it is clear that the general tendency is similar to his own view of the proper use of reason, developed with respect to Enlightenment. The term ‘practical reason’ is new to his vocabulary and associated with Kant, but, again, Reinhold is as yet not very clear on how exactly to understand it. It is obvious, though, that practical reason fulfils a crucial function in Reinhold’s efforts to sell the Kantian philosophy. Only if reason must be understood as involving something that traditional metaphysics has neglected and only if this extra feature contains something that will satisfy those who seek to base religion on reason as well as those who rightly mistrust metaphysics, only in that case has Kant solved the pressing problem that had become common knowledge with the pantheism controversy. Considering the way in which this controversy figures in the final pages of the second ‘Brief’, it is very likely that Reinhold was aware of the reviews that Schütz had produced relating the Kantian philosophy to the pantheism controversy. Regarding Jacobi, one of Schütz’s main points, as we have seen, was that he misunderstood Kant. Reinhold states that Jacobi’s way of dealing with Kant’s *Critique* obviously shows “that he has not thoroughly grasped it” (24; Zweyter Brief, 138). Further, Reinhold follows Schütz in criticizing Jacobi’s lack of clarity when it comes to his conception of faith (Zweyter Brief, 140). Regarding Mendelssohn, Reinhold appears to be inspired by the excerpt from a letter from Kant himself, included in Schütz’s review. In it Kant says that it is in the interest of philosophy that the arguments are stated in their strongest and clearest form, and, although he believes Mendelssohn’s argumentation is faulty, he praises him for showing the best that rational metaphysics is capable of.[[307]](#footnote-307) Reinhold describes Mendelssohn’s *Morgenstunden* as a work “that with rare clarity expounds ontological pseudo-arguments on the basis of their fundamental concepts, presents these arguments in their strongest possible forms, and seeks to supplement them with new ones” (24; Zweyter Brief, 138). Reinhold’s brief discussion here of the positions in the pantheism controversy show that Schütz’s reviews were a source of inspiration for starting the ‘Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie’.

## Reinhold’s Kantian solution to the problem of the rational foundation of religion: the remainder of the Merkur-‘Briefe’

Having stated his enthusiasm for the Kantian philosophy in the first two ‘Briefe’, while situating the Kantian system in relation to current debates on the nature of reason, Reinhold took a break before continuing the series of ‘Briefe’. Wieland’s announcement in December that the ‘Briefe’ were to be resumed in January suggests that the discontinuity was due to external and editorial factors, rather than to the author’s choice.[[308]](#footnote-308) It appears, however, that this pause was not unwelcome to Reinhold. As mentioned earlier, in his letter to Voigt he claims that the birth of his first child, in October 1786, had robbed him temporarily of “the peace of heart and the leisure of mind,”[[309]](#footnote-309) which implies that he had personal reasons to take it easy. At first sight, this appears to contradict a letter he wrote later, probably to Schütz, in which a remark concerning the continuation of the ‘Briefe’ in January 1787 is followed by the statement that during the break, he had had ample time and fancy “to penetrate more deeply into the mind of my great master.”[[310]](#footnote-310) There is only a seeming contradiction here, however. It will not be contested that understanding Kant in more depth requires a lot of time and motivation. And while the letter to Voigt opens with the image of an overwrought new father, the letter also makes it clear that Voigt’s request and his possible promise are highly motivating for Reinhold to continue his work on Kant (cf. Chapter 3). The motivation to study Kant found during the break may thus well be related to encouragement received from Voigt and others. The letter to Schütz cited above indicates the importance of external encouragement as well, as Reinhold speaks of “encouragement that I have received from others to continue this project.” Some of these others are explicitly mentioned, namely Johann Christian Friedrich von Schiller (1759-1805) and Heinrich Christian Boie (1744-1806).[[311]](#footnote-311) This picture is also supported by Wieland’s announcement in *Der Teutsche Merkur* of December 1787, promising that the ‘Briefe’ will be continued,

da die, wie wir hören, die Aufmerksamkeit unserer ernsthaften Leser erregt haben, und der Wunsch, sie fortgesetzt zu sehen, uns von vielen Orten her zu erkennen gegeben worden ist.[[312]](#footnote-312)

[since these, as we have heard, have aroused the interest of our serious readers and since the wish to see them continued has been communicated to us from many sides.]

In combination, Reinhold’s letters to Voigt and Schütz and Wieland’s announcement concerning the continuation of the ‘Briefe’ yield the following picture. It is well possible that Reinhold originally intended to write only the two ‘Briefe’ that were published in August 1786, forming a neat unity. They follow the line on presenting Kant as the solution in the pantheism controversy that was initiated in Schütz’s reviews. Having received encouragement from esteemed figures like Voigt and Schiller, Reinhold was motivated to make more of the ‘Briefe’ and wrote a plan that he communicated to Voigt. However, in order to continue the ‘Briefe’ Reinhold needed to study the Kantian philosophy in more depth. As shown in the previous section, the first two ‘Briefe’ hardly focus on Kant at all and where they do, they merely follow the master’s own Preface to the first *Critique*. Since Reinhold admits that he used the break to deepen his knowledge of the Kantian philosophy, he apparently deemed his knowledge up to that point insufficient for continuing the ‘Briefe’. As we shall see in the following, Reinhold’s familiarity with Kantian themes and terminology would continue to grow throughout the ‘Briefe’.

Another factor that may have delayed the continuation of the ‘Briefe’ was the publication of Kant’s ‘Was heißt: sich im Denken orientiren?’ in the *Berlinische Monatsschrift* in October 1786.[[313]](#footnote-313) After all, Reinhold had claimed that Kant had solved the problem of the pantheism controversy, and now the master came forward with a contribution to that debate. This could not be overlooked by Reinhold, who indeed cited a long passage from the ‘Orientation’-essay in his third ‘Brief’. All in all, it is clear that the pause in the publication of the ‘Briefe’ also involved a pause in Reinhold’s production, as he used the four months between August and January to gain a deeper understanding of Kant’s philosophy. From his own statements we can infer that he was encouraged to do so by people like Voigt and Schiller.

This second section will show how Reinhold’s claim in the first two ‘Briefe’ – that Kant has solved the problem of the role of reason regarding religion by means of practical reason – takes shape in the remainder of the series. Thematically, a division can be made between the third and fourth ‘Briefe’ on the one hand and the fifth through eighth on the other. Correspondingly, section 2.1 will deal with the third and fourth ‘Briefe’, which mainly elaborate Reinhold’s claim regarding the existence of God in a systematic and historical manner, whereas section 2.2 will discuss the remainder of the ‘Briefe’, which deal with the rational grounds for the conviction that the human soul continues to exist after the death of the body.

### The third and fourth ‘Briefe’: Systematic and historical backgrounds to Reinhold’s claim concerning Kant

In his first two ‘Briefe’ Reinhold had described the Kantian project in relation to its external grounds, that is the historical context, rather than on the basis of an overview of the actual contents of the first *Critique*. His argument to introduce the Kantian project to his fictitious correspondent involved the following bold claim: Kant has solved the most pressing philosophical problem of the time and has thus been able to provide by means of practical reason a rational ground for the conviction that God exists. These first two ‘Briefe’ were clearly of an introductory nature and the solution was only proposed in general terms without much specification of the manner in which this extraordinary result was obtained.

With regard to a more in-depth discussion of the Kantian solution to the problem posed in the first two ‘Briefe’ the title of the third installment (January 1787) sounds promising enough: ‘The result of the Critique of Reason concerning the necessary connection between morality and religion’. By way of introduction, Reinhold considers his correspondent’s doubts concerning the desirability of overcoming the traditional metaphysical proofs for God’s existence. If metaphysics did provide proofs that rationally grounded the conviction that God exists, why would one want to supersede them? Clearly, Reinhold is aware of some of the difficulties his correspondent, that is, the general reader of the *Merkur*, will have with the Kantian project. By means of the didactical move of discussing these difficulties, Reinhold provides himself with an opportunity to defend the positive results of the Kantian project with more depth, introducing new (external) grounds in order to reassure his friend. The claim with which he seeks to do so is already presented at the beginning of the article.

Die Religion gewinnt durch die Hinwegräumung dieser Beweise, so wie sie durch die Kritik der Vernunft aus ausgeführt wird, nichts geringeres: als einen einzigen unerschütterlichen und allgemeingiltigen Erkenntnißgrund, der auf dem Wege der Vernunft die Vereinigung zwischen Religion und Moral vollendet, welche durch das Christenthum auf dem Wege des Herzens eingeleitet worden ist. (Dritter Brief, 5)

[By the clearing away of these proofs in the manner accomplished by the Critique of Reason, religion gains nothing less than a single, unshakeable, and universally valid ground of cognition, one which completes by means of reason the unification of religion and morality that was introduced through Christianity by means of heart.] (29)

Bearing in mind that Reinhold did not want to lead his readers “into the depths of speculation from which Kant has unearthed so many previously undiscovered treasures of the human spirit” (16; Erster Brief, 125), it would be misguided to expect him to provide a detailed Kantian account of the reasons why the ‘proofs of previous metaphysics’ can be cleared away without detriment to religion. However, the claim that he does advance on behalf of the positive results of the Kantian project is surprising and certainly goes beyond anything Kant claimed in his first *Critique*. Moreover, this claim requires substantial argumentation as it is far from obvious that ‘Christianity unified religion and morality by means of the heart’ and that ‘Kant completes this unification by means of reason’. Finally, these claims need to be related to the main claim that through this unification, ‘religion gains a single, unshakeable, and universally valid ground of cognition’.

In order to explain his claim, Reinhold starts by putting forward his account of Christianity, and the way in which this religion, according to him, succeeded in unifying religion and morality. The starting point for Christianity, so Reinhold argues, was a situation in which the general masses had religion without morality, while a few philosophical sects had morality without religion (Dritter Brief, 5). From this brief description of the situation it is not at all clear who these general masses are (Jews, Romans, Greeks?) and which philosophical sects Reinhold has in mind. However, it may well be the case that he does not have any concrete masses and philosophers at all in mind, but is simply using a scheme very similar to the one employed in ‘Gedanken über Aufklärung’, where the philosopher and the common man were opposed as well (cf. Chapter 2). What emerges from the description is that there is not only a disconnection of religion and morality, but that the disconnection is associated with a social division between the general masses and the intellectual elite. However, since these groups and the key terms ‘religion’ and ‘morality’ are not clearly specified, it is not at all obvious that this would be a problematic situation. The description of the changes brought about by Christ’s teachings yields some more insight into what the problem was in the first place.

Seine [Christ’s] Lehre setzte also den **Mittelbegriff** fest, an den sich die feinste Spekulation und die sinnlichste Vorstellungsart der Menschen mit gleicher Leichtigkeit anschliessen konnte; und allenthalben, wo man sich dieser Lehre gemäß das höchste Wesen als **Vater**, und das menschliche Geschlecht als dessen **Familie** dachte, wurde die Moral auch für den gemeinsten Verstand einleuchtend, und die Religion für den kaltblütigsten Philosophen rührend. (Dritter Brief, 6)

[Christ’s teaching thus established a mediating concept for human beings by which the most subtle speculation and the most sensory manner of representation could be connected with equal ease. And wherever, according to this teaching, the highest being was thought of as a father whose family was the human race, morality became illuminating for even the most elementary understanding, and religion became moving for the most cold-blooded philosopher.] (29-30)

Although the exact problem remains unspecified, the main aim of the unification effort appears to lie on the social level. Christianity provides something that makes the former division between masses and intellectual elite disappear and is accessible to both these classes of people. By now, Reinhold’s connection of the philosophers with rational efforts (subtle speculations) and of the masses with a sensory manner of representation should come as no surprise. We have already encountered this association in his essay on Enlightenment, along with a call upon philosophers to employ concepts like ‘father’ that can serve as bridges of communication between them and the general masses, in order to make the abstract philosophical concepts accessible to them as well.[[314]](#footnote-314) Here, in the ‘Briefe’, Christianity is credited with establishing a connection that puts an end to the division between the rational speculation of the philosophers and the sensible world in which the general masses live. It is, of course, no coincidence that the concept ‘father’ is used in both instances as an example, as this is precisely the sort of concept that can serve as a mediator: it is common to all human beings, regardless of their education, and it does not have to be learned in order to be understood. The everyday concept ‘father’ at once acquires both a religious and a moral dimension. As the teaching of Christ presents God as the father of all mankind, the love people naturally feel for their own family can be extended to all of humanity, and morality will become just as easy to practice – on the assumption of course that everyone naturally loves their family and treats their siblings well. The second chapter has demonstrated that this interpretation of Christianity is strongly related to Reinhold’s Illuminatist background. According to him, the new religious and moral use of the concept ‘father’ is advantageous for both the social classes which, until then, had suffered from a one-sided development of their mental capacities: the general masses relying too much on their sensory capacities, and the philosophers attaching too much value to their rationality. The philosopher’s rationality was exclusively focused on morality, but with the Christian concept of God this morality became easy to follow as it had found a way to influence the heart. The sensory capacities of the general masses were focused on religion, which with the new concept of God became closely connected to moral behavior. Or, as Reinhold puts it, morality and religion became united “by an internal relation according to which morality depended upon religion, at least in so far as it was indebted to religion for its dissemination and effectiveness” (30; Dritter Brief, 6). In this way Reinhold briefly attempts to clarify his earlier statement that ‘Christianity has united religion and morality by means of the heart’. Although he has not specified his understanding of ‘by means of the heart’, the phrase must refer to the concept of God introduced by Christ’s teaching, that of a father of all humanity. This concept represents the way of the heart because, it is a concept that is natural, simple and common to everyone. This means that it is equally accessible to everyone, regardless of the education that they may or may not have had. Further, this concept is associated with the ‘heart’ as it expresses a close relationship that naturally involves a mutual affection. It is expressly in this capacity that Christianity’s employment of the concept ‘father’ can perform the unification of morality and religion for both the general masses and the philosophers.

Seine [Christianity’s] eigentliche Bestimmung war also, und wird es zu allen Zeiten seyn: „die moralischen Aussprüche **der Vernunft** theils für den Verstand des gemeinen Mannes zu versinnlichen, theils dem Denker ans Herz zu legen, und folglich **der Vernunft** bey der sittliche Bildung der Menschheit wohlthätig and die Hand zu gehen.“ (Dritter Brief, 7)

[Thus, its [Christianity’s] actual purpose was, and will be for all times, partly to make the moral claims of reason tangible for the understanding of the common man, partly to gain them a place in the thinker’s heart, and consequently to be the benefactor of reason in the moral cultivation of humanity.] (30)

As mentioned earlier, for Reinhold the term ‘heart’ relates to a complex of concepts and feelings that is best described as relating to the real, actual world in which human beings lead their lives, the world of the senses, the world of action, the world of contacts with other human beings. It is in this world that the rational, abstract and universal rules of morality have to be concretely applied. The actions of general masses for the sake of religion had been unrelated to morality, or at least so Reinhold claims, because the rules of morality were not yet “tangible” for their “sensory manner of representation.” On the other side of the intellectual spectrum, the philosophers had established these rules rationally, but were not motivated by their rationality to act upon them, as the rules remained universal and abstract, without influence on the heart. Christianity, with its innovative concept of God is credited with providing, through this concept, both classes of people with what they needed most in order to act morally. The common man gained insight into the rules of morality, while the philosopher found an easy motivation to act upon them.

In this analysis of part of Reinhold’s third ‘Brief’ the connection with his earlier work stands out much more clearly than the relation to Kant. In some form or other, many elements of this presentation were already there in his pre-Kantian work. He had not only used the concept of ‘father’ as an example before, he had also intended it to perform a similar function. In ‘Gedanken über Aufklärung’ this concept facilitated the communication between the philosopher with his abstract rational concepts and the common man, whose concept of God is corrected by means of his natural understanding of the concept ‘father’, which is not only concrete concept but also close to his heart. We have also encountered the opposite problem, that of the philosopher, before. In his speech on the ‘Wehrt einer Gesellschaft’ Reinhold already made clear that without a healthy relation to the heart, the lofty plans of the *Aufklärer* would come to nothing.[[315]](#footnote-315)

Kant, on the other hand, only gains prominence in the second half of the article, after a brief account of the historical fate of Christianity, which, as in the first ‘Briefe’, attaches great importance to the Reformation. As a result of the historical developments Reinhold sees in his own time once again a disconnection of religion and morality. He describes the current circumstances and the different perspectives of the ‘orthodox’ and the ‘moralists’.

Die einen wollen die Moral höchstens nur als ein Kapitel ihrer Theologie, und die andern die Theologie nich einmal für ein Kapitel ihrer Moral gelten lassen. Diese bestreben sich ihrer Vernunft alle Religion entbehrlich zu machen; und jene, ihre Religion gegen allle Vernunft zu verwahren. (Dritter Brief, 11)

[The orthodox will admit morality at most as a chapter of their theology, and the moralists will not admit theology even as a chapter of their morality. The moralists strive to make all religion dispensable to their reason, and the orthodox strive to secure their religion against reason.] (32-33)

As with the philosophers and the general masses at the time of the introduction of Christianity, Reinhold fails to specify the exact positions of the ‘orthodox’ and the ‘moralists’. On the basis of his context we can make an educated guess, however. The orthodox may be the Pietist *Glaubenstheologen*, mentioned in the earlier ‘Briefe’ in relation to their tendency to rely almost exclusively on “proofs derived from supernatural sources” (6; Erster Brief, 107). The moralists, who seek to make morality independent of religion, may be thinkers in the field of natural rights or adherents of the moral sense theories of men like Shaftesbury (1671-1713) and Hutcheson (1694-1746). Reinhold himself was not averse to theories that sought to establish morality on an independent ground, as is testified by his *Herzenserleichterung*.[[316]](#footnote-316) In contrast to the situation at the time of the foundation of Christianity, the opposing groups in Reinhold’s own time are not identified as social or intellectual classes. Reinhold only remarks that currently there is a “more universal disposition toward morality” that can be used in the same way for a unification as Christ had used the “more universal disposition towards religion” in his time (33; Dritter Brief, 12), but this does not appear to imply that the current group of ‘moralists’ is associated with the general masses. As in the time of Christ, morality and religion need to be reunited, but the process through which this can happen will be different this time, because the circumstances have changed.

Soll nun die Philosophie nach ihrer Art an der Religion thun, was das Christenthum nach der Seinigen an der Moral gethan hat, indem es von Religion zur Moral durch den **Weg des Herzens** führte, so muß sie von der Moral zur Religion durch den **Weg der Vernunft** zurückführen. (Dritter Brief, 13)

[If philosophy, in its own way, is to do to religion what Christianity in its way did to morality, then as Christianity led from religion to morality by means of the heart, so philosophy must lead from morality back to religion by means of reason.] (34)

The connection is currently to be established in the opposite direction and by the opposite means in comparison to the connection introduced in early Christianity. This means that religion has to be founded upon morality by reason. This latter part is of course in line with Kant’s claims, even if the preceding analysis of Christianity is not. It is only here, fourteen pages into the article that Reinhold can start to address the worries of his correspondent, namely that the clearing away of any proofs for God’s existence may damage religion rather than support it. According to Reinhold, the establishment of the much needed foundation of religion upon morality is hindered by the claims that religion must either be founded upon “hyperphysical events” or upon “metaphysical speculations” (34; Dritter Brief, 14). As in his first two ‘Briefe’ Reinhold refers to the debate between Jacobi and Mendelssohn and to the general confusion regarding the possibility of providing universally valid grounds for religion that resulted from this debate. In order to disarm the metaphysical and hyperphysical competition for good, however, reasons must be given “that themselves nullify all counterproofs as well as proofs” (37; Dritter Brief, 19). With this Reinhold can satisfy his fictitious correspondent that the toppling of metaphysical proofs by Kant is not only undertaken without harming religion, but even for the sake of providing religion with a more appropriate foundation. He offers a further insight into the manner in which the old foundations have to be overcome.

Soll dem moralischen Erkenntnißgrunde sein **Vorzug der Einheit** auf immer zugesichert, und der Vernunft ihr endloses Bestreben nach neuen Beweisen, (…) auf immer eingestellt werden; so müssen die Gründe, welche die Nichtigkeit der metaphysichen Beweise für und wider das Daseyn Gottes aufdecken, nich nur die bisher vorgebrachten, sondern alle möglichen Beweise dieser Art, oder vielmehr, ihre **Möglichkeit**selbst treffen; eine Sache an die sich nicht denken läßt, bevor es nicht apodiktisch erwiesen ist, „daß die Vernunft kein Vermögen besitze, das Daseyn, oder Nichtseyn von Gegenständen zu erkennen, die ausser der Sphäre der Sinnenwelt liegen.“ (Dritter Brief, 19-20)

[If the moral ground of cognition is to be guaranteed its singular pre-eminence, and reason is to be forever suspended from its endless striving for new proofs (…), then the arguments that uncover the emptiness of metaphysical proofs for and against God’s existence must count not only against previous proofs that have been brought forward but also against all possible proofs of this kind – or rather, against their very possibility. Such a state of affairs cannot be conceived until it is apodictically proven ‘that reason does not possess any faculty for recognizing the existence or non-existence of objects that lie outside of the world of sense’.] (37-38)

Now, of course, Reinhold claims that Kant has undertaken an investigation of reason to the effect that exactly this last claim is proven, and that thereby all metaphysical proofs for or against God’s existence are shown to be illegitimate. Apart from this, Reinhold also wants to establish that Kant effectively criticized hyperphysical arguments for the existence of God. In order to do this, Reinhold cites about a page and a half from Kant’s ‘Orientation’-essay. The upshot of the cited passage is that the “concept of God” can only originate from reason, since no intuition can be adequate to it.[[317]](#footnote-317) This confirms Kant’s criticism of the hyperphysical as well as the metaphysical arguments by establishing, on one hand, that reason must have the right to judge “in matters concerning supersensible objects such as the existence of God and the future world” (40; Dritter Brief, 23)[[318]](#footnote-318) and on the other hand showing that the idea God as an idea of reason does not receive its material from sensibility. Thus, Reinhold’s citation of Kant here confirms his reading of the achievement of Kantian philosophy vis-à-vis both hyperphysical and metaphysical arguments for the existence of God. As a bonus, the cited passage reflects Reinhold’s previously expressed opinion that the Reformation had been a crucial preparatory development for Enlightenment, by establishing reason’s right to judge in matters of religion. Both the indispensability (of reason in general) and the limitations of (speculative) reason with regard to the fundamental truths of religion are being confirmed as Kantian tenets by Reinhold’s citing from the ‘Orientation’-essay.

Having confirmed his authority as a spokesman on behalf of the Kantian philosophy, Reinhold has no need to linger over the texts of the master, but swiftly returns to the issue at hand, that is, the way in which the moral ‘ground of cognition’ is able to supersede the previous (metaphysical and hyperphysical) grounds of cognition for God’s existence. Since the previous grounds on their own were “neither completely true, nor completely false,” they were in need of determination by “a more fundamental concept” (40; Dritter Brief, 24). This is indeed what the moral ground of cognition is credited with: it “imparts determination and internal coherence to all the metaphysical doctrinal principles that belong to rational theology” (42; Dritter Brief, 27). While there is no doubt about the enthusiasm expressed here regarding Kant’s achievements in the first *Critique*, Reinhold has yet to present the manner in which the moral ground of cognition can do this. Even in what he announces as an example of how this ground of cognition can actually secure the achievements of metaphysics with regard to theology, he remains rather vague.

Denn so wie der moralische Erkenntnißgrund als der einzige Probehaltige fest steht, erhalten die **Notionen**, welche von der **Ontologie**, **Kosmologie** und **Physikotheologie** zum Lehrgebäude der reinen **Theologie** geliefert werden, auf einmal Inhalt, Zusammenhang und durchgängigen Bestimming. So bald das sonst **unerweisliche Daseyn** des Wesens, dessen **Idee** sie der **spekulativen Vernunft** festsetzen, und vollenden helfen, auf das nothwendige und unwiderstehliche Geboth der **praktischen Vernunft** angenommen ist, empfangen sie gewisser massen iher wirkliches ausser der Idee befindliches Object. (Dritter Brief, 28)

[For, just as the moral ground of cognition stands firm as the only one that survives testing, it gives at once content, coherence, and thoroughgoing determination to the notions that are supplied by ontology, cosmology, and physico-theology for the doctrinal structure of pure theology. As soon as the otherwise indemonstrable existence of a being whose idea these notions fix and help to complete for speculative reason is accepted on the necessary and irresistible demand of practical reason, these notions receive, in a certain way, their actual object – an object that lies outside the idea.] (43)

From this ‘example’ we can gather that Reinhold believes that, although the existence of God is indemonstrable by means of the ideas of speculative theology, these ideas can and do have an external object once the existence of God is accepted from the moral ground of cognition. The process of this determination of the idea of God by means of the moral ground of cognition would have been a lot clearer if Reinhold had provided a clear statement of his understanding of Kant’s so-called ‘moral argument’, that is, the argument that the conviction that there is a God is justified because it is a necessary assumption of moral action. Note that, according to Kant, this justified conviction does not imply that we know that God exists. Although Kant was to present the moral argument in detail only later, in his second *Critique*,[[319]](#footnote-319) it figures in abbreviated forms in both the first *Critique* and the ‘Orientation’-essay.[[320]](#footnote-320) At the point where Reinhold comes closest to giving an argument his starting point is the thought that speculative reason fails to provide a rational ground or proof, while practical reason succeeds, not in providing an apodictic proof of God’s existence, but in providing a rational ground for the conviction that God exists. The reason why speculative reason fails is that its demonstrations require that the concepts or ideas have an object in possible experience, which is not the case with the idea of God. As we have seen, Reinhold had already cited Kant himself authorizing this claim. In his understanding the moral argument works because, contrary to speculative reason, the ideas of practical reason *do* have their objects in experience, that is, in moral actions.

Indeß alle Ideen der **spekulativen** Vernunft ohne Ausnahme von aller Anschauung leer sind, das heißt, keinen Gegenstand habe, der in einer wirklichen oder möglichen Erfahrung, den einzigen Erkenntnißgründe alles Daseyns, vorkommen könnte: sind die Ideen der **reinen praktischen** Vernunft, durchaus bestimmt, in einer wirklichen Erfahrung ( in den moralischen Handlungen der Menschen) ihre Gegenstände zu erhalten. (Dritter Brief, 30)

[Whereas all the ideas of speculative reason are without exception void of all intuition – that is, they have no object that could occur in an actual or possible experience, which are the only grounds of cognition of anything existent – the ideas of pure practical reason are definitely destined to be given their objects in an actual experience (in the moral actions of human beings).] (amended translation KJM, cf. *Letters*, 44)

Note that the argument does not actually conclude that practical reason can provide a rational ground for believing that God exists. It presents the relation of ideas (speculative or practical) to experience as the crucial difference between speculative and practical reason. This difference might then be considered the reason why speculative reason fails to provide a rational ground for the conviction that God exists, while practical reason succeeds. Still, there is no straightforward argument here. First of all, Reinhold would have to argue that the idea of God is among the ideas of pure practical reason. Further, the claim that this idea will be given its object in the moral actions of human beings would require more argumentation. Especially if the idea of God is an idea of practical reason, this claim would be hard to understand.

Although there is no straight argument here, Reinhold’s perspective does appear to be related to the version of the moral argument in Kant’s first *Critique*, which also figured in the ‘Orientation’-essay. In both cases, Kant had argued that in order for the practical ideal of a moral world (to be realized by our moral actions) to have objective reality, the idea of the highest good must be accepted by us as having objective reality and with it the idea of God, who would make this highest good possible. In his emphasis on moral action Reinhold may have taken Kant’s reply to his counter-review to heart, which also stressed that human action yields a relevant kind of experience.[[321]](#footnote-321) There is also an important parallel between Kant stressing the role of the idea of a moral world as an ideal to be brought about in the sensible world and Reinhold’s phrase that ideas of practical reason are “destined to be given their objects” in moral action.[[322]](#footnote-322) Although Reinhold may be hinting at Kant’s moral argument as it was available at the time, his version of it is at best partial and omits crucial steps. Reinhold appears to believe that it is the connection to experience that allows practical reason to provide a rational foundation where speculative reason fails to do so. If this is the case, he overlooks the circumstance that the failure to connect to intuition is only a problem when one tries to *prove* speculatively that something exists. By stressing the connection to actual experience Reinhold suggests that practical reason can achieve something equivalent to apodictically proving God’s existence. In the end, Reinhold does not put forward an interpretation of Kant’s moral argument, or an explanation of the actual nature and role of practical reason, but simply asserts that there is such an argument.[[323]](#footnote-323) His interpretation of the moral argument as focused upon providing the lacking connection between reason and sensibility, however, is very understandable when we take into account that his pre-Kantian philosophy centered on the thought that in order for Enlightenment to succeed reason needs to be connected to sensibility. His messy understanding of Kant’s moral argument is a clear sign that he is working from his own, not Kant’s perspective.

Towards the end of the third installment of his ‘Briefe’ Reinhold proceeds to relate the insights regarding the grounds of cognition for God’s existence to religion in general. This yields important information on the background of his understanding of the moral argument and practical reason.

**Wie der Erkenntißgrund für das Daseyn und die Eigenschaften der Gottheit: so die Religion**. Isolierte Sinnlichkeit, vernunftloses Gefühl, blindes Glauben reissen unaufhaltsam zum Fanatismus dahin; Isolierte Vernunft, kalte Spekulation, ungeregelte Wißbegierde führen, wenns hoch kömmt, zum frostigen, grübelnden, unthätigen Deismus. **Vernunft und Gefühl** hingegen in **ihrer Vereinigung**, – die Elemente der Sittlichkeit, –bringen den **moralischen Glauben** hervor, und machen (…), den einzigen, reinen und lebendigen Sinn aus, den wir für die Gottheit haben. (Dritter Brief, 33)

[What is true of the ground of cognition of the existence and properties of the deity is also true of religion. Isolated sensibility, feeling without reason, and blind faith pull inexorably toward fanaticism; isolated reason, cold speculation, and the unrestricted desire to know lead at best to icy, carping, inactive deism. Yet when they are unified, reason and feeling – the elements of morality – give rise to moral faith and constitute (…) the only pure and living meaning that we have for the deity.] (46)

Immediately following this passage, Reinhold identifies religion based on sensibility alone with hyperphysical religion, and religion based on reason alone with metaphysical religion. With this he has returned to the pantheism controversy. As hyperphysicists base their conviction of God’s existence on (accounts of) supernatural experience, and metaphysicians base theirs on proofs of reason alone, we can extrapolate that the moral faith, based on practical reason, must rely on the unity of sensibility and reason to ground the conviction that God exists. Thus we arrive at the unity of head and heart supposedly established by Kant’s first *Critique*, upon which religion is to be founded and which completes the earlier unity established by Christianity. His comparison of the achievements of Kant and Christ is developed to the point where he can refer to the *Critique* as a “gospel of pure reason,” following the “gospel of the pure heart,” that is, Christ’s teachings (49; Dritter Brief, 39).

All in all, the third installment of Reinhold’s ‘Briefe’ does not lead the reader into the speculations of the first *Critique* but rather continues to relate its claimed results to external circumstances. Although Reinhold does cite Kant’s ‘Orientation’-essay literally and at length, the account he gives of Kant’s moral argument is at best an abbreviated and elliptic version of Kant’s expressions of it up to that point. Reinhold’s portrayal of the manner in which, according to him, the Kantian philosophy fulfils the current need for a rational religion is clearly related to his previously expressed views on Enlightenment. Both the vocabulary and the theme of the unification of our rational and sensory capacities are almost directly taken from the works written in the period prior to his acquaintance with Kant. The Kantian philosophy appears to fulfill a role here similar to that of the Enlightenment in ‘Gedanken über Aufklärung’, namely the role of providing the unification between the concrete world of the masses and the abstract reasoning of the philosophers.

Like the third, the fourth installment of the ‘Briefe’ (February 1787) can be seen as a continuation of Reinhold’s previous interests in philosophy, for it presents an overview of the “elements and the previous course of conviction in the basic truths of religion” (50; Vierter Brief 117). As this title indicates, a substantial part of the fourth installment is dedicated to an historical overview of the course of development of the moral ground of cognition concerning the conviction that God exists. In the second chapter, we have seen a similar strategy on Reinhold’s part with regard to the concept of Enlightenment. If his systematic elucidation did not suffice to convince his audience that Enlightenment was desirable, his historical account of the development of reason would have to show that it was inevitable. Moreover it would show how the previous phases of the development of reason were but phases, characterized by the one-sided development of human capacities. With regard to the moral ground of cognition for the existence of God, Reinhold now proceeds similarly. Having proposed, in the third ‘Brief’, the systematic claim that the moral ground of cognition supersedes both the metaphysical and the hyperphysical grounds, he now seeks out the elements of this moral ground and shows their development through history, in order to strengthen his claim that the current philosophical circumstances require that religion be based on morality by means of reason.

Reinhold opens the article by claiming that the result of Kant’s *Critique* corresponds to the basic truths common sense has cherished with regard to religion, namely that there is a God and that the soul continues to exist when the body dies. Now the ground upon which common sense is committed to these claims consists, in Reinhold’s opinion, of nothing other than

dem **Gefühle des moralischen Bedürfnisses**, welches durch die Kritik der Vernunft in deutliche Begriffe aufgelöset, und zum einzigen und höchsten philosophischen Erkenntnißgrunde der Religion erhoben worden ist. (Vierter Brief, 120)

[the feeling of the moral need, which the Critique of Reason has resolved into distinct concepts and elevated to the single and highest philosophical ground for cognition of religion.] (51)

This means that, according to Reinhold, Kant’s *Critique* has first expressed and elucidated a ground of cognition for religion that had already been the basis of religion in a pre-reflected, common-sense way. In one of the previous ‘Briefe’ Reinhold had already likened Kant’s achievement to Newton’s discovery of the spectrum of colors making up white light. It was not as if, before that discovery, light was not comprised of seven visible colors, only that nobody knew that it was (Zweyter Brief, 128). The identification of a basic feature of common sense with the results of the subtle philosophy in the *Critique* almost automatically leads to the historical question: Why has it taken so long and has it been so hard to establish this result by reason? Reinhold’s answer to this question presupposes in a way his views on the development of human reason throughout history as expressed in his pre-Kantian works, because the general line of his answer is that the uneven development of human reason has hindered a thorough understanding of this moral need.

The two fundamental truths of religion – as Reinhold calls the convictions that there is a God and an afterlife – are characterized as “just as incapable of being intuited, as they are necessary according to concepts” (53; Vierter Brief, 123). The circumstance that these truths cannot be intuited forms the first element of faith, the second element being their necessity. In the early days of the development of reason, people had to support these incomprehensible, yet necessary convictions by means of “intuitions that likewise had to contain something incomprehensible so that they could testify to the existence of incomprehensible objects” (54; Vierter Brief, 125).[[324]](#footnote-324) This, according to Reinhold, explains the development of the so-called historical ground of cognition of these religious convictions, that is, a ground that is taken from experience. In comparison to his previous ‘Briefe’ Reinhold appears to switch terminology here. Earlier he had used the dichotomy ‘hyperphysical-metaphysical’ with regard to religion and the grounds of cognition for its fundamental truths. This dichotomy refers to the sources of these grounds, that is, they originate either from supernatural revelation or from metaphysics. The dichotomy in use here, ‘historical-philosophical’ refers to the same distinction but from the perspective of the way in which we come to know these grounds, that is, either by experience and historical tradition or by using reason. The ‘historical-philosophical’ dichotomy is reminiscent of his ‘Schreiben des Pfarrers’ in which he had used this distinction in relation to the two ‘poles of the totality of human knowledge’, experience and metaphysics.[[325]](#footnote-325) Although he is no enthusiast for historical religion himself, Reinhold stresses its necessity for the development of reason.

So wie er auf der eine Seite allen Kräften der Sinnlichkeit und Phantasie für das Interesse der Religion aufbieten konnte und mußte, wenn bey dem damaligen Zustande der höheren Geisteskräfte die Aufmerksamkeit der Menschen vom Sichtbaren auf das Unsichtbaren gelenket werden sollte: so war auf der andere Seite nichts natürlicher, als daß er die Religion, eben durch das Uebergewicht, welches er dem Unsichtbaren über das Sichtbare gab, zum ersten und ältesten Gegestande der Nachforschungen denkender Köpfe machen mußte. So war der historische Erkenntnißgrund als Vorbereitung zum Philosophischen unentbehrlich. (Vierter Brief, 126)

[On the one hand, it could and had to summon all the powers of sensibility and fantasy for the interest of religion so that, given the state of the higher mental powers at the time, the attention of human beings could be steered from the visible to the invisible. On the other hand, however, there was nothing more natural than the fact that, precisely by giving priority to the invisible over the visible, the historical ground of cognition had to make religion into the first and oldest object of investigation for thinking minds. In this way, the historical ground of cognition was indispensable as preparation for the philosophical.] (54-55)

This two-sided picture of the development of the historical ground of cognition fits perfectly with Reinhold’s pre-Kantian way of dealing with history. First of all, he stresses that this ground of cognition was a perfectly acceptable, even necessary answer to the needs of reason at the time when it was developed. We have seen a similar regard for the historical context in his Vienna reviews, in which it was argued for instance that Latin had indeed served a rational purpose as language of Christianity, even if it had later come to hinder people’s understanding of the Mass.[[326]](#footnote-326) Secondly, the historical ground of cognition is placed in the wider context of the development of reason, as it is described as the necessary preparation for the stage of philosophical religion, even containing the germs, as it were, for the onset of that stage. However, with the beginning of philosophical investigation into the objects of religion, the impossibility of intuiting these objects remained. Again, Reinhold places the development of philosophical religion based on metaphysical grounds of cognition firmly within the context of the development of human reason.

Die Entdeckungen, die man auf dem Wege der Vernunft über den **Gegenstand** des Glaubens gemacht hatte, wurden auf den **Grund** des Glaubens in eben dem Verhältnisse übertragen, als mit der Kultur des Geistes einerseits die **Evidenz** jener Entdeckungen, andererseits aber das **Bedürfniß** zugenommen hatte, sich über den **Grund des Glaubens** Rechenschaft zu geben. Von diesem Bedürfnisse gedrungen, und von jener Evidenz geblendet, schloß man von den Attributen der Gottheit in der Idea, auf das Daseyn derselben im Objekte, unterschob den Gegenstand des Wissens dem Gegenstande des Glaubens und glaubte von dem letztern bewiesen zu haben, was eigentlich nur von dem ersteren gelten konnte. Der philosophische Erkenntnißgrund des leeren Wissens, der sich hierauf immer mehr und mehr festsetzte, war also der Vernunft auf ihrem Wege zurm Moralischen eben so unvermeidlich als der historische. (Vierter Brief, 128-129)

[The discoveries regarding the object of faith that were made on the path of reason were projected onto the ground of faith at the same rate that the evidence of these discoveries, on the one hand and the need to give oneself an account of the ground of faith, on the other, increased with the cultivation of spirit. Compelled by this need, and blinded by that evidence, one inferred from the attributes of the deity in the idea to their existence in an object, presented as an object of knowledge what was an object of faith, and took oneself to have proven something of the object that could only properly hold true of the idea. The philosophical ground of cognition of empty knowledge, which established itself ever more firmly in this way, was thus as inevitable for reason on the way to the moral ground of cognition as the historical ground was.] (56)

The rationale behind the development of the philosophical ground of cognition is again provided by “the cultivation of the spirit,” or the degree of development of reason at a certain time in human history. It is clear that for Reinhold the philosophical ground of cognition is closely related to the so-called ontological argument for God’s existence. Like historical religion’s recourse to miracles, this argument can be understood as a way of dealing with the problem of the lack of intuition for fundamental religious convictions. Like historical religion, philosophical religion is a necessary stage in the development towards moral religion.

Even though philosophical religion developed from historical religion, the two kinds of ground they offer for the fundamental truths of religion are not compatible. This has only become clear, however, since the revival of the sciences and has culminated in the clash of metaphysical and hyperphysical arguments in the pantheism controversy which in this manner is likewise placed in a wider historical context (cf. 59-61). It is clear that, according to Reinhold, the main problem with the fundamental truths of religion is the combination of inevitability and incomprehensibility. On the one hand, the concept of an infinite being is a necessary concept of the human mind, which, on the other, can provide no intuition to support it. These two elements of religion have, in combination with the growing development of human reason, determined the outlook of both historical and philosophical religion. Now that these forms of religion stand in opposition to one another it is time to come to a rational faith and introduce a third element binding the two together, the “command of practical reason, which makes moral faith necessary” (62; Vierter Brief, 139-140). Needless to say that Reinhold believes that Kant was the first to present this third element with the required clarity. His explanation of the way in which the third element can unite the other two again provides some insight into his understanding of Kant’s project.

Die **Unbegreiflichkeit des göttlichen Daseyns** verträgt sich so lange nicht in einer und eben derselben Vorstellung mit dem **nothwendigen Vernunftbegriffe** von der Gottheit, als nicht das **unwiderstehliche Geboth der praktischen Vernunft** anerkannt wird, welches den Begriff des Daseyns, der sich hier nicht beweisen läßt, mit dem Vernunftbegriffe, der durchaus bewiesen werden muß, zu verbinden nöthiget, und den **Ueberzeugungsgrund der Religion** vollendet, in dem es dasjenige, was an demselben ewig unerweislich bleiben muß, zu unsrer Befriedigung ersetzet. (Vierter Brief, 141)

[As long as the irresistible command of practical reason is not recognized the incomprehensibility of divine existence is not compatible in one and the same representation with reason’s necessary conception of the deity. This command requires connecting the concept of existence, which cannot be proven in this case, with the concept of reason, which certainly must be proven, and it completes the ground of conviction in religion by making up, in a satisfying way for that which must forever remain indemonstrable in this ground.] (63-64)   
As in the third installment of the ‘Briefe’, Reinhold does not actually provide anything like a moral argument here, but is content with presenting the problem in some detail and then claiming that it has now been solved because of Kant’s *Critique*. His ‘explanation’ of the Kantian *solution* definitely lacks clarity and does therefore not allow for conclusions concerning the depth of his knowledge of Kant at this time. His explicit formulation of the *problem*, however, in terms of a necessary concept of reason, which lacks the connection to intuition that would enable the existence of its object to be proven, shows that he was well aware of the problem of the theological idea as presented by Kant.[[327]](#footnote-327) His main achievement in the third and fourth ‘Briefe’ is therefore not his exposition of the Kantian solution to the problem concerning the provability of God’s existence, for the exposition provided is formulated in a vague and superficial manner. Rather, his merit lies in the formulation of the problem, which is clear and true to Kant. If Reinhold had done nothing more than present the problem to the rather broad audience of the *Merkur*, he would already have taken a major step towards providing the *Critique* with a wider readership.

The unique selling point of these ‘Briefe’ is, however, that Reinhold presents the problem in the context of the development of human reason throughout history. In both a systematic and a historical way this leads to the conclusion that the problem is inevitable, but that the solution is close at hand.[[328]](#footnote-328) Systematically, the problem is a result of the structure of the human mind, in which some ideas present themselves as necessary, without there being a possibility to prove the existence of the objects of those ideas. Historically, the problem results from the uneven development of human rationality, which led to the development of competing and incompatible solutions to the problem. By presenting the problem as stemming from the structure of reason and having developed because of the lack of clarity regarding the nature of reason, Reinhold provides more plausibility for his claim that Kant, by investigating the very structure of reason, has solved the problem. Moreover, this way of presenting the problem enables Reinhold to claim that the Kantian solution is not really new at all, for religion had been founded upon the moral need all along. Kant is only credited with unearthing this fact regarding the foundation of religion. His investigation of reason has achieved a rational insight into this foundation, thereby completing the development of reason. For Reinhold this way of presenting Kant is crucial to his efforts to counter the important negative comments and reviews, the main objection of which was that the *Critique* amounted to incomprehensible idealism. By presenting Kant as only elucidating a ground that had always been present and fundamental to a common-sense foundation of religion, Reinhold seeks to show that, although the *Critique* is hard to read, the results of Kant’s work are indeed far from incomprehensible or detrimental to religion.

Taken together, the third and fourth ‘Briefe’ present a structure similar to Reinhold’s earlier ‘Skizze’, discussed in Chapter 2. In that article, he presented a sketch of a history of religion according to which the initial harmony between God and mankind was lost due to the incomplete development of reason. With the full development of reason, the harmony would be found again, but at another level, where it would not only be felt but also understood (cf. section 4 of Chapter 2). True to his promise not to lead his correspondent “into the depths of speculation from which Kant had unearthed so many previously undiscovered treasures of the human spirit” (16; Erster Brief, 125), Reinhold does not expound the reasoning behind the Kantian solution, that is, the moral argument, in any detail – not even in the sketchy version that Kant himself had given up to that point. Instead, he is content with claiming that practical reason provides a ground for this conviction “by making up, in a satisfying way, for that which must forever remain indemonstrable” (64; Vierter Brief, 141). Rather than presenting Kant’s arguments, he provides an elaborate structure of his own, centering on the development of human reason throughout history. It is in this respect that his account is closer to his own previous works on Enlightenment than to Kant’s writings.

### The final four ‘Briefe’

Like the first two ‘Briefe’ and the third and fourth taken together, the final four *Merkur*-‘Briefe’ form more or less a unity. Again, there was a discontinuity in the publication, as the series was resumed in May 1787 while the fourth installment had been published in February 1787. Roughly, these final four ‘Briefe’ show a structure similar to the third and fourth, but with the focus upon the conviction that the soul continues to exist after the death of the body. This is to say that Reinhold seeks to establish how different philosophical opinions regarding the nature of the soul arose from the structure of the human mind and how the development of these opinions throughout history led to a seemingly insolvable conflict, to be solved only by Kant’s *Critique*. The fact that this took him four, instead of two, installments is explained by his desire to elaborate, in the final two installments, on the historical backgrounds of the conception of the soul as a simple, thinking substance. Keeping the structure of the last four ‘Briefe’ in mind, this section is divided into two subsections, the first of which will focus on analyzing Reinhold’s discussion of the grounds for the belief in a future life, while the second will discuss his considerations regarding the history of the concept ‘soul’.

#### Grounding the conviction of the continuing existence of the human soul

The title of the fifth article in the series of ‘Briefe’ (May 1787), ‘The result of the Critique of Reason concerning the future life’, parallels the title of the second. The installment opens with the claim that there are great similarities between the nature and fate of both fundamental truths of religions, that is, the convictions that God and the future life exist (Fünfter Brief, 168). Reinhold refers to the conviction that there will be life after death as a ‘postulate of practical reason’ (*Postulat der praktischen Vernunft*). Although this is terminology that a modern philosophical reader would immediately associate with Kant, Reinhold’s use of it is very remarkable, since Kant had not yet used it at the time and was only to introduce the phrase in the second *Critique*. In the first *Critique* God and the afterlife are termed ‘presuppositions’ (*Voraussetzungen*), while the term ‘postulate’ is predominantly used in the context of the ‘postulates of empirical thinking’.[[329]](#footnote-329) The closest Kant had come at the time to introducing the term ‘postulate’ in a practical context is in the ‘Orientation’-essay, in which he calls the “rational faith” a “postulate of reason” and stresses that although holding something to be true in this manner is different from knowledge, it is certain in its own way.[[330]](#footnote-330) Since Reinhold almost certainly derived the term ‘postulate’ from this context, the importance of this essay for the development of his understanding of Kant as expressed in the ‘Briefe’ is obvious. His fifth article in the series claims that as we have a moral interest in being convinced of God’s existence, so we have a moral interest in believing there is an afterlife.

Das **Moralische** hingegen (…) gründet sich auf das entweder **gefühlte**, oder **deutlich erkannte** Bedürfniß, welches die Vernunft nöthiget, zum Behuf ihrer moralischen Gesetze eine Welt, in welcher Sittlichkeit un Glückelichkeit in vollkommenster Harmonie stehen, anzunehmen, und die anschauende Erkenntniß dieser Harmonie für die Zukunft zu erwarten. (Fünfter Brief, 168-169)

The moral intrest, in contrast (…) is grounded on a need that is either felt or distinctly cognized. This need requires reason, on behalf of its moral law, to assume a world in which morality and happiness stand in most perfect harmony and to expect an intuitive cognition of this harmony in the future. (66)

Historically, this conviction appeared somewhat later than the conviction that God exists, because the “expectation of reward and punishment presuppose faith in a judge” (67; Fünfter Brief, 171). Systematically, however, the conviction that a moral world is possible and the expectation to experience this world in the future would appear to be prior to the conviction that God exists. The versions of the moral argument for the existence of God provided by Kant in the first *Critique* and in the ‘Orientation’-essay both proceed from the need to presuppose the possibility of a moral world.[[331]](#footnote-331) Since Reinhold does not discuss the moral argument in any detail, the incongruity between the historical priority of the conviction that God exists and the systematic priority of the conviction of the immortality of the soul is not obvious from the ‘Briefe’. Reinhold certainly does not seem to be bothered by the difference and stresses the similarity of the fates met by these two core convictions of religion, which provides him with a reason to abstain from discussing the conviction of the immortality of the soul in detail. Apart from the similar historical fates of the two fundamental religious convictions, the main similarity is their foundation upon a felt moral need that was only to be articulated in a rational manner by Kant. The common-sense basis of the conviction of the immortality of the soul is “the concept of a good or bad fate after death that is determined by the moral course of one’s life prior to death” (68; Fünfter Brief, 173). Since, as Reinhold claims, it took some time before Kant came along and firmly grounded this conviction in reason by giving this need a rational articulation, the previous, fallacious, grounds proposed for this conviction were historically necessary in order to pave the way for this final articulation.

Diese höchstwichtige Entdeckung war so lange unmöglich (…) als nicht einerseits die Evidenz des Sittengesetzes durch die Fortschritte der moralischen Cultur jenen Grad von Stärke erreicht hatte, die der **Einzige** Ueberzeugungsgrund von den Grundwahrheiten der Religion haben muß, andererseits aber die spekulative Vernunft in ihrem Selbsterkenntnisse so weit gekommen, das sie die Unmöglichkeit sowohl historischer als spekulativer Beweise für das Daseyn und die Beschaffenheiten von Gegenständen, die ausserhalb der Sinnenwelt liegen, einsehen mußte. (Fünfter Brief, 175)

[This most important discovery was not possible (…) as long as the evidence of the moral law had not reached, through the advances of moral cultivation, the degree of strength that the sole ground of conviction in the basic truths of religion must have. Moreover, it was not possible as long as speculative reason had not come far enough in its self-cognition for it to gain insight into the impossibility of historical as well as speculative proofs regarding the existence and nature of objects lying outside the world of sense.] (69-70)

Because of the similarity of the two convictions, their moral origins and the fate they met through history, Reinhold simply forgoes any explanation of what a Kantian articulation might look like. Instead, he proceeds by showing why the historical and metaphysical grounds for this conviction that have been proposed throughout history are spurious, that is, not at all related to morality.

Thus, the remainder of the fifth installment is dedicated to showing that historical religion, with its hyperphysical ground of cognition has only served to separate religion and morality. As that ground is supposed to be taken from supernatural revelation, it is beyond the reach of reason and “there is no necessary connection, illuminative to reason between the moral law and future rewards and punishments,” because the divine will prescribing that law must be considered to be incomprehensible (72; Fünfter Brief, 180). The hyperphysical ground of cognition turns out to hinder morality rather than contribute to it. Again, the Reformation is hailed as the first step towards true Enlightenment.

Seit dem es den Protestanten gelungen hat, sich von der Bothmäßigkeit der unfehlbaren Ausleger des unbegreiflichen Willens loszumachen, hat sich ihre religiöse Moral mit starken Schritten der Moral der Vernunft genähert. (Fünfter Brief, 184)

[Ever since Protestants managed to free themselves from subordination to the infallible explicators of the incomprehensible will, their religious morality has drawn closer to the morality of reason with giant strides.] (74)

With this by now familiar note on the importance of the Reformation, Reinhold need not waste any more ink on the hyperphysical ground of the conviction of the existence of a future life. His discussion of the metaphysical ground is postponed to the sixth installment of the ‘Briefe’, aptly titled ‘Continuation of the preceding letter: the united interests of religion and morality in the clearing away of the metaphysical ground for cognition of a future life’ (July 1787). As Reinhold’s fictitious correspondent is portrayed as an adherent of this ground of cognition, the dismissal of the metaphysical grounds for the conviction of a continuation of the existence of the soul deserves extra attention. The aim of this article is therefore to show that

durch denselben Erkenntnißgrund, der Ihnen die Ueberzeugung vom zukünftigen Leben, und das Ansehen der Vernunft zugleich festzusetzen, und folglich das Interesse der Religion und der Moral zu vereinigen schien, in der Sache selbst dieses Interesse nicht weniger getrennt und entzweyt werden müsse, als durch den entgegengesetzte **Historischen**, der doch durch jenen überflüssig gemacht werden sollte. (Sechster Brief, 70)

the interests of religion and morality would, in truth, be no less divided and opposed to each other by the very ground of cognition that seems to you to establish at once both the conviction in a future life and the reputation of reason – and consequently to unite the interests of religion and morality – than they would be by the opposing historical ground, which was supposed to have been made superfluous by this metaphysical ground. (77-78)

In order to convince his readers that the metaphysical ground of cognition does not at all deliver what it promises, Reinhold first stresses his use of a narrow definition of this metaphysical ground of cognition. First of all, he does not understand by it any ground based on reason, since “the moral faith that the Critique of Reason establishes is built entirely upon grounds of reason” as well (78; Sechster Brief, 70). The truly metaphysical ground of cognition being based on the concept of the soul as a simple substance, Reinhold secondly narrows down his argument to direct it at a certain use of this concept only. He states that it is certainly legitimate to use the concept in “defending against its opponents the basic religious truth of a future life” (78; Sechster Brief, 71).[[332]](#footnote-332) If the concept is not used merely in defense against those who deny the immortality of the soul, for instance because they believe the soul is material, but in order to claim something about the nature of the soul as it is in itself, it will become contradictory, so Reinhold warns.

sobald er mehr als die bloße Verschiedenheit der Prädikate des innern und äussern Sinnes, so bald er das absolute Subjekt unsres denkenden Ichs, das eigentliche und unbegreifliche Wesen unsrer Seele ausdrücken soll, so widerspricht er sich selbst: indem er ein bloßes Prädikat der Anschauung zum Subjekte an sich selbst macht, einem ganz unbekannten Dinge, in sofern dasselbe unbekannt ist, eine bekannte Beschaffenheit beylegt, und einen leeren Begriff zum wirklichen Gegenstand umschaft. (Sechster Brief, 72)

[It contradicts itself as soon as it is supposed to express more than the mere difference between predicates of inner and of outer sense, or as soon as it is supposed to express the absolute subject of the thinking I, the genuine and incomprehensible essence of our soul. And it does this by making a mere predicate of intuition into a subject in itself, by attaching a known nature [*Beschaffenheit*] to a wholly unknown thing (…) and by transforming an empty concept into an actual object.] (79)

It is precisely this misuse of the ‘psychological concept of reason’ that Reinhold calls the metaphysical ground of cognition for immortality. However, his criticism on it will not focus on the legitimate and illegitimate uses of this concept, but rather on its “influence on the common interest of religion and morality” (80; Sechster Brief, 73). Reinhold’s way of dealing with the metaphysical grounds of cognition for this conviction runs more or less parallel to his discussion of the metaphysical grounds for the conviction that God exists. There he answered his correspondent’s worries concerning the desirability of toppling the metaphysical grounds by pointing out the relation of these grounds to the unification of morality and religion, instead of presenting a Kantian argument against the validity of these arguments. Parallel to his presentation of the impossibility to gain speculative knowledge of God, Reinhold presents the impossibility to know the nature of the soul because it is not an object of a possible perception.

(…) das **Subjekt** derselben [i.e. of inner sense, das der Verstand zwar als **Etwas** überhaupt denken, aber nie als **etwas Bestimmtes erkennen** kann, weil es ausser dem Gesichtskreise aller möglichen Wahrnehmung liegt. (Sechster Brief, 74)

[The understanding can certainly think of this subject [of inner sense] as something in general, but can never cognize it as something determinate because it lies outside the horizon of all possible experience.] (80)

To those who seek to determine the concept by predicating substantiality and simplicity, he replies that these determinations do not at all furnish the concept of the soul with an actual object, as they contradict the criteria by which actuality is established.

Alle wirkliche Gegenstände, denen wir eine Subsistenz ausser unsren Begriffen einräumen, müssen **irgendwo**, das heißt, **im Raume** daseyn; und alles, was sich von diesen Gegenständen erkennen läßt, ist blosses Prädikat. Dem einem dieser Kriterien der Wirklichkeit wiederspricht der Begrif des Einfachen, und dem andern der Begrif des Subjektes, das kein Prädikat seyn kann. (Sechster Brief, 75).

[All actual objects to which we grant subsistence outside our concept must exist somewhere – that is, in space – and all that can be cognized with regard to these objects are mere predicates. The concept of the simple contradicts one of these criteria of actuality, and the concept of a subject that cannot be a predicate contradicts the other.] (80-81)

The citation purports to show that thinking the soul as a simple substance, which is the basis of the metaphysical ground of cognition of immortality does not constitute knowledge of the soul at all, but rather attributes empty determinations to it. It is forever to remain empty, for it cannot be filled with perception. Moreover, Reinhold believes that putting such a concept of the soul at the foundation of the metaphysical ground of cognition is detrimental to the unity of morality and religion. As the demonstrations of the continuity of the soul after the death of the body concern precisely the soul as far as it cannot be known, that is, the soul in its capacity of simple substance, the survival of such a soul is of no interest at all to an actual person and thus will not provide a morally relevant ground for the religious tenet of the continuing existence of the soul.

Da also die metaphysisch demonstrirte Fortdauer nach dem Tode nur dasjenige trift, was er von seinem Selbste **nicht** kennt, alles dasjenige aber, was er während seines Lebens kennen gelernt hat, entweder gerade zu von der künftigen Existenz ausschließt, oder wenigstens darüber in Ungewisheit läßt; so muß dem konsequenten Denker sein **künftiges** Daseyn in der **unsichtbaren Welt** ungefähr eben so gleichgültig seyn als sein **voriges** Daseyn im **Reiche der Möglichkeiten**. (Sechster Brief, 80)

[Since, therefore, the metaphysical demonstration of survival after death concerns only what he does not know about himself, while everything that he has become acquainted with over the course of his life either excludes his future existence straight away or at least leaves him in uncertainty with regard to it, a consistent thinker must be just about as indifferent to a future existence in an invisible world as to a former existence in a realm of possibilities.] (83)

Having established that the metaphysical ground of cognition cannot succeed in demonstrating the immortality of the soul in a way that preserves the unity of morality and religion because of the emptiness of the determination of the metaphysical concept of the soul, the remainder of the article indicates how filling up this emptiness with fantasy is detrimental to this unity as well. Reinhold does not fail to refer to the pantheism controversy again as an “expression of the perplexity in which reason finds itself when it becomes aware of the incongruity between its essential needs and its previous means for satisfying these needs” (87; Sechster Brief, 86). The sixth ‘Brief’ closes with the promise to elucidate this incongruity in the following installment, on the history of the metaphysical concept of the soul.

#### Brief history of the concept of the soul

And indeed, Reinhold’s seventh article in the series of ‘Briefe’ bears the title ‘A sketch of a history of reason’s psychological concept of a simple thinking substance’ (August 1787). It opens with a move similar to the ones we have already encountered regarding the historical accounts of the development of the grounds of cognition for the basic truths of religion: the features of the concept of the soul as a simple substance originate from the structure of our cognitive faculty and have been present in an elementary form from the first development of reason.

Gleich mit der ersten Morgendämerung der Vernunft mußte sich das denkende Ich, den Gesetzen des **Bewußtseyns** gemäß, von jeder seiner **gedachten** Vorstellungen, und folglich auch schon darum vom Körper, in so ferne dieser unter jenen Vorstellungen vorkam, unterscheiden. Eben so machten die Gesetze der **Sinnlichkeit** die wesentliche Unterscheidung zwischen den Gegenständen des inneren und des äusseren Sinnes, das heißt zwischen den **Vorstellungen** in uns, und den **Dingen** ausser uns nothwendig. In so ferne nun alle Vorstellungen in uns dem **Ich** als ihren **Subjekte** anhängen, der **Körper** aber in die Reihe der Dingen ausser uns gehört, mußte der beym Bewußtseyn **gedachte** Unterschied zwischen dem **Ich** und dem **Körper**, einerseits an den **Vorstellungen** die durch den inneren Sinn, andererseits aber an dem **Körper**, der durch den äusseren Sinn dargestellt wurde, auch sogar in der Anschauung gegeben seyn. (Siebenter Brief, 142-143)

[Right at the first dawning of reason, the thinking I, in conformity with the laws of consciousness, had to distinguish itself from every one of the representations it was thinking and consequently also from the body, particularly in so far as this body appeared among those representations. Similarly, the laws of sensibility made necessary the essential distinction between representations in us and things outside us. Now, in so far as all representations in us, attach to the I as their subject, while the body belongs to the order of things outside us, the distinction that is thought in consciousness between the I and the body – between representations presented through inner sense, on the one hand, and the body that is presented through outer sense, on the other – had to be given already in intuition as well.] (89)

Even though the ‘I’ was distinguished from the body from the beginning of the development of human reason, Reinhold continues, the nature of this distinction was not thought clearly at all. It will come as no surprise that Reinhold credits Kant with finally discovering the ground of this distinction by investigating the structure of human reason, showing this ground to be the following rule of reason: “it is not possible to think the subject of the predications of inner sense by means of the predicates of outer sense” (90; Siebenter Brief, 144). It is upon this rule of reason that the concept of the soul as a simple substance is based, being slowly developed from the rule and only determined in full by Kant’s *Critique* (Siebenter Brief, 145). This means that the distinction between body and soul, made on the basis of the nature of our cognitive faculty, is prior to the concept of the soul as a simple thinking substance. The latter concept is empty and only legitimately functions as a rule of reason. As such it protects the expectation of a future life “from any possible refutation on account of the death and dissolution of the body” (93; Siebenter Brief, 148). Since this concept is empty, fantasy is likely to try and fill it, as Reinhold already indicated in the previous installment. In antiquity the soul was thought of as an invisible body, made of very fine matter, like air or ether (cf. 94-95; Siebenter Brief, 150-152). The immortality of the soul was not safeguarded by its simplicity, but by its mere invisibility, so that this fantasy had no detrimental influence whatsoever on the belief in a future life.

The element of the conception of the soul that was of crucial importance in this regard was the characterization of the soul as a power of thinking. To be more precise, the understanding of the connection and division of thinking and sensing proved to be crucial with respect to the belief in the continuing existence of the soul after the death of the body. Again, so Reinhold, it is only because of the *Critique* that we now do know the proper relation between sensibility and understanding.

Bis auf die Erscheinung der **Critik der Vernunft**, durch welche zuerst die **Sinnlichkeit** als **Receptivität unsres Erkänntnißvermögens** von der **Receptivität** der **sinnliche Werkzeuge** mit völliger Bestimmtheit unterschieden, die erstere für einen wesentlichen Theil unsres Erkenntnißvermögens, der vor aller Empfindung, und vor aller Receptivität der Organe (…) im Gemüthe vorhanden ist, erklärt, und ihre wesentliche Zusammenwirkung mit dem **Verstande** bey aller wirklichen **Erkenntniß** gezeigt worden ist – war das eigentliche **Verhältniß** der **Sinnlichkeit** zum **Verstande** ein tiefes Geheimnis geblieben. (Siebenter Brief, 154-155)

[Prior to the appearance of the Critique of Reason, by which sensibility, as the receptivity of our faculty of cognition, was distinguished with complete determination of the receptivity of our sense organs, the true relation of sensibility to the understanding remained a deep mystery. For the Critique of Reason explained for the first time sensibility as an essential part of our faculty of cognition that is present in the mind before all sensation and before all receptivity of the organs (…), and it showed the essential cooperation of sensibility with the understanding in all actual cognition.] (97)

Although considerations concerning the various philosophical opinions of the Greek schools on rationality and sensibility fill most of the remainder of the seventh and eighth ‘Briefe’, Reinhold’s account of these opinions need not concern us in detail here. Instead, it will be worthwhile to focus upon his presentation of the Kantian solution to the problem he has identified. According to Reinhold, “the true relation of sensibility and understanding remained a deep mystery,” prior to Kant’s *Critique* (97; Siebenter Brief, 155). The Greeks dealt with this mystery by either “assuming two different souls – one thinking and one sensing – in order to explain the distinction between understanding and sensibility” or by “abolishing that distinction, on account of the very same hypothesis that had been forged for its explanation, in order to save the unity of the soul” (98; Siebenter Brief, 156). The first strategy is attributed to both Plato and Aristotle, while the second is attributed to both the Stoics and Epicure. Whether they made too large a distinction between sensibility and understanding, or none at all, all the ancient schools failed to grasp “how understanding and sensibility were supposed to be essentially different and yet essential parts of one and the same faculty of cognition” (101; Siebenter Brief, 160). At the end of the seventh ‘Brief’ it turns out that those who conflate sensibility and understanding do not ascribe immortality to the human soul, because they take the soul to be “immediately connected to the flesh through sensation” (103; Siebenter Brief, 164). Those who strictly separate the thinking soul from a sentient soul, however, ascribe immortality only to the former. With this, Reinhold presumes to have established that the ancient philosophical opinions on the mortality or immortality of the human soul were closely related to the respective concepts of the faculty of cognition, rather than connected to a concept of “the substratum of the soul” (103; Siebenter Brief, 165).

The final, eighth installment of the ‘Briefe’ continues the discussion on ancient philosophy and is aptly titled ‘Continuation of the preceding letter: The master key to the rational psychology of the Greeks’ (September 1787). Using, once again, the didactic tool of objections from his correspondent, Reinhold opens the article by contrasting his view on the ancient philosophy of the soul with that of other authors of his day, like Platner and Meiners.[[333]](#footnote-333) The most important point to deal with, however, is the objection that the differences of opinion Reinhold had attributed to the ancient philosophers and hence their misunderstanding of the faculty of cognition amounted to nothing but a dispute about words. Reinhold responds to this objection in the following manner.

Es giebt eine **Verschiedenheit der Meynungen** über die Natur des Denkens und Empfindens, die eine Folge der **verschiedenen richtigen Gesichtspuncte** ist, aus welchen verschiedene Denker das Erkenntnißvermögen betrachtet haben. Es giebt aber auch eine **Verschiedenheit unter jenen Meynungen**, die eine Folge des noch **nicht entdeckten einzigen Gesichtspunctes** ist, aus welchem sich **alle übrigen Gesichtspunkte vereinigen lassen**. (Achter Brief, 255-256)

[There is a difference of opinion regarding the nature of thinking and sensing that is a consequence of the different, correct viewpoints from which different thinkers considered the faculty of cognition. But there is also a difference among those opinions that is a consequence of a single point of view not having been discovered yet, one by which all other viewpoints can be united.] (109)

By stating that the differences of opinion among philosophers are real yet admit of a unification from a higher viewpoint, Reinhold has paved the way for bringing in the Kantian philosophy again. In the seventh ‘Brief’, he had already pointed out the importance of the Kantian conception of sensibility as an a priori part of the human faculty of cognition. Here, in the eighth ‘Brief’, he introduces this element of Kant’s philosophy again, this time under the name of ‘pure sensibility’.

**Kant** hat in dem erstgenannten Werke eine neue, oder wenigstens **bisher ganz verkannte Quelle der menschlichen Erkenntniß** entdeckt – die **reine Sinnlichkeit**. Sie ist weder Thätigkeit der Organisation, noch Reitzbarkeit der Organe, sondern **das Vermögen der Seele überhaupt afficiert zu werden**, und besteht aus den in unsrem Erkenntnißvermögen vorhandenen Bedingungen, welche jeder Anschauung (unmittelbare Vorstellung) eines Gegenstandes zum Grunde liegen. Sie ist die **subjektive** Beschaffenheit des Anschauungsvermögens, und heißt, weil alle Anschauungen durch sie bestimmt werden, die allgemeine **Form** derselben. Sie ist die **Receptivität der Seele**, welche **vor** allen Eindrücken durch die Organe vorhergehen muß, weil sie bey jedem derselben vorausgesetzt wird. (Achter Brief, 264) [[334]](#footnote-334)

[In this work Kant discovered a new, or at least heretofore wholly unrecognized, source of human cognition – pure sensibility It is neither the activity of the sense organs nor their excitability, but rather the faculty of the soul for being affected in general, and it consists in the conditions present in our faculty of cognition that lie at the basis of every intuition (immediate representation) of an object. It is the subjective constitution of the faculty of intuition, and it is called its universal form, because all intuitions are determined through it. It is the receptivity of the soul, which must precede all impressions from the sense organs because it must be presupposed by each of them.] (114-115)

Reinhold’s use of the term ‘pure sensibility’ is novel and not taken directly from Kant.[[335]](#footnote-335) It does, however, figure as an element in his earliest reception of Kant, as it found an expression in the letter he wrote to Voigt, containing his plans regarding the Kantian philosophy. There, listed as point VII under ‘external grounds’, we find the following.

Bedürfniß einer entscheidenden Antwort auf die Frage über den *Ursprung der Begriffe*. Nachtheile sowohl der bisherigen Lehre der *angebohrnen Begriffe* (auch selbst im Leibnitzischen Sinne) als auch vom *empyrischen*[[336]](#footnote-336) *Ursprunge* der Begriffe (auch selbst im Lockischen Sinne). Kant berichtiget die Leibnizische und Lockische Lehre und vereiniget das Wahre von beyden; in dem er eine bisher verkannte äusserst wichtige Quelle menschlicher Erkenntniß: Reine Sinnlichkeit entdeckt, die bisher bekannten – Verstand, und Vernunft genau bestimmt, und ihr Verhältniß (als der Form) zur Empfindung (als der Materie aller Erkenntniß) deutlich angiebt.[[337]](#footnote-337)

[Need for a decisive answer to the question concerning the *origin of concepts*. Disadvantages of both the current doctrine of *innate concepts* (even in the sense of Leibniz) and the doctrine of the *empirical origin* of concepts (even in the sense of Locke). Kant corrects the doctrines of Leibniz and Locke and combines the truth of both, because he discovers a very important source of human knowledge that was hitherto unknown, namely pure sensibility, determines those that were already known, namely understanding and reason, and clearly states their relation (as the form) to sensation (as the matter of all knowledge).]

At first sight the context in which the term ‘pure sensibility’ is introduced in the eighth ‘Brief’ does not concern the origin of cognition. Yet there are some significant similarities. In both the letter to Voigt and the eighth ‘Brief’ Reinhold refers to ‘pure sensibility as a ‘source’ (*Quelle*) of cognition. Moreover, following the passage cited, the paragraph in the ‘Brief’ continues in the following manner.

Eben darum aber weil sie bloßes Vermögen, bloße subjective Form, bloße Receptivität ist, müssen ihr die Gegenstände **gegeben**, oder vielmehr muß sie durch Gegenstände **afficirt werden**; und dieses Afficirtwerden der reinen Sinnlichkeit durch Gegenstände ist es was **Kant Empfindung**, empirische Anschauung nennt. [In]dem nun die **reine Sinnlichkeit**, die **Form**, die **Empfindung** aber die **Materie** der empirische Anschauung liefert: so giebt es keine sinnliche Erkenntniß, keine **unmittelbare Vorstellung** eines Gegenstandes ohne reine Sinnlichkeit und Empfindung. (Achter Brief, 264-265)

[But precisely because it is a mere faculty, a mere subjective form, a mere receptivity, objects must be given to it – or rather, it must be affected by objects. And the affecting of pure sensibility is what Kant calls sensation [*Empfindung*], empirical intuition. Now because pure sensibility provides the form while sensation supplies the matter for empirical intuition, there can be no sensory cognition, no immediate representation of an object, without pure sensibility and sensation.] (115)

As in the letter to Voigt, Reinhold, in this eighth ‘Brief’ stresses the role of ‘pure sensibility’ as the form that is applied to the matter of sensation in order to have empirical intuition. From this it is clear that, although he uses the odd terminology ‘pure sensibility’, Reinhold has the Kantian a priori forms of intuition in mind. Later on in the same paragraph he considers the matter-form relation more extensively.

Der **Verstand** bezieht sich also in seinen **wesentlichsten** Wirkungen auf reine Sinnlichkeit und Empfindung, so wie sich Sinnlichkeit und Empfindung, in so fern Gegenstände nicht bloß durch sie **gegeben**, sondern auch **erkannt** werden sollen, auf den Verstand beziehen. **Reine Sinnlichkeit** liefert also die **Form** – **Empfindung** den **Inhalt** der **Anschauung**; **Anschauung** liefert den **Inhalt**, **Verstand** die **Form** des **Begriffes**; so daß es ohne **Zusammenwirkung** von reine Sinnlichkeit, Empfindung und Verstand keine Erkenntniß eines wirklichen Gegenstandes geben kann. (Achter Brief, 265)

[In its most essential operations, the understanding thus relates to pure sensibility and sensation, just as sensibility and sensation relate to the understanding, in so far as objects are not merely to be given through them but also cognized. Hence pure sensibility supplies the form of intuition, and sensation its content; intuition supplies the content of the concept, and the understanding its form – so that without the cooperation of pure sensibility, sensation, and the understanding, there can be no cognition of an actual object.] (115;)

Since, in the end, Reinhold does add a note on the origins of knowledge, the only difference between the introduction of ‘pure sensibility’ here and in the letter to Voigt is the focus. As the term is introduced in the eighth ‘Brief’ in the context of ancient philosophy, Leibniz and Locke and their ideas on the origins of cognition would have been somewhat out of place.[[338]](#footnote-338) Here, it is much more important for Reinhold to stress that Kant’s philosophy has produced a result that can help understand Greek philosophy.

Reinhold’s way of putting the Kantian philosophy forward as the single viewpoint from which the differences between ancient philosophical opinions can finally be properly understood is an application of the strategy he had already used with regard to the question of the grounds for the conviction of God’s existence. As mentioned earlier, that question led directly to a sharp conflict of grounds, expressed in the pantheism controversy. Reinhold’s way of relating the question regarding the conviction of the immortality of the soul to a similar conflict is indirect. Having shown that the two traditional grounds for this conviction fail to deliver what they promise because they do not have the proper relation to morality (cf. 2.2.1 of the present chapter), he focuses on the (mis)understandings of the concept of the soul generated by fantasy, that have a bearing on the convictions regarding immortality. From that point, he can use a similar strategy as in the case of the grounds for the conviction of God’s existence. In the earlier case, the nature of human reason was being misunderstood, with the Kantian conception of ‘practical reason’ providing the new perspective from which the previous misunderstandings could be understood. In the case of the conception of the soul the human faculty of cognition as a whole is misunderstood and ‘pure sensibility’, although not a term used by Kant, is introduced as the solution to these misunderstandings.

However continuous the methodology of the final two ‘Briefe’ may be with that of the previous installments, there are also elements that point ahead, towards the methodology of the *Versuch*, which will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter. At the beginning of the seventh article the representing ‘I’ is distinguished sharply from both its representations and the objects of these representations, which distinctions were to become very prominent in the so-called *Satz des Bewußtseins*.[[339]](#footnote-339) Reinhold’s preoccupation in general with properly distinguishing and connecting the elements of the human faculty of cognition is striking in light of his later interests and is illustrated by the following passage.

Bis auf diese Theorie [Kant’s] – welche unser Erkennen bloß auf Gegenstände einschränkt die der Sinnlichkeit gegeben werden können, und folglich alle Erkenntniß **von Dinge an sich selbst** und **ausser der sinnlichen Vorstellung**, für unmöglich erklärt – mußte der eigentliche Unterschied sowohl als der Zusammenhang zwischen Denken und Empfinden **nothwendig misverstanden** werden. (Achter Brief, 266)

[Prior to this theory [Kant’s] – which restricts our cognizing to only those objects that can be given to sensibility and, consequently, declares as impossible all cognition that is of things in themselves and that goes beyond sensory representation – the genuine distinction as well as connection between thinking and sensing was necessarily misunderstood. (115;)

From this passage it is very clear that Reinhold believed that Kant was the first and only philosopher who had got the difficult relation between thinking and sensing right, that is, who knew how to distinguish them but also showed their intimate connection. Moreover, this passage is illustrative of the direction into which Reinhold was developing, as it contains a brief characterization of Kant’s theory that shows Reinhold’s tendency to develop what Karl Ameriks has termed a ‘short argument’ for idealism, that is, an argument to the effect that we cannot know things in themselves, based solely on the thought that things in themselves cannot be experienced.[[340]](#footnote-340) Although it takes the form of an argument only in the *Versuch*, the thought appears to be clearly prefigured in Reinhold’s description of the Kantian philosophy.

The final four *Merkur*-‘Briefe’, then, show both a consolidation and an elaboration of the position introduced in the first four. Reinhold’s claims regarding the achievements of Kant’s philosophy are consolidated by the consistent application of his historical way of arguing in favor of the special position of this philosophy. The general line of the historical arguments is closely related to the way Reinhold had presented the history of religion in his ‘Skizze’. According to these arguments, human history has been through several phases, characterized by different stages of the development of human reason in general. The most important truths for humanity have been available from the beginning, in a pre-reflected form, as needs felt. Through the subsequent uneven development of human reason these truths have been elucidated, but only partly, in different one-sided manners. It is only with the investigation into the nature of human reason undertaken by Kant that humanity has gained insight into the way reason functions. The building has been finished and the one-sided earlier efforts can be understood from the newly found perspective. Reinhold also remains constant in his approach of the Kantian results from external, not from internal grounds. He does not refer to the *Critique* with regard to specific claims, nor does he provide any arguments for the claim that Kant has solved the problems he allegedly solved.

Nevertheless, the final four ‘Briefe’ do show a more thorough awareness of the Kantian philosophy. Reinhold’s stress on the importance of ‘pure sensibility’, for instance, means that the area of interest of the ‘Briefe’ is widened from the field of philosophy of religion and morality to epistemology, which is assigned a crucial role in solving the problems in the field of the philosophy of morality and religion. Notwithstanding the first steps taken into the direction of the *Versuch*, it is clear that the historical methodology would remain firmly in place within the context of the ‘Briefe’, focusing on external arguments: the above-mentioned ‘Skizze’ was to figure as a part of the final, twelfth ‘Brief’ in the first volume of ­*Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie*.[[341]](#footnote-341) It fills the place of a promised ninth installment in the *Merkur* concerning the influence of the concept of the soul on religion and morality.

## Evaluation: Practical reason and pure sensibility

The previous sections of the present chapter have introduced both the context and the content of Reinhold’s ‘Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie’ as first published in *Der Teutsche Merkur* in 1786-1787. In order to have a clear starting point for our account of the developments in Reinhold’s reception of the Kantian philosophy, it will be useful to pay specific attention to the role of the concept ‘practical reason’ in these articles. Since the concept only entered his vocabulary with the ‘Briefe’, his usage is obviously associated with Kant. The analysis of the ‘Briefe’ provided above has shown that, true to his intentions, Reinhold does not provide his readers with Kantian intricacies regarding the exact nature and function of practical reason. His use of the concept nevertheless yields valuable insights into his understanding of Kant. This final section will evaluate the importance of the concept ‘practical reason’ as employed by Reinhold in especially the first four ‘Briefe’. Understanding the way in which the term is used in that context will allow us to identify a more or less parallel concept, ‘pure sensibility’ in the later installments of the ‘Briefe.

### Practical reason

From the first two installments it was already clear that the concept ‘practical reason’ is of crucial importance to Reinhold’s argument. We have seen that the general line of argument, as introduced in the first two ‘Briefe’, rests upon the claim that there is a crisis regarding the status of reason in respect of the foundation of the basic truths of religion. Given the pantheism controversy, this claim was likely to be granted readily by Reinhold’s audience. However, as an advocate of the Kantian philosophy Reinhold had advanced the further claim that the Kantian philosophy could give an answer to the problems; an answer, moreover, that would supersede the misguided claims made by previous philosophy and theology. Practical reason is presented as the crucial ingredient of Kant’s philosophy with respect to achieving this aim.

Indem sie [the new answer] den von der praktischen Vernunft gebothenen Glauben festsetzt, stürzet sie die Lehrgebäude der **apodiktischen Beweise** und des **blinden Glaubens** um, und stiftet durch die glückliche Vereinigung der geläuterten Hauptgründe ven beyden Lehrgebäuden ein neues System, in welchem die Vernunft anmassend, und der Glaube blind zu seyn aufhören, und anstatt sich, wie bisher, zu widersprechen, in ewiger Eintrach sich wechselseitig unterstützen. (Zweyter Brief, 134-135)

[In so far as it is founded on a faith commanded by practical reason, this answer topples the doctrinal structures of both apodictic proofs and blind faith and establishes a new system through a most successful union of the clarified principal arguments of both doctrinal structures. In the new system, reason ceases to be presumptuous and faith ceases to be blind, and instead of opposing one another as before they mutually support one another in perpetual harmony.] (22)

As shown, Reinhold provides elaborate historical accounts to argue that it was due to the previous uneven development of human reason that its nature and capacities had been hitherto misunderstood. This had resulted in a crisis regarding the status of reason, which in fact was a crisis regarding the status of rationalist metaphysics, especially with regard to the existence of supersensible objects. However, rationalist metaphysics is the result of speculative reason only. Therefore, the shortcomings of this type of metaphysics are not to be regarded as objections against the capacities of reason as a whole, including practical reason. Since the proper concept of reason differentiates between speculative and practical reason, it softens the opposition between reason and faith, which had dominated the pantheism controversy. Reason as such is still opposed to *blind* faith, but no longer to faith as such, as practical reason establishes a moral faith, based on rational grounds (Sechster Brief, 70). In the context of the pantheism controversy the only two alternatives, as presented by Jacobi, werespeculative reason and blind faith, which were diametrically opposed. The new, properly investigated conception of reason is opposed to blind faith only, while including rational grounds for a moral faith. Reinhold claims that, by means of the introduction of ‘practical reason’, Kant has found a way to rise above the previous opposition, by identifying a middle ground between reason and faith, rational faith, founded upon practical reason. It alone provides a rational ground for the conviction that God exists and that the soul is immortal.

Die **Kritik der Vernunft** hat (…) dargethan: „Daß es der **spekulativen** Vernunft eben so unmöglich sey, die **Unsterblichkeit der Seele**, als das **Daseyn der Gottheit** zu **demonstriren**; daß hingegen die **praktische** Vernunft durch eben dasselbe **Postulat**, wodurch sie ein höchstes Princip der sittlichen und natürlichen Gesetze voraussetzt, auch die Erwartung einer künftigen Welt nothwendig mache, in welcher Sittlichkeit und Glückseligkeit nach der Bestimmung jenes höchsten Princips in vollkommenster Harmonie stehen müssen.“ (Vierter Brief, 117-118) [[342]](#footnote-342)

[(…) the Critique of Reason has shown ‘that it is just as impossible for speculative reason to demonstrate the immortality of the soul as it is for it to demonstrate the existence of the deity’, and ‘that practical reason, on the contrary, through the same postulates by which it presupposes a highest principle of moral and natural laws, also makes necessary the expectation of a future world in which morality and happiness must stand in most perfect harmony according to the determination of the highest principle’.] (50)

There are two claims at stake here. First, speculative reason cannot *demonstrate* the existence of God. Secondly, the conviction of the existence of God is rationally justified by practical reason, which *postulates* this existence. As the analysis in the previous sections has shown, Reinhold does not provide a clear or complete account of the reasons why practical reason can postulate this existence. He appears to construe a picture in which practical reason, in contrast to speculative reason, does not exclude a connection to sensibility. This may then, in a way, make up for the lack of intuition due to which speculative reason cannot assert the existence of supersensible objects.

We may also investigate Reinhold’s views on practical reason in a more general way, abstracting from its role in providing a rational ground for the fundamental tenets of religion. With regard to the question what practical or moral reason is and does in general, it is clear that Reinhold understands it as a mediating capacity in several different but related contexts. First, related to its function in solving the disputes on faith and reason, practical reason mediates between apodictic proofs and blind faith by overcoming both and using the truth of both while dispensing with their falsity. Thus, practical reason is not only presented as capable of providing a rational ground for religion, which speculative reason cannot do. It is also presented as commanding a faith that mediates between apodictic proofs and blind faith by superseding both (Zweyter Brief, 134-135, cited at the beginning of this section). Secondly, this characteristic of practical reason leads to mediation in a different field. Since, in Reinhold’s schematic accounts, the philosophers are commonly associated with the search for apodictic proofs, whereas the common man is portrayed as subjected to blind faith and superstition, the new solution is accessible to both and thus also mediates on a social level, as the truth that arises from the unification is accessible to everyone, the common man and the philosopher alike.

(…) und wenn sich der Weise genöthiget sieht, ein **höchstes Wesen** als Princip der sittlichen und physischen Naturgesetze vorauszusetzen, welches mächtig und weise genug ist, die Glückseligkeit der vernünftigen Wesen, als den nothwendigen Erfolg der sittlichen Gesetze, zu bestimmen und würklich zu machen: so fühlt sich au der gemeinste Mann gedrungen, einen künftigen **Belohner** und **Bestrafer** jener Handlungen anzunehmen, die sein Gewissen (…) billiget und verwirft. In der **Kantischen** Antwort ist es also ein und ebenderselbe Vernunftgrund, welcher dem aufgeklärtersten sowohl als dem gemeinsten Verstande Glauben gebiethet; und zwar einen Glauben der die strengste Prüfung des einen aushält, und den gewöhnlichsten Fähigkeiten des andern einleuchtet. (Zweyter Brief, 136-137)

[And just as the sage feels it necessary to presuppose a highest being as the principle of the moral and physical laws of nature, a principle that is wise and powerful enough to determine and bring about the happiness of rational beings as a necessary consequence of the moral laws, so too the most common man feels compelled to accept a future rewarder and punisher of the actions that his conscience approves and condemns (…). In the Kantian answer it is thus one and the same ground of reason that offers faith to the most enlightened as well as to the most elementary understanding – that is, a faith that stands up to the most rigorous examination by the former and is illuminating for the most ordinary capacities of the latter.] (23)

Thirdly, practical reason does not only mediate between the different grounds proposed for the belief in God’s existence, but also between speculative reason and sensibility in general. These capacities of the human mind can be regarded as the bases of the different perspectives discussed above. Apodictic proofs have their origin in speculative reason, whereas blind faith is supported by revelation and miracles, that is, by information gathered by sensibility. With regard to the issues of religion both these faculties, when operating on their own lead to excesses.

Isolierte Sinnlichkeit, vernunftloses Gefühl, blindes Glauben reissen unaufhaltsam zum Fanatismus dahin; Isolierte Vernunft, kalte Spekulation, ungeregelte Wißbegierde führen, wenns hoch kömmt, zum frostigen, grübelnden, unthätigen Deismus. **Vernunft und Gefühl** hingegen in **ihrer Vereinigung**, –die Elemente der Sittlichkeit, –bringen den **moralischen Glauben** hervor, und machen (…), den einzigen, reinen und lebendigen Sinn aus, den wir für die Gottheit haben. (Dritter Brief, 33)

[Isolated sensibility, feeling without reason, and blind faith pull inexorably toward fanaticism; isolated reason, speculation, and the unrestricted desire to know lead at best to icy, carping, inactive deism. Yet when they are unified, reason and feeling – the elements of morality – give rise to moral faith and constitute (…) the only pure and living meaning we have for the deity.] (46)

Left to themselves, the two poles of human cognition, sensibility and reason, lead to opposite and extreme results. While sensibility on its own can lead to nothing more than blind faith, reason on its own leads to speculation, but not to action. Both are needed to produce moral faith. Morality is thus presented as the combination of two elements of our faculty of cognition which appear to be opposites but need to be combined.

It is interesting to note that “isolated reason” appears to be speculative reason here, which would render the distinction between speculative and practical reason not one within reason or between different forms of reason, but rather a distinction between reason on its own and reason connected to the senses. Thus instead of an opposition of reason and intuition with a distinction within reason (as appears to be the Kantian picture), we find that for Reinhold isolated reason and isolated sensibility are opposed, but practical reason mediates between them and combines the two roots of human knowledge.

Reinhold’s deviation from Kant in this respect and his insistence on mediation between reason and sensibility reflects his pre-Kantian concerns regarding Enlightenment, discussed in detail in the second chapter, especially in section 3. Some of his key writings of that period will be briefly recapitulated below as an illustration of the consistency of his approach to reason. Already in Vienna, Reinhold expressed the thought that Enlightenment in practice needed both reason and sensibility. We have seen this especially clearly in the speech on the ‘Wehrt einer Gesellschaft’, in which the importance of a good heart, or virtue, was stressed. Without it, the noblest (rational) ideas would not be put into action, as they could not be asserted with sufficient force in the actual life of the agent, where sense impressions distract the attention. In order to compete with these, the good ideas must, by means of a good heart, or virtue, become similar to these sense impressions, for the way to action goes, as Reinhold puts it, “through sensation [*Empfindung*].”[[343]](#footnote-343) Enlightenment in practice thus presupposes a good heart as well as a good mind, sensibility as well as reason.

Moreover, from other writings, such as ‘Mönchthum und Maurerey’ (1784) and ‘Gedanken über Aufklärung’ (1784) it is clear that Reinhold believed that true Enlightenment is Enlightenment in practice. With regard to ‘Mönchthum and Maurerey’ we have seen that Reinhold thinks of human reason as closely related to human nature. Man’s natural and rational behavior in turn is understood in terms of proper action in society, as a husband, father, and citizen.[[344]](#footnote-344) The article makes very clear that according to Reinhold the type of reason that is to be furthered by Enlightenment is a practical type of reason, focusing on being rational in our relation to other people and to society in general. Although Reinhold himself does not use the term ‘practical reason’ at all in this context (and neither does he contrast it with speculative reason), we may say that Reinhold’s conception of reason, as it surfaces from this article, is thoroughly practical (in a common-sense understanding of the term, that is, not in the Kantian sense). It is hard to tell whether Reinhold had a distinct conception of reason at this time and whether he would distinguish between a speculative and a practical use. We cannot deny, however, that he primarily associates reason with activities in the practical sphere, with being a concrete human being with concrete relations to other human beings rather than with speculation.

In the tripartite article ‘Gedanken über Aufklärung’ Reinhold looks at Enlightenment from a scientific rather than a personal perspective. He provides a brief history of the sciences culminating in the elaborate systems of rational metaphysics. However, although the system of concepts thus built has been finished, it is not a proper building at all, but only the scaffolding, so Reinhold argues.[[345]](#footnote-345) As the philosophers are not aware of this, they do not proceed to the construction of the building itself. The unceasing labor on the scaffolding has resulted in ever more refined analyses of concepts, which thereby become more and more abstract. This means that the common notions become disconnected from and useless for human life. The real importance of Enlightenment is situated in the efforts to overcome this gap between scientific concepts and real life. This is to be done by means of concepts that can build a “bridge between speculation and action.”[[346]](#footnote-346)

As shown in our second chapter, Reinhold’s explication of ‘bridging concepts’ uses the concept ‘father’ as an example, which resonates in the third ‘Brief’. By means of these intermediate concepts, which are common to humanity as such, the distinct idea of the philosopher and the confused idea of the common man can be connected. Again, human relations are the basis for the connection of rationality to real life. It is this process, then, that Reinhold calls Enlightenment, the process of dissemination of the concepts developed by reason throughout society.

Although Reinhold’s pre-Kantian writings recapitulated here discuss the relation between reason and feeling, mind and heart in different manners, their common denominator is that Enlightenment combines rationality and action. This requires that the rational and sensible capacities of man are connected properly. With respect to society, Enlightenment must aim to bring about a unification between those who predominantly use their minds and those who predominantly rely on their senses in life. The proper use of reason is connected to real life, which is related to the complex of human relations that people have when they are a part of society. Reason, as an essentially human property, belonging to human nature, expresses itself properly in connection with the daily reality of human life, that is, in connection with social relations. The concepts that describe these relations are therefore properly called common notions and are the basis of the solution to the problem of the excessive speculative use of reason. The situation in which the proper use of reason is as yet to be found is the result of the uneven development of man’s cognitive capacities throughout history.

Even if the actual term ‘practical reason’ only entered Reinhold’s vocabulary with the ‘Briefe’ and is thus closely associated with his getting acquainted with Kant’s philosophy, it will be clear from the above brief recapitulation of his earlier writings that the seeds for the way in which the ‘Briefe’ present practical reason had been sown already in his pre-Kantian years. In the ‘Briefe’ the concept of ‘practical reason’ serves to present his argument in support of the Kantian philosophy. As speculative reason is not able at all to answer the questions it has raised, practical reason is introduced as an authority that can provide answers, and thus overstep the boundaries set on speculative reason, without sacrificing the rational character of the answers. This is the essential feature Reinhold needs to be able to present Kant as the philosophical hero of the age. Reinhold’s hints at the solution that practical reason offers point towards reconciliation of speculative reason and sensibility and suggest that his view differs from Kant’s. Practical reason appears either to mediate between pure speculative reason and sensibility, or to combine them. This is not in line with the Kantian conception viewing the distinction between speculative and practical reason as one within reason. In Reinhold’s picture speculative reason is devaluated to a one-sided form of reason, deaf to the senses. Nevertheless, it is understandable that Reinhold, when focusing on the first *Critique* in 1786 and 1787, could have thought that this was indeed Kant’s intention. In the first *Critique* there are remarks that imply that the sphere of the practical presupposes a connection to the sensible world of desires and inclinations.[[347]](#footnote-347) The interpretation Reinhold gives of Kant’s philosophy, according to which practical reason mediates between speculative reason and sensibility, is, however, more strongly connected to Reinhold’s own, pre-Kantian conceptions of reason than to the scattered and imprecise remarks of the master himself.

In his early works the term ‘practical reason’ itself is never employed, but Reinhold stresses the importance of reason being practical time and again, in the sense of being connected to human action in the world. At first, he does not need to distinguish between speculative and practical reason, since reason is so closely connected with human nature that its use in social practice is presented as essential in ‘Mönchthum and Maurerey’. Later, in ‘Gedanken über Aufklärung’, pure speculative reason is presented simply as reason gone adrift, disconnected from the reality of human life. In both cases, the proper, or complete, use of reason is practical, which in Reinhold’s vocabulary means ‘connected to the real world and sensibility’. This understanding of ‘practical’ also underlies his reception of Kant’s first *Critique*, as the ‘Briefe’ clearly testify. Reason and sensibility are frequently presented as opposites, which opposition is solved by practical reason, combining rationality with being informed by the real, concrete world.

### Pure sensibility

In a way the emphasis laid so far in this section on ‘practical reason’ as a central concept in Reinhold’s ‘Briefe’ is somewhat artificial, or may appear unbalanced. For actually, this concept is mainly prominent in the third and fourth ‘Briefe’, with the first two installments building up to its introduction. In the later ‘Briefe’ the term hardly occurs, as Reinhold discusses the solution of the problems regarding the grounds for the conviction of the immortality of the soul in even less detail than he had discussed the conviction that God exists. While it is true that the analysis given of Reinhold’s use of the Kantian term ‘practical reason’ is not directly applicable to the final four ‘Briefe’, it still offers very valuable insights into Reinhold’s reception of Kant especially in relation to his pre-Kantian thoughts on reason. Moreover, the analysis is of indirect importance, for we have seen that the argumentative structure of the final four ‘Briefe’ runs more or less parallel to that of the third and fourth. In them, Reinhold introduces the seemingly Kantian term ‘pure sensibility’, which then performs a function similar to that of ‘practical reason’ in the earlier installments. As shown above that Reinhold introduces the term independently of Kant’s usage to refer to the ‘Kantian discovery’ of the a priori forms of intuition. Since apparently there is something a priori to sensibility, this discovery is very important in overcoming the opposition between Leibnizian and Lockean theories of cognition. Leibniz had identified man’s rational capacities as the sole source of cognition, whereas Locke had maintained that all cognition was rooted in sense experience. The discovery of a ‘source of cognition’ as Reinhold called it, that a priori shapes sense experience and is thus related to both our rational and our sensible capacities means that both Leibniz and Locke were partly right and partly wrong and that their differences can be reconciled. In the ‘Briefe’ the term is introduced in order to give a novel interpretation of the opinions of the ancient philosophers on the immortality of the soul. The point of introducing it is to stress the importance of a proper understanding of the relation between our sensible and our rational capacities, that is, recognizing that these capacities must be distinguished, yet are at the same time intimately related.

In this case, as in the case of ‘practical reason’ we are dealing with a feature of the structure of the human faculty of cognition, ever present and active, but only acknowledged recently, since the thorough investigation undertaken by Kant in his first *Critique*. Moreover, Kant’s discovery, as Reinhold puts it, of both ‘practical reason’ and ‘pure sensibility’ provides a new standpoint in philosophy, one that allows us, so Reinhold, to put the previous controversies and misunderstandings in perspective. Thus, in both cases, he introduces a feature of our faculty of cognition, allegedly discovered by Kant, as an argument for the value of the Kantian philosophy, claiming that these discoveries yield crucial insights not only into the structure of the human mind, but into the structure of the history of philosophy as well. After all, for Reinhold the history of philosophy is closely related to the development of man’s mental capacities.

It is further important to note that the two newly introduced concepts, ‘practical reason’ and ‘pure sensibility’, are not only similar in their role of supporting the Kantian philosophy. They appear to have a similar content as well. That is to say, a content that appears to function in a similar way, since, as always, Reinhold is not very interested in the technical details in these ‘Briefe’. Both the discoveries Kant is credited with, namely those of ‘practical reason’ and of ‘pure sensibility’, are presented as extremely important by Reinhold because they refer to the element or elements of the human faculty of cognition that can mediate between abstract rationality on the one hand and concrete sensation on the other. We have seen that ‘practical reason’ is presented as a mediation between isolated (that is, speculative) reason on the one hand and isolated feeling or sensibility on the other. Similarly, ‘pure sensibility’ mediates between sensation, the input to our sense organs on the one hand, and the understanding, the faculty of concepts on the other. Judging by diversity of terms, it is clear that Reinhold still did not have, at that point, a fully developed system of the human faculties in mind, but rather still worked within the familiar framework, in which ‘heart’, ‘feeling’ and ‘sensibility’ are associated with the concrete, real world, whereas ‘reason’, ‘understanding’ and ‘thought’ are associated with the abstract world of concepts. We have already encountered this schematic dichotomy in Reinhold’s works on Enlightenment.[[348]](#footnote-348) The fact that it continues to play such an important role in his first reception of Kant indicates that his becoming acquainted with the Kantian philosophy did not significantly alter his views on the nature of man’s mental capacities. Given the circumstance that Kant’s theory of cognition was to change the philosophical landscape forever and, as Reinhold admits, contained the seeds of a philosophical revolution, the fact that Reinhold’s thoughts on the nature of the human mind underwent little change is remarkable indeed. He apparently conceived of the Kantian philosophy as very suitable for the ideas he already had about the proper relation between our rational and sensible capacities.

A further point of similarity between the introduction of ‘practical reason’ in the earlier ‘Briefe’ and ‘pure sensibility’ in the later ones is that these discoveries of Kant do not only both have a mediating function between ‘reason’ and ‘sensibility’, they are also both strongly connected to morality. That is, both are presented in a way showing that they are necessary conditions for the successful unification of religion and morality. The case is most clear, of course, with the introduction of practical or moral reason. This type of reason is presented as directly providing the moral foundation for the conviction that God exists, and also for the conviction that the human soul is immortal. ‘Pure sensibility’ contributes albeit indirectly, to the unification of religion and morality as well. Its discovery showed that the previous ways of understanding the relation between thinking and sensing had been misguided. These mistaken understandings, which either conflated the two or introduced too sharp a distinction between them, did have a detrimental influence upon either the conviction of the immortality of the soul or at least upon the unity of religion and morality in this regard. We have seen that Reinhold went to great lengths to argue that the opinions of ancient philosophers on the (im)mortality of the soul were not related to their thoughts on its (im)materiality, but rather to their conceptions of the nature of our cognitive capacities. In this manner, the discovery of ‘pure sensibility’ is very significant with regard to religion and morality, just as the discovery of ‘practical reason’.

Finally, it must be pointed out that, for Reinhold, both these discoveries are actually discoveries and not philosophical inventions of some kind. That is to say, Reinhold presents Kant as having uncovered a number of essential features of the structure of the human mind. The undiscovered existence of these features had caused feelings which in turn had inspired the mistaken views on the human mental capacities that were being superseded by the Kantian philosophy. On the one hand, this way of presenting Kant’s work allows Reinhold to elaborate on the historical development of man’s mental capacities, claiming that the grounds discovered by Kant were always there and have always worked towards the same goal, but that they can only be fully understood after various necessary misconceptualizations. On the other hand, presenting the terms introduced as discoveries of the structure of the human mind means that Kant has successfully identified grounds that are common to all of humankind. Since the Kantian discoveries concern fundamental traits of the human mind, the problems created by the previous misguided standpoints can be solved in a manner that is accessible to philosophers and common men alike.[[349]](#footnote-349) The connection to Reinhold’s Enlightenment ambitions can hardly be overlooked. Those things that he hoped Enlightenment would achieve are now presented as achievements of the Kantian philosophy.

The single most important feature of the Kantian philosophy, then, is in Reinhold’s eyes that it alone is able to overcome the distinctions between rationality and sensibility that resulted from the uneven development of human reason throughout human history. Reinhold’s enthusiasm for the new philosophy follows from his pre-Kantian conviction that philosophy actually needed to overcome these distinctions as is testified by his earlier works. In the ‘Briefe’ he pulls this feature of the Kantian philosophy into focus by introducing two Kantianizing terms, ‘practical reason’ and ‘pure sensibility’. These terms denote the newly discovered facts concerning the structure of our faculty of cognition that enabled Kant to indeed overcome the deadlock of previous philosophy. In light of the early reception of Kant’s work throughout Germany, it is important to note that Reinhold’s use of these terms is more related to the perspective from which he wants to present the Kantian philosophy than to anything Kant had claimed with regard to them up to that point. Reinhold’s use of the term ‘practical reason’ is not so much inspired by Kant’s moral philosophy, but rather by his own desire to find a way in which the abstract world of reason and philosophy can be connected to the real, concrete world of feeling. His use of the term ‘pure sensibility’ to denote the a priori forms of sensibility is unrelated to Kant’s preoccupation with synthetic a priori judgments and the status of mathematics, but rather stresses overcoming the distinction between our rational and sensible capacities and their role in bringing about cognition, a distinction which has been made too sharply in the history of philosophy. Both terms are used by Reinhold in a context in which the foundation of religion upon morality is the main issue. His claim that this foundation has been achieved by Kant in a way that is in principle understandable to everyone and that is the inevitable final stage of the development of reason, strongly links the ‘Briefe’ to his pre-Kantian interests. His employment of Kantianizing terms serves his overall Enlightenment purpose, rather than explaining Kant.

# ‘Practical reason’ in the Versuch einer neuen Theorie des menschlichen Vorstellungsvermögens

The previous chapter showed that Reinhold initially used the Kantian term ‘practical reason’ in a way that nicely fitted his own pre-Kantian thoughts on human reason and Enlightenment. The ‘Briefe’ were never intended as an exposition on Kant’s thoughts regarding practical reason. Rather, Reinhold employed the term in order to apply a form of Kantianism to his interpretation of Enlightenment. Addressing key issues with which German philosophy was dealing at the time, the ‘Briefe’ were a profound success and Reinhold became an extraordinary professor in Jena.[[350]](#footnote-350) His intention to lecture on the *Critique of Pure Reason* entailed that he had to look into it more deeply than he had done before. He also became more aware of the fact that the first *Critique* was the center of controversy and that the work he had put forward as the panacea for the philosophical problems of his age was not universally appreciated. At the same time, Kant’s *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft* (1788) saw the light and was noted by critics. The result of Reinhold’s more intensive occupation with Kant is the *Versuch einer neuen Theorie des menschlichen Vorstellungsvermögens* (1789). This 600-page main work is the impressive expression of a second, more ambitious phase of Reinhold’s occupation with Kant’s philosophy. Instead of merely attempting to make the usefulness of the Kantian philosophy known to a wide audience, Reinhold now tries to secure unanimous support for the philosophy he had fused with his own.

The present chapter continues the investigation of Reinhold’s reception of Kant on the basis of his use of the Kantian concept ‘practical reason’. There are several reasons why the *Versuch* is highly significant in this respect. Reinhold’s new academic status and his growing awareness of the many controversies surrounding Kant’s philosophy required a more intensive study of Kant’s works and those of his critics. The publication of Kant’s second *Critique*, dealing with practical reason is likely to have generated some pressure on Reinhold’s views concerning practical reason, especially as he had employed the term, as we have seen in the previous chapter, not so much out of interest in Kant’s moral philosophy, but rather because it provided him with the desideratum for his views on human nature, a faculty that mediates between (speculative) reason and sensibility. Conspicuously, explicit references to the second *Critique* are missing from the *Versuch*. Moreover, the new *Critique* was scrutinized immediately by August Wilhelm Rehberg, with whom Reinhold had had a polemical encounter earlier.[[351]](#footnote-351) These and other historical circumstances surrounding the production of the *Versuch* will be discussed in the first section of the current chapter.

Apart from these external factors, there are also features of the *Versuch* itself that give rise to the expectation that Reinhold’s reception of Kant entered a new phase with that book, and in particular his conception of practical reason. The *Versuch*, first of all, does not deal exclusively with the external grounds for the Kantian philosophy (cf. the letter to Voigt, discussed in Chapter 3). Rather, it appears to advance to the internal grounds as well. This distinction between the internal and external grounds, however, cannot be applied to the *Versuch* in a straightforward way, since the work is not constructed as an exposition of Kant, but rather as a new theory, on the human faculty of representation, intended as a foundation of the Kantian theory of cognition. The very thought that the Kantian theory of cognition, heralded as the ‘Evangelium der reinen Vernunft’ in the ‘Briefe’, should need of a new and proper foundation implies a critical attitude towards Kant, which is likely to have had implications for Reinhold’s conception of ‘practical reason’ as well. The second section of the present chapter will discuss the general structure of the *Versuch*, focusing on the First Book, from which we can gain useful insights into Reinhold’s aims with this work, and on the final part of the Third Book, the ‘Theory of Reason’, including the curious section entitled ‘Grundlinien der Theorie des Begehrungsvermögens’. It is only in this final part that the terminology of ‘practical reason’ returns.

Parallel to the previous chapter, the final section of this chapter will analyze Reinhold’s views on ‘practical reason’ as they emerge from the *Versuch*. They will not only be connected to his previous views, as presented in the ‘Briefe’, but also to Rehberg’s review of Kant’s second *Critique*. In several places this section will supplement Alessandro Lazzari’s important study.[[352]](#footnote-352) Firstly, it will stress the continuities between the ‘Briefe’ and the central theme of the *Versuch*, the theory of the faculty of representation. This confirms that Reinhold’s practical interests were a driving force behind the development of his theoretical philosophy. Secondly, the final section will point out the relevance of Rehberg’s review of Kant’s second *Critique*, which explains how and why Reinhold came to consider ‘practical reason’ at the end of the *Versuch*, in the ‘Grundlinien’. From a different perspective, namely that of investigating Reinhold’s understanding of ‘practical reason’, Lazzari’s conclusion that Reinhold’s theory of the faculty of representation gets him into trouble when it comes to justifying an absolute conception of freedom will be confirmed.

## Historical context of the Versuch

As Reinhold started lecturing at the University of Jena, his chosen subjects were aesthetics and ‘Introduction to the Critique of Reason for beginners’.[[353]](#footnote-353) In January 1788 he informed Kant of his method.

Ich diktire die Theorien der Sinnlichkeit, des Verstandes, und der Vernunft in Aphorismen; in welchen ich von einer getreuen Schilderung des Zustandes in welchem die Kr. d. V. unsre spekulativen Ph[ilosoph]ie natürliche Theologie und Moral gefunden hat, ausgieng, die Nothwendigkeit einer Beilegung des Misverständniß das die Philosophische Welt in vier Partheyen 1 *Supernaturalisten* 2 (Naturalisten) *Skeptiker*, 3 (Dogmatiker) *Pantheisten* oder *Atheisten*. 4 *Theisten* trennt; so wie den Grund und Ursprung des Misverständnisses, die unbestimmten und falschen Vorstellungsarten vom Erkenntnißvermögen (…).[[354]](#footnote-354)

[I dictate the theories of sensibility, understanding and reason in aphorisms; in which I started from a true picture of the circumstances in which the Critique of Reason had found our speculative philosophy, natural theology and morality and in which I showed the necessity of overcoming the misunderstanding that divides the philosophical world in four parties[[355]](#footnote-355) (1 s*upernaturalists*; 2 (naturalists) *skeptics*; 3 (dogmatists) *pantheists* or *atheists*; 4 *theists*) and the ground and origin of this misunderstanding, that is, the indeterminate and false ways of representing the faculty of cognition (…).]

This method of introducing Kant’s *Critique* appears to be clearly related to the project of the *Versuch*. The elements it mentions – the theories of the different capacities of the faculty of cognition and the misunderstandings of the philosophers prior to the Kantian *Critique* – have both found their way into the *Versuch*, in the Third and First Books respectively.[[356]](#footnote-356) The structure of dictating aphorisms matches the structure of the *Versuch* as well since it consists of numbered sections, followed by an explanation or argument. What is clearly absent from Reinhold’s account of his lectures is the theory of the faculty of representation, which either did not form part of his lectures, or, more likely, did not yet exist at this time.

Although Reinhold already hints at the possible publication in the letter to Kant cited above,[[357]](#footnote-357) the first mention of a definite plan to publish a book on the basis of these lectures is only found in a later letter to Kant. Reinhold announces that an “Introduction to the Critique of Reason” will be published by Blumauer and appear in the autumn of 1788.[[358]](#footnote-358) He even published a notice in the ‘Anzeiger’ of *Der Teutsche Merkur*, stating that he was working on a “theory of the faculty of cognition” in which the “results of the Critique of Reason” would be presented in a systematic way together with the vitiation of the criticisms made against it as well as their origin, which can be found in a misunderstanding of the principles.[[359]](#footnote-359) Wisely, he did not present a date by which the readers of the *Merkur* could expect this book, for it was nowhere near completion by the autumn of 1788. In October, Reinhold complains that his other activities have barely left him time to compile the materials for his theory of the faculty of cognition. He now plans its publication for Easter 1789, and expects that printing will start in December 1788.[[360]](#footnote-360) It is in this letter to Schack Hermann Ewald that we find the first mention of the theory of the faculty of representation, when Reinhold introduces the aim of the “booklet.” In keeping with his promise in the *Merkur* he plans to do the following:

die bisherigen Misverständnisse der Crit. der V. ohne Polemik und auf eine leicht faßliche Weise für die jenigen, die anders überzeugt werden wollen hinwegräumen (…). Ich bin nämlich auf die *Prämissen* gerathen, welche der Kantische *Theorie des Erkennens* vorangeschickt werden müssen, und die in einer genauen Theorie des *Vorstellens* liegen.[[361]](#footnote-361)

[clear away the misunderstandings of the Critique of Reason, without polemics and in a way that is easily understandable for those who will let themselves be convinced. (…) I have actually found the *premises* which have to precede the Kantian *theory of cognition* and which consist in a precise theory of *representation*.]

During 1788 the focus of the projected work appears to have shifted significantly. At first, Reinhold’s main aim was to “provide the *Critique* with prepared readers.”[[362]](#footnote-362) By the end of the year a new element had been introduced, a theory of representation which has to precede the Kantian theory of cognition not as an *introduction* but as its *premise*. Reinhold’s efforts to counter the misunderstandings of the Kantian philosophy take on a new form. Although it appears as if the decision to provide the Kantian philosophy with new premises requires a shift in Reinhold’s perspective,[[363]](#footnote-363) he himself did not see a real break. His claim that he had worked on the “Theorie des Vorstellungsvermögens” for four years[[364]](#footnote-364) suggests that he thought of his efforts on behalf of the Kantian philosophy as a continuous project, starting with his first studies of Kant.

The actual writing of the *Versuch* as has come down to us, however, began in December 1788, when Reinhold signed a contract with the Jena publisher Mauke and his business partner Widtmann.[[365]](#footnote-365) Soon after, we find him complaining about his workload and the resulting lack of time to keep up with all the attacks on the Kantian philosophy that had appeared.[[366]](#footnote-366) The work on the *Versuch* did not progress as smoothly as Reinhold would have liked, and it was not even near completion by Easter 1789. This must at least partly have been due to the fact that Reinhold fell seriously ill. He appears to have suffered some kind of stroke, becoming temporarily paralyzed and was recovering by the end of February.[[367]](#footnote-367) Although it is not clear to what extent this thwarted the plan to publish the work by Easter, it was, by that time, clear that publication would not take place before the autumn of 1789.[[368]](#footnote-368)

The Preface, however, was ready by the beginning of April,[[369]](#footnote-369) and was published both as a separate booklet, and in the *Merkur* of April and May 1789.[[370]](#footnote-370) By that time Reinhold claimed to have the “small work” lying in his desk “for the most part finished,” while the first sheet was being prepared for print.[[371]](#footnote-371) By the end of May, the First Book had been printed, as Reinhold sent its final sheets to Hufeland.[[372]](#footnote-372) The printing of the Second Book appears to have begun immediately when the First was finished since Reinhold informed Kant on June 14 that it would be ready within six weeks.[[373]](#footnote-373) From the same letter it appears that the final Third Book did not at that time lie ready in Reinhold’s desk yet, since he speaks of it in the future tense. “The third book will contain the application to the theory of the faculty of cognition.”[[374]](#footnote-374) It is most likely that this book was only written during the summer of 1789. Indeed, the state of the Third Book suggests that Reinhold was under some pressure to finish the work in time, as it is not as neatly polished as the earlier parts of the work.[[375]](#footnote-375)

Our account of the circumstances surrounding the publication of Reinhold’s first main work – he himself consistently and modestly refers to it as *Büchlein* or *Werkchen –* is not complete with only a look at the publication process itself. While producing the work, Reinhold was also very concerned about its reception and he took his measures to ensure the attention of potential reviewers, trying to create some sort of media hype as we might call it. For instance, when he sent Hufeland the final sheets of the First Book, he used the occasion to complain – Hufeland co-edited the *ALZ* – about the lack of attention his works had received up until that moment in that magazine.[[376]](#footnote-376) Particularly the tardiness of the *ALZ* in reviewing *Ueber die bisherigen Schicksale der Kantische Philosophie* appears to be a source of concern.[[377]](#footnote-377) Of course, this booklet had been published as an appetizer to create an eager anticipation of the main work with the readers. For that reason, it must have been of the highest importance to Reinhold that it was noted in the magazines and did not get too much criticism. By May 1789, Reinhold had every reason to be unhappy with the reception so far. As he tells Hufeland, he is not pleased that the *ALZ* has not been the first to review his booklet – the first review, in the *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen*,[[378]](#footnote-378) was not to his liking.[[379]](#footnote-379) His suspicion that Rehberg would be the reviewer for the *ALZ* did not ease his worries and he anticipated having to write a counter-review to redeem himself.[[380]](#footnote-380)

Reinhold had his reasons for expecting trouble if Rehberg were to review his work. Preceding the work on the *Versuch*, Reinhold and Rehberg had been engaged polemically as a result of the latter’s book *Über das Verhältniß der Metaphysik zur Religion* (1787). Reinhold had reviewed the work for the *ALZ*,questioning the author’s understanding of Kant.[[381]](#footnote-381) Rehberg had reacted to the review in the *Merkur*, questioning Reinhold’s understanding of Kant in turn.[[382]](#footnote-382) Reinhold was thus not only concerned about the time it took for a review of the *Bisherige Schicksale* to appear in the *ALZ*, he also doubted that this review would be favorable. He continued his complaints regarding the lack of attention for his works on the part of the *ALZ* in his letter to Kant of June 14. Again, both the tardiness and the expected contents of the review worried Reinhold. He expressly states that he believes that Rehberg has “only half understood the *Critique*.”[[383]](#footnote-383) Reinhold’s prayers were answered, since the review of the *Bisherige Schicksale* was published June 23 and was not negative.[[384]](#footnote-384) It appears, however, that the review (of the *Bisherige Schicksale*) was not Rehberg’s after all. For in his review of the *Versuch­* – which was certainly not to Reinhold’s liking – Rehberg states that the Preface had been reviewed earlier by somebody else.[[385]](#footnote-385) The contents of the review of the *Versuch* occasioned new complaints from Reinhold to Hufeland and a reaction in the ‘Intelligenzblatt’ of the *ALZ*.[[386]](#footnote-386)

His complaints regarding the *ALZ* were by no means the only measures Reinhold took to try and ensure a positive reception of his first main work. Similar requests not to let certain individuals review his *Versuch* went to Nicolai, the publisher of the *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek* – with a similar lack of success.[[387]](#footnote-387) Reinhold’s haste to finish the work before the Michaelmas book fair must be seen in the same light. After all, he had gone to great lengths to ensure that everybody knew that the new Jena professor was about to publish his textbook on Kant in the autumn of 1789. Not only had he published the Preface as an appetizer, the various parts of the First Book had also appeared in several magazines.[[388]](#footnote-388) From a marketing perspective, postponing publication any further would not have been a good idea, even if its philosophical and structural qualities might have benefited from a delay in publication.

## Structure and aims of the Versuch

The eventual result of Reinhold’s hard work consists of four main parts. First, there is the lengthy Preface on the “fate of the Kantian philosophy up till now,” which had been published separately before. The work itself, then, is divided into three books, each consisting of sections numbered continuously, and containing a short statement or aphorism, followed by an explanation. The first of these books is entitled ‘Abhandlung über das Bedürfniss einer neuen Untersuchung des menschlichen Vorstellungsvermögens’, in which Reinhold argues, as he had done in the ‘Briefe’, that the given problems regarding the philosophy of religion and morality necessitate a critique of reason. He also argues, however, that this critique must be preceded by and founded upon an investigation of the faculty of representation, since the central concept of Kant’s first *Critique*, cognition (*Erkenntnis*) is but a species of the more general concept of representation (*Vorstellung*) (cf. *Versuch*, 189). This investigation, intended as foundation for the Kantian philosophy, is presented in the Second Book of the *Versuch*, entitled ‘Theorie des Vorstellungsvermögens überhaupt’. In the Third Book, the ‘Theorie des Erkentnissvermögens überhaupt’, Reinhold claims to show how the Kantian results follow from that foundation. In doing so, Reinhold roughly follows the structure of Kant’s first *Critique*.[[389]](#footnote-389) He tacitly assumes that these results solve the problems discussed in the First Book. The general structure of the *Versuch* can thus be described as follows. First, as in the ‘Briefe’, serious problems in the field of the philosophy of morality and religion are introduced and attributed to misunderstandings among the philosophers. The Kantian philosophy is credited with providing a solution for these problems, as in the ‘Briefe’. In contrast to the ‘Briefe’, however, this solution has to be grounded in a new theory of the faculty of representation. From this theory, the results of the Kant’s first *Critique* are thought to follow, which means that the *Versuch* as a whole can be characterized as a work of theoretical philosophy. The focus on the first *Critique* is also apparent from the absence of any explicit reference to either Kant’s *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* or the second *Critique*.[[390]](#footnote-390)Nevertheless, the Kantian results that it seeks to establish do have a practical character, since they are to provide a rational ground for the basic concepts of religion and morality (God, the soul, freedom). We have seen that in the ‘Briefe’ Reinhold attached a crucial importance to practical reason with regard to such an effort to provide these rational grounds.

Although one would therefore expect Reinhold to work out these rational grounds from practical reason in greater detail in his first main work, this is not what happens in the course of the Third Book. Reinhold’s strategy in following Kant’s first *Critique* rather appears to be showing how the ideas of God, the soul and freedom are necessarily related to our cognitive faculties, which in turn would tell us what can and cannot be done with these ideas. That is, they cannot be used to ground knowledge of supersensible objects, yet have an important function in organizing knowledge and are rationally sound. The exact manner in which these ideas can be used to ground religion and morality is not part of the scope of the *Versuch*.[[391]](#footnote-391) Given these circumstances, it is surprising to find that ‘practical reason’ figures prominently at the very end of the work, in a curious chapter entitled ‘Grundlinien der Theorie des Begehrungsvermögens’. The peculiarities at the very end of the work provide us with at least one good reason to examine the structure of the *Versuch* in more detail.

There is another good reason, however, which is connected to Reinhold’s initial plans regarding the Kantian philosophy as expressed in his letter to Voigt from 1786. As we have seen in the second section of Chapter 3, Reinhold intended to discuss both the ‘external grounds’ or benefits and the ‘internal grounds’ of the Kantian philosophy. It also appeared that Reinhold’s ‘Briefe’ correspond to the first seven points he planned to discuss as external grounds.[[392]](#footnote-392) Thematically, these external grounds return in the First Book of the *Versuch*. There is, however, a difference in perspective. While the ‘Briefe’ focused on the *content* of the solution, that is, on the Kantian discovery that practical reason can provide rational grounds for certain religious beliefs, while speculative reason fails to do so, the First Book of the *Versuch* stresses the *need* for an investigation of the faculty of representation, leaving the actual results of this investigation for the remainder of the work to answer. This is where one might expect a discussion of the internal grounds, which remained unspecified in Reinhold’s letter to Voigt. However, since Reinhold at this point no longer just intends to present Kant’s philosophy proper – if he ever did – but has become quite convinced that the premises for the Kantian theory of cognition have not been provided yet, it becomes hard to understand what, at this point, would be the internal grounds for the Kantian philosophy. This is, of course, partly due to the initial lack of determination given of that term in Reinhold’s letter to Voigt. As we have seen, the internal grounds concern a presentation of the Kantian arguments that would display the Kantian system as an actual and sound system of philosophy. Given Reinhold’s enterprise of providing, in his theory of the faculty of representation, the missing premises for the Kantian theory of cognition, it is doubtful that he can still maintain that this theory is in fact completely sound.[[393]](#footnote-393) The nature of the project of providing the premises for the Kantian philosophy indicates that the earlier distinction between the external and internal grounds for the Kantian philosophy is not very helpful. Since Reinhold initially already failed to specify the internal grounds, it is impossible to pinpoint them in the *Versuch*, where the emphasis is no longer solely on the Kantian theory of cognition but also on Reinhold’s own theory of representation.

Similarly, there are some difficulties in determining the nature of the Kantian ‘results’ at this point. It is clear that Reinhold seeks to establish these results on a more firm basis by explicitly providing the hidden premises of the Kantian theory of cognition. As the Third Book presents the outlines of that theory as founded upon Reinhold’s theory of the faculty of representation, they appear to be the Kantian ‘results’. If this is the case, however, there appears to be a mismatch between these ‘results’ and the ‘results of the Kantian philosophy’ as they figured in the context of the external grounds.[[394]](#footnote-394) In that context, it is a result of the Kantian philosophy that it has provided the means to solve urgent philosophical matters such as the status of the conviction that God exists. In the *Versuch* it is tacitly assumed that the ‘results of the Kantian philosophy’ as presented in the Third Book are ‘results’ in the second sense as well, that is, that they meet the needs sketched in the First Book. However, there is no hint in the *Versuch* that the book is actually trying to establish the results of the Kantian philosophy in the second sense.[[395]](#footnote-395)

For now, let it suffice to say that the relation of this work to Reinhold’s earlier work on Kant and to his plans regarding the Kantian philosophy cannot be described very neatly. Although the main idea to consider both external and internal grounds appears to remain upright, the fusion of Reinhold’s own theory with that of Kant makes it hard to affix these labels in the case of the *Versuch*. The following overview of the structure of the work aims to provide a more detailed insight into Reinhold’s aims when writing it.

### Preface

The separate publication of *Ueber die bisherigen Schicksale der Kantischen Philosophie* was intended to prepare the general public for the *Versuch*, and Reinhold indeed received positive comments.[[396]](#footnote-396) As a Preface it serves a similar purpose, that is, it aims at convincing the reader that the book that lies before him is worthwhile and that its author knows what he is talking about.[[397]](#footnote-397) In order to make these points Reinhold opens with a move similar to that of the first two ‘Briefe’: he establishes that the German philosophical world is in chaos, which is a result of the decline of the Leibnizian-Wolffian philosophy which is no longer as solid as it was, because of the combination of this system with experience (cf. *Versuch*,1-8). The chaos shows that there is a lack of universally valid (*allgemeingültig*) principles among philosophers. Kant’s *Critique* is intended to remedy this but his project has been misunderstood (cf. 12). In the ‘Briefe’ the nature of reason is presented as being misunderstood, and in the Preface the Kantian project is said to be misunderstood. Here Reinhold’s first aim, then, is to show that there is “no absolute impossibility that the Critique of Reason has been misunderstood by its opponents and defenders alike” (18). Without actually claiming that Kant’s first *Critique* does in fact contain universally valid principles, Reinhold points out that the thought that it might contain such principles is indeed compatible with the reception it has had (cf. 41).

In order to strengthen his case, however, Reinhold adds some more specific notes on the situation of German philosophy and the nature of Kant’s *Critique*. The first step here is to ascribe the lack of universally valid principles to “a general misunderstanding, common to all [philosophical] sects” (41). Since, according to Reinhold’s construction, the controversies between the different sects concern the cognizability (*Erkennbarkeit*) of supersensibles, Kant’s investigation of what can be known in general may provide the solution to the general misunderstanding, by showing the one-sidedness of the different perspectives of all sects. This hypothesis of a general misunderstanding thus not only explains the lack of unison among philosophers, it also explains the fate Kant’s philosophy met (cf. 49).

The remainder of the Preface aims at making a case for the author as a legitimate spokesman on behalf of the Kantian philosophy. As we have seen in the third section of Chapter 3, Reinhold sketches quite a dramatic image of his philosophical career up to this point, aiming not only at convincing the reader that he knows his philosophy (cf. 51-52), but also emphasizing his unique position in the philosophical world, not being attached to a single system. In this ‘professional autobiography’ his advocacy for Kant is also presented as a natural result of its salutary effects on Reinhold’s personal faith. We have already seen in Chapter 3 that Reinhold probably had less noble reasons as well for making a serious effort to understand Kant. As the sincerity of Reinhold’s statements regarding the time he initially invested in his study of Kant is doubtful,[[398]](#footnote-398) one may easily become cynical with regard to the statements about himself in this Preface. Although most commentators acknowledge that Reinhold produces a stylization of himself here, his remarks on being saved from the twin evils of *Aberglauben* and *Unglauben* are generally taken seriously.[[399]](#footnote-399) Given the discussion in Chapter 2 on Reinhold’s Enlightenment ideals, however, there is not much reason to exclude these statements from the stylized picture Reinhold paints of himself here. He obviously had a clear insight into the spirit of the times and in what would be appreciated by the general public. He presents himself as the personification of the recent philosophical history in Germany. After going through different phases that did not quite work, he has been saved from intellectual and religious crisis by the Kantian philosophy.

### Book I: The need for a theory of the faculty of representation

With a citation from Locke’s *Essay concerning Human Understanding* on the title page (69) of the First Book Reinhold presents himself as an “under-labourer” and his aims as “removing some of the rubbish, that lies in the way to knowledge.”[[400]](#footnote-400) Like the Preface, the First Book had been published in several parts earlier that year.[[401]](#footnote-401) It discusses a problem very similar to that of the ‘Briefe’: given the animosity among philosophers regarding the foundations of morality and religion, we need to investigate how our convictions in these fields are even possible. Such an investigation should provide the common ground upon which a universally valid and universally accepted structure of philosophy of morality and religion can be erected. The terminology of ‘universally accepted’ principles (*allgemeingeltend*) as different from principles that are merely universally valid (*allgemeingültig*) is novel in comparison to the ‘Briefe’ (cf. 71-76) and reflects the fact that Reinhold had become more aware of Kant’s critics. Although he himself was firmly convinced that the Kantian theory of knowledge was universally valid, and had presented it as such in his ‘Briefe’, the writings of Kant’s critics must have driven the point home that not everybody was receptive to this universal validity, in other words that the universally valid theory was by no means universally accepted (*allgemeingeltend*). In the Preface, as we have seen above, Reinhold argued that it was very well possible that the Kantian philosophy was universally valid, but almost universally misunderstood.

In comparison to the ‘Briefe’ the First Book of the *Versuch* approaches problems of the philosophy of religion and morality in a more systematic way. Following his discussion on the lack of universal validity in philosophy, he specifies four areas in which this is conspicuous: the grounds of cognition of the fundamental truths of 1) religion and 2) morality and the principles of 3) morality and 4) natural rights (cf. 75). After modestly announcing that his only goal here is to point out the lack of universally valid principles in these areas, Reinhold continues with a specification of his understanding of ‘grounds of cognition of the fundamental truths of religion and morality’.

Es bedarf wohl kaum erinnert zu werden, daß hier unter *Religion* und *Moralität*, kein wissenschaftliches System der Theologie und der Moral, sonder die Inbegriffe gewisser Neigungen und Thätigkeiten des Willens verstanden werden, die man mit diesen Namen bezeichnet. Die Ueberzeugungen durch welche diese Neigungen und Thätigkeiten zunächst möglich werden, nenne ich *Grundwahrheiten*; und die zureichenden Gründe dieser Ueberzeugungen *Erkenntnißgründe* (nicht der Gegenstände, sondern) der *Grundwahrheiten der Religion und der Moralität*. (75-76)

[It is hardly needed to point out that here by *religion* and *morality* is not meant a scientific system of theology and morality but the quintessence of certain dispositions and activities of the will that are designated by this name. The convictions through which these dispositions and activities are first possible I call the *fundamental truths*; and the sufficient grounds for these convictions *grounds of cognition* (not of objects but) of the *fundamental truths of religion and morality*.]

Applied to religion, discussed immediately following this specification (76-89), Reinhold stresses that he is not considering religion as an abstract system, but rather focuses on the actual religious inclination of people and the convictions that make these inclinations possible – in the case of religion the convictions that God exists and that there is an afterlife. It is the sufficient ground for these *convictions* that Reinhold calls ‘grounds of cognition’. If universally accepted grounds of cognition should be established at some point, they are sufficient grounds of conviction of the existence of these objects, not proofs.[[402]](#footnote-402) This clarity about the status of the grounds of cognition is an improvement in comparison to the ‘Briefe’. Another innovation is the systematic presentation of the parties in the conflict regarding the grounds for the fundamental truths of religion. Reinhold himself was very aware of this innovation, having published it beforehand as ‘Neue Entdeck’.[[403]](#footnote-403) (New discovery). Instead of the two parties introduced in the ‘Briefe’ from a diachronic perspective (hyperphysicists and metaphysicians) Reinhold now presents a synchronic perspective of four parties (dogmatic theists, atheists, dogmatic skeptics and supernaturalists). Further, the account deviates from the ‘Briefe’ in that it lacks any discussion of the conviction that the soul is immortal whatsoever.

With the discussion of the ground of cognition of the fundamental truth of morality (89-98) we enter territory that had not been covered by the ‘Briefe’. [[404]](#footnote-404) Reinhold opens with the definition of morality as the “*intended* agreement of voluntary (*willkürlich*) actions with the laws of reason” (89). Since this agreement, so Reinhold continues, should depend on the choice (*Willkür*) of the actor, it is presupposed that this actor has the ability to enforce these laws of reason in the face of opposing demands of sensibility, which ability is called freedom (cf. 89-90). Thus, the conviction of freedom is the fundamental truth of morality. Because Reinhold sees it as the task of philosophy to provide grounds for this conviction and given that these grounds should go beyond the immediate common-sense conviction of our freedom, philosophers are required to establish at least the ‘logical possibility’ of freedom, which is contrasted with its metaphysical possibility (cf. 93). Unfortunately, however, the philosophical world is divided on this issue along the same lines as it is in the case of the fundamental truths of religion.

In relation to the third area specified above, Reinhold sets out to show a lack of universal acceptance regarding the principle of morality (99-117). This *principle* is not to be confused with the *fundamental truth* of morality. While the latter concerns the non-impossibility of human freedom, the former concerns the grounds of obligation (*Verbindlichkeit*) of the moral law (cf. 99). Without any explicit reference, this section leans heavily on Kant’s second *Critique* and can be regarded as an explication of the Table of Practical Material Determining Grounds (*AA* 5:40). The result of this discussion is that there are many ways to define the nature of the obligation implied by the moral law, but those who have done so in a way depending on pleasure and pain (material determining grounds) have not succeeded in producing any universally accepted principle of morality. The fourth point, regarding the lack of a universally accepted principle in the field of natural right, is not discussed in any detail. Reinhold merely indicates (117-120) that in this field the disagreements are even bigger, as philosophers do not even agree on the concept of ‘right’.

Now that Reinhold has established the omnipresent lack of universally accepted (*allgemeingeltend*) principles, the second section (120-141) of his First Book considers whether this lack could be due to a lack of universally valid (*allgemeingültig*) principles. This leads to the critical doubt whether philosophy is able to provide universal grounds of cognition and principles at all (cf. 120). It is important to Reinhold to distinguish this kind of doubt from dogmatic skepticism as well as from the “unphilosophical skepticism” of the *Popularphilosophen* (130-141). Critical doubt differs from dogmatic skepticism because it doubts whether philosophy (in which dogmatic skepticism is but one party) can provide universally valid grounds, whereas the dogmatic skeptic, far from doubting the universal validity of his own grounds, doubts the possibility of objective truth (cf. 131). Since the *Popularphilosophen* are, like Reinhold, not themselves a party in the philosophical conflicts as Reinhold has sketched them, and in a way also doubt the capacity of philosophy in general to provide sufficient grounds, Reinhold takes great pains to convince his readers that the critical skepticism he advocates is to be sharply distinguished from the ‘popular’ skepticism. He refers to it as an ‘unphilosophical’ kind of skepticism, since it stems from an antipathy against philosophical reason (cf. 132-133). This antipathy in turn is grounded upon inscrutable common sense, and therefore unphilosophical, whereas Reinhold’s critical doubt is based upon a comparison of the various philosophical systems from the point of view of the Kantian philosophy and the observation that none of them has been able to provide us with universally valid principles and grounds of cognition. Unlike the two other kinds of skepticism, critical doubt necessitates a new kind of inquiry, which is to establish precisely the differences and agreements between the various parties in order to see whether anything universally valid can be found (cf. 140).

The third section (141-146) of the First Book takes a further step, as it establishes that this new inquiry is of a transcendental nature, focusing on the question: “*How* are those universally valid grounds of cognition and principles possible?” (141). This question can only be answered, so Reinhold continues in the fourth section (146-188), after an answer to the following question has been found: “What are the limits of the human faculty of cognition?” (146). This means that the investigation that is to be undertaken is “neither *hyperphysics* nor *metaphysics* but rather *Critique*” (148 n.). The section is devoted to showing that there is currently no agreement among philosophers as to their understanding of the human faculty of cognition. They do not agree on the meaning of ‘reason’, not on the meaning of ‘sensibility’, and not on the meaning of ‘faculty of cognition’ in general. This disagreement, which hinders the all-important investigation into the possibility of universally valid grounds of cognition and universally valid principles, can only be solved, so Reinhold claims in the fifth and final section (188-192) of the First Book, by starting not from cognition, but from the faculty of representation. The reason for this is that ‘representation’ is prior to ‘cognition’ in the sense that any concept of ‘cognition’ presupposes a concept of ‘representation’, but not vice versa (cf. 189). Moreover, “representation is the *only thing* about the reality of which *all* philosophers agree” (190). Thus, it is the only universally valid presupposition, even if not all philosophers share the same concept of ‘representation’. Reinhold hopes, however, that his *Versuch* will succeed in providing such a degree of clarity that everybody can grasp the proper concept of ‘representation’.

It is only with this very last section that Reinhold distances himself from the position held in the ‘Briefe’ that the Kantian theory of cognition is the ultimate solution to the philosophical disputes of his age. The fact that the Kantian theory of knowledge was nearly universally misunderstood necessitated a new theory, one of the faculty of representation, which is to be at once both universally valid and universally accepted and will thus pave the way for the Kantian theory of cognition.

### Book II: The theory of the faculty of representation

Like the First Book, the Second opens with a citation from Locke’s *Essay* which claims that the only immediate objects of the mind are its own ideas.[[405]](#footnote-405) It must be noted that Reinhold does not accept Locke’s use of the term ‘idea’ as referring to the basic unit of mental activity. He would prefer “representation in general” (cf. 317). The first seven sections of the Second Book (§§ 6-12) contain an introductory determination of the ‘faculty of representation’. Reinhold distinguishes three determinations of this concept, varying in width. In the first, very broad, sense the faculty or capacity of representation (*Vorstellungsvermögen*)is the totality of conditions for representation (cf. 195; 217). Although ‘*Vermögen*’ is usually translated as ‘faculty’, Reinhold does not aim to provide some sort of faculty psychology. Rather, his aim is transcendental, concerning the internal and external conditions required for representation.[[406]](#footnote-406) The representing subject and represented object are among the external conditions. They are implied by the consciousness of representation, but are distinct from the representation itself, even if they are necessary conditions for representation (cf. 202). In its narrower meaning, the faculty of representation only includes the internal conditions of representation (cf. 202). This narrower meaning is to be distinguished from the narrowest meaning, which only considers the conditions for ‘representation’ as a genus, excluding the specific kinds of representations (intuition, concept, idea) in their variation (cf. 218-219).

This gives us a general idea of Reinhold’s theory of the faculty of representation. If ‘mere representation’ is the genus of different kinds of representation, it will contain only what is common to these kinds. The faculty of representation in the narrowest sense is the set of conditions for this genus and the theory of this faculty is an investigation of these conditions. Before actually embarking upon this investigation, Reinhold uses §§ 13-14 to clarify its nature. First of all, he explains that it is not an investigation into the nature of the soul or the nature of objects.[[407]](#footnote-407) It can only be undertaken with the concept of mere representation (*blosse* *Vorstellung*) as a starting point. Any other representation, be it of the soul or of something else, is necessarily only a particular representation, the conditions of which are not necessarily the conditions of representation in general (cf. 221). He adds that although both the representing subject and the represented object are indeed conditions of representation, they are only external conditions. As the investigation concerns the faculty of representation in its narrowest sense, it does not deal with the origin of representation, but rather with its nature (cf. 222). The question to be answered is: “what can and must be thought in the *concept of representation*?” (223). The impossibility to give a definition does not mean that it cannot be expounded and discussed (cf. 227). This discussion will entail an exposition of the essential characteristics (*wesentliche Merkmale*) which in turn will provide us with a criterion of representability (*Vorstellbarkeit*), for anything that is in contradiction with these characteristics cannot be represented.

These characteristics of representation, then, are ‘material’ (*Stoff*) and ‘form’ (*Form*), reflecting the double relation of representation to both the subject and the object. The material of a representation relates to the object (§ 15), whereas the form relates to the subject (§ 16) of a representation. Representation itself is the unity of this material and form. Since every representation has a form, Reinhold continues in section 17, a thing in itself, that is, a thing as it is independent of the form of representation, cannot be represented as such, for representing it would entail giving it the form of representation. Reinhold presents this as the shorter route to Kant’s thesis that we only know appearances, not things in themselves (cf. 254).[[408]](#footnote-408) It now becomes clear why Reinhold chose that particular citation from Locke to put on the title page of this Second Book. The thought that the immediate objects of the mind are representations supports Reinhold’s thought that things cannot be known as they are in themselves.

The next step is to determine the nature of the material and form of representation. In section 18 Reinhold establishes that the material must be given, whereas the form must be produced (*hervorbringen*) by the subject. Referring to the systems of Locke and Leibniz, he argues that the concept of representation had been confused insofar as Locke overemphasized the element of givenness, whereas Leibniz exclusively focused on the production by the subject. It turns out that their systems have to be combined as both the given material and the produced form are essential characteristics of representation (cf. 260-261). The discussion of Leibniz and Locke again, as in the ‘Briefe’, stresses the need to combine sensibility and understanding. There, the discussion focused on sensibility and understanding as elements of the faculty of cognition. Here, in the *Versuch*, the essential dichotomy and the need to combine receptive and spontaneous elements is situated at a more fundamental level, that of the faculty of representation.

From these characteristics of representation the essential characteristics of the faculty of representation can be inferred, as conditions for the possibility of representation. On the one hand, the faculty of representation must have receptivity, in order to receive the given material (§ 19). On the other, it must have spontaneity, in order to produce the form of representation (§ 20). Reinhold insists that these characterizations are neutral concerning the nature of the representing subject, which must be regarded as the “merely *logical substrate*” of the predicates ‘receptivity’ and ‘spontaneity’, and which cannot be represented in itself (273). Likewise, mere material and mere form of representation cannot be represented in themselves (§ 22). Nevertheless, Reinhold claims that the material of a representation is a manifold, whereas the form is a unity (§ 24). Hence, the nature or form of receptivity is the “manifold in general” (*Mannigfaltigkeit überhaupt*), while the form of spontaneity consists in the synthesis of this manifold. (§§ 25-26) These forms are prior to all representation and are given to the subject as subjective material, that is, material that does not come from outside the faculty of representation (§ 27). Here we find the *Versuch*’s version of Reinhold’s ideas on ‘pure sensibility’ as found in the ‘Briefe’.[[409]](#footnote-409) That is, he stresses that both spontaneity and receptivity must be part of the faculty of representation prior to actual representations. This means that they can be represented ‘purely’, that is, without reference to other objects (cf. 294). We get at these forms by means of a conceptual analysis of the concept of ‘mere representation’, which is an abstraction from particular representations (cf. 295).[[410]](#footnote-410)

Since the faculty of representation, however, only provides “the determined possibility to receive a manifold and (…) give it unity through synthesis” the actuality of representation requires something more, something outside the faculty of representation (296). This external element necessary for the actuality (*Wirklichkeit*) of representation is objective material, or material that is given from outside the faculty of representation (§ 28). This forms the basis of Reinhold’s ‘refutation of idealism’ as he continues in the next section: “The existence of objects outside us is therefore just as certain as the existence of a representation in general” (299).[[411]](#footnote-411) The Second Book concludes with the description of the different kinds of representation and their relation to mere representation (§§ 33-37).

### Book III: The theory of the faculty of cognition

The Locke-citation on the title page (319) of the Third Book draws attention to the limited nature of our knowledge: its scope is narrower than that of our ideas.[[412]](#footnote-412) Although Reinhold would not use ‘idea’ as the most general term for ‘representation’ (cf. 317), the citation indicates that his theory of the faculty of cognition (*Erkenntnisvermögen*), to be expounded in this Book, will be narrower than the theory of the faculty of representation. It must be noted, however, that Reinhold was not entirely satisfied with the title he had chosen for the Third Book. In his *Beyträge zur Berichtigung bisheriger Mißverständisse der Philosophen* he presents the theories of sensibility, understanding and reason as belonging to the theory of the faculty of representation, rather than the theory of the faculty of cognition. In *Beyträge I* Reinhold describes the relation between representing and cognizing in the following manner:

Die Formen der Vorstellungen sind nur *in wieferne* sie mit den Vorstellungen auf die *Objekte* derselben bezogen werden, *Formen des Erkennens*; in *wieferne* sie hingegen mit den Vorstellungen nicht auf Objekte, sondern auf das *Subjekt* bezogen werden, sind sie die bestimmten *Formen des Begehrens*.[[413]](#footnote-413)

[The forms of representations are only *forms of cognition insofar* as they are, with the representations, related to the *objects* of those representations; on the other hand, *insofar* as they are not with the representations related to objects, but rather to the *subject*, they are determinate *forms of desiring*.]

The first eight sections (§§ 38-45) form a transition from the theory of the faculty of representation to the theory of the faculty of cognition by means of a discussion of consciousness. Consciousness, according to Reinhold, in general consists of “the being related [*Bezogenwerden*]of mere representation to the object and the subject” (321). Reinhold’s discussion of consciousness as an introduction to his theory of the faculty of cognition is a continuation of his theory of the faculty of representation, extending it from the internal conditions of representation to the external conditions, that is, the representing subject and the represented object. This fits in with the understanding of the relation between the theory of the faculty of representation and the theory of the faculty of cognition as presented in the passages from the *Beyträge* cited above. Reinhold further stresses that consciousness is not itself a representation, but rather a “double act of the subject, through which the representation is assigned [*zueignen*] to the object with respect to its material, and to the subject with respect to its form” (324). This double action is in both cases an act of both connecting (*verbinden*)and distinguishing (*trennen*), as connecting a representation to the subject entails distinguishing it from the object and vice versa (cf. 324-325). As representation and consciousness are intimately connected, consciousness containing the external conditions for representation, Reinhold maintains that there are no representations without consciousness (cf. 327). He further distinguishes between consciousness of the representation, of the representing subject and of the represented object. The precise details of these distinctions need not concern us here.

Finally, the transition to the theory of cognition is made when Reinhold announces that “consciousness of the object is called *cognition in general*, in so far as in this consciousness the representation is related to the determined object” (340). In cognition the object is not only connected to and distinguished from the representation (as in consciousness in general) but it is again “*represented as* distinct” from the representation (341). Cognition entails representing the object as an object that differs from the representation itself. This requires that the object was earlier represented immediately, that is, was an object of intuition. This intuition can then be the object of another representation, a concept, in which the object of the intuition is thought, that is represented as something which is represented (cf. 344). The conclusion of the introduction is therefore that the “*faculty of cognition in general* consists of a faculty of *intuitions* and a faculty of *concepts*” (349).

#### Theory of sensibility

The theory of sensibility comprises twenty-one sections (§§ 46-66) and roughly corresponds to Kant’s Transcendental Aesthetics in that it establishes the forms of intuition, space and time. In the opening section Reinhold stresses time and again that he is not concerned with the question as to the nature of the representing subject but only with the nature of the faculty of representation. That is, he aims to answer the question: “What must be the nature of the faculty of representation, if it is to be capable of sensible representation?” (351). First the special nature of sensible representation must be established, which is done in the following manner: “Mere representation is called *sensible* insofar as it is formed immediately by the way in which receptivity is affected” (356). The material of the sensible representation is immediately given as the faculty of representation is being affected and its form can only consist in the synthesis “of the given insofar as it is given” (357). In accordance with this description sensibility is defined as “the ability [*Vermögen*] to come to have representations by the way in which receptivity is affected” (362). This way, then, in which receptivity can be affected is either from the outside or from the inside, resulting in the distinction between outer and inner sense (§§ 50-51). Like receptivity and spontaneity, outer and inner sense have forms that are a priori determined in the faculty of representation. As the form of outer sense comprises the possibility to receive a manifold that consists of parts that are outside of one another (*aussereinander befindliche Theile*) (cf. 378), it is no wonder that this form is itself the material for the a priori representation of mere space (cf. 389). Similarly, the form of inner sense comprises the possibility to receive a manifold of sequential parts (*nacheinanderfolgende Theile*) (cf. 381) and is itself the material of the a priori representation of mere time (cf. 402). Reinhold establishes the forms of sensibility in a different way than Kant had done; for instance, he does not appear to care for mathematics at all. Nevertheless, the conclusion of his theory of sensibility neatly matches the result of Kant’s Transcendental Aesthetics: “*Space* and *time* are essential conditions of all appearances, but not of things in themselves” (419).[[414]](#footnote-414)

#### Theory of the understanding

Reinhold’s theory of the understanding comprises ten sections (§§ 67-76) and roughly matches Kant’s Transcendental Analytics as Reinhold deals with acts of judgment and the categories. In contrast to sensible representation, or intuition, which is immediately formed by the way in which receptivity is affected, a concept is immediately formed by the way in which spontaneity acts, that is, through synthesis (cf. 423). The representation that comes to be in this way has as its material some material that had already been represented in an intuition. The understanding or the “ability to come to have representations by the way spontaneity is active” synthesizes the already represented material anew and thus produces a concept (422). Reinhold stresses the necessity of combining sensibility and understanding in the process of cognition. The representation on the basis of which the concept was formed becomes a predicate of the object, which means that the way to produce a concept is by means of judgment (cf. 424). The unity that is brought about by judging is called objective unity, and is the form of objects in general (*Gegenstand überhaupt*) (§§ 69-70). The next step is the distinction between analytic and synthetic judgment which concerns the relation of the objective unity to intuition (§ 71). In judging synthetically, so Reinhold explains, objective unity is produced (*hervorbringen*) out of an intuition, whereas in judging analytically, an already existing objective unity is connected to intuition (cf. 435-436). This entails that any analytic judgment must be preceded by a synthetic judgment (cf. 439).[[415]](#footnote-415)

With the basic terms in place, Reinhold can start the pièce de résistance of the theory of the understanding: the deduction of the categories. He first introduces them in section 72 as “particular forms under which objects have to be thought,” which are determined a priori by the different forms of judgment (441). Reinhold’s presentation of the forms of judgment and the categories do not concern us here in detail.[[416]](#footnote-416) Let it suffice to note that, in contrast to Kant, Reinhold does not distinguish a metaphysical and a transcendental deduction. He uses the ‘objective unity’ to be brought about by synthetic judgment as a guideline to systematically establish all possible forms of judgment as forms of uniting a subject and a predicate. This should guarantee the completeness of the table of forms of judgment and of the derived table of categories as well.[[417]](#footnote-417) By applying the categories to the common form of all intuition, time, Reinhold, like Kant, provides the *schemata* (§ 75), or “forms of cognizability” (482).

#### Theory of reason

Reinhold’s theory of reason comprises the final twelve sections of his *Versuch* (§§ 77-88) and only matches Kant’s Transcendental Dialectics in its outlines, while, for instance, crucial Kantian doctrines such as the antinomies of reason are missing. Before § 87, however, we find a separate unit of text, entitled ‘Grundlinien der Theorie des Begehrungsvermögens’. The layout suggests that this unit may be a chapter on a par with the theories of sensibility, understanding and reason, yet it does not contain any numbered sections, which suggests that it is something other than a chapter. The last sections of the work continue the structure of the Theory of reason, rather than forming part of the ‘Grundlinien’.[[418]](#footnote-418) As, in fact, it is a part of section 86, that section and the ‘Grundlinien’ will be discussed separately below (2.4.4). First, we will look at the theory of reason, putting the ‘Grundlinien’ in brackets, as it were.

Similarly to the way in which concepts are formed by the understanding through the synthesis of intuitions, ideas are formed by reason through the synthesis of concepts.[[419]](#footnote-419) This is the starting point for Reinhold’s theory of reason. The activity of thus synthesizing concepts is described as syllogistic reasoning, or *schließen*. Unlike the objective unity of the understanding brought about by the categories, the unity of reason, in synthesizing the manifold of the understanding, is independent of sensibility. It cannot, therefore, be the unity of the knowable, but rather is the unity of the thinkable. Whereas the objective unity (of the knowable) established by the concepts of the understanding is “together with intuition an essential *constitutive* component of experience” (515), the unconditioned unity of reason, relating to mere concepts cannot be a constitutive component of experience; it is “a mere law, according to which the objects of experience that are thought can be ordered in a whole of knowledge, in scientific connection” (515-516). It thus systematizes knowledge, through the “laws of reason for the systematic unity of experience” [[420]](#footnote-420) and the principles of homogeneity, specification and continuity, according to which reason guides the understanding (cf. 516-522).[[421]](#footnote-421) Thus, in general, the form of syllogistic reasoning is related to the systematicity of our cognition. Like Kant, Reinhold gives a more specific interpretation of the unity brought about by reason, related to three specific forms of syllogistic reasoning. Kant connected the psychological, cosmological and theological ideas of reason to the forms of the categorical, hypothetical and disjunctive syllogisms.[[422]](#footnote-422) In Reinhold’s terminology, these syllogistic forms are connected to the idea of absolute subject, that of absolute ground or cause,[[423]](#footnote-423) and that of absolute community respectively (cf. 522). Unlike Kant Reinhold proposes a further specification with regard to these three ideas. They are specified with regard to the difference between outer and inner sense, as these have different kinds of objects (§ 83). The rational unity (*Vernunfteinheit*) of empirical knowledge is thus split up in objective and subjective unity of reason. The first relates to “the objects outside us,” the second to the “representations in us.” Both of these are brought into complete interconnection (*vollständiger Zusammenhang*), by the three ideas respectively (526). Thus, the number of ideas comes to six, as the ideas relating to outer sense and those relating to inner sense have “essentially different objects, to the extent that they relate to either the cognizable of outer sense or that of inner sense” (526).

With this the set-up for the presentation of the ideas is complete. Six ideas need to be related to reason, in three pairs. *First*, there is the idea of the absolute subject in relation to the objective unity of reason, which with respect to the objects of outer sense can be specified as that which underlies the phenomena of outer sense, and which has to be thought of as a *noumenon*. With respect to the subjective unity of reason, the idea of the absolute subject *secondly* specifies that which underlies the phenomena of inner sense, or the soul, which has to be thought of as a *noumenon* as well (§ 84). *Thirdly*, the idea of absolute ground or cause in relation to the objective unity of reason yields the idea of a first cause, undetermined and not a member of the knowable series of causes and effects (§ 85). With respect to the subjective unity of reason, *fourthly*, the idea of absolute cause represents a property of the absolute representing subject, namely the way of acting that is peculiar to reason (§85). *Fifthly*, the idea of absolute community in relation to the objective unity of reason yields the idea of the physical world (§87), whereas, *sixthly*, it yields the idea of the moral world in relation to the subjective unity of reason (§ 87). One would expect Reinhold’s presentation of the ideas to be finished at this point, but two more ideas are appended. The first is to be understood as the idea of absolute community applied to the ideas of the physical and the moral world together, which results in the idea of an intelligible world in which both worlds are in harmony (§ 87). Finally the idea of absolute community is applied to predicates, yielding the idea of the most real being, which is to be regarded as the first cause (§ 88).[[424]](#footnote-424) These last two ideas correspond to Kant’s postulates of practical reason and are not introduced on the basis of the distinction between objective and subjective unity of reason.

From the above overview it will be clear that Reinhold’s presentation of the ideas differs from Kant’s. It is more systematic, streamlining the psychological, cosmological and theological ideas into three objective-subjective pairs. This has implications for the location of the ideas of ‘soul’, ‘world’ and ‘God’. The psychological idea is no longer the sole paradigm for the idea of absolute subject; it must share its title with the idea of absolute subject in the relation to the objects of outer sense. The cosmological idea of the physical world is no longer presented as part of a set of antinomies, but as a form of the idea of absolute community. Kant’s discussions of the dialectical illusions that the ideas of reason may produce (paralogisms, antinomies, ideal) have no place in Reinhold’s account. His idea of absolute causation yields the ideas of the first cause of phenomena and of free activity of the representing subject. Like the idea of the soul is mirrored by the idea of the absolute subject with regard to the objects of outer sense, the idea of the physical world is mirrored by the idea of the moral world. The idea of God as the ideal of reason, or the highest reality,[[425]](#footnote-425) is not included in the set of six ideas that Reinhold has set out to present. However, it does appear in the last section of the *Versuch*, after the mentioning of the idea of an intelligible world. Both these last ideas are related to the idea of absolute community, and they do not appear to fit in the subjective-objective scheme with regard to the unity of reason. The idea of the intelligible world is the idea of absolute community applied to the ideas of the physical and the moral worlds together, while the idea of the most real being as a first cause originates from the application of the idea of absolute community to predicates instead of subjects. Apart from the fact that these ideas do not appear to fit into the intended scheme, they show a striking similarity to Kant’s postulates of practical reason. At the end of his theory of reason, therefore, Reinhold is not only providing a presentation of the ideas, but is showing that the practical postulates belong to reason as well. The relation to Kant’s practical philosophy is obvious since the final two ideas, resembling the postulates, are first mentioned in the final paragraph of the ‘Grundlinien’, which implicitly discusses Kant’s second *Critique*.

Wie sich aus der näheren Bestimmung und weiteren Ausführung dieser Prämissen der *Glaubensgrund* für das *Daseyn einer intelligiblen Welt* (in welcher das höchste Gute nur durch eine ins Unendliche fortdaurende Existenz und Personalität des endlichen vernünftigen Wesens erreichbar ist) und für das *Daseyn einer von der Natur unterschiedenen und der moralischen Gesinnung gemäß wirkenden Ursache der gesamten Natur* ergebe: läßt sich nur in der eigentlichen *Theorie der praktischen Vernunft*, und nach einer völlig entwickelten *Theorie des Begehrungsvermögens* einleuchtend genug darthun. Die Theorie der *Vernunft überhaupt*, in wieferne sie ein Theil der blossen Theorie des *Erkenntnißvermögens überhaupt* ist, muß sich begnügen, die blossen Ideen der *intelligiblen Welt,* und jenes *Urwesens*, in wieferne dieselben in der Form des Vernunftvermögens gegründet sind, aufzustellen. (575)

[How from the more precise determination and further development of these premises follows the *ground of belief* for the *existence of an intelligible world* (in which the highest good is attainable only through the infinite duration of existence and personality of the finite rational being) and for the *existence of a cause of nature as a whole that differs from nature and works in accordance with a moral disposition*, can only be adequately shown in the proper *theory of practical reason* and after a completely developed *theory of the faculty of desire*. The theory of *reason in general*, insofar as it is part of the mere theory of the *faculty of cognition in general*, must be satisfied with establishing the mere ideas of the *intelligible world* and of that *original being*, in as much as these are grounded in the form of the rational faculty.]

In accordance with his first mention of these ideas in the final paragraph of the ‘Grundlinien’, Reinhold does not discuss them in their practical capacities. Rather, he relates them to the structure of reason, which suggests that they are both legitimate and inevitable.

#### Section 86 and ‘Grundlinien der Theorie des Begehrungsvermögens’

Although the layout of the ‘Grundlinien’ chapter suggests that it is indeed a chapter on a par with the earlier theories of sensibility, understanding and reason,[[426]](#footnote-426) the fact that the theory of reason continues right after the ‘Grundlinien’ with section 87, presenting the ideas related to absolute community, shows that it is not on a par with the other parts of the Third Book, such as the ‘theory of sensibility’ or the ‘theory of reason’.[[427]](#footnote-427) It is more like a chapter within the theory of reason. If we look at the contents, however, it clearly does not belong as a constituent part to the theory of reason in which we find it. It deals with reason only from the perspective of the faculty of desire, not from that of the faculty of cognition, in which context the theory of reason is treated. The ‘Grundlinien’ can be regarded as a separate chapter, albeit one that relates to the main structure of the text in another way than the other parts of the Third Book. In fact, it is a chapter *within* section 86, since it supplies argumentation that is missing from the main text of that section.[[428]](#footnote-428) Taking a closer look at the aphorism of the section will reveal why Reinhold needs additional argumentation.

Durch die Idee der absoluten Ursache, in wieferne dieselbe auf die Kaussalität der Vernunft bezogen werden muß, wird das vorstellende Subjekt als *freye Ursache* vorgestellt; und zwar als *komparativ-frey*, in wieferne die Vernunft beym *Denken* geschäftig ist, und das *Begehrungsvermögen* *a posteriori* bestimmt; *absolut-frey*, in wieferne sie das *Begehrungsvermögen a priori* bestimmt. (558)

[Through the idea of absolute cause, in so far as it must be related to the causality of reason, the representing subject is represented as a *free cause*; that is, as *comparatively free*, in so far as reason is active in *thinking* and determines the *faculty of desire* *a posteriori*, and *absolutely free*, in so far as it determines the capacity for desire *a priori*.]

In the previous section (§ 85) Reinhold has already treated the idea of the absolute cause with respect to both the objective and subjective unity of reason. The discussion of the idea of absolute cause with regard to the causality of reason in section 86 appears to be something extra, apart from the presentation of the six ideas. The whole of section 86, including the ‘Grundlinien’, is to be regarded as an excursion outside the scope defined by the presentation of the six ideas. This is a novel interpretation of the connection of the ‘Grundlinien’ to the rest of the *Versuch*. Although Lazzari has already interpreted the ‘Grundlinien’ as in a way belonging to section 86 (cf. above, footnote ), he still considers section 86 itself as belonging to the basic structure of the theory of reason.This interpretation is illustrated by his table regarding the structure of Reinhold’s presentation of the ideas of reason.[[429]](#footnote-429) This table situates the presentation of the idea of an absolute cause with regard to the subject (idea of a free will) in section 86, parallel to the presentation of the same idea with regard to objects (idea of a first cause) in section 85. It overlooks the circumstance that section 85 in fact already presents the idea of an absolute cause with regard to the subject. Section 86 does not relate the idea of an absolute cause to the subject, but rather to the ‘causality of reason’, which differs from the ‘absolute representing subject’, which is discussed in the final paragraph of section 85, and which is, according to that section to be regarded as an absolute cause. Taking in consideration that the other two pairs of ideas (absolute subject and absolute community) are both presented in a single section (sections 84 and 87), interpreting the whole of section 86 as an anomaly within the structure of the theory of reason makes good sense. This new interpretation is strengthened by the fact that Reinhold introduces two sets of new terminology in this section. First, a specification is made regarding the free causality of reason as comparative and absolute freedom. Secondly, the aphorism contains the first reference to the faculty of desire. Although, in a similar context in section 83, Reinhold had employed a differentiation between a theoretical and a practical faculty of representation, no introduction or explanation of the faculty of desire had been given so far.

Let us briefly compare its introduction here, in section 86, to the passage of section 83 introducing the practical faculty of representation. There Reinhold had considered the rational unity as the effect of the absolute subject. He had also stated, in a parenthetical remark, that this rational unity in the theoretical faculty of representation determines the systematicity of knowledge, whereas in the practical faculty of representation it determines the morality of acts of will (cf. 537). The similarity of the context of this passage to that of section 86 warrants the claim that the phrases ‘practical faculty of representation’ and ‘faculty of desire’ denote the same faculty. In both cases the subjective idea of an absolute ground is related to a form of causality of reason, and in both cases the activity of reason is specified with regard to a theoretical (thinking/cognizing) and a practical (willing/desiring) activity. Moreover, in both cases no immediate explanation is provided. Since section 86 makes claims concerning the faculty of desire that are part of an argument, Reinhold needs to come forward with some explication of this newly introduced faculty. He first discusses reason as an absolute cause, that is, a free cause, in general and then continues to discuss the comparatively free activity of reason in thinking. At the point where Reinhold would have to start a discussion of the comparative and absolute freedom of reason in determining the faculty of desire, he comes up with the chapter on the ‘Grundlinien der Theorie des Begehrungsvermögens’.

Within this chapter Reinhold’s first move is to relate the faculty of desire to the faculty of representation. The link is made by defining the ‘representing power’ (*vorstellende Kraft*) as the ground of “that which is actualized through the representing subject” (560).[[430]](#footnote-430) As such, the representing power differs from the spontaneity that with receptivity belongs to the grounds for the mere possibility of representation.[[431]](#footnote-431) Abstaining from metaphysical claims about the (material or spiritual) nature of this power, Reinhold stresses that the power must “express itself in accordance with the capacities given to it,” and defines ‘drive’ (*Trieb*) accordingly as the relation or the connection “of the power [*Kraft*] to the capacity [*Vermögen*]” (561). ‘Drive’ is the activity of the principle responsible for the actuality of the representation (the representing power) in accordance with the forms given a priori in the faculty of representation. Building upon his definition of ‘drive’, Reinhold continues to define ‘desire’ and the ‘faculty of desire’ as “being determined by drive to produce a representation” and “the capacity of being determined by drive,” respectively (561).[[432]](#footnote-432)

The next step is to build up a theory of this faculty of desire along the lines of the theory of representation. Reinhold identifies an empirical drive (ordinary desires relating to empirical objects), a rational-sensible drive (drive for happiness) and a purely rational drive (moral drive). With regard to the freedom of reason in determining the faculty of desire our present interest lies with the latter two. Regarding the rational-sensible drive the rational component consists of the extension of the empirical drives towards a maximum. It is the drive for happiness. Here Reinhold resumes the discussion on freedom, by stating that reason acts only comparatively free with regard to the drive for happiness. It is free “in so far as the form of the unconditioned imparted on the drive is the effect of absolute self-activity” (566). Insofar as the drive itself, however, springs from the need to be affected and “its satisfaction depends upon the objective material’s being given,” it is “neither free, nor unselfish” (566).

With the claim that reason may also determine the faculty of desire in an a priori way, Reinhold proceeds to the argument for the absolute freedom of reason in its determination of the faculty of desire. In contrast to the rational-sensible drive Reinhold now introduces the ‘purely rational’ (*rein-vernünftig*) drive, which “is only determined by the self-activity of reason, and thus has only the exertion of self-activity, the mere action of reason as object” (569). The action of reason, that is, the object of the purely rational drive consists “in the *realization* of (…) the *form of reason*, which is only given in the subject as a possibility, but the reality of which outside the subject has to be produced by the subject” (569). In contrast to the activity of reason with regard to the rational-sensible drive, in the purely rational drive, reason “does not presuppose the sensible drive and sensibility for the realization of its action, and thus acts *a priori*, from the completeness of its self-activity” (570). This is the sense in which reason can be called practical, that is, insofar as it can “determine itself a priori to an action, which has no other purpose than the reality of the way of acting of reason” (571). Reinhold is trying to establish an understanding of ‘practical reason’ that does not presuppose anything but reason, so that absolute, not comparative freedom can be assigned to it.

Thus, Reinhold sides with Kant in stating that pure reason can indeed be practical.[[433]](#footnote-433) He also follows Kant in not specifying how reason’s practicality can be active in sensibility. Like Kant he addresses the issue by means of the effects of the moral law as incentive. According to Reinhold the necessity of the determination of the will by the moral law is what is called duty (*Pflicht*). With regard to practical reason the ‘ought’ that expresses the necessity is a freely willing of lawfulness, whereas with regard to the faculty of desire, it is a commanding (cf. 574). Thus the subject, acting free through practical reason, can only get its orders followed by forcing its selfish drive to comply with them (cf. 574). Comparing this to what Kant says in the third chapter of the Analytic of the second *Critique*, Reinhold conspicuously fails to mention the feeling of *Achtung* for the moral law. The main point of Kant’s chapter is that we cannot know how reason can become an incentive, we can only be aware of its effects when it is.[[434]](#footnote-434) These effects, called *Achtung* by Kant, are described by Reinhold as an ‘ought’ and a ‘commanding’ by practical reason, directed at sensibility. This is not so different from Kant’s claim that the feeling of respect supplies authority to the law. Reinhold does choose a different perspective, however. Instead of emphasizing the feeling effectuated by the moral law, he stresses the manifestation of the moral law in sensibility as an ‘ought’.

Thus, ‘practical reason’ as it appears at the end of Reinhold’s *Versuch* is in many ways a Kantian conception. Reinhold defends the absolute freedom of the will in following the law prescribed be practical reason, while the rational following of natural inclinations is only comparatively free, because of heteronomy. Reinhold’s account differs from Kant’s in that, for instance, he understands the moral law as being formulated (*verfaßt*) by theoretical reason, whereas it is sanctioned as an actual law (*wirkliche* *Gesetz*) “by the mere self-activity of practical [reason], which itself imposes it upon itself” (572). Thus, the principal characteristic of practical reason from Reinhold’s perspective is that it sanctions the law of reason, establishing it as a law with authority.

## Evaluation: Practical reason in the Versuch

In the *Versuch* the term ‘practical reason’ appears to play a less crucial role than in the ‘Briefe’. It is only empoyed at the end of former work in a section that is not even a proper part of the order of argumentation. In order to understand the role of practical reason in Reinhold’s *Versuch* it is important to distinguish between the role played by the concept ‘practical reason’ in the ‘Briefe’ and his use of the actual term ‘practical reason’. First of all, we need to establish in what way the role that Reinhold attributed to practical reason in the ‘Briefe’ is still relevant in the context of the *Versuch*. After all, his understanding of practical reason was, as we have seen in Chapter 4, crucial for his public endorsement of the Kantian philosophy. In the ‘Briefe’ Reinhold employs the term ‘practical reason’ without strict reference to Kant’s practical philosophy. This is not only because there was no second *Critique* yet and Reinhold did not aspire to go into the technical details of Kant’s philosophy anyway, but also and most importantly because he uses the term to call attention to what he believes to be the most salient feature of Kantian philosophy: the unification of our rational and sensible capacities it provides. We have also seen with regard to the ‘Briefe’ that ‘practical reason’ is not the only Kantianizing term that Reinhold employs for that purpose. When discussing the problem of the grounds for the conviction of the immortality of the soul, he uses ‘pure sensibility’ to point out that according to the Kantian theory of cognition, both our rational and our sensible capacities need to be involved in order to have cognition. It is in calling attention to these features of Kant’s philosophy that Reinhold’s personal contribution to the discussion consists, which has developed out of his own pre-Kantian Enlightenment engagement. In the *Versuch* this mediating role between our receptive and spontaneous capacities is fulfilled by the theory of the faculty of representation, without reference to ‘practical reason’ or ‘pure sensibility’. Reinhold no longer needs the Kantian terms to call attention to the core premise of the Kantian philosophy; he has developed his own vocabulary. In section 3.1 the way in which he expresses his insights into the crucial premise of the Kantian philosophy in his theory of the faculty of representation will be discussed.

Yet Reinhold did not abandon the use of the term ‘practical reason’. In the ‘Grundlinien’ it figures in a context that is clearly related to Kant’s second *Critique*, which was not available when Reinhold wrote the ‘Briefe’. On the one hand the circumstances suggest that ‘practical reason’ was of subordinate importance with regard to the main argumentation of the *Versuch*. On the other hand, Reinhold apparently had something to say regarding ‘practical reason’ that was important enough to deviate from his framework, which suggests anything but a subordinate role. Section 3.2 will address Reinhold’s reasons for adding a discussion relating to practical reason at this point in the *Versuch*.

### ‘Practical reason’ / ‘pure sensibility’ and the theory of the faculty of representation

In order to assess what role the thought behind Reinhold’s use of ‘practical reason’ / ‘pure sensibility’ in the ‘Briefe’ plays in the *Versuch*, a brief recapitulation of the results of Chapter 4 will be useful. In the ‘Briefe’ Reinhold had argued that Kant was able to solve the misunderstanding of reason, brought to light by the pantheism controversy regarding the grounds of the fundamental truths of religion. These convictions, that there is a God and an afterlife, were neither to be grounded by sensibility alone, nor by theoretical reason alone, but rather by morality, that is, by practical reason, which was presented as combining sensibility and reason. The details of this grounding remained unclear, because Reinhold was only interested in making a case for the relevance of the Kantian philosophy. The most important point to him was that Kant had overcome the dichotomy of reason and sensibility and he employed the term ‘practical reason’ to express this feature of Kant’s philosophy in the context of the grounds for the conviction that God exists. In the context of the grounds for the conviction that the soul continues to exist after the body has died, he employed the term ‘pure sensibility’ to call attention to the same characteristic, that is, that the essential feature of the human mind is the combination of receptive and spontaneous capacities. Both terms have a Kantian ring, but are not used by Reinhold to deal with Kantian arguments. Rather, they are presented as the expressions of the Kantian discovery that cognition only arises as a composite of the activities of our rational and our sensible capacities. As we have argued in the previous chapter, both terms serve to express the same claim, namely that Kant has been able to solve the fundamental problems of his time by means of the discovery of the necessity and possibility of a combination of man’s sensible and rational capacities. We have also seen that Reinhold’s position develops during the writing of the ‘Briefe’ as, in his elaborations in the context of his use of the term ‘pure sensibility’, he begins to use formulations that appear to foreshadow the ‘Satz des Bewußtseins’.

On the basis of the important role of the terminological complex ‘practical reason’/ ‘pure sensibility’ in the ‘Briefe’ some points that are relevant for our interpretation of the *Versuch* can already be noted. First of all, Reinhold’s claims regarding the nature and importance of the Kantian philosophy are not exclusively related to his use of one particular Kantianizing term, but to two different terms that both carry Kantian associations. Secondly, the claim that the Kantian philosophy represents a higher standpoint because it has discovered the nature of the human faculty of cognition can be considered as Reinhold’s personal contribution to the debates regarding the Kantian project. If we consider these points in relation to the *Versuch*, the theory of the faculty of representation may be regarded as a continuation of the ‘Briefe’. After all, it is Reinhold’s own addition to the Kantian philosophy and it lays the foundation for the claim that all cognition consists of an interaction between our rational and sensible capacities. Moreover, it is in the Second Book of the *Versuch* that an early form of the ‘Satz des Bewußtseins’ figures, indicating a kinship between the ideas expressed there and the development taking place in the ‘Briefe’, especially in relation to ‘pure sensibility’.

Taking a closer look at Reinhold’s argumentation for the need for a theory of the faculty of representation as given in the First Book strengthens the case for interpreting the Second Book as a development from the ‘Briefe’. The five sections of the First Book contain the five steps of an argument for the necessity of a theory of the faculty of representation. The first step establishes the lack of universally accepted principles and grounds of cognition in the fields of religion, morality and natural right. Secondly, this lack of universally *accepted* (*allgemeingeltend*)principles leads to critical doubt concerning universally *valid* (*allgemeingültig*)principles and grounds of cognition. The third section argues for an investigation into the possibility of such principles. This, however, cannot be done before the human faculty of cognition has been thoroughly investigated in order to establish its boundaries, as Reinhold argues in the fourth section. In the ‘Briefe’ of course, he had already claimed that Kant had successfully undertaken such an investigation and he indeed refers to these articles in support of his argument (cf. 149). In a lengthy paraphrase he argues that the investigation of reason or the faculty of cognition has become inevitable given the current misunderstandings regarding that faculty.[[435]](#footnote-435) The relevance of the Kantian project had been questioned, however, by *Popularphilosophen* claiming that the nature of the faculty of cognition is understood by common sense. Reinhold replies that these philosophers have not understood Kant (cf. 155-156). He then argues against the claim that everybody knows what cognition is. The most commonly shared view on reason is that it is the capacity for syllogistic reasoning. The right form of reasoning, however, by no means implies true conclusions, so this may not be the most relevant perspective on ‘reason’ (cf. 160). There is less agreement among philosophers when it comes to reason’s metaphysical capacities, that is, the capacity to come to conclusions with regard to supersensible objects, since they disagree about the question where the material for those conclusions would come from (cf. 162-163). In order to find out whether or not reason possesses a metaphysical capacity, this faculty must be investigated in its relation to the understanding, which “first works on the raw materials received by sensibility and hands them to reason” (173). Understanding, in turn, if it is not to be a mere logical capacity, relies on the material supplied to it by sensibility. It is therefore to sensibility that the investigation must be turned in order to find out the relation between sensibility and understanding. As in the ‘Briefe’, this question is closely related to the question of the nature of the representing subject. Reinhold proposes taking the faculty of cognition as the starting point instead of the material or spiritual nature of the subject (cf. 178). The materialists see sensibility as a foundation of the faculty of cognition as a whole, whereas the spiritualists deny the role of sensibility when it comes to knowledge. Given the different opinions of philosophers on both reason and sensibility it is not surprising that there is no shared opinion regarding the faculty of cognition. Reinhold concludes the section with the claim that the philosophers “are not in agreement with one another, or with themselves when it comes to the meaning of the term ‘cognition’” (188).

Of course, this is exactly the conclusion he needs to refute the claim that everybody knows what the faculty of cognition is. By the time Reinhold undertook the writing of the *Versuch* it was clear to him that, in spite of his efforts, this analysis of the importance of the Kantian philosophy was not widely shared. Thus, instead of arguing for the importance of Kant, Reinhold, in his final section of the First Book, argues for the need of an investigation of the concept of the faculty of representation. The argumentation consists of the claims that the concept of representation is presupposed by that of cognition and that misunderstandings regarding the faculty of cognition are usually due to differences in the concept of the faculty of representation (cf. 189). This is intuitively plausible, but does not really constitute an argument. It remains to be seen what is to be gained by an investigation of that faculty for the establishment of universally accepted principles, since the philosophers only agree on the fact that there are representations and by no means on the content of the concept ‘representation’. To be sure, agreement on the existence of representation is indeed a marked advantage in comparison to ‘cognition’, the existence of which is doubted by the skeptical party. However, it is not clear what good it would do to agree that there is such a thing as representation, when it is apparently very hard to agree on the marks of that concept. Reinhold’s further argumentation in favor of an investigation of the faculty of representation only states that once its “essential mark” has been found, it will be very easy to develop this in a universally valid manner and to find the criterion for ‘representability’(191). The main work in this section is done by the negative argumentation showing the lack of agreement on the faculty of cognition. Reinhold makes clear that the main area on which the philosophers do not agree is the relation between our rational and sensible capacities. The reason they do not agree is found in their taking metaphysical status of the subject as their starting point, that is, their presumptions on the materiality or spirituality of the subject. Apart from the direct reference and extensive paraphrase from the ‘Briefe’ the matter of the argument is related to the seventh and eighth installments. There, the proper relation of sensibility and rationality was also an issue, with reference to the problem of the continued existence of the soul. There, Reinhold argued that Kant had discovered the proper relation between our sensible and rational capacities.

For the Critique of Reason explained for the first time sensibility as an essential part of our faculty of cognition that is present in the mind before all sensation and before all receptivity of the organs (…), and it showed the essential cooperation of sensibility with the understanding in all actual cognition. (*Letters*, 97; Siebenter Brief, 155)

In the *Versuch*, however, Reinhold abstains from referring to Kant’s solution, since the very relevance of the Kantian *Critique* had been doubted by the popular philosophers. Instead, he provides his own theory, namely on the faculty of representation. Given the direct and indirect references to the ‘Briefe’, the project of that theory, that is, of the Second Book of the *Versuch*, must be understood as closely related to what in the ‘Briefe’ was described as the Kantian solution. That is to say, the Second Book of the *Versuch* should be read as aiming to prepare an audience that is potentially hostile to Kant for the results that Reinhold ascribed to the Kantian philosophy in the ‘Briefe’. We may therefore expect it to pave the way for a theory of cognition according to which sensibility and understanding are presented as cooperating throughout the formation of cognition.

This is indeed the case. In the introductory sections of the Second Book (§§ 6-14) Reinhold argues that his enquiry concerns ‘representation’ in general, without regard to the special kinds of representation, that is, intuitions, concepts and ideas. From section 15 onwards he starts to develop the two essential characteristics he believes to have discovered by means of the conceptual analysis of ‘mere representation’, ‘material’ and ‘form’. He bases this conviction on the ‘Satz des Bewußtseins’ as expressed in its embryonic form in section seven, stating that subject and object belong to any representation and are, at the same time, distinct from it.[[436]](#footnote-436) Both subject and object determine a distinct but necessary element of representation. The material relates to the object, while the form relates to the subject (cf. 237). The next step argues that the material of any representation is given from the side of the object, while the form is produced by the subject (§ 18). Reinhold’s reasons for stating that they cannot be both given or produced is that that would render the distinction of subject and object, required by consciousness, impossible (cf. 257). This means that on the one hand every representation must have a given material, even ideas of reason. On the other hand, even the most basic representations, intuitions, involve the activity of the subject, producing the representation by giving form to the material. These implications of Reinhold’s thoughts on the faculty of representation refute both the empiricist and the rationalist approach to the formation of cognition. It is therefore no wonder that in section 18, Reinhold restates his criticism that Leibniz and Locke presented one-sided accounts by exclusively focusing on the production of the form and the givenness of the material respectively (cf. 260-261). This is precisely the one-sidedness that Reinhold claimed Kant had remedied with his theory of cognition. That theory, however, was by no means securely established since its relevance had been called into question. By situating the combination of man’s receptive and spontaneous capacities at the level of consciousness, Reinhold aims to overcome the difficulties surrounding the Kantian philosophy, arising from the lack of consensus regarding the faculty of cognition. Granting his claim that any concept of ‘cognition’ will presuppose the concept of ‘representation’, Reinhold’s strategy of introducing the combination of receptivity and spontaneity at the level of representation should imply that, on the level of cognition, there will be a similar unity of elements.

In the following we shall see that this framework did not work too well for Reinhold’s practical concerns, yet this was not fully clear to him when he finished his *Versuch*. On the contrary, most probably he congratulated himself on his way of arguing for the importance of the discovery made by Kant without presupposing the Kantian philosophy itself. He had already pointed out this discovery in the ‘Briefe’, which unfortunately had not succeeded in convincing the entire philosophical world. This meant that he had to find a way to present the same discovery, that both our receptive and spontaneous capacities must work together to produce cognition, without presupposing the Kantian theory of cognition. With the claim that ‘representation’ is prior to ‘cognition’ Reinhold’s theory of the faculty of representation is prior to Kant’s theory of the faculty of cognition. The theory is meant to remedy the incomplete conceptions that people have of ‘representation’ and show that the Kantian theory is built upon the proper concept of representation, that is, the concept that entails that in any representation both receptivity and spontaneity have a role to play. The fact that Reinhold’s attempt was not entirely successful and that the foundational role he had in mind for ‘representation’ was by no means universally accepted, does not mean that we cannot understand that this is what he set out to achieve. Reinhold’s claim, cited earlier in the present chapter, that he had worked on the theory of the faculty of representation for four years,[[437]](#footnote-437) which is at first sight blatantly untrue, becomes more understandable in light of what we have seen in this final section. After all, the core claim of that theory was exactly what Reinhold had spotted as the most relevant and interesting feature of the Kantian philosophy several years earlier. It is also no wonder that he identified the claim of the necessary combination of rational and sensible capacities at a very early stage of his study of Kant, as it was precisely what he had been looking for throughout his philosophical career up to that time.

### Section 86 and Rehberg’s review of Kant’s second *Critique*

Now that we have shown how Reinhold transforms his insights into what he considers the crucial feature of the Kantian philosophy, into a theory of the faculty of representation, the question remains what happened to his usage of the term ‘practical reason’. It has obviously been removed from the context in which it was all-important to the Kantian project as a mediator between our receptive and spontaneous capacities, for this role is now fulfilled by the theory of the faculty of representation. Furthermore, the publication of Kant’s second *Critique* would have made it hard for Reinhold to maintain his previous use of ‘practical reason’ as if it was in line with Kantian philosophy. As we shall see below, Reinhold’s use of the term in the *Versuch* is indeed closely related to the context of the *Critique of practical reason*, especially to Rehberg’s review of that work.

The term only figures in the ‘Grundlinien’, which, being a part of section 86 must be regarded as a sideline to the main argument of the *Versuch*. In order to understand Reinhold’s use of the term ‘practical reason’ in this context we must turn our attention to the question why Reinhold would want to make an excursion like that. As we have seen above () the new terminology introduced in section 86 relates to the question of human freedom, more specifically the causality of reason with respect to the faculty of desire and the question whether this freedom is absolute or comparative. The wider context therefore includes Reinhold’s earlier discussion relating to freedom and the subject as absolute cause in section 83. Reinhold’s thoughts on freedom as we find them there can be termed the ‘theory of degrees of spontaneity’.[[438]](#footnote-438) He opens with the claim that the absolute subject can only be called an absolute cause with regard to what is produced by mere reason with respect to mere representations and explains this thesis in the following manner (cf. 534). The absolute subject is to be understood as acting, in so far as it is the subject of spontaneity. There are, however, different kinds of representation, namely intuition, concept and idea, in the production of which spontaneity expresses itself in different “degrees of activity” (535). In intuitions, the activity of spontaneity consists in synthesizing a given manifold, which is the lowest degree of spontaneity, as the activity is only a forced reaction to the manifold affecting the receptivity of the faculty of representation (cf. 535). In this context it is worthwhile to point out that Reinhold’s account here is consistent with his introduction of a low degree of spontaneity in the Second Book. There he attributed spontaneity to the spring of a watch in so far as the ground why it opposes (*entgegenwirken*)the tension of being wound up is internal to the spring (cf. 269). Similarly, the faculty of representation possesses spontaneity in so far as the ground of the activity in the representation cannot be found outside the faculty of representation, as the production of the form of representation must have its ground in the faculty of representation itself (cf. 269-270). This understanding of spontaneity is confirmed by the ‘theory of degrees of spontaneity’ in section 83, where the first and lowest degree is also described as a reaction (*entgegenwirken*) to a given manifold.

In contrast, the second degree of spontaneity, which is active when the understanding produces a representation, is unforced. The activity of the understanding consists in the synthesis of a manifold that has already been synthesized in intuition, which synthesis is therefore not a reaction to something given from the outside and spontaneity is only determined by itself (cf. 536). However, as the understanding always synthesizes a manifold of the intuition it is bound by the forms of intuition, by means of which the given manifold is represented. Because of this Reinhold says that the understanding can only be regarded as an absolute cause of the production of concepts, not as an absolute cause of their form, because it acts in unison with sensibility (cf. 536).

Finally, Reinhold discusses the activity of reason, which consists in the synthesis of the manifold that is determined “in the mere nature of the understanding and by the mere form of concepts,” that is, it is a synthesis of the “concepts in so far as they are the mere products of the second degree of spontaneity” (537). As these concepts that make up the manifold subsequently synthesized by reason are themselves products of spontaneity, in the activity of reason, spontaneity synthesizes a material that is not given to it by sensibility and is therefore no longer bound to the forms of sensibility. This brings Reinhold to the following conclusion.

In wieferne also das vorstellende Subjekt durch Vernunft handelt, in soferne handelt dasselbe als *absolute Ursache, ungezwungen, ungebunden*, durch nichts als seine Selbstthätigkeit bestimmt, das heißt, *frey*. (537)

[To the extent that the representing subject thus acts through reason, in so far it acts as *absolute cause, unforced, unbound*, determined by nothing but its own spontaneity, that is, *free*.]

The connection between being an absolute cause and being free is reinforced by identifying being an absolute cause with being a free cause immediately following this passage. Furthermore, freedom can only be attributed to the representing subject in so far as it is “the subject of *reason*” (537).

From the ‘theory of the degrees of spontaneity’ it appears that Reinhold has succeeded in founding the freedom of the representing subject upon the structure of the faculty of representation. At least, he has identified the absolute subject as an absolute cause, which to him is the same as a free cause. Both the absolute subject and absolute causation, however, are only thinkable, not knowable. This means that the freedom established in this context is “incomprehensible as to its *real* possibility” (538). [[439]](#footnote-439) This is in line with the requirement made in the First Book, that philosophy should establish the *logical* possibility of freedom, that is, it should establish that its concept is non-contradictory (cf. 93). There Reinhold assumed that the non-philosophical mind would be convinced of the reality of freedom because it is aware of itself (*durch das Selbstgefühl bewußt*), while the philosophers could not even agree on its possibility. Therefore, in order to secure the *Selbstgefühl* of freedom against skepticism, the establishment of the possibility of freedom will count as “*philosophical ground of cognition* of the fundamental truth of morality” (93).

Having accomplished with respect to freedom what he set out to do, why did Reinhold return to the subject of freedom and introduce the distinction between comparative and absolute freedom in the curious section 86? The simultaneous introduction in section 86 of the faculty of desire and the activity of reason with regard to that faculty points to problems with the application of freedom, not to problems regarding its possibility. As mentioned above, Reinhold had only hinted at the different concrete expressions of freedom vis-à-vis the theoretical and practical faculty of representation.

In order to understand why Reinhold did return to the matter we must turn to factors beyond the cover of the *Versuch*. The context in which Reinhold was feverishly trying to get his first substantial monograph ready before the book fair was full of debates on human freedom and the possibility of its actuality. More specifically, Kant’s moral philosophy, greeted enthusiastically by Reinhold,[[440]](#footnote-440) was under fire. Jacobi had published a second edition of his *Ueber die Lehre des Spinoza* in the spring of 1789.[[441]](#footnote-441) Its introduction contains a small treatise ‘Ueber die Freyheit des Menschen’, in which it is argued that man has no freedom. Jacobi concludes that he has shown how “moral laws, which are called apodictic laws of practical reason” come to be and that in this way “only mechanism and no freedom” follow.[[442]](#footnote-442) The reference to Kant is unmistakable and it is suggested that a Kantian moral theory is compatible with a mechanistic view of the origin of moral law in which there is only apparent freedom. The Jena professor Ulrich had, in his book on freedom *Eleutheriologie* (1788), proposed a form of determinism and attacked Kant for not specifying the nature of human freedom.[[443]](#footnote-443) Reinhold wrote to Kant that Ulrich “abused” Kant’s theory of freedom.[[444]](#footnote-444) These are but a few examples to indicate that Kant’s moral philosophy could not count on such enthusiasm such as Reinhold’s everywhere.

One piece that is of particular interest here is Rehberg’s review of Kant’s second *Critique*.[[445]](#footnote-445) This review may have played an important role in Reinhold’s decision to add section 86 to his *Versuch* and to consider the freedom of reason in its practical application in some detail. First of all, Rehberg had questioned one of the core claims of the second *Critique*, namely the claim that pure reason can be practical. He had argued that if pure reason is to have any effect on our (empirical) decision-making, it must become empirical too. Reinhold’s section 86, including the ‘Grundlinien’, deals explicitly with the determination of the faculty of desire by reason. Reinhold would have had good cause to react if he believed this criticism to be potentially lethal to Kant’s theory of freedom. The overthrow of Kant’s theory would be disastrous for Reinhold’s own attempts to secure the same theory by means of a theory of the faculty of representation. Furthermore, Reinhold may have thought that his theory of freedom put forward in the ‘theory of degrees of spontaneity’ would solicit the same criticism from Rehberg. Reinhold had only established the absolute causality of the absolute subject as a possibility, whereas Rehberg demanded that the actual practicality of pure reason be established in order for a Kantian theory of freedom to be viable. As he (Rehberg, that is) deemed this impossible, he proposed a ‘slight modification’ of the Kantian theory, which in effect was a form of Rehberg’s own Spinozism. If Rehberg raised the same to parts of the *Versuch*, Reinhold’s theory might become publicly associated with Spinozism as well. Naturally, he would want to avoid that, especially because the whole point of the exercise was to convince the world that Kant (and of course he himself as well) had in effect overcome the past struggle in which Spinozism was only one of four opposing parties. Moreover, he assumed that Rehberg would actually review his *Versuch*. There is also textual evidence hinting at a role for Rehberg’s review. The terminology of comparative and absolute freedom that Reinhold introduces in section 86 is crucial to both Kant’s claim that, for morality, absolute freedom is needed and Rehberg’s claims that Kant has not sufficiently shown that there is such a thing as absolute freedom and that mere comparative freedom suffices for morality. The fact that Reinhold in section 86 introduces this debated terminology to address an issue that is debated by Rehberg, one of its main polemical users, strongly indicates that Reinhold at this point seeks to address the issues put forward by Rehberg, which he may well have feared could be raised against his own theory as well. By trying to establish absolute freedom on the basis of his own theory of representation, Reinhold could present Rehberg’s criticism as stemming from one of the many misunderstandings of Kant that are remedied by the universally acceptable theory of representation.

In his *Critique of Practical Reason* Kant had used the term ‘comparative freedom’ several times in relation to the problem of accountability in a world determined by natural causal laws. One who acts according to an inevitable law of nature cannot be held accountable for his actions. Kant believes it is “a wretched subterfuge to seek to evade this by saying that the *kind* of determining grounds of this causality in accordance with natural law agrees with a *comparative* concept of freedom.”[[446]](#footnote-446) The reason why it is such a miserable defense is that, for instance, the movement of the hands of a watch is not determined externally, but is still determined in accordance with natural causal laws.[[447]](#footnote-447) The agent cannot be held responsible for any action following from this comparative kind of freedom, which is only freedom from one kind of natural causation (external), but not from another (internal) kind of natural causation. On the basis of the second *Critique* C. Ch. E. Schmid describescomparative freedom in his *Dictionary* as follows: “when only a certain type of cause, e.g. external, mechanical, does not determine the action necessarily.”[[448]](#footnote-448) As we shall see, Reinhold’s definition of comparative freedom is closely related to Schmid’s. A similar definition must have been at the back of Rehberg’s mind.

In his critical assessment of Kant Rehberg used the distinction between absolute and comparative freedom in such a way as to conclude that morality is connected to comparative, not to absolute freedom.[[449]](#footnote-449) He deems absolute freedom, which he connects to the practicality of pure reason, to be improvable.[[450]](#footnote-450) His line of argument is as follows. If we are to know that there is such a thing as absolute freedom, we must know that pure reason can indeed be practical, that is, can be the cause of an empirically perceivable action. However, we cannot understand how this might be the case. Therefore, we cannot accept that pure reason is practical and we cannot accept absolute freedom. Rehberg takes Kant’s discussion of the moral feeling of *Achtung* as an attempt to provide a transition from pure reason to action in the sensible world and claims that this attempt fails.[[451]](#footnote-451) From this failure Rehberg concludes that any attempt to prove the reality of absolute freedom must fail – note that Kant never claimed that it could be proven. In order to guarantee the connection between moral reason and action in the world of the senses, reason must depend for its existence on God. The reason why the noumenal subject can be said to be active in the phenomenal world, as Rehberg requires, is that God must be regarded as the creator of both the noumenal subject and the phenomenal world. Because of its dependence on God, however, the subject is not completely independent and hence only comparatively free. At the same time Rehberg appears to agree with Kant that freedom entails freedom from natural causation, as he insists that morality is not endangered by his (Rehberg’s) version of comparative freedom, for it is still based on reason. Reason’s being part of a “system of intelligible necessity” is no issue for Rehberg. We would not be able to get rid of this “intelligible fatalism” without at the same time rejecting the idea of an original being.[[452]](#footnote-452) Although Rehberg claims his theory is only a slightly moderated version of Kant, it is not. First of all, Kant rejected the idea that God is to be regarded as the creator of the phenomenal world, as well as the noumenal world.[[453]](#footnote-453) Further, Kant saw absolute freedom as the only guarantee for the independence of morality from the sensible world and natural inclinations. With regard to the distinction between absolute and comparative freedom, it must be noted that Rehberg does comply with Kant’s objections against comparative freedom, which demand that neither external nor internal natural causes are involved. He introduces another kind of comparative freedom, however, consisting in the dependence of reason on God. The related claim is that reason on its own cannot relate to sensibility, that is, that pure reason cannot be practical.

Reinhold’s description of comparative freedom, “in case of which a certain kind of foreign [*fremde*] cause does not determine the action necessarily” (558), is very similar to Schmid’s. Reinhold describes its opposite, absolute freedom, as follows, “in case of which no foreign cause at all contributes to the determination of an action” (558). Since Reinhold adds ‘foreign’ to ‘a certain kind of cause’ it is clear that for him the distinction between comparative and absolute freedom is about the involvement of foreign causes; an action being absolutely free if no foreign causes at all determine it, while comparative freedom only rules out a specific type of foreign causation. Rehberg’s comparative freedom would fit this description as well, as dependence on God would entail dependence on a cause foreign to human reason, even if it also entails independence from sensibility, which would be another kind of foreign cause. According to Reinhold, causes foreign to reason can be at work even if there is no empirically given material, thus denying Rehberg’s contention that morality would depend upon reason alone, for it would depend on the cause of reason (God) as well. Rehberg’s description of reason as dependent upon its cause bears resemblance to Reinhold’s own description of the comparatively free activity of reason in thinking. In thinking, Reinhold admits, reason only acts comparatively free, as its material (the manifold of categories) is not created by it, but given in the structure of the faculty of representation (cf. 559). In a way the structure of the faculty of representation is a condition for Reinhold’s ‘reason’, just as God is a condition for Rehberg’s ‘reason’. In claiming that this kind of freedom is not sufficient for morality Reinhold denies Rehberg’s claim that his version of comparative freedom would save morality, without further argumentation. Rehberg reinterpreted ‘comparative freedom’ so as to entail internal dependence upon non-sensible causes. Precisely such a description would apply to Reinhold’s account of the free activity of reason as the highest degree of spontaneity as well.[[454]](#footnote-454) For, although this activity is independent of sensibility, its material still needs to be given. Assuming that Reinhold took Kant’s claim that morality requires absolute, not comparative freedom seriously, he would need to make sure that the activity of reason with regard to morality involves absolute, not comparative freedom. In section 86 Reinhold indeed admits that the activity of reason in thinking entails only comparative freedom. The next step is showing that, contrary to Rehberg’s contentions, the activity of reason in morality must be thought of as being absolutely free, as it must be understood as determining the faculty of desire in an a priori way.

The ‘Grundlinien der Theorie des Begehrungsvermögens’ serves precisely this purpose. As we have seen, Reinhold needs it in order to be able to make claims regarding the faculty of desire, introduced in section 86. In the ‘Grundlinien’ he gives a sketchy account of different kinds of drives, related to the receptive and spontaneous capacities of our faculty of representation in relation to the representing power.[[455]](#footnote-455) In the purely rational, moral drive Reinhold identifies pure activity of reason, as the object of this drive is the realization of the form of reason itself (569). Therefore, it needs nothing foreign to itself, and is an a priori drive. Rehberg would of course object that it cannot be proven that this a priori drive determines the faculty of desire and that we therefore cannot say that pure reason is practical. Like Kant, Reinhold does not attempt to *prove* the reality of absolute freedom and of its influence on the faculty of desire, but addresses the issue through the effects of the moral law as an incentive. In comparison to Kant’s account in the third chapter of the Analytic of the second *Critique*, the feeling of *Achtung* for the moral law is missing from Reinhold’s picture. This does not mean, however, that Reinhold rejects the thought that the effects of the determination of the will by the moral law are felt. Like Kant, Reinhold does not claim to know how reason can become an incentive, but rather focuses on its effects when it is. These effects, called *Achtung* by Kant, are described by Reinhold as an ‘ought’ directed at sensibility. This ‘ought’ is a “*commanding*” with regard to the faculty of desire, although it is a “*free willing*” with regard to practical reason itself (574). Instead of emphasizing the feeling that is effected by the moral law, Reinhold stresses the manifestation of the moral law in sensibility as an ‘ought’. This neatly avoids Rehberg’s suggestion that the moral feeling is a mediator. With Kant, Reinhold holds that no mediator is needed; moral feeling is the effect of practical reason being both rational and practical.

Since Reinhold’s main defense against Rehberg at this point consists in reasserting the Kantian point of view in relation to his own theory of the faculty of representation, it is not very likely that Rehberg would have been impressed. He could still claim that Reinhold, like Kant, needs to prove that a pure and absolutely free reason can influence our faculty of desire a priori. This means that the Kantian-Reinholdian concept of absolute freedom is still under pressure.[[456]](#footnote-456) In the following chapter we shall see how Reinhold, instead of elaborating a further defense, comes to share at least part of the criticism. In the second volume of the *Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie* (1792) he gives up on the Kantian identification of the free will with practical reason. He admits that Rehberg’s review of Kant’s second *Critique* has taught him that reason cannot be called practical “as if it would entail the complete ground of an act of will, determined by itself.”[[457]](#footnote-457)

Upon the interpretation provided here section 86 and the ‘Grundlinien’ are to be regarded as a pre-emptive strike at Rehberg, who, so Reinhold correctly believed, would probably review his *Versuch*. Given the way Rehberg had reacted to Kant’s theory of freedom, Reinhold may well have felt that his views as expressed in the ‘theory of the degrees of spontaneity’ would be vulnerable to a similar reproach, namely, that showing the possibility of freedom of a noumenal subject is not sufficient. Rehberg had demanded proof of the actual existence and activity of this absolute freedom. Thus, the question concerns the relation between Reinhold’s theorizing about the nature of the faculty of representation and the activity of an actual (empirical, not absolute) subject. Reinhold’s response to this potential criticism is an attempt to relate Kant’s thoughts on the matter as provided in the third chapter of the Analytic of the second *Critique* to his own theory of the faculty of representation. In order to do this, however, he needs to break the framework of that theory and appeal to representing power, one of the external conditions of representation. The introduction of the distinction between absolute and comparative freedom does not harmonize with the thoughts on freedom provided by the ‘theory of degrees of spontaneity’, for the kind of freedom established in that context is called ‘comparative freedom’ in section 86. This has led Lazzari to interpret this section including the ‘Grundlinien’ as a revision of that theory, stemming from Reinhold’s insight that it would not be sufficient for his purpose, that is, the establishment of absolute freedom. Based on that interpretation, section 86 is a regular part of the structure of the theory of reason, aiming at establishing something that is not to be had within the framework of the *Versuch*, hence the supplementary argumentation in the ‘Grundlinien’. However, I do not believe that Reinhold needed to introduce the distinction between comparative and absolute freedom, since he had already established the possibility of absolute (that is, free) causality with regard to the absolute subject, which is exactly what he had set as the task for philosophy. The need to introduce this distinction arises instead from the fact that precisely the sufficiency of establishing the possibility of freedom of the absolute subject had been questioned by Rehberg. It is that criticism that Reinhold wants to avoid at a considerably high cost. It means that he needs both to break with the structure of his *Versuch* and to discuss a distinction (between absolute and comparative freedom) that is, to say the least, problematic within the framework of the theory of the faculty of representation.

# ‘Practical reason’ from Versuch einer neuen Theorie des menschlichen Vorstellungsvermögens to the second volume of Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie

Although Reinhold had written his *Versuch einer neuen Theorie des menschlichen Vorstellungsvermögens* with the aim of creating unanimous support for the Kantian philosophy, the work failed to achieve that object. Instead of securing support for the Kantian project, the project of providing the premises of Kant’s theory of cognition solicited criticism from Kantians and anti-Kantians alike.[[458]](#footnote-458) For Reinhold the years following the publication of the *Versuch* were filled with responding to his critics and revising the *Elementarphilosophie*, until, in 1797, he admitted “that by means of [Fichte’s] *Wissenschaftslehre* the scientific foundation that was sought by the *Elementarphilosophie* (…) has actually been found.”[[459]](#footnote-459) The changes in Reinhold’s thought taking place in the early 1790s were not limited to his *Elementarphilosophie*, that is, the attempt to base a scientific philosophy upon one single fundamental principle that developed during the discussions on his *Versuch*, but his practical philosophy underwent significant development as well.[[460]](#footnote-460) In the *Versuch* practical philosophy had only appeared at the very end of the work and in a polemical context, as we have seen in the previous chapter. The practical benefits of the Kantianphilosophy were presented as consequences, rather than as subject matter of philosophy. Although at the end of the ‘Grundlinien’ Reinhold hinted that he would be publishing a theory of the faculty of desire, this promise was not fulfilled. However, in the years following the publication of the *Versuch* he did develop a moral philosophy on the basis of Kant’s. This development can be traced in several articles published in *Der neue Teutsche Merkur*, some of which reappeared in an adapted form in the second volume of Reinhold’s *Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie* (1792). This is, however, only a preliminary end of the development that was continued in the fourth essay of the second volume of *Beyträge zur Berichtigung bisheriger Mißverständnisse der Philosophen* (1794)*,* entitled ‘Ueber das vollständige Fundament der Moral’, and in his later *Verhandlungen über die Grundbegriffe und Grundsätze der Moralität* (1798).[[461]](#footnote-461)

The aim of this final chapter is to present and analyze the development in Reinhold’s practical philosophy from the *Versuch* until the second volume of the *Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie* (*Briefe* *II*). Because of its focus on Reinhold’s practical philosophy the contemporaneous development of his more theoretically oriented *Elementarphilosophie* falls outside the scope of the current chapter.[[462]](#footnote-462) Instead we will focus on some of the essays he produced for *Der neue Teutsche Merkur* (*NTM*) after the publication of the *Versuch*.[[463]](#footnote-463) Since they were later adapted to be included in the second volume of *Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie* they provide us with very useful material regarding the development of Reinhold’s moral philosophy. Taking the ‘Grundlinien’-chapter of the *Versuch* as a starting point and *Briefe II* as the end of this development, the focus will be on the relation of practical reason and the will in these essays. My analysis of this development leans on the important work done by Lazzari in establishing the chronology and circumstances of Reinhold’s development towards distinguishing between practical reason and the will.[[464]](#footnote-464) On the basis of development in the longer term of Reinhold’s conception of practical reason as presented in the earlier chapters of this study it will be possible to supplement Lazzari’s account by showing the strong continuities among all those changes.

The focus of the current chapter is not so much the development itself, a detailed account of which can be found in the work of Lazzari, but rather Reinhold’s understanding of ‘practical reason’ in *Briefe II* as the final point of this development. The reasons for zooming in on *Briefe II* and not, for instance, on Reinhold’s later works on the foundation of morality are firstly that *Briefe* *II* represents the end of the development towards sharply distinguishing between practical reason and the will, which can be traced quite well as the essays included in the collection are adapted versions of earlier articles. Secondly, since *Briefe II* is presented by Reinhold as part of essentially the same project as the original ‘Briefe’ in *Der Teutsche Merkur* marking Reinhold’s first reception of the Kantian philosophy,[[465]](#footnote-465) focusing on *Briefe II* paves the way for an evaluation of his thoughts on practical reason in relation to his original plans with the Kantian philosophy. The later works do not relate to the Kantian philosophy to the same extent.[[466]](#footnote-466) Therefore, looking at *Briefe* *II* presents us with an excellent opportunity to round off our investigations on Reinhold’s understanding of the Kantian term ‘practical reason’. Finally, the position on the freedom of the will that Reinhold defended in *Briefe II* significantly influenced the debates concerning the Kantian perspective on freedom.[[467]](#footnote-467) That this position was no longer Kant’s position became painfully clear when the latter, in his *Metaphysics of Morals* (1797) distanced himself from Reinhold, by stating that according to him “freedom of choice cannot be defined – as some have tried to define it – as the ability to make a choice for or against the law.”[[468]](#footnote-468) Although Kant does not mention him by name, Reinhold appears to be the target of this remark, since Kant continues by providing considerations regarding definitions and expositions and Reinhold had claimed that Kant had not defined the concept of the will properly. Although Kant’s objections against Reinhold may not have been entirely fair, Reinhold was disappointed by this reception.[[469]](#footnote-469)

The first section of this chapter will concentrate on the development of Reinhold’s practical philosophy leading up to *Briefe* *II*, with special attention for the relation between the will and practical reason. This section will include a brief recapitulation of the ‘Grundlinien’ from the *Versuch*, as well as an analysis of relevant passages from some of Reinhold’s essays written for *Der neue Teutsche Merkur*.[[470]](#footnote-470) The second section contains a presentation of *Briefe II* itself, starting from its aims and structure and including a brief analysis of the contents of this collection. The third and final section of the final chapter will evaluate the development of Reinhold’s practical philosophy from the *Versuch* to *Briefe* *II*. This evaluation is intended to supplement Lazzari’s analysis of the changes in Reinhold’s practical philosophy by paying attention to a number of important continuities.

## Practical reason and the will up to Briefe II

In order to understand the development of Reinhold’s practical philosophy after the publication of the *Versuch*, this development must first be described. The structure of the *Versuch* clearly shows that, although Reinhold promised beneficial practical consequences, this is a work of theoretical philosophy. We have seen in the previous chapter that the attention to practical philosophy in the form of the ‘Grundlinien der Theorie des Begehrungsvermögens’ can be understood as following from a polemical context involving Rehberg. It was obviously composed in haste and its relation to the theory of the faculty of representation or the theory of the faculty of cognition was not worked out sufficiently. The explicit promise of a full theory of the faculty of desire implies that Reinhold was intending to work more extensively on practical philosophy; yet the promise was not fulfilled. Instead, he produced several articles in which he related current issues in practical philosophy, especially the philosophy of right to the promise of the Kantian project to solve the problems of philosophy. These essays enable us to see how Reinhold’s practical philosophy took shape in the years after the publication of his *Versuch*.

This section first returns to the ‘Grundlinien’, pointing out the issues that Reinhold had to address in developing his practical philosophy. Its general line of argument and the reasons for its occurrence have already been discussed in the previous capter (section 2.4.4. and 3.2). Here the focus will be on the problems Reinhold needed to address in his writings on practical philosophy, following the publication of the *Versuch*. Secondly, it analyzes the relevant passages from articles dating from the spring and the autumn of 1791, showing his initial ways of dealing with these issues. These essays would later be adapted to be part of *Briefe II*.Finally, we will consider a 1792 essay in which Reinhold explicitly starts to distinguish between the will and practical reason. In *Briefe II* Reinhold would consolidate that approach.

### ‘Grundlinien’: implicit identification of practical reason and pure will

Because of the role of the ‘Grundlinien’ in supplementing the argumentation for section 86, its starting point is that freedom is associated with reason as an absolute cause.[[471]](#footnote-471) We have seen in Chapter 5 that Reinhold departs from his original scheme establishing the idea of the representing *subject* as an absolute cause, and, in section 86, adds that the causality of *reason* must be understood as absolute causation as well, consisting of three different kinds of activities. First, there is the activity of reason in thinking, that is, the production of ideas. Secondly, reason is active in determining the faculty of desire a posteriori. Thirdly, it can also determine this faculty a priori (cf. *Versuch*, 558-559). To complicate matters, only the a priori determination of the faculty of desire is considered to be absolutely free, whereas the others are presented as comparatively free expressions of the causality of reason. Reinhold’s introduction of the differentiation between comparative and absolute freedom can be understood as a pre-emptive reaction to the criticism he feared his work would receive from Rehberg.[[472]](#footnote-472) The introduction of the faculty of desire occasions the ‘Grundlinien’-chapter.

The core concept of the ‘Grundlinien’ is ‘drive’ (*Trieb*), the “relation of the representing power to the possibility of representation that is a priori determined in its capacity” (561). The faculty of desire, or the capacity of being determined by drive to produce a representation, is thus instrumental in bringing about representations. In accordance with the basic characteristics of representations, namely that they consist of material and form, ‘drive’ is likewise understood as being basically twofold, a drive for the material of representation and a drive for form. The drive for form is the need for the spontaneity of the representing subject to express itself in accordance with the categories. This drive, thus determined by the understanding, can be further modified by reason, which “extends the selfish drive that is conditioned by sensibility and determined by the understanding to the unconditioned” (564). Since reason’s activity here is bound to the forms of sensibility, it only acts comparatively free (cf. 566).

At this point in the ‘Grundlinien’ Reinhold introduces the will, which differs from desire, as the will is a “being determined by reason, an act of spontaneity” (567). When the subject determines itself to an action considered a means of satisfying the drive for happiness, this determination is an action of the empirical will. The causality of reason, expressed as empirical will is only comparatively free, since it determines a given sensible drive by prescribing a rule for it “that is only sanctioned by pleasure, through a drive that essentially differs from reason” (568). Reason acts comparatively free in two different ways. First, it acts comparatively free in generating the drive for happiness, by extending the sensible drive to the unconditioned. Secondly, it acts comparatively free as empirical will, by being the self-determination of the representing subject to an action that is considered a means to this happiness. The circumstance that the latter case entails self-determination of the representing subject, rather than of reason can be understood by referring to Reinhold’s theory of degrees of spontaneity according to which the spontaneity of the representing subject expresses itself to the highest degree in the acts of reason. Hence, the self-determination of the representing subject by its spontaneity is the same as a determination by reason.

Next to the comparatively free drive, there is the drive that is determined “by nothing but the spontaneity of reason,” the purely rational drive (569). This has as its object “exercising spontaneity, the mere act of reason,” which act is the “realization of the way of acting of reason” (569). The object of this purely rational drive is called morality (cf. 570). As with the sensible drive, Reinhold proceeds by linking the activity of reason with regard to the purely rational drive to the will. The determination to an action “that has no other purpose than the actuality of the way of acting of reason” is carried out by practical reason (571). ‘Pure will’ is then described as the capacity of the representing subject[[473]](#footnote-473) to “determine itself to an action by means of the spontaneity of the purely rational drive” (571). Reinhold’s descriptions of practical reason as presented here amount to the claim that the realization of morality, that is, moral action is tantamount to acting for the sake of realizing the form of reason. Practical reason appears to be closely related to the pure will, yet the relation is not specified. The matter is only clarified slightly in the remainder of the paragraph, in which the will as a whole is described as “self-determination to an action” (571). In what Reinhold terms ‘empirical will’ reason considers the action as a means to happiness, that is, it acts for the sake of sensibility. The pure will is now described as self-determination to an action that is “determined by the object of the purely rational drive” and that consists in “the solely intended realization of the way of acting of reason” (571). The pureness of the will is described as the independence from sensibility, since it “realizes the form of reason that was determined according to its possibility only” (571). Although Reinhold does not explicitly identify the pure will with practical reason, the following is suggested. Reason is considered practical insofar as it works as pure will, that is, insofar as it determines the representing subject to an action that solely aims for the realization of the form of reason, that is, a moral action.

The identification of practical reason and the will is confirmed by the next paragraph, concerning the freedom of the will. Earlier, in section 86, different kinds or degrees of freedom – comparative and absolute – were attributed to different expressions of the causality of reason. Reinhold’s attention to the freedom of the will in the ‘Grundlinien’ shows that he understood the will as causality of reason. He makes a distinction between the will as being free and as acting free. The will *is* free because of its independence from coercion by the senses and because it is not bound to “either the law of the unselfish drive or that of the selfish drive” (571). The independence from the senses parallels the activity of reason in thinking (cf. section 86), employing material that itself is the product of spontaneity. The second of the determinations, that is, the freedom freedom from the unselfish drive, is new, but relates to Reinhold’s thoughts on freedom as expressed in the First Book of the *Versuch*. There he attributed the freedom needed for morality to the actor, who has a free choice “either to determine his decision himself by means of reason, or to let it be determined by the objects of sensibility” (90). This rules out being forced by laws of reason as well as being forced by sensible desire (cf. 91). Because of its relation to the First Book the understanding of ‘freedom of the will’ as independence from both the selfish and the unselfish drive is more related to Reinhold’s preconception of moral freedom than to the previous argument in the ‘Grundlinien’. It appears to be at odds with a strong relation between the will and practical reason, since it implies that the spontaneity of the will in its capacity to decide differs from the spontaneity of reason that only strives for the realization of its way of acting. The former spontaneity must include the freedom to determine oneself to be determined by the sensible drive, which appears incompatible with the latter kind of spontaneity, which solely strives for the realization of the form of reason. It is precisely this tension that Reinhold would try to resolve in the years to come, resulting in an explicit distinction between the will and practical reason.

The determination of the freedom of the will as freedom from both the law of the selfish drive and the law of the unselfish drive also opens the way for the different kinds or degrees of freedom – comparative and absolute – associated with the different ways in which the will *acts*. It can act comparatively free, when it “subjects itself to the law of the selfish drive” which is “foreign” to it (571-572). This on the one hand echoes the understanding of freedom as presented in the First Book, the freedom to let oneself be determined. On the other hand, it echoes section 86, where ‘comparative freedom’ was described as “when only a certain kind of foreign causes does not determine the action necessarily” (558). Being free, the will may choose to subject itself to the foreign laws of sensibility, thus acting comparatively free. It acts absolutely free, however, “when it follows the law of the unselfish drive” (572). This law, being established by theoretical reason, “is sanctioned as an actual law only by the mere spontaneity of practical reason” (572). This distinction indicates a differentiation between the spontaneity of reason involved in drafting the moral law (ascribed to theoretical reason) and the spontaneity of reason involved in sanctioning this law (ascribed to practical reason) which “itself imposes it [the moral law] upon itself” (572). Apart from this distinction there appears to be another form of spontaneity still, involved in deciding which law to follow.

Summarizing, Reinhold uses the terms ‘freedom’ and ‘spontaneity’ in different senses in the ‘Grundlinien’. First, there is the comparatively free action of reason in extending the sensible drive to the unconditional. Secondly, we have the comparatively free action of the (empirical) will in choosing to be determined by the laws of sensible desire. Although this action is conceived as an action of the will, it is associated with the activity of reason as the highest degree of the representing subject’s spontaneity. The will is also said to be free in a third sense, namely in the sense of being independent of both the laws of selfish and unselfish drive. This latter drive is understood as the result of the absolutely free activity of (practical) reason, striving to realize its own way of acting, independently of any empirical considerations. This is Reinhold’s fourth understanding of ‘freedom’. Linked to this is, fifthly, the absolutely free way of acting of the will in determining itself to follow this law rather than empirical laws. Reinhold, at this point, has no clear position on exactly where to locate human freedom. There is a strong relation between the will and reason and especially between the pure will and practical reason, yet the kinds of freedom ascribed to each differ. There is a tension between, on the one hand, considering the faculty of desire as relating to the realization of representations and, on the other hand, the realization of the way of acting of reason outside the mind. There is further a strong intuition, already expressed in the First Book of the *Versuch*, that freedom in morality requires the ability of the subject to decide either to determine himself or to let himself be determined. This appears to be the freedom of the will, yet it is unclear why this should be an ability of the *representing* subject. Reinhold does not succeed in presenting a coherent and convincing picture of the relation between the freedom of the will and the faculty of representation. These characteristics of the ‘Grundlinien’ can be sufficiently understood from Reinhold’s desire to pre-emptively defend his work against Rehberg, by restating or at least trying to restate the Kantian position in terms of the theory of the faculty of representation.[[474]](#footnote-474)

### *NTM*-essays from 1791: explicit identification of practical reason and the will

By the end of 1791 Reinhold started to make a sharp distinction between practical reason and the will.[[475]](#footnote-475) In order to understand how he came to this, we must take a look at some of the articles he published during 1791, starting in March, when he published ‘Ueber die Grundwahrheit der Moralität und ihr[ ] Verhältniß zur Grundwahrheit der Religion’.[[476]](#footnote-476) As in the *Versuch*, we find a listing of moral theories that is inspired by Kant’s Table of Practical Material Determining Grounds in the second *Critique*.[[477]](#footnote-477) Reinhold himself describes morality as “the free and unselfish willing of that which is lawful” (229). This willing is described as depending on “the spontaneity of the mind,” with which we are familiar through the “facts of consciousness” (229). In contrast to the ‘Grundlinien’, in which Reinhold tried to link the capacities of desire and will to the faculty of representation, here ‘personhood’ is the central notion, announcing itself in self-consciousness as independence and the spontaneity of our actions. This spontaneity, so Reinhold explains, “is limited to a willing, and even only to that willing that is determined by reason and that consists in acting through reason” (230). Since ‘willing’ is described in terms of ‘acting through reason’, Reinhold does not appear to think of the will and reason as separate and independent capacities. The power of the will is described as “steering” our responses to the needs we have as living beings, rendering us rational animals (231). Reinhold distinguishes between desiring and willing on the basis of the involvement of reason.

Das **Begehren** heißt nur dann und in soferne ein **Wollen**, wenn und in wieferne es durch Vernunft bestimmt wird, wenn und in wieferne der Grund desselben in unsrer **Selbstthätigkeit** liegt; wenn und in wieferne dasjenige, was mich zur **Person** macht (…) dabey wirksam ist. (239)

[*Desiring* is only called *willing* when and only in so far as it is determined by reason, when and insofar as its ground lies in our *spontaneity*; when and in so far that which makes me a *person* (…) is active in it.]

Although willing is clearly associated here with reason, reason in turn is not associated with the representing subject, but rather with personhood. ‘Spontaneity’ is no longer understood in terms of the degrees of spontaneity involved in different kinds of representations, but, in a literal translation, as ‘self-activity’, which is understood in terms of “that which makes us a person.” The introduction of personhood and the kind of spontaneity it involves in order to distinguish ‘willing’ from ‘desiring’ has, of course, a distinct Kantian ring to it. For Kant personality is intimately connected to morality, since it singles human beings out as ends in themselves.[[478]](#footnote-478) In the second *Critique*, personality is described as “freedom and independence from the mechanism of the whole of nature.”[[479]](#footnote-479) It is therefore no wonder that Reinhold would turn to ‘personality’ in this context, when reason is no longer exclusively understood in terms of the theory of the faculty of representation. He continues by discussing the relation of will and reason in the following manner.

Die Regel der Handlung wird daher bey jedem Wollen durch **Vernunft** gegeben; und der Entschluß des Willens besteht in der Handlung nach einer sich selbst gegebenen Vorschrift. (239)

[Thus, the rule of action in any willing is given by *reason*; and the decision of the will consists in the action according to a prescription that it has given to itself.]

From the continuation of the passage it is clear that “spontaneous reason” both gives and follows the prescription, either “for the sake of its own interest” or “for the sake of a foreign interest” (239). The former giving and following of the prescription is called ‘moral’, and the latter ‘amoral’ “but not, because of that, immoral” (239). The only instance of immoral action is when reason follows a foreign law, the prescription of which contradicts the moral law (cf. 241). In line with Reinhold’s statements on the foundation of morality in the First Book of the *Versuch*, the freedom of the will is presented as the fundamental condition of morality, expressing itself morally or immorally (cf. 241-242). Practical reason, identified here with the activity of reason as will, must have its ground in freedom, which is associated in this case with the independence from sense-impression (cf. 242). The remainder of the article focuses on the relation of the conviction that the will is free and the grounds for the conviction that God exists.[[480]](#footnote-480) In March 1791 Reinhold explicitly identifies practical reason and the will, as he considers reason to be practical insofar as it is a free will choosing between the different laws available for prescribing action. The one law, the law of practical reason itself, is independent of empirical input, while the other law prescribes on the basis of empirical input, and is thus foreign to the subject’s spontaneity.

In another article he produced for the *Merkur*,in April 1791, entitled ‘Ehrenrettung des Naturrechts’, Reinhold considers the fundamentals of morality in relation to the concept of natural right.[[481]](#footnote-481) In it he first establishes the lack of a distinct concept of ‘natural right’ and then briefly considers the previous systems of morality, again following the Kantian table.[[482]](#footnote-482) All attempts to give morality a foundation are presented as attempts to find the grounds of moral feeling. Reinhold believes that a proper explanation of these grounds will follow from the Kantian philosophy.

Ich suche die **wirkende Ursache** alles **moralischen Gefühls** (…) in derjenigen **Selbthätigkeit** des menschlichen Geistes auf, durch welche sich unsre **Selbstständigkeit**, die sich nur durch Unabhängigkeit im Handeln denken läßt, in dem **Bewußtseyn unsrer Personalität**, ankündiget. Diese Selbstthätigkeit, die, in wie ferne sie beym Erkennen geschäftig ist, **theoretische**, und beym **Begehren** – **praktische** **Vernunft** heißt, ist das **Vermögen der Gesetze** überhaupt, die als solche (…) nur in der **Handlungsweise** der bloßen Vernunft, und nicht außer derselben in der Natur der Dinge an sich ihren Grund haben. Die praktische Vernunft handelt als **reiner** (**moralischer**) **Willen**, in wiefern sie die Gesetzmäßigkeit des Begehrens bloß um der Gesetzmäßigkeit willen realisirt; und folglich ihr eigenes Gesetz aus einer und eben derselben Fülle ihrer Kraft sich selbst giebt, und befolgt. (361-362)

[I look for the *effective cause* of all *moral feeling* (…) in that *spontaneity* of the human mind through which our *independence*, which can only be thought as independence in acting, announces itself in the *consciousness of our personhood*. This spontaneity, which is called *theoretical* reason in so far as it is active in cognizing and *practical reason* in so far as it is active in *desiring*, is the *capacity for laws in general*, which as such have their ground only in the *way of acting* of reason and not outside it, in the nature of things in themselves. Practical reason acts as *pure* (*moral*) *willing*, insofar as it realizes the lawfulness of desiring merely for the sake of lawfulness, and thus from one and the same fullness of power gives its own law to itself and follows it.]

It is clear that Reinhold at this point identifies practical reason and the will to a certain extent and situates its activity in the realization of lawfulness for its own sake. Practical reason, acting as moral will, is presented as both the giver and the follower of laws, some of which are fully related to its own spontaneity, while others depend on something given. Moral feeling has its ground in this capacity since it is nothing more or less than the feeling of joy or pain at the consciousness of the agreement or disagreement of an action with the moral law. The remainder of the article reassesses the spurious grounds of morality introduced earlier. Since this is not relevant to the main argument of this chapter, it will not be discussed any further.

Reinhold’s preference for the philosophy of right is further expressed in the autumn of 1791, with his ‘Ehrenrettung des positiven Rechtes’ (September and November 1791).[[483]](#footnote-483) The first part of this essay, published in September, mainly concerns the disputes between philosophers and jurists regarding the status of positive jurisprudence. As usual, the dispute is due to the lack of a determined concept, in this case of ‘right’, needed to distinguish properly between natural and positive right. It is only in the second part of the article, published in November, that Reinhold presents his thoughts on how the concept of ‘right’ should be determined. He opens with the bold claim that the Kantian investigation of the capacities of the human mind has established the reality of the ‘unselfish drive’, without being acknowledged by the majority of philosophers (cf. 278).[[484]](#footnote-484) Therefore, Reinhold assumes this result as a hypothesis, not as an established fact in his efforts to establish the concept of ‘right’ in order to distinguish properly between natural and positive right without losing sight of what these two have in common (cf. 279). He first distinguishes between ‘right’ and ‘useful’ and claims that human reason is employed in different ways when judging each of these. What is right is related to the unselfish drive, independently of “needs and impressions,” while the useful relates to the selfish drive, which “as an instinct” depends on those two things (280). Reinhold describes the different ways of acting of reason with respect to judgments of right and of utility in the following manner.

Im ersten Falle [that of right] wirkt sie [reason] als die **für und durch sich selbst wollende**, folglich als handelnde (praktische) – im zweyten hingegen nur als die für und durch den eigennützigen Trieb wollende, folglich an sich nur als **denkende** (theoretische) Vernunft. Beym bloßen **Rechte** ist ihre Vorschrift ein **Gesetz**, dem sich der eigennützige Trieb unterwerfen soll; beym blossen **Nutzen** ist ihre Vorschrift eine **Regel**, die nur durch den eigennützigen Trieb die Sanktion ihrer Nothwendigkeit erhält. (281)

[In the first case reason works as willing *for and through itself*, that is, as acting (practical) reason; in the second case, however, only as willing for and through the selfish drive, that is, in itself only as *thinking* (theoretical) reason. With regard to mere *right* its prescription is a *law* to which the selfish drive should subject itself; with regard to mere *usefulness* its prescription is a *rule*, the necessity of which is only sanctioned by the selfish drive.]

When deciding that something is right, reason only depends on itself and wills through its own demand, that is, the unselfish drive. We here find the same idea as in the ‘Grundlinien’, namely that the prescription that only involves reason also sanctions itself, whereas the prescription that relates to something given needs external sanction, from the selfish drive. The distinction here between practical and theoretical reason is twofold. On the one hand Reinhold distinguishes them in terms of ‘acting’ and ‘thinking’ reason, respectively. On the other hand the identification of reason (in general) and the will is obvious from his distinction between practical reason as “willing for and through itself” and theoretical reason as “willing for and through the selfish drive.” Again, there appear to be four distinguishable activities of reason. First, (practical) reason establishes and sanctions the moral law. Secondly, it acts for and through itself in following this law. Thirdly, (theoretical) reason in thinking considers what is useful and finally, it acts for the selfish drive in following its demands. It is clear that reason is on the one hand involved in establishing the rules or law while on the other carrying them out. Similarly, reason is involved in carrying out the demands of both the moral law and the selfish drive.

Reinhold then turns to establishing ‘right’ and ‘duty’, deriving them from the relation between the selfish and the unselfish drive in order to be able to distinguish properly between morality and natural law. It is considered a given that “the relation of the unselfish drive to the selfish drive can only consist in a limitation (*Beschränkung*) of the latter in favor of the former” (285). Using this as his starting point, Reinhold describes ‘duty’ as “a necessary limitation of the selfish drive, determined by the law of the unselfish drive” (285). When the law of the unselfish drive necessitates the limitation of the selfish drive, this means that the satisfaction of the latter drive is morally impossible (even though it may very well be physically possible) (cf. 285). Parallel to this description of ‘duty’ Reinhold describes ‘right’ as “the possibility of a limitation of the selfish drive” on the basis of the law of the unselfish drive, entailing the non-impossibility of its opposition, that is, the moral possibility of satisfying the selfish drive (285). Because of the interplay of the selfish and the unselfish drive, right and duty are not possible when the selfish drive cannot be limited by the unselfish drive, for instance, when we act on instinct, in animals and in beings which lack a selfish drive (cf. 286).[[485]](#footnote-485) Reinhold makes clear that the modalities involved in describing ‘right’ and ‘duty’ are moral, that is to say, ‘necessity’ means an obligation, whereas ‘possibility’ means a permission. Yet he also speaks of the possibility of a limitation of the selfish drive in another, more ontological sense, when he claims that in order for a limitation to be possible, both the selfish and the unselfish drive need to be present in a being. The first, moral, sense of the modality refers to the content of the law given by the unselfish drive with regard to the selfish drive. The second, metaphysical use of the term ‘possible’ refers to the nature of a being which makes it ontologically possible or impossible that the unselfish drive effectuates such law with regard to the selfish drive. This sufficiently solves the equivocation that Lazzari attributes[[486]](#footnote-486) to Reinhold’s use of the term ‘Beschränkung’, which according to the interpretation provided above does not arise from Reinhold’s use of ‘Beschränkung’ but rather from his use of different notions of possibility. There is no confusion of terminology on Reinhold’s part and the lack of clarity in his terminology does not point to a problem for his theory here. Reinhold’s definition of ‘duty’ and ‘right’ as modalities of the limitation of the selfish drive by the unselfish drive is complicated, for it must be noted that the limitation, when it actually takes place, is carried out differently in both cases. In the case of duty, the actual limitation is carried out by the unselfish drive or practical reason, which, in the case of right, only declares that a limitation is possible and thereby leaves the question of the actual limitation for theoretical reason to decide, which may or may not actually limit the selfish drive for prudential reasons.[[487]](#footnote-487) Such an action is called “in conformity with right [*rechtmäßig*]” in so far as it is carried out “with regard to its possibility by the law, in so far as it merely does not contradict the moral law, it is called ‘permitted’” (288). Later on in the article, Reinhold speaks of ‘strict right’ and ‘strict duty’, where ‘strict right’ is described as “the morally possible, the impossibility of which (…) contradicts the law of that [unselfish] drive totally and always” (292). This confirms that Reinhold’s descriptions of duty and right are exclusively related to moral possibility and necessity. The question as to how a possible or necessary limitation is actually carried out appears to be of little interest to him in this context.

### ‘Beytrag’-essay: distinction between practical reason and the will

Almost immediately upon finishing the work on the second part of his ‘Ehrenrettung des positiven Rechts’ discussed above, Reinhold started reworking its material.[[488]](#footnote-488) Apparently he was not fully satisfied with his distinction between natural and positive right on the basis of the concepts of ‘right’ and ‘duty’, which in turn were defined in terms of the relation between the selfish and the unselfish drive. We have seen above that the question regarding the activity of reason when it allows itself to be determined by the selfish drive was left unanswered. In his ‘Beytrag zur genaueren Bestimmung der Grundbegriffe der Moral und des Naturrechts’, which was presented as an addition to a dialogue that he had published earlier,[[489]](#footnote-489) Reinhold addressed the themes of defining right and duty in terms of the relation between the selfish and the unselfish drive anew, by presenting an overview of the things he believes are evident on the basis of the awareness of these dispositions of the human mind.

First of all, he believes that it is evident that “the human faculty of desire (…) consists of two original (…) drives,” one of which is grounded in sensibility, having pleasure as its object (109). The other is “grounded in personal spontaneity,” having as its object the prescription that a person gives herself through reason (109). The unselfish drive is now situated in the person, rather than in reason, although reason is the means through which this spontaneity expresses itself. This shift from reason to the person as the seat of spontaneity shows that the faculty of desire is now fully emancipated from the faculty of representation. Reinhold no longer needs to link the faculty of desire to that of representation, since the spontaneity that is needed is no longer thought of as the spontaneity of reason, as in the theory of the degrees of spontaneity. It is the spontaneity of the person as a whole, not just the spontaneity of the representing subject. Reinhold had already begun this process of emancipation in his article on natural right discussed above. After identifying the first drive as the selfish and the second as the unselfish drive, Reinhold continues by developing a number of further concepts that are necessary in order to derive the proper concepts of right and duty. This is remarkable, since we have seen above that in the article on positive right Reinhold built his concepts of right and duty directly upon the relation between the unselfish and selfish drives. The first step is the introduction of the will, which is defined as “the capacity of a person to determine herself to satisfaction or non-satisfaction of a demand of the selfish drive” (110). Again we see the growing importance of the concept of personhood, replacing some of the many meanings of the spontaneity of reason. The importance of the person is confirmed by Reinhold himself, who, in his explanation, states

Ich sage das Vermögen der Person, und nicht der Vernunft. Diese ist das Vermögen Vorschriften zu geben (Regeln hervorzubringen). Sie gehört zum Willen, inwieferne die Person nur durch eine Vorschrift, die sie sich zur Befriedigung oder Nichtbefriedigung des eigennützigen Triebes giebt, sich selber bestimmen kann. Allein sie ist nicht der Wille selbst. (111)

[I say, capacity of a person, not of reason. The latter is the capacity to give prescriptions (produce rules). It belongs to the will, insofar as a person can only determine herself by means of a prescription regarding the satisfaction or non-satisfaction of the selfish drive. But it is not the will itself.]

The authority prescribing rules for itself is now the person instead of reason. This giving and following of prescriptions, however, is accomplished by two distinct capacities of the person, reason and the will. It is clear that at this point Reinhold no longer identifies the two. In a note appended to this explanation, he explicitly states that the will “cannot be defined as causality of reason, for then it would be confused with the power to think” (111). In the main text, Reinhold further points out that not all prescriptions of reason are acts of will, but “only those through which the subject determines itself to the satisfaction or non-satisfaction of the selfish drive” (111-112). He subsequently stresses that the selfish drive itself is necessary and involuntary, only the satisfaction or non-satisfaction of the demands of that drive is voluntary in so far as it depends on the will. Further, he introduces the term ‘pure willing’ (*reines Wollen*) for “the mere demand of the unselfish drive, in so far as it becomes an incentive [*Triebfeder*] for the satisfaction or non-satisfaction of a demand of the selfish drive” (112). Conversely, the willing is empirical or impure, in so far as “the prescription that a person gives herself, is given on the impulse [*auf Antrieb*] of the selfish drive and for its sake only, and is therefore in no way the only incentive” (113).

Having explicated the two different drives, Reinhold distinguishes between different meanings of the term ‘freedom’. He first defines ‘natural freedom’ as the freedom to determine oneself with regard to the demands of desire “either in accordance with or against the demand of the unselfish drive” (113). This freedom is a capacity of a person and as such it is to be distinguished from the freedom of reason, which “consists in the independence from external impressions and from the structure of sensibility” (114). The freedom of the will, which appears to be equivalent to ‘natural freedom’ and thus differs from the freedom of reason, can only be thought as a “fact occurring in self-consciousness” (114).[[490]](#footnote-490) This means that no further explanation of it can be given and that only its non-impossibility can be established. Because of the freedom of the will it is equally impossible to give reasons why, in any given case, the will has decided to go this way or that. It uses the unselfish drive and selfish drive as occasioning grounds (*veranlassende Gründe*), yet is its own determining ground, so that it is not determined by either sensible impulses or the law of reason.

The difference between this account and the ones discussed in sections 1.1 and 1.2 is obvious. In the ‘Beytrag’-essay Reinhold clearly and explicitly distinguishes the will from reason, by means of the distinction introduced above between natural freedom and the freedom of reason. The spontaneity that expresses itself as the free will is different from the spontaneity of reason expressing itself in establishing the moral law. By explicitly presenting the will as a capacity that is separate from both sensible desire and the law of reason, its spontaneity can be properly distinguished from the activity of reason acting involuntarily. This solves the previous lack of clarity regarding the various activities of reason while at the same time completing the emancipation of the spontaneity of the will from the faculty of representation. This may seem far away from Reinhold’s position in the *Versuch*, where there was no clear distinction between the spontaneity of the will and the spontaneity of reason and where Reinhold sought to relate his thoughts on the faculty of desire to his theory of the faculty of representation. Although the account in the ‘Beytrag’-essay is indeed very different from the account in Reinhold’s ‘Grundlinien’, it must be remembered that it is rather close to the starting point of the *Versuch*, as expressed in the First Book. We noted earlier that there Reinhold already emphasized the independence from both sensibility and reason as a necessary condition of the kind of freedom required by morality. He also claimed that the actuality of this freedom is accepted as a fact by common sense, while the philosophers seek to demonstrate its possibility. We have seen that the demand for the double independence of the will returned in the ‘Grundlinien’. Reinhold’s development from the ‘Grundlinien’ to the ‘Beytrag’-essay can thus be seen as a growing awareness that in order to realize the demand intuitively made with regard to morally relevant freedom, the spontaneity grounding this freedom must be different from the spontaneity of reason that is related to the faculty of representation.

## Briefe II

Now that we have established the main line in the development of Reinhold’s practical philosophy it is time to turn to the second volume of the *Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie*. In 1790 Reinhold had published the first volume, about half a year after he had finished the *Versuch*.[[491]](#footnote-491) He must have been eager to deliver the expanded version of the *Merkur*-‘Briefe’ as a collection in order to compete with the two pirate editions of the series that had appeared earlier.[[492]](#footnote-492) Although this first volume appeared after the *Versuch* and indeed contains new material compared to the *Merkur*-‘Briefe’,[[493]](#footnote-493) it will not be taken into consideration in the present chapter. The reason for this is that Reinhold did not use the occasion of rewriting and expanding his ‘Briefe’ into the first volume of *Briefe* to explore the issues of practical philosophy from the point at which the ‘Grundlinien’ had left them. *Briefe I* does discuss the fundamental truth of morality (that is, human freedom), but only in its more abstract form as ‘the fundamental truth of morality’, not as the freedom of the will. Nor does Reinhold discuss the distinction introduced in the ‘Grundlinien’ between the selfish and unselfish drives.This means that the first volume of *Briefe* is not particularly relevant for our purpose in this chapter, that is, tracing the development of Reinhold’s practical philosophy from the *Versuch* to *Briefe II*. In the following I will first analyze the aims and structure of the second volume of *Briefe* and then briefly present the contents of this work in order to have a basis for our evaluation of Reinhold’s understanding of ‘practical reason’ at that time.

### Structure and aims of *Briefe II*

In the Preface Reinhold presents the second volume of *Briefe* as an attempt to assist a friend in studying Kant’s second *Critique*. He clearly presents its contents as a unified collection, although many ‘Briefe’ contained in it are actually adaptations from separately published articles in *Der neue Teutsche Merkur*.[[494]](#footnote-494) Based on the table of contents and Reinhold’s presentation of the individual articles in the Preface we can say that *Briefe II* can be divided into five main parts. The first, consisting of the first article, introduces the subject of the work in a rather wide sense. It presents a conflict in current philosophy regarding the status of metaphysics vis-à-vis applied philosophy. This conflict is related to debates regarding the usefulness of the Kantian philosophy. The second main part, consisting of the second, third, fourth and fifth articles, introduces more specific problems, namely the lack of accepted principles in the fields of natural and positive right. It further prepares for the solution of these problems by means of the Kantian philosophy. That is, Kantian philosophy properly understood, for Reinhold is keenly aware of the fact that this philosophy was by no means fully accepted in the philosophical world and tries to remedy the misunderstandings by making Kant’s premises explicit. This explication follows in the sixth article and is further developed in the seventh and eighth, which together form the third main part of *Briefe II*. It aims at a proper determination of the concept of the will. Having established this concept and developed its characteristics, Reinhold fourthly turns to the consequences of the newly determined concept of the will in the ninth, tenth and eleventh articles. Finally, the twelfth article concludes the collection by presenting a dialogue on the likelihood of the reform in philosophy actually coming about.

From the above account of the structure of the second volume of *Briefe* it is clear that there are certain similarities to the first volume. The first volume, however, responded to ‘external grounds’ by referring the reader to Kant’s first *Critique*, which supposedly solved all the problems introduced. This strategy is no longer available to Reinhold in the second volume of *Briefe*. As the title of the first article, ‘Ueber einige Vorurtheile gegen die Kantische Philosophie’,[[495]](#footnote-495) indicates, the Kantian philosophy itself, now the subject of debate has become part of the problem in a way that precludes a simple ‘Read Kant!’ as an advice to the reader.

Notwithstanding this changed status of the Kantian philosophy, the structure of the first article in *Briefe II* is remarkably similar to that of the very first two ‘Briefe’ in the *Merkur* of August 1786. Reinhold starts by recounting the pessimistic outlook of his correspondent on the current philosophical landscape in order to reinterpret the phenomena in more positive terms. His starting point is a complaint made in *Neues Deutsches Museum* that Germany suffers from “metaphysical influenza.”[[496]](#footnote-496) The metaphor of an illness is of great use to Reinhold, who reinterprets the symptoms of the disease as the crisis announcing the recovery from a previous ailment (cf. *Briefe II*, 7). The symptoms consist of the retreat of philosophy from the domain of experience (cf. 8). The consequences of metaphysical speculation are deemed harmful, and the anarchy in France is presented as resulting from claims in the name of such abstract concepts as ‘humanity’ and ‘cosmopolitanism’ (cf. 12).

Reinhold’s reply starts by pointing out that, if there is indeed a ‘metaphysical influenza’ it is not of epidemic proportions since the number of Kantianizing writings is still relatively small (cf. 15). As for the remark that ‘experience’ is neglected in the current philosophical debates, Reinhold claims that the parties involved misunderstand Kant’s views on experience, because Kant has first given the proper determination of the boundaries of experience (cf. 18). Those who are used to working with their own indeterminate concepts of experience naturally misunderstand Kant’s efforts. This way of reinterpreting the controversy to the advantage of the new, critical philosophy is reminiscent of the *Bisherige Schicksale*, functioning as the Preface to the *Versuch*. The controversy helps to uncover the weaknesses of the old systems, which will in the end collapse and give way to the only possible system to be built upon determinate fundamental concepts (cf. 21). The only cure for the ‘metaphysical influenza’, that is, the ongoing debates concerning the principles of philosophy, is, therefore, the establishment of pure and scientific principles (cf. 37).

Although Reinhold abstains from explicitly claiming that either the Kantian philosophy or his own *Elementarphilosophie* has firmly established these principles it is certainly implied that the Kantianizing philosophy deemed responsible for the metaphysical influenza, in fact contains the only possible cure. In its presentation of a current chaos in philosophy, which has to be solved by a proper understanding of its presuppositions and principles, this first article is related to the introductory articles of the first series of ‘Briefe’.[[497]](#footnote-497) In dealing with the misunderstanding of the Kantian philosophy and attacking the *Popularphilosophen*, it is also akin to the Preface and the First Book of the *Versuch*. The most striking difference with all of these previous works is that Reinhold no longer claims that it is the Kantian philosophy that, although almost universally misunderstood, contains the solution. In the Preface to *Briefe II* the Kantian philosophy appears as the necessary condition for the solution rather than the solution itself. When introducing his plan to present the inner premises of morality by means of proper characteristics of the will, Reinhold remarks the following with regard to the work done by Kant.

Zu Folge des analytischen Ganges an welchen die philosophierende Vernunft bey der fortschreitenden Entwickelung der Grundvermögen des Gemüthes gebunden ist, konnten jene Merkmale nur erst **nach** dem vorläufig bestimmten Begriffe von dem eigenthümlichen **Gesetze** des Willens, welcher durch **Kant** zuerst aufgestellt worden ist, gefunden werden. Sie sind in der **Kritik der praktischen Vernunft** sowohl als in der **Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten** zwar nicht unrichtig, aber völlig unentwickelt vorausgesetzt, und die Aufstellung ihrer **bestimmten** Begriffe ist durch diese Werke zwar erst möglich, aber eben so wenig leicht als entbehrlich gemacht worden. (vii)

[As a result of the analytical path to which philosophizing reason is bound by the proceeding development of the fundamental capacities of the mind, those characteristics could only be found *after* the provisionally determined concept of the proper *law* of the will, which has first been established by Kant. These characteristics have been presupposed in the *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft* and in the *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*, not incorrectly, but totally undeveloped. Through these works the establishment of their *determinate* concepts has first become possible, but it has not become easy or dispensable.]

The characteristics of the will can only be determined after a provisional concept of the law of the will has been established. Reinhold secures his own place in the history of philosophy, by claiming that the course of development of the human mind makes it necessary that Kant’s work is a *conditio sine qua non* but nevertheless only a condition. A similar way of arguing is found in the Preface to the *Versuch*, where Reinhold also referred to the “analytical way of proceeding” of the human mind as responsible for the circumstance that “proper premises of a science are only found after that science itself” (*Versuch*, 67). The concept of ‘representation’ was presupposed rather than determined when Kant set out to determine the concept of ‘cognition’. According to Reinhold this inevitable circumstance explains why Kant’s first *Critique* had been widely misunderstood. The argument in the Preface of *Briefe* *II* amounts to the same, although Reinhold appears to be more confident in proclaiming that Kant only provided the preparation for the final stage of philosophy, which consists in making Kant’s premises explicit.

It is clear that Reinhold’s aim in *Briefe II* is closely related to the aim of the *Versuch*. He intends to bring philosophy a step closer to its final, scientific form by making the premises of the Kantian philosophy explicit. In the *Versuch* this was done with regard to the first *Critique*, or the theoretical philosophy of Kant. Three years later, in the second volume of the *Briefe*, he is ready to do the same for Kant’s practical philosophy or the second *Critique*. Both the *Versuch* and *Briefe II* are related to the project of the first set of ‘Briefe’ in the *Merkur* in that all of these projects aim at solving current philosophical conflicts by finding a common starting point. The main difference between the *Merkur*-‘Briefe’ on the one hand and the *Versuch* and *Briefe II* on the other is, as we have seen, that the first project presents the Kantian philosophy as the solution to current debates in philosophy, whereas the latter two start from the debates surrounding the critical philosophy itself. The second volume of *Briefe* in turn differs from the earlier two projects in that it explicitly relates to the premises of Kant’s practical philosophy.

### Contents of *Briefe II*

The current section analyses the contents of *Briefe II* in accordance with the division in parts presented earlier. Since the first part, consisting only of the first ‘Brief’ has already been discussed in the preceding section, section 2.2.1 discusses Reinhold’s introduction of the problem and his preparation for the solution; section 2.2.2 deals with that solution itself; section 2.2.3 presents the consequences as Reinhold sketches them; and section 2.2.4 considers the twelfth, concluding article of the collection.

#### The problem and the preparation of the solution: second to fifth ‘Briefe’

These four preparatory articles sketching the problems of the current debates on the sources of duties and rights and the relation of natural and positive right had been published in 1791 as two articles in *Der neue Teutsche Merkur*. The second and third ‘Briefe’ are an adaptation of ‘Ehrenrettung des Naturrechts’, briefly discussed in section 1.2 of the present chapter. The fourth and fifth pieces in *Briefe II* are based on the essay ‘Ehrenrettung des positiven Rechts’, which was discussed in section 1.2 as well. In the following I will first pay attention to Reinhold’s two sketches of the problem, that is, to the second and fourth ‘Briefe’, and then turn to his preparations of the solution in the ‘Briefe’ three and five.

In the ‘Zweyter Brief’, entitled ‘Von der bisherigen Uneinigkeit der philosophierenden Vernunft mit sich selbst über die Quelle der Pflicht und des Rechts’, Reinhold takes the current debate on the situation in France as the starting point for his discussion.[[498]](#footnote-498) According to Reinhold the discussions regarding the principles of the new political system in France clearly show the lack of determination and clarity concerning the main terms, such as ‘natural right’ (cf. 38). The *Selbstdenker* are divided between themselves regarding the desirability of basing a constitution on natural right, while failing to investigate the concept of ‘natural right’ itself, because they take its meaning for granted (cf. 39-40). Reinhold writes that the ground of our natural rights and duties is at the same time “obvious and mysterious” (43). On the one hand “the existence of these rights and duties announces itself through feeling” (43). The effective cause of these feelings, on the other hand, has only become available to philosophizing reason since the progress made by Kant. The reality of our feelings shows that natural right is a real subject matter, which might be treated scientifically although we lack as yet the proper concept and hence the proper scientific form. According to Reinhold the disagreement on the status of natural right is due to a confusion of the reality of the subject matter with that of the scientific form. Thus the defenders, focusing on the existence of the thing, claim that the concept has been sufficiently established, whereas their adversaries, focusing on the lack of a determinate concept cast doubt on the existence of the thing (cf. 44-45).

The remainder of the second ‘Brief’ builds on the historical approach applied in the first series of ‘Briefe’, describing how the disagreement on the status of natural right necessarily arose from the combination of a clear feeling with the lack of a determinate concept. First, Reinhold argues that it is necessary that the awareness of right and duty is first installed in mankind through feeling (cf. 47). All philosophical attempts to establish a determinate concept of natural right or morality must be understood as attempts to identify the cause of this feeling, whereas the feeling itself is independent of any speculation (cf. 48). Reinhold links the question regarding the cause of moral feeling to the question of the ground of moral obligation (*Verbindlichkeit*) and concludes, as in the *Versuch*, that up till now philosophical theories have not been able to provide a satisfactory explanation (cf. 49-57). The true explanation of moral feeling must combine the true parts of all the other explanations, while dispensing with the falsities contained in them (cf. 62). This higher standpoint must therefore on the one hand establish the “reality of natural right,” that is, establish the unselfishness, necessity and universality of our sense of justice. On the other hand it must explain why natural right had not yet acquired a scientific form (63). The formulation of the subsequent claim that this new explanation “follows from the principles of the Kantian philosophy” expresses both Reinhold’s loyalty to Kant and his conviction that the Kantian philosophy is not the final stage of philosophy yet (63).

Reinhold’s analysis of the problem is continued in the fourth article in the collection, entitled ‘Ueber die bisherige Mißhelligkeit zwischen der moralischen und politischen Gesetzgebung, und zwischen der natürlichen und der positiven Rechtswissenschaft’. Here he investigates the animosity between the philosophers on the one hand and the “practitioners of the positive sciences,” especially jurists on the other, concerning the status of positive right (98). Philosophers claim that jurists overestimate its importance, while the latter blame philosophers for underestimating it (cf. 100). In the background, the conflict concerns the status of natural right in relation to positive right, since the latter is the domain of jurists, while philosophers are more concerned with the former. Both parties claim that the cause of their disagreement is the lack of a determined concept of positive right on the part of their adversaries (cf. 111-112).[[499]](#footnote-499) Again, the question cannot be solved without a determinate concept of positive right (cf. 113). According to Reinhold, the jurists pay too much attention to empirical studies of actual legal documents and only consider the historical sides of a claim to justice (118). Further, they think that the concept of right has been sufficiently established and that they need not address the problem because they confuse the feeling of right with its concept (cf. 122). Essentially, this is the same problem as the one identified in the second ‘Brief’, only with regard to positive right rather than natural right. The problem is the lack of a properly determined concept of the subject matter of these disciplines, even if the subject matter is related to clear feelings. It is up to philosophy to provide positive jurisprudence with its ‘propaedeutic’, a preparatory science in which the main concepts are determined and the domain and its relation to natural right are established and presented (127). However, the philosophers have not yet succeeded in providing this proper concept of ‘right’ (cf. 129).

Summarizing, the second and fourth ‘Briefe’ clearly sketch similar problems in addressing the conflicts that result from the lack of determinate concepts in the field of theories of right. Both theories of natural right and positive jurisprudence lack a determinate concept of their subject matter, ‘natural right’ and ‘positive right’, respectively. In both cases Reinhold refers to a clear feeling of right that serves to prove the reality of right, which has become confused with the as yet unclear concept of right that must be the foundation of any scientific treatment of the subject. Only with Kant it has become possible to determine this concept, for which the third and fifth ‘Briefe’ pave the way.

In the third ‘Brief’, entitled ‘Von dem künftigen Einverständnisse der philosophierenden Vernunft mit sich selbst über die Quelle der Pflicht und des Rechts’, Reinhold puts forward a series of claims as hypotheses, since he is not aiming at this point to show how they are related to their Kantian grounds (cf. 64). The strategy of claiming that the Kantian philosophy has produced such and such results, without giving the grounds for these results is of course similar to the strategy of the first series of ‘Briefe’, only now the results relate to Kant’s second *Critique*. First, he claims that the second *Critique* has shown that the source of morality, “and therefore also the efficient cause of moral feeling” can in no way be found in the “receptivity for pleasure and pain” (64).[[500]](#footnote-500) From the explication, Reinhold here appears to understand this receptivity so broad as to include all possible material determining grounds of the will according to Kant’s table.[[501]](#footnote-501) Secondly, Kant is credited with having shown that the moral law is “a prescription that contains the ground of its necessity in itself,” that is to say that it is a law that does not need any foreign sanction; it can therefore “only be followed for its own sake” (65). Finally, Kant is reported to have shown that the “source of this law is only to be found in the spontaneous nature of reason” (65). In its capacity of giving this law reason is called ‘practical reason’. With the basic claims in place, Reinhold is quick to admit that this novel concept ‘practical reason’ must seem very unclear to anyone who has not yet studied the *Critique of Practical Reason*.[[502]](#footnote-502) Instead of providing an exegesis of Kant’s understanding of the term, he presents his own thoughts on the subject.

He starts by describing ‘reason’ as the capacity of a person to give herself prescriptions (*Vorschriften*) for any of the effects that are possible through her other capacities. When reason, in order to make a prescription, needs an external ground, it is called theoretical reason. When no external ground is needed and the ground for the prescription is to be found in the self-activity of reason, reason acts as practical reason (cf. 66). The laws that are established by theoretical reason are called ‘laws of nature’, whereas the law made by practical reason, as a law that is grounded in the self-activity of reason is a ‘law of freedom’ (cf. 68). Since this law of practical reason is solely based on reason’s capacity to prescribe a rule to itself, its only prescription consists of a rule that is valid through itself, “that needs no sanction, because it contains it in itself.” This prescribing a rule for its own sake is called the “autonomy of reason” (68). Given this autonomous nature of practical reason, it can only prescribe for those actions that depend on the person as a person, and not for behavior that follows from instinct. That is to say, the practical law is a law of willing. Not the regulation of desire is subject to the practical law, but rather the self-determination of a person either to satisfy the demand made by desire or to refuse it. This self-determination is what Reinhold calls ‘willing’ (*Wollen*) (cf. 69).

This willing must, according to Reinhold, be carefully distinguished from the activity of practical reason itself. The action of practical reason is to establish (*aufstellen*) the moral law, whereas the action of the free will is self-determination to satisfy a given desire or not.[[503]](#footnote-503) When this action is done “for the sake of the practical law,” it is called ‘pure willing’, which hence also differs from practical reason (70). Next the definitions of duty, right and injustice are related to the law. Duty is that which is necessary through the law, right is what is possible through the law, while injustice is that which is impossible through the law (cf. 70). Moral feeling is then described as the (dis)pleasure following from the (dis)agreement of an act of willing with the law (cf. 71). Hence, we can now identify practical reason as “the effective cause of moral feeling” (71).

Next Reinhold sets out to criticize previous attempts to identify the cause of moral feeling from his newly acquired insights. Since duty and right at first manifest themselves as feelings rather than as concepts it is very understandable that some have sought the effective cause of these feelings in a special moral sense. According to Reinhold, moral sense theorists confuse the “effect of the moral incentive” with the incentive itself (82). Likewise those who, like Rousseau, sought the source of right and duty in benevolence are criticized, because *moral* benevolence can only follow from the moral law and does not ground its obligatory character (cf. 85). Those who believe that the determining ground of right and duty can be found in the drive for happiness are also corrected. In a remark that may be directed at Rehberg, Reinhold states

Als Vergnügen gehört das moralische Gefühl unter die **Bestandtheile** der **Glückseligkeit**, und als Objekte dieses Vergnügens gehören Pflicht und Recht unter die Objekte des Triebes nach **Glückseligkeit**. Allein, daraus, daß die Sittlichkeit auch eine der unmittelbaren Befriedigungen dieses Triebes ist, folgt doch keineswegs, daß sie **nichts anderes** sey. (86)

[As a pleasure, moral feeling belongs to the *elements* of *happiness* and as objects of this pleasure, duty and right are among the objects of *happiness*. However, just because morality is one of the direct fulfillments of this drive, it does not follow that it is *nothing else*.]

Rehberg had attacked Kant’s conception of ‘respect for the moral law’ on the basis that it could not provide a bridge between the pure law and the empirical action, since according to him this respect itself was a feeling of pleasure, hence could only be empirical.[[504]](#footnote-504) According to Reinhold, the relation between morality and happiness is to be understood in the following manner. Although there is a strong connection between morality and happiness, the role of morality is not restricted to being involved in achieving happiness. Identifying morality and happiness means bringing in theoretical reason, since happiness cannot be achieved without a certain degree of prudence (cf. 89). Reinhold again appears to target Rehberg in stating that philosophers who have made that mistake have also confused the application of the moral law with the law itself (cf. 90). Rehberg had required that the application of pure practical reason be demonstrated.[[505]](#footnote-505) Finally, it is clear why perfection cannot be the source of moral obligation, even if the moral law is a perfection. Since not all perfection is moral perfection, however, perfection cannot serve as an explanation for the obligatory nature of moral perfection (cf. 90-91).

In the third ‘Brief’ Reinhold indicated how Kantian practical philosophy may be able to solve the problems regarding the status of natural right; in the fifth he tries to accomplish the same with regard to positive jurisprudence. It is fittingly titled ‘Ueber die künftige Einhelligkeit zwischen der moralischen und politischen Gesetzgebung und zwischen der natürlichen und positiven Rechtswissenschaft’. As in the third ‘Brief’, Reinhold begins by putting forward a ‘Kantian result’ as hypothesis. In this case he posits the unselfish drive in order to establish the proper relation between natural and positive jurisprudence (cf.137).

Earlier, by limiting natural right to “duties of force” (*Zwangspflichten*) and morality to “duties of conscience” (*Gewissenspflichten*), philosophers had overlooked the source of “duty in general” (142). Reinhold seeks support from the common understanding of the term ‘natural right’. The term ‘right’ is commonly understood to refer to something that is “morally possible” rather than “physically possible” (146). This basic understanding is founded on moral feeling and provides the connection between the concepts of morality, natural right and positive jurisprudence. A proper understanding of the connection of the different concepts relating to ‘right’ first depends on a proper concept (not feeling) of ‘right’ and of morality. Morality is situated in a “relation of an act of will to the law of practical reason,” which enables one to follow or break the law (146-147). This ability is called “natural freedom” and is distinguished from the “moral capacity” to do something that is in agreement with the moral law (147).[[506]](#footnote-506) Both in natural and positive right and in morality, the concept ‘right’ refers not to the physical capacity of freedom, but rather to “the moral freedom of the will,” that is, the possibility of following the moral law (148). Secondly, it is very important to have a proper, determinate “concept of the distinction between the objects of these three sciences,” that is, of natural right, positive right and morality (148). Again Reinhold relies on the common usage. It is relevant to note that in common usage ‘natural right’ does not have ‘natural duty’ as its counterpart, whereas morality and positive jurisprudence acknowledge both rights and duties. Morality is accordingly defined as the “science of moral legislation,” while positive jurisprudence is understood as the “science of positive legislation” (149). Natural right on the other hand is “a science of mere rights” (150). This is elaborated in the remainder of the fifth ‘Brief’, but it need not be discussed in any detail here, since it has no bearing on our argument.

#### The solution: sixth to eighth ‘Briefe

After the preparations presented in the third and fifth article, Reinhold in his sixth ‘Brief’ aims for a ‘new presentation of the fundamental concepts and principles of morality and natural right’.[[507]](#footnote-507) The title is reminiscent of the rigor of the *Versuch* and indeed we find numbered propositions with explanations. Like the *Versuch*, this article aims at convincing the reader/correspondent that Kant’s innovations make a thorough determination of fundamental concepts and principles possible, in this case of morality (cf. 175). While the pre-Kantian era is described as progress towards science, with conflicting philosophical currents that did not succeed in establishing universally acceptable principles, there will be an endless progress within the scientific philosophy established by the *Elementarphilosophie*. The period of transition from the one kind of progress to the other is the period of “Kantian or critical philosophy” (178). The foundations of the new scientific philosophy are not complete, yet the previous philosophies have been discredited. Many defenders of Kant think that his system will be the new philosophy. They get the same reproach Reinhold had once made the Wolffian metaphysicians, namely that they mistake the scaffolding for a finished building (179).[[508]](#footnote-508) As in the case of the metaphysicians, “mediating concepts” are needed for a complete building, in this case, concepts that mediate between the *Critique of Practical Reason* and a future “system of pure morality and natural right” (179).[[509]](#footnote-509) Reinhold puts forward as evident his own fundamental concepts of morality and natural right as an attempt to establish those mediating concepts.

First of all, Reinhold thinks it is evident that the human faculty of desire consists of two original drives, which are both “essentially different and essentially unified.” One is the drive for pleasure, while the other is practical reason, which is called a drive because its activity is involuntary (181). The drive for pleasure (*Vergnügen*), activated by pleasure (*Lust*) and pain (*Unlust*) is described as a selfish drive, while the drive that is practical reason is called unselfish (cf. 182-183). The will is defined as “the capacity of a person to determine herself to actual satisfaction or non-satisfaction of a demand of the selfish drive” (183). Reinhold stuck to the text he used for the ‘Beytrag’-essay, discussed above (section 1.3). Both in the ‘Beytrag’-essay and in this sixth ‘Brief’, the action of the selfish drive is described as “desire in the narrow sense,” whereas the demands of the unselfish drive, considered as incentive in willing, is called “pure willing” (184). In line with the fifth article Reinhold defines the natural freedom of the will as the “capacity of a person to determine herself (…) either in line with or against the demand of the unselfish drive” (185) and he expressly distinguishes this kind of freedom from the self-activity of reason.

With the basic definitions in place, Reinhold continues with a closer look at ‘morality’, which in the widest sense refers to “the relation between the demands of the selfish and unselfish drives.” In the narrower sense of morally good, this relation is the “subordination of the satisfaction of the selfish drive under the demand of the unselfish drive” (186). The subordination of the selfish drive under the demand of the unselfish drive requires that the satisfaction or non-satisfaction of the demands of the former be undertaken for the sake of the lawfulness of the latter (cf. 188). This subordination, however, has its limits, and the selfish drive must not be destroyed or extinguished by the moral law. Reinhold refers to incorrect concepts of moral action, according to which a moral action is “merely the action of practical reason” and of freedom, according to which freedom is only to be found “in the mere spontaneity of this [i.e. practical] reason” (191). This misunderstanding leads to an understanding of morality in which the source of moral action is freedom, whereas the immorality can only be understood as a limitation of freedom.[[510]](#footnote-510)

The remainder of this sixth article is dedicated to defining right, duty and related concepts like perfect and imperfect right and duty, duties against oneself and against others and more. First of all the genus ‘right’ is defined as that “which is possible through the moral law by means of freedom” (193). Two species reside under this genus, namely right in the narrower sense – that which is merely possible – and duty – that which is necessary according to the moral law (cf. 193). Reinhold starts by taking a closer look at duty, distinguishing between perfect and imperfect duty. Perfect duty, according to him, follows “immediately from the moral law,” whereas imperfect duty follows only from the moral law under extra assumptions (195). The only thing that immediately follows from the moral law is the impossibility of its contradiction, that is, the impossibility of “the voluntary subordination of the most general demand of the unselfish drive under the demand of the selfish drive” (196). Forgoing a more precise determination of imperfect duty, Reinhold continues with the definition of right in the narrower sense. Like perfect duty, perfect right follows “immediately from the moral law,” whereas imperfect right only follows from the law under certain assumptions (202). Again, Reinhold attacks some ‘friends of the Kantian philosophy’, that is, Schmid,[[511]](#footnote-511) who confuse the causality of reason with the freedom of the will (204-205), whose understanding of the will as a causality of reason is, according to him, not fit for deriving the proper concepts of right and duty.[[512]](#footnote-512) He believes that these can only be established “from the relation of the unselfish drive to the selfish drive, not from one of them considered on its own” (204).

In the seventh ‘Brief’, ‘Ueber den bisher verkannten Unterschied zwischen dem uneigennützigen und dem eigennützigen Triebe, und zwischen diesen beyden Trieben und dem Willen’, Reinhold returns to the first definitions of the previous article, in order to elaborate on the concepts used. It is necessary to specify the differences between both drives and the will, since philosophers do not agree on the nature of these differences because they share the misunderstanding:

daß Lust und Unlust die Triebfeder nicht nur des unwillkührlichen Begehrens, sondern auch des willkührlichen, oder des **Wollens** seyen und seyn müßten. (223)

[that pleasure and pain were not only the incentives for involuntary desire, but were and had to be also the incentives for voluntary desire, or *willing*.]

Hence, willing was understood as rational desire and it was assumed that the will could only be moved by pleasure, not by “grounds of reason on and for itself” (224). Since it was not questioned whether all drives were selfish (based on pleasure), the debate regarding the selfishness (*Eigennützigkeit*) or unselfishness (*Uneigennützigkeit*)of a certain drive often centered on the question how the term ‘use’ (*Nutzen*) is employed (cf. 227).

Not only the terms ‘selfish’ and ‘unselfish’ have proved to be problematic; the understanding of the term ‘pleasure’ (*Vergnügen*) has also shown a marked lack of clarity (cf. 231). Since the source of pleasure has often been identified as an agreeableness on the part of the object, Reinhold investigates whether morality could involve pleasure, based on the agreeableness of a moral action. The agreeableness of moral action may be situated in the pleasure that follows from the awareness of having done the right thing, even if the action itself is not particularly pleasant or involves forsaking some other pleasure. However, if this anticipated pleasure were a factor in the judgment that an action is to be taken, moral action would inevitably follow (cf. 238). This implies moral determinism, which abolishes responsibility and the distinction between moral and amoral action (*sittliche und nichtsittliche Handlungen*) (238). Any system that only allows pleasure as determining ground for the will and thus seeks to describe the moral will as being determined by unselfish pleasure, abuses the term ‘unselfish’ (cf. 241). A pleasure can only be called ‘unselfish’ “when and insofar it could only be thought as the consequence, not as the ground of moral action” (241-242). Not surprisingly, Reinhold credits Kant’s moral philosophy with having established the proper concept of ‘unselfishness’ (cf. 243).[[513]](#footnote-513) As usual Reinhold does not provide any argumentation but instead explains why this proper concept has not been recognized as the foundation of morality before. One of these reasons is the hitherto only partially understood conception of the will (cf. 243). Willing has been understood as the “drive for pleasure, guided by reason” (244). Although it is true that desire for pleasure takes place in willing, this is only part of the story. There is another thing involved that is specific for willing, namely a decision (*Entschluß*), which concerns the satisfaction of the demands of involuntary desire (245). This determination to satisfy the demand of involuntary desire or not is active and voluntary. The other element of willing, reason, has likewise been misunderstood in so far as it was not acknowledged that in willing a person could “act against the verdicts of reason, abuse reason” (248). This is, according to Reinhold, a fact of consciousness, the denial of which leads to the abolition of the distinction between amoral and immoral actions. The combination of the characteristics of both desire and reason in the will leads to the following description:

wirklich besteht das ganz Eigenthümliche der Willenshandlung, der Entschluß, in nichts anderm als in der Vorschrift die sich die Person zur Wirklichkeit der Befriedigung oder Nichtbefriedigung des eigennützigen Triebes giebt. (251)

[actually the proper characteristic of the act of will, the *decision*, consists in nothing else but the *prescription that a person gives herself for the actualization of the satisfaction or the non-satisfaction of the selfish drive*.]

This kind of prescribing something for oneself must be carefully distinguished from several other kinds of prescriptions. First of all, there are the rules of involuntary desire itself, which are natural laws. These are not established by the person, but rather by “the selfish drive by means of reason” (252). Secondly, the prescription that a person gives herself in willing must be distinguished from the “prescription that a person gives herself by means of practical reason” (252). The prescription given in willing is a maxim for action that determines whether or not to satisfy a given demand of desire in light of the moral law, prescribed by practical reason. Both the demand of desire and the demand of the moral law are only “incentives of the will” in so far as the will decides to accept one of them as determination for the satisfaction or non-satisfaction of the desire (cf. 254-255).

In the eighth ‘Brief’, ‘Erörterung des Begriffes von der Freyheit des Willens’, Reinhold starts from the premise that the concept of the freedom of the will needs further explanation, because all philosophical systems before Kant contradict the proper concept of freedom, whereas the Kantian philosophy has only given an indication and “by no means established it with those characteristics that distinguish its object from all other objects” (263). Rather, Kant has only made a full definition of the concept of the freedom of the will possible. Reinhold intends to provide this concept by identifying the elements that are part of the proper concept of the freedom of the will, but have hitherto been interpreted as the full concept. First he uses his description of the will as the capacity of a person to self-determine with regard to the satisfaction of a desire to point out that this entails the “independence of the person from the coercion of that demand” (264). This is granted by philosophers like Schmid, who agree that freedom means freedom from the force of instinct, but allow the will to be necessarily determined by reason, and are thus determinists. According to Reinhold, the “limitation of instinct that inevitably follows from the power to think” on which these determinists rely, is not necessarily voluntary (265). The determinists further believe that reason’s determination is grounded in pleasure. Thus the difference between an action from instinct and an action based on reason is only that the first immediately depends on coercion by pleasure and pain, whereas the second depends on it “mediately, through the power of thought” (265). Finally, as they think of reason as the capacity to know the connection of things in themselves, ‘being determined by reason’ must mean “being determined by the connection of things in themselves that is completely independent of the person, that is, depending by reason on the inevitable necessity of nature” (266).

Secondly, on the basis of the description of the will as the capacity of a person to self-determine with regard to the satisfaction of a desire in accordance with the moral law, Reinhold points out that reason, in its practical law, must be independent of the drive for pleasure (cf. 267). According to him, this characteristic of the freedom of the will has been accepted as the only one by certain ‘friends of the Kantian philosophy’, that is, Schmid. The prevalence of this characteristic entails a confusion of the “spontaneous, yet by no means free, action of practical reason” in establishing the moral law, with the action of the will (267). This leads to the claim that “the will is only free in moral action” (268). We have seen earlier that Schmid defended such a claim in his *Versuch einer Moralphilosophie*.Reinhold claims that Kant’s expressions regarding the nature of the will must be understood as expositions, rather than full definitions (cf. 268-269). The Kantian identification of the will with ‘causality of reason’ does not sufficiently distinguish the will from other capacities, such as rational thought (cf. 269). Schmid’s understanding of ‘empirical will’ in his *Wörterbuch* is cited as an example of such a poor Kant interpretation, for it leads to the conclusion that the empirical will is not free. Freedom is situated in “the dependence of the will on reason that determines it immediately” (271, citing Schmid[[514]](#footnote-514)). According to Reinhold, however, the dependence on reason is “posited by freedom, which can follow or break the practical law” (271).

Thirdly, on the basis of the definition of the will as the capacity of a person to self-determine with respect to the satisfaction of a desire either in accordance with or against the practical law, Reinhold points out that the freedom of the will must include the “independence from the coercion of practical reason itself” (272). The point Reinhold makes here is in fact a continuation of the previous point against Schmid, since he aims to show that both pure and impure, or empirical, willing are based in the freedom of the will (cf. 272-273).

Ohne das praktische Gesetz würde er [the will] von dem bloßen Naturgesetze des Begehrens abhängen, und nicht nur nicht frey, sondern nicht einmal eine **Wille**, sondern ein unwillkührliches Begehren seyn, und ohne die Naturgesetze des Begehrens würde er von dem bloßen praktischen Gesetze abhängen, die bloße praktische Vernunft selbst, und folglich zwar selbstthätig, aber nicht frey, und kein **Wille**, kein Vermögen sich zur Befriedigung oder Nichtbefriedigung eines Begehrens zu bestimmen seyn. (275-276)

[Without the practical law the will would depend on the mere natural laws of desire, and not only would it not be free, but it would not even be a *will*, but rather an involuntary desire; and without the natural laws of desire it would depend on the mere practical law, mere practical reason itself, and therefore it would indeed be spontaneous, but not free, and not a *will*, not a capacity to determine oneself to the satisfaction or non-satisfaction of a desire.]

Since, according to Reinhold, both natural law and practical law are required for the freedom of the will, he understands Kant’s claim that the consciousness of the moral law yields cognition of freedom[[515]](#footnote-515) as a partial exposition of the freedom of the will. The consciousness of the reality of freedom depends on the consciousness of the demands of both the moral law and of desire, but also on “the consciousness of the capacity to self-determine the satisfaction or non-satisfaction of the selfish drive either through or against the demand of the unselfish drive” (276).

One philosophical position has taken the independence of the will from all determining grounds seriously, namely that of the equilibrists.[[516]](#footnote-516) Reinhold, at least, interprets the equilibrist claims regarding the indifference of the will towards its incentives and the balance of these incentives as expressing the total independence of the will from all kinds of incentives. The equilibrist account, however, lacks a proper understanding of the important role of maxims in moral action. According to Reinhold, the proper understanding of freedom rests on the following understanding of maxims.

Die Maxime ist ein Resultat der Willkühr und der Vernunft, eine Vorschrift unter der Sanktion der Willkühr, durch die entweder das praktische Gesetz, oder die demselben entgegen gesetzte Reitze der Lust oder Unlust in den Willen aufgenommen, und aus bloß veranlassenden zu bestimmenden Gründen der Handlung gemacht werden. (279)

[The maxim is a result of will and reason, a prescription sanctioned by will, through which either the practical law or the opposite stimulus of pleasure and pain is incorporated in the will and is made from an occasioning ground into a determining ground of action.]

This understanding of maxims is missing from the account of the equilibrists, who have correctly given the negative description of freedom, namely the independence from both the unselfish and the selfish drive, but have neglected the positive side of freedom, namely the capacity for self-determination, that is, “the capacity to elevate one of the occasioning grounds to be a determining ground” (280). Since the spontaneity of the will consists in the independence from the objective grounds of reason and desire, there is no answer to the question as to the objective ground determining the will. Nevertheless, free action is not groundless; “its ground is freedom itself” (282). This freedom is the first cause of the action, which is legitimized for common sense with reference to self-consciousness, “through which the action of this capacity announces itself as a fact” (283). Philosophical reason cannot give a further justification since it cannot understand the possibility of freedom any more than common sense can (cf. 283). It can, however, explain why further justification is impossible; the free will is a “fundamental capacity” (*Grundvermögen*) of the human mind, that is, a capacity “that cannot be understood or explained on the basis of another capacity” (284). Only the effects of such a capacity may be understood or explained, yet the source of these effects cannot be understood.

Having established his thoughts on the proper concept of the freedom of the will and having indicated the way in which previous philosophers have failed to grasp this concept, Reinhold dedicates the remainder of the eighth ‘Brief’ to the issue of Schmid’s interpretation of Kant, according to which the will is “nothing but the causality of reason with regard to desire” (285). Reinhold first takes the claim from the second *Critique* that reason, in moral legislation, is practical[[517]](#footnote-517) and interprets it as the claim “that the will cannot be free without the practicality of reason (by no means through it alone)” (286). He further claims that Kant calls reason practical “not in so far as it acts as will itself (…), but because and in so far it gives the will a prescription only through itself, for the mere sake of prescribing” (288). This practicality of reason is the important thing that has been established by Kant. It is important, because it is the only way in which moral necessity can be united with natural freedom (cf. 290). If the only prescriptions regarding the satisfaction or non-satisfaction of desire were those that were sanctioned by pleasure and pain themselves, a person would be bound by “natural laws of desire” and could not will, only desire (290). When, however, there is another prescription, sanctioned only by itself, independent of pleasure and pain, the person is dealing with “two equally involuntary, opposed demands” that can only be unified by subordinating one to the other (291). Some of the ‘friends of the Kantian philosophy’ have, however, confused this practicality of reason with the will (293). Seeking to unite moral necessity with the freedom of the act of will, they have interpreted the independence of instinct as coercion on the part of reason. Like Rehberg, they call a moral action free in so far “as it was forced by reason and not by sensibility” (295). Consequently, they cannot ascribe freedom to immoral action.

Instead of making the will the slave of the passions, the friends of the Kantian philosophy have made the will “the slave of practical reason,” or rather, they let practical reason act in its place (295-296). The problem here is that the same spontaneity is ascribed to the foundation of the moral law and to the action in accordance with that law (cf. 297). Reinhold describes moral and natural necessity and freedom as united in the following manner.

In der sittlichen Handlung ist **absolute praktische Nothwendigkeit** und **Freyheit** in so ferne vereinigt, als das absolute nothwendige Gesetz, die Wirkung der praktischen Vernunft, durch Willkühr in einem gegebenen Falle ausgeführt, und in so ferne zur Wirkung der Freyheit gemacht ist. In der unsittlichen Handlung ist die **Naturnothwendigkeit** und die **Freyheit** in so ferne vereinigt, als die bloß dem Naturgesetz des Begehrens gemäße, aber dem praktischen Gesetze widersprechende Forderung des eigennützigen Triebes durch Willkühr ausgeführt, und in so ferne zur Wirkung der Freyheit erhoben ist. (297-298)

[In moral action *absolute practical necessity* and *freedom* are united in so far as the absolutely necessary law, the effect of practical reason is carried out in a given case by will and to this extent is made the effect of freedom. In immoral action *natural necessity* and *freedom* are united insofar as the demand of the selfish drive that merely accords with the natural law of desire, but contradicts the practical law is carried out by will and insofar is elevated to an effect of freedom.]

It is important for Reinhold to clearly distance himself from the position that would make the will the slave of practical reason. We have seen that in the ‘Grundlinien’, he had not properly distinguished between the spontaneity of reason in establishing the moral law and the spontaneity of the will in following or disobeying it. This is not to say that he, at that point, was proposing the form of moral determinism that he now condemns – after all, his starting point was that moral freedom must entail freedom from both sensible desire and reason. Nevertheless, his thoughts as expressed in the ‘Grundlinien’ and in the essays on justice discussed in section 1.2 are very confused with regard to the different activities of reason. In criticizing the position of Schmid, Reinhold also distances himself from his own previous position. Given the remark on the importance of Rehberg’s review of the second *Critique*, it may have been this review that made him realize that his own position might result in moral determinism because of the identification of the will and practical reason.[[518]](#footnote-518) This is clearly something that Reinhold did not yet realize when he reacted to Rehberg’s review in the ‘Grundlinien’, reasserting a Kantian line on the practicality of pure reason. As we have seen in section 1.1 of the present chapter, however, Reinhold was quite confused at the time regarding the distinction between will and practical reason. He did not explicitly identify the two, yet gives us nothing to distinguish them by. An implicit identification of will and practical reason is at odds with the ‘pre-philosophical’ thoughts on freedom as expressed in the First Book of the *Versuch*. Reinhold’s account there appears to require a will that can act independently from both sensibility and reason, thus mediating the demands of both. Apart from this tension between his defense of Kant in the ‘Grundlinien’ and his common-sense requirements for the free will, he had one more reason to revisit his initial reaction to Rehberg’s review. In section 3.2 of the previous chapter, it became clear that there is also a tension between the framework of the theory of the faculty of representation and establishing an absolutely free will. Since Reinhold’s initial reaction to Rehberg is characterized by the attempt to relate a ‘Kantian’ theory of morality to the theory of the faculty of representation, he may not have realized that this created tensions. The ‘Grundlinien’ are no more than a temporary solution. It was clear to Reinhold that more work needed to be done. When he returns to the subject he first liberates his practical philosophy from the framework of the theory of the faculty of representation and then starts to distinguish sharply between the will and practical reason.[[519]](#footnote-519)

#### The beneficial consequences: ninth to eleventh ‘Briefe’

The final four articles in *Briefe* II are dedicated to presenting the consequences of the proper understanding of the freedom of the will. One would expect those beneficial consequences to be situated in the fields of natural and positive right, yet Reinhold first returns to the themes of the first series of ‘Briefe’, namely the conviction of the existence of God and of an afterlife. In that first series he had boldly claimed that Kant’s investigation of human reason had yielded important results. The newly found insight into the nature and structure of human reason made the solution of the philosophical debates regarding the rational grounds for the convictions of the existence of God and of an afterlife possible. Especially with regard to the conviction that God exists Reinhold had claimed that the Kantian investigation of reason had revealed a special role for practical reason as providing a rational ground for this conviction. The fourth chapter has shown that Reinhold’s understanding of ‘practical reason’ at that time was more related to his Enlightenment ideals than to the context in which he presented it, that of Kant’s first *Critique*. It is not surprising that in his second volume of *Briefe*, having presented a view on practical reason and the will that is much more related to the second *Critique* than to the first, Reinhold would want to address the issue again.

The ninth article, ‘Ueber die Unverträglichkeit aller bisherigen philosophischen Begriffe von der Seele mit dem richtigen Begriffe von der Freyheit des Willens’, presents Reinhold’s previous explanation of the concept of the freedom of the will as “a justification of the conviction of common and healthy understanding” (308). The relation between philosophical reasoning and common understanding is then described in the following manner.

Der gemeine Verstand und die philosophierende Vernunft sind an **eben dieselben Grundvermögen** des menschlichen Geistes gebunden, die sich in dem gemeinen Verstand durch unwiderstehliche und unfehlbare **Gefühle** ankündigen und durch sie die Ueberzeugungen bewirken, über welche die philosophierende Vernunft, welche die **Gründe** jener Gefühle aufsucht, so lange mit sich selbst uneinig bleiben muß, als es ihr noch nicht gelungen ist, deutliche und bestimmte Begriffe der Grundvermögen aufzustellen. (309)

[Common understanding and philosophizing reason are bound to the *same fundamental capacities* of the human mind. These capacities announce themselves in common understanding through irresistible and infallible *feelings* through which they establish those convictions, about which philosophizing reason, seeking the *grounds* of those feelings, must remain in discord with itself as long as it has not succeeded in establishing distinct and determinate concepts of the fundamental capacities.]

It is clear that the voice of common understanding carries substantial weight, whereas philosophical reason cannot at first achieve its aim to justify the convictions of common understanding. With regard to freedom this means that common understanding is convinced of its actuality through feeling, while philosophical reason seeks to establish its possibility. Since the understanding of freedom as a fundamental capacity of the mind has only become possible with the Kantian philosophy, the concept of the soul, “the subject of the fundamental capacities of the mind” was likewise not sufficiently determined (310).

Reinhold starts from scratch by establishing that there must be a metaphysical conception of the soul that is compatible with the concept of the freedom of the will.

Da man den Willen nur als ein **Prädikat der Seele** denken kann, so fordert der Begriff vom Willen einen Begriff von der Seele, als dem **Subjekte** desselben, und da dieser letztere seiner Natur nach **metaphysisch** ist, so muß freylich auch ein metaphysischer Begriff von der Seele möglich seyn, aus dem sich zwar die Freyheit nicht **ableiten** läßt, mit dem sich aber der Begriff von derselben verträgt. (317)

[Since the will can only be thought as a *predicate of the soul*, the concept ‘will’ presumes the concept ‘soul’ as its subject. Since the latter is *metaphysical* in nature, there must be possible a metaphysical concept of the soul, from which we may not *infer* freedom, but which is compatible with the concept of freedom.]

As we have seen in the earlier citation, the task of philosophy is to establish the conceptual framework for the convictions of common sense. Guided by feeling, we are convinced that we are free; philosophy, although unable demonstrate that we are free, must show that the concept of this freedom contains no contradiction. From the above passage it is clear that this entails that philosophy must show that it is possible to think of the subject of the will, the soul, in a way that is compatible with the freedom of this will. From this starting point Reinhold discusses the strengths and weaknesses of the previous metaphysical systems. He praises philosophical supernaturalism for rejecting material and naturalistic explanations for morality and ascribing the moral convictions of common sense to revelation (cf. 319-320). Yet the philosophical supernaturalist[[520]](#footnote-520) is wrong in seeking the cause of moral feeling outside reason, because it is indeed grounded in practical reason (cf. 320). Lacking a determinate concept of the role of practical reason, the supernaturalist has no determinate concept of his moral feeling either, and the convictions established by moral feeling remain mysterious to him (cf. 322-323). Thus he assumes contradictions without noticing them. Thinking of the soul as a thing in itself, as the supernaturalist does, cannot be done “without attributing marks to it with which the freedom of the will is entirely incompatible” (324).

In his discussion of the naturalistic ways of conceptualizing the soul, Reinhold distinguishes between “dogmatically skeptical” and “dogmatically metaphysical” convictions regarding the nature of the soul (325). As in the *Versuch*, Reinhold discusses different forms of skepticism at length with the aim of disqualifying skepticism of a non-philosophical kind.[[521]](#footnote-521) The dogmatic skeptic who claims that all metaphysical concepts of the soul are untenable, at the same time discredits the determinations “under which common understanding must think the soul” as well (328). Hence, common understanding does not benefit at all from skepticism regarding the concept of the soul. With regard to the dogmatically metaphysical naturalists, Reinhold distinguishes between the materialistic and the spiritualistic variety. According to materialists the soul is “nothing but the human organization itself,” that is, the organic human body (331). The materialist ascribes the feeling of freedom to “the ignorance of the actual incentive [*Triebfeder*] of our actions” (332). According to Reinhold, these materialistic conceptions of the soul and freedom are not only discredited by the Kantian philosophy, but also by the evidence of science, which he believed to show that mechanical and chemical laws “are limited to unorganized matter” and therefore do not apply to phenomena in so far as they are organized (333).[[522]](#footnote-522) The spiritualist philosophical conceptions of the soul are closest to the verdicts of common sense, yet, thanks to the activities of *Popularphilosophen* it finds itself in a miserable position (cf. 335). According to Reinhold, the spiritualist systems (Descartes, Leibniz, Berkeley) all need a “system of assistance” to account for the representations of (seemingly) material objects (338). Popular philosophy, however, has sought to sever the Leibnizian conception of the soul from the theory of pre-established harmony. This theory is detrimental to the freedom of the will, and it is only the “unstable and confused conceptions” of the popular philosophers that allow them to think that the Leibnizian concept of the soul is compatible with the common conception of the freedom of the will (341).

Having thus established the incompatibility of the previous conceptions of the soul with the proper conception of the freedom of the will, Reinhold sets out to show that the Kantian idea of the soul does not suffer similar problems. He does this by invoking his ‘short argument’ to idealism that in this context runs as follows.[[523]](#footnote-523) Kant has countered the realist claim that reason knows things in themselves by pointing out that the forms of representation are only predicates of the represented objects in so far “as they are represented” (343). This means that they do not apply to the things as they are in themselves, which, as such, can therefore not be known. There are no laws that are given from the outside; it is only in sensibility that a dependence is found, namely on “the material of sensible representation” determined by things outside us (344). From this description of transcendental idealism in combination with the proper conception of the will, Reinhold draws the following conclusions. First, in willing we only depend on things outside us in so far as the “involuntary and sensible faculty of desire is involved” (344). Secondly, we are not determined by things outside us insofar as reason is involved. Thirdly, the demand of the selfish drive is determined partly by the things outside us, partly by our own theoretical reason. Fourthly, the demand of the unselfish drive is determined “by mere reason and definitely not by things outside us” (345). Fifthly, all determination in willing only concerns the involuntary demands of the selfish and unselfish drives. Finally, the voluntary element in willing, the self-determination to satisfaction or non-satisfaction of those demands, cannot be thought as a “being determined, either by the things outside us, or by reason” (345). It is self-determination of the will.

According to Reinhold the above claims summarize the proper conception of the will and the premises that led to these results also lead to the only concept of the soul that is compatible with the results concerning freedom of the will presented above. It follows that the soul “cannot be cognized in the capacity of a thing in itself” (345-346). The capacities of the human mind do not follow from the concept of the soul as a substance, but rather “they announce themselves through different states of consciousness” (346). The will and its freedom are among the fundamental capacities and reveal themselves “through facts of consciousness” (347).[[524]](#footnote-524)

In the tenth ‘Brief’, ‘Ueber die Unverträglichkeit zwischen den bisherigen philosophischen Ueberzeugungsgründen vom Daseyn Gottes und den richtigen Begriffen von der Freyheit und dem Gesetze des Willens’, Reinhold revisits the other major theme of his first series of ‘Briefe’, namely the grounds for the conviction that there is a God.[[525]](#footnote-525) The starting point of the article is the claim that morality “could not exist, if there would be a proof for the existence of God that is independent of it and therefore theoretical” (352). This strong claim requires argumentation. The first step is to make the relevant understanding of morality explicit.

Nach unsern Begriffen ist die Sittlichkeit ein völlig freyes und ganz uneigennütziges Wollen des Gesetzmäßigen um seiner Selbst willen, und die sittliche Handlung so wie die Unsittliche (…) die eigenthümliche Aeußerung der Freyheit unsres Willens. (354-355)

[According to our conception, *morality is a completely free and unselfish willing of that which is lawful, for its own sake*, and the *moral action* and the *immoral action* alike are characteristic expressions of the freedom of our will.]

It is only because of the “independent capacity of the self-determining will” that we understand ourselves as moral beings, as persons (356-357). Although this freedom is a fact of consciousness for us, it may be doubted in a society with a certain level of scientific and cultural development (cf. 358). This doubt can only be overcome by means of the “secret of the complete harmony between thinking and acting reason, grounded in the nature of the human mind” (360). This ‘secret’ is to be found in the proper concept of the freedom of the will, revealing the relation between practical reason, depending only on itself to prescribe, and theoretical reason, the prescriptions of which depend on given pleasure and pain (cf. 361). Anything contradicting the proper conception of freedom at the same time destroys morality. The next step is to show that any theoretical proof for God’s existence is at odds with the proper conception of the freedom of the will. If the existence of God can be cognized prior to and independently of the moral law, that law is no longer “the law, the following or breaking of which depends on our choice” but rather the will of a sovereign enforcing it by infinite punishments or rewards (362). If, however, the conviction of God’s existence is determined by the independent conviction of the moral law, this fundamental truth of religion provides “an external ground that supports the demands of the unselfish drive upon the selfish drive” (363).

Without morality as the ground of the conviction that God exists, God’s moral nature cannot be acknowledged. The atheist understands God as the primordial power (*Urkraft*) of nature, which is incompatible with the freedom of the will (cf. 365-366). The supernaturalist likewise thinks of God as a primordial power, endowed with an incomprehensible will, which is also destructive for morality (cf. 366). Both misunderstandings of the characteristics of God derive from a one-sided understanding of the moral feeling.

Der Supernaturalist ahndete die Unzertrennlichkeit zwischen Religion und Moral, der Naturalist die Unabhängigkeit der Moral von Religion. (367)

[The supernaturalist sensed *the inseparability of religion and morality*; the naturalist sensed *the independence of morality from religion*.]

The reason for these one-sided approaches is that both parties misunderstand practical reason: the supernaturalist confuses it with God, while the naturalist confuses it with nature (cf. 369). According to Reinhold we can only distinguish between God and nature by considering the ways of acting that we attribute to them. Unlike nature, the deity acts out of absolute spontaneity “which we know from no other source, than through the self-consciousness in which our own spontaneity reveals itself as free will” (373). This confirms the connection between the conviction of God’s existence and morality.

Reinhold continues his overview of the beneficial consequences of his concept of the freedom of the will in the eleventh article, ‘Grundlinien zur Geschichte der bisherigen Moralphilosophie überhaupt, und insbesondere der stoischen und epikurischen’.[[526]](#footnote-526) He claims that “the most important misunderstanding” between these systems can be overcome by the proper concept of the freedom of the will (383). From this concept it follows “that moral actions are neither produced only by reason nor by striving for pleasure, neither by the selfish, nor by the unselfish drives” (384). The proper philosophical concept of morality requires a proper concept of the freedom of the will, which in turn requires the distinction between “the involuntary demand of the selfish drive,” “the involuntary demand of the unselfish drive” and “the voluntary act of decision” (384). These “facts of consciousness” can only be philosophically distinguished by understanding them as manifestations of different fundamental capacities of the mind, namely theoretical reason, practical reason and the will (cf. 384-385). As long as there is no determinate concept of the will as one of the fundamental capacities, philosophers will confuse the will either with the unselfish drive, and adhere to a form of stoicism, or with the selfish drive, and adhere to a form of Epicureanism (cf. 387). Since both the stoics and the epicureans focus on only one of our drives, they cannot have a proper concept of the “complete object of the moral will, the whole good of man” consisting in the “satisfaction of both drives of human nature” (390). Thus they both confuse morality and happiness, either by replacing happiness with morality (stoics), or by replacing morality with happiness (epicureans) (cf. 392-393). Both systems fail to understand happiness and morality properly, since they define them from their own standpoints; thus the epicurean is more right in his conception of happiness and the stoic in his conception of morality (cf. 405). Morality and happiness cannot be though apart from one another, however. In the complete good for man, the “aim of the united drives of human nature” morality and happiness come together (407). Notwithstanding the flaws of these opposed systems, the stoics and epicureans themselves had less problems with moral practice, since their faulty concepts were corrected by their feelings of common sense (cf. 408). When the Greek and Roman civilizations of Antiquity declined, the stoic and epicurean systems lost touch with the correction of feeling and degenerated; stoicism became monasticism, while Epicureanism became libertinism (cf. 411). These degraded forms of stoicism and Epicureanism are, according to Reinhold, currently connected to supernaturalism and naturalism, respectively (cf. 413). The supernaturalist stoic differs from his ancient counterpart in taking the source of the moral law to be divine reason instead of human reason (cf. 414-415). Current epicureans, naturalists, confuse the law of desiring with the law of willing, while it depends on the details of their metaphysics what they take to be the object of desire (cf. 415).

#### Philosophy and society: twelfth ‘Brief’

The twelfth and final article is entitled ‘Ueber die äußere Möglichkeit des künftigen Einverständnisses der Selbstdenker über die Principien der Moralphilosophie’.[[527]](#footnote-527) With this ‘Brief’ Reinhold concludes the collection by considering the likelihood that the revolution initiated by the Kantian philosophy will indeed change moral philosophy for good. He presents the issue in the form of a dialogue between himself and his fictitious correspondent, who is skeptical and opens by doubting whether freedom is actually possible, since it always appears to degenerate into either despotism or anarchy (cf. 421). Reinhold admits that true freedom can only exist once the proper concept of freedom has been developed (cf. 421). However, he believes that a certain amount of freedom is guaranteed by the existence of extremes limiting one another. The situation in France may be viewed as a negative example for the rest of Europe, making clear that the two extremes of freedom, despotism and anarchy, lead to disaster (cf. 424). His opponent doubts whether the constitutions resulting from this example and expressing the growing political prudence of both subjects and sovereigns will be stable enough, being the result of coincidence (cf. 425). Reinhold admits that in many cases the higher classes (the nobility and (higher) clergy, that is) in society have assumed power at the expense of the third estate, yet also points out that the lack of power of that estate is more due to “its natural immaturity, than to the national constitution” (427). Moreover, historically speaking, aristocratic and clerical rule have been “the instruments of natural necessity, or rather of Providence reigning through natural necessity, in the education of the middle class,” as initiating the state of majority in Europe (432). With ‘middle class’ Reinhold refers to the higher social strata of the third estate, that is, to those members of the third estate that are relatively well-off and relatively educated (cf. 427). In the following Reinhold uses both ‘dritter Stand’ and ‘Mittelstand’ to refer to this class of people. With a brief historical excursion Reinhold seeks to defend his claim that aristocratic and clerical rule was not at first unjust. Rather, it only became unjust after the novelties like the printing press, gunpowder and the discovery of the new world had *de facto* shifted the balance of power between the three estates (cf. 429).[[528]](#footnote-528) The third estate, however, can only successfully claim its role in the constitution of the state when it has reached a state of majority, that is, when it is able to have its freedom without oppressing the other classes in turn (cf. 433). The next question is whether the middle class can actually reach this state from its current state of minority. The education provided by the two privileged classes is no longer adequate to the current state of society (cf. 435). Reinhold’s answer to this is that as long as major parts of the third estate are by no means sufficiently mature, the third estate as a whole is rightfully limited in its actions by nobility and clergy (cf. 437).[[529]](#footnote-529) It is only from the opposition of the extremes (old-fashioned prejudices of clergy and nobility versus the new lust for wealth and *Freigeisterei*)that the true middle road becomes possible (cf. 439). The coexistence of opposing standpoints will force those who think for themselves (*Selbstdenker*) to search for the grounds of the competing views, and thus develop their own point of view (cf. 441). Reinhold’s opponent is worried that in this way the freedom for the middle class will be limited to those who think for themselves. Although the third estate will always include those who cannot really think for themselves, Reinhold replies, “at a certain level of scientific and moral culture” they will follow the cosmopolitan ideas of their intellectual leadership so that all will ‘come of age’ (442). Notwithstanding the further doubts of his opponent regarding the feasibility of this task for the *Selbstdenker* Reinhold remains optimistic and says they must keep trying. The fact that philosophers up to this point have not been able to come up with properly determinate concepts of morality is due to their lack of “determinate concepts of reason and its relation to sensibility” (469). The harmony and unity brought forward once the scientific philosophy has been established is like the unanimity regarding logic or mathematics, not varying with character, education or culture (cf. 472-473). Although this philosophical paradise may not be a reality yet, Reinhold concludes the second volume of his *Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie* with the hope that one day it will.

## Evaluation

Now that we have seen how Reinhold’s practical philosophy started to take shape after the publication of the *Versuch*, in separate articles and later in the second volume of *Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie*, we are in a position to evaluate the development of his use of the term ‘practical reason’ in these works. It is clear that Reinhold’s understanding of this term underwent significant changes in the first few years after the publication of the *Versuch*. In the ‘Grundlinien’, which we took as our starting point for this chapter, Reinhold implicitly identified ‘practical reason’ with the pure will in his somewhat messy attempt to reassert the Kantian line on the practicality of pure reason in opposition to Rehberg. As indicated above, there is some tension between this attempt and Reinhold’s statements on human freedom in the First Book of the *Versuch*. There, he stressed a feature of freedom, namely the possibility to choose either to submit to the law of desire or to follow the law of reason, that does not easily fit with the thought expressed in the ‘Grundlinien’ that absolute freedom is to be located in the spontaneity of reason in giving and following its own law. By attributing the spontaneity to give the moral law to the same capacity as the spontaneity that realizes moral action, that is, practical reason, Reinhold fails to present a clear picture regarding his location of human freedom. The picture appears to be something like the following. Reason is free, in both its theoretical and practical expressions, which are independent from the forms of sensibility. Yet in its theoretical expression reason does depend on something outside reason, namely the forms of the understanding, whereas practical reason depends only on itself. Since the forms of the understanding are themselves the products of spontaneity, reason’s dependence on them does not abolish its freedom, it merely qualifies it. The dependence of theoretical reason also applies to the expression of reason with regard to happiness; although happiness is a non-sensible ideal because it entails infinity, it depends on the modifications of drive through, again, the forms of the understanding. The activity of practical reason is independent and consists in realizing the rational form of lawfulness. From these different expressions of reason arise different laws for action. Practical reason supplies the moral law, sanctioned by itself alone, while the prudential laws of theoretical reason are sanctioned by happiness or pleasure, that is by an external source. Within this structure Reinhold’s implicit identification of practical reason and the (pure) will leads to tensions. In line with his demand made in the First Book of the *Versuch*, Reinhold in the ‘Grundlinien’ claims that the will (in general) is free in so far as it chooses between the laws for action that are available to it. It then acts absolutely free when it chooses to follow the moral law, for this is a law that is of its own provenance, while it acts only comparatively free when it chooses freely to subject itself to the external law of desire. In the first case it acts as pure will, in the second as empirical will. The distinction between these two kinds of will implies that there are different authorities making the decision depending on the outcome. When the decision is a moral one, practical reason has been at work; when it is immoral, subordinating the moral law under the law of desire, practical reason, always striving to realize the moral law has apparently failed. It is totally unclear how this situation is compatible with Reinhold’s starting point that freedom consists in the capacity to choose freely between two competing laws, especially when this capacity is situated in the will, which in this context does not appear to be a united capacity at all.

The source of the confusion is Reinhold’s effort in the ‘Grundlinien’ to strongly link his preliminary thoughts on the faculty of desire and the will to his theory of the faculty of representation. This means that he can only present the highest degree of spontaneity (needed for moral freedom) as a form of reason. Remember that section 86, of which the ‘Grundlinien’ are a part, concerns the causality of reason as an absolute causality. This in turn implies that he cannot differentiate between different forms of spontaneity, for instance, between independently establishing a law and choosing freely between laws. The focus on reason means that the will is basically a form of reason, yet Reinhold’s starting point as expressed in the First Book of the *Versuch* demands that there is a capacity to choose between laws for action. By attributing this capacity to ‘the will’ Reinhold suggests that the will is an independent capacity, but the set-up of the ‘Grundlinien’, in which the will is a form of reason, does not leave much room for such a move. Within the framework of the ‘Grundlinien’ the spontaneity expressing itself as reason is the spontaneity of the faculty of representation, that is, the spontaneity that unifies a given matter to a representation with a specific form. Since the framework requires that form and material go together, Reinhold’s effort to understand practical reason as the realization of the pure form of reason is unfeasible within that framework. The text of section 86 preceding the ‘Grundlinien’ makes it clear that dependence on any material, even if it is the result of the spontaneity of the faculty of representation itself – as is the case with the activity of reason in thinking – will render the activity of reason only comparatively free. It is clear that for the establishment of absolute freedom the framework of the faculty of representation is a hindrance.

The development of Reinhold’s practical philosophy from the *Versuch* onwards amounts to a gradual solving of the tension described above, that is to say, Reinhold is looking for ways to do justice to his starting point in a way that the ‘Grundlinien’ did not allow. The first and arguably most important step taken in this process is the emancipation of the issue from the theory of the faculty of representation, where it did not appear to belong in the first place. The theory of the faculty of representation considers the premises for the Kantian theory of cognition. One of the results of this theory was that the absolute subject, about which nothing can be known, must be thought as an absolute cause, that is, as free. Reinhold’s preliminary thoughts on practical philosophy as he expressed them in de ‘Grundlinien’ are not related to this core of the *Versuch*. We have established above that his attempt to forge a strong link between the theory of the faculty of representation and practical philosophy complicates the issue rather than solving it. In the essays that Reinhold published in 1791, he clearly chose not to link his thoughts on practical philosophy to the faculty of representation. Instead of reason as the seat of spontaneity, we find personhood as a central notion. In his essay ‘Ueber die Grundwahrheit der Moralität und ihr[ ] Verhältniß zur Grundwahrheit der Religion’, discussed in section 1.2, Reinhold takes the first steps in that direction. Given the subject of this article, the relation between the existence of God and the freedom of the will, Reinhold may still be working from the context of dealing with Rehberg’s review of Kant’s second *Critique*, yet his account differs from the ‘Grundlinien’ in that he describes the will as depending on the spontaneity of the mind, which in turn is that upon which our personhood depends (cf. section 1.2). This may still be compatible with an attempt to link practical philosophy to the theory of the faculty of representation, since it is not clear how the spontaneity here relates to the spontaneity identified in the *Versuch*. Reinhold’s identification of this spontaneity with reason indicates that he is indeed still working within that framework. Yet he no longer presents an explicit connection between the faculty of representation on the one hand and the faculty of desire on the other. What he does present explicitly, however, is the identification of practical reason and willing. The distinction between theoretical and practical reason is made by describing theoretical reason as thinking reason and practical reason as willing reason, that is, reason involved in action. This involvement is in turn described as prescribing a law for itself, which it can either follow for its own sake or for the sake of something else. It is clear that this account is close to Reinhold’s preliminary thoughts on the subject in the *Versuch*. The lack of an explicit link with the faculty of representation does not solve the problems that arise from the combination of identifying the will and practical reason and claiming freedom to willingly choose between two different laws. As in the *Versuch*, the will is not an independent capacity, but rather a form of reason.

This is also the case in the other essay from the spring of 1791 discussed in section 1.2, on the concept of natural right. Again Reinhold identifies the activity of reason in regulating desire with practical reason, which gives and follows its own law. This time, the discussion is undertaken in an attempt to solve the philosophical controversies regarding the concept of natural right. The misunderstandings and lack of clarity regarding this concept lead to disputes among philosophers that can be solved by means of the Kantian philosophy. Reinhold aims to determine the foundation of morality enabling him to establish natural right as well. This context is no longer reminiscent of the theory of the faculty of representation at all, but rather of the ‘Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie’ in the *Merkur*. Instead of linking his thoughts on practical philosophy to his theory of the faculty of representation, Reinhold appears to start anew and tries to establish practical philosophy upon external, rather than internal grounds. The same strategy is followed in the later essay on positive right, which parallels that on natural right, in that it starts from the disputes among philosophers and jurists on the status of positive right. The disputes are presented as the result of a common misunderstanding of the structure of the human mind, which can be solved by the Kantian philosophy. Still, in the autumn of 1791, Reinhold clearly identifies practical reason with willing and, as we have seen, still generates a substantive amount of confusion by identifying as activities of reason both the giving and the following of laws of both practical and theoretical reason. The issue of freedom appears to have shifted to the background to make place for the determination of the concepts of right and duty. We have seen that the question as to which capacity carries out which limitation of the selfish drive does not have Reinhold’s attention at this time. Thus, there is less tension between claiming a freedom of the will and failing to have a unified picture of this will, but the confusion regarding the many activities of reason remains.

Yet, as Lazzari has shown in his reconstruction of the production of the essay ‘Beytrag zur genaueren Bestimmung der Grundbegriffe der Moral und des Naturrechts’ Reinhold almost immediately upon finishing the essay on positive right started to rework the material into what would become the ‘Beytrag’-essay.[[530]](#footnote-530) The shift away from the theory of the faculty of representation is here completed, since the unselfish drive, presenting the demand of the moral law is related to the spontaneity of the person, instead of reason. Reinhold’s letting go of reason as *the* seat of human spontaneity allows him to differentiate between various spontaneous capacities with more clarity. Now the will can be introduced as an independent capacity and as a necessary ingredient of the determination of the concepts of right and duty. The following and giving of prescriptions for action is no longer the sole task of reason, since the decision to follow the rules of reason or not is located in the will, expressly distinguished from reason. On the basis of this distinction in activity Reinhold can also distinguish between different kinds of freedom. The freedom of complying with the moral law or not is situated in the will, while the freedom that consists in total independence from external factors is attributed to practical reason, as it establishes the moral law. In this manner Reinhold can finally do justice to his starting point as presented in the First Book of the *Versuch*. The thought that there must be freedom to either follow the moral law or not, requires acknowledging the will as a capacity that independently decides which prescriptions it follows in a given case.

This approach was elaborated and consolidated in the second volume of Reinhold’s *Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie*. His reworking of the earlier articles on natural and positive right, with their focus on correcting the current misunderstandings regarding the philosophy of right, matches the outlook of the *Briefe* project in general. It is telling in this respect that only the second halves of those articles were changed significantly, that is, the parts having a direct bearing on the issue of the activities of reason and the will. The first halves, introducing the subject in relation to current philosophical debates remained essentially the same. This means that, even though Reinhold’s thoughts on the core subject changed significantly, the format of presenting the Kantian philosophy as the solution to current debates remains applicable. The first ‘Brief’ affirms that the strategy of the first series of ‘Briefe’ was not only of use to introduce a wider audience to the Kantian philosophy, but is also instrumental in solving debates occasioned by the Kantian philosophy. With regard to the aim and structure of *Briefe* *II* it is clear that Reinhold no longer looks at practical philosophy on a Kantian basis as something to be appended to the theory of the faculty of representation. Instead, the second volume of *Briefe* is structured in a way that parallels the *Versuch*. First, it is claimed that the Kantian philosophy, although universally discredited, in fact contains the solution to the current crisis of philosophy, which parallels the *Bisherige Schicksale*. The following four ‘Briefe’, introducing the problem, match the First Book of the *Versuch*, claiming that the solution to the problems of philosophy has only become possible with Kant, but that, inevitably, the concepts he used were not yet thoroughly determined; in the case of *Briefe II* this concerns the concept of the will, in the case of the *Versuch* it concerns the concept ‘representation’. The core of *Briefe* *II* is formed by the sixth, seventh and eighth **‘**Briefe’ in which Reinhold seeks to determine the undeveloped Kantian premise, the concept of the will. Although this is done with somewhat less rigor than the determination of ‘faculty of representation’ in the *Versuch*, the starting point is still somewhat similar. In both cases the starting point is a fact of consciousness, although the *Versuch* does not employ that term for the insight into the nature of representation. In the *Briefe*, the freedom that is involved in morality, the same freedom to choose for or against the moral law is presented as a fact of consciousness. As in the *Versuch*, parts of Kantian doctrine, such as the categorical imperative, are established upon this fact of consciousness. The structure of *Briefe II* differs from that of the *Versuch*, because in the later ‘Briefe’ Reinhold expressly addresses the beneficial consequences of his newly established doctrine at length: the *Versuch*, however,does contain some passages discussing the differences between, for instance, the conception of the absolute subject as Reinhold had established it and that of other major philosophical parties.[[531]](#footnote-531)

With this parallel treatment in *Briefe II* the practical philosophy is definitely emancipated from the theory of the faculty of representation. There are, however, some more points on which the second volume of *Briefe* can be regarded as the conclusion of a development. Although Reinhold had already separated the will from practical reason in the ‘Beytrag’-essay he was still consolidating this position as he set himself to adapting the earlier articles for inclusion in *Briefe II*.[[532]](#footnote-532) In the third ‘Brief’ he added a fresh account of the nature of reason and the specific tasks of practical and theoretical reason in order to prepare the reader for his moral theory. We have seen that he now presents reason in general as a capacity of giving prescriptions and that practical and theoretical reason differ because theoretical reason depends on something given and practical reason does not.

In section 86 of the *Versuch* including the ‘Grundlinien’, Reinhold stressed the independence from receptivity for reason in general, which made it harder for him to make a clear distinction between theoretical and practical reason and the kind of spontaneity involved in them. Thus, he ended up stating that theoretical reason was comparatively free; free, because it was not bound to the forms of sensibility, yet only comparatively, because it was still bound to the forms of the understanding, given in the faculty of representation. With regard to human action, theoretical reason was also regarded as connected to those forms, since they modified the drive that was extended by reason into infinity, yielding the drive for happiness. Practical reason, on the other hand, only focused on realizing its own form, although Reinhold did not explain whether this realization consisted in the establishment of the moral law, or rather in moral action following the moral law. Although the main distinction between theoretical reason as still dependent on something given and practical reason as totally independent appears to remain in place, there are important shifts. First of all, in the *Versuch*, reason in general is associated with rising above nature, the world of given, sensible material. In *Briefe II* the laws of prudence modified by the forms of the understanding are expressly understood as natural laws. This means that Reinhold’s understanding of the term natural has changed in order to distinguish more clearly between theoretical and practical reason. The loss of the importance of spontaneity is related to the gradual abandonment of the framework of the theory of the faculty of representation. The description of freedom as the causality of reason, employed by Reinhold in section 86 of the *Versuch* and criticized by him as too wide in *Briefe*, illustrates the growing need for him to differentiate between theoretical and practical reason more clearly. Both this differentiation and the separation of the will and practical reason reflect Reinhold’s growing awareness that just one spontaneous capacity will not suffice to ground his starting point for moral philosophy, namely that humans must be free in a way that allows them to choose freely between opposing laws. By distinguishing more clearly between practical and theoretical reason, downplaying the importance of the spontaneity of the latter, Reinhold can more easily oppose the different laws. By distinguishing more clearly between the will and practical reason, making the will a separate fundamental capacity of the human mind, he can explain why the result of our highest form of spontaneity, the moral law, does not invariably bring about moral action. As a different capacity, independent of the demands of both the selfish and the unselfish drives, the will is the determining ground of action. Here we see the main addition in *Briefe II*, if we compare it to the ‘Beytrag’-essay in which Reinhold first separated the will and practical reason. In the *Briefe* he presents a fuller picture of the structure of the human mind that enables us to see better how, after the ‘Grundlinien’, his views of reason have changed together with his practical philosophy.

Another issue on which Reinhold’s account in the *Briefe* differs from the ‘Beytrag’-essay is his view on the distinction between pure will and empirical will. The essay still used it to differentiate between the will determined by the moral law and the will determined by desire. In the *Briefe*, however, Reinhold rejects the distinction, with reference to Schmid’s understanding of it. Instead, he stresses the involvement of both sensibility and reason in every decision of the will, since it is the independence of the will from both that enables to choose any occasioning ground as a determining ground. Schmid’s understanding of the earlier formulation would, according to Reinhold amount to moral determinism.

Regarding the role of practical reason in the second volume of the *Briefe*, it is clear that the way Reinhold conceives of practical reason here is the result of a process starting in the ‘Grundlinien’ and for the time being ending here. At the beginning of this process, Reinhold, on the basis of his theory of the faculty of representation, counted on the spontaneous nature of reason as such to establish human freedom. We have seen in the ‘Grundlinien’ that at first Reinhold had no clear idea where exactly to situate this freedom. In the 1791 articles he explicitly located it in the will, which was identified with practical reason. His account was still confused with regard to the different activities of reason and how the will related to them. A clear separation of the spontaneity exercised by reason and the spontaneity exercised by the will was introduced in the ‘Beytrag’-essay, where the will was established as a separate fundamental capacity of the human mind, irreducible to other capacities. This finally enabled Reinhold in the second volume of his *Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie* to treat the will, given as a fact of consciousness, in a similar fashion as ‘representation’ in the *Versuch*.[[533]](#footnote-533) Between the ‘Grundlinien’, in which practical reason was both the giver and executor of the moral law and the supreme seat of human spontaneity, and *Briefe* *II*, in which role of practical reason was reduced to that of involuntary giver of the moral law, lies a big difference. Reinhold started out to reassert the Kantian line on the causality of reason, yet this did not square with his starting point regarding human freedom, which required the independence from both reason and sensibility. Reinhold’s development after the ‘Grundlinien’ is to be regarded as the effort to ground this starting point in a Kantianizing framework. It is no coincidence that the final solution consists in reducing the role of practical reason to establishing the moral law, while the will takes prominence as a fundamental capacity that rises above and unifies man’s spontaneous and receptive capacities. This was Reinhold’s ultimate aim in his works on Enlightenment, his first ‘Briefe’ and the *Versuch* as well.

# Conclusion

The present study has presented the Kantianizing phase of the philosophy of Karl Leonhard Reinhold from the perspective of his pre-Kantian concerns. The main premise underlying the project has been that Reinhold’s education in Josephite Vienna and his early philosophical concern were of the highest importance for the way he would not only understand the Kantian philosophy, but also set out to present it. As we have seen in the first chapter, Reinhold was exposed to an extraordinary range of influences during his formative period. Apart from being thoroughly familiar with the Baroque Catholicism of late 18th century Austria, he also became acquainted with philosophy within the monastic curriculum. That may not seem very exciting, but the circumstance that he had a philosophy teacher, Pepermann, that introduced him to the English language, literature and philosophy as well proved to be highly significant. It meant that he could and would access a work like Locke’s *Essay* in the original. Not only did Pepermann include British philosophy in his lessons, he also went beyond the textbooks, for example by letting his pupil read Malebranche. Because of the relative openness of the Barnabite Order, Reinhold could still socialize with the friends he knew from his time as a Jesuit novice. They introduced him to Enlightenment in the form of Freemasonry and Illuminatism. The Illuminate view of human history, as presented by Weishaupt had a lasting influence on Reinhold’s way of understanding and presenting the history of religion and philosophy. Apart from the specific influence of Freemasonry and Illuminatism, Vienna provided Reinhold with experience on a specific form of Enlightenment and its consequences. He was confronted with the abolition of the Jesuit Society when he was just a teenager. As a reviewer for the Viennese *Realzeitung* he dealt with the results of the widened freedom of the press, which resulted in an explosion of publications. From the works he reviewed, it is clear that issues of religion, especially in combination with issues of Enlightenment were heavily discussed in the circles in which Reinhold now moved. All of these factors, together with those (Platner, Herder) he encountered on his way to Weimar, played a role in determining Reinhold’s outlook on Enlightenment.

In the second chapter, this outlook on Enlightenment as it manifested itself in a range of Reinhold’s pre-Kantian writings was presented and analyzed. Being one of the first to address the question ‘what is Enlightenment?’, he took into account the course of history and his view on human nature and human reason. The role of history is not only related to particular issues regarding the question whether certain institutions are still adequate given the changes in society. The history of human reason also plays a crucial role in arguing for the inevitability of Enlightenment at a certain point in history. Reinhold’s considerations concerning Enlightenment also relied on his views of human nature, in which he distinguishes between capacities that deal with the real world (‘heart’, ‘sensibility’), and capacities that deal with and abstract world of thought (‘mind’, ‘reason’). True and effective Enlightenment can only occur when the ideas and plans developed by the elite bear the fruit of action, are concretized in the real world. Apart from the fact that from his earliest writings on, Reinhold aims for the synthesis of reason and sensibility, it is also clear that he has a pedagogic vocation that is connected to his membership of Freemasonry and the League of Illuminati. This vocation is elitist in the sense that Reinhold sees himself as a member of the enlightened intellectual elite, who should try and enlighten others as far as possible. The focus of this Enlightenment is on religion, which should be purified from superstition. The pure religion that Reinhold and his fellow-Illuminati adhere to appears to differ considerably from the common forms of Christianity. It is based on morality, which is understood as the rationalization of the natural inclination towards one’s family. This rationalization allows the inclination to be universalized, so that morality consists in loving one’s neighbor as one’s brother. In this understanding of morality we also see the combination of heart and mind, of reason and sensibility.

Reinhold’s conviction that religion was to be based on morality instead of vice versa is also of the highest importance for understanding his turn to Kant. We have seen in the third chapter that Reinhold, in his first letter to Kant, claimed that it was Schütz’s presentation of Kant’s moral justification for the ‘fundamental truths of religion’ in the *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung* that highly impressed him. The justification of the most fundamental religious convictions in a way that was independent from current rationalist metaphysics was of the highest interest to Reinhold. In his *Herzenserleichterung* he already stated that religion had to be based on morality instead of vice versa. The thought that religion needs to be based on morality implies that it is not to be based on metaphysics. Reinhold’s writings on Enlightenment had already distrusted the one-sidedness of the Leibnizian-Wolffian school metaphysics, claiming that its high level of abstraction entailed that it failed to provide the most basic religious convictions with a foundation that would be relevant for ordinary people.

This distrust of school metaphysics and the firm conviction that something more is needed are also apparent from Reinhold’s virtual encounter with Kant over the latter’s review of Herder’s *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*. In his counter review, Reinhold attacked Kant – wrongly – for being an old fashioned, orthodox metaphysician, who, because of his abstractions, had lost sight of the empirical facts. Kant’s mild response may have first drawn Reinhold’s attention to Kant. When the opportunity arose to put his studies to good use and secure a job at the University of Jena, Reinhold did not hesitate. His personal situation would certainly benefit from having a regular income. His response to minister Voigt’s question regarding the influence of the Kantian philosophy shows that he places this philosophy in the context of Enlightenment and presents it as a means to correct the one-sidedness of current metaphysics. From both the skirmish with Kant over Herder’s *Ideen* and Reinhold’s letter to Voigt it is clear that his interest in Kant was not solely dictated by philosophical considerations. Despite these external factors, or maybe because of them, Reinhold soon related the Kantian project to his own pre-Kantian thoughts and saw in it the potential to achieve the unification of sensible and rational capacities he had been looking for in order to justify morality as a foundation for religion.

When we consider the state that German philosophy was in at the time that Reinhold started studying the Kantian philosophy, it is no wonder that he thought it might contain the solution to the philosophical problems that were on his mind. The pantheism controversy between Mendelssohn, Jacobi and others centered on the question whether rationalist metaphysics provided an adequate foundation for fundamental religious convictions such as the conviction that there is a God. This question was not new to Reinhold, whose writings on Enlightenment show that he was keenly aware of a possible tension within Enlightenment. Jacobi presented this tension in the form of an inevitable choice: either to develop rational philosophy and be an atheist, or to forsake rationality and have faith. Given his previous concerns, Reinhold would hope to overcome this choice and establish a form of rationality that would reinforce fundamental religious tenets rather than destroy them. The hint that Kant’s philosophy might provide the means to achieve this would have come from Schütz’s reviews of works by Kant and of works that were central to the pantheism controversy. In reviewing Mendelssohn’s *Morgenstunden* and Jacobi’s *Ueber die Lehre des Spinoza*, Schütz, who was especially attracted by Kant’s moral theology, stressed his conviction that the Kantian philosophy had in effect overcome the opposed positions in the pantheism controversy. This was, as we have seen in our fourth chapter, also Reinhold’s starting point for the ‘Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie’.

In this series of articles appearing in 1786 and 1787, Reinhold applied his views on Enlightenment to make a case for the Kantian philosophy. In it he perceived the possibility of a coherent system doing justice to both man’s rational and sensible capacities which would be conducive to true Enlightenment. If that was not enough, the Kantian philosophy showed a distinct promise to employ this new view on human cognitive capacities to justify an enlightened form of religion. Reinhold’s reading of Kant from this perspective of course only captures some of the aspects of the Kantian philosophy, yet his interpretation became very influential, precisely because he was interested in those elements of Kant that average readers of his time were interested in as well. For that is exactly what the ‘Briefe’ offer: an account of why the Kantian philosophy would be of interest to friends of Enlightenment, to people who are seriously worried by the tension within philosophy that Jacobi appeared to have identified. It is especially in the first two ‘Briefe’ that Reinhold takes this approach, which relies mainly on sketching the situation of German philosophy at the time, Kant’s own introduction to the first *Critique* and Schütz’s reviews regarding Kant, Mendelssohn and Jacobi. Enlightenment is presented as being deadlocked, which is indicated by the pantheism controversy. If both horns of Jacobi’s dilemma are to be avoided, the only option is to show that his conception of reason is flawed. Reinhold employs the Kantian term ‘practical reason’ to present a viable alternative to the rationalist metaphysics of Mendelssohn that does not forsake rationality. In presenting Kantian philosophy as the only way forward out of the crisis of metaphysics, Reinhold follows Kant’s own statement of his project in the introduction to the first edition of the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*. In presenting Kant as a solution to the issue raised by the pantheism controversy, Reinhold follows Schütz.

It is in his understanding of the pantheism controversy as the crisis of metaphysics, however, that Reinhold added his own perspective. Kant had mainly stressed the opposition between dogmatism and skepticism, which needed to be overcome. Reinhold rather focuses on the philosophy of religion and identifies an opposition between those who believe that rational metaphysics can justify religious convictions and those who deny this. Although these positions are similar to the dogmatism and skepticism presented by Kant, the circumstance that Reinhold is able to apply the opposition to a current issue (the pantheism controversy) as well as to an issue of substantial practical interest (the justification of religious conviction) make an important difference in arguing for the relevance of the Kantian philosophy.

It is clear that the issues and themes that occupied Reinhold before he became involved in the Kantian philosophy are the main factor in determining his perspective on the new philosophy. That his pre-Kantian outlook is more important than the Kantian philosophy itself is shown by the way he employs the Kantianizing terms ‘practical reason’ and ‘pure sensibility’. We have seen that these terms are used by Reinhold to alert the reader to what, according to him, is the central aspect of the Kantian philosophy, namely the importance of a connection between our sensible and rational capacities. He presents this connection as a fact about the human cognitive capacity that has been established by the Kantian investigation of reason. From there, it is not hard to argue that the previous deadlock in philosophy is the result of the failure to recognize this fact. The further claim is that once the misunderstanding of reason is corrected and practical reason and pure sensibility are recognized as capacities that mediate between man’s rational and sensible abilities, beneficial results will follow with regard to the justification of fundamental religious convictions. Reinhold’s use of the terminology of ‘practical reason’ and ‘pure sensibility’ is more related to his own thoughts on the task of philosophy in the context of Enlightenment than with any Kantian considerations regarding these terms. Apart from using Kantianizing terms – which is important for conveying the message that Kant has done something special – Reinhold argues for the relevance of the new philosophy in a way that is similar to the way in which he had earlier argued for the relevance of Enlightenment. The development of reason over time, the development of religion, the importance of the Reformation and the importance of linking philosophy to reality are themes that in the ‘Briefe’ come together in one argument for the relevance of the Kantian philosophy.

Although the ‘Briefe’ were a profound success – they helped Reinhold qualify for an extraordinary professorship – they did not convince Kant’s philosophical opponents that the first *Critique* was indeed a ‘gospel of pure reason’. He attributed the failure of these critics to understand Kant to their attachment to their own systems, which either overemphasized reason or sensibility. For that reason they could not appreciate Kant’s efforts, which stressed the need to combine these two elements in cognition. Note that this reproach is similar to the one that Reinhold had once made Kant, in his counter review of Herder’s *Ideen*. Now, however, it did not remain just a reproach; in his *Versuch* Reinhold sought to remedy the misunderstanding of Kant by presenting the theory of the faculty of representation as a premise of the Kantian theory of cognition. This was not because he believed that the latter theory was insecure, but rather because he wanted to make sure that everyone was on the same page. His strategy with the *Versuch* does therefore not essentially differ from his strategy in promoting Enlightenment in his ‘Gedanken über Aufklärung’, or from his efforts on behalf of the Kantian philosophy in his *Merkur*-‘Briefe’. In all three cases, the first step is trying to achieve conceptual clarity. With a proper concept (of Enlightenment, the Kantian philosophy, or cognition) in place, it will not be difficult to convince people that Enlightenment and the Kantian philosophy are good things. In all three cases the proper concept allows for understanding the previous conflicts and misunderstandings from a higher standpoint.

It is only in the *Versuch*, however, that Reinhold explicitly credits himself for having found this higher standpoint. His theory of the faculty of representation is designed to provide philosophers of all denominations with a point of access to the central feature of the Kantian philosophy: the way it overcomes the traditional opposition between man’s rational, spontaneous capacities and his sensory, receptive capacities. In his ‘Briefe’ Reinhold had already identified this feature and claimed that it was this feature that enabled Kant to provide a rational foundation for the fundamental tenets of religion without being trapped by the fallacies of previous metaphysics. In the *Versuch*, this foundational role is hinted at, rather than made explicit. Reinhold now aims to show that the Kantian theory of cognition actually works in this way, that is, that the Kantian concept of cognition entails a combination of the activity of our receptive and spontaneous capacities. This is done by Reinhold’s own theory of the faculty of representation. Since Reinhold analyzes ‘representation’ as consisting of ‘material’, which is received from the object, and ‘form’, which is produced by the representing subject, he can now claim that any representation (and therefore any cognition) involves the activity of both the receptivity and the spontaneity of the human faculty of representation.

Having developed his own terminology to point out what he believes to be the key feature of the Kantian philosophy, Reinhold has no further use for the terms ‘practical reason’ and ‘pure sensibility’ in the sense he used them in the ‘Briefe’. This is also due to the aim of the *Versuch*. Reinhold is no longer trying to show that the Kantian philosophy provides a rational foundation for religious convictions. Rather he is calling attention to what he believes is the key feature of the Kantian philosophy. The consequences of the Kantian theory of cognition when it comes to these convictions are dealt with only negatively. That is to say, Reinhold’s discussion of the ideas of reason shows that ideas such as the absolute subject, absolute causation, a moral world and a most real being can legitimately be thought, for they follow from the structure of reason. Instead of claiming that these ideas are grounded in ‘practical reason’, Reinhold now uses the more Kantian strategy of distinguishing between the ‘thinkable’ and the ‘cognizable’ in order to claim that these ideas are legitimate, yet do not allow us to know anything about their objects.

In the case of human freedom, however, Reinhold does not appear to be content with establishing its possibility on the basis of the structure of human reason. Section 86 of the *Versuch*, which interrupts the line of argument, seeks to establish the application of the causality of reason in the real world. This involves introducing the faculty of desire and a distinction between comparative and absolute freedom. In the ‘Grundlinien einer Theorie des Begehrungsvermögens’, which forms a part of section 86, Reinhold, without a reference, uses Kant’s second *Critique* to argue that pure reason really can be practical and that it can determine the faculty of desire. Reinhold’s reasons for interrupting his argumentation at this point can be understood as an attempt to counter the criticism he expected on the basis of Rehberg’s review of Kant’s second *Critique*. Rehberg had doubted that Kant had successfully shown that pure reason can be practical and had presented an alternative that claimed that comparative freedom would be sufficient for morality. Clearly, Rehberg’s alternative was not acceptable for Reinhold, who might have feared that his efforts to establish the possibility of human freedom would solicit a similar criticism. Section 86, including the ‘Grundlinien’ are therefore to be regarded as a preemptive strike against Rehberg.

Unfortunately for Reinhold, his desire to establish absolute freedom within the framework of his theory of the faculty of representation created tension. After all, the premise of that theory entailed that all activity of that faculty involved both spontaneity and receptivity. Considering the ‘absolute freedom’ that he needed to distinguish from ‘comparative freedom’, Reinhold sought to establish an activity of reason (belonging to the faculty of representation) that would not involve any receptivity. Partly as a result of this tension, his account in the ‘Grundlinien’ is somewhat confused. The confusion is also due, however, to the circumstance that Reinhold mixes a Kantian account of the freedom of the will, based on the lawgiving activity of practical reason with his own account, which appears to situate human freedom in the choice for or against the law. Thus, Reinhold’s efforts to present an account of absolute freedom within the framework of the *Versuch* do not yield a satisfactory result. On the one hand, these efforts do not fit well within the framework; on the other hand, Reinhold has no clear thought on how to understand the absolute freedom he is trying to establish.

In the essays he produced between the publication of the *Versuch* in 1789 and the second volume of his *Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie*, Reinhold gradually develops a theory of the freedom of the will that is to be understood independently from his theory of the faculty of representation. It not only breaks away from Reinhold’s own previous framework, but also from the framework of the second *Critique*, by sharply distinguishing between the will and practical reason. Reinhold combined later versions of these articles with new material to make up *Briefe II*. From the Preface it is clear that this is a unified collection that in a sense does for Kant’s practical philosophy what the *Versuch* did for his theoretical philosophy. Both works first identify a misunderstanding among philosophers, which is to be remedied by bringing the Kantian philosophy into play. Reinhold’s version of the Kantian philosophy, that is, for in both the *Versuch* and in *Briefe II* he adds his taste for conceptual clarity to the Kantian philosophy to make it work the way he needs it to work. In order to get people to see what he saw in Kant’s first *Critique*, Reinhold used the concept of representation. In order to make the second *Critique* fit his thoughts on morality, he needed in the end to make a distinction between practical reason and the will. Saving his understanding of the freedom of the will involved understanding it as a separate fundamental capacity of the human mind, independent from both the demands of sensibility and of reason. Understanding the will as a fundamental capacity, which (like the faculty of representation) announces itself in consciousness, allows Reinhold to put Rehberg’s criticism of Kant aside. He admits that pure reason cannot be directly practical. The will mediates.

With this, Reinhold’s journey from a Viennese monk who wrote on Enlightenment and was a member of a secret society to a University professor involved in one of the most important philosophical debates of his time has come full circle. In his discussions of the freedom of the will Reinhold is once again trying to come to terms with the process of how rationality is put to action. His answers are this time clearly inspired by the context of the Kantian philosophy, but the fundamental thought that there needs to be something in the middle, something that can combine both the abstract demand of reason and the concrete desires of everyday life, is still in place. It remains to be seen whether his solution, the free will as an incomprehensible fundamental capacity of the mind which cannot be grounded philosophically is a viable solution. Yet at least we now understand how this solution came to be from the transformation of Reinhold’s ideals of Enlightenment into the context of the Kantian philosophy.

The above account of Reinhold’s philosophical development from his Vienna reviews up to *Briefe II* has shown how strongely his efforts on behalf of the Kantian philosophy are related to his commitment to Enlightenment. It is not just that the religious and moral aspects that he emphasizes in his *Merkur-*‘Briefe’ are related to his pre-Kantian work. He also seeks to establish a similar unity, of reason and sensibility, of intellectual ideas and the real world. Moreover, his pre-Kantian Illuminatism had given him a sense of belonging to an intellectual elite, whose responsibility it is to improve society. It is no coincidence that he speaks of his decision to write the *Merkur-*‘Briefe’ as a ‘vocation’, or ‘calling’. Reinhold’s self-image as an apostle of the ‘gospel of pure reason’ was undoubtedly inspired by the way the Illuminati viewd themselves and their role in society. The *Versuch* and the book edition of the *Briefe* likewise stem from the desire to spread the good news of the Kantian philosophy, rather than from dissatisfaction with its foundations. This important observation of Reinhold’s fundamental motives is easily obscured by the fact that his foundational work set the tone for the next generation of philosophers, for whom the problems of the Kantian philosophy indeed formed a starting point. It is not so much the fact that Reinhold was the first to demand a foundation of the Kantian philosophy, but rather the way in which he presented a philosophy that was a curious mix of Kantian terms and Reinholdian themes, that triggered the foundational responses. This study has shown how Reinhold’s efforts to find a common ground for reason and sensibility do not stem from a dissatisfaction with the Kantian answer regarding the unity of the two stems of knowledge, but rather from the firm belief that the Kantian philosophy indeed provides the means to identify this unity. His initial situation of this unity in practical reason has less to with the foundational structure of the Kantian philosophy than with Reinhold’s pre-Kantian interests. There is a continuous line of development through Reinhold’s Kantianzing phase, of which the efforts (by Reinhold and others) to ground philosophy as a scientific discipline was an important and fruitful side-effect.

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1. *RK* 1:153, Letter 35, beginning of November 1786, to Christian Gottlob von Voigt. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *RK* 1:153. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Karl Ameriks has pointed out the relevance. Cf. Ameriks, ‘Reinhold’s *first* Letters on Kant,’ 13; Ameriks, introduction to Letters. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Schelling called Reinhold a “vom Wind umhergetriebene Rohr” and also a “Schwachkopf.” His changes of system were interpreted as a sign of “philosophische Imbecilität” (Hegel). Later commentators have interpreted Reinhold’s tendency to work in reaction to other philosophers as unmanly (Kuno Fischer) and as clinging to authority, supposedly a remnant form his former Catholicism (Karl Rosenkranz). Cited in Schönborn, *Reinhold. Eine annotierte Bibliographie*, 21-22. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Cf. Lazzari, *Das Eine, was der Menschheit Noth ist*, 20-21. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Schönborn, *Reinhold. Eine annotierte Bibliographie*, 25. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Hegel, in fact, owed much to Reinhold, even if he refused to acknowledge it. Cf. Onnasch, ‘Hegel zwischen Fichte und der Tübinger Fichte-Kritik,’ 173. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. For a more detailed account of these two lines of reception, cf. Onnasch, introduction to *Versuch*, [XV-XXII]. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Raymund Schmidt, introduction to *Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie von Carl Leonhard Reinhold*, 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Herbert Adam, *Carl Leonard Reinholds philosophischer Systemwechsel* (Heidelberg: Carl Winters Universitätsbuchhandlung, 1930); Magnus Selling, *Studien zur Geschichte der Transzendentalphilosophie. I: Karl Leonhard Reinholds Elementarphilosophie in ihrem philosophiegeschichtlichen Zusammenhang. Mit Beilagen Fichte’s Entwicklung betreffend* (Uppsala: Lundequistska Bokhandeln, 1938). Alfred Klemmt, *Karl Leonhard Reinholds Elementarphilosophie. Eine Studie über den Ursprung des spekulativen deutschen Idealismus* (Hamburg: Meiner, 1958). [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Karl Leonhard Reinhold, *Versuch einer neuen Theorie des menschlichen Vorstellungsvermögens* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1963); Photomechanical reprint of the first edition (Prague and Jena: Widtmann and Mauke, 1789); Zwi Batscha, *Karl Leonhard Reinhold. Schriften zur Religionskritik und Aufklärung 1782-1784* (Bremen and Wolfenbüttel: Jacobi Verlag, 1977). [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Karl Leonhard Reinhold, *Über das Fundament des philosophischen Wissens/Über die Möglichkeit der Philosophie als strenge Wissenschaft*, ed. Wolfgang Schrader (Hamburg: Meiner, 1978). This book contains a reprint of the main part of *Ueber das Fundament des philosophischen Wissens, nebst einigen Erläuterungen über die Theorie des Vorstellungsvermögens* (Jena: Mauke, 1791), in which Reinhold also included two reactions to reviews of the *Versuch*. It further contains a reprint of one of the essays in *Beyträge I*: ‘Ueber die Möglichkeit der Philosophie als strenge Wissenschaft.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Faustino Fabianelli, Eberhard Heller, Kurt Hiller, Reinhard Lauth, Ives Radrizzani, Wolfgang Schrader, *Karl Leonard Reinhold Korrespondenzausgabe*. First volume (1773-1788) 1983; second volume (1788-1790) 2008. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Martin Bondeli, *Das Anfangsproblem bei Karl Leonhard Reinhold. Eine systematische und entwicklungsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zur Philosophie Reinholds in der Zeit von 1789 bis 1803* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1995). [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Karl Leonhard Reinhold, *Beiträge zur Berichtigung bisheriger Missverständnisse der Philosophen. Erster Band, das Fundament der Elementarphilosophie betreffend*, ed. Faustino Fabbianelli (Hamburg: Meiner, 2003); Karl Leonhard Reinhold, *Beiträge zur Berichtigung bisheriger Missverständnisse der Philosophen. Zweiter Band, die Fundamente des philosophischen Wissens, der Metaphysik, Moral, moralischen Religion und Geschmackslehre betreffend*, ed. Faustino Fabbianelli (Hamburg: Meiner, 2004). [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Karl Leonhard Reinhold, *Letters on the Kantian Philosophy*, ed. Karl Ameriks, transl. James Hebbeler (Cambridge: CUP, 2005). [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Karl Leonhard Reinhold, *Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie.* *Erster* *Band*, ed. Martin Bondeli (Basel: Schwabe, 2007), Volume 2/1 of Karl Leonhard Reinhold, *Gesammelte Schriften*; Karl Leonhard Reinhold, *Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie.* *Zweiter Band*, ed. Martin Bondeli (Basel: Schwabe, 2008), Volume 2/2 of Karl Leonhard Reinhold, *Gesammelte Schriften*. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Karl Leonhard Reinhold, *Versuch einer neuen Theorie des menschlichen Vorstellungsvermögens*, ed. Ernst-Otto Onnasch (Hamburg: Meiner, forthcoming). [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. This translation is being made by Professor Tim Mehigan, Otago University, New Zealand. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Reinhold, ‘The Foundation of Philosophical Knowledge’ in *Between Kant and Hegel: Texts in the Development of Post-Kantian Idealism*, ed. George di Giovanni and H. S. Harris (New York: State University of New York, 1985; revised edition: Indianpolis: Hackett, 2000), 51-103. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Reinhold, ‘The Fundamental Concepts and Principles of Ethics,’ in Sabine Roehr, *A Primer on German Enlightenment* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1995), 157-251. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Reinhold, ‘Thoughts on Enlightenment,’ in *What is Enlightenment? Eighteenth-Century Answers and Twentieth-Century Questions*, ed. James Schmidt (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996), 65-77. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. An integral translation in Italian of the *Versuch* has been published by Faustino Fabbianelli. Karl Leonhard Reinhold, *Saggio di una nova teoria della facoltà umana della rappresentazione*, ed. Faustino Fabbianelli (Florence: Le Lettere, 2006). For an overview of earlier modern translations of Reinhold’s works, see the list of ‘Übersetzungen’ in *Beyträge I*, Fabbianelli ed., LII. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Reinhard Lauth ed., *Philosophie aus einem Prinzip. Karl Leonhard Reinhold. Sieben Beiträge nebst einem Briefekatalog aus Anlaß seines 150. Todestages* (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag Herbert Grundmann, 1974). [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Wolfgang Schrader in his introduction to the partial reprint of *Über das Fundament des philosophischen Wissens*, VII, citing Kuno Fischer. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. With respect to this, Michael Gerten has suggested that one of the reasons of Reinhold’s impopularity is the identification of foundational philosophy with fundamentalism and totalitarianism. Gerten, ‘Begehren, Vernunft und freier Wille: Systematische Stellung und Ansatz der praktischen Philosophie bei K. L. Reinhold,’ 154. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Manfred Zahn, ‘Einleitung’ in Lauth (ed.), *Philosophie aus einem Prinzip*, 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Apart from the collection mentioned in footnote , see, for instance, Klemmt, *Karl Leonhard Reinholds Elementarphilosophie*; Selling, *Studien zur Geschichte der Transzendentalphilosophie. I: Karl Leonhard Reinholds Elementarphilosophie*. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Manfred Frank, *Unendliche Annäherung: Die Anfänge der philosophischen Frühromantik* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1997). [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Dieter Henrich, *Grundlegung aus dem Ich: Untersuchunge zur Vorgeschichte des Idealismus. Tübingen-Jena (1790-1794)* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2004). This work can be regarded as the general synthesis of prolonged investigations, spanning more than two decades. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Alexander von Schönborn stresses the relevance of Reinhold’s later work in his ‘Reinholds letztes Werk: Anfang im Ende.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. For the influence of Reinhold’s *Elementarphilosophie* in Scandinavia, see Vesa Oittinen, ‘Ein nordischer Bewußtseinsphilosoph: “Reinholdianische” Themen by G. I. Hartman.’ For the influence on his moral philosophy on Schiller, see Sabine Roehr, ‘Zum Einfluß K. L. Reinholds auf Schillers Kant-Rezeption.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. See, for instance, Bondeli, *Das Anfangsproblem bei Karl Leonhard Reinhold*. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Frank, *Unendliche Annäherung*, 152. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Gerhard Fuchs, *Karl Leonhard Reinhold – Illuminat und Philosoph. Eine Studie über den Zusammenhang seines Engagements als Freimaurer und Illuminat mit seinem Leben und philosophischen Wirken* (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1994). [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Alessandro Lazzari, *Das Eine, was der Menschheit Noth ist. Einheit und Freiheit in der Philosophie Karl Leonhard Reinholds (1789-1792)* (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 2004).For the relevance of Reinholds practical philosophy, see further Lazzari, ‘K. L. Reinholds Behandlung der Freiheitsthematik zwischen 1789 und 1792’ and Gerten, ‘Begehren, Vernunft und freier Wille.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. *Die Philosophie Karl Leonhard Reinholds*, ed. Martin Bondeli and Wolfgang Schrader (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2003); *Philosophie ohne Beynamen: System, Freiheit und Geschichte im Denken Karl Leonhard Reinholds*, ed. Martin Bondeli and Alessandro Lazzari (Basel: Schwabe, 2004); *K.L. Reinhold: Alle soglie dell’Idealismo*. Archivio di Filosofia, volume 73 (2005), issue 1-3; *Karl Leonhard Reinhold and the Enlightenment*, ed. George di Giovanni (Dordrecht: Springer, forthcoming). [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. According to Schönborn Reinhold can be called the “Idealtypus des Aufklärers.” Schönborn, *Reinhold. Eine annotierte Bibliographie*, 10. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. For Reinhold’s debt to the ‘reformist Catholicism’ of Maria Theresa and Joseph II, see Batscha, *Karl Leonhard Reinhold*. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. For a more detailed account of Reinhold’s life up to his move to Kiel, cf. Onnasch, introduction to *Versuch*. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Ernst Reinhold, *Karl Leonhard Reinhold’s Leben und litterarisches Wirken nebst einer von Briefen Kant’s, Fichte’s, Jacobi’s und andrer philosophirender Zeitgenossen an ihn* (Jena: Friedrich Frommann 1825). [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. The correct year of Reinhold’s birth was first published in Lauth, ‘Nouvelles Récherches,’ 593. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. *RK* 1:1, n. 2. Cf. *RLW*, 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. *RLW*, 3-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. *RLW*, 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. *RK* 1:1, Letter 1, September 13, 1773, to Karl Ägidius Reinhold. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. *RK* 1:2-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. *RK* 1:5-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. *RK* 1:7. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. For a detailed account, see ‘Reinhold’s Werdegang im Orden der Barnabiten’, *RK*, 1:386-393. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. *RK*, Letters 33, 36, 73, 111. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Sigmund von Storchenau (1731-1797) was a Jesuit professor of logic and metaphysics. Apart from textbooks he wrote books against the modern world view. Guiseppe Bertieri (1734-1804) was an Augustinian theology professor at the Vienna University. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. *RK* 1:159-160, Letter 36, November 5, 1786, from Don Paulus Pepermann. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. For details on the development of philosophy in Vienna in this period, see Sauer, *Österreichische Philosophie*,second chapter. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. *RLW*, 16-1. However, cf. *RK*, 1:138, n. 2, which reports that Pepermann came from Vienna. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Reinhold, *Ehrenrettung der Lutherischen Reformation*, ‘Vorbericht’ (Jena 1789), cited from: *RK*, 1:11, n. 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. In Mistelbach Reinhold taught Church history, Rhetoric (*eloquentia sacra*), Mathematics and Philosophy; in Vienna he lectured on philosophy and was *Novizenmeister*. *RK*, 1:390-392. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. At this time both Leibniz’s *Theodicée* (1710) and his *Nouveaux essais sur l’entendement humain* (published posthumously in 1765) would have been available. Locke may have been available to Reinhold in English, through Pepermann. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. Cf. *RK* 1:5, n. 4. Friedrich Schiller states in a letter to Christian Körner that a girl Reinhold was planning to marry robbed him of his ecclesiastical status. Karl Böttiger speaks of a barber’s daughter, who decided not to elope with Reinhold for fear of her parents. Gerhard Fuchs further mentions a French letter to a certain Therese. Contrary to his suggestion, this letter appears to have been addressed to one of Reinhold’s sisters rather than to the mysterious lover. Unfortunately it is missing from *RK*.Notwithstanding bringing up this letter, Fuchs does not view the alleged affair as the primary motivation for Reinhold’s departure from Vienna. Cf. Fuchs, *Karl Leonhard Reinhold – Illuminat und Philosoph*,33. Ernst-Otto Onnasch, on the other hand, does present the affair as a relevant factor contributing to Reinhold’s decision to leave Vienna. Cf. Onnasch, introduction to *Versuch*, [XXVIII]. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Cf. *RLW*, 20-21. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. This circle of politically engaged young men who were active in literature included Aloys Blumauer, Joseph Franz Ratschky, Martin Prandstetter, Johann von Alxinger, Gottlieb Leon, Johann Pezzl, Joseph Richter und Franz Xaver Huber. For more elaborate information on Freemasonry in Vienna and the circle Reinhold belonged to, see Rosenstrauch-Königsberg, *Freimaurerei im josephinischen Wien.*  [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. Rosenstrauch-Königsberg, *Freimaurerei im josephinischen Wien*, 13. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. *RK* 1:11-12, Letter 1.1, shortly before April 16, 1783, to Aloys Blumauer. This effectively refutes Gliwitzky’s view that Reinhold cannot reasonably have felt oppressed by his monastic status. Gliwitzky did not know this letter. Cf. Gliwitzky, ‘Carl Leonhard Reinholds erster Standpunktwechsel,’ 19, 67. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. *RK* 1:5, Letter 1, September 13, 1773. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. *RK* 1:394-395, ‘Reinholds freimaurerischer Werdegang in der Loge ‘Zur wahren Eintracht’.’ Two of the speeches that were not subsequently published are extant in manuscript. ‘Über die Kunst des Lebens zu genüssen’, ms. Haus-, Hof-, und Staatsarchiv Wien, Vertrauliche Akten, Kart. 73, fol. 74-75, read by Blumauer on June 18, 1783; ‘Der Wehrt einer Gesellschaft hängt von der Beschaffenheit ihrer Glieder ab’, ms. in Haus-, Hof-, und Staatsarchiv Wien, Vertrauliche Akten, Kart. 73, fol. 64-68, read by Reinhold himself on September 5, 1783. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. Cf. Batscha, *Karl Leonhard Reinhold*, 22. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. ‘Der Wehrt einer Gesellschaft hängt von der Beschaffenheit ihrer Glieder ab,’ see footnote . [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. Fuchs, *Karl Leonhard Reinhold – Illuminat und Philosoph*, 18. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. Rosenstrauch-Königsberg, *Freimaurerei im josephinischen Wien*, 70. The reviews have been photomechanically reprinted in Batscha, *Karl Leonhard Reinhold*. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. Cf. Batscha, *Karl Leonhard Reinhold*, 41. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. For a brief overview of the themes discussed in the reviews and the development of Reinhold’s Enlightenment in this period, cf. Fuchs, *Karl Leonhard Reinhold – Illuminat und Philosoph*, 26-31; Batscha, introduction to *Karl Leonhard Reinhold*. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. Cf. Fuchs, *Karl Leonhard Reinhold – Illuminat und Philosoph*, 31. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. Cf. Jacob, *Living the Enlightenment*, 35, styling freemasonry a “cult of Enlightenment.” [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. *RK* 1:17, n. 17. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. Karianne Marx and Ernst-Otto Onnasch, ‘Zwei Wiener Reden Reinholds. Ein Beitrag zu Reinholds Frühphilosophie’ in George di Giovanni ed., *Reinhold and the Enlightenment*. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. For a list see *RK* 1:75-76, n. 13. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. Being a member of a secret society for education, hidden from the absolutist government, and thus able to read books that were officially not allowed, however, also entailed a political statement. Cf. Agethen, *Geheimbund und Utopie*, 30-36. On the political implications of Masonic sociability, see also Jacob, *Living the Enlightenment*. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. Reprinted in van Dülmen, *Der Geheimbund der Illuminaten*, 166-194. Further references are in the text. For a more elaborate summary than the one given here, see Agethen, *Geheimbund und Utopie*, 106-111. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. For a schematic account of the degrees, see van Dülmen, *Der Geheimbund der Illuminaten*, 292. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. Reinhold, ‘Mönchthum und Maurerey. Eine Rede von Br. R\*\*,’ *JF*, 1784 IV, 167-188. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. Batscha, *Karl Leonhard Reinhold*, 28. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. Rosenstrauch-Königsberg, *Freimaurerei im josephinischen Wien*, 66. Cf. *RK*, 1:18-19, Letter 2, April 19, 1784, from Ignaz von Born. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. Reinhold, ‘Ueber den Hang zum Wunderbaren,’ *JF*, 1784 III, 123-138. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. Reinhold, ‘Mönchthum und Maurerey’; Reinhold, ‘Ueber die kabirischen Mysterien. von Br. R\*\*,’ *JF*, 1785 III, 5-48; Reinhold, ‘Ueber die wissenschaftliche Maurerey’, *JF*, 1785 III, 49-78; Reinhold, ‘Ueber die Mysterien der alten Hebräer’ *JF*, 1786 I, 5-79; Reinhold, Ueber die größern Mysterien der Hebräer, *JF* 1786 III, 5-98. The latter two articles were later published together as *Die Hebräischen Mysterien oder die älteste religiöse Freymaurerey* (Leipzig: Göschen 1788) [under Reinhold’s Illuminatist pseudonym ‘Br. Decius’]. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. *RK*, Letters 2 and 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. “Sie erhalten hier den 3ten Band des 2ten Jahrg. unseres Maurerjournals, dessen Herausgabe meiner Krankheit wegen etwas verzögert wurde. Sie werden darin eine treffliche Arbeit unseres Reinholds finden.” Letter from Blumauer to Bertuch, September 30, 1785, cited from: Rosenstrauch-Königsberg, *Freimaurerei im josephinischen Wien*, 236-237. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. Cf. Fuchs, *Karl Leonhard Reinhold – Illuminat und Philosoph*, 38. [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. *RK* 1:15, n. 2. Ernst Platner, *Philosophische Aphorismen nebst einigen Anleitungen zur philosophischen Geschichte* (Leipzig: Schwickert 1776); Ernst Platner, *Philosophische Aphorismen nebst einigen Anleitungen zur philosophischen Geschichte. Anderer Theil* (Leipzig: Schwickert 1782). [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. Fuchs, *Karl Leonhard Reinhold – Illuminat und Philosoph*, 34. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. For more on *Popularphilosophie*, see Böhr, *Philosophie für die Welt*. [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. For the later relation of Reinhold and Platner, see Onnasch, introduction to *Versuch*, [XXX-XXXI, LXXIII-LXXIV]. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. *RK* 1:15-16, Letter 2, April 19, 1784, from Ignaz von Born. See *RK*, 1:23-24, Letter 3, June 9, 1784, from Ignaz von Born, for the adoration of Born for Wieland. [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. Cf. *RLW*, 24. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. *RK* 1:180-181, Letter 41, January 26, 1787, to Nicolai. [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. Reinhold, review of *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*, by Herder, *Anzeiger des Teutschen Merkur*, June 1784, LXXXI-LXXXIX. [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
96. Wahl, *Geschichte des Teutschen Merkur*,12. [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
97. Cf. Wahl, *Geschichte des Teutschen Merkur*, 164. [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
98. Cf. Wahl, *Geschichte des Teutschen Merkur*, 169. [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
99. Cf. Wahl, *Geschichte des Teutschen Merkur*, 170; *RK* 1:48, Letter 10, after May 16, 1785, from Anna Dorothea Wieland . [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
100. *RLW*, 25. Cf. Wahl, *Geschichte des Teutschen Merkur*, 168. [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
101. Reinhold, review of *Ueber die Einsamkeit*, by Zimmermann, *Anzeiger TM*, August 1784, CXIII; Reinhold, review of *Briefe über die Schweiz*, 1. und 2. Theil, by Meiners, *Anzeiger TM*, December 1784, CLXXVII; Reinhold, review of *Oeuvres de Valentin Jamerai Duval, precédés des Memoires sur sa Vie*, *Anzeiger TM*, December1784, CLXXVIII. [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
102. Review of *Iohannis Physiophili Specimen Monachologiae*, *Anzeiger TM*, June 1784, XCII-XCIV. [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
103. Pater Patritius Fast was the Rector of the Metropolitan Church in Vienna and is mentioned frequently in the *Realzeitung­* reviews as an adversary of Enlightenment and a superstitious man. His opinion on Jesus’s circumcision, earned him a third ‘P’ in Reinhold’s circle, for ‘*praeputium’*, ‘foreskin’. [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
104. Reinhold, review of *Vollkommene Abfertigung des Freund Werklins mit seinem vollkommenen Widerlegungsschreiben*, by Geisttrich,’ *RZ*, August 12, 1783 [316-319]. [↑](#footnote-ref-104)
105. Reinhold, ‘Die Wissenschaften vor und nach ihrer Sekularisation. Ein historisches Gemählde,’ *TM*, July 1784, 35-43 (Photomechanical reprint in Batscha, *Karl Leonhard Reinhold*, 398-406). [↑](#footnote-ref-105)
106. Reinhold, ‘Gedanken über Aufklärung’, *TM*, July, 3-22; August, 122-133; September, 232-245 (Photomechanical reprint in Batscha, *Karl Leonhard Reinhold*, 352-396). [↑](#footnote-ref-106)
107. Immanuel Kant, ‘Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung?’, *Berlinische Monatsschrift*, December 1784, 481-494. According to Wahl, Kant reacts to Reinhold, rather than to Zöllner. Wahl, *Geschichte des Teutschen Merkur*, 189. [↑](#footnote-ref-107)
108. Johann Friedrich Zöllner, ‘Ist es rathsam, das Ehebündnis nicht ferner durch die Religion zu sanciren?’ *BM*, December 1783, 516. [↑](#footnote-ref-108)
109. Moses Mendelssohn, ‘Ueber die Frage: was heißt aufklären?’ *BM*, September 1784, 193-200. [↑](#footnote-ref-109)
110. Reinhold, ‘Ueber die neuesten patriotischen Lieblingsträume in Teutschland. Aus Veranlassung des 3. und 4. Bandes von Hrn. Nicolai’s Reisebeschreibung’, *TM*, August, 1784, 171-186; September, 246-264. [↑](#footnote-ref-110)
111. Christoph Friedrich Nicolai, *Beschreibung einer Reise durch Deutschland und die Schweiz im Jahre 1781*, Berlin 1783-1796, 12 volumes. This work was also known in Vienna, given that Reinhold refers to it in one of his last reviews for the *Realzeitung* [337], although at that time probably not the 3rd and 4th volume, to which the article in the *Merkur* refers*.*  [↑](#footnote-ref-111)
112. Reinhold, Schreiben des Pfarrers zu \*\*\* an den H[erausgeber]. des T[eutschen]. M[erkurs]. Ueber ein Recension von Herders Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit,’ *TM*, February,1785, 148-174. [↑](#footnote-ref-112)
113. Reinhold, ‘Ehrenrettung der Reformation gegen zwey Kapitel in des k.k. Hofraths und Archivars Hrn. M.I. Schmidts Geschichte des Teutschen,’ *TM*, February, 1786, 116-142; March, 193-228; April, 42-80. [↑](#footnote-ref-113)
114. Reinhold, ‘Berichtigungen und Anmerkungen über eine Stelle aus der Broschüre Faustin, oder das philosophischen Jahrhundert. Zweytes Bändchen. S. 83,’ *TM*, March, 1785, 267-277; ‘Revision des Buches: Enthüllung des Systemes der Weltbürger-Republik,’ *TM*, May, 1786, 176-190; ‘Auszug einiger neueren Thatsachen aus H. Nikolais Untersuchung der Beschuldigungen der Herrn Prof. Garve u.s.w.,’ *TM*, June, 1786, 270-280. [↑](#footnote-ref-114)
115. Reinhold, ‘Skizze einer Theogonie des blinden Glaubens,’ *TM*, June, 1786, 229-242. [↑](#footnote-ref-115)
116. *Briefe I*, ‘Zwölfter Brief’, 358-371. Cf. *Briefe I*, Bondeli ed., 339, n. 401. [↑](#footnote-ref-116)
117. Reinhold [anonymously], *Herzenserleichterung zweyer Menschenfreunde, in vertraulichen Briefen über Johann Caspar Lavaters Glaubensbekenntnis* (Frankfurt and Leipzig 1785). Due to the Leipzig censorship, the work was printed in Halle. Cf. *RK* 1:199, Letter 43, March 23, 1787, to Nicolai. [↑](#footnote-ref-117)
118. Lauth, ‘Nouvelles Récherches,’ 614. [↑](#footnote-ref-118)
119. Wahl, *Geschichte des Teutschen Merkur*, 170-171, 188. [↑](#footnote-ref-119)
120. *RK* 1:267-268, Letter 64, September 20, 1787, to the University of Jena (Philosophical department). [↑](#footnote-ref-120)
121. Kurt Röttgers, ‘Die Kritik der reinen Vernunft und K.L. Reinhold’, 795. [↑](#footnote-ref-121)
122. *RK* 1:226, n. 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-122)
123. See Neuper, *Das Vorlesungsangebot an der Universität Jena von 1749 bis 1854*. For a detailed account of Reinhold’s lecturing activities, see Onnasch, introduction to *Versuch*, ‘Reinholds Vorlesungen in Jena.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-123)
124. Probably Ernst Platner, *Philosophische Aphorismen*. [↑](#footnote-ref-124)
125. Probably Johann August Eberhard, *Theorie der schönen Künste und Wissenschaften* (Berlin, 1783). [↑](#footnote-ref-125)
126. *RK* 1:315, Letter 84, January 19, 1788, to Immanuel Kant. [↑](#footnote-ref-126)
127. *RK* 1:315. [↑](#footnote-ref-127)
128. John Locke, *An Essay concerning Human Understanding* (1690); Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *Nouveau essais sur l’entendement humain* (written 1704, published 1764). [↑](#footnote-ref-128)
129. Cf. Fuchs, *Karl Leonhard Reinhold – Illuminat und Philosoph*, 171-172, n. 131. Apart from the catalogue of lectures from the Unversity of Jena, Fuchs has also consulted the ‘Lektionszettel’, which describe the content of the lectures in more detail. [↑](#footnote-ref-129)
130. Cf. Frank, *Unendliche Annäherung*, 217. [↑](#footnote-ref-130)
131. *RLW*, 63-66. [↑](#footnote-ref-131)
132. For the relation between Reinhold’s views on Enlightenment and the ideology of Joseph II, cf. Sauer, *Österreichische Philosophie*, chapter 3, esp. 64-70. [↑](#footnote-ref-132)
133. Cf. Paine, *The Age of Reason* (1794-1795). This work aimed to apply reason to religion in general and the Bible in particular. Thomas Paine (1737-1809) was an inventor and Enlightenment author, involved in bringing about the American Declaration of Independence (1776). [↑](#footnote-ref-133)
134. Reinhold, ‘Ueber den Hang zum Wunderbaren,’ *JF*, 1784 III, 123-138. [↑](#footnote-ref-134)
135. Reinhold [anonymously], *Herzenserleichterung zweyer Menschenfreunde in vertraulichen Briefen über Johann Caspar Lavaters Glaubensbekentnis* (Frankfurt and Leipzig: 1785). Due to the Leipzig censorship, the work was printed in Halle. Cf. *RK* 1:199, Letter 43, March 23, 1787, to Nicolai. [↑](#footnote-ref-135)
136. Reinhold, ‘Skizze einer Theogonie des blinden Glaubens,’ *TM*, June, 1786, 229-242. [↑](#footnote-ref-136)
137. Cf. Reinhold, ‘Gedanken über Aufklärung,’ *TM*, July, 1784, 21. Further references will be in the text. [↑](#footnote-ref-137)
138. Reinhold, ‘Gedanken über Aufklärung,’ 123. Translation [amended, KJM] Kevin Paul Geiman, ‘Thoughts on Enlightenment’ in *What is Enlightenment?*,ed. James Schmidt, 65. Although the brief introduction gives the wrong year for Reinhold’s ‘Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie’ (and also for his birth), the notes are accurate. Only the second and third parts of the tripartite article are translated. Whenever I cite from this translation the page will be indicated in brackets following the original pagination. [↑](#footnote-ref-138)
139. “*Enlightenment is the human being’s emergence from his self-incurred minority*. *Minority* is inability to make use of one’s own understanding without direction from another.” Kant, ‘Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung?,’ *BM*, December, 1784, 481; *AA* 8:35; *PP*, 17. According to Wahl, Kant’s piece reacts to Reinhold’s. Wahl, *Geschichte des Teutschen Merkur*, 189. [↑](#footnote-ref-139)
140. For the difference between Kant’s and Reinhold’s views on Enlightenment, cf. also Batscha, *Karl Leonhard Reinhold*, 57. [↑](#footnote-ref-140)
141. Cf. Sauer, *Österreichische Philosophie*, 100, n. 54. According to Sauer, this does not entail that Reinhold could be called a Herderian at this point. Ibid., 100-101, n. 58. Cf. Bondeli, ‘Von Herder zu Kant,’ 204, stating that Reinhold was fully ‘under the spell’ of Herder’s philosophy of nature and history. [↑](#footnote-ref-141)
142. Cf. ‘Anrede an die neu aufzunemenden Illuminatos dirigentes von A. Weishaupt. 1782’ in *Der Geheimbund der Illuminaten*, ed. van Dülmen, 185-187. [↑](#footnote-ref-142)
143. Cf. Fuchs, *Karl Leonhard Reinhold*, 21-23. [↑](#footnote-ref-143)
144. Reinhold, ‘Mönchthum und Maurerey. Eine Rede von Br. R\*\*,’ *JF*, 1784 IV, 167-188. [↑](#footnote-ref-144)
145. Reinhold, ‘Mönchthum und Maurerey,’ 169. [↑](#footnote-ref-145)
146. Reinhold, ‘Gedanken über Aufklärung’, 124-125; Schmidt, 66. [↑](#footnote-ref-146)
147. Reinhold, review of *Lehr- und Gebethbuch für die unmündige Jugend*, by Seibt, *RZ*, December 3, 1782 [128]. “Eine Aufklärung, die uns anstatt grauer Frömmlinge, unbärtige Spötter, statt furchtsamer Heuchler, zaumlose Schwelger, statt abergläubiger Bürger, ungläubige Wilde gäbe, würde uns für die zufälligen Vortheile der heiligen Dummheit unmöglich schadlos halten.” [↑](#footnote-ref-147)
148. Reinhold, review of *Glaubensbekentniß und Lehre der ächtdenkende Katholiken (…)*, by Koch, *RZ*, November 12, 1782 [117]. [↑](#footnote-ref-148)
149. Possibly a reference on Matthew 16:18. “And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” In a modernised version of Luther’s German translation: “Und ich sage dir auch: Du bist Petrus, und auf diesen Felsen will ich bauen meine Gemeinde, und die Pforten der Hölle sollen sie nicht überwältigen.” [↑](#footnote-ref-149)
150. Alexander Piatigorsky calls Freemasonry “obsessed with its own history,” while at the same time being anti-historical, because “almost unaffected by the history of mankind in general.” Piatigorsky, *Who’s Afraid of Freemasons?*, xiii. [↑](#footnote-ref-150)
151. Reinhold, ‘Ueber die kabirischen Mysterien. von Br. R\*\*,’ *JF*, 1785 III, 5-48. The text shows awareness of the Masonic historical tradition, for instance, it mentions James Anderson, *Constitutions of freemasonry* (1723), the first part of which discusses the history of Masonry, starting with Adam. [↑](#footnote-ref-151)
152. Cf. *RK* 1:16-17, Letter 2, April 19, 1784, from Ignaz von Born. [↑](#footnote-ref-152)
153. Reinhold, ‘Ueber die kabirischen Mysterien,’ 48. [↑](#footnote-ref-153)
154. Reinhold, ‘Ueber die kabirischen Mysterien,’ 48. [↑](#footnote-ref-154)
155. Cf. Weishaupt, ‘Anrede,’ 191. [↑](#footnote-ref-155)
156. Reinhold, review of *Abhandlung von der Einführung der Volkssprache in den öffentlichen Gottesdienst* *(…)*, *RZ*, 1783, March 4 [176]. [↑](#footnote-ref-156)
157. Reinhold, review of *Abhandlung über den Werth der Mönchsprofessen (…)*, transl. from French by Stambach, *RZ*, 1783, March 11 [187]. [↑](#footnote-ref-157)
158. Reinhold also does this elaborately in *­Die Hebräischen Mysterien oder die älteste religiöse Freymaurerey*, which originally appeared in 1786 as two articles in the *Journal für Freymaurer* and was published in 1788 as a book with Reinhold’s Illuminatist pseudonym Br. Decius on the title page. In it, Reinhold discusses the Egyptian origins of both the substance and the rituals of Judaism. [↑](#footnote-ref-158)
159. Reinhold, review of *Rede von dem erlaubten und nöthigen Bande der freyen Religionsduldung mit der Freyheit der Handlung*, by Faber, *RZ*, 1783, April 8 [209]. [↑](#footnote-ref-159)
160. ‘Gutachten des Fürsten Kaunitz vom 21. Juni 1770 über die Notwendigkeit, den Ordensklerus zu reformieren’ in Maaß, *Der Josephinismus*, 140-141. [↑](#footnote-ref-160)
161. Cf. Weishaupt, ‘Anrede,’ 191-192. [↑](#footnote-ref-161)
162. Reinhold, ‘Die Wissenschaften,’ 35. [↑](#footnote-ref-162)
163. Reinhold, ‘Gedanken über Aufklärung,’ 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-163)
164. Reinhold, ‘Die Wissenschaften,’ 39. [↑](#footnote-ref-164)
165. This dialectic view of the dynamic of human history was made famous through Hegel’s dialectics and, via Hegel, in Karl Marx’s (1818-1883) theories on the *Verelendung* of the proletariat, which provides the dynamic for a revolution. Reinhold showed a taste for dialectics already when he interpreted the abolition of the Jesuit order as the preliminary to its glorious return. Cf. Batscha, *Karl Leonhard Reinhold*, 14-15. [↑](#footnote-ref-165)
166. Cf. Weishaupt, ‘Anrede,’ 177. [↑](#footnote-ref-166)
167. Reinhold, ‘Die Wissenschaften,’ 39-40. [↑](#footnote-ref-167)
168. Reinhold, ‘Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie,’ especially the seventh and eight ‘Briefe’ as they appeared in *Der Teutsche Merkur*, on the history of the rational psychology of the Greeks, passim. [↑](#footnote-ref-168)
169. Reinhold, ‘Die Wissenschaften,’ 40-41. [↑](#footnote-ref-169)
170. Reinhold, ‘Die Wissenschaften,’ 42. [↑](#footnote-ref-170)
171. Reinhold, ‘Die Wissenschaften,’ 42-43. [↑](#footnote-ref-171)
172. In his ‘Was ist Aufklärung?’; cf. footnote . [↑](#footnote-ref-172)
173. Reinhold, ‘Gedanken über Aufklärung,’ 4-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-173)
174. In this criticism of the Wolffian philosophy of the schools, Reinhold manifests himself as a *Popularphilosoph*. We shall see in later chapters how he turns against this development in German Enlightenment, disavowing his own origins, so to speak. Cf. Böhr, *Philosophie für die Welt*;di Giovanni, ‘Die *Verhandlungen über die Grundbegriffe und Grundsätze der Moralität* von 1798.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-174)
175. Reinhold, ‘Gedanken über Aufklärung,’ 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-175)
176. Reinhold, ‘Gedanken über Aufklärung,’ 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-176)
177. Herder’s dislike of metaphysics, which we shall encounter in the third chapter, may have influenced Reinhold’s choice of perspective as well. [↑](#footnote-ref-177)
178. Cf. Reinhold, review of *Die Herzjesuandacht nach theologischen und historischen Gründen geprüft*, by Huber, *RZ*, 1783, January 1 [143]. [↑](#footnote-ref-178)
179. Reinhold, review of *Die Herzjesuandacht* [139]. [↑](#footnote-ref-179)
180. Reinhold, review of *Die Herzjesuandacht* [139-140]. [↑](#footnote-ref-180)
181. A edition of the manuscript of this speech will be published in the collection of papers presented at the 2007 Reinhold conference in Montréal. Karianne Marx and Ernst-Otto Onnasch, ‘Zwei Wiener Reden Reinholds. Ein Beitrag zu Reinholds Frühphilosophie’ in George di Giovanni ed., *Reinhold and the Enlightenment* (Dordrecht: Springer forthcoming). The manuscript is kept in the Viennese Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Vertrauliche Akten, Kart. 73, fol. 64-68. The citation is taken from fol. 65v. [↑](#footnote-ref-181)
182. Reinhold, ‘Der Wehrt einer Gesellschaft,’ 67v-68r. [↑](#footnote-ref-182)
183. Reinhold, ‘Mönchthum und Maurerey,’ 171. [↑](#footnote-ref-183)
184. “(…) daß so viele unserer Gottesgelehrten Gott und sein edelstes Werk, den Menschen, noch immer so wenig kennen, daß sie dafür halten, der Urheber der Natur könne in den Menschen dringende Triebe geleget haben, deren gänzliche Vernachlässigung an sich selbst besser und gottesgefälliger wäre, als ein vernünftiger Gebrauch davon (…).” Reinhold, review of *Hat dich keiner verdammt?*, by Elexia, *RZ*, 1783, May 6 [235]. [↑](#footnote-ref-184)
185. In line with social practice at the time, Reinhold does not discuss the rational development of women in relation to their role in society (or in Freemasonry). This does not make him a misogynist, but rather serves as a reminder for the modern reader that the Enlightenment as it actually took place is not the same as the Enlightenment as it lives in our minds. [↑](#footnote-ref-185)
186. Reinhold, ‘Der Wehrt einer Gesellschaft,’ 66r-66v. [↑](#footnote-ref-186)
187. Cf. section 1 of the current chapter. [↑](#footnote-ref-187)
188. Cf. Weishaupt, ‘Anrede,’ 191-192. [↑](#footnote-ref-188)
189. Reinhold, *Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie*, ‘Zwölfter Brief,’ 358-371. Cf. *Briefe I*, Bondeli ed., 339, n. 401. [↑](#footnote-ref-189)
190. Reinhold, ‘Ueber den Hang,’ 125. [↑](#footnote-ref-190)
191. Reinhold, ‘Ueber den Hang,’ 125-126. [↑](#footnote-ref-191)
192. Cf. Reinhold, ‘Skizze,’ 236 [↑](#footnote-ref-192)
193. Reinhold, ‘Ueber den Hang,’ 126. [↑](#footnote-ref-193)
194. Cf. Reinhold, ‘Ueber den Hang,’ 126; Cf. Weishaupt, ‘Anrede,’ 169, saying that humanity as a whole has to go through the stages of childhood, adolescence, maturity. [↑](#footnote-ref-194)
195. Cf. Reinhold, ‘Ueber den Hang,’ 128; Cf. Weishaupt, ‘Anrede,’ 172. [↑](#footnote-ref-195)
196. Cf. Reinhold, ‘Ueber den Hang,’ 130. [↑](#footnote-ref-196)
197. Reinhold, ‘Skizze,’ 237. [↑](#footnote-ref-197)
198. Cf. Reinhold, ‘Skizze,’ 241; Cf. Reinhold, ‘Ueber den Hang,’ 131. [↑](#footnote-ref-198)
199. In his tripartite article ‘Ueber die Natur des Vergnügens’ Reinhold would describe different ways of approaching aesthetics. The theory that looks at pleasure from a subjective perspective centres on the notion of ‘need’ (*Bedürfnis*)in a way that appears to be related to the thought expressed here, for Reinhold claims that all needs are derived from the need for the faculty of representation to be occupied. The central role assigned to the faculty of representation is striking in light of his *Versuch*. Cf. Reinhold, ‘Ueber die Natur des Vergnügens,’ *TM*, October, 1788, 63.For the importance of this article with regard to Reinhold’s later systembuilding, see Lazzari, ‘K.L. Reinhold: Die Natur des Vergnügens und die Grundlegung des Systems.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-199)
200. Cf. Reinhold, ‘Ueber den Hang,’ 132. [↑](#footnote-ref-200)
201. Cf. Reinhold, ‘Ueber den Hang,’ 133; Cf. Weishaupt, ‘Anrede’, 191. [↑](#footnote-ref-201)
202. Reinhold, ‘Der Wehrt einer Gesellschaft,’ 67r. [↑](#footnote-ref-202)
203. Cf. Reinhold, ‘Ueber den Hang,’ 137. [↑](#footnote-ref-203)
204. Cf. Reinhold, ‘Skizze,’ 242. [↑](#footnote-ref-204)
205. Reinhold, ‘Skizze,’ 229; Cf. Weishaupt, ‘Anrede,’ 168. [↑](#footnote-ref-205)
206. Reinhold, ‘Skizze,’ 229. [↑](#footnote-ref-206)
207. Cf. Weishaupt, ‘Anrede,’ 170. [↑](#footnote-ref-207)
208. Reinhold, ‘Skizze,’ 230. [↑](#footnote-ref-208)
209. Reinhold, ‘Skizze,’ 230-231. [↑](#footnote-ref-209)
210. Reinhold, ‘Skizze,’ 230. [↑](#footnote-ref-210)
211. Lauth, ‘Nouvelles Récherches,’ 614. [↑](#footnote-ref-211)
212. Reinhold, *Herzenserleichterung*, 31. [↑](#footnote-ref-212)
213. Elsewhere in the *Herzenserleichterung* the origins of this view of nature are located in the ignorance of man, which is a thing of the past. Cf. Reinhold, *Herzenserleichterung*, 12-13. [↑](#footnote-ref-213)
214. Reinhold, *Herzenserleichterung*, 110; Cf. Weishaupt, ‘Anrede,’ 177-178. [↑](#footnote-ref-214)
215. Reinhold, *Versuch*, 12, 15; Lauth, ‘Nouvelles Récherches,’ 612. [↑](#footnote-ref-215)
216. Reinhold, ‘Skizze,’ 229. [↑](#footnote-ref-216)
217. Batscha understands these claims as being naive, showing that Reinhold was not yet aware of the possible tension between faith and reason. Cf. Batscha, *Karl Leonhard Reinhold*, 49. [↑](#footnote-ref-217)
218. Cf. Sauer, *Österreichische Philosophie*, 68. [↑](#footnote-ref-218)
219. This thought may also be behind the moral hierarchy presented in Reinhold’s speech, where the strength of mind determines the width of his moral action. Ordinarily this circle of action is limited to one’s own family, but with sufficient strength of mind, it might be extended to encompass all of mankind. Cf. section 3.2 of the present chapter. [↑](#footnote-ref-219)
220. Sabine Roehr has brought the connection between Reinhold’s portrayal of the Hebrew religion in this work and his attitude towards Masonry to the fore in her ‘Reinholds *Hebräische Mysterien oder die älteste religiöse Freymaurerey*: Eine Apologie des Freimaurertums.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-220)
221. Cf. Reinhold, *­Die Hebräischen Mysterien*. [↑](#footnote-ref-221)
222. Cf. Reinhold, ‘Ueber den Hang,’ 128; Reinhold, ‘Die Wissenschaften,’ 39. [↑](#footnote-ref-222)
223. Reinhold, ‘Skizze,’ 231. [↑](#footnote-ref-223)
224. Reinhold, *Herzenserleichterung*, 16-17. [↑](#footnote-ref-224)
225. By means of Schütz’s review of Schultz’s *Erläuterungen*, which explicitly considered Kant’s first *Critique* and *Prolegomena* as well. The review provides an overview of the structure of the first *Critique* and pays special attention to Kant’s *Stufenleiter der Vorstellungen* and the moral argument for the existence of God*.* It appeared in several parts in the *ALZ* of July 12 (nr. 162), July 14 (nr. 164), July 30 (nrs. 178 and 179 and supplement) 1785. It is included in Landau ed., *Rezensionen zur Kantischen Philosophie. 1781-1787*, 147-82. Reinhold indeed acknowledges the importance of this review for his first understanding of the Kantian project. Cf. *RK*, 1:271-273, Letter 66, October 12, 1787, to Kant. For the possibly crucial role of Schultz’s *Erläuterungen*, cf. Onnasch, introduction to *Versuch* [LII-LIII]. [↑](#footnote-ref-225)
226. Cf. Onnasch, introduction to *Versuch* [LVIII-LX]. [↑](#footnote-ref-226)
227. ‘Ehrenrettung der Reformation gegen zwey Kapitel in des k.k. Hofraths und Archivars Hrn. M.I. Schmidts Geschichte des Teutschen,’ *TM*, February,1786, March, and April; ‘Ueber die Mysterien der alten Hebräer’, *JF* 1786 I; ‘Revision des Buches: Enthüllung des Systemes der Weltbürger-Republik,’ *TM*,May 1786; ‘Skizze einer Theogonie des blinden Glaubens,’ *TM*, June, 1786; ‘Auszug einiger neuern Thatsachen aus H. Nikolais Untersuchung der Beschuldigungen des Hrrn. Prof. Garve u.s.w.,’ *TM*, June, 1786. [↑](#footnote-ref-227)
228. Kant, review of *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*, by Herder, *ALZ*, 1785, January 6, (nr. 4 and supplement), 17-20 and 21-22; *AA* 8:45-55. Asked by Schütz to review Herder’s book in July 1784, Kant’s review was only published in January 1785 in the *ALZ.* Cf. *AA* 10:394 (Schütz to Kant, July 10, 1784); *AA* 10:396 (Schütz to Kant, August 23, 1784). [↑](#footnote-ref-228)
229. Reinhold, review of *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*, by Herder, *Anzeiger TM*, June 1784, LXXXI-LXXXIX. [↑](#footnote-ref-229)
230. On May 4, 1784, Herder sent Johann Wilhelm Ludwig Gleim the first copy of the first part of his *Ideen*. Dobbek and Arnold ed., *Johan Gottfried Herder. Briefe. Fünfter Band*, Letter 25, May 4, 1784, to Sophie Dorothea and Johann Wilhelm Ludwig Gleim. [↑](#footnote-ref-230)
231. Reinhold, review of *Ideen*, *Anzeiger TM*, June 1784, LXXXVI. [↑](#footnote-ref-231)
232. Cf. Onnasch, introduction to *Versuch* [XLII, XLIV]; Bondeli, ‘Von Herder zu Kant, zwischen Kant und Herder, mit Herder gegen Kant,’ 206. [↑](#footnote-ref-232)
233. Cf. section 4 of the previous Chapter; Reinhold, ‘Ueber den Hang,’ 137. [↑](#footnote-ref-233)
234. On April 19, 1784, Born tells Reinhold that this article cannot be published in a public journal. *RK* 1:19, Letter 2, from Born. The article was published in the *Journal für Freymaurer* later that year. For an evaluation of this article, cf. sections 1 and 3.2 of the second Chapter. [↑](#footnote-ref-234)
235. Cf. section 1 of the previous Chapter; Sauer, *Österreichische Philosophie*, 100, n. 54. [↑](#footnote-ref-235)
236. ‘Ideen, von Herder,’ *Anzeiger TM*, June 1784, LXXXIX. [↑](#footnote-ref-236)
237. Kant, ‘Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltbürgerlicher Absicht,’ *BM*, November, 1784, 385-411, *AA* 8:17-31. [↑](#footnote-ref-237)
238. *Herder. Briefe*, Letter 91, Herder to Christian Gottlob Voigt, January 11 1785.. [↑](#footnote-ref-238)
239. ‘Vermöge einer Nachricht…’, *Gothaische gelehrte Zeitungen*, zwölftes Stück den elften Februar, 1784, 95. Cf. Landau ed., *Rezensionen*, 64. [↑](#footnote-ref-239)
240. Cf. Bondeli, ‘Von Herder zu Kant,’ 210. [↑](#footnote-ref-240)
241. Cf. *AA* 8:17. [↑](#footnote-ref-241)
242. In more general Kantian terms, the idea of a plan of human history has to be understood as an idea in the regulative sense, that is, as an ideal that serves to guide research by providing an ideal endpoint, as we know from the Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectics, titled ‘On the Regulative Use of the Ideas of Pure Reason’ in the first *Critique* (A 644/B 672). [↑](#footnote-ref-242)
243. *AA* 8:52; translation by Allen W. Wood, cited from *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant: Anthropology, History and Education*, 130-131. In the following the pagination of this translation will follow the reference to the Academy Edition in brackets. [↑](#footnote-ref-243)
244. Cf. *Herder. Briefe*, Letter 96, February 14, 1785, to Hamann, and Letter 98, February 25, 1785, to Jacobi. Cf. also Schütz to Kant, February 18, 1785, *AA* 10: 398-400. Herder had followed lectures by Kant in 1762-1764. See Irmscher ed., *Immanuel Kant. Aus den Vorlesungen der Jahre 1762 bis 1764*. [↑](#footnote-ref-244)
245. Reinhold, ‘Schreiben des Pfarrers zu \*\*\* an den H. des T. M. Ueber eine Recension von Herders Ideen zur Philosophie der Menschheit,’ *TM*, February, 1785, 148-174. [↑](#footnote-ref-245)
246. *Herder. Briefe*, Letter 93, Herder to Wieland, End of January 1785. [↑](#footnote-ref-246)
247. Cf. Röttgers, ‘Die Kritik der reinen Vernunft und K.L. Reinhold,’ 793. [↑](#footnote-ref-247)
248. Cf. Malter ed., *Immanuel Kant in Rede und Gespräch*, nr. 301:Hamann to Herder, February 4, 1785. Making a rebuke of this kind corresponds to Herder’s views on the method of literary criticism, which emphasised the importance of judging a work internally, that is, from the perspective of the author’s intentions. Cf. Beiser, *The Fate of Reason*, 141. [↑](#footnote-ref-248)
249. Röttgers, ‘Die Kritik der reinen Vernunft und K.L. Reinhold’, 793. One problem of this interpretation may be that it is not clear why Herder would initiate any reconciliation with Kant. Attempts at reconciliation would be more likely to have come from the Kantian side, since Herder’s anger about the review may have threatened the attempts at gaining influence at the University of Jena. Notwithstanding the unlikelihood of Herder initiating a kind of reconciliation, the changes he suggested show a reluctance to wage war with Kant over metaphysics. [↑](#footnote-ref-249)
250. Kant, ‘Erinnerungen des Recensenten des Herderschen Ideen zu einer Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit (Nro. 4) und Beil. der Allg. Lit.-Zeit.) über ein im Februar des Teutschen Merkur gegen diese Recension gerichtetes Schreiben.’ *ALZ*, ‘Anhang zum Märzmonat der Allgemeine Literatur- Zeitung,’ March 1785. *AA* 8:56-58. [↑](#footnote-ref-250)
251. *AA* 10:398-400 (Schütz to Kant, February 18, 1785). [↑](#footnote-ref-251)
252. Röttgers considers Reinhold’s “Bildung einer Kantschule” an effect of Kant’s Herder review. Röttgers, ‘Die Kritik der reinen Vernunft und K.L. Reinhold,’ 791. [↑](#footnote-ref-252)
253. For this process and especially the role played by Christian Gottfried Schütz, cf. Schröpfer, *Kant’s Weg in die Öffentlichkeit*. [↑](#footnote-ref-253)
254. Cf. Röttgers, ‘Die Kritik der reinen Vernunft und K.L. Reinhold,’ 792. [↑](#footnote-ref-254)
255. Cf. Röttgers, ‘Die Kritik der reinen Vernunft und K.L. Reinhold,’ 799. [↑](#footnote-ref-255)
256. Röttgers suggests that the ‘Briefe’ project was the direct result of Voigt’s request which he therefore dates before the summer of 1786. This implies that Voigt’s efforts were crucial in Reinhold’s turn to Kant. Cf. Röttgers, ‘Die Kritik der reinen Vernunft und K.L. Reinhold,’ 794-795. Ernst-Otto Onnasch, on the other hand employs a later letter from Reinhold concerning the break in the ‘Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie’ to claim that Voigt only contacted Reinhold after the publication of the first two ‘Briefe’ published in August 1786, and that the request must therefore be dated after August. Cf. Onnasch, introduction to *Versuch* [LXVIII]. Assuming that Voigt’s specific request, to which the ‘Briefe’ of 1787 were the response, was indeed dated between August and October 1786, this does not disqualify Röttgers’s suggestion that Reinhold and Voigt may have had contacts concerning the Kantian philosophy earlier, say, in the spring of that year. This means that both suggestions to put a date on Voigt’s approaching Reinhold are not conclusive. [↑](#footnote-ref-256)
257. *RK* 1:145-157, beginning of November 1786, Letter 35, to Christian Gottlob von Voigt. In the following, references to this letter will be in the text. [↑](#footnote-ref-257)
258. Cf. Röttgers, ‘Die Kritik der reinen Vernunft und K.L. Reinhold,’ 794-795. [↑](#footnote-ref-258)
259. Cf. Chapter 2, section 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-259)
260. Reinhold refers to the following reviewers: Johan Georg Heinrich Feder (1740-1821), Christoph Meiners (1747-1810), Johann August Eberhard (1739-1809), Christian Garve (1742-1798), Christian Gottlieb Selle (1748-1800), Dietrich Tiedemann (1748-1803), Platner and Johann August Heinrich Ulrich (1746-1813). For details of their reviews, cf. *RK* 1:149-151, nn. 7-22. [↑](#footnote-ref-260)
261. Cf. *AA* 4:377. [↑](#footnote-ref-261)
262. Reinhold refers to *Neue Litteratur-Briefe*, first volume (Berlin 1786), 21, where this claim is attributed to Eberhard. He does not refer directly to any publication of Eberhard himself. Cf. *RK* 1:150, n. 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-262)
263. Cf. Reinhold, *Beyträge I* , IV [Fabbianelli, 4]. The way that things are stated in the letter to Voigt suggests that both projected volumes could be part of the ‘Briefe’ project, although Reinhold does not commit to any title yet for either the whole project or the two projected volumes. [↑](#footnote-ref-263)
264. Reinhold, *Versuch*, 58. [↑](#footnote-ref-264)
265. ‘Zwölfter Brief: Winke über den Einfluß der unentwickelten und mißverstandenen Grundwahrheiten der Religion auf bürgerliche und moralische Kultur,’ *Briefe I*, 332-371. [↑](#footnote-ref-265)
266. Cf. Röttgers, ‘Die Kritik der reinen Vernunft und K.L. Reinhold,’ 794, 796; Fuchs, *Karl Leonhard Reinhold*, 63, n. 44. [↑](#footnote-ref-266)
267. Alessandro Lazzari may have underestimated the connection to the internal grounds, expressed by Reinhold’s claim that the results of the Kantian philosophy can only be presented properly with the ‘How’ of these results. Thus, he exclusively interprets the ‘results of the Kantian philosophy’ that the *Versuch* aims to establish in terms of positive statements regarding the reality of the ideas of God, immortality and freedom. Lazzari, *Das Eine, was der Menchheit Noth ist*,45-46. This would of course have been Reinhold’s ultimate aim. Yet the one thing conspicuously lacking from the *Versuch* is a concluding chapter that shows how the results established in the Third Book contribute to the solution of the problems introduced in the First Book. Reinhold does not spell out how the results in the narrower sense will suffice to solve the problems posed in the First Book. For a further discussion of this issue see Chapter 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-267)
268. The accounts of Reinhold’s turn to Kant presented by Röttgers (‘Die Kritik der reinen Vernunft und K.L. Reinhold’) and also by Onnasch (introduction to *Versuch*) assume an even stronger connection between these two stories; they link Voigt’s interest in Reinhold’s opinion on the Kantian philosophy to his contribution to the controversy over Herder’s *Ideen*. Given the delicate relations between the Weimar court and the University of Jena this may be plausible, but as long as there is no concrete historical evidence of such a link, it should be treated for what it is, a plausible speculation. [↑](#footnote-ref-268)
269. Cf. *RK* 1:267-268, September 20, 1787, Letter 64, to the philosophy department of the University of Jena. [↑](#footnote-ref-269)
270. Reinhold’s first known publication was a poem, published in 1777. Cf. Schönborn, *Karl Leonhard Reinhold*, 65. [↑](#footnote-ref-270)
271. Cf. Gliwitzky, ‘Carl Leonhard Reinholds erster Standpunktwechsel,’ 19, 67. [↑](#footnote-ref-271)
272. For details on the development of philosophy in Vienna in this period, see Sauer, *Österreichische Philosophie*, second chapter. [↑](#footnote-ref-272)
273. Reinhold certainly took an interest in different forms of scepticism, as will be apparent from the discussions of the *Versuch* and *Briefe* *II* in the fifth and sixth chapters of this study. He also wrote the introduction to the new German translation of Hume’s *Essay concerning Human Understanding*. Reinhold, ‘Ueber den philosophischen Skepticismus’ in *David Humes Untersuchung über den menschlichen Verstand* neu übersetzt von M. W. G. Tennemann (Jena: Verlag der akademischen Buchhandlung, 1793), i-lii. [↑](#footnote-ref-273)
274. For Reinhold as *Popularphilosoph*, see di Giovanni, ‘Die *Verhandlungen über die Grundbegriffe und Grundsätze der Moralität* von 1798.’ The circumstance that Reinhold’s thought shared features with the *Popularphilosophie* does not mean, however, that he can be said to belong to this school or be directly influenced by *Popularphilosophen*. Cf. Onnasch, introduction to *Versuch*, [XXXVI]. [↑](#footnote-ref-274)
275. Cf. Schultz, *Erläuterungen*, 8. Schultz was able to read the first *Critique* and produce a decent book on it in about nine months. [↑](#footnote-ref-275)
276. Cf. Onnasch, introduction to *Versuch* [LIX-LX] . [↑](#footnote-ref-276)
277. *RK* 1:183, January 26, 1787, Letter 41, to Nicolai. [↑](#footnote-ref-277)
278. Reinhold, ‘Ehrenrettung der Reformation,’ *TM*, February, 1786, 116-142; March, 193-228; April, 42-80. [↑](#footnote-ref-278)
279. *RK* 1:153, beginning of November 1786, Letter 35, to Voigt. The combination of these statements also implies that Reinhold was probably still trying to make sense of the *Critique* at the time when he wrote the ‘Briefe’ and replied to Voigt’s request, since the obscurity of that work had “barely disappeared” upon his fifth reading of it. [↑](#footnote-ref-279)
280. Cf. Onnasch, introduction to *Versuch* [LXIII-LXIV]. [↑](#footnote-ref-280)
281. A link has been claimed between the first and second perspectives discussed above, that is, between the controversy regarding Herder’s *Ideen* and Voigt’s request that Reinhold write something on the Kantian philosophy. Cf. Röttgers, ‘Die Kritik der reinen Vernunft und K.L. Reinhold,’ 792-795; Onnasch, introduction to *Versuch*, [LXVIII-LXIX]. However, since there is no concrete evidence that Voigt’s motivation behind the request to Reinhold was related to the tension between the Jena University and the Weimar court, this must remain historical speculation. [↑](#footnote-ref-281)
282. Cf. Onnasch, introduction to *Versuch* [LXI]. Röttgers speaks of *Selbststilisierungen* with regard to Reinhold’s first letter to Kant. Cf. Röttgers, ‘Die Kritik der reinen Vernunft und K.L. Reinhold,’ 794. [↑](#footnote-ref-282)
283. *RK*, 1:271, October 12, 1787, Letter 66, to Kant. [↑](#footnote-ref-283)
284. See footnote . [↑](#footnote-ref-284)
285. Schütz, review of *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*, by Kant, *ALZ*, April 7 (nr. 80) 1785. Included in Landau, *Rezensionen*, 135-139. [↑](#footnote-ref-285)
286. Schröpfer, *Kant’s Weg in die Öffentlichkeit*, 207-278. [↑](#footnote-ref-286)
287. Thus Schütz reviewed Mendelssohns *Morgenstunden* (*ALZ*, 1786, January 2 (nr.1) and January 9 (nr. 7)) (Landau, *Rezensionen*, 249-261) and quite possibly also Jacobi’s *Ueber die Lehre des Spinoza* (*ALZ*, 1786, February 11 (nr. 36)) (Landau, *Rezensionen*, 271-276) and Wizenmann’s *Die Resultaten der Jacobischen und Mendelssohnsen Philosophie* (*ALZ*, May 26 (nr. 125) and May 27 (nr. 126) 1786) (Landau, *Rezensionen*, 383-398). For argumentation regarding Schütz’s authorship of the latter two reviews, see Schröpfer, *Kant’s Weg in die Öffentlichkeit*, 228-229. [↑](#footnote-ref-287)
288. The circumstance that the *ALZ* published these reviews in which Kant was presented in a light that appears to have influenced Reinhold’s perspective on the Kantian philosophy, as we shall see in more detail in the following chapter, renders it plausible that Reinhold started out to study the Kantian philosophy out of personal curiosity, rather than from political motives. Onnasch’s contention that Voigt only contacted Reinhold after the first two ‘Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie’ had been published in August 1786, gains plausibility in comparison to Röttgers’s thought that these first ‘Briefe’ are already a reaction to Voigts request. Cf. footnote . The following chapter deals with the publication history of the ‘Briefe’ in more detail. [↑](#footnote-ref-288)
289. Reinhold, ‘Schreiben des Pfarrers’, 164. Cf. also his *Herzenserleichterung*, discussed in Chapter 2, section 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-289)
290. Cf. *RK* 1:200, n. 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-290)
291. That is, the claim that religion is required as a motivation or an incentive for morality. Both Schütz’s review and Schultz’s *Erläuterung* cite the *Critique* stating that, without the ideas of God and an afterlife moral action would be admirable, but we would lack incentives to act morally. Cf.*KrV*, A 813; Schultz, *Erläuterungen*, 176; Schütz’s review, 128 (Landau, *Rezensionen*, 180). Kant would clearly distance himself from that position in ‘Was heißt: sich im Denken orientiren?’ (*BM*,October 1786, 306; *AA* 8: 134). In the following chapter we will return to the significance of this text for Reinhold. [↑](#footnote-ref-291)
292. *Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie von Hn. Karl Leonhard Reinhold Rath, und Professor der Philosophie zu Jena. Zum Gebrauch und Nuzen für Freunde der Kantischen Philosophie gesammelt* (Mannheim: Bender, 1789); *Auswahl der besten Aufsäzze über die Kantische Philosophie* (Frankfurt and Leipzig; de facto Marburg: Krieger, 1790). [↑](#footnote-ref-292)
293. In his introduction to the English translation of the ‘Briefe’: Reinhold, *Letters on the Kantian Philosophy*, ix. Citations from the ‘Briefe’ will be taken from this translation, with reference to the pagination of the original article. [↑](#footnote-ref-293)
294. For a detailed account of the pantheism controversy, cf. Beiser, *The Fate of Reason*, Chapters 2-4, 44-126. [↑](#footnote-ref-294)
295. Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi, *Über die Lehre des Spinoza in Briefen an den Herrn Moses Mendelssohn* (Breslau: Löwe 1785). [↑](#footnote-ref-295)
296. Moses Mendelssohn, *Morgenstunden oder Vorlesungen über das Daseyn Gottes* (Berlin: Voß 1785); Mendelssohn, *An die Freunde Lessings. Ein Anhang zu Herrn Jacobis Briefwechsel über die Lehre des Spinoza* (Berlin: Voß 1786). [↑](#footnote-ref-296)
297. Thomas Wizenmann, *Die Resultate der Jacobischer und Mendelssohnischer Philosophie kritisch untersucht von einem Freywilligen* (Leipzig: Göschen 1786). [↑](#footnote-ref-297)
298. Kant, ‘Was heißt: sich im Denken orientiren?,’ *BM*,October, 1786, 306; *AA* 8: 134. According to Beiser it was Wizenmann “who convinced Kant that Jacobi and Mendelssohn were both heading in the dangerous direction of irrationalism and that something had to be done about it.” Beiser, *Fate of Reason*, 110. [↑](#footnote-ref-298)
299. Schütz, review of *Morgenstunden*, by Mendelssohn, *ALZ*, January 2 (nr.1) and January 9 (nr. 7), 1786; Landau, *Rezensionen*, 249-261. Cf. Schröpfer, *Kant’s Weg in die Öffentlichkeit*, 222. [↑](#footnote-ref-299)
300. Schütz (?), review of *Ueber die Lehre des Spinoza*, by Jacobi *ALZ*, February 11 (nr. 36), 1786; Landau, *Rezensionen*,271-276. Cf. Schröpfer, *Kant’s Weg in die Öffentlichkeit*, 226-227. [↑](#footnote-ref-300)
301. Cf. Chapter 2, section 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-301)
302. Cf. Chapter 2, section 2.2. [↑](#footnote-ref-302)
303. Cf. Schütz’s review of Kant’s *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*, which opens: “Mit Hn. *Kant’s Critik der Vernunft*, welche vor einigen Jahren erschien, ist eine neue Epoche der Philosophie angegangen.” Schütz, review of Review of *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*, by Immanuel Kant. *ALZ*, April 7 (nr. 80), 1785; Landau, *Rezensionen*, 135. [↑](#footnote-ref-303)
304. Cf. *KrV*, A ix-x. [↑](#footnote-ref-304)
305. Cf. *KrV*, A x-xii. [↑](#footnote-ref-305)
306. Cf. Kant, ‘Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung?’ *AA* 8:41. [↑](#footnote-ref-306)
307. Schütz, review of *Morgenstunden*, by Mendelssohn, 56. Landau, *Rezensionen*, 260. [↑](#footnote-ref-307)
308. *TM*, December, 1786, 294. Wieland writes: “Die im August angefangenen Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie, welche durch zufällige Ursachen unterbrochen, und zum Theil durch andere Artikel, die man nicht zurücksetzen konnte, verdrängt worden sind, sollen in dem bevorstehenden Jahrgang von Monat zu Monat fortgesetzt werden.” [↑](#footnote-ref-308)
309. *RK* 1:145, Letter 35, beginning of November 1786, to Voigt; cf. Chapter 3, section 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-309)
310. *RK* 1:206, Letter 45, end of March/before April 4, 1787. [↑](#footnote-ref-310)
311. *RK* 1:206. [↑](#footnote-ref-311)
312. *TM*, December 1786, 294. [↑](#footnote-ref-312)
313. Kant, ‘Was heißt: sich im Denken orientiren?,’ *BM* October 1786, 304-330; *AA* 8: 131-147. Hereafter referred to as ‘Orientation’-essay. [↑](#footnote-ref-313)
314. Cf. Chapter 2, section 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-314)
315. Cf. Chapter 2, section 3.2. [↑](#footnote-ref-315)
316. In *Herzenserleichterung* Lichtfreund claims “Wir haben nun wieder eine Moral, die von allen Religionssystemen und Glaubensmeinungen unabhängig ist” and he continues “Man weiß, daß man Religion auf Moral, nicht diese auf jene gründen müsse.” Reinhold, *Herzenserleichterung zweyer Menschenfreunde*, 13-14. [↑](#footnote-ref-316)
317. *Letters*, 39-40; Dritter Brief, 22-23. The cited text corresponds to *AA* 8: 142-143. Kant is not sticking to his own terminology of the first *Critique* here. He uses the term ‘concept of God’ to argue that this concept is in fact an idea in the sense of the first *Critique*, that is, that its content cannot be intuited. [↑](#footnote-ref-317)
318. Citing Kant, ‘Was heißt: sich im Denken orientiren?’ *BM* October 1786, 322; *AA* 8:143. [↑](#footnote-ref-318)
319. Kant’s *Prolegomena* (1783) and *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten* (1785) would have been available to Reinhold, but do not focus on the moral argument. From the letter to Voigt we know that Reinhold was at least aware of both of these works. Cf. *RK* 1:148, 157. [↑](#footnote-ref-319)
320. *KrV*, A 808-810; *AA* 8:139. [↑](#footnote-ref-320)
321. Cf. Chapter 3, section 1.3. [↑](#footnote-ref-321)
322. It is for this reason that I have given my own translation here, instead of Hebbeler’s, which reads: “the ideas of pure practical reason are thoroughly determined, for they have objects in an actual experience.” *Letters*, 44. I believe this is a serious misinterpretation of the phrase “durchaus bestimmt (…) ihre Gegenstände zu erhalten.” [↑](#footnote-ref-322)
323. In one of his letters to Kant (January 19, 1788) Reinhold showed awareness of the incompleteness of his account. “Wie lieb ist mirs nun daß ich mich in meinen *Briefen über die kantische Philosophie* bis itzt noch nicht auf die eigentliche Erörterung des *moralischen Erkenntnißgrundes der Grundwahrheiten der Religion* eingelassen habe. Ich hätte da ein schwaches Lämpchen aufgesteckt wo *Sie* durch die Kr. d. pr. V. eine Sonne hervorgerufen haben.” *RK* 1:313. [↑](#footnote-ref-323)
324. Reinhold still appears to be a naturalist when it comes to explaining historical religion. Cf. Chapter 2, section 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-324)
325. Cf. Reinhold, ‘Schreiben des Pfarrers,’ 174; cf. Chapter 3, section 1.2. [↑](#footnote-ref-325)
326. Cf. Reinhold’s review of *Abhandlung von der Einführung der Volkssprache in den öffentlichen Gottesdienst (…)*, *RZ*, 1783, March 4 [176]. [↑](#footnote-ref-326)
327. Cf. *KrV*, A 636-637. [↑](#footnote-ref-327)
328. Karl Ameriks has already pointed out the novelty of Reinhold’s approach to the history of philosophy and the importance of this approach for the subsequent developments in philosophy. Marion Heinz has discussed the intimate relation between the systematic and the historical approach in Reinhold’s later *Fundamentschrift*. Cf.Ameriks, *Kant and the Historical Turn*; Ameriks, ‘Reinhold über Systematik, Popularität und die ‘historische Wende’’; Heinz, ‘Untersuchungen zum Verhältnis von Geschichte und System der Philosophie in Reinholds *Fundamentschrift*.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-328)
329. Cf. *AA* 5:122, 124, 132; cf. *KrV*, A 811, A 218; *KrV*, A 633-634 refers to “postulating” the existence of something that is a condition for necessary practical laws. [↑](#footnote-ref-329)
330. Cf. *AA* 8:141. [↑](#footnote-ref-330)
331. Cf. *KrV*, A 808-810; *AA* 8:139. In the second *Critique* the postulate of immortality is treated prior to the postulate of the existence of God as well. Cf. *AA* 5:122-132. [↑](#footnote-ref-331)
332. Kant allows for a similar use of the concept of the soul as a defense against materialism. Cf. *KrV*, A 383-384. [↑](#footnote-ref-332)
333. *Letters*, 106; Achter Brief 251. The actual references to Meiners, *Geschichte des Ursprungs, Fortgangs, und Verfalls der Wissenschaften in Griechenland und Rom* (Lemgo: Meyer, 1781-1782) and Platner, *Philosophische Aphorismen nebst einigen Anleitungen zur Philosophiegeschichte* (Leipzig: Schwickert, 1776) were inserted only in the first volume of *Briefe* (1790). Cf. *Briefe I*, 292. [↑](#footnote-ref-333)
334. From the fact that Reinhold gives several descriptions here and from the circumstance that he would substantially rewrite the paragraph three years later, it is clear that he is struggling to find a way of making Kant’s achievement intelligible to a wider audience. Cf. *Briefe I*, ‘Eilfter Brief,’ 308-316; *Letters*, Appendix H, 201-205. [↑](#footnote-ref-334)
335. Kant does use the term once in the B-edition of the first *Critique* (cf. *KrV*, B 107/108). This use appears to be unrelated to the way in which Reinhold employs the term. It certainly does not play a similar, crucial role. Reinhold’s use does appear to be related to Schmid’s in the second edition of his *Wörterbuch*. Cf. C. Ch. E. Schmid, *Wörterbuch zum leichtern Gebrauch der Kantischen Schriften* (Jena: Cröker, 1788; 2nd edition), s.v. ‘Sinnlichkeit’, 318. However, since that edition dates from 1788 and I have been unable to locate a copy of the first edition of 1786, it is impossible to establish whether Reinhold’s use is influenced by Schmid’s or vice versa, although the former appears to be more likely. [↑](#footnote-ref-335)
336. Reinhold’s spelling of the word ‘empirisch’ is idiosyncratic. Apparently he used this spelling frequently, as Wieland felt compelled to correct him. In a postscript he writes: “Il faut toujours ecrire *empirisch* / empirique, empiricus / non pas empyrisch; weil dies wort nicht von πυρ, *Feuer*, sondern von πειρω, und zunächst von εμπειρια herkommt.” *RK* 1:258, Letter 59, August 29, 1787, from Wieland. As, in the same letter, Wieland refers to reading Reinhold’s eighth ‘Brief’, it is not far-fetched to assume that he had had to correct Reinhold’s idiosyncrasy there in a context similar to this one. The printed version of the ‘Briefe’ consistently has ‘empirisch’. [↑](#footnote-ref-336)
337. *RK*, 1:156, letter 35, beginning of November 1786, to Voigt. [↑](#footnote-ref-337)
338. Reinhold may have had ‘On the amphiboly of concepts of reflection’ in mind, from Kant’s first *Critique*, and especially the passage on A 271, where Kant accuses Leibniz of ‘intellectualizing’ appearances and Locke of ‘sensitivizing’ concepts, and stresses that understanding and sensibility only yield objective knowledge in conjunction. This appears to be exactly what Reinhold stresses at this point in the eighth ‘Brief’, even if Leibniz and Locke are not mentioned here. [↑](#footnote-ref-338)
339. Lazzari has already pointed out a connection between the opening of the seventh ‘Brief’ and Reinhold’s objections against Platner’s arguments regarding immortality in the context of the historical genesis of Reinhold’s *Satz des Bewußtseins*. Cf. Lazzari, ‘Zur Genese von Reinholds “Satz des Bewußtseins”.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-339)
340. Cf. Ameriks, *Kant and the Fate of Autonomy*, 125-129. [↑](#footnote-ref-340)
341. Reinhold, *Briefe I*, ‘Zwölfter Brief,’ 358-371. Cf. *Briefe I*, Bondeli ed., 339, n. 401. [↑](#footnote-ref-341)
342. For similar passages, cf. 20; Zweyter Brief, 131 and 38; Dritter Brief, 20. [↑](#footnote-ref-342)
343. Reinhold, ‘Der Wehrt einer Gesellschaft,’ 68r. [↑](#footnote-ref-343)
344. Reinhold, ‘Mönchthum und Maurerey,’ 183. [↑](#footnote-ref-344)
345. Reinhold, ‘Gedanken über Aufklärung,’ 4-5. Reinhold uses a similar metaphor in the ‘Briefe.’ Cf. 43; Dritter Brief, 29. [↑](#footnote-ref-345)
346. Reinhold, ‘Gedanken über Aufklärung,’ 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-346)
347. Cf. *KrV*, A 15; A 569. [↑](#footnote-ref-347)
348. Cf. Chapter 2, section 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-348)
349. For more on the way in which Reinhold combines systematic and historical approaches to philosophy with the effort to make philosophy popular, that is, accessible to philosopher and layman alike, cf. Ameriks, *Kant and the Historical Turn*, especially Chapter 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-349)
350. Not everyone, of course, was convinced that Reinhold had found the right way of arguing for the Kantian philosophy. The Jena professor of metaphysics Ulrich, for instance, had been lecturing on Kant earlier, but turned against Kant around the time when Reinhold became his colleague. Cf. *RK* 1:274-275, Letter 66, October 12, 1787, to Kant; *RK* 1:316-17, Letter 84, January 19, 1788, to Kant; *RK* 1:339, Letter 94, March 1, 1788, to Kant; for Kant’s reaction cf. *RK* 1:345, Letter 96, March 7, 1788, from Kant. [↑](#footnote-ref-350)
351. Rehberg was a Hannover politician and author. Philosophically, he flirted both with Kantianism and Spinozism. For more on Rehberg and Kant, cf. Schulz, *Rehbergs Opposition gegen Kants Ethik*; di Giovanni, *Freedom and Religion*, section 4.3 ‘Rehberg and Kant’, 125-136. [↑](#footnote-ref-351)
352. Lazzari, *Das Eine, was der Menschheit Noth ist*. [↑](#footnote-ref-352)
353. Cf. *RK* 1:274, Letter 66, October 12, 1787, to Kant. [↑](#footnote-ref-353)
354. *RK* 1:315, Letter 84, January 19, 1788, to Kant. [↑](#footnote-ref-354)
355. The presentation of the four parties in philosophy here is not very clear. The numbered order of italicised parties goes together with the indications ‘naturalists’ and ‘dogmatists’ between parentheses. I think we must understand Reinhold’s fourfold division in accordance with the following scheme. Philosophers can be divided into supernaturalists (the first party) and naturalists. The naturalists can be divided into skeptics (the second party) and dogmatists, which are divided into a pantheist/atheist party (third) and a theist party (fourth). In this way all parties are in opposition to some other party over some philosophical issue and both the numbered order of parties and the parenthetical remarks are taken into account. [↑](#footnote-ref-355)
356. Upon the assumption that Reinhold, in his lectures, limits himself to the ‘external grounds’ for the Kantian philosophy, Onnasch claims that the ‘theories of sensibility, understanding and reason’ as mentioned in the letter to Kant cited above, have not found their way into the Third Book of the *Versuch*, dealing with ‘internal grounds’ but into the First Book. Cf. Onnasch, introduction to *Versuch*, [LXXXVII]. Although this Book discusses ‘sensibility’ and ‘reason,’ these discussions, in my opinion, cannot be called ‘theories’ dictated in aphorisms. Their main aim is to show that there has hitherto been a lack of agreement among philosophers regarding the faculty of cognition. According to Lazzari, the Theories of Sensibility, Understanding and Reason as they are found in the Third Book of the *Versuch*, may be based on the theories mentioned in this letter, adapted, of course, to the situation that in the *Versuch* they are related to the theory of the faculty of representation, which did not yet exist when Reinhold wrote this letter. Cf. Lazzari, *Das Eine, was der Menschheit Noth ist*, 86, n. 24. Onnasch’s interpretation requires that the ‘theories’ here ar understood as referring not to the Kantian theories of sensibility, understanding, reason, but rather to such theories in previous philosophy. Lazzari’s interpretation, on the other hand, rests on the assumption that the ‘Theories’ refer to the Kantian philosophy. The matter cannot be conclusively resolved on the basis of the text of this letter. [↑](#footnote-ref-356)
357. Cf. *RK* 1:315, Letter 84. [↑](#footnote-ref-357)
358. *RK* 1:337, Letter 94, March 1, 1788, to Kant. [↑](#footnote-ref-358)
359. *Anzeiger TM*, 1788, June, LXXII. [↑](#footnote-ref-359)
360. Cf. *RK* 2:28, Letter 132, October 10 1788, to Schack Hermann Ewald. [↑](#footnote-ref-360)
361. *RK* 2:28-29, Letter 132. [↑](#footnote-ref-361)
362. *RK* 1:315, Letter 84. [↑](#footnote-ref-362)
363. For the view that the newer project essentially differs from the intended publication of his introductory lectures, cf. Onnasch, introduction to *Versuch* [LXXXV-LXXXIX]. For the thought that the theory of the faculty of represesentation, or at least the *Satz des Bewußtseins* resulted from Reinhold’s work on his ‘Kantian theory of sensibility’, cf. Lazzari, *Das Eine, was der Menschheit Noth ist*, 86, n. 24. [↑](#footnote-ref-363)
364. Cf. *RK* 2:169, Letter 175, October 12, 1789, to Nicolai. “Die Theorie des Vorstellungsvermögens habe ich *vier Jahre* unter der Feder gehabt.” Obviously, Reinhold refers to the whole work here, as his discovery of the theory of the faculty of representation as presented in the Second Book of the *Versuch* dates from 1788 as we have seen above, cf. note . [↑](#footnote-ref-364)
365. Cf. *RK* 2:44, Letter 139, December 21, 1788, from Wieland. [↑](#footnote-ref-365)
366. Cf. *RK* 2:46, Letter 140, End of December 1788 and January 8, 1789, to Karl Wilhelm Justi. [↑](#footnote-ref-366)
367. Cf. *RK* 2:53, Letter 143, February 18, 1789, from Wieland; *RK* 2:58, Letter 144, February 23, 1789, to Nicolai. [↑](#footnote-ref-367)
368. Cf. *RK* 2:63, Letter 145, February 26, 1789, to Göschen. [↑](#footnote-ref-368)
369. Reinhold sent a copy to Kant as a birthday present. Cf. *RK* 2:69, Letter 148, April 9, 1789, to Kant. [↑](#footnote-ref-369)
370. Reinhold, *Ueber die bisherigen Schicksale der Kantischen Philosophie* (Jena: Mauke 1789); Reinhold, ‘Ueber das bisherige Schicksal der Kantischen Philosophie,’ *TM*, April, 1789, 3- 37; May, 113- 135. The separate publication is identical with the Preface of the *Versuch*, which explains the fact that the Preface is dated April 1789, although the *Versuch* was published only in the autumn of that year. It is unclear whether the separate publication or the *Merkur­* version was written earlier. The fact that the separate publication was published only by Mauke shows that it was not part of the original deal with Mauke and Widtmann. Reinhold did not only seize the opportunity to alert the public to his forthcoming book, but also to gain supplementary income. Cf. Onnasch, Introduction to *Versuch* [XCVIII-XCIX]. [↑](#footnote-ref-370)
371. *RK* 2:81, Letter 153, April 30, 1789, to Ewald. [↑](#footnote-ref-371)
372. *RK* 2:122, Letter 161, end of May/ begin June 1789, to Gottlieb Hufeland. [↑](#footnote-ref-372)
373. *RK* 2:131, Letter 164, June 14, 1789, to Kant. [↑](#footnote-ref-373)
374. *RK* 2:131, Letter 164. [↑](#footnote-ref-374)
375. Cf. Onnasch, ‘Introduction to *Versuch* [CIX-CXI]; Lazzari, *Das Eine, was der Menschheit Noth ist*, 154-155. [↑](#footnote-ref-375)
376. Cf. *RK* 2:123-124, Letter 161. [↑](#footnote-ref-376)
377. Cf. footnote . [↑](#footnote-ref-377)
378. Buhle, review of *Ueber die bisherigen Schicksale der Kantischen Philosophie*, by Reinhold, *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen*, nr. 84, May 25, 1789. [↑](#footnote-ref-378)
379. Cf. *RK* 2:123, Letter 161. [↑](#footnote-ref-379)
380. He writes to Hufeland: “Ist H. Rehberg *ungerecht*: so werde ich mir zum erstenmal in meinem Schriftstellerleben selbst Gerechtigkeit verschaffen.” Cf. *RK* 2:124, Letter 161. [↑](#footnote-ref-380)
381. Reinhold, review of *Ueber das Verhältniß der Metaphysik zur Religion*, by Rehberg, *ALZ*, June 26 (Nr 153b),1788. For the claim that Reinhold is the author of this (second) *ALZ* review of Rehberg’s book and for a overview and evaluation of the issues contested cf. Schulz, *Rehbergs Opposition*, third chapter, 77-175, esp. 81-83. Although the review is not listed in Schönborn’s bibliography or the *Korrespondenzausgabe*, several authors have followed Schulz in attributing it to Reinhold. Cf. Onnasch, annotations to *Versuch*; di Giovanni, *Freedom and Religion*, 126. [↑](#footnote-ref-381)
382. Rehberg, ‘Erläuterung einiger Schwierigkeiten der natürlichen Theologie,’ *TM*, September,1788, 215-233. Cf. *RK*, 2:17, Letter 126, September 6 1788, from Wieland, who informs Reinhold of including Rehberg’s article in the *Merkur*. [↑](#footnote-ref-382)
383. *RK*, 2:133, Letter 164, June 14, 1789. Reinhold’s statement in the Intelligenzblatt of the *ALZ* that the *ALZ*-reviewer of the *Versuch* (Rehberg) “has completely understood” Kant’s *Critique* (Reinhold, ‘Erklärung’ in ‘Intelligenzblatt’, *ALZ*, December 12 (Nr. 137), 1789, 1138-1140; cf. *RK*, 2:133, note 35) becomes more understandable when we realise that Reinhold was not aware that Rehberg was the author of that review. Cf. note below. [↑](#footnote-ref-383)
384. [anonymous] review of *Ueber die bisherigen Schicksale der kantische Philosophie*, by Reinhold, *ALZ,* June 23 (Nr. 186), 1789, 273-276. [↑](#footnote-ref-384)
385. Cf. Rehberg, review of *Versuch einer neuen Theorie des Vorstellungsvermögens*, by Reinhold, *ALZ*, November 19 (Nr. 357), 1789, 414-424; continued November 20 (Nr. 358) 425-429. This would also explain why Reinhold would think that Schultz, the author of the *Erläuterungen* was the reviewer, given that he assumed that Rehberg had reviewed the *Schicksale*. Even the editors of Reinhold’s correspondence appear to be confused by the matter, as they indicate that Reinhold first ascribed the review to Rehberg and later to Schultz. Cf. *RK* 2:186, note 3. However, Reinhold only ascribed the review of the *Schicksale* to Rehberg. Cf. *RK* 2:124, Letter 161, end of May/ begin June 1789, to Hufeland; *RK* 2:133 Letter 164, June 14, 1789, to Kant. Given the claim in the review of the *Versuch* that the *Schicksale* had been reviewed by someone else, it would make sense for Reinhold to think that Rehberg was not the author of the review of the *Versuch*. Despite his friendly relations to the publishers and editors of the *ALZ*, Reinhold was not always aware of the ins and outs of the reviews. [↑](#footnote-ref-385)
386. Reinhold, ‘Erklärung’ in ‘Intelligenzblatt,’ *ALZ*, December 12 (Nr. 137), 1789, 1138-1140; Rehberg, ‘Antwort’ in ‘Intelligenzblatt’, *ALZ*, January 30 (Nr. 15), 1790, 118-120. Cf. *RK* 2:185-188, Letter 181, between November 20 and December 2, 1789, to Hufeland. [↑](#footnote-ref-386)
387. Cf. *RK* 2:170, Letter 175, October 12, 1789, to Nicolai; *RK* 2:192, Letter 183, November 29, 1789, to Nicolai. Against Reinhold’s wishes, the *Versuch* was critically reviewed by Hermann Andreas Pistorius in *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek*, 1791, vol. 101, nr. 2, 295-318. [↑](#footnote-ref-387)
388. Section 1 had been published in *Der Teutsche Merkur*, June, July, 1789. Section 2 had been published in *Berlinische Monatsschrift*, July 1789. Sections 3, 4 and 5 had been published in *Neues deutsches Museum*, July, August, September, 1789. Although the versions are not identical, the changes made merely concern style and typography. Cf. Schönborn, *Karl Leonhard Reinhold* , 73-74. Moreover, a summary of the first eleven sections of the Second Book was published in *Der Teutsche Merkur*. ‘Fragmente über das bisher allgemein verkannte Vorstellungs-vermögen,’ *TM*, October, 1789, 3-22. The relevant deviations from the *Versuch* in all of these works are noted in Reinhold, *Versuch*, ed. Onnasch. [↑](#footnote-ref-388)
389. That is, Reinhold presents the theories of sensibility, understanding and reason respectively, in a way that is reminiscent of Kant’s division of the *Critique* in Transcendental Aesthetics, Analytics and Dialectics. Reinhold’s theory of sensibility leads to the presentation of the forms of intuition, space and time; the theory of the understanding results in the presentation of the categories; and the theory of reason leads to the transcendental ideas (all in Reinhold’s understanding, of course). For a further overview of the structure of the Third Book of Reinhold’s *Versuch* in relation to Kant’s first *Critique*, cf. Lazzari, *Das Eine, was der Menschheit Noth ist*, 75-81. [↑](#footnote-ref-389)
390. Reinhold cites from the *Groundwork* and is certainly inspired by Kant’s table of material determining grounds of the will from the second *Critique*, yet does not explicitly acknowledge these works as a source. Cf. *Versuch*, 102-117. [↑](#footnote-ref-390)
391. According to Lazzari, the structure of the Third Book shows that it aims to establish the idea of absolute freedom in a much stronger sense. Cf. Lazzari, *Das Eine, was der Menschheit Noth ist*, 63, 81-82; cf. footnote of the present chapter. In the final section of the current chapter I argue for a different interpretation of that structure, according to which Reinhold, in line with the first *Critique*,only seeks to establish the logical possibility of freedom. Of course, Kant’s second *Critique* aims to establish something beyond the logical possibility of freedom, namely the practicality of pure reason. Cf. *AA* 5:3. [↑](#footnote-ref-391)
392. Cf. Chapter 3, section 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-392)
393. Cf. Lazzari, *Das Eine, was der Menschheit Noth ist*,section 1.3, esp. 51-52. [↑](#footnote-ref-393)
394. Cf. Chapter 3, section 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-394)
395. Lazzari, on the other hand, claims that the aim of the *Versuch* is precisely to establish these results in the second sense. Cf. Lazzari, *Das Eine, was der Menschheit Noth ist*, 42, 46, 63, 81-82. Although it is certainly true that the *Versuch* is the first step towards universally acceptable claims concerning the fundamental truths of religion and morality, this does not entail that the theory of the faculty of representation itself should be seen as directly providing the grounds of cognition for these truths. Cf. Lazzari, *Das Eine, was der Menschheit Noth ist*, 48-49. [↑](#footnote-ref-395)
396. From Johann Heinrich Abicht and Karl Heinrich Heydenreich, whom Reinhold had sent copies. Even Christian Garve, although he did not share Reinhold’s opinion on Kant, found some friendly words for its author. Cf. *RK* 2:104, Letter 158, May 14 1789, from Abicht; *RK* 2:152, Letter 169, July 20, 1789, from Heydenreich; *RK* 2:159, Letter 171, August 14, 1789, from Garve. [↑](#footnote-ref-396)
397. For Reinhold’s presentation of his philosophical history provided in the Preface, cf. Chapter 3, section 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-397)
398. Cf. Chapter 3, section 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-398)
399. For a very strong instance of taking Reinhold’s statements about his philosophical and religious development at face value cf. Lauth, ‘Nouvelles Récherches’. Cf. also Batscha, *Karl Leonhard Reinhold*, 11, 17; Sauer, *Österreichische Philosophie*, 59.In the most recent literature, however, Reinhold’s enthusiasm for Kant is viewed from a broader perspective. Cf. Bondeli, introduction to *Briefe I*, XXIV-XXVII; Onnasch, introduction to *Versuch* [XXXII, LVII-LVIII]. [↑](#footnote-ref-399)
400. Cf. John Locke, *An Essay concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Peter. H. Nidditch, 10. [↑](#footnote-ref-400)
401. Cf. footnote . [↑](#footnote-ref-401)
402. It is no coincidence that Reinhold came to replace the unfortunate terminology of ‘grounds of cognition’ (Erkenntnißgründe) with ‘grounds of conviction’ (Ueberzeugungsgründe) in *Briefe I*. [↑](#footnote-ref-402)
403. ‘Neue Entdeck.’ in *ALZ*, September 25 (nr. 231a),1788, 831-832. [↑](#footnote-ref-403)
404. The addition of a discussion on the lack of universally accepted principles regarding the principles of morality (freedom) and natural right is foreshadowed in Reinhold’s plan as communicated to Voigt. Point XV mentions the “need for *universally valid first principles* for other sciences, for instance, *natural right*.” *RK* 1:157, Letter 35. This may include morality as well. The issue of freedom is also mentioned under point X, in the context of the antinomies of reason. Cf. *RK* 1:156. [↑](#footnote-ref-404)
405. Cf. Locke, *Essay*, 525. Reinhold has added emphasis on ‘immediate’ by means of italics. [↑](#footnote-ref-405)
406. Although the aphorism of the second section of the Second Book (§ 7) contains a version of the ‘Satz des Bewußtseins’ “in statu nascendi” (Bondeli, *Das Anfangsproblem bei Karl Leonhard Reinhold*, 56), the *Versuch* does not appear to propose a strict ‘deduction’ of the rest of the work from that section as its principle, but is only taken as the basis for the further theory of the faculty of representation insofar as it is the first and most general description of some of the conditions of representation, the external conditions. Although the internal conditions (material and form) of representation are related to object and subject, there is no relation of strict deduction of the latter conditions from the claim in § 7. Rather they are presented as resulting from the conceptual analysis of ‘representation’. [↑](#footnote-ref-406)
407. For this reason I cannot agree with Bondeli’s claim that Reinhold’s way of dealing with the faculty of representation as the foundation of all philosophy entails that this faculty resembles a Herderian ‘erzeugende Originalgattung’, as “ein höchstes Vermögen das sich zu realisieren und das dadurch Folgeprinzipien zu begründen vermag.” Cf. Bondeli, ‘Von Herder zu Kant,’ 227. As indicated above, Reinhold’s understanding of the term ‘Vorstellungsvermögen’ as the condition for representation excludes understanding it in the sense of faculty psychology, as a part of the mind to be distinguished from other parts. Reinhold’s explicit description of his theory as a conceptual analysis of ‘representation’ shows that he is not aiming to establish foundational relations between faculties, but rather between our concepts of them. [↑](#footnote-ref-407)
408. Cf. Ameriks, *Kant and the Fate of Autonomy*, 125-135. [↑](#footnote-ref-408)
409. Cf. Chapter 4, section 2.2.2 and section 3.2. [↑](#footnote-ref-409)
410. In this analysis of the abstracted forms of representation without reference to the actual content of particular representations, Reinhold’s method resembles the later phenomenological method of Edmund Husserl. See Klemmt, *Karl Leonhard Reinhold’s Elementarphilosophie*, 58-68. Frederick Beiser likewise explicitly discusses ‘Reinhold’s Phenomenological Project.’ See Beiser, *The Fate of Reason*, 247-252.Martin Bondeli is critical of the attempts to place Reinhold in a ‘phenomenological undercurrent of German Idealism,’ more specifically of Klemmt’s interpretation. See Bondeli, *Das Anfangsproblem bei Karl Leonhard Reinhold*, 15, 17. For the most recent assessment of Reinhold’s phenomenonology, see Oittinen, ‘Über einige phänomenologische Motive in Reinhold’s Philosophie.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-410)
411. Cf. *KrV*, B 275. It is interesting to note that Reinhold places the proof for the reality of things outside us at the end of the theory of the faculty of representation, whereas, in Kant’s first *Critique* it is found in the Transcental Analytics, which would be the theory of the understanding in the structure of the *Versuch*. This position of Reinhold’s refutation of idealism may relate to the lack of a transcendental deduction of the categories. He was critical on Kant’s use of the ‘synthetic unity of apperception’ in relation to the deduction of the categories. Cf. Onnasch, ‘Vorüberlegungen zur Herleitung der Urteilsformen und Kategorien,’ especially section 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-411)
412. Cf. Locke, *Essay*, 539. Reinhold’s citation breaks off in the middle of a long and complex sentence. The gist of that sentence is that although it is obvious that our knowledge cannot extend beyond our ideas, it would be nice if the boundaries of knowledge would coincide with those of our ideas, but this is not case, hence we are often in doubt concerning our ideas. [↑](#footnote-ref-412)
413. *Beyträge I*, 277 [Fabbianelli 192]. [↑](#footnote-ref-413)
414. Cf. *KrV*, A 43/B 60. [↑](#footnote-ref-414)
415. This appears to be close to Kant’s statement in § 15 of the transcendental deduction (B) that analysis presupposes synthesis “for where the understanding has not previously combined anything, neither can it dissolve anything” *KrV*, B 130; *CPR*, 246. Since the transcendental deduction in the A-edition does not discuss the relation between analysis and synthesis in this way, the terminological correspondence suggests that Reinhold did have a good look at the second edition of Kant’s first *Critique* when he wrote the *Versuch*. It must be noted, however, that he speaks of analytic and synthetic judgements, whereas the context of the passage from Kant discusses ‘synthesis’ and ‘analysis,’ rather than judgements. [↑](#footnote-ref-415)
416. For more on the details of Reinhold’s categories, see Onnasch, ‘Vorüberlegungen zur Herleitung der Urteilsformen und Kategorien.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-416)
417. Cf. *Beyträge I*, 316. [↑](#footnote-ref-417)
418. For various interpretations of this curious part of the *Versuch* and its relation to the theory of reason, cf. Lazzari*, Das Eine, was der Menschheit Noth ist*, 89. [↑](#footnote-ref-418)
419. *KrV*, A 664/B 672. [↑](#footnote-ref-419)
420. Cf. *KrV*, A 228-229/B 280-281. These laws are: ‘in mundo non datur hiatus,’ ‘in mundo non datur saltus,’ ‘in mundo non datur casus purus’ and ‘in mundo non datur fatum.’ In Kant’s *Critique* these laws are related to the third postulate of empirical thinking in general. [↑](#footnote-ref-420)
421. Cf. *KrV*, A 657-658/ B 685-686. [↑](#footnote-ref-421)
422. Cf. *KrV*, A 405-406/B 432-433. This passage strongly suggests a link between the forms of syllogistic reasoning and the ideas of reason ordered according to their material. Nikolai Klimmek has argued that in Kant, the ordering in psychological, cosmological and theological ideas comes to override the older ordering based upon the forms of syllogistic reasoning, as the latter cannot be related to the various domains of special metaphysics. Cf. Klimmek, *Kants System der transzendentalen Ideen*, 58. Reinhold, at any rate, saw a close connection between the forms of syllogistic reasoning and the psychological, cosmological and theological ideas. [↑](#footnote-ref-422)
423. As noted by Lazzari, the terms ‘*absolute* *Ursache’* and ‘*absoluter* *Grund*’ are equivalent and are used interchangeably by Reinhold. Cf. Lazzari, *Das Eine, was der Menschheit Noth ist*, 99. I have translated both as ‘absolute cause’. [↑](#footnote-ref-423)
424. My interpretation of the relation of the different idea to the respective sections differs from Lazzari’s, who takes § 86 to be an integral part of the presentationof the ideas and therefore locates the introduction of the idea of absolute cause relating to the subjective unity of reason in that section. However, this overlooks the fact that the final paragraph of § 85 does introduce that idea, whereas § 86 does something else, namely introduc the notion of absolute freedom. Cf. Lazzari, *Das Eine, was der Menschheit Noth ist*, 87-88. [↑](#footnote-ref-424)
425. Cf. *KrV*, A 579-580/B 607-608. [↑](#footnote-ref-425)
426. Cf. for instance Breazeale, ‘Between Kant and Fichte: Karl Leonhard Reinhold’s “Elementary Philosophy”,’ 802. [↑](#footnote-ref-426)
427. According to Klemmt the ‘Grundlinien’ forms an appendix to the theory of reason serving as a transition towards the final two sections. Klemmt, *Karl Leonhard Reinholds Elementarphilosophie*, 117. [↑](#footnote-ref-427)
428. Lazzari points out that the text of section 86 following the aphorism does not live up to the expectations of that aphorism, because it does not contain arguments concerning the determination of the faculty of desire by means of reason. Based on this supplementary function, Lazzari describes the ‘Grundlinien’ as “gewissermaßen ein Teil” of section 86. Lazzari, *Das Eine, was der Menschheit Noth ist*,94. [↑](#footnote-ref-428)
429. Lazzari, *Das Eine, was der Menschheit Noth ist*, 87. [↑](#footnote-ref-429)
430. The use of the term ‘vorstellende Kraft’ may be a bit surprising, given the trouble Reinhold had taken in the Second Book to exclude the representing power from the investigation into the faculty of representation (especially § 8). His use here, however, does not contradict or ignore the earlier restrictions, as Reinhold does not make any claims about the nature of the representing power, for instance, whether it is material or spiritual. Both the representing power and the things in themselves (cf. § 28) are part of the external conditions for representation. In section 28 and 29 the reality of “things outside us” had already been postulated as being necessary for the “reality of representation” (299), so there is nothing worrisome about Reinhold’s introduction of the representing power as something needed for the reality of representations at this point. The way in which he uses it to introduce the faculty of desire merely shows that this faculty is not only related to the capacity for representation but rather to its actuality. [↑](#footnote-ref-430)
431. Cf. § 20, 268, where Reinhold’s claim that the capacity of representation involves spontaneity leads to the claim that this spontaneity is not to be confused with the representing power, in so far as the latter is connected to a representing subject [↑](#footnote-ref-431)
432. A parallel to this view on drive and the faculty of desire can be found in the first instalment of the article ‘Ueber die Natur des Vergnügens’ (*TM*, October, November 1788, January 1789). In his discussion of the aesthetical theories of Pouilly and Du Bos, he describes ‘drive’ as the ‘feeling of this need [for the occupation of the faculty of representation]’ (63) and relates the representing power to the actuality of representations. [↑](#footnote-ref-432)
433. Cf. *AA* 5:3. The Preface of the *Critique of Practical Reason* opens with the statement that this work has to show “*that there is pure practical reason*.” *PP*, 139. [↑](#footnote-ref-433)
434. Cf. *AA* 5:72. [↑](#footnote-ref-434)
435. It must be noted, however, that the version that is found in the *Versuch* is not taken directly from the first ‘Brief’ as published in the *Merkur*. It appears to be somewhere in between the first *Merkur*-‘Brief’ and the later edition of *Briefe I*, which appeared in 1790. Cf. Reinhold, *Briefe I*, 93-103; ‘Erster Brief’, 117-123. Reinhold was working on his *Briefe I* more or less alongside his work on the *Versuch* and revised the text several times. Cf. *RK* 2:63, Letter 145, February 26, 1789, to Göschen. Reinhold states the following: “Meine Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie sind rein abgeschrieben und warten auf Durchsicht und zum Theil Umarbeitung.” At the time when Reinhold was working on the First Book of the *Versuch*, he would have had an early version of what would become *Briefe I* available. [↑](#footnote-ref-435)
436. Cf. footnote . [↑](#footnote-ref-436)
437. Cf. footnote . [↑](#footnote-ref-437)
438. Cf. Lazzari, *Das Eine, was der Menschheit Noth ist*, 95. [↑](#footnote-ref-438)
439. Probably in the same sense as ‘the existence of God’ and ‘life after death’ were termed incomprehensible in the ‘Briefe’. Cf. *Letters*, 63 (Vierter Brief, 140-141); *Letters*, 69 (Fünfter Brief, 174-175). [↑](#footnote-ref-439)
440. *RK* 1:312-313, Letter 84, January 19, 1788, to Kant. Reinhold writes: “Wie lieb ist mirs nun daß ich mich in meinen *Briefen über die kantische Philosophie* bis itzt noch nicht auf die eigentliche Erörterung des *moralischen Erkenntnißgrundes der Grundwahrheiten der Religion* eingelassen habe. Ich hätte da ein schwaches Lämpchen aufgesteckt, wo Sie durch die Kr. d. p. V. eine Sonne hervorgerufen haben. Ich muß gestehen, daß mir ein solcher Grad von Evidenz, eine so ganz vollendete Befriedigung, als ich wirklich gefunden habe, unerwartet war.” [↑](#footnote-ref-440)
441. Jacobi, *Ueber die Lehre des Spinoza in Briefen an den Herrn Moses Mendelssohn. Neue vermehrte Ausgabe* (Breslau: Löwe 1789). Reinhold had received a copy of this second edition as a gift and was impressed by it. Cf. *RK* 2:172-173, Letter 176, October 18, 1789, to Jacobi. [↑](#footnote-ref-441)
442. Jacobi, *Ueber die Lehre des Spinoza*, xxxiv. [↑](#footnote-ref-442)
443. Ulrich, *Eleutheriologie oder über Freyheit und Nothwendigkeit* (Jena: Cröker 1788). The attack on Kant was condemned by Christian Jakob Kraus in his *ALZ* review of the work. Cf. Kraus, review of *Eleutheriologie oder über Freyheit und Nothwendigkeit*, by Ulrich, *ALZ*, April 25 (nr. 100), 1788. [↑](#footnote-ref-443)
444. *RK* 1:316-317, Letter 84, January 19, 1788, to Kant. [↑](#footnote-ref-444)
445. Rehberg, review of *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*, by Kant, *ALZ*, August 6 (nr. 188 a and b), 1788. [↑](#footnote-ref-445)
446. *AA* 5:96; *PP*, 216-217. [↑](#footnote-ref-446)
447. This would be a more or less Spinozist approach to the issue of freedom, which Kant clearly rejects. In light of Rehberg’s criticism it is worthwhile to note that Rehberg had fewer problems with Spinozism. Cf. di Giovanni, *Freedom and Religion*, 125-136. As we have seen above, Reinhold, on the basis of his own theory of the degrees of spontaneity, had no trouble attributing the lowest degree of spontaneity, that of *entgegenwirken* to the activity resulting from the spring of a watch (cf. *Versuch*,269-270). [↑](#footnote-ref-447)
448. C. Ch. E. Schmid, *Wörterbuch zum leichtern Gebrauch der Kantischen Schriften* (Jena: Cröker 1788; 2nd edition), 178: “Freyheit; *relativ*, comparativ; wenn nur eine gewisse Art von Ursachen z.B. äussere, mechanische, die Handlung nicht nothwendig bestimmt.” [↑](#footnote-ref-448)
449. For an evaluation of Rehberg’s review from a Kantian point of view, cf. Schulz, *Rehbergs Opposition*, 9-42; for an evaluation more sympathetic to Rehberg’s points of criticism on Kant, cf. di Giovanni, *Freedom and Religion*, 125-136. [↑](#footnote-ref-449)
450. Cf. Rehberg’s review of *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*, 357. [↑](#footnote-ref-450)
451. Rehberg’s review of *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*, 353-354. Cf. Schulz, *Rehbergs Opposition*, 16-20. [↑](#footnote-ref-451)
452. Rehberg’s review of *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*, 357 [↑](#footnote-ref-452)
453. Cf. *AA* 5:102. [↑](#footnote-ref-453)
454. Although Lazzari attributes Reinhold’s attempt to prove absolute freedom here to problems with the notion of ‘absolute cause’ and the theory of degrees of spontaneity (cf. Lazzari, *Das Eine, was der Menschheit Noth ist*, 95-108), I believe that Reinhold has in principle proved enough with this theory. It would suffice to analyse the structure of reason so as to ensure that we need to think of the representing subject as an absolute cause, i.e. a free cause. Lazzari’s claim that Reinhold’s theory of degrees of spontaneity is not sufficient because it does not prove that the subject is absolutely free, only makes sense in so far as it can be shown that proving absolute, not comparative freedom is Reinhold’s aim from the outset. However, I do not believe that this can be shown conclusively, as the distinction between absolute and comparative freedom does not occur, except in section 86. In the First Book, where Reinhold introduces freedom as the basic truth (*Grundwahrheit*) of morality, he claims that common sense is as convinced of the reality of freedom “as of a fact.” It is up to the philosophers to prove at least the logical possibility of freedom, that is, to present freedom as something thinkable. Cf. *Versuch*, 91-94; Cf. *AA* 5:47. [↑](#footnote-ref-454)
455. This is not to say that Reinhold claims here that the faculty of desire is no more than a species of the faculty of representation, as some commentators have claimed from a Fichtean perspective. Cf. Klemmt, *Karl Leonhard Reinholds Elementarphilosophie*,VII; more recently cf. Lohmann, ‘Reinholds Philosophie im Spiegel der Kritik von Heydenreich und Fichte,’ 93. For the contrary view, i.e. that the faculty of representation becomes a species of the faculty of desire, cf. Beiser, *The Fate of Reason*, 264-265. Beiser relates the problems Reinhold encounters in this field to Wolff’s problems with his ‘single-faculty’ theory of mind. On the relation of the faculty of desire to the faculty of representatition, cf. also Gerten, ‘Begehren, Vernuft und freier Wille,’ 156-159. To me it is not obvious that Reinhold himself had a clear idea on the relation between the faculty of representation and the faculty of desire. We have already seen that in *Beyträge I* he reconsidered the structure of his theory, which restructuring appears to be related to the effort to find the proper place for the faculty of desire. In the following chapter we shall see that in the end Reinhold abandoned his efforts to introduce the faculty of desire in terms of the faculty of representation. [↑](#footnote-ref-455)
456. In my opinion Lazzari does not sufficiently relate this pressure on Reinhold’s thoughts on freedom to Rehberg’s review. Cf. Lazzari, *Das Eine, was der Menschheit Noth ist*, 157-163. [↑](#footnote-ref-456)
457. *Briefe II*, x. [↑](#footnote-ref-457)
458. Among those who did not react positively to the *Versuch* in review, for instance, were Johann Friedrich Flatt (1759-1821) (anti-Kantian) and Karl Heinrich Heydenreich (1764-1801) (Kantian). These and other reviews regarding Reinhold’s *Versuch* and later *Elementarphilosophie* have been collected. See Fabbianelli ed., *Die zeitgenössischen Rezensionen der Elementarphilosophie K.L. Reinholds*. [↑](#footnote-ref-458)
459. Reinhold, *Auswahl vermischter Schriften: Zweyter Theil*, xi. [↑](#footnote-ref-459)
460. These developments are not independent of one another. According to Lazzari, the final attempt to save elementary philosophy must be understood as the result of developments in Reinhold’s practical philosophy. Cf. Lazzari, *Das Eine, was der Menschheit Noth ist*, 226. Fabbianelli has likewise pointed out the importance of Reinhold’s practical philosophy in this phase of his development, enabling Reinhold to reconsider his *Elementarphilosophie*. Cf. Fabbianelli, Introduction to *Beitrage II*, XVII. [↑](#footnote-ref-460)
461. Reinhold, *Beyträge zur Berichtigung bisheriger Mißverständnisse der Philosophen. Zweyter Band, die Fundamente des philosophischen Wissens, der Metaphysik, Moral, moralischen Religion und Geschmackslehre betreffend* (1794); Reinhold, *Verhandlungen über die Grundbegriffe und Grundsätze der Moralität aus dem Gesichtspunkte des gemeinen und gesunden Verstandes, zum Behuf der Beurtheilung der sittlichen, rechtlichen, politischen und religiösen Angelegenheiten* (Lübeck and Leipzig: Bohn, 1798). [↑](#footnote-ref-461)
462. The development of Reinhold’s *Elementarphilosphie* is mainly documented in two volumes of *Beyträge zur Berichtigung bisheriger Mißverstandnisse der Philosophen* (1790 and 1794) and *Ueber das Fundament des philosophischen Wissens nebst einigen Erläuterungen über die Theorie des Vorstellungsvermögens* (1791). For an extensive overview and analysis of Reinhold’s struggle with the deduction of the whole of philosophy from a single fundamental principle, cf. Bondeli, *Das Anfangsproblem bei Karl Leonhard Reinhold*. [↑](#footnote-ref-462)
463. *Der neue Teutsche Merkur* was the new name of *Der Teutsche Merkur* as of 1790, reflecting Wieland’s desire to start his magazine anew. Nothing much changed, however, apart from the fact that, in the early 1790s, Wieland himself contributed many pieces reflecting his current opinions on the situation in post-revolutionary France. Cf. Wahl, *Geschichte des Teutschen Merkur*, 203-209. [↑](#footnote-ref-463)
464. Cf. Lazzari, *Das Eine, was der Menschheit Noth ist*, chapter 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-464)
465. That Reinhold thought of the publication of the volumes of *Briefe* as one coherent project is clear from his remarks in the first volume of *Beyträge*, which appeared when he had already adapted the *Merkur*-‘Briefe’ and published them as a the first volume of *Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie*. Cf. Reinhold, *Beyträge I*, IV, where Reinhold speaks of the *Briefe* as dealing with the “effects, application and influence” of the critical philosophy, whereas the *Beyträge* deal with its “grounds, elements and principles.” [↑](#footnote-ref-465)
466. Although Beyträge *II* thematizes practical philosophy, it does so from the context of *Elementarphilosophie*, that is, with regard to the place of practical philosophy in the system of philosophy as a whole, even if Reinhold has had to abandon the thought of basing philosophy on a single principle. Within this context the results of *Briefe II* regarding practical reason and the will are defended. Cf. Fabbianelli, introduction to *Beyträge II*, LI. [↑](#footnote-ref-466)
467. For the reception of *Briefe II*, see Bondeli, introduction to *Briefe II*, section 3. For the reactions of Fichte and Schelling, see Piché, ‘Fichtes Auseinandersetzung mit Reinhold im Jahre 1793. Die Trieblehre und das Problem der Freiheit’ and Stolzenberg, ‘Die Freiheit des Willens. Schellings Reinhold-Kritik in der *Allgemeinen Übersicht der neuesten philosophischen Literatur*.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-467)
468. *AA* 6:226; *PP*, 380. [↑](#footnote-ref-468)
469. Bondeli, introduction to *Briefe II*, LII. [↑](#footnote-ref-469)
470. Reinhold, ‘Ueber die Grundwahrheit der Moralität und ihr[ ] Verhältniß zur Grundwahrheit der Religion’ *NTM*, March, 1791; Reinhold, ‘Ehrenrettung des Naturrechts’, *NTM*, April, 1791; Reinhold, ‘Ehrenrettung des positiven Rechtes’, *NTM*, September, November, 1791; Reinhold, ‘Beytrag zur genaueren Bestimmung der Grundbegriffe der Moral und des Naturrechts,’ *NTM*, June, 1792. [↑](#footnote-ref-470)
471. Cf. Chapter 5, section 2.4.4. [↑](#footnote-ref-471)
472. Cf. Chapter 5, section 3.2. [↑](#footnote-ref-472)
473. The text reads “Vermögen des vorstellenden Objektes” which makes no sense. Lazzari, who in his citations of the passage, tacitly corrects the error, interprets making a mistake like this as a definite sign that Reinhold had no time for a thorough correction of the final sheets. See Lazzari, *Das Eine, was der Menschheit Noth ist*, 154-155. The new edition of the *Versuch*, by Onnasch also corrects the error. [↑](#footnote-ref-473)
474. The importance of the faculty of representation in this context may be due to the influence of Platner, who links the will to the faculty of representation. Lazzari, *Das Eine, was der Menschheit Noth ist*, 119 n. 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-474)
475. According to Lazzari’s detailed account of the origins of Reinhold’s distinction between will and practical reason, Reinhold started to work on his ‘Beytrag zur genaueren Bestimmung der Grundbegriffe der Moral und des Naturrechts’ in November 1791, which was to be published June 1792 and in which he for the first time explicitly distinguishes between the will and practical reason. Cf. Lazzari, *Das Eine, was der Menschheit Noth ist*, 195-196. This essay will be discussed in section 1.3 of the current chapter. [↑](#footnote-ref-475)
476. See footnote . An adapted version of this essay would figure as ‘Zehnter Brief. Ueber die Unverträglichkeit zwischen den bisherigen philosophischen Ueberzeugungsgründen vom Daseyn Gottes und den richtigen Begriffen von der Freyheit und dem Gesetze des Willens’ in *Briefe* *II*. References will be in the text. [↑](#footnote-ref-476)
477. *AA* 5.40; cf. *Versuch*, 102-114. [↑](#footnote-ref-477)
478. Cf. *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*, *AA* 4:428; *Critik der praktischen Vernunft*, *AA* 5:87. [↑](#footnote-ref-478)
479. *AA* 5:87; *PP*, 210. [↑](#footnote-ref-479)
480. This issue appears to be related to Rehberg’s review of Kant’s second *Critique*, since Reinhold explicitly states that the human will needs to be followed for its own sake which he considers to be impossible if it depends on a divine will the existence of which is established independently of morality. Rehberg had claimed that the will can only be comparatively free, because it must always depend on God, who, by creating both the noumenal and the phenomenal world, guarantees the correspondence between both. Cf. Chapter 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-480)
481. See footnote . References will be in the text. The theme of natural right was not new to Reinhold: in the First Book of the *Versuch* he had already called attention to the lack of universally accepted principles in that field. Cf. Chapter 5, section 2.2. [↑](#footnote-ref-481)
482. See footnote . [↑](#footnote-ref-482)
483. See footnote . [↑](#footnote-ref-483)
484. Cf. Kant’s explicit aim in the *Critique of Practical Reason* as expressed in the Preface. “It has merely to show *that there is pure practical reason.*” *AA* 5:3; *PP*, 139. [↑](#footnote-ref-484)
485. Lazzari interprets the passages as stating that there is already a limitation of the selfish drive because of the mere presence of the unselfish drive. Cf. Lazzari, *Das Eine, was der Menschheit Noth ist*, 209. Although it is true that Reinhold claims that only a being with two drives, so that one can be limited by the other, can act from duty, he does not actually claim that the selfish drive needs to be *limited* by the *presence* of the unselfish drive, but rather that they both at least need to be present in order for the one to limit the other. Since Lazzari uses his understanding of the passage to claim that Reinhold equivocates on the term ‘Beschränkung’ in this context, it is useful to point out that the latter claim is more related to Lazzari’s use of the term than to what Reinhold actually says. Cf. Lazzari, *Das Eine, was der Menschheit Noth ist*, 209-211. [↑](#footnote-ref-485)
486. Cf. Lazzari, *Das Eine, was der Menschheit Noth ist*, 209-211; cf. footnote . [↑](#footnote-ref-486)
487. Cf. Lazzari, *Das Eine, was der Menschheit Noth ist*, 212-213. [↑](#footnote-ref-487)
488. See footnote . [↑](#footnote-ref-488)
489. Originally, the piece was not intended as a part of that dialogue, but as a separate article for the *Berlinische Monatsschrift*. Hence the only link with the previous dialogue in the *Merkur* is the introduction ‘Frank an Horst,’ referring to the characters of the earlier parts of the dialogue. Reinhold, ‘Die drey Stände. Ein Dialog,’ *NTM*, March, 1792; Reinhold, ‘Die Weltbürger. Zur Fortsetzung des Dialogs, die drey Stände, im vorigen Monatsstück,’ *NTM*, April, 1792. Cf. Lazzari, *Das Eine, was der Menschheit Noth ist*, 188-190, nn. 19 and 20. References to the ‘Beytrag’-essay will be in the text. [↑](#footnote-ref-489)
490. In contrast, Kant’s ‘fact of reason’ – the announcement of reason as lawgiving – appears to be related to what Reinhold calls the ‘freedom of reason’ rather than ‘natural freedom’. Cf. *AA* 5:31. Reinhold’s formulation here, referring to self-consciousness, appears to be related to his description in the *Versuch*, according to which freedom is a fact of which one is conscious through one’s *Selbstgefühl* (*Versuch*, 92). As we shall see in the following (section 2.2.3 of the present chapter), Reinhold would later (in *Briefe II*) describe human freedom as something we can only be aware of as a ‘fact of consciousness,’ which cannot be explained any further. [↑](#footnote-ref-490)
491. In the Preface to *Briefe I* Reinhold announced that the next volume would deal with “morality, freedom and instinct” and the results of the critical philosophy regarding these subjects. *Briefe I*, x. [↑](#footnote-ref-491)
492. *Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie von Hn. Karl Leonhard Reinhold Rath, und Professor der Philosophie zu Jena. Zum Gebrauch und Nuzen für Freunde der Kantischen Philosophie gesammelt* (Mannheim: Bender 1789); *Auswahl der besten Aufsäzze über die Kantische Philosophie* (Frankfurt and Leipzig; de facto Marburg: Krieger 1790). [↑](#footnote-ref-492)
493. Reinhold was working on his *Briefe I* more or less at the same time as writing the *Versuch* and revised the text several times. In a letter to Göschen, he states the following: “Meine Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie sind rein abgeschrieben und warten auf Durchsicht und zum Theil Umarbeitung.” Cf. *RK* 2:63, Letter 145, February 26, 1789, to Göschen. At the time when Reinhold was working on the First Book of the *Versuch*, he would have had an early version of what would become *Briefe I* available. [↑](#footnote-ref-493)
494. Some of these have only been changed stylistically, others have undergone strong revision. Cf. Bondeli, introduction to *Briefe II*, XIII-XIV. This new edition notes all relevant changes between the original articles and the texts as they are found in *Briefe II*. [↑](#footnote-ref-494)
495. This first ‘Brief’ is a revised version of an earlier article in *Der neue Teutsche Merkur*, January, 1791, 81-112 entitled ‘Ehrenrettung der neuesten Philosophie.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-495)
496. *Briefe II*, 6. Further references to *Briefe II* will be cited in the text. Reinhold refers to the following article: Marcard, ‘Ist die Deutsche Nation die erste Nation des Erdbodens?’ *Neues Deutsches Museum*, October, 1790, 1030. Reinhold cites this source both in the *NTM*-article and in the second volume of *Briefe*, but uses the term in a way that is independent of the article by Marcard. [↑](#footnote-ref-496)
497. ‘Erster Brief’ and ‘Zweyter Brief’ in *Der Teutsche Merkur*, August 1786; first four ‘Briefe’ of *Briefe I*. [↑](#footnote-ref-497)
498. This in part reflects the political outlook of *Der neue Teutsche Merkur*, in which Wieland actively commented on current developments in France. [↑](#footnote-ref-498)
499. The motive of two parties reproaching one another for misunderstanding the central concept of their controversy already figures in Reinhold’s *Merkur*-‘Briefe.’ Cf. ‘Erster Brief,’ 122. [↑](#footnote-ref-499)
500. Cf. *AA* 5:58. [↑](#footnote-ref-500)
501. See footnote . [↑](#footnote-ref-501)
502. Note that this also applies to his own understanding of the term at the time of writing the first series of ‘Briefe’. Despite the fact that the second *Critique* was not even written at that time, Reinhold’s *Merkur*-‘Briefe’ claim that ‘practical reason’ is of crucial importance, as we have seen in Chapter 4. Reinhold’s remark here could be interpreted as an admission that he now, with the benefit of hindsight, can see that at the time he was not in a position at all to understand what Kant meant by ‘practical reason.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-502)
503. In the original article these two actions were identified. Cf. section 1.2 of the present chapter. [↑](#footnote-ref-503)
504. In his review of Kant’s second *Critique*. See Chapter 5, section 3.2. [↑](#footnote-ref-504)
505. See Chapter 5, section 3.2. [↑](#footnote-ref-505)
506. The distinction made here between moral and natural freedom appears to be related to the distinction made in the ‘Grundlinien’ between the will as being free and as acting free, which was hinted at, rather than drawn in an explicit way. Cf. section 1.1 above. [↑](#footnote-ref-506)
507. The article is an adaptation of ‘Beytrag zur genaueren Bestimmung der Grundbegriffe der Moral und des Naturrechts. Als Beylage zu dem Dialog der Weltbürger,’ discussed in section 1.3. Cf. footnote . [↑](#footnote-ref-507)
508. Reinhold had already used a similar metaphor in his ‘Gedanken über Aufklärung’ and his *Merkur*-‘Briefe.’Cf. ‘Gedanken über Aufklärung,’ 4-5; *Letters*, 43; Dritter Brief, 29. . [↑](#footnote-ref-508)
509. Kant was only to put forward a system of morality in his *Metaphysik der Sitten* (1798). [↑](#footnote-ref-509)
510. This is the interpretation of Kant that Schmid had put forward. Cf. Schmid, *Versuch einer Moralphilosophie*, § 255, pp. 209-210. [↑](#footnote-ref-510)
511. In his introduction to *Briefe II* Bondeli also mentions Ludwig Heinrich Jakob (1759-1827) and Johann Heinrich Abicht (1762-1816), and also Salomon Maimon (1753-1800). Cf. Bondeli, introduction to *Briefe II*, XXXIV. [↑](#footnote-ref-511)
512. The disagreement between Reinhold’s and Schmid’s interpretation of Kant’s thoughts on freedom has been extensively discussed in recent literature. See for instance Zöller, ‘Von Reinhold zu Kant. Zur Grundlegung der Moralphilosophie zwischen Vernunft und Willkür’; di Giovanni, ‘Rehberg, Reinhold und C. C. E. Schmid über Kant und die moralische Freiheit’; Fabbianelli, ‘Die Theorie der Willensfreiheit in den „Briefen über die Kantische Philosophie“ (1790-1792) von Karl Leonhard Reinhold’; Goubet, ‘Der Streit zwischen Reinhold und Schmid über die Moral’ and Lazzari, *Das Eine, was der Menschheit Noth ist*, section 5.1. [↑](#footnote-ref-512)
513. Given Reinhold’s apparent fascination with Kant’s Table of Material Determining Grounds it seems likely that he presents Kant as having established the proper concept of ‘unselfishness’ in because the latter claimed that the truly moral determining ground of the will would have to be formal rather than material. [↑](#footnote-ref-513)
514. Schmid, *Wörterbuch zum leichtern Gebrauch der Kantischen Schriften* (2nd edition), s.v. ‘practische Freyheit,’ 178. [↑](#footnote-ref-514)
515. Cf. *AA* 5:28-30. [↑](#footnote-ref-515)
516. Reinhold also considered the equilibrist position in *Versuch*, 97. [↑](#footnote-ref-516)
517. Cf. *AA* 5:31-32. [↑](#footnote-ref-517)
518. For more on the Reinhold-Rehberg-Schmid triangle cf. di Giovanni, ‘Rehberg, Reinhold und C. C. E. Schmid über Kant und die moralische Freiheit.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-518)
519. The combination of these adaptations amount to allow for several foundational principles, rather than one, which is, as Lazzari has show, very relevant with respect to Reinhold’s *Elementarphilosophie*. Lazzari, *Das Eine, was der Menschheit Noth ist*, 322-324. [↑](#footnote-ref-519)
520. Reinhold aims at describing philosophical systems rather than referring to actual philosophers. In this case he may have had in mind someone like Jacobi. In the *Versuch* he mentions Pascal (*Versuch*, 11), Jacobi and Schlosser (*Versuch*, 86) as supernaturalists. [↑](#footnote-ref-520)
521. Cf. *Versuch*, 120-141; Chapter 5, section 2.2. [↑](#footnote-ref-521)
522. Reinhold here appears to touch upon themes that are central to Kant’s third *Critique*, which was published in 1790. According to Bondeli, introduction to *Briefe II*, XXVII, Reinhold was definitely influenced by the *Critik der Urtheilskraft*, especially by Kant’s consideration concering aesthetic judgment and *sensus communis.* [↑](#footnote-ref-522)
523. Cf. Ameriks, *Kant and the Fate of Autonomy*, 125-135; *Versuch*, 254; Chapter 5, section 2.3. [↑](#footnote-ref-523)
524. Note again that Reinhold’s description of the freedom of the will as a fact of consciousness clearly differs from Kant’s ‘fact of reason’, which refers to the lawgiving capacity of reason. Cf. footnote ; AA 5: 31. [↑](#footnote-ref-524)
525. The article is an adapted version of Reinhold, ‘Ueber die Grundwahrheit der Moralität und ihr[ ] Verhältniß zur Grundwahrheit der Religion’. Cf. footnote . [↑](#footnote-ref-525)
526. It was not uncommon in late eighteenth-century Germany to employ ‘stoicism’ and ‘epicureanism’ as two extremes of moral philosophy. Platner had done so in his 1776 article entitled ‘Versuch über die Einseitigkeit des Stoischen und Epikurischen Systems in der Erklärung vom Ursprunge des Vergnügens,’ *Neue Bibliothek der schönen Wissenschaften und der freyen Künste*. In the second *Critique* Kant had also used the scheme of opposing stoics and epicureans with the aim of presenting his own moral philosophy as the means of overcoming this opposition. Cf. *AA* 5:111-113. Cf. Bondeli, introduction to *Briefe II*, LXXXI-LXXXIII. [↑](#footnote-ref-526)
527. This article consists of two pieces published earlier in *Der neue Teutsche Merkur*. Reinhold, ‘Die drey Stände. Ein Dialog’; Reinhold, ‘Die Weltbürger. Zur Fortsetzung des Dialogs, die drey Stände, im vorigen Monatsstück.’ Cf. footnote . [↑](#footnote-ref-527)
528. Note that Reinhold still uses the same kind of historical argumentation as in his pre-Kantian writings, arguing that certain practices may have been very rational at the time of their institution, yet may loose their rationality and legitimacy when historical circumstances change. Cf. Chapter 2, section 2.1. [↑](#footnote-ref-528)
529. Here we encounter Reinhold’s elitism, which may very well stem from his Masonic and Illuminatist background. Cf. Chapter 2, section 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-529)
530. Cf. Lazzari, *Das Eine, was der Menschheit Noth ist*, Chapter 5, section 2, 187-198. [↑](#footnote-ref-530)
531. Cf. *Versuch*, 546-556. [↑](#footnote-ref-531)
532. That is, articles that would become the first through sixth ‘Briefe’, the tenth ‘Brief’ and the twelfth ‘Brief’ in *Briefe II*. See footnotes , , . [↑](#footnote-ref-532)
533. Bondeli, introduction to *Briefe II*, LXX-LXXI. [↑](#footnote-ref-533)