Philosophical Reviews in German Territories (1668-1799)

Volume I

edited by
Marco Sgarbi

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Introduction to Philosophical Reviews in German Territories (1668-1799)

Marco Sgarbi

Abstract: The introduction explains the main purpose of the project Philosophical Review in German Territories (1668-1799). It shows why philosophical reviews are not only mere intellectual modes of communication or cultural media, but as an intellectual work with their own philosophical dignity. It shows the importance of the methodology of history of knowledge in order to achieve the major objectives of the projects and the relevance of five transversal and interdisciplinary vectors of study: 1. knowledge management; 2. philosophical transfers; 3. authorities and monopolies; 4. anonymity and authorship; 5. professionalization.

Keywords: Reviews, philosophy, German Territories

This book is the first of a number of volumes that will be published in this series with aim to offer the first complete and systematic study of the rise of the philosophical review in German territories between 1668 and 1799, adopting the methodology of the discipline of the history of knowledge. The time span corresponds to two unsuccessful attempts by Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz and Johann Gottlieb Fichte to establish review journals.

The birth of the periodicals in the second half of the seventeenth century – especially with the foundation of the *Journal des Sçavans* and the *Philosophical Transactions* 1665 – has been a watershed in the dissemination of knowledge leading to the establishment of a new literary genre, that of review.[1] Despite the enormous interest of scholarship in the history of journals, philosophical reviews have been considerably neglected. The basic idea of the project is to fill this gap working on the fact that philosophical reviews are not to be considered merely as intellectual modes of communication or cultural media, but have to be credited with their own philosophical dignity; an aspect often neglected by the scholarship. Indeed, the history of philosophical reviews is an uncharted territory and waits to be written.

While there is a large bibliography on journals,[2] counting for instance more than 1,700 titles for France only, reviews as a literary genre have been neglected

[1] See Sgarbi 2024.

[2] See among the many studies Sgard 1968, Fambach 1976; Habel 2007; Gantet-Schock 2014; Csiszar 2018.

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by historians of knowledge so far. Scholars have stressed the role of book reviewing for the rise of literary criticism and for information management,[3] others have shown the peculiarities of review journals in tracking the reception and transmission of books and ideas across borders, but still their focus is on journals, not reviews as such.[4] In general, they complain in particular that reviews have "not been subject to thorough and systematic study."[5]

Reviews play a secondary role also in the scholarship of the history of philosophy. Indeed, only a handful of specific studies on notable cases has aroused some scholarly interest. Reviews are generally credited a certain role for philosophy in studies on the reception of philosophers like Spinoza in England, Locke in France or Germany, Hume in Germany, Newton in Italy etc.[6] Overall, scholars have not paid due attention to the role of reviews in *shaping* – rather than passively mirroring – the prevailing trends in philosophy. Reviews have been conceived of as mere means of diffusion of ideas, but not as platforms actively promoting new philosophical ideas and discussions. Especially in Germany, in spite of the number of projects on journals in Germany during the period, no research project has been devoted to the impact of reviews in the shaping of philosophy.

The convergence between the history of knowledge and the history of philosophy is a *desideratum,* which will help overcome the usual, superficial view of considering reviews as brief and descriptive reports or summaries, devoid of any philosophical import as scholars tend to assume. The integration of the methodology of the history of knowledge into the practice of writing history of philosophy intercepts five transversal vectors of study (1. knowledge management; 2. philosophical transfers; 3. authorities and monopolies; 4. anonymity and authorship; 5. professionalization), which helps to understand how and why reviews had such an important role in early modern philosophy.

About knowledge management, the early stage of journal was a period of experimentation, and there were different kinds of reviews which reveal different knowledge management systems. Among the various genres of review, it is possible to count critical evaluations, summaries, abstracts, extracts, announcements or advertisements, self-reviews and letters.

Critical evaluations are the most interesting for reconstructing what were the interests, the criticism, the weak and strong points of the work. They are usually either positive or negative, never indifferent, and they reflect review-

[3] See Donoghue 1996; Basker 1997; Blair 2010.

[4] See Munck 2010; Munck 2019.

[5] See Munck 2010, 417. Also the most recent *Information: A Historical Companion,* published by Princeton University Press in January 2021 by eminent scholars mentions albums, bibliographies, sales catalogs, cases, inventories, letters, manuals, maps, memos, petitions, registers, sermons, newspapers, notebooks, newsletters, as literary genres that shaped early modern culture, but not reviews. In this sense our project will constitute a significant contribution to the emerging field of the history of knowledge.

[6] See Mossner 1943; Mossner 1954; Colie 1963; Gawlick-Kreimendahl 1987; Fieser 1996; Schock-Löffler 2018.

ers' position in confrontations to the new ideas. Almost lacking in a critical assessment and indifferent to the doctrines are summaries and abstracts. They provide in very few paragraphs, or at maximum in one page, the content of the book. They are mainly descriptions of the table of contents. Nonetheless also this kind of review is important to establish the interests of reviewers and what readers could know of the work. The extracts were so important that journals were devoted only to them, introducing for the first time in another language works hitherto unknown. Announcements or advertisements are mere strings in which it is declared the publication of the work: these testify the rapidity of the dissemination of a work. While self-reviews resulted to be a common practice of self-promotion or self-criticism, especially when the reviews were anonymous. Letters to the journal are reviews in defence of another bad review or to complain for the absence of a review.

Reviews are extremely important and offers a unique point of view on the early modern philosophy because they promote a bottom-up approach and a pluralistic perspective in determining what was the philosophical culture of the time acknowledging the existence of a plurality of different knowledges that can emerge from the reviews, without supposing any trend or assuming as dominant any philosophy. The pluralistic approach entails that there is no favourite philosophical centre, but the geography of philosophy will be reconstructed by considering situated knowledge in different social, political, religious and intellectual contexts. The polycentrism of the geography of philosophy dismantles the idea that philosophical knowledge is universal, fostering the conception that philosophical knowledge is produced in particular environments, in particular contexts and then it is disseminated. The geography of philosophy of philosophical reviews thus offers a dynamic picture of the circulation of the ideas. The circulation of ideas means first of all that knowledge received is not the same as knowledge sent. For philosophical texts, an appropriate intellectual, political, religious and social context was essential to securing positive receptions. Philosophical reviews allow a new way for understanding the transformation of knowledge and how the dissemination of knowledge was responsive and reactive to introduction of new ideas. In other words, philosophical reviews indicate the levels of awareness of foreign work, either when first published, or when translated.

The philosophical transfer of knowledge takes place not only laterally, spreading across space, but also vertically, moving from philosophers, scholars and other experts to common people and general public, and sometimes viceversa. Philosophical reviews are a good indicator of the level of knowledge people had in the various social strata. Within the German territory, the *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* and *Bibliothek der schönen Wissenschaften* had a narrow science-oriented audience, capable of grasping even the most complex philosophical ideas. Instead, the *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek* or *Der deutsche Merkur* aimed at a readership with wider cultural and literary interests. Investigating the reviews contained in these journals allows us to understand what people knew or could know and at what level of the new books and philosophical ideas spreading in Europe.

Philosophical reviews show how books were received among different religious and confessional contexts. Most of the time the review journals had peculiar religious attitudes. Friedrich Nicolai – editor of the *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek* – was known to want his reviewers to discuss books on religion with an open frame of mind.

Reviews reveal the authorities and monopolies of philosophy. They have the power of to accept or reject philosophical ideas, to declare ideas to be orthodox or heterodox, useful or useless, reliable or unreliable, indeed to define what counts as philosophy in a particular time and place. Holders of the key of knowledge, reviews established the access and control in the republic of letters, playing an analogous role the early scientific academies had in England, France and Germany. What is not reviewed is virtually unimportant or not philosophically relevant. Reviews were one the first means of intellectual and scientific recognition. This methodology allows us to determine the orders of learning and regimes of truth that those specific societies had.

A clear example of the impact of reviews in shaping the philosophical and scientific culture of the time is the Newton-Leibniz affair. Leibniz understood immediately the power of reviews and in 1668 asked the privilege to publish a review journal with the aim to provide a full account of the books in the catalogs of the Frankfurt fair. The reviews would have assessed the quality of the books and their political and religious orthodoxy. The books not included or not approved in the journal could be confiscated and the publisher prosecuted. Leibniz conceived reviews as a kind of censorship to keep control over knowledge.[7] The Newton-Leibniz affair starts with Leibniz's anonymous review to Wallis' *Opera in* the *Acta eruditorum* (1696), where he proclaimed the originality of his own method for the infinitesimal calculus. In 1700 in the *Acta* Leibniz reviewed N. Fatio de Duillier's work in which he defended the independent discovery of his method. In 1704 Newton published his *Tractatus de quadratura curvarum,* which was positively reviewed by Leibniz in the *Acta* (1705), but in which there is a controversial statement about the use of similar methods for the calculations of fluxions or differences. In 1708 in the *Philosophical Transactions* John Keill emphasized how Newton was the first to discover the method and charged Leibniz for appropriation of Newtonian ideas. Leibniz complained to the president of the Royal Society, at that time Newton himself, asking for a rectification. Newton nominated a commission within the Royal Society to investigate the case of the priority. In 1713 the commission published the *Commercium epistolicum* stating that Keill was right. Newton wrote an anonymous review to the *Commercium in* the *Philosophical Transactions* (1715) in which he was considered himself as the inventor of the infinitesimal calculus. The review had a profound effect on Leibniz's reputation in England, but also in Europe. Reviews play a central role in this affair in shaping the reputation of intellectuals and recent researches have shown how this kind of practices skillfully manipulated the backstage philoso-

[7] See Widmann 1963; Gantet 2018.

phy that supported the overt civility of the republic of letters. The firm authority over knowledge will constitute the Enlightenment as the age of Newton in every discipline from physics to ethics, from metaphysics to anthropology. Furthermore, reviews firmly shaped the public opinion orienting the readers and determining the trends and the tendencies in the society.

Another example is Fichte's failing attempt of founding a review journal in 1799. His aim was to establish a new journal in opposition to the *Allgemeine Literatur Zeitung,* which should include relevant reviews in order to influence the public opinion and the intellectual life of the time. This journal, like that of Leibniz, was related to the book fairs and should include review of all disciplines in connection to philosophy like mathematics, physics, hermeneutics, philology etc. His explicit objective was to create an "habit" in its readers. The attempt involved as editors not only Fichte, but also other philosophers of the calibre of Schlegel and Schelling, providing thus a specific tone to the journal. Like Leibniz, therefore, Fichte believed that reviews could be an effective tool to generate a monopoly of knowledge.

Reviews, in addition, represent a unique standpoint for the reconstructions of the regimes of knowledge and ignorance, in other words what was not known by different kinds of people in certain places or times. Reviews show what books were not read or known in specific countries or cultural contexts, and therefore the developments of specific trends. In Göttingen the acquisition records of the libraries show that librarians relied on the *Monthly* and the *Critical Review* to decide what books order from England, establishing thus the largest archive of English books in Germany and affecting the reception of British thought.[8]

One of the most common characteristics of reviews in the period considered by the project is the lack of a public authorship, that is anonymity of the reviewer. This is a pivotal aspect in order to understand the role reviews played in the making of eighteenth-century philosophy. Review anonymity protected the review from intellectual ostracism in the case of attacks of a famous philosopher and allowed him more freedom for criticism. Review anonymity guarantees a personal defence in case of support of unorthodox ideas. Given the high number of reviews written and the little time to read a book, anonymity protected reviewers in case of misunderstandings. Review anonymity was useful in case of self-review. Anonymity was fundamental also in reaction to possible negative reviews. Authors could publish anonymously, not only because they were afraid of censorship or to be charged with unorthodox doctrines, but also because they could protect themselves, their honour and dignity without revealing their identity. There are also different levels of anonymity, indeed sometimes reviews were signed just with one letter like "H." in the case of Johann Gottfried Herder's collaboration with *Der Teutsche Merkur.*

Anonymity was also important in both passive and active ways in order to avoid criticism based in social conventions. This is for instance the case of wom-

[8] See Basker 1997, 330.

en. Anonymity played a central role in concealing women authorship in the early modern period and this is the case also for the reviews. To Christoph Martin Wieland's *Der Teutsche Merkur* contributed regularly more than 30 women, among whom, concealed under initials, Charlotte Reclam, Johanne Susanne Bohl and Karoline von Brandenstein.

This leads to the question who were the reviewers in a vast range of knowledgeable people. There are exceptional cases in which the activity of the entire intellectual activity was comprised by reviewing books. Albrecht von Haller (1708-1777) in his 31 years of collaboration with the *Göttingische Zeitung von gelehrten Sachen* published more than 9,000 reviews.[9] Von Haller's contributions make Christian Wolff's effort of writing more than 500 reviews for the *Acta eruditorum a*s a vain enterprise. If one looks at the reviewers are, of course not always, but most of the times, intellectuals, who scholarship considers as of "second rank." However, these alleged minor figures, almost unknown, wrote severe critical assessments of major philosophers, shaping the philosophical culture of the time. For instance, Christoph Pfautz, the mathematician who wrote the review to Newton's *Principia* in the *Acta eruditorum,* has not even an entry in the *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* and the only information we have derive from Zedler's *Universal-Lexicon* (1741) and Jöcher *Gelehrten-Lexicon (*1751). [10] Only looking at this professionalization and at the power of the reviews, concealed behind anonymity, it is possible to appreciate the anxiety of philosophers of reading reviews of their works to know his judgment on the book.

Having in mind these considerations, it is essential to determine how the professionalization of the reviewer and the establishment of the review as an intellectual practice led philosophers to change the way in which they wrote about philosophy. Reviews became the chief means of ascertaining their approval or disapproval or the indifference of the philosophical works.

And, it is also important to consider how much time traditionally major philosophers spent in writing reviews since from decade to decade there is an evident increased effort devoted to review. Looking only at Leibniz's contributions to the *Acta,* 40% of his activity for the journal was spent in writing reviews (ca. 41 reviews vs. 60 articles). Lessing at the age of 22 had already written more than 400 reviews for the *Berlinische privilegierte Zeitung* and became famous in Berlin for his activity of fine reviewer and critic, more than as philosopher or a dramatist. While before he wrote only short announcements or reports of new works, from 1751 on he started to write long critical assessments, the first of which was on Rousseau's *Discours sur les sciences et les arts.* Again, he wrote reviews on Montaigne's German translation of the *Essais,* on Rousseau's *Discours sur l'origine et les fondemens de l'inegalité parmi les hommes* or Mendelssohn's *Über die Empfindungen.*

[9] See Gantet-Krämer 2021.

[10] See Brancato's paper in this volume.

This fundamental activity of reviewing has passed unnoticed by scholarship. Therefore, there is room to answer innovative research questions like how were the reviews written? Who were the reviewers? Were the reviewed philosophers influenced by reviews in later editions of the reviewed book or in later books? Were philosophers influenced by the perspective of being reviewed? How do reviews help to reconstruct how philosophical texts were read and understood? How did reviews influence the philosophical works of other authors? What was read? Where was the book read or reviewed? What were the main philosophical interests in the various regions? In what language was a philosophy book read in various countries? How were translations judged? How fast did books circulate? How readily were books and their ideas spread? What was the role of women as authors and readers of reviews? How did reviews establish monopolies of philosophical knowledge? Not all of these questions will be answered in these volumes and not all of the vectors of study will be considered in all their facets. However, we hope that these investigations can highlight the importance of reviews and the activity of reviewing in the formation of early modern thought.

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Christoph Pfautz as a Reviewer for the *Acta Eruditorum*: the Invention of a German Tradition in the Sciences[1]

Mattia Brancato

Abstract: In 1682, Otto Mencke and Christoph Pfautz founded the *Acta Eruditorum*, the first fully-fledged German scientific journal. In this paper, I argue that this journal had a fundamental role in shaping the narrative on the rise of the new science in the 17th century, placing Germany as the ideal intermediary between tradition and innovation. In particular, Pfautz's review of Newton's *Principia* in the *Acta Eruditorum* initiated the Leibniz-Newton controversy, which forced the German tradition to reconsider its role and reshape its philosophical foundations to appeal to a wider international audience.

Keywords: Pfautz, Leibniz, Newton, reviews.

1. Introduction

This paper explores the contribution of Christoph Pfautz to the development of a German tradition in the sciences. In 1682, Pfautz was one of the founders of the *Acta Eruditorum*, the famous German journal that greatly contributed to the debate on science and philosophy in Europe during the early modern times and beyond. More specifically, the paper argues that Pfautz's review of Newton's *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica*, which appeared in the *Acta Eruditorum* in July 1688, had a pivotal role in the process of defining the scientific debate, to the point that a true German tradition was almost invented around the opposition suggested there by Pfautz not only between Newton and Leibniz but also between an English and a German way of doing science.

As a preliminary remark then, it is important to specify in which sense a German tradition was invented in such a way: no one denies that many great and talented scientists engaging in the European debate were already active in Germany before the foundation of the *Acta Eruditorum*, as much as no one denies that there was among the German scientist a concrete interest in promoting themselves as representatives of a unique German tradition in the sciences,

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distinct from those developed in France, England or Italy. However, before the end of the 17th century, there were also decisive historical, social, and conceptual reasons that prevented the rise of a clear and distinct German tradition and its consolidation, especially if we take as a model, much like the German scientists of that time did, how science was being developed in other parts of Europe in the same period.

It seems in fact that the requisite for scientific traditions to consolidate during the 17th century was not only the presence of a single major author from a certain area and the supporters gravitating around their ideas, for instance Newton or Descartes, because otherwise Leibniz would have been a great candidate for this to happen also in Germany, but instead his presence became relevant only at a later stage. Focusing solely on the authors prevents us from understanding the significant cultural support from the home country on which those traditions were built on. This support can be evaluated analyzing three specific historical processes: the institution of scientific societies, which were founded on a shared vision about how science should be practiced and developed; the adoption by local universities of the methods and notions related to that scientific tradition in their teachings, tying together the apparently independent freedom of scientific societies with their more politically and geographically grounded power; finally, the institution of one or more scientific journals that would lead the main narrative on how that scientific tradition was superior to others, thus worth following. Having a wider historical and sociological approach will clearly show the significant political and nationalistic turn that various scientific traditions in Europe took starting from the second half of the 17th century. While on a surface level science as a general practice has promoted since its beginnings the idea that a scientific theory was worth as much as it was verifiable, reasonable, and reproducible by anyone, regardless of any other contingent factor concerning their promoter, like their origin or other political or religious affiliations, the local social entities involved were progressively realizing how important leading the main narrative concerning the evolution of science was. These two opposing needs created a peculiar situation in which scientists from other parts of Europe were indeed accepted in certain circles, on the condition however that they shared the same general framework of that circle. For instance, when a young Leibniz was sent to Paris to learn the most advanced mathematics, his introduction to the Parisian circle was possible on the premise that his work had to tackle topics researched among that tradition: there is a substantial difference in political scope between a young Leibniz working with Tschirnhaus on the limits of Descartes' geometry and a mature Leibniz writing the *Brevis demonstratio erroris memorabilis Cartesii* on the *Acta Eruditorum* in 1686.[2]

[2] Tschirnhaus in fact, who was already a member of the *Académie royale des sciences*, met Leibniz in Paris. For an account of their jointed work and how it differs from Leibniz's later approach, see Kracht-Kreyszig 1990 and more recently Rabouin 2022.

This political pressure was possible because the evolution of academies, universities, and journals in France and England had reached a level where these three main pillars were already working together to preserve the cultural influence of their corresponding country. They constituted the main model for the development of the German tradition, which in the earlier part of the century was instead lagging behind in the realization of the same conditions. What makes the rise of the German tradition unique however is not only the fact that it consolidated later with respect to the English and French ones, but also that the catalyst of this process was the political use of a review that appeared in a scientific journal, something which is generally considered a minor expression of a wider cultural phenomenon.

The paper investigates why this was the case and Pfautz's central role: the following chapter shows how Germany struggled to create a consistent scientific narrative before the foundation of the *Acta Eruditorum* and tries to make sense of why this was the case on a wider conceptual level. The third chapter analyzes in detail Pfautz's contribution to the *Acta Eruditorum* as a reviewer before his review of Newton's *Principia*, while the fourth one analyzes this seminal review in detail. The last chapter shows how, under Christian Wolff, Pfautz's efforts consolidated in a centralized management of scientific academies, universities and journals, in a way that was unprecedented for Germany at that time.

2. Before the *Acta Eruditorum*: the struggles of the German tradition

Given that the French *Journal des Sçavans* and the English *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* started being published in 1665, almost twenty years before the foundation of the German *Acta Eruditorum*, understanding what happened in German territories during that time gap becomes extremely important. Pfautz's life reflects the many active exchanges between German scholars that were going on during that time and the unique approach to the new science that they were promoting, but also their struggles in finding unity of intent.

If we focus solely on the evolution of the German journals, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, who was acquainted and studied with Pfautz at the University of Leipzig in the 1660s, surely stands out as the author that attempted the foundation of a German journal the most. After the foundation of the two major French and English journals, Leibniz proposed first in 1668, and then in 1669 a similar endeavor in Germany, conceiving a journal called *Nucleus Librarius Semestralis*. The aim of the journal was trying to solve the main problem that, according to Leibniz, was preventing the German tradition to have international recognition: fragmentation. This fragmentation was at the same time political, because turning many different states in one single nation was not an easy task, but also scientific, because the many talented German scholars were at that time fighting one against the other without a common intent. In addition to this main problem, unlike other nations, Germany could not count on a city like Paris or London, a place that could have functioned as a shelter for all the scientists and scientific societies that were spread around the country. Leibniz's plan was to

write to the emperor in Vienna, with the support of different intermediaries, but he failed in securing the support needed. He made another attempt in 1679 conceiving a journal, called *Semestria Literaria*, that had even more ambitious objectives, but once again with no luck[3]. It was only natural then that in 1681 when contacted by Otto Mencke and Christoph Pfautz, who studied with him in Leipzig, he gave all his support to the foundation of the *Acta Eruditorum*. He was in good company though, since Mencke secured the approval of the *Collectores Actorum Eruditorum Lipsiensium*, a group of eminent intellectuals that were advocating for the foundation of the journal. After a tour around Europe made by Mencke and Pfautz in 1682 to find the necessary political and scientific approval, the journal was finally founded in 1682. In the end, the *Acta Eruditorum* can be considered the first fully fledged journal appeared in German territories, since the only one that had some luck before it, the so called *Miscellanea curiosa*, had however a convoluted and discontinuous publication history.[4] From a practical perspective, Otto Mencke, Pfautz's brother-in-law, had a central role in the creation of the journal,[5] but since he was no expert in mathematics or natural philosophy, he had to rely on Pfautz, Leibniz, and others on those topics. For this reason, when it comes to evaluate how the journal was shaping its narrative concerning the new science, the role of Pfautz, severely underestimated until now, is worth analyzing in detail.

Before the foundation of the *Acta* however, Leibniz's early attempts at creating scientific journals already show that in Pfautz's circle the idea that German territories needed a journal modeled after that of the other relevant cultural areas of influence was present since the very beginning of the twenty-year gap. All this journals were conceived mainly with the *Journal des Sçavans* in mind as their main model, but Pfautz and the other German scholars were also referring to what was going on in England and in Italy in the same period. The need for the foundation of a German journal in fact must have felt more pressing in the following years, while witnessing that even in Italy, where the presence of the Holy See was holding back the diffusion of new scientific ideas, things were changing for the better: in 1668 the *Giornale de'Letterati* starts being published in Rome, with a new edition of the same journal being published later in 1675 and directed by Giovanni Giustino Ciampini, founder of the *Accademia Fisico-matematica* in 1677. It seems then that only Germany was lagging behind in the race for creating a voice that would represent their tradition among the Republic of Letters.

Concerning what Pfautz could have done regarding this situation, it is important to note that his influence was not particularly relevant until he became professor of Mathematics in Leipzig in 1676. From that moment on, Pfautz becomes the dean of the university for several semesters, a position that will have a decisive impact on the foundation of the *Acta Eruditorum*. This does not mean

[3] This is well documented in Antognazza 2009, 97, 238, 239.

[4] See Leaven 1990, 18.

[5] See Leaven 1990.

however that the attempts made before the *Acta Eruditorum*, such as those of Leibniz, were single attempts not related to a shared goal: a common pattern could be found here, showing how the scholars that contributed to the rise of the German tradition were all gravitating around the Saxon-Thuringian universities, like the University of Jena and the University of Leipzig. Some of the scientists involved were students in one university and then became professors in the other or vice versa. For example, Pfautz started teaching mathematics in Leipzig to replace Johann Kühn, a professor who studied at the University of Jena. There, Leibniz studied for a while with Erhard Weigel, who was also the teacher of Johann Christoff Sturm before him. These are all main characters that contributed to the development of the German tradition in the sciences: besides Leibniz, who does not need any presentation, Sturm, for instance, will end up teaching at the University of Altford and founding the *collegium experimentale*, pioneering experimental science in Germany, while Weigel will have a central role in presenting the German tradition as the one in charge of a reform of the calendar based on solid scientific observations[6]. All these scientists were also acquainted to other professors coming from the same area, like Jakob Thomasius or Samuel Pufendorf, establishing a common background also in philosophy and the law. They all refer to other German scholars who were active in other parts of Germany, such as Joachim Jungius or Athanasius Kircher, but these authors represent more an important influence or the demonstration that German scholars were worth considering, rather than actual contributors to the same cause. The main difference and the reason why the efforts of the scientists working in the Saxon-Thuringian area are worth being analyzed for the purpose of identifying a German tradition is that they are the first scholars that with their actions and with the creation of the *Acta Eruditorum* received international response and recognition. Before the *Acta Eruditorum* then, despite the emergence of a common cultural tradition in this area around the 1660s, the political institutions that were supposed to help in the creation of the journals failed to offer substantial support, hence the twenty-year gap with other cultural traditions outside Germany.

If we consider the other two main pillars theorized for the creation of a unique scientific tradition in Germany, that is the creation of scientific societies and the diffusion of new ideas in the universities, we find in that period the same struggles occurred for the foundation of relevant scientific journals. The problem was not that there was a lack of scientific societies in Germany: for example, there was the already mentioned *Collegium curiosum sive experimentale* joined by Leibniz already in 1666 and founded by Sturm, or the *Societas Ereunetica* founded by Jungius. In addition to these societies, all plans related to the foundation of a journal by Leibniz mentioned before were also envisioning the foundation of corresponding scientific societies but, much like the journals, they never saw the

[6] See Schmidt 2022.

light of day.[7] Concrete advancements were made by Leibniz at a much later time, when the the peace of Ryswick in 1697 caused a renewed patriotism in Germany. Thanks to this event and to the fact that Leibniz was acquainted at that time with Sophie Charlotte of Hannover, he was able to contribute to the creation of Berlin's observatory, which led to the foundation of the Berlin Academy of science in 1700, symbol of the new monarchy of Prussia. The context in which this academy was found is then very political and it is a testament to the nationalistic turn that the practice of science took at the end of the century. Much like the *Acta Eruditorum* then, the Berlin Academy is a late attempt that shows how in the previous years Germany was lagging behind in these terms. We witness here the first synergy in Germany between a journal and a scientific society since the observatory and the society were originally founded to give Germany a leading role in the reformation of the calendar. Before 1700, Weigel first and then the *Acta Eruditorum* paved the way for this to happen, promoting German talented scholars on this topic as the only ones capable of offering the correct astronomical measurements needed to reform the calendar.

On the relationship between the rising new science and German universities instead, the problem before 1682 was that the ideas developed by the scholars involved in this fundamental turn were considered at first too dangerous to be adopted. While it is true that many of the scholars that will have an important role in the foundation of the *Acta Eruditorum* were already acquainted thanks precisely to the universities in which they completed their studies or in which they started teaching, they were not however in a dominant position inside those institutions from a political perspective, at least during the first half of the century. Many accusations were being made about the ideas promoted by these scholars that led to several internal clashes.[8] First and foremost there was a problem of clarity which was making the old establishment suspicious: the new scholars were promoting a form of syncretism between the new science and old ideas taken from different traditions that was hard to decipher. While they were still referring to the scholastic tradition, they were also involved in the revaluation of philosophers and philosophies, above all Pythagoras and some obscure form of mathematical Pythagorism, that didn't have the same appeal as Aristotle to the traditionalists populating the universities, especially because they were seen as dangerous ancestors of Spinoza's philosophy.[9] A good amount of effort and years then were spent by the new German scientists and philosophers to

[7] See Roinila 2009.

[8] During his career, Weigel was opposed by the faculty of theology at the University of Jena. A similar fate was faced at a later time by Christian Wolff, an opposition that became the center of the German cultural debate for several years.

[9] As much as a connection between Pythagoras and Spinoza seems implausible, it was fairly reasonable in the context of the German syncretism. The idea was that, if we take mathematics as a form of metaphysics and we conceive real entities as numbers modeled after God, there wouldn't be a significant way to discern this God from those entities. This would lead to an homogeneity between God and the world similar to Spinoza's *deus sive natura*.

clean their names from these accusations and to offer a metaphysical background that was compatible with more traditional beliefs. If we take into account this conceptual problem, together with the lack of a unified intent and political support, it is clear why the German tradition was having trouble in manifesting as a unique alternative internationally.

When the *Acta Eruditorum* finally appeared in 1682, the first important objective was defining the cultural framework in which the journal wanted to operate and how it was posing itself with respect to other international journals and scientific societies. This process took some years and it can be certainly studied through the many contributions published in the journal. The value of the reviews that appeared in the journal instead is often underestimated, but for the purpose of understanding what was the international framework in which the rising German tradition was seeing itself, I believe they give us a fundamental advantage: since the contributions to the journal are proposed and accepted, they entail relationships with authors that in some way are already acquainted with the journal. Reviews instead can be made of works that are or may become relevant for the scholars gravitating around the journal, without direct contact with the author of the work reviewed. They show in other words what the journal considered culturally relevant and the constellation of authors it wanted to be remembered with, even when an actual connection with those authors was at that stage only wishful thinking. In addition to this, reviews are a way to prove what actual books were circulating in a certain territory and what books were not.[10] For this reason, studying the journal's reviews allows us to see more clearly what were its international reference points. The role of the reviews is particularly important for Pfautz and the German scientific tradition in general, because we can appreciate through them the passage from a journal that wished for international recognition to a journal that was granted international recognition thanks to Pfautz's review of Newton's *Principia*, which planted the seeds for the Leibniz-Newton controversy. An overview of Pfautz's reviews before this one then will give an idea of the general framework in which the German tradition wanted to operate, but it will also show how it wanted to bend the main narrative of the new science to its plans.

3. Pfautz and the *Acta Eruditorum*: an overview of his contribution as a reviewer

I am offering here a brief summary of Pfautz's work as a reviewer after the foundation of the *Acta Eruditorum* and before his review of Newton's *Principia* in 1687. The purpose of this analysis is to show common patterns in his work and the wider cultural context in which these reviews became relevant, as they set the stage for the first controversy where the German scientific tradition identified itself as an independent cultural movement. This summary highlights how,

[10] In particular, the publication of so many reviews shows how the University of Leipzig had a central role in the production and circulation of books in Germany. See Leaven 1990.

despite Pfautz's apparently neutral reviewing style, every choice was made to foster a certain debate in German territories, and it was related to the cultural context in which Pfautz was born and raised.

Pfautz's first 1682 review in the *Acta Eruditorum* is Gilles de Launay's *Cosmographie,*[11] a relatively unknown book on the geographical description of the earth using the notion of sphere. While the review was particularly short, we can already appreciate here Pfautz's plain reviewing style, which focuses mainly on the exposition of the book's contents, only to add subtle and polite criticism when needed (in this case, he highlighted how the book was focusing primarily on the geographical description of Europe rather than the entire world). In the wider cultural context, this review becomes relevant because it shows the German interest in the topic of spherical geometry and its use in the construction of globes, something on which both Weigel and Leibniz extensively researched[12]. Seen in this context then, the review is an attempt to establish a connection between these German research efforts and the French ones.

Pfautz's second review of the same year is the *Cometarum natura, motus et origo* by Johann Christoff Sturm,[13] a book on the nature of comets. Again, the importance of this review is to be found in the author reviewed and in the wider context that it implies: at that time, before his criticism of Leibniz's metaphysics became relevant in the following years, Sturm was considered part of the same cultural milieu where Pfautz was raised: Sturm studied mathematics, natural philosophy and theology with Weigel in Jena until 1662, only to figuratively leave his place to Leibniz in the following year. In Pfautz's review, Sturm is considered primarily for his contribution as an astronomer, something which is often underestimated by contemporary scholars: despite our interest in the more philosophical explorations of these authors in fact, it is important to remind that they were focusing first and foremost on their activity as astronomers, an activity which led them to fairly decent results[14]. This is probably why, as it will be shown, Pfautz's review of Newton's *Principia* had such a profound impact on the invention of a German tradition, since all the German scholars, despite their differences, were at least agreeing on the rejection of some major astronomical assumptions related to Newton's theory. This kind of unity of intent was probably impossible to obtain starting from other scientific premises, as the quarrel between Sturm and Leibniz for example shows.

[11] Pfautz 1682, 56.

[12] See Weigel 1657 or *Trigonometria sphaerica tractanda per projectionem* in Leibniz, 1923-. Preprint available at https://www.gwlb.de/leibniz/digitale-ressourcen/repositorium-des-leibniz-archivs/laa-mathesis.

[13] Pfautz 1682, 116.

[14] German scholars were among the first to offer a categorization of comets and they were competent in the prediction of eclipses. Other efforts in the same direction were paling in comparison, as Pfautz highlights in his review of *Cometa annorum 1680 et 1681 et in eundem astronomici conatus atque physicae meditatione* by Pietro Maria Cavina, a work renown for being inaccurate on several levels. (Pfautz 1682, 163).

The same focus on astronomical observations, models and results can be found in Pfautz's review of Jonas Moore's *A New System of mathematicks*,[15] published the same year: Moore was not only a prominent member of the Royal Society, but he was also one of the members who contributed the most in the creation of the Royal Observatory at Greenwich, founded in 1676.

Another relevant review during the first year is that of Jakob Bernoulli's *Conamen novi systematis cometarum*,[16] where the author argues that comets are nothing more than satellites of a planet gravitating around the sun, but placed at such a longer distance from the earth that we perceive its satellites only when their orbit comes closer to our planet. The review is particularly long and, above all, is presented with the reproduction of the geometrical disposition of the comets and the planets. Pfautz in fact praises in particular the geometrical elegance of the solution and refers to Bernoulli's main influence, which in this case is Descartes' *Geometrie*. This theory was completely wrong (only Newton will find the true solution of the problem at a later time) but it shows nonetheless how Pfautz focused often on the topic of comets, their origin study and classification, in order to show that also Germany, with authors such as Sturm, had something relevant to say on the matter. These few initial reviews already attempt to connect the two most important cultural movements in Europe active in French and England with the work that was being carried on in Germany on a major scientific topic.

The first review in the following year is that of Ptolemy's *Harmonikon*.[17] At a first glance, it might be of interest only because it is one of Pfautz's few reviews concerning an author who was active before his times, but the book reviewed is actually the latin edition of the *Claudii Ptolemaeii harmonicorum libri tres*, the latin translation edited and annotated by John Wallis. The review becomes then an excuse to praise this author and present his works, thus mentioning also the Wallis-Hobbes controversy. Wallis and Hobbes were among the most influential English authors in the cultural circles gravitating around the Saxon-Thuringian universities[18]. The review of Ismael Boulliau's *Opus novum ad arithmeticam infinitorum*,[19] which appeared later in that same year also had the same ideal function of celebrating and spreading Wallis' works, since the author claims in this book that he successfully proved what Wallis showed in his *Arithmetica Infinitorum* only by induction.

In 1683, Pfautz's reviewing activity continues with three subsequent reviews[20]. Among those, beside another review of one of Sturm's works, the most important is the review of Pierre Ango's *Optique*. The review of this book, written by a French jesuit who was professor at La Flèche's college, shows on one side

[15] Pfautz 1682, 145.
[16] Pfautz 1682, 178.
[17] Pfautz 1683, 77.
[18] See Probst 2018.
[19] Pfautz 1683, 207.
[20] Pfautz 1683, 163-169.

the interest in expanding the relationships with the Jesuits, something which is going to be a distinctive trait of many authors gravitating around the *Acta Eruditorum*, as shown for example by Leibniz's coeval interest in the relationship between the Jesuits and the Chinese culture or that of Wolff on the same topic at a later time.[21] On the other side, Ango's *Optique* is an interesting choice in itself, because of the unique approach proposed in his book: Ango argues that there was a misunderstanding in the interpretation of Aristotle's theory on the nature of light and that, once the true meaning of Aristotle's words would have been found, his ideas would have contributed in a positive way to the contemporary scientific debate "contra *Recentiorum* Physicam"[22]. This idea that there is an opposition between the "*Princeps Philosophorum*"[23], misunderstood by his most famous interpreters, and the *Recentiores*, a general category in which are grouped indiscriminately personalities such as Descartes, Hobbes, Spinoza, and Gassendi who failed to see the importance of a modern interpretation of Aristotle's works, is also at the core of many German works written in those years. Many German scientists were calling themselves *Conciliatores*, scholars that were going to offer the perfect blend between modern science and the supposedly real interpretation of Aristotle. The most important expression of this idea is probably Leibniz's 1669 letter to Thomasius[24], another author frequently reviewed during those years in the *Acta Eruditorum*, although not by Pfautz. The terminology used in that letter to name the different sides of this ideal clash is the same used by Pfautz in his review of Ango's *Optique*, showing continuity in their intent. We could safely say that the *Conciliatores* are both a first timid instance of a German tradition in the sciences and at the same time its worst enemy, according to what I've shown in the previous chapter on the downsides of German syncretism.

During that year, Pfautz introduced also a topic that would play a decisive role in the relationships between the German scholars and the Italian scholars: the reform of the calendar. Pfautz tackles this issue in a clever way by reviewing François Blondel's *Histoire du Calendrier Romain*.[25] Much like he already did with Ptolemy's work, Pfautz here uses a review of an old topic (the Roman calendar) to introduce a new one (the adoption of the Gregorian calendar first introduced by Pope Gregory XIII). In Germany, the work on the reform of the calendar was first initiated by Weigel and then carried on after his death by, among others, Leibniz and Sturm[26].

[21] See Maitre 2020 and Lach 1953.

[22] Pfautz 1683, 163.

[23] Pfautz 1683, 163.

[24] Leibniz to Thomasius, April 1669 (Leibniz 1923, AA II 1, N. 11).

[25] Pfautz 1683, 347. For an account of the Italian research on the calendar, see Appetecchi 2023.

[26] See Schmidt 2022.

By giving more information on these reviews and the context in which they were published, I believe we could now already see a certain pattern in Pfautz's choices: the intent was first to promote German authors like Sturm in the international field as good scientists, particularly astronomers capable of achieving good and reliable measurements. This promotion was presented together with a philosophical framework in the field of natural philosophy and mathematics, where German scholars were presented as *Conciliatores*, with respect to the opposition between the old Aristotelian science and the new emerging one. Since there is an easy parallel between this approach and German religious irenicism, it is easy to see why they were thinking of themselves as the ideal intermediaries between the opposing traditions. In the attempt of assuming this role, the German scholars were led to those authors that, despite coming from a conservative background, were experimenting with merging old ideas with the new scientific ideas, like the Jesuits. The culmination of this process of taking the international lead in the role of intermediary should have been the reform of the calendar, where something that was approved by the most conservative side, the catholic church, was planned for being adopted also in Germany, yet improved and verified by the reliable German astronomical observations. This masterplan is reflected in the *Acta Eruditorum*'s reviews of the following years, before Pfautz's review of Newton's *Principia*.

Concerning Pfautz only, notable mentions of these last years before Newton's review are some reviews related to the English tradition and to the attempted connection with the Royal Society, such that of Barrow's *Lectiones* in 1684,[27] or the review in the following year of the *Clavis geometrica catholica* from Thomas Baker,[28] another mathematician of the Royal Society who tried to find a solution for biquadratic equations. Particularly important is also the review of Hevelius' *Annus Climactericus*[29], which refers to a famous controversy between the author, Robert Hooke and John Flamsteed.[30] This shows that Pfautz and the German scholars, despite being attracted by the dialogue with the English tradition, were also aware of possible misunderstandings and controversies.

A unique review that appeared during these years is the review of the Jesuit Tachard's travelogue to China and Thailand.[31] This seems to be an unusual topic[32] for Pfautz, given his past reviewing activity on the journal, but some hints in the review connect it to the topics already analyzed: on one side, the travelogue contained also astronomical observations gathered during the journey, which

[27] Pfautz 1684, 84.

[28] Pfautz 1685, 25.

[29] Pfautz 1685, 141. The title refers to the idea of certain years which were considered particularly important in the life of a person.

[30] Hevelius was an advocate for naked-eye astronomy and he was proud of his results. Renown is the controversy with Edmond Halley. See Szanser 1976.

[31] Pfautz 1688, 6.

[32] Particularly interesting in this sense is that Pfautz puts an emphasis on the Thai notion of God, as explained in the book.

is probably the reason why the review was assigned to Pfautz in the first place, and on the other side it is also important to remind that the Jesuit's missions to China were among the most interesting from a scientific perspective. The Jesuits operating there were attracted by the opportunity of teaching the new science to the natives and for this reason, they started long exchanges with scholars of the German tradition, such as Leibniz.

Finally, the most notable review before Newton's *Principia* is the review of Christian Huygens' *Astroscopia*.[33] In classic Pfautz's fashion, it is a review of a recent book that serves to present and praise an author considered important in the international field, who played a significant role in influencing the German tradition. It is widely known that Huygens was a fundamental author and guide for Leibniz in his early years, but the fact that he was acquainted with Leibniz does not mean that he was aware of the major research activities happening in Germany at that time. Iconic in this sense is Huygen's letter to Leibniz, dated February 1691[34], where Huygens, who had just received Weigel's visit, basically wonders with his former student who that person was, despite the fact that Huygens was already quoted by Weigel in one of his 1674 works and despite the fact that he was so celebrated in Germany in the same cultural milieu. This exchange clearly shows the strong dichotomy between how the masterplan of becoming an international reference was playing out in the minds of the German scholars and how it was actually affecting the balance of the cultural narratives abroad before the Leibniz-Newton calculus controversy had taken traction. However, the situation was about to change soon and the catalyst of this change was Pfautz's review of Newton's *Principia*.

5. Reviewing Newton's *Principia*

The publication of Newton's *Philosophiæ Naturalis Principia Mathematica* in July 1687 was followed by only four reviews in the entire world. The first one appeared in England in the *Philosophical Transaction* as a sort of presentation of the book, and it was written by Edmond Halley, renown astronomer and member of the Royal Society. All the other three appeared an entire year after the book's publication. The first one was a review from the *Bibliothèque Universelle* in March 1688; the second one, published shortly thereafter, was the one in the *Acta Eruditorum* by Pfautz; finally, the last one appeared in the *Journal des Sçavans*. While the note by Halley was nothing but a simple summary of Newton's thesis, prepared for readers that already knew and accepted his views and discoveries, the one published in the *Bibliothèque Universelle,* and written by no other than the philosopher John Locke, had an important role in spreading Newton's ideas throughout the continent, especially because it avoided the explanation of mathematical details that would have been too complicated for the majority of

[33] Pfautz 1684, 563.

[34] Huygens 1891, X, 15-16, 141-142.

readers in favor of a more generalist approach. Considering that the review appeared in the *Journal des Sçavans* was nothing more than a small remark where Newton was criticized for not adhering to the Cartesian dogma, Pfautz's review is considered the one that had the most detailed scientific exposition of Newton's ideas and, for this reason, the most neutral of the three reviews appeared outside England. On this topic for instance, the opinion of James Axtel, a scholar who worked on Locke's review, is worth quoting in its entirety:

> For the scientist or the mathematician, the review in the *Acta Eruditorum* was probably the best. In twelve octavo pages the reviewer went deeper into the structure and methodology of the *Principia* than either Halley or Locke had done, but, like them, he made no effort to criticize Newton's work. He was content to give a detailed summary. Although this was probably the best review from a scientific standpoint, two things unfortunately mitigated its effectiveness in spreading Newtonianism to the European intellectual class. First, the *Acta* was published in Latin, and Latin was read by an increasingly smaller audience than French. It is true, of course, that most scientists and mathematicians could understand Latin, but here we are concerned primarily with the more general lay audiences of the literary journals. And second, it reached very few French libraries where the Cartesian orthodoxy was most firmly entrenched. The *Acta* does not even appear on the list which Daniel Mornet compiled of the most popular periodicals in French libraries, which ends with a journal found only in three of the 500 catalogues consulted (Axtel 1965, 158–59).

It is fascinating how this quote, in the light of the reconstruction of the German cultural references presented in this paper, can be considered both an acceptable account of the situation and an incomplete one. It is a take that can be defended on the premise that the goal of the review was «spreading Newtonianism», something that the author tends to believe probably because, according to his reconstruction, Pfautz «made no effort to criticize Newton's work». The same can be said for the reasoning for which the fact that Pfautz's review was not appealing to a French speaking world prevented its thorough diffusion, even though this claim seems to be unclear in itself, since nothing would have prevented the scientists of that time, who could clearly understand latin, to later divulge Pfautz's review in their own native languages, especially French. On a very general level then, it is indeed true that Pfautz's review failed in spreading Newtonianism, but only if our approach as historians of science is based on the idea that Newton's theory represented the winning side of history and that researching on this matter means first and foremost researching on the ways in which Newton's theory became the dominant one. However, this approach fails to see the deep implications that Newton's work and Pfautz's review had on German society and, in the long run, on the rise of a German tradition in the sciences.

Having highlighted Pfautz's reviewing journey in the years before the publication of the *Principia*, we can clearly see instead that Pfautz's review was far from being neutral. Beyond the deceiving neutral tone of Pfautz's reviewing style, there are two relevant passages that show how some of Newton's ideas

were not well received at all. The first one is the remark that the mathematical method implemented by Newton was similar to that presented by Leibniz, which can be considered the start of the Leibniz-Netwon calculus controversy[35]. The second one is Pfautz's remark on how Newton's ideas implied on a fundamental level the adoption of specific methodological and philosophical premises, such as the existence of the void and action at a distance[36]. Above all, this last remark, reframed in the wider context of Pfautz's reviewing activity, shows how Newton's implied principles were strongly against whatever the rising German scientific tradition was trying to build.[37] Pfautz was far from being a neutral reviewer since the moment the review was published the stage was already set for the perfect storm to happen. Newton's work represented the greatest threat faced by the slowly developing German scientific tradition, not only because it implied the accusation of plagiarism for one of its members, but because it associated the most important mathematical advancement of the century with philosophical principles that were not compatible with those adopted by the German tradition, since this tradition was presenting itself internationally as the one which was destined to successfully merge the new science with old yet reevaluated philosophical principles, above all the Aristotelian impossibility of the void.

Even if Descartes shared similar Aristotelian premises regarding the refutation of the void, accepting or not Newton's ideas was for the French-speaking world mainly a matter of siding with Descartes or not, since Descartes and his tradition had already put a lot of effort in differentiating themselves from the old philosophy, defining an independent space for science and its method to thrive, while conceiving at the same time other ways to still defend the Christian tradition. In German territories instead, much more was at stake, because the activities of their scholars were directly connected with a kind of syncretism that was not completely independent from older metaphysical assumptions. At a more fundamental and conceptual level, the real threat seemed to be that Newton's mathematical method, which was different from the French one and instead similar to the Leibnizian one, directly implied its metaphysical assumptions. Defending Leibniz then became for the German community also a way to defend their metaphysical assumptions. Leibniz followed his tradition in this direction, while an alternative scenario would have been submitting to the Eng-

[35] «Ubi & de sua (cui geminam Cl. Leibmtio esse affirmat) methodo determinandi maximas & minimas» (Pfautz 1688, 309).

[36] More precisely, Pfautz highlights the incompatibility between Newton's theory and Descartes' vortex theory, which means that the effect of gravity has to be based on action at a distance. It is not by chance in fact that Leibniz's first article written as a reaction to Newton will attempt to fix this problem (Pfautz 1688, 310).

[37] Remarkable in this sense is the fact that only few months after the review of the *Principia*, Pfautz will review one of Weigel's works on spherical geometry. This positive review enriched with expensive drawings appears out of place if we compare Weigel's achievements with Newton's, unless we take into account the cultural background detailed in this paper.

lish tradition on one side, accepting for instance the metaphysical framework that argued for the existence of the void and for absolute space and time, and on the other side claiming Leibniz's priority in the discovery of the mathematical method that made that tradition shine. This was never an option however for the German tradition, on the light of its political objectives: the dialogue with the Roman Church, the Jesuit tradition and the French tradition was conceived on the very metaphysical premises that Newton's work was refuting.

In this sense then, Pfautz's review had a pivotal role in the creation of a German tradition in the sciences, because it forced that rising tradition to make a choice between assuming a leading role internationally or submitting to another tradition. In this process of becoming aware of their role, the German scholars will progressively move away from their naive syncretic efforts of the early years and they will start conceiving a scientific approach that could have been seen and defined as uniquely German.

6. Conclusion: Pfautz's legacy and the consolidation of the German tradition

Leibniz will be concerned with the calculus controversy only at a later stage of his life, with respect to Pfautz's review. The history of the Leibniz-Newton controversy is widely known and scholars usually agree that it started around 1699.[38] Already in 1688 however, Leibniz was deeply stimulated by Pfautz's review[39], as three major articles were published on the *Acta Eruditorum* in the following year and inspired by Newton's work show. One of these articles, the *Tentamen de Motuum caelestium Causis*, was an attempt to offer a mechanical explanation of the force of gravity, showing that, in a way, the controversy on the correct metaphysical premises of natural philosophy precedes the controversy on the origin of the infinitesimal calculus and it is the result of Leibniz following Pfautz in trying to define the metaphysical framework of the German tradition. Despite the controversy then, we cannot dismiss the importance of Pfautz's review and Leibniz's reading of the *Principia*, because it made Leibniz realize how the German scientific tradition was relying on syncretistic ideas that were not able to compete in that form with the most recent scientific advancements. Suddenly then, the reference to actual works written by Aristotle, summoned with the purpose of finding a new and unique perspective, became a mere homage to ideas considered similar: that of Leibniz becomes a reevaluation of Aristotle's substantial forms and not a reuse, because the context now had to change and become completely Leibnizian, or rather uniquely German. In the same spirit in the following years, the concept of substance

[38] A relatively recent contribution is Bardi 2006.

[39] As shown in Antognazza 2009, 295. Whether Leibniz red the *Principia* in 1687, 1688, or 1689 remains unclear, but it seems that he was not willing to admit an early read of Newton's masterpiece because he was worried that the public would have judged his subsequent works derivative. Given the relationship with Pfautz, it is likely that he could have access to the book already in 1687.

is progressively substituted with the concept of monad and the argument on the *vis viva*, with its own controversy[40], becomes the cornerstone of Leibniz's natural philosophy. Recent studies have also pointed out that the very reading of Newton's *Principia* seems to have stimulated Leibniz in developing a more robust and streamlined version of his iconic definition of space as a system of relations.[41] By answering Pfautz's call, Leibniz was put in the position of redefining the entire German metaphysical framework that served as a premise for their scientific contributions.

If this process represents the invention of a German tradition in the sciences from a conceptual standpoint, it is also true that the German society and its institutions were finally ready to at least partially support this fundamental change. The life of Christian Wolff is a sort of testament of this consolidation: he studied in Jena under Hamberger, Weigel's successor, where he was introduced to Sturm's works; He was one of Pfautz's students (they wrote a jointed review in 1706) and he was hired by Mancke as a reviewer for the *Acta Eruditorum*, where he wrote forty papers and almost five hundred reviews; he was also hired as a professor of mathematics in Halle thanks to Leibniz's support. In addition to these biographical facts related to the Saxon cultural milieu, Wolff is widely known for having popularized the use of the German language in philosophy and, despite the criticism that was still being made in many conservative circles against him, the controversies he took part in never impacted is ever rising popularity. At the end of his life, the Wolffian tradition was a reality involved in developing every main pillar supporting the German tradition: from the presence in several scientific societies to the fundamental role in the *Acta Eruditorum*, which gave Wolff an unprecedented international recognition as a German scholar.[42] The German tradition in the sciences was now a reality, so much so that a young Immanuel Kant, despite resorting to Newton's ideas at a later time, had to dedicate the majority of his early efforts to defending and expanding this tradition, working on the concept of *Vis viva* first and later proposing his own *Monadologia Physica*.

While Pfautz's contribution represents only a fraction of a wider and still unexplored cultural background related to the *Acta Eruditorum*, it shows nonetheless how the practice of reviewing other works could shape the narrative concerning a scientific tradition, even when the style proposed is apparently neutral. The constellation of national and international authors proposed by Pfautz in his reviews tells us the story of how the German tradition was conceiving itself with respect to other cultural influences and help us understanding how and why major shifts in the evolution of its narrative happened as a reaction to these reviews.

[40] See Iltis 1971.

[41] In recent years, Vincenzo De Risi has presented seminal work on Leibniz's unpublished manuscripts pointing out in this direction. See "The Genesis of Relationism. Leibniz's Early Theory of Space and Newton's Scholium". Forthcoming in *Oxford Studies in Early Modern Philosophy*, 12, 2025.

[42] For an account of Newton's reception during these years see Ahnert 2004.

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Albrecht von Haller's Self-Reviews and Style of Reasoning

Claire Gantet

Abstract: Despite the review ethos introduced by the physician Albrecht von Haller when he took over the *Göttingische gelehrte Nachrichten* as chief editor in 1747, he wrote many self-reviews. This article examines von Haller's numerous self-reviews in order to explore the aims of reviewing, the openness of scholarship, the relationship between reviewing and truth, and the scientific language used, which can be summarised as what Marco Sgarbi, in a stimulating article, has called a "style of reasoning." Reviews and self-reviews did not develop as an autonomous genre, but were integrated into a system of intermediality in which publications, reviews, (semi-)private letters and images responded to one another. They were primarily aimed at correcting and advancing science in the complexity of his intellectual, personal and cultural options.

Keywords: Albrecht von Haller, style of reasoning, scholarly journals, reviews, scientific illustration, anatomy

1. Introduction

During his lifetime, Albrecht von Haller (1708–1777) impressed his contemporaries with his immense erudition and the sophistication of his information management. He was said to have read every scientific and certainly every medical work, and to have developed an ingenious system of notebooks with internal cross-references to serve in particular as working tools for his "libraries" or *Bibliothecae*, his monumental works reviewing the state of knowledge in a particular branch of learning. But alongside, and perhaps even more than, these voluminous works, scholarship was played out in public debate, especially in reviews of works in scholarly journals.

The review was invented and defined as a new literary genre in the founding issue of the *Journal des Sçavans* in 1666. The aim of the journal was to provide scholars with regular information on new publications and the academic world. The very term "journal" used by its first editor, Denis de Sallo, referred to a register in which merchants and tradesmen recorded their daily accounts and transactions, archiving and indexing them so that it could be consulted at a later date:[1] from the outset, therefore, journals were not simply channels for

[1] Vittu 2005, 527–28.

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information, but had to store and index the knowledge disseminated in the Republic of Letters.

The *Journal des Sçavans* had no systematic structure. For contemporaries, the internal openness of the journals contributed to the usefulness of knowledge. Some scholars, such as Leibniz, took a very self-confident stance,[2] even though the status of the 'reduced' knowledge provided by scholarly journals quickly became controversial – it was lamented very early on that people no longer read books, but only more or less biased reviews.

From the outset, Denis de Sallo, in his "Avis de l'imprimeur au lecteur," distinguished between two categories of texts: "extraits" (reviews) on the one hand, and "lettres" or "mémoires" (scientific news) on the other. In order to guarantee the 'freedom' of the reviewer, the "extraits" had to remain anonymous. In a letter from Jean Gallois, it is made clear that all extracts must provide information on the specific features of the book under review:

> It is a good idea to make the review a little longer so that I can get to know the book better. It should note what is good or bad about the book, what the book can be used for and what profit can be made from it if it has already been written about, and make a comparison with those who have written about it before the author of this book.[3]

In order to produce an accurate review, one must first "read carefully," then assess the quality, usefulness and value of the book, recall previous studies on the subject and make a comparison with them. In this way, the reviews should contribute to the development of literary history (*historia literaria*), a reasoned history of knowledge and therefore a history of the Republic of Letters.

Nevertheless, the art of reviewing remained an area of debate between several models: firstly, the 'skeleton' model, which retained only the structure of the book under review; secondly, the sequence of extracts from selected passages; or thirdly, the reasoned assessment of the publication.[4] It also depended on material constraints such as the periodicity and format of the journal: should the reviews be brief and topical, or more substantial but less topical? As a result, there were not one but several arts or styles of criticism.[5]

In 1747, almost a hundred years after Denis de Sallo, Albrecht von Haller – a professor of anatomy, surgery and botany at the newly founded University of Göttingen from 1736 to 1753 – became chief editor of the *Göttingische gelehrte*

[2] Gantet 2018.

[3] "II est bon qu'il fasse l'extrait un peu ample afin que je puisse avoir plus de connaissance du livre. Il fault remarquer ce qu'il y a dans le livre de bon ou de mauvais, a quoy le livre peut servir et quel profit on en peut tirer, si on a desja escrit sur cette matière, et faire comparaison de ceux qui en ont escrit avant l'auteur de ce livre," Jean Gallois to Denis II Godefroy, about a review to be prepared by Chabron. Quoted by Vittu 2002, 353.

[4] See Léchot 2017.

[5] I therefore take the opposite view to that of Thomas Habel, who reduces discussion to a single form of criticism. Habel 2007.

Anzeigen (henceforth: *GGA*). From the outset, in the preface to the 1747 volume of the *GGA*, Haller defined the functions of a reviewer.[6] First of all, the reviewer had to have access to a large number of recent works; he had to be familiar with many sciences and speak several languages; but as no one person could master all the sciences, the collaboration of several scholars, each covering his own special field, was necessary. A scholar who studied a work in his field had therefore to give a precise judgement, positive or negative, in the interest of the progress of science.

When Denis Sallo had defined the recension in 1666, exchanges between scholars were taking place within the classical framework of the Republic of Letters. Anne Goldgar has shown that these contacts were governed by codes of politeness and moderation: the Republic of Letters was based on a community of obligation. According to Goldgar, the Republic of Letters came to an end under the influence of French philosophers, who replaced polite exchanges with calls for mobilisation in the name of humanitarian virtues such as tolerance.[7]

As Hubert Steinke has pointed out, Haller's example contradicts Goldgar's theory. Not only did French philosophers still respect the codes of the Republic of Letters, but Haller placed the progress of science and the scientific community above the codes of the Republic of Letters. What Haller required was the verdict of a specialist. The reviews he wrote and demanded in the name of special scientific expertise had to be clear in their judgement, which did not necessarily go hand in hand with collegial courtesy. Like Hubert Steinke, I interpret this tension as the beginning, within the Republic of Letters, of the outline of a scientific community.[8]

Haller wrote some reviews as early as the 1730s. It seems that the controversies about the mechanism of respiration with Georg Erhard Hamberger and the heritage of the Leiden Professor Herman Boerhaave, which both began in 1744 simultaneously with the publication of his *Icones anatomicae* and were conducted through review journals, persuaded him of the crucial importance of this kind of criticism. He started to work for the *Bibliothèque Raisonnée* in 1742, but only in 1745 did he begin to write for the Göttingen journal. As in 1747, finally, he became chief editor of the *GGA*, he guaranteed to submit half of all the articles. Despite his return to Switzerland in 1753, he almost honoured his commitment and provided some 9,000 reviews only to the *GGA* alone, before his death in 1777.[9] To these must be added at least 44 reviews in French for the *Bibliothèque*

[6] Prefaces by Haller, *Göttingische Gelehrte Anzeigen*, volumes 1747 and 1748. The title *Göttingische gelehrte Anzeigen* is a collective title for the Göttingen scholarly journal, which was published under the following titles: *Göttingische Zeitungen von gelehrten Sachen* (1739–1752) and *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* (1753–1801). See in particular Boschung and Pross (eds.) 2008; Holenstein, Steinke and Stuber (eds.) 2013.

[7] Goldgar 1995.

[8] I take up Hubert Steinke's excellent analysis, which inspired this article. Steinke 2005b, 256.

[9] Guthke 1962. See Steinke and Profos (eds.) 2004, n° 2477.

raisonnée des ouvrages des savans de l'Europe[10] and a few more for the *Nouvelle bibliothèque germanique*. The sheer number of reviews – an average of 266 per year, or one review every 1.3 days – demonstrates the importance of reviews in Haller's scholarly work. Haller's correspondence shows in turn the weight that authors and readers attached to reviews. Contrary to the ethics of the reviewer Haller set out in his preface to the *GGA* of 1747, he frequently reviewed his own works when they were published.[11]

The practice of self-review, which was made possible by anonymity, was the subject of ambivalent judgements. On the one hand, it ran counter to the impartial judgement advocated by learned journals and the ethos of the Republic of Letters. On the other hand, editors could be sure that the reviewer had actually read the book he was assessing and mastered the topic.[12] I propose to examine Albrecht von Haller's numerous self-reviews in order to explore the aims of reviewing, the openness of scholarship, the relationship between reviewing and truth, and the scientific language used, which can be summarised as what Marco Sgarbi, in a stimulating article, has called a "style of reasoning."[13]

I have undertaken an exact count of Haller's self-reviews, but had to give up for lack of time. In any case, there are several hundred in the *GGA* alone, as well as others in French-language scholarly journals. Rather than undertake an exhaustive study, I will focus on an influential publication in order to shed light on the role of self-reviews in Albrecht von Haller's scholarly work: the *Icones anatomicae*, which was published between 1743 and 1756, not as a finished work but in the form of illustrated fascicles. They provide a particularly good insight into the interactions between science and the public, or in other words, science in the making through 'external' reviews and self-reviews.

My approach to Haller's reviews will not be purely 'internal,' but will integrate them into the intermedial system ('external' reviews, correspondence, images, etc.) into which they were integrated, in search of Haller's specific way of arguing. In fact, not only the reviews, but also the number of Haller's letters is enormous, with 12,000 letters addressed to him and several thousand written by him. The University of Bern's hallerNet database provides easy access to Haller's letters and reviews. My considerations will be based largely on an exploitation of this database and on a few surveys of the other GJZ18 database.[14]

[10] Guthke 1973 was able to provide evidence of 44 reviews by Haller in the *Bibliothèque raisonnée*. Lagarrigue estimates at least 50 reviews by Haller: Lagarrigue 1993, 93–123 and 132.

[11] Catherine 2013: 247. Profos Frick 2009: 108. He reviewed his own literary works 28 times, but in fact these are mainly reviews of translations and new editions.

[12] See Léchot 2017.

[13] I borrow this expression from Ian Hacking's notion of "style," as reinterpreted and clarified by Sgarbi 2024. This means not only thinking, but also arguing and demonstrating in the public arena of the Republic of Letters. See Hacking 1992; Sciortino 2017; and newly Sgarbi 2024. My warmest thanks to Marco Sgarbi for sending me his article while it was still forthcoming.

[14] The very powerful database https://hallernet.org/ and the more traditional database https://adw-goe.de/gjz18/datenbank/. All the data were consulted in February 2024.

I will proceed in three parts of unequal length. The first part will examine the relationships between self-reference and the openness or public dimension of science; the second part will examine the scientific language used; and finally, the third part will examine self-reference in the work of Albrecht von Haller, all in the context of the changing Republic of Letters.

2. An open science? Self-reviews between scientific norms and values

Haller never stopped writing about the works of others, but also about himself. He kept his collections of reading notes and his working copy of the *GGA*, in which he wrote an 'H' in the margin for reviews of his own writings. In his *Iudicia*, or collections of excerpts, he kept a record of his reviews and self-reviews. So not only can we easily identify them, but we can also assume that they played a role in his knowledge management.[15] Self-reviews had three main functions.

2.1. Personal vanity and ambition

Self-reviewing was, of course, a means of self-promotion. Haller never missed an opportunity to announce one of his publications in the *GGA*. This was an act of vanity, and Haller was not averse to it. Haller listed the first biography written about him, by his student Georg Zimmermann:

> We have found nothing against the historical accuracy. We only wish that Mr Zimmermann had complained as little about academic envy and republican jealousy as Mr v. H. himself did in his writings […].[16]

A rival journal to the GGA, the *Jenaische gelehrte Anzeigen*, even denounced abuse: Haller was using the journal not to promote the progress of science, but his own fame. The Jena journal – and behind him, presumably, Haller's rival, the professor of medicine Georg Erhard Hamberger – argued that Haller was misusing the *GGA* to further his own reputation and "deceive the readers with all sorts of incomplete information and judgements concerning his own affairs."[17]

However, Haller, who could be extremely incisive in his reviews, was careful in his self-reviews. He endeavoured to present only facts.

Haller was not just a self-promoter. It was not only an "I" that spoke in his (self-) reviews, but also a "we." The "we" form, of course, concealed the self-review

[15] See Gantet and Krämer 2021.

[16] "Wir haben nichts der historischen Richtigkeit wiedriges gefunden, nur hätten wir gewünschet, daß Hr. Zimmermann so wenig über den Academischen Neid und über die Republicanische Eifersucht geklagt hätte, als Hr. v. H. selbst in seinen Schriften darüber geklagt hat," Albrecht von Haller über Zimmermann (1755) in den GGA 1755 (1), issue 66, 2 June 1755, 615–16, Editions- und Forschungsplattform *hallerNet*, https://hallernet.org/data/review/09018. Review of Johann Georg Zimmermann. 1755. *Das Leben des Herrn von Haller*, Zürich: Heidegger und Compagnie.

[17] *Jenaische gelehrte Anzeigen*, 1750,23. Quoted by Steinke 2005b, 261.

and gave it an external authority – as if the review had been written by a society of scholars, a university tribunal, even though the *GGA* was not the journal of the University of Göttingen.[18]

This characteristic can be illustrated by the example of the *Icones anatomicae*, a series of annotated anatomical plates that Haller published in eight leaflets between 1743 and 1756. This work, with its meticulous engravings, was intended to show for the first time the network of the arteries in the human body. The stakes were high, not only in terms of anatomical and physiological knowledge of the body, but also in terms of the iconographic methods used.

Haller published self-reviews of each fascicle in various journals. I was able to count 28 reviews of this work, an indication that science was largely played out in journals. Of these 28 reviews, at least 11 – almost half – were Haller's own, as evidenced by his initials 'H' in the margin of his working copy, by a mention in his collections of excerpts, or even by his correspondence.

The massive presence of self-reviews among the reviews is an unmistakable sign of a desire for publicity as the reviews reacted to each other: public interest was created by multiplying the reviews. More than half (exactly 16) of these reviews concerned the first four issues, while Haller published self-reviews up to the eighth and last issue.

In his self-reviews, Haller gave a history of anatomical studies and illustrations, mentioning the qualities and faults of each author, including himself. He asserted his authorship by emphasising his functions from the outset. Thus in the first review, which was logically a self-review:

> For this reason it is easy to understand how such a skilful and attentive naturalist as Mr personal physician is able to describe the various parts of the human body more accurately than has been done so far.[19]

From the outset, Haller violated the codes of modesty, moderation and collegiality of the Republic of Letters, as the editors of other journals were quick to point out. Indeed, this first self-review immediately provoked irritation. The reviewer of the *Neue Zeitungen von gelehrten Sachen* in Leipzig noted that Haller had taken two of his illustrations from his prosector Johann Jakob Huber (1707–1778) and criticised the accuracy of two other plates, while confirming that Haller's plates were better than those of Jacques-Bénigne Winslow, professor of anatomy at the Jardin du Roi in Paris.[20] The prosector, who until then had

[18] According to Martin Gierl, Haller was also promoting the University of Göttingen corporately: Gierl 2013.

[19] "Aus dieser Ursache ist es leicht zu erachten, wie es zugehet, daß ein so geschickter und aufmerksamer Naturforscher, als der Herr Leibmedicus, im Stande ist, verschiedene Theile des menschlichen Leibes richtiger vorzustellen, als bisher geschehen ist," *Göttingische Zeitungen von Gelehrten Sachen*, 1743, issue 38, 13 May: 335–36, on 336.

[20] *Neue[r] Zeitungen von Gelehrten Sachen auf das Jahr…* 1744, 6 February, vol. 30, issue 11: 101–2, article: http://gdz.sub.uni-goettingen.de/dms/load/img/?PPN=PPN72918062X&physid=PHYS_0153.

usually been a surgeon or barber, was the person who cut up the flesh during dissection. However, the reviewer immediately noted that Huber had been appointed professor of medicine at the University of Kassel. Haller had therefore borrowed two anatomical plates from a scholar of the Republic of Letters and not from a craftsman, presumably without asking him.

Haller's reaction to the review in the *Neue Zeitungen von gelehrten Sachen* was one of extreme pique, and he refuted both criticisms in a new, self-justifying review.

At issue in the exchange between Haller and the reviewer of the *Neue Zeitungen von gelehrten Sachen* was Haller's personalisation of his scholarly work and his failure to acknowledge his intellectual debts. This personalisation was, of course, the fruit of his vanity and ambition. But the exchange between Haller and the anonymous reviewer touched on more sensitive points, which explains Haller's bitterness and which can be explored by leaving the strictly public sphere and reading the private correspondence between the two scholars.

2.2. Between authorship, heritage and corporate affiliation

Johann Jakob Huber owed the start of his career to the protection of Haller, who acted as his 'patron.'[21] His letters to Haller were therefore full of deep gratitude to the master. At Haller's request, Huber had also carried out extensive research on the blood vessels of the thyroid gland, which he intended to publish under his own name, and he asked Haller to wait before publishing his anatomical plates (letter of 24 November 1743). Haller vehemently refused and complained to Huber. Huber replied by pointing out his own achievements in the field of anatomy and denouncing Haller's excessive language (letter of 2 December 1743).[22] The clash was so serious that their correspondence ended there.

However, in a letter to his minister and protector Münchhausen in 1750, Haller attributed the break with Huber to insufficient payment and apologised for his poor health: after nights of sleeplessness, his hand was too shaky to perform the dissections himself. Separation for reasons of honour did not exclude considerations of material and physical precariousness.[23]

The reviewer of the *Neue Zeitungen von gelehrten Sachen* knew that Haller had ignored and despised Johann Jakob Huber's authorship. The public review therefore revealed personal matters. Naturally, Haller immediately attempted to break

[21] On Haller's role as "patron," see Steinke 2005a and 2013.

[22] See Johann Jakob Huber to Albrecht von Haller, 24 november 1743 (BB Bern, N Albrecht von Haller 105.29, Huber, Johann Jakob, 24), *hallerNet*, https://hallernet.org/data/letter/04092 and Johann Jakob Huber to Albrecht von Haller, 2 December 1743 (BB Bern, N Albrecht von Haller 105.29, Huber, Johann Jakob, 25), *hallerNet*, https://hallernet.org/data/letter/04093.

[23] Albrecht von Haller to Gerlach Adolph von Münchhausen, 12 March 1750, in Digitale Edition der Korrespondenz Albrecht von Hallers, *hallerNet* 2018-23, https://hallernet.org/edition/letter/17653. For an epistemological reflection on the inherent precariousness of knowledge, see Mulsow 2022.

through the anonymity of the review by asking his correspondents who might have written such a review. In his self-review published in the *Nouvelle bibliothèque germanique* in the second half of 1747, he even took the liberty of denouncing the author of this review, which he considered almost defamatory as a professor of medicine in Leipzig.[24] We can therefore assume that the author was probably Johann Ernst Hebenstreit (1702–1757), professor of anatomy and chemistry in Leipzig since 1737.[25] Haller did not denounce Hebenstreit by name, but rather his position at the University of Leipzig: beyond individuals, there was the rivalry between the new and modern University of Göttingen and the traditional University of Leipzig.[26]

But Haller's bitterness was not merely personal, as he was opposed to Hebenstreit, who claimed to have discovered the peculiarities of the aorta. It was not just a matter of honouring the priority of a discovery made by a lesser-known scholar. It was also the legacy of the great Leiden physician Herman Boerhaave that Haller wanted to monopolise, whereas Hebenstreit had appropriated it.

Furthermore, the conflict was not only based on honour or heritage, but also extended to the members of the university whom the professors mobilised, starting with the students or the common correspondents. One of them was Georg Matthias Bose (1710–1761), who in Leipzig took the courageous step of supporting Haller, despite the "enmity" (*Feindschaft*) between the "enemies" (*Feinde*), in other words between the two sides, as he put it in a letter to Haller dated 23 January 1746:

> You may therefore judge that it is not only out of esteem for your merit, or out of love for fairness, but also out of knowledge of the justice of your cause, that I take sides against your enemies in Leipsic, although it is my home.[27]

Bose also hoped that Haller would review his writings on electricity in the *Bibliothèque raisonnée…*[28] Was the example of the *Icones anatomicae* an excep-

[24] *Nouvelle bibliothèque germanique*, 3/2, April–December 1747: 263–71.

[25] A letter from 1752 lamented: "Unterdessen ist es mir doch ein großer Verdruß. Ich hätte nicht geglaubt, daß der Hl. D. Hebenstreit so partheyisch bey der Sache hätte sein sollen. Ew. Wohlgebohrnen werden unterdessen finden, daß sie mit aller Mäßigung geschrieben ist: und daß ich Dero gutem Rathe würklich gefolget habe," Gottlob Carl Springsfeld to Albrecht von Haller, 8 October 1752, in Digitale Edition der Korrespondenz Albrecht von Hallers, *hallerNet* 2018–23, https://hallernet.org/edition/letter/07946. His responsibility is therefore far more convincing than that of Justus Gottfried Günz (1714–1754), Extraordinary Professor of Medicine at the University of Leipzig.

[26] See his self-review in *Nouvelle bibliothèque germanique*, April-December 1747: 263–71, on 269. On Göttingen, see for example Saada 2019.

[27] "Vous pouvez donc juger par là, que ce n'est pas seulement par éstime pour Vôtre merite, ou par amour de l'équité, mais aussi par connoissance de la justice de Vôtre cause, que je prens parti contre Vos ennemis de Leipsic, quoique c'est ma patrie," Georg Matthias Bose, letter to Haller, 23 January 1746, in Digitale Edition der Korrespondenz Albrecht von Hallers, *hallerNet* 2018–23, https://hallernet.org/edition/letter/00642.

[28] Georg Matthias Bose to Albrecht von Haller, 23 January 1746, in Digitale Edition der Korrespondenz Albrecht von Hallers, *hallerNet* 2018–23, https://hallernet.org/edition/letter/00642.

tional, isolated case? Probably not. Hubert Steinke mentions the deep controversy on the mechanics of respiration with Georg Erhard Hamberger with the same characteristics.[29]

The accusation was therefore effective, especially as it mobilised the corporate institutions of the universities. As a result, Haller introduced his self-review of the second fascicle with a "we," suggesting that it was the voice of the University of Göttingen and its patrons (whereas the *GGA* were not the organ of the University of Göttingen) and quoted his two collaborators: Christian Jeremias Rollin (1707–1781) as prosector and draughtsman (and professor of anatomy in Göttingen), and the Göttingen academic engraver Georg Daniel Heumann (1691–1759).[30]

> The drawings are by *our* skilful and industrious prosector, Mr D. Rollin, and the plates by *our university and court engraver*, Heumann.[31]

The last reviews of the *Icones anatomicae* also underlined the importance of institutional support for the work of Haller:

> With this part, the famous author concludes his magnificent anatomical work on the veins of the human body, immortalising his memory and demonstrating both his tireless and wide-ranging erudition and the extent to which the University of Göttingen facilitated such undertakings with financial aid.[32]

[29] Steinke 2005b, 131–32: "The controversy attracted considerable attention, not least because it was seen as a rivalry between the old University of Jena and the new University of Göttingen. This reading was reinforced by the fact that both professors recruited their students for their own purposes and continued the often heated dispute with blunt statements in the university-affiliated review journals they both edited (*Göttingische* and *Jenaische Gelehrte Anzeigen*, respectively)."

[30] The relationship with Rollin seemed to be difficult, as Haller reported in a letter to his minister Münchhausen on 29 September 1746 that Rollin no longer wanted to work with him. However, in the summer of 1747, Haller asked Münchhausen to grant a pension to Rollin, whose eyesight had deteriorated to the point where he could no longer work: Albrecht von Haller to Gerlach Adolph von Münchhausen, 10 August 1747, in Digitale Edition der Korrespondenz Albrecht von Hallers, *hallerNet* 2018–23, https://hallernet.org/edition/letter/17623. As for Heumann, he left Göttingen in 1751.

[31] "Dieses Werk ist eine Fortsetzung des ersten Fasciculi, *aber* einzig von Herrn Hallers Arbeit. […] Die Zeichnungen sind von *unserm* geschikten und fleißigen Prosectore Herrn D. Rollin, und die Platten von *unserm* Universitäts- auch Hof-Kupferstecher Heumann," Albrecht von Haller on *Icones anat.* (1743–56) in *GGA*, 17 June 1745, *hallerNet*, https://hallernet.org/data/review/07012. I highlight. Or he dodged the issue by blaming his bookseller for Huber's loan! See *Bibliothèque raisonnée*, vol. 36, 1746, part 1, January-March: 23–32, on 25-26.

[32] "Mit diesem Theil endiget der berühmte Hr. Verfasser das prächtige anatomische Werk von den Pulsadern des menschl. Körpers, womit er sein Andenken verewigt, und einen Beweis, so wol seiner unermüdeten und weit sich erstreckenden Gelehrsamkeit, als auch, *wie sehr die Göttingische Universität mit Hülfsmitteln dergleichen Unternehmungen erleichtere*, darlegt," Gelehrte Nachrichten 1756, 7 July, vol. 5, issue 27, 311–12, article: http://purl.uni-rostock.de/rosdok/ppn1048341771/phys_0327.

This review referred to one of Haller's fundamental methodological principles: the multiplication of dissections in order to identify variants before drawing conclusive conclusions and illustrations – hence the enormous need for cadavers, which the University of Göttingen guaranteed him more than other universities. During his years at Göttingen, Haller is said to have dissected between 300 and 350 cadavers, mostly children and women, and very few men (39 in all)[33]. It was precisely this advantage, which was also a scientific limitation, that had led Haller to concentrate on blood vessels, as children's blood vessels were easier to fill with wax than those of adults.

The collective and institutional background to Haller's (self-)reviews was also commercial.[34] The *GGA* appeared at a brisk pace in order to get the earliest information and possibly to set the tone by influencing subsequent reviews. Books with positive reviews were likely to sell better.

This commercial space also had an influence on the actual production of scientific work. The first works published by Haller in Göttingen had been published as essays by his students or as occasional writings and were not illustrated. In the 1740s, Haller became convinced of the potential of one of his pupils, the draughtsman Christian Jeremias Rollin. He used him and the engravers Georg Daniel Heumann and Christian Friedrich Fritzsch (1719–1772?) to illustrate his botanical and anatomical works. He then published plates on the *omentum* (or *epiploon*, a highly vascularised abdominal fat sac) and the thoracic duct, as well as new plates on the diaphragm. At this point, encouraged by his bookseller, he had the idea of presenting the results of his anatomical research in the form of separate plates under the title *Icones anatomicae*. By publishing them in successive fascicles, he hoped to attract attention, stimulate debate and boost sales.

The Republic of Letters was therefore not a smooth surface, but a community of tensions that drove a debate involving personal, collective, corporate and commercial issues. Haller knew how to take the criticism of the reviews into account. From the second fascicle of the *Icones anatomicae*, he included this dis-

[33] As the usual cadavers were not sufficient, Haller requested permission to dissect the bodies of illegitimate children and dead women. See in particular Albrecht von Haller to unknown, 7 November 1748, *hallerNet*, https://hallernet.org/data/letter/17639. Again in 1753, he threatened that his students would have to go to Berlin to study anatomy, and envisaged the delivery of prisoners' corpses: Albrecht von Haller to Gerlach Adolph von Münchhausen, 10. January 1753, *hallerNet*, https://hallernet.org/data/letter/17776. He provided an exact count of the number of cadavers supplied and the related costs, for example or Albrecht von Haller an Unbekannt, Dezember 1737, in Digitale Edition der Korrespondenz Albrecht von Hallers, *hallerNet* 2018–23, https://hallernet.org/edition/letter/17805, or Albrecht von Haller to unknown, December 1739, in Digitale Edition der Korrespondenz Albrecht von Hallers, *hallerNet* 2018–23, https://hallernet.org/edition/letter/17806.

[34] He wanted to finish the angiology fascicle before the Easter Fair of 1750 (Haller's letter of 22 April 1748): Gerlach Adolph von Münchhausen to Albrecht von Haller, 28 June 1748, in Digitale Edition der Korrespondenz Albrecht von Hallers, *hallerNet* 2018–23, https://hallernet.org/edition/letter/17634.

pute in the "literary history" of anatomy. The science he proposed was shaped by public controversies, fundamentally open and therefore subject to tensions.

2.3. The reflexivity of reviews

Because self-reviews had an ambivalent status, they were subject to a number of strategies. Just as personal ambition and vanity were not the only issues at stake, reviews and self-reviews were not only public. To abolish the anonymity of reviews, as Haller did, was tantamount to discrediting a scholar. Self-reviews therefore developed in a space between publicity and the (semi-) secrecy of private correspondence.[35] And even publicity was not a flat surface, since reviews and self-reviews could mobilise students and motivate their work or run bookshops: there were different kinds of publicity.

Self-reviews and their refutation had a value that was not only self-referential but also self-reflexive. Hebenstreit concluded his review with these words:

> These errors are not in our eyes. Connoisseurs will easily find them and many others in Mr Haller's figures, whose services to the art of dismantling we shall never fail to appreciate. Scholarly journals are an arena where truth, and not self-love, should have the freedom to speak.[36]

In other words, beyond vanity and personal ambition, it was the progress of science through reviews that was at stake. Indeed, Albrecht von Haller, who wrote his works in Latin, presented his taxonomy and working methods in his self-reviews.

3. Reviews and scientific progress

3.1. In search of the truth

Hebenstreit criticised Haller for inaccuracies and for personalising his work, and stood by his criticisms, which he repeated in his later reviews.[37] He reiterated that he was in search of "truth" ("*Wahrheit*"). Haller's reaction was not only one of anger, but also of reproach. Thus, in his self-review of the second fascicle, he presented his *Icones anatomicae* in these terms:

[35] See Stuber 2004.

[36] "Diese Fehler sind nicht in unsern Augen. Kunstverständige werden diese und viele andere gar leicht in Herrn Hallers Figuren finden, dessen Verdienste um die Zergliederungskunst wir ausser dem niemals hochzuachten ermangeln werden. Gelehrten Zeitungen sind ein Schauplatz, wo die Wahrheit, und nicht Eigenliebe, zu sprechen Freyheit haben sollte," *Neuer Zeitungen von Gelehrten Sachen auf das Jahr…* 1744, 4. Mai, vol. 30, n° 36: 325–8, on 328, article: http://gdz.sub.uni-goettingen.de/dms/load/img/?PPN=PPN72918062X&physid=PHYS_0377.

[37] *Neuer Zeitungen von Gelehrten Sachen auf das Jahr…* 1745, vol. 31, issue 88, 4 November: 787–9, article: http://gdz.sub.uni-goettingen.de/dms/load/img/?PPN=PPN729351548&physid=PHYS_0841.

> This work is a continuation of the first Fascicle, but exclusively the work of Mr Haller [!]. In the first work the arteria *maxillaris interna* is described in detail, *and the more so because the author was attacked by another scholar.*[38]

Haller was therefore not only experimenting on cadavers in front of and with his students, but also through his reviews in front of the Republic of Letters. Fascicles 7 and 8 were published after Haller's return to Switzerland, where he no longer had an anatomical theatre. In his self-reviews, Haller presented the differences between his new observations and his previous ones, reflecting the fundamental openness of his work.[39] The dispute can therefore be understood as a contradictory search for common ground within the constraints of the ethos of the Republic of Letters and the individual affirmation of scholars.[40]

The historiography of the 'scientific revolution' has emphasised that observation and experimentation were the hallmarks of the science practised in the Royal Society from the 1660s onwards. Fabian Krämer has rightly pointed out that reading was still widespread, even if it became more critical.[41] All of Haller's handwritten excerpts and reviews were intended to provide a critical overview of the state of knowledge in particular fields.[42] Haller described scholarship in anatomy as follows:

> When one dissects a body, one knows what to see; one is informed of what is either known or disputed; one looks with interested eyes at the sizes, situations and figures. Whether one wishes to verify the discoveries of the good authors or to correct erroneous descriptions, one is attached to the work with imitation and with a pleasure unknown to uneducated anatomists.[43]

Reading sharpened the eye and allowed oneself to verify what was not certain or to discover something new. The good anatomists cited by Haller in his

[38] "Dieses Werk ist eine Fortsetzung des ersten Fasciculi, *aber* einzig von Herrn Hallers Arbeit. In dem ersten Stüke wird die arteria maxillaris interna weitläuftig, *und um desto genauer beschrieben, weil der Verfasser darüber von einem andern Gelehrten angegriffen worden,*" Albrecht von Haller on *Icones anat.* (1743–56) in *GGA*, 17 June 1745: 407–8, *hallerNet*, https://hallernet.org/data/review/07012.

[39] So Albrecht von Haller on *Icones anat.* (1743–56) in *GGA*, 30 October 1756: 1185–86, *hallerNet*, https://hallernet.org/data/review/09304.

[40] See Rey 2017.

[41] See Krämer 2014.

[42] See Steinke 2005b, 252–60.

[43] "Quand on a lu, & qu'on a lu avec attention, on se trouve en païs de connaissance ; lorsqu'on dissèque un corps, on sait ce qu'il faut voir, on est instruit de ce qui ou connu, ou contesté ; on regarde avec des yeux d'intérêt les grandeurs, les situations, & les figures. Soit que l'on veuille vérifier les découvertes des bons Auteurs, soit qu'on veuille corriger des descriptions défectueuses, on s'attache au travail avec émulation, & avec un plaisir inconnu aux Anatomistes non lettrés," Haller, review of René-Jacques Croissant De Garengeot, *Splanchnologie, ou l'anatomie des viscères* (1742), in *Bibliothèque raisonnée*, 1743, vol. 31, part 2: 269-293, on 272–3 ; see Schultka and Neumann (eds.). 2007, 113.

works, and even more so in his self-reviews, practised erudite anatomy ("*gelehrte Anatomie*"), which distinguished them from surgeons who lacked erudition.

Haller chose to begin his study with what Bernhard Siegfried Albinus (1697–1770) – his own mentor! – had neglected in his myology and osteology, namely the bones of the nose. Haller therefore turned his attention early on to angiology, a field in which he felt that research was lagging behind. Only Bartolomeo Eustachi (c. 1505–1574) had produced usable, if critical, plates. The first fascicle of the *Icones anatomicae* was thus devoted to the nose. Haller worked intensively on the preparation of blood vessels, especially arteries, so that they could be dissected and illustrated. From the second fascicle onwards, blood vessels dominated his anatomical studies, without excluding other subjects. With the exception of the fourth fascicle, they were all devoted to arteries and veins.

Haller therefore carried out specialised anatomical studies for which he commissioned specific plates to be compiled in a later major work. He did not have a fixed programme from the outset, but developed his thinking through reading, practice and criticism. He also involved his students: the essays he wrote, or increasingly had written by his students, also dealt with the anatomy of blood vessels, nerves, the brain and cellular tissue. Haller therefore decided to teach what he had dissected for research purposes, so that he offered only specialised courses. Students were obliged to obtain an overview of anatomy from the prosector.

For Haller, scientific progress could only be achieved through specialised research, especially as a comprehensive anatomy would take many years, if not a lifetime. The immediate danger, which his critics were quick to point out, was the differences in treatment and even postulates between successive fascicles. From the outset, Haller tried to fend off his critics by stating in a self-review: "It is therefore wise to give only fragments."[44] He advocated a public and cumulative science, writing in French: "Physics needs materials, the time has not yet come to erect buildings."[45]

Following the example of the anatomist Giambattista Morgagni (1682–1771), Haller saw the solution in the multiplication of experiments and their internal comparisons, which would eventually allow the "method of nature" ("*naturae methodus*") to speak for itself.[46] Despite the many variations, he believed that there was a rule of nature that anatomical structures followed and that the anatomist worked to find. As he explained in one of his self-reviews: "After a certain number of tests, all that remains are the results that are born of the nature of things."[47]

[44] "Il y a donc de la prudence à ne donner que des fragmens," *Bibliothèque raisonnée*, vol. 36, 1746, part 1, January-March: 23–32, 1746, 27.

[45] "La Physique a besoin de matériaux, le temps d'en élever des Bâtimens n'est pas encore venu," *Bibliothèque raisonnée*, vol. 36, 1746, part 1, January-March: 23–32: 32.

[46] Albrecht von Haller, *Icones anatomicae*, fasc. III, 1747, preface to the third plate.

[47] "après un certain nombre de vérifications, il ne reste que les résultats, qui naissent de la nature des choses," Haller 1760, 25.

Albinus represented the "perfection" of anatomy by applying Morgagni's method to the description of muscles. Between 1727 and 1753, he had published anatomical atlases (on bones in 1726, on muscles in 1734, on the human skeleton in 1737, on bones and muscles in 1747, etc.) and, with Herman Boerhaave, atlases of Vesalius, the anatomical plates of Eustachi and the work of Fabricius ab Aquapendente (1737).[48] Haller only acknowledged his debts in passing.[49] In fact, he had made other methodological choices.

Contrary to his contemporaries, who denigrated dissection as a mere craft, Haller saw it as a way of working that was capable of uncovering the truth. Only through reading and repetition – and the reviews emphasised the hundreds of cadavers he had dissected himself – could truth therefore emerge. Reviews of the *Icones anatomicae* increasingly emphasised his method of observation.[50] For Haller, good observation and good writing made a good scholar.

> There are two classes of scholars: those who observe, often without writing, and those who write without observing. The first of these classes cannot be too highly exalted, and the second, perhaps, not too lowly. A third class is even worse, namely those who observe badly.[51]

In the *GGA*, Haller wrote reviews in German of texts he had written in Latin. The aim was not just or not primarily to disseminate his work to a non-specialist audience, but also to make German a scientific language. He introduced the problems, while retaining the Latin terms he had coined to designate the anatomical elements he had uncovered.[52]

3.2. Words and images

Haller valued language as a means of describing anatomical discoveries. The self-reviews used language to help the reader relive the journey of the scalpel in the body.[53] The language was, of course, reduced, neutral, simply descriptive. But Haller also believed that illustrations were just as important for clarifying where language failed. The illustrations also showed the successive

[48] See for example Bernhard Siegfried Albinus. 1744. *Explicatio tabularum anatomicarum Bartholomaei Eustachii* […] Accedit tabularum editio nova, Leiden: Langerak et Verbeek.

[49] Georg Thomas von Asch, for example, attributed to Albinus a strong jealousy of Haller: Georg Thomas von Asch to Albrecht von Haller, 19 October 1751, 1v°, in Digitale Edition der Korrespondenz Albrecht von Hallers, *hallerNet* 2018–23, https://hallernet.org/edition/letter/00127.

[50] See *Gelehrte Nachrichten* 1756, 7 July, vol. 5, issue 27: 311–12, article: http://purl.uni-rostock.de/rosdok/ppn1048341771/phys_0327.

[51] Haller to Bonnet, 5 January 1759. *Correspondance. Bonnet*: 153. Quoted after Steinke 2005b: 70.

[52] So "abdomalis," *Freymüthige Nachrichten von Neuen Büchern und Andern zur Gelehrtheit gehörigen Sachen*, 4 April 1753, as well as self-reviews from 19 June 1749 and 26 February 1753.

[53] See for example on the head, Albrecht von Haller on *Icones anat.* (1743-56) in *GGA*, 3 April 1755: 369–72, *hallerNet*, https://hallernet.org/data/review/08994.

stages in the cutting of the flesh. Above all, Haller gave the contrasting images a didactic function.

And it was precisely in the images that previous studies had proved unsatisfactory, especially those of Albinus. Albinus had made precise drawings, but of idealised bodies with long legs and harmonious, symmetrical proportions. In a self-review, Haller declared: "It is a question of expressing with distinction those parts which the anatomist wishes to make known, without giving too much elegance to everything else."[54] This is not to say that he did not outline a certain aesthetic:

> This distinction must be even greater than in nature; the features of an anatomical figure must be more distinct and the shadows sharper. This is the pitfall of the best painters; they cannot bring themselves to end the parts with black lines, which give them hardness and take away their naturalness; they cannot give up these nuances, which imitate nature but make an anatomical figure weak, confused and difficult to use.[55]

Haller explained the principles of his method in more detail in his French-language self-reviews than in his German-language ones.

3.3. German and French science

As both a scholar and a poet, Haller kept a close eye on the language and the development of texts. Not only did he want to promote German as a literary and scientific language, but he also ensured that his works were translated into foreign languages and that their quality was controlled. For Haller, language played an important role in the progress of science. While he advocated classical scholarship in Latin, which he considered the most accurate language, in his learned volumes, he promoted German as a language of scholarship in and through the *GGA*. The epistemic importance of reviews depended on the target readership of the journal and its frequency, and Albrecht von Haller understood this perfectly.

The *GGA*, which discussed 700–900 books on 1,400–2,000 pages annually, reflected a German scientific culture based on an exhaustive compilation of knowledge. Haller's aim in his German-language reviews was the transmission of his Latin scientific nomenclature and concepts:

[54] "Il s'agit d'exprimer, avec distinction, les parties que l'Anatomiste veut faire connoitre, sans s'attacher à une trop grande élégance pour tout le reste," *Bibliothèque raisonnée*, vol. 36, 1746, part 1, January-March: 23–32, on 26-7.

[55] "Il faut même que cette distinction soit plus grande qu'elle n'est dans la Nature ; les traits d'une Figure anatomique doivent être plus marqués, & les ombres plus tranchantes. C'est là l'écueil des meilleurs Peintres, ils ne sauroient se résoudre à terminer les parties par des traits noirs, qui y donnent de la dureté, & qui leur ôtent le naturel ; ils ne sauroient renoncer à ces nuances, qui imitent la Nature, mais qui rendent une Figure anatomique foible, confuse, & d'un usage difficile," *Bibliothèque raisonnée*, vol. 36, 1746, part 1, January-March: 23–32, on 27.

> In the description he has retained as many of the known names as he could, but has given new names to the other veins, which no one had yet described in detail or correctly. The arteries that he presents and describes here are the *Saera media, Saera lateralis, Iliaca posterior, Obturatoria, Ischiadica, Pudenda communis Winsl. Haemorrhoidea media, Vesicalis ima, Umbilicalis* and *Vaginalis*. *We retain their Latin names because the German descriptions might be even less understandable*.[56]

In other words, Haller was aiming for specialist communication in his German self-reviews.

But Haller also wrote at least two self-reviews in French-language journals, the *Bibliothèque raisonnée des ouvrages des savans de l'Europe* and the *Nouvelle bibliothèque germanique*, a journal of the Huguenot refuge in Berlin (around Jacques Pérard and Jean-Henri-Samuel Formey).[57] These were quarterly journals that published longer reviews.

These self-reviews were tailored to the target audience of French "honnêtes hommes." The self-review of the *Bibliothèque raisonnée* in particular used comparisons to make the subject more accessible and opened by invoking Fontenelle, the most indisputable French scientific authority. Behind Fontenelle, it was conformity with the Académie des Sciences (of which he was permanent secretary from 1697 to 1740) that was asserted. Haller's review ended with this remark, which evoked the profile of his reader: "Here is enough, and more than most readers want to know about a book that does not interest them infinitely."[58]

The difference in the style of argumentation between German and French journals reflects a different understanding of scholarship. In France, the figure of the "honnête homme" dismissed the German *historia literaria* as pedantry. Writing style was more important than erudition based on numerous excerpts.

However, despite the devaluation of the *historia literaria* in the French context, there were also meticulous scholars and, of course, critical readers. Mon-

[56] "Er hat bey der Beschreibung so viel der bekannten Nahmen beybehalten, als ihm möglich gewesen, den übrigen Adern aber, die noch niemand ausführlich oder richtig beschrieben gehabt, neue Nahmen beygelegt. Die Schlagadern, die er hier vorstellt und beschreibt, sind die Saera media, Saera lateralis, Iliaca posterior, Obturatoria, Ischiadica, Pudenda communis Winsl. Haemorrhoidea media, Vesicalis ima, Umbilicalis und Vaginalis. Wir behalten ihre lateinischen Nahmen, weil man die Deutschen Umschreibungen vielleicht noch minder verstehen würde," Albrecht von Haller on *Icones anat.* (1743–56) in *GGA*, 19 June 1749: 465–66, on 466, *hallerNet*, https://hallernet.org/data/review/08072.

[57] Haller was a contributor to *Bibliothèque raisonnée*. See the lemma in *Dictionnaire des journaux,* ed. Jean Sgard: in https://dictionnaire-journaux.gazettes18e.fr/journal/0169-bibliotheque-raisonnee. He was in contact with Jacques de Pérard, to whom he sent Fascicule III (1747), which was to be reviewed. See Jacques de Pérard to Albrecht von Haller, 24 April 1747, in Digitale Edition der Korrespondenz Albrecht von Hallers, *hallerNet* 2018–23, https://hallernet.org/edition/letter/06447.

[58] "En voila assez, & plus, que le plus grand nombre des Lecteurs ne souhaite de savoir d'un Livre, qui les ne intéresse pas infiniment," *Bibliothèque raisonnée*, vol. 36, 1746, part 1, January-March: 23–32, on 32. The *Nouvelle bibliothèque germanique* 3/2, 1747: 263–71 set out Haller's discoveries.

tesquieu, for example, produced no fewer than 28 volumes of thematic excerpts. Far from being a simple documentation of his reading, his selective excerpts were a critical dialogue with what he had read, a pre-writing of his *Esprit des lois*. In order to write his groundbreaking political works, Montesquieu, like Haller, read with a critical and commentary pen. Even Voltaire, who enjoyed the role of polemical critic of the scholarly tradition and was in turn criticised at the time for his alleged lack of erudition, was also a zealous and meticulous scholar, producing numerous critical excerpts.

In his French-language reviews, Haller therefore stood somewhere between the French "honnête homme" and the erudite "fleißig" German scholar.[59] He did justice to both, showing in every sentence his mastery of the discoveries of both, as well as the limits of their reception:

> The figure of the base of the brain is accompanied by a more detailed commentary. […] He had Mr Petit's small ganglion engraved, together with some less generally known sinuses; […] he gives back to Mr Duverney the occipital sinus which this great man discovered, but which was hardly known outside France before Mr Morgagni made a new description of it, without knowing that of Mr Duverney.[60]

Finally, it is mainly the French reviews that mentioned the problems of anatomical representation (see fig. 1).

> A painter thinks he is doing the right thing when he expresses nature, but that is not the merit of an anatomical figure. Nothing is more beautiful than the flesh of the muscles drawn by Lairesse; but all this beauty is pure loss. It is a question of expressing with distinction those parts which the anatomist wishes to make known, without giving too much elegance to everything else. This distinction must be even greater than it is in nature; the features of an anatomical figure must be more distinct and the shadows sharper. This is the pitfall of the best painters; they cannot bring themselves to end the parts with black lines, which give them hardness and take away their naturalness; they cannot give up these nuances, which imitate nature but make an anatomical figure weak, confused and difficult to use.[61]

[59] See Zedelmaier 2019.

[60] "La Figure de la base du Cerveau est accompagnée d'un Commentaire plus étendu. […] Il a fait graver le petit Ganglion de Mr. *Petit*, avec quelques Sinus moins généralement connus ; […] Il rend à Mr. *Duverney* le Sinus occipital que ce Grand-homme a découvert, mais qui n'a guère été connu hors de la France, avant que Mr. *Morgagni* en eût fait une nouvelle description, sans avoir de connoissance de celle de Mr. *Duverney*," *Bibliothèque raisonnée*, vol. 36, 1746, part 1, January-March: 23–32, on 29.

[61] "Un Peintre croit bien faire, quand il exprime la Nature ; ce n'est pourtant pas cela qui fait le mérite d'une Figure anatomique. Rien n'est plus beau que les chairs des Muscles dessinés par *Lairesse* ; mais toute cette beauté est en pure perte. Il s'agit d'exprimer, avec distinction, les parties que l'Anatomiste veut faire connoitre, sans s'attacher à une trop grande élégance pour tout le reste. Il faut même que cette distinction soit plus grande qu'elle n'est dans la Nature ; les traits d'une Figure anatomique doivent être plus marqués, & les ombres plus

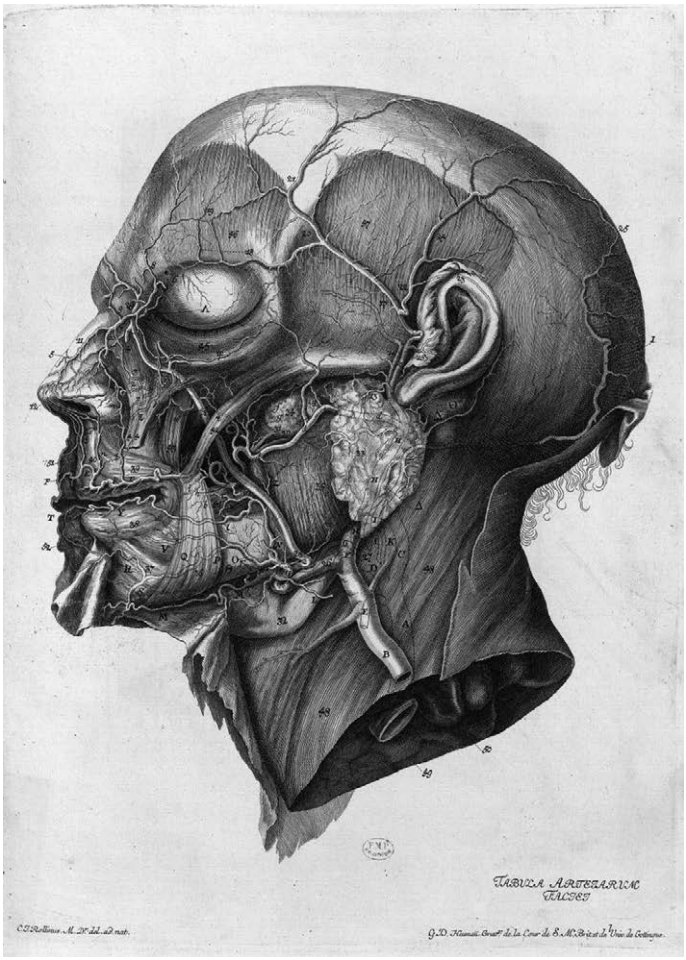

Figure 1 – Albrecht von Haller, *Icones anatomicae*, head.

An enigma remains. Why did Haller's work, and especially his *Icones anatomicae*, receive so little attention in France's leading scientific journal, the *Journal des sçavans*? In the best cases, the title of the fascicle is announced among many other works, without any review as such.[62] A reading of the reviews in the

tranchantes. C'est là l'écueil des meilleurs Peintres, ils ne sauroient se résoudre à terminer les parties par des traits noirs, qui y donnent de la dureté, & qui leur ôtent le naturel ; ils ne sauroient renoncer à ces nuances, qui imitent la Nature, mais qui rendent une Figure anatomique foible, confuse, & d'un usage difficile," *Bibliothèque raisonnée*, vol. 36, 1746, part 1, January-March: 23–32, on 26-7.

[62] See for example *Journal des sçavans*, 1752: 703 et 829. Gautier's *Myology* was the subject of separate articles in each of the volumes. See for example *Journal des sçavans*, 1745: 506,

Journal des sçavans reveals the intense market for publications on anatomy. In particular, its columns were filled with the announcement of the publication of a project for anatomical plates supported by the King: Jacques Fabien Gautier d'Agoty's *Myologie*, based on the anatomist Duverney and with spectacular four-colour engravings (see fig. 2).[63] Colour was used for didactic purposes, but also to depict life, in line with Newton's precept. Haller's plates were analytical, Gautier d'Agoty's offered an innovative aesthetic (see fig. 1 and 2). In France, the market for anatomical plates was already saturated.

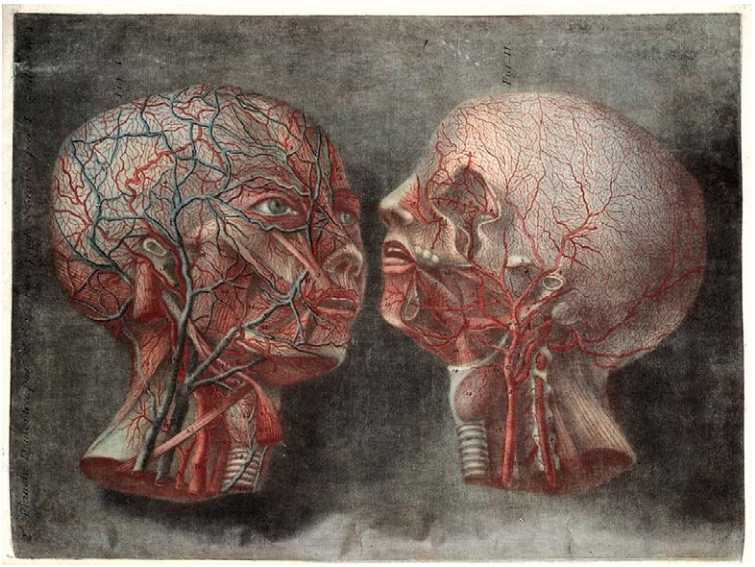

Figure 2 – Jacques Fabien Gautier d'Agoty, *Myologie*, Woman's back.

4. Self-reviews in Haller's work

Haller devoted a great deal of time and energy to writing his many self-reviews. What was their purpose?

Haller's critical excerpts and reviews served as the basis for his work. They became an integral part of his way of working. But a review was a public product, open to criticism, and Haller was not afraid of controversy. When confronted with his opponents, he defended himself by turning the weapon of the review against them. He suspected or even accused some of his opponents of

1746: 318–9, 1747: 443–5, 1751: 506–7, etc.

[63] One of his books is available online: https://bibliotheque-numerique.inha.fr/collection/item/26527-exposition-anatomique-des-organes-des-sens-avec-des-planches-imprimees-en-couleurs-naturelles-suivant-le-nouvel-art-par-m-dagoty-pere?offset=.

only knowing what the reviews had said about his work.[64] The scholarly style produced by the reviews threatened to escape the author. What was at stake in the self-reviews was the author's reappropriation of the semi-autonomous scientific discourse that took place in the reviews, the authorship that was brought into play and endangered by this new style of argumentation. Haller wanted to reappropriate his own reception.

The *Icones anatomicae* posed a double danger. Haller wanted to reappropriate his discoveries and the illustration. In the end, however, it was the illustrations produced by his colleagues or rivals that were most successful.

Haller's anatomical plates were of particular interest to French physicians. In a letter of 1 April 1748, Pierre Tatin informed Haller of his intention to use his plates for the article "Anatomie" that was to appear in the *Encyclopédie*. Of the 33 plates published by Tatin to accompany his "Anatomie" article, seven came from Haller's *Icones anatomicae* (1756 fascicle).[65] The double paradox of this story is that Haller's greatest reception was not directly through his work, but in the philosophical circles he abhorred. He was outraged by the mutilation of his plates in Diderot and d'Alembert's *Encyclopédie* (see fig. 3).

***

In Albrecht von Haller's time, scholarly disputes were essentially conducted through reviews. They involved individuals, honours and reputations, but also corporate institutions such as universities and their students. The Republic of Letters asserted the individual scholar, convinced of his personal competence and authorship, but expected to fit into the corporate institution of the university. The relationship between personal ambition or vanity and corporate membership was a constant source of tension. Since the public arena had a conflicting dimension, this gave rise to different types of criticism. The controversy over self-reviews highlighted the tensions between the affirmation of the authorship of the specialist scholar and the values of the Republic of Letters. It was an integral part of the autonomation of science that took place there around 1750.

Haller seemed to want to make his work his own, to filter and guide the scientific discussion. He failed because of the public dynamics of the scientific debate. Although he was part of a gigantic scholarly network in which he played the role of "patron," he did not pull all the strings.

His self-reviews were primarily aimed at correcting and advancing science in the complexity of his intellectual, personal and cultural options. Haller modulated his discourse according to the medium, its constraints – the more or less tight periodicity and the scientific and intellectual context of the target language – and the desired effect. His reviews were therefore brief in terms of page space and rapid in terms of time in the *GGA*, longer and more widely distributed in

[64] Catherine 2013: 241.

[65] Catherine 2012: 241.

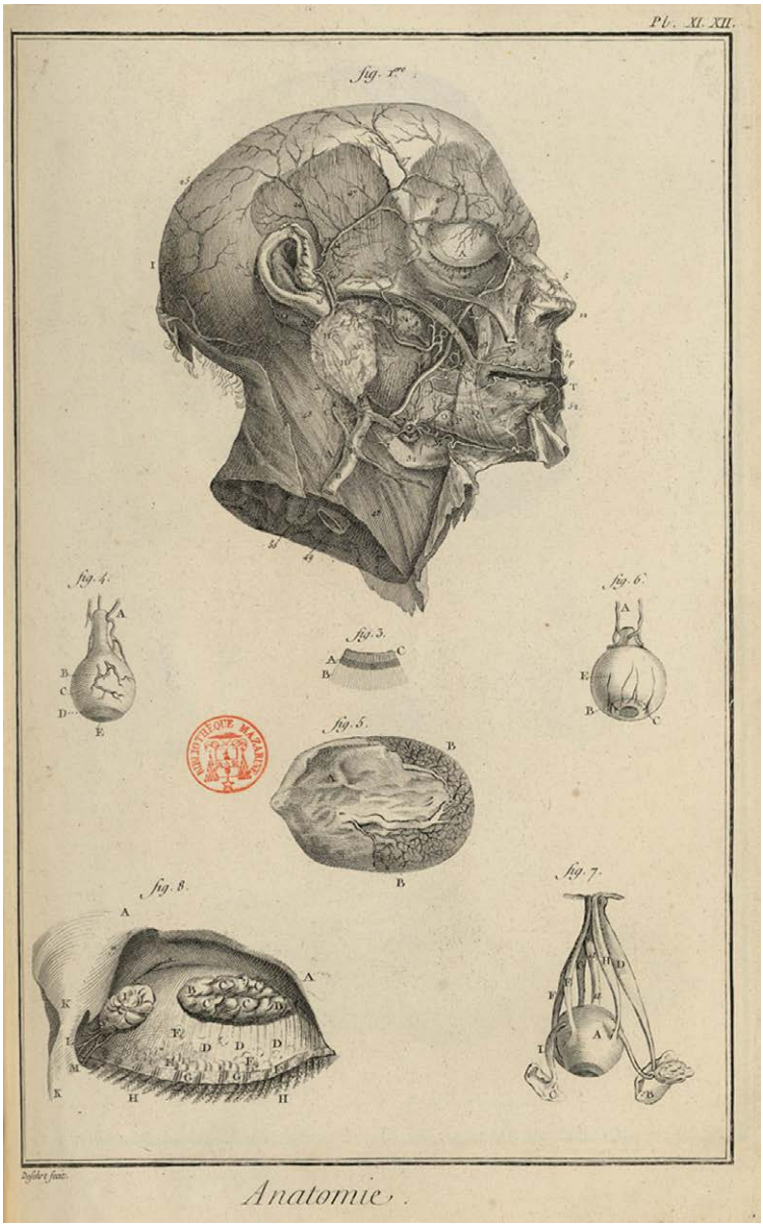

Figure 3 – Denis Diderot. 17. *Encyclopédie ou dictionnaire raisonné des arts et des sciences*, Plates, Anatomy.

the French-language Refuge journals: the materiality of knowledge partly determined the means of communication and scholarly discourse.

The history of the *Icones anatomicae* confirms the importance of critical scholarship and public openness in shaping a new "style of argumentation" (Marco Sgarbi). It shows the extent to which reviews did not develop as an autonomous genre, but were integrated into a system of intermediality in which publications, reviews, (semi-)private letters and images responded to one another, in other words "the constant interplay, hybridity, and complementarity of acoustic, oral, performative, sensorial, visual, written and printed means of communication."[66]

Using the example of the reader and critic Albrecht von Haller, it can be said that the project of Enlightenment criticism was at least partially built on the scholarly practices of reading and public debate through reviews or a new "style of reasoning."

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[66] Bellingradt and Rospocher 2021, 8.

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Knowledge in Motion: The Circulation of Maupertuis's *Discours sur les différentes figures des astres* (1732) between Switzerland and Germany

Marco Storni

Abstract: This paper explores the circulation of philosophical ideas in the early modern period by examining the elaboration and reception of Pierre-Louis Moreau de Maupertuis's *Discours sur les différentes figures des astres* (1732), widely regarded as the first Newtonian treatise ever published in France. Drawing on insights from cultural history, I argue that the circulation of knowledge was not only an intellectual process, but also involved practical and material factors. In particular, I emphasise the role of personal networks, such as that of Johann Bernoulli, in facilitating the dissemination of scientific and philosophical books across Europe. The paper also highlights the importance of reviews as a medium for engaging with new knowledge, influencing debates, and extending intellectual controversies beyond national borders. The example of Christian Wolff's review of the *Discours* published in the *Nova Acta Eruditorum* in 1733 is used to illustrate the potential of reviews to "territorialise" – in Wolff's case, "Germanise" – a foreign natural-philosophical debate.

Keywords: circulation of knowledge, Newtonianism, Pierre-Louis Moreau de Maupertuis, Johann Bernoulli, Christian Wolff, philosophical reviews.

1. The Circulation of Philosophical Ideas: A Culturalist Approach

Amongst historians of philosophy, there has been a long-standing interest in the study of the circulation of knowledge. Investigating the circulation of knowledge implies an examination of "how knowledge moves, and how it is continuously moulded in the process" (Östling et al. 2018, 17). A good example of the study of circulation, in terms of the quality and quantity of works published, is the historiography of the dissemination of Isaac Newton's (1643-1727) natural philosophy in Europe in the eighteenth century.[1] Newtonian theories spread to different regions and were received and adapted differently according to local sensibilities, especially as they were grafted onto pre-existing debates. One might consider the reception of Newton's natural philosophy in the Netherlands, where

[1] For a general overview of the European reception of Newton's theories, see Mandelbrote and Pulte 2019.

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its acceptance was favoured by the local sensitivity to experimentalism, but also by its theological relevance, as it was seen as a useful tool to combat superstition and incredulity (Israel 2006, 201-203; Jorink and Maas 2012). A different case is that of the diffusion of Newtonianism in Italy, where its implantation was more complex: although the vestiges of the Galilean tradition constituted an optimal environment for its germination, numerous Peripatetic and Cartesian philosophers thwarted its advance, often motivated by concerns over heterodoxy rather than solid scientific criticism (Casini 2022, 73-75).

The circulation of knowledge is usually studied as an intellectual process. The diffusion of ideas is conceived, to quote a famous theory of the biologist Richard Dawkins, as the transmission of "memes," namely cultural units (ideas, beliefs) that can travel from one mind to another (Dawkins [1976] 2016). Memes evolve historically according to the laws of evolution, i.e. they undergo processes of variation, competition, selection and inheritance, since their success lies in their ability to influence the greatest number of individuals. The parallel with memetics is here useful to emphasise that historians of philosophy often tend to study circulation as a phenomenon in which the human mind is the main, and oftentimes the only, actor.

However, it is important to recognise that the circulation of knowledge, at least before the advent of the "information age," necessarily involved a gesture of a practical, physical nature. Consider the early modern period (c. 1600-1800) on which this paper focuses: in this era, marked by the rise of print culture, knowledge circulated thanks to networks of travel and exchange – as well as, in the words of historian Robert Darnton (2021), of "pirating" and counterfeiting – that allowed books to move from one place to another.[2] While this observation may seem trivial at first glance, adopting it as a methodological precept can help to make the often too abstract history of the circulation of philosophical ideas more tangible, transforming it into a history of the particular trajectories of objects and people, namely the supports that conveyed theories and the carriers who facilitated their circulation. To be sure, my aim is not to break down intellectual circulations into a heap of microhistories, thereby atomising the historical narrative; rather, I aim to suggest that any "diffusionist" account conceals a complex web of mediations, negotiations, gaps, dead ends – in short, a physical and living network.

In materialising the circulation of ideas, this contribution adopts a culturalist approach to the history of philosophy, which – to quote a programmatic text co-authored by three French historians – considers philosophy "at once a theoretical knowledge, a social practice and a cultural object" (Anheim, Lilti and Van Damme 2009, 7). The aim of this paper thus is to provide an example of the fruitfulness of broadening the scope of the historiography of philosophy with insights from cultural history, an approach that is sometimes announced

[2] Roger Chartier and Henri-Jean Martin have described the period 1660-1830 as the age of the "triumphant book" (Chartier and Martin 1984).

in the presentation of scholarly work, but rarely adopted as a consistent research methodology.

This study analyses a key episode in the circulation of Newtonian natural philosophy in France and Germany during the first half of the eighteenth century: the early reception of Pierre-Louis Moreau de Maupertuis's (1698-1759) *Discours sur les différentes figures des astres* (*Discourse on the Different Shapes of the Stars,* 1732), widely regarded as the first Newtonian treatise ever published in France.[3] After an analysis of the genesis of the *Discours,* which was greatly influenced by Maupertuis's discussions with his mentor Johann Bernoulli (1667-1748), and a brief presentation of its contents, I focus on the reviews that the volume received. In particular, I consider the review that appeared in the *Nova Acta Eruditorum* of Leipzig in July 1733, written by the philosopher Christian Wolff (1679-1754),[4] as we have traces that enable us to reconstruct the volume's journey from Paris to Leipzig via Basel, elucidating the material and personal networks integral to this trajectory. I provide a comparison between the reviews of the *Discours p*ublished in France and that written by Wolff, to show that the latter, removed from the immediate context of the French debates on Descartes's and Newton's natural philosophies, used the act of reviewing as an opportunity to "territorialise" – one might also say "Germanise" – the philosophical debate that Maupertuis's book fed. In fact, my approach also emphasises the cultural aspects of the activity of reviewing, since this new philosophical genre, typical of the early modern period, is a crucial factor to consider when studying the circulation of ideas.[5] Building on the insights of Michel de Certeau (1925-1986) – who suggested that consumers are in fact practitioners who are active in relation to the objects (or representations) prescribed for them, and who went as far as to characterise the very activity of reading as "silent production" (de Certeau [1980] 1990, XLIX) – I argue that critical readings of a philosophical text are as many reappropriations of its content as they are dependent on the intellectual agendas of its readers.

[3] In the *Discours préliminaire de l'Encyclopédie* (*Preliminary Discourse to the Encyclopaedia),* Jean le Rond d'Alembert (1717-1783) writes: "It is necessary only to open our books in order to see with surprise that twenty years have not yet passed since we began to renounce Cartesianism in France. The first among us who dared declare himself openly Newtonian was the author of the *Discours sur la figure des astres,* who combines a very extensive knowledge of geometry with the kind of philosophical mind not always found in conjunction with it, and also a talent for writing to which his geometrical knowledge certainly does no harm, as will be seen upon reading his works. Maupertuis believed that one could be a good citizen without blindly adopting the physics of one's country; and we ought to be grateful to him for the courage he had to display in attacking that physics" (d'Alembert [1751] 1995, 88-89).

[4] Although the review was published anonymously, Augustinus H. Laeven and Lucia J. M. Laeven-Aretz were able to discover the identity of its author (Laeven and Laeven-Aretz 2014, 106). I would like to thank Mattia Brancato for suggesting this reference to me.

[5] On philosophical reviews in the early modern period, see the research project "PREME-Philosophical Reviews in Early Modern Europe (1665-1789)," based at the Ca' Foscari University of Venice and at the University of Verona (https://pric.unive.it/projects/preme/home).

2. Maupertuis and Bernoulli

In March 1731, Maupertuis sent Bernoulli his thoughts on the shape of the Earth – stating that he could not properly understand what Newton had said on the subject[6] – and, more generally, the results of some of his research on rotating celestial bodies. Maupertuis discussed the shapes that celestial bodies must take due to the action of gravity and centrifugal force, even dealing with complicated cases such as the explanation of Saturn's rings. Bernoulli found Maupertuis's solutions convincing and encouraged him to publish them (Bernoulli to Maupertuis, 1 April 1731).[7] Maupertuis followed Bernoulli's suggestion and communicated his results to the Royal Society of London. His paper, written in Latin, was entitled *De figuris quas fluida rotata induere possunt, problemata duo; cum conjectura de stellis quae aliquando prodeunt vel deficiunt; et de aunulo Saturni* (*On the Shapes that Rotating Fluids Can Assume, in Two Problems; with a Conjecture on the Stars That Sometimes Appear or Disappear; and on Saturn's Ring*), and was read at the meeting of 8 July 1731; the text was subsequently published in the *Philosophical Transactions* of 1732 (n. 37, 240-256).

The *De figuris,* as Maupertuis wrote to Pierre des Maizeaux (1666-1745) in response to a query from the mathematician John Machin (1680-1751), contained "mathematical solutions rather than actual physical explanations."[8] However, Maupertuis had greater theoretical ambitions, especially when it came to offering his research to the French public, less receptive than the English to a mathematical physics inspired by Newton. Published in late 1732, the *Discours* added to mathematical problems "a preliminary [discussion] of gravity, in which I set out the different ideas held by Cartesians and Newtonians"; as Maupertuis stressed in his letter to Bernoulli of 4 August 1732, "as soon as this little work is printed, I'll take the liberty of sending [a copy] to you."

Bernoulli was careful not to enter into direct controversy with his pupil. He responded to Maupertuis by introducing the subject of a treatise of his own with which he intended to enter for a prize announced by the Paris Academy of Sciences (for 1732, postponed to 1734), which would later be published under the title *Nouvelles pensées sur le système de M. Descartes* (*New Thoughts on Descartes's System*), in which he adopted epistemological principles opposed to Newtonian ones.[9]

[6] For Newton's discussion of the shape of the Earth, see the propositions 18-20 of the third book of the *Principia* (Newton [1687] 1999, 821-832).

[7] The manuscript correspondence of Johann Bernoulli has been digitised as part of a larger project concerning the whole Bernoulli family (Basler Edition der Bernoulli-Briefwechsel) and is available at the following address: https://ub-mediawiki.ub.unibas.ch/bernoulli/index.php/Kategorie:Bernoulli_Johann_I. All the letters exchanged between Bernoulli and Maupertuis that I will mention in this paper are available at this web address. The original papers are kept at the University Library of Basel.

[8] British Library, Add. Ms. 4285, fol. 212. On Maupertuis's exchange with des Maizeaux see Terrall 2002, 66.

[9] The question posed by the Paris Academy was the following: "What is the physical cause of the inclination of the planes of the planets' orbits in relation to the plane of the equa-

> I shall perhaps be able to put forward my theory on the gravitation of the planets towards the Sun […]. Be that as it may, if I take the trouble to write something, I shall treat my subject as a physicist, without mixing much geometry [read: mathematics] into it, content to give principles from which we can deduce a probable cause, according to the laws of the mechanics of the phenomenon in question; that is all that is required of a physicist, we leave it to the geometers [read: mathematicians] to make the calculations […] (Bernoulli to Maupertuis, 17 August 1732).

Bernoulli resorted here to a classic argument from the anti-Newtonian repertoire of the early eighteenth century, which accused the Newtonians of constructing mental rather than physical models, as they relied on mathematical abstractions. For the Cartesians – and here Bernoulli repeats the same argument – the true essence of physics was the construction of mechanical models based on principles of reality (including the transmission of motion by direct contact, the negation of vacuum, and so forth). Bernoulli's system was essentially equivalent to Newton's; the main difference was in the philosophical grounding of the scientific models, since Bernoulli explained the motions of the heavenly bodies "by the only principles of mechanics, received from all the modern philosophers of whatever faction they are" (Bernoulli to Maupertuis, 9 October 1732).

As for what he expected from Maupertuis's forthcoming book, Bernoulli downplayed the philosophical significance of the text, employing the well-worn anti-Newtonian critique mentioned above: "I believe that your aim is mainly to treat your subject in geometry" (Bernoulli to Maupertuis, 27 November 1732). The *Discours* was in fact much more radical than Bernoulli had expected. In addition to a discussion of the problems associated with the figure of rotating celestial bodies (chapters 6-8), it discussed the two main world systems, the Cartesian and the Newtonian, and compared the strengths and weaknesses of each (chapters 3-5). Maupertuis prefaced this comparison, from which the Newtonian system emerges as more consistent in explaining phenomena, with a "metaphysical discussion of attraction" (chapter 2), which is the most original part of the text from a philosophical standpoint.

The problem that some critics attributed to the Newtonian system, and which partly explained the continuing success of Cartesianism, was the mysterious nature of attraction. Many considered it to be an occult quality, similar to those introduced by the Scholastics to explain phenomena they did not understand. Maupertuis therefore set out to examine whether attraction was really a "metaphysical monster" (Maupertuis 1732, 13), i.e. whether it was contradictory to assume that this force was inherent in physical bodies. Building on John Locke's (1632-1704) critique of the idea of substance and his insistence on the limits of the intellect, Maupertuis argued that our knowledge of things is limited to a small number of properties and, more importantly, that we have no knowledge

tor, of the Sun's rotation around its axis, and why do the inclinations of these orbits differ?" (Maheu 1966, 213). The prize was awarded *ex aequo* to Johann and his son Daniel Bernoulli.

of the substratum underlying these properties. Therefore, any statement about natural reality is underdetermined. With the exception of certain primordial properties of matter, such as impenetrability, it is impossible for our limited intellect to exclude the possibility that other properties – as long as they do not conflict with the primordial ones – belong to the nature of bodies. Experience is the only guide that can confirm or deny such attributions of properties.[10] As the parallel of the two systems developed in the following chapters shows, experience validated Newton's system, and thus provided an *a posteriori* confirmation of its fundamental principles – including the most controversial ones, namely attraction and vacuum.

3. From Paris to Leipzig, through Basel

In the circulation of Newton's natural philosophy in eighteenth-century Europe, the work of Maupertuis played a key role, especially in the early 1730s, which marked the auroral phase of French Newtonianism. The *Discours* represented an authoritative peroration – authoritative because Maupertuis was a member of the Paris Academy of Sciences, one of the most important scientific institutions of the time – in favour of the new English physics, towards which the first continental readers, amongst them Christiaan Huygens (1629-1695) and Gottfried W. Leibniz (1646-1716), had been highly sceptical. In this section, I examine the penetration of this text into Germany through a series of material mediations that passed through Bernoulli's house in Basel. The history I offer of the circulation of the *Discours* will serve as an example of a material history of the circulation of knowledge in the early modern period.

The Bernoulli family was at the centre of European scientific life due to their extensive personal connections with numerous prominent figures and institutions. One notable example is the Bernoulli's role in promoting the international career of Leonhard Euler (1707-1783), as Johann encouraged him to apply for various positions and eventually helped him to enter the St Petersburg Academy of Sciences, where Johann's son Daniel (1700-1782) was already working.[11] Even prior to the publication of the *Discours,* Maupertuis leveraged Bernoulli's European network as a source of book supply, not solely for scientific texts. One issue that came up frequently in the letters of 1732 and 1733 is Maupertuis's re-

[10] "If we had complete ideas of bodies; if we knew well what they are in themselves, and how their properties affect them; how and in what number they [the properties] reside there [in bodies]; we would not be embarrassed to decide whether attraction is a property of matter. But we are very far from having such ideas; we know bodies only by a few properties, without knowing anything about the subject in which these properties are reunited. […] It would be ridiculous to wish to attribute to bodies other properties than those which experience has taught us are to be found in them; but it would perhaps be even more ridiculous to wish, on the basis of a small number of scarcely known properties, to pronounce dogmatically the exclusion of all others; as if we had the measure of the capacity of subjects when we know them only by this small number of properties" (Maupertuis 1732, 13-16). See Downing 2012, 290-298.

[11] On Euler's biography, see Fellmann 2007.

quest for a "Chinese grammar." At Maupertuis's request, Bernoulli arranged for the book to be sent from Russia and subsequently transported to Paris, using some of his acquaintances who were travelling in France as couriers.[12] Bernoulli described the Chinese grammar as a beautiful book, while conjecturing that Maupertuis wished to give the volume as a gift to an acquaintance of his:

> It is undoubtedly a curious book for lovers of oriental languages, the Chinese characters are all engraved in intaglio, there is also a small dictionary of that language with explanations of the words in Latin; I imagine that you are asking for it for a friend, for I have never taken you for a connoisseur of the Chinese language (Bernoulli to Maupertuis, 2 November 1732).

The text, whose title is never mentioned, is probably the *Museum Sinicum* published in 1730 by Gottlieb Siegfried Bayer (1694-1738), one of the greatest sinologists of the time, who worked at the St Petersburg Academy. Maupertuis also used Bernoulli's Russian connections to obtain copies of various scientific works that his mentor had received from the St Petersburg Academy, of which he was a member.[13] Indeed, we know from other correspondence that Bernoulli's formal membership of the St Petersburg Academy did not entitle him to remuneration in money but in books. As Bernoulli pointed out in a letter to Johann Scheuchzer (1672-1733), at the St Petersburg Academy he enjoyed "the simple honour [of being a member] without pension and without any other emolument than perhaps the works that will be printed there and of which a copy will be sent to me free of charge" (Bernoulli to Scheuchzer, 22 October 1729).

Bernoulli's European network proved fundamental to the circulation of the *Discours* and thus, more generally, to the penetration of French Newtonianism in Germany. Maupertuis sent the book to Bernoulli at the end of 1732, and Bernoulli received it in early January. In his letter of 6 January 1733, Bernoulli wrote: "Since this letter I have received the parcel of four copies of your excellent *Discourse on the Different Shapes of the Stars.*" Of these four copies, Bernoulli proposed to send one to Leipzig, where it could be reviewed in the *Nova Acta Eruditorum,* the continuation of the renowned journal (the *Acta Eruditorum)* which, some decades earlier, had hosted various articles in favour of Leibniz in the context of the calculus controversy. Bernoulli entrusted the copy of the *Discours* addressed to Leipzig to Frédéric Moula (1703-1782), a Swiss mathematician and member of the St Petersburg Academy, to deliver to the editors of the journal on his way to Berlin.

[12] In the letter of 20 October 1732, Maupertuis mentions "Moscow (*Moscovie)*" as the place from which the book came.

[13] In the letter of 14 April 1732, Maupertuis stressed that he still owed Bernoulli a sum for a copy of the *Commentarii Academiae Scientiarum Imperialis Petropolitanae,* the annual collection of the papers published by the St Petersburg Academy: "A long time ago, Deucher took it upon himself to pay you back the 100 sous I owed you for the memoirs of St Petersburg." Johannes Deucher (1673-1747) was a merchant in Strasbourg and Paris. He was a partner in the bank Labhard & Cie, founded in Paris in 1713. In 1720 he bought the Castle of Bottmingen near Basel. He died there in 1747, leaving no direct heirs (Müller von Blumencron 1992, 105–7).

Bernoulli's letters to Maupertuis reveal some interesting elements concerning the circulation of the text. The first element concerns the role of Bernoulli's authority. The copy of the *Discours* sent to Leipzig was accompanied by a letter inviting the editors of the *Nova Acta t*o make an extract of the book as soon as possible: "[Moula] took charge of your book for the collector of the *Acta* of Leipzig, accompanied by one of my letters to him, in which I ask him to have an extract made of it so that it can be inserted in the journal" (Bernoulli to Maupertuis, 5 February 1733). This letter, apart from its content (which is unknown to us), guaranteed the visibility of Maupertuis's work. Maupertuis, although already a member of the Paris Academy, was a young author little known outside France and England.[14] Moreover, Bernoulli relied on his personal connections with some of the journal's editors, in particular Wolff, who was one of his correspondents, and also the designated reviewer of Maupertuis's book. The second element is the discretion required of Moula for the delivery. Bernoulli stressed that he had "strongly recommended to Mr Moula to ensure that the parcel is delivered to the said collector immediately and in complete secrecy" (Bernoulli to Maupertuis, 5 February 1733). This secrecy is a symptom of the desire to keep the circulation of the text within a network of trusted persons, but it was also a key to increasing the curiosity of the recipients and giving it priority over the volumes that were routinely received.

Before turning to the analysis of the review published in the *Nova Acta,* it is interesting to note that only a few months later Wolff wrote a letter to Maupertuis emphasising his interest in the *Discours* and his admiration for the Frenchman's work – although, as we shall see, the review (published anonymously) was less laudatory and in fact quite critical of Maupertuis's views.

> No sooner had I heard through the grapevine […] that you had published your *Discourse on the Different Shapes of the Stars,* than I burned with such a desire to read it that I would have moved heaven and earth to get hold of it. Reading it, however quickly, fully satisfied my curiosity, so much so that, although you were still unknown to me, I loved you (Wolff to Maupertuis, 20 September 1733, in Le Sueur 1896, 424–25).

These few lines illustrate the strength of Bernoulli's network and, more generally, the deep interconnections between some of the protagonists of the early eighteenth-century Republic of Letters.

4. The Review of Maupertuis's *Discours* in the *Nova Acta Eruditorum*

The significance of the review that appeared in *Nova Acta* can best be understood against the backdrop of the other reviews received by the *Discours,* particu-

[14] In 1728, Maupertuis spent three months in England. During this period, he was admitted to the Royal Society, but also attended a number of coffee houses, notably the Rainbow Coffee House, where Huguenots and freethinkers gathered (Storni 2022, 37–40).

larly those published in France. This is the reason why I have chosen to briefly discuss two French reviews before focusing on the German one.

In the *Histoire de l'Académie des Sciences* of 1732, the perpetual secretary of the Paris Academy Bernard Le Bovier de Fontenelle (1657-1757) discussed Maupertuis's latest publication. Most of the review consisted of a faithful presentation of the text, especially the last chapters, those with the most technical content. Fontenelle completely ignored chapter 2 of the *Discours,* i.e. the "metaphysical discussion of attraction," while making some veiled critical allusions to the problematic metaphysical status of this force: "But it is true that this hypothesis of gravity acting because of the distance to the central point is not as acceptable in physics as it is in geometry or algebra, where only formal contradictions can be excluded" (Fontenelle 1732, 89). In the final lines of the review, Fontenelle acknowledged Maupertuis's preference for Newton, while attempting to refrain from explicit criticism: "[Maupertuis] almost begins his book with a parallel of impulse and attraction, where he does not agree as to the advantages of one over the other. He even gives a parallel of the sentiments of Descartes and M. Newton, and the whole advantage is to the English philosopher" (Fontenelle 1732, 93). Fontenelle's review provides a good representation of the intellectual debates at the Paris Academy, where academicians were encouraged to avoid addressing contentious issues such as natural-philosophical ones. However, in his fidelity to Cartesianism, Fontenelle's text also reveals a tacit opposition to the Newtonian worldview.[15]

Another review of the *Discours a*ppeared in April 1733 in the *Mémoires de Trévoux,* a journal whose editors were mostly members of the Society of Jesus. Mary Terrall (2002, 77) has suggested, with some degree of speculation, that the author of the anonymously published review is Louis-Bertrand Castel (1688-1757). The reviewer goes through Maupertuis's text chapter by chapter. When it comes to chapter 2, he clearly sees the potential philosophical danger of the "metaphysical discussion" and formulates his perplexity in the following terms: "Would Mr Maupertuis want to give attraction more force than Mr Newton gave it? For what he seeks here goes beyond the limits of physics and the factual level, and wishes to establish attraction as a metaphysical and utterly primitive principle of action, movement, weight, etc." (Anonymous 1733, 707). Alongside the reconstruction of the contents of the *Discours,* there are a few passages of more general critical discussion in which the reviewer set out his natural philosophical ideas, inspired by the Cartesian tradition. In his view, Maupertuis should have realised that Newtonian attraction "is a purely geometric and mathematical principle, which explains nothing physical" (Anonymous 1733, 711). Contrary to what the Newtonians believed, "the Cartesians" were in fact those who formulated hypotheses based on empirical evidence, namely grounded on data

[15] Fontenelle remained a Cartesian to the end of his life. His *Théorie des tourbillons cartésiens, avec des réflexions sur l'attraction* (*Theory of Cartesian Vortices, with Some Reflections on Attraction*), published in 1752, is usually regarded as the swan song of French Cartesianism, and the final act of the "Newton Wars" in France (Shank 2008, 468).

that "resemble facts much more than all those which Mr Maupertuis here describes by that name" (Anonymous 1733, 711). In this sense, the review implicitly presented Maupertuis as a radical Newtonian, who wanted to go beyond Newton's more serious and modest presentation of his theories.

> What should a sound philosophy not attempt, instead of admitting vacuum and attraction? Mr Newton himself never seems to have dared to support or present this idea, except after wrapping himself in the most profound geometry. Whenever he spoke openly and to the public, he always modified his discourse and softened his ideas with "perhaps," with suspensions, with corrections (Anonymous 1733, 716–17).

The review that appeared in the *Mémoires de Trévoux* provides a valuable insight into the critical reading of Newtonian natural philosophy provided by the Jesuits, who were supporters of the Cartesian perspective, mixed with remnants of Aristotelianism (Storni 2024, 236–38). Since the epistemological compass of the Jesuits was intuition and common sense, they criticised Newtonian physics for the obscurity of its principles and the abstractness of its demonstrations, thus opposing the rise of mathematical physics. There was another point of controversy which was never explicitly mentioned, but which was central to the Jesuit polemic against the Newtonians: the idea that the Newtonian approach, underpinned by radical empiricism, was conducive to materialism and atheism. Indeed, the Jesuits feared that French Newtonians would come to support the same theses that were being advocated in England by authors such as John Toland (1670-1722), who in his *Letters to Serena* (1704) took up Locke's suggestion of "thinking matter" to establish a form of Spinozist materialism based on the idea that matter is intrinsically active.[16]

At first glance, the review published in *Nova Acta* differs from the French reviews in two ways. Firstly, it is much shorter, occupying only five pages; secondly, it is written in Latin and thus addressed to a scholarly, but at the same time international (who did not necessarily read French), audience. As in the case of the French reviews, Wolff's followed Maupertuis's arguments step by step, but was nevertheless original in several respects. The first is that the reviewer took seriously the philosophical stakes of chapter 2 of the *Discours*. Summarising the metaphysical discussion, Wolff wrote the following:

> So that he [Maupertuis] does not seem to be praising unreasonably the Newtonian [system], which satisfies the phenomena to the extent that it makes many of them appreciable, he introduces a certain metaphysical discussion of

[16] Toland's inspiration came from an interpretation of the following passage of Locke's *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1689) IV.3.6: "We have the ideas of matter and of thinking, but possibly shall never be able to know, whether any material being thinks, or no; it being impossible for us, by the contemplation of our own ideas, without revelation, to discover whether omnipotency has not given to some system of matter fitly disposed, a power to perceive and think, or else joined to matter so disposed, a thinking immaterial substance" (Locke [1689] 1975, 540–41).

> attractions, in which, relying on Lockean notions, he endeavours to remove the absurdity from attraction when considered a primitive quality inherent in matter; however, he does not dare to decide whether this universal attraction is a real thing or not (Wolff 1733, 317).

It was the first (and only) review to mention Locke as a source for Maupertuis. More generally, Wolff seemed to recognise the radical nature of Maupertuis's argument, in that – contrary to the prevailing opinion, at least of his fellow countrymen – he sought to demonstrate that is was not contradictory to attribute an attractive force to matter. The reviewer insisted, however, that the *Discourse* as a whole was not explicitly favourable to Newton. In fact, he seemed to take seriously Maupertuis's apparent oscillation between the two systems, which actually came down to a few rhetorical phrases inserted here and there in the text.[17]

> He [Maupertuis] therefore concludes that no one has been found so far that could save the vortex system, although from there he never infers its impossibility. Newton excellently explains, and demonstrates with geometric rigour, the celestial motions, through the hypothesis of attraction, which agrees admirably with Kepler's laws. He [Maupertuis] also shows that planetary motion and gravity depend on the same cause. But in the meantime, he openly admits that he has no distinct idea of universal gravity, of the inherent matter, of the Newtonian attractive force, or of the impulsive force, and he thus remains so much in doubt as to which system corresponds to truth (Wolff 1733, 317–18).

Such remarks may be the result of a lack of understanding of Maupertuis's rhetoric, but they may also be the consequence of a precise reading strategy. They may be an indirect sign of the reviewer's scepticism towards Newton's system, which, despite its obvious experimental strengths, should never be declared superior to the Cartesian or absolutely true. The insistence on Maupertuis's hesitation could also be read as a veiled criticism: even a proponent of Newtonianism like Maupertuis found sufficient ambiguity in Newton's theories to refrain from overtly aligning with him.

A final original aspect of Wolff's review concerns the presentation of the central chapters of the *Discours,* particularly those devoted to the exposition of Cartesian cosmology (chapters 3 and 4). Wolff dwelt little on Descartes, while devoting more space to the exposition of the cosmological views of Leibniz and Georg Bernhard Bilfinger (1693-1750), a theologian and philosopher deeply influenced by Wolff himself. Maupertuis mentioned both of these authors in the *Discours* but gave them far less prominence than Descartes and Huygens. For

[17] For example: "It must be admitted that we have not yet been able to reconcile vortices with phenomena in a satisfactory way. But this does not mean that vortices are impossible. Nothing is more beautiful than the idea of Mr Descartes, who wanted to explain everything in physics by matter and motion; but if we want to preserve the beauty of this idea, we must not allow ourselves to assume matter and motion for any other reason than the need we have for them" (Maupertuis 1732, 33).

Maupertuis, the cosmologies of Leibniz and Bilfinger were, in fact, adaptations of the Cartesian cosmology, but they could not remedy the flaws of the vortex system. Wolff gave much space to the two German authors, quoting their works in a laudatory manner (e.g. he cited a paper by Bilfinger that had been awarded by the Paris Academy) and with precise bibliographical references.

> Descartes explained the motion of the planets around the Sun and the phenomenon of gravity through vortices of a certain subtle matter; but, when the same system was applied to explain Kepler's laws of celestial motions, it was observed to be in little agreement with them. The way in which Leibniz tried to remove the difficulties, so that the same [system] might be brought into agreement with these laws, may be read in *Acta* 1689, p. 82. Bilfinger, now professor of theology at the Academy of Tübingen, in a dissertation on the cause of gravity, awarded a prize by the Royal Academy of Sciences [of Paris, in 1728], similarly shows that different laws must be admitted in vortices if the phenomena are to be satisfied. There is indeed no less difficulty in explaining the cause of gravity for vortices. Huygens tried to find a solution, but he gave up the simplicity of nature: before this failure, Bilfinger tried to bring another remedy, but – in the author's [Maupertuis] opinion – not only did he presuppose motion but, with a very difficult idea, he imagined four vortices in one, two of which strive to oppose the other two, and nevertheless pass through each other without destroying themselves (Wolff 1733, 317).

The repeated references to Leibniz and Bilfinger suggest that Wolff was trying to introduce German authors into the debate on Newtonian natural philosophy. His attempt was in fact to "territorialise" or "Germanise" the controversy between the Cartesians and the Newtonians, which had hitherto been confined to France. In other words, he believed that German authors could also provide relevant contributions to the discussion and deserved to be considered as relevant interlocutors: for Wolff, it was not a matter of explaining their positions in detail, but rather of trying to make them more visible by repeatedly mentioning their names, referring to their works, and citing academic titles that rhetorically attested to their intellectual value, which was no less than that of more "canonical" authors.

5. Conclusion

The study of the genesis and reception of Maupertuis's *Discours sur les différentes figures des astres* offers valuable insights into the circulation of philosophical ideas in the early modern period. I have shown that the circulation of knowledge was not merely an intellectual process, but also involved practical, material factors, the analysis of which reveals a complex web of mediations, interactions, and negotiations. In particular, the case of Maupertuis's *Discours* demonstrates the crucial role played by personal networks, such as the connections of the Bernoulli family, in facilitating the dissemination of scientific and philosophical works across Europe.

I have also emphasised the crucial role of reviews in shaping the circulation of philosophical ideas. Reviews emerged as a vital medium through which philosophers and scientists engaged with new knowledge, offering critiques, interpretations and contextualisations that influenced the reception and trajectories of learned debates. A notable example is Wolff's review of the *Discours* published in *Nova Acta Eruditorum* of Leipzig, which not only critically engaged with Maupertuis's arguments, but also introduced German authors into the debate, thereby extending the Cartesian-Newtonian controversy beyond the French intellectual sphere.

Overall, this study highlights the importance of a multidimensional approach to the history of philosophy, one that takes into account both intellectual and material factors in the circulation of ideas. By doing so, we gain a richer understanding of the complexities involved in the transmission and reception of philosophical knowledge during the early modern age.

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Reviews of the Pre-Critical Kant

Marco Sgarbi

Abstract: This paper deals with the reviews of Kant's pre-critical philosophy before 1770, which involve minor works such as *Gedanken von der wahren Schätzung der lebendigen Kräfte*, *Allgemeine Naturgeschichte und Theorie des Himmels*, *Der einzig mögliche Beweisgrund zu einer Demonstration des Daseins Gottes* and the *Beobachtungen über das Gefühl des Schönen und Erhabenen*. These reviews involved authors who were protagonists of the philosophical debate of that time such as Johann Georg Hamman, Moses Mendelssohn, and Johann Gottfried Herder, and determined the way in which Kant developed his philosophical thought from an initial approach to natural science to more genuine metaphysical themes.

Keywords: Kant, reviews, announcement, critical assessment, pre-critical

1. Introduction

Immanuel Kant is one of the philosophers most studied by historians of philosophy for what his thought represented in terms of a break with the past and for the new paths of investigation that he opened. He is studied so much that when reading Kant's endless bibliography one often has the impression of finding very little that is original and one feels that everything has already been written about him. However, new approaches to the history of thought allow us to read even an author as famous as Kant in another light, revealing previously little known and little explored aspects. This is the case with the methodology of the history of knowledge, using the very particular epistemic genre that is the review.

To state that the reviews of Kant and by Kant have not been studied is certainly wrong: No one can deny the extensive bibliography inspired by Christian Garve's review of the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* or the various polemical reviews published by Kant in the 1980s. However, work on these reviews, despite some valuable studies, has not been systematic and has been confined above all to the sphere of the so-called *Rezeptionsgeschichte*, certainly a very noble area of investigation, but not exhaustive for reconstructing the meaning that reviews had for the intellectual career of the philosopher from Königsberg.

As a man of his time, Kant was profoundly influenced by the culture of reviews, an influence which, however, is rarely acknowledged to exalt, and certain-

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ly for good reasons, his philosophical genius. However, there are clues that lead us to suspect that reviews had a notable impact on the construction of Kant's philosophical thought and that Kant's ideas took very specific trajectories from the reading and writing of reviews.

While the reviews received and written by Kant from 1781 onwards, given the philosopher's already acquired notoriety, have at least been taken into consideration by scholars, this paper addresses those of the pre-critical period, which involve minor writings, in respect of which, often no real echo is perceived either in the philosophical panorama of the period, or in Kantian intellectual evolution.

These reviews involve authors who were protagonists of the philosophical debate of those years such as Johann Georg Hamman, Moses Mendelssohn, and Johann Gottfried Herder.[1] However, I do not take into consideration the one most studied by scholars,[2] namely Johann Schultz's review of Kant's dissertation *De mundi sensibilis atque intelligibilis forma et principiis* published in the *Königsbergische gelehrte und politische Zeitunge* in November 1771. This review was initially published anonymously, but its authorship is made certain by all the clues that emerge from Kant's private correspondence and its impact was immediate as can be seen from the letters to Marcus Herz.[3] This review marks a friendship that remained stable almost until Kant's death, a relationship profoundly marked by reviews of Kantian philosophy that led to significant changes in the second edition of the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*. However, this review appears at a moment in the development of Kant's "critical period" and deserves a separate investigation and for this reason it is not examined here.

2. The Early Reviews of Kant

The first work to have a certain response among critics was also the first work published by Kant in 1749, namely the *Gedanken von der wahren Schätzung der lebendigen Kräfte*, composed, with well-known unfortunate economic vicissitudes, in the period between 1744 and 1747. The work was ambitious and full of original ideas in its attempt to overcome the divisions between the Newtonian, Leibnizian and Cartesian schools. However, not all the ideas were developed systematically and this aspect was immediately captured by reviewers.

The first review was commissioned by Kant himself from his friend Ferdinand Wilhelm Mühlmann, as evidenced by a letter dated 23 August 1749, whose recipient for a long time was thought to be Albrecht von Haller.[4] The review ends with the same words with which Kant closes the letter.

[1] There is no claim to completeness or exhaustiveness in this research on the reviews of Kant.

[2] See Brandt 1981, Bonelli Munegato 1992; Morrison 1995.

[3] *KGS*, X, 133.

[4] See Fischer 1985a.

Kant's letter[5]	Review[6]
Ich habe noch eine Fortsetzung dieser Gedancken in Bereitschaft die nebst einer fernern Bestätigung derselben andere eben dahin abzielende Betrachtungen in sich begreifen wird.	Der gelehrte Herr Verfasser hat noch eine Fortsetzung dieser Gedacken in Bereitschafft, welche sowohl eine Bestättigung derselben, als auch eine Hinzuthuung noch anderer dahin abzielender Untersuchungen in sich halten wird.

Mühlmann's anonymous review appeared on Friday, 14 November 1749 in the *Franckfurtischer Gelehrten Zeitungen*, a magazine dedicated almost exclusively to book reviews from all over Europe.[7] The review takes up approximately four columns and is significantly longer than the others which were usually limited to the space of half a column or a little more.

The reviewer justifies the length of his review by underlining how the author of the work is worthy of detailed analysis, especially in consideration of his numerous intuitions and the depth of his thought. Kant's ability to clearly explain the concepts of Leibniz's philosophy, as no one had ever managed to do before, is emphasized. The aspect that seems to strike Mühlmann most about the first parts of the work is the total compatibility in the description of forces between Leibnizian physics and Cartesian mathematics. He also notes how in the description of the force, Kant distances himself from Leibniz's conclusions, listing their various points of divergence, all revolving around the adoption of the principles of Newtonian dynamics, which however do not appear explicitly in the text of the review. It is precisely in contrast to Leibniz that Mühlmann tries to show Kant's originality, without however taking on his defense or supporting his thesis, but simply reporting the differences and leaving the judgment to the reader. What emerges clearly from the review is that Kant follows the Leibnizian tradition and tries to improve it.

On the same day as the letter to Mühlmann, that is 23 August 1749, Kant attempted the great coup and wrote to the greatest mathematician of his time, probably the only one to have a complete understanding of the Leibnizian and Newtonian systems, namely Leonhard Euler. Kant tried to stimulate a reaction and judgment from Euler on his work, asking for "a benevolent and detailed examination of these modest thoughts [...] of your most esteemed public or private judgment."[8] What Kant hoped for is evidently a review. Unlike Mühlmann, however, what he got was only silence. We therefore do not know Euler's thoughts on Kant's writing, but perhaps it was not so different from the mockery received by Lessing's review of *Das Neuste aus dem Reiche des Witzes* in July 1751. Calling it a review is perhaps an exaggeration — they are four lapidary lines, a small poem dedicated to Kant's work in which Lessing contemptuously

5 *KGS*, X, 2.

6 *Franckfurtischer Gelehrten Zeitungen*, 91 (1749), 503.

7 *Franckfurtischer Gelehrten Zeitungen*, 91 (1749), 501–3.

8 Fischer 1985b, 217–18.

judges as arrogant the Kantian attempt to resolve such a difficult and age-old question. The poem in English sounds like this: "Kant undertook an arduous task, to educate the world. He evaluated the living forces, without first evaluating his own."[9] In short, we do not know how much Lessing understood about Kant, but he must not have liked what he read, unless he wrote these lines out of mere satirical whim without even opening the book, as Samuel Christian Lappenberg taught in those years in his *Anfangsgründe der Rezensirkunst zum Gebrauch der Vorlesungen* (1778).

On 10 July 1750, the publication of the work by Martin Eberhard Dorn was announced in the *Hamburgische Berichte von den neuesten Gelehrten Sachen*.[10] Another anonymous review appeared in the *Göttingische Zeitungen von Gelehrten Sachen* in April 1750. The journal was directed by Albrecht von Haller at the time and some have hypothesized that he was the author of the review.[11] Indeed, we know that Haller was one of the few lucky owners of a copy of the *Gedanken*. However, from the list of over 9900 reviews attributed to Haller, this review is excluded.

According to the reviewer, Kant approaches the problem of the evaluation of living forces "with profound erudition" and "with all the respect due to the results obtained by the great Leibniz."[12] The reviewer decides not to give a critical judgment on Kant's ideas, but prefers to analytically expose the contents, leaving readers to determine whether Kant's solution is convincing. Reading this review reveals a more metaphysical than physical interest on the part of the reviewer, who, exactly like Mühlmann, sees in Kant a perfect continuation of the Leibnizian school which tries to apply Cartesian mathematics to the understanding of natural phenomena.

The criticism came in March 1752 with a review of the *Nova Acta Eruditorum*.[13] As Giorgio Tonelli has said, a negative response from the Leipzig newspaper was widely expected given the treatment that Wolff had received in Kant's writing.[14] The review immediately goes into the merits of Kant's thesis by analyzing the two main steps which show the weakness, as well as the ineffectiveness of the Kantian solution. The first step is the one in which Kant attempts to derive the origin of movement from the general concept of active force, of which an extensive extract is reported, translated into Latin.[15] The passage is §4, the one in which Kant expresses his first conception of space and time. The reviewer states that all Kantian arguments are nonsense ideas (*omnia haec sine mente soni sunt*) and that experience provides a secure guide to solving the problem. The

[9] Lessing 1998, 168. "K* unternimmt ein schwer Geschäfte/Der Welt zum Unterricht. Er schätzet die lebendigen Kräfte/Nur seine schätz er nicht."

[10] *Hamburgische Berichte von den neuesten Gelehrten Sachen*, 19 (10 July 1750), 412.

[11] Grillenzoni 1998, 176; Habel 2007, 392.

[12] *Göttingische Zeitungen von Gelehrten Sachen*, 37 (13 April 1750), 290-94: 291.

[13] *Nova Acta Eruditorum*, 2 (1752), 177–79.

[14] Tonelli 1957.

[15] This is a particularly interesting aspect of the reviews of the period, that is, translating works into other languages by making long extracts.

second step is that of the thesis on the arbitrariness of the three dimensions of space, which for the reviewer is nothing more than raving, an invention like a dream or a delusion. The review ends laconically by stating that these few lines of criticism are already too much time wasted and too much paper wasted for a book of such little value. In short, as often happens with little known authors, Kant's first work did not have the reception he expected.

Not even his second work of a certain consistency, *Allgemeine Naturgeschichte und Theorie des Himmels*, which in the eyes of Kant, still without a university degree, should have given him fame, had hoped for success. Kant had first tried to affirm his ideas, or rather to make his name known through them, given that the work had been published anonymously and that probably behind his anonymity was the fear that his thoughts would not be taken adequately into consideration due to his academic status.

Success eluded him, not through Kant's own fault, but due to the fact that the publisher, Johann Friedrich Petersen, went bankrupt and all his possessions, including copies of all the books he published and which had already been announced in the *Messkatalog*, including that of Kant, were confiscated.[16] However, we know from the *Wöchentliche Königsbergische Frag- und Anzeigungsnachrichten* of 1 May 1756 that among the "things that are for sale in Königsberg […] at the printer Johann Friedrich Driest," the one who would later be Kant's publisher from 1756 to 1760, was "available: M. Kants *Allgemeine Naturgeschichte und Theorie des Himmels*." Despite this immediate block on sales, in 1755 two reviews appeared, probably from copies distributed by Kant himself.

The first was published in the *Jenaische gelehrte Zeitungen* on 14 June 1755.[17] The anonymous reviewer gave a positive review of the anonymous work, treating the author with deference, underlining his ability to expose even the most complex ideas in the easiest way. Ultimately, the reviewer recommended everyone to read this book full of novelties, the only contribution from Huygens' time worthy of being mentioned. The main innovations are the time for Saturn's orbital revolution, the formation of its rings, the thesis of infinite space and time, the formation of nebulae, the continuous rising and setting of the universe, the absence of divine intervention after creation, and the origin of the universe according to mechanical principles. The reviewer realizes that very little can be proven of what the author says and that everything is reduced to the field of conjecture, sometimes taken to extremes, but the hypotheses are nevertheless presented judiciously and with caution. In short, according to the reviewer, Kant provided an original and innovative contribution to the cosmology of time.

If we exclude the first introductory lines, the exact same review was published a month later in the *Freye Urteile und Nachrichten* of Hamburg on 15 July 1755.[18] In the issues of those months, by sampling, there are no other identical

[16] Dreher 1896, 174.

[17] *Jenaische gelehrte Zeitungen*, 45 (1755), 355–59.

[18] *Freye Urteile und Nachrichten*, 12 (1755), 429–32.

or partially identical reviews. The reviewer probably sent the review to both journals.[19] Unfortunately, neither Kant's letters nor the networks of the collaborators of these two magazines provide further information to reconstruct the genesis of these reviews. The work did not have the desired impact, as Kant himself complained in 1761, Johann Heinrich Lambert arrived independently at similar conclusions without knowing his thoughts and therefore without mentioning *Allgemeine Naturgeschichte*[20] — or at least this is what Johann F. Goldbeck claims, perhaps naively.[21] In any case, Kant felt obliged to summarize the theses of his *Allgemeine Naturgeschichte* in the seventh reflection of the second part of his new writing, *Der einzig mögliche Beweisgrund zu einer Demonstration des Daseins Gottes* (1763, but probably late 1762).

3. The Reviews in the *Briefe*

It is of this writing that we find the subsequent review of Kant in the *Briefe, die neueste Litteratur betreffend* of 1764. Indeed, in this journal, in which the reviews were published in the form of letters, two more reviews of two other of Kant's works also appeared in the following year, *Die falsche Spitzfindigkeit der vier syllogistischen Figuren erwiesen* (1762) and *Versuch den Begriff der negativen Größen in die Weltweisheit einzuführen* (1763). All these reviews are anonymous and their attribution is still uncertain.

Manfred Khuen certainly attributes them to the theologian Friedrich Gabriel Resewitz, while Erich Adickes, Karl Vorländer, Giorgio Tonelli, David Walford, and John Zammito attribute them to Moses Mendelssohn. Some biographers, starting from a note by Christian Jacob Kraus to Samuel Gottlieb Wald's *Gedächtnissrede auf Kant* (1804), have handed down the anecdote according to which Kant stated that this review was the one that made him famous in Germany and that this was by Mendelssohn. Kraus' note presents a small margin of ambiguity, as well as imprecision. Correcting Wald, who argued that Kant's success occurred after the *Preisschrift*, Kraus reports:

> In reality, Mendelssohn first *presented him to the public* in the *Briefe* through a review of his two writings 1) on the existence of God, and 2) on the false subtlety of syllogistic figures. The highlighted ones are Kant's words, which he said to me once when I spoke to him about the old Hamann, with whom the same thing happened.[22]

The note is imprecise because there are three reviews and certainly all by the same author. The note is also potentially ambiguous because if it is true that the personal anecdote is very strong and refers to Mendelssohn, it is also true

[19] There is no evidence of common collaborators.

[20] Grillenzoni 1998, 200–4.

[21] Goldbeck 1781, 248–49.

[22] Reicke 1860, 21.

that Kant could have been wrong about his past, as we know was often the case, and it can be hypothesized that in the interlocution Kant was thinking of the reviews and not the reviewer. However, these are all hypotheses. To help attribute the authorship of the reviews to Mendelssohn there is also a testimony closer in time, namely a letter from March 1767 from Herder to Johann George Scheffner, in which he says that Kant's writings "have never been reviewed worthily and in detail, and Mendelssohn undoubtedly did not understand Kant in his *Beweisgrund*."[23] Again the note is ambiguous because it cannot be certain whether Mendelssohn did not understand Kant in general, or did not misunderstand him in his review.

In any case, these reviews were included in Mendelssohn's *Jubiläumsausgabe*, in which the co-editors of the critical edition, Michael Albrecht and Eva J. Engel, had opposite opinions on the authorship of these reviews. Albrecht attributed the reviews to Resewitz because Nicolai wrote to Herder in 1768 that all the contributions signed with Q and Tz came from him, while Engel for stylistic reasons states that the author is Mendelssohn and that Nicolai's attribution may not be correct as there had been other cases in which the same letters "Fll" have been attributed to two different authors, in this case Mendelssohn and Lessing.[24] The only thing that is certain is that Resewitz's collaboration with the *Briefe* began in January 1764,[25] but this does not mean that Mendelssohn stopped contributing to the development of the journal.

The first review of *Der einzig mögliche Beweisgrund* is divided into two letters composed of two parts each with a total length of 32 pages and was published between 26 April 1764 and 10 May 1764. The reviewer perfectly captures the danger of the great challenge launched by Kant and wonders whether, after the entire republic of letters used every means to demonstrate the existence of God from the most abstruse algebraic formulas to the lowest worm that lives in the dust, with this writing Kant was not too bold and would not go against all the scholars of his time. The reviewer particularly appreciates the attitude of modesty on the part of Kant, whose work is not intended to be presented as a solution to such a complex problem, but rather as a simple argument for the demonstration of the existence of God. According to the reviewer, the author correctly warns the reader that much evidence will be lacking or that many explanations will be inadequate or that many solutions will be weak and defective. Above all, the reviewer appreciates the way in which Kant seems to be able to accept criticisms and suggestions about his own thinking. "An author who announces himself in this way in his preface" – states the reviewer – "deserves to be read and studied in depth."[26] In this review, the rhetoric of the work is therefore cap-

[23] Herder 1988, 52.

[24] Mendelssohn 2004, 414–35. There is also the possibility of a compromise solution: the reviews were written by Resewitz and stylistically revised by Mendelssohn.

[25] Habel 2007, 376.

[26] *Briefe, die neueste Litteratur betreffend*, 26 April (1764), 71.

tured and the work is also written to meet the taste and sensibility of the reader and of the reviewer, unlike previous writings in which Kant claimed to say the definitive word on the subject.

Paul Guyer, who has studied these reviews in depth and who attributes them to Mendelssohn, shows how the reviewer subtly moves between the different Kantian argumentative strategies in such a way as to make the proof of God's existence expounded in Mendelssohn's *Abhandlung über die Evidenz in metaphysischen Wissenschaften*, published that year, as most convincing.[27] This could be the most damning proof of the attribution of the review to Mendelssohn. Leaving aside the authorship of the work, the reviewer never presents himself as excessively critical: he complains about some obscure passages or some leaps in reasoning, due to misunderstandings of Kant. According to Guyer, these misunderstandings on the part of the reviewer are deliberate, precisely to leave room for his own thesis which would emerge from this review as the winner, so much so as to force Kant to abandon his formulation of the proof of the existence of God in the later *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*.

Indeed, the impression that the reviewer reviews the Kantian work keeping more firmly in mind what he himself knows and is convinced of than what Kant writes is strong. In fact, the reviewer does not seem to grasp the novelty of Kant's work: the fact that we must look more at the origin of the knowledge of the thing, at the fact that existence adds nothing new to the concept of the subject, but what changes is its position; these are all aspects that the reviewer deals with quickly and/or that he does not understand, denouncing their obscurity. The reviewer is unable to follow Kant in his reasoning and is unable to follow him precisely because he asks for clarification on what the absolute position of a thing is: "the author must also clarify what he means by absolute position." However, if this concept is not clearly understood, it is difficult to understand the rest of Kant's argument, so much so that the reviewer is ultimately forced to state that the thesis of scholastic ontology, in particular that of Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, according to which existence would be a complement of essence understood as complete internal determination, is still the clearest definition on the matter. But with respect to this point Kant is explicit in highlighting the shortcomings of Baumgarten's definition and indeed Mendelssohn would also partly be so in 1785 in his *Morgenstunden*. However, we know that in 1762 Mendelssohn in his *Abhandlung über die Evidenz in metaphysischen Wissenschaften* (selected 1763, published 1764) argued for a modified version of the Baumgartenian ontological proof.

In short, it is not clear from the review whether and to what extent the reviewer wants to distort the review in favor of his own argument (and obviously this would tilt the authorship towards Mendelssohn) or whether, instead, he did not understand the Kantian text and interpreted it using the filters of the philosophies that he knew better, particularly the Baumgartenian one. We do not know

[27] Guyer 2020, 101.

whether the remarks in this review were the cause that led Kant to change his point of view or whether the change should be attributed to the internal developments of his thought. What is certain is the reviewer's main interest in purely ontological topics; in fact all the other parts of Kant's text are quickly examined with some passages altered. At most the reviewer limits himself to making some notes on the compatibility of mechanism with finalism, but without elaborating detailed comments. The reviewer, however, expresses his desire to review the *Versuch den Begriff der negativen Größen*, whose project appears similar to that of *Der einzig mögliche Beweisgrund*.

The *Versuch* was reviewed between 2 and 9 May 1765, therefore it was published almost a year after the *Beweisgrund* review. The review was quite substantial: more than twenty pages, for an essay of about forty pages in total. To the reviewer, the essay seemed to be an original and significant contribution in the reconciliation between metaphysics and mathematics, above all for its ability to use the concepts of the latter in the former, just as had happened at the dawn of the modern era for the philosophy of nature, which later became so dear to Kant in the *Einleitung* of the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*. The author appreciates the distinction between the logical opposition that leads to a *nihil negativum*, which is irrepresentable, and the real opposition that leads to a *nihil privatitum*, which is representable. This distinction in the metaphysical field is important for the reviewer because it allows us to conceive nothingness in two different ways and shows how opposite predicates can be attributed without contradiction, even if with opposition, to the same subject, in the same respect.

The reviewer appears very impressed by the fruitfulness of Kant's metaphysical reflection and faithfully reports the examples of impenetrability, heat, pleasure and displeasure, and virtue, which together make up a good part of the review. He then comes to the commentary on the last part, in which, according to the reviewer, the author explains through two principles the application of these negative concepts "with a modesty worthy of an expert in profound issues."[28] The two principles that Kant arrives at, namely one which states that in all the natural changes that occur in the world the sum of what is positive neither increases nor decreases, and one which states that all real causes give a result that is equivalent to zero, are extremely fruitful and shed new light in the understanding of both cosmology and psychology in a more in-depth way. As the reviewer explains, however fruitful these considerations are, they do not clarify anything about the nature of divinity, whose difference from all other beings is so immeasurable that it is not possible to transfer these concepts and principles from them to God himself. The concept of divinity, the reviewer reiterates, can only be drawn from us. This is an idea fully in line with the previous review of the *Beweisgrund* and with Mendelssohn's *Abhandlung*.

The reviewer concludes with two personal opinions regarding the work. On the one hand he states that the author concludes his work with a "very strange

[28] *Briefe, die neueste Litteratur betreffend*, 9 May (1765), 168.

question, which he asks all philosophers to answer." The question is declined by the reviewer in three different ways. The first asks "why, since there is something, there is another," the second asks "how, since one thing exists, can another be cancelled out," and finally, the reviewer adds, "if I correctly understand what the author means, what makes a cause a cause, a force a force."[29] For the reviewer, it is a question of reflecting not from a logical point of view, but from a real one, and this is the Kantian novelty. The reviewer concludes the review by stating that: "I do not undertake to contribute in any way to the solution of this question, but I am very anxious to see a correct solution to it, especially since the author promises that he will one day express to the world what he thinks of it."[30] Finally, the reviewer takes leave of the reader by saying that "if I have entertained you for too long with these little writings and their abstract content, forgive me. My spirit found more nourishment there than in some great systems."[31] The reference to the small writings is probably not only to the *Versuch*, but to all the reviews of Kant of these two years, the latest of which is to *Die falsche Spitzfindigkeit*.

Unlike the *Beweisgrund* and the *Versuch*, which were works intended for a wide audience, the *Die falsche Spitzfindigkeit* was an *Einladungschrift* for the winter semester of 1762/1763 written for university students, even if it is clear that the content exceeded their ability to understand the core of his argument.[32] The review consists of 12 pages and appeared on May 2, 1765.[33] This review is less pregnant than the previous two and contains extensive extracts from Kant's text, quoted directly, but appropriately modified. The reviewer describes Kant as a bold man who wants to fight against the bad practice in German academies and universities of studying logic through a sterile syllogistic. The review is enthusiastic because it praises Kant as an autonomous thinker, capable of penetrating complex topics deeply and with originality, and the reviewer hopes to read many academic writings of such value, instead of useless disputes, just as he hopes that many professors will abandon the syllogistic in favor of this new type of logic.

The reviewer captures the originality of Kant's essay: that is, the primacy of judgment on concepts to obtain clear and distinct knowledge. Furthermore, he emphasizes as particularly new the conception according to which both understanding and reason are based on the faculty of judging. This faculty of judging would in turn be based on that of internal sense, which elaborates thoughts through a specific representation of an object. Finally, the reviewer appreciates the attempt to reduce all human knowledge to unity. Thus the reviewer concludes "we can see that the author is on the right path to simplify the theory of the human mind in a correct and natural way; which not only facilitates his ap-

[29] *Briefe, die neueste Litteratur betreffend*, 9 May (1765), 175.
[30] *Briefe, die neueste Litteratur betreffend*, 9 May (1765), 175.
[31] *Briefe, die neueste Litteratur betreffend*, 9 May (1765), 176.
[32] Lee, Pozzo, Sgarbi and von Wille 2012.
[33] *Briefe, die neueste Litteratur betreffend*, 2 May (1765), 147–58.

plication to the knowledge of truth, but also opens the way to penetrate more deeply and with greater certainty into the nature of the soul."[34] He then adds a personal note, "while reading it also occurred to me that, by following the author's path, various obstacles that stand in the way of discovering the *ars characteristica* could be removed."[35] We do not know whether the reviewer followed up on these ideas: neither Mendelssohn nor Resewitz engaged in such philosophical reflections. It was certainly among Kant's intentions to develop an innovative logical system that could surpass the attempts of a Leibniz, a Lambert or a Ploucquet.[36]

4. The Reviews of Kant's *Beobachtungen*

In the period in which the reviews in the *Briefe* appeared, Kant published in 1763 the *Beobachtungen über das Gefühl des Schönen und Erhabenen*. Of this work the biographer Ludwig Ernst Borowski states that

> In the journals people preferred these *Beobachtungen* to similar works by Crousaz, Hutcheson, André and others, and praised [...] the genius with which these pages had been written. In the *Lindauschen Nachrichten* the author was defined as the La Bruyère of Germany. Several reviews observe that this Kantian work should not be missing either in the studies of scholars or in ladies' dressing tables.[37]

However, no scholar has explored this statement in depth, and it is reasonable to ask which reviews he was referring to. Indeed, *Beobachtungen* is by far Kant's best-reviewed pre-critical work with at least 11 reviews, including those of later editions. The first known review is the one that appeared in the *Königsbergische gelehrte und politische Zeitungen* on 30 April 1764. Johann Georg Hamann was the author, although the review was published anonymously. It occupied approximately four columns.[38] Hamann frames Kant's work within the series of works by Crousaz, Hutcheson, André, and Diderot, exactly as Borowski reminds us in his note, exalting the fruitfulness of his ideas. However, the review is not free from criticism and tends to diminish Kant's value. First of all, Hamann accuses Kant of behaving more like a "philosopher" than an "observer," contrary to what he promised. Furthermore, he criticizes the length of Kant's explanations to clarify the meaning of the words, while failing to precisely define the purpose of his observations. Finally, a criticism of Kantian aesthetic subjectivism is implied, because of the emphasis given to feelings that concern the subject rather than with the definition of the object. According to Hamann the very concept of "feeling" appears obscure in the thousand meanings used by

[34] *Briefe, die neueste Litteratur betreffend*, 2 May (1765), 157.
[35] *Briefe, die neueste Litteratur betreffend*, 2 May (1765), 157–58.
[36] Sgarbi 2016; Sgarbi 2022.
[37] Borowski 1804, 32.
[38] *Königsbergische gelehrte und politische Zeitungen*, 30 April (1764), 101–3.

the author. Even in the conclusion of the review, which deals with the section on genius, Hamann seems to be ironic about Kant's attempt at an education of sentimentality and taste. Several times the reviewer seems to suggest alternatives to Kant, from Wilkes to Savigny to Edmund Burke, whose identity he did not know since his *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757) was published anonymously. It was probably this review by Hamann, according to Piero Giordanetti's reconstructions, that introduced Burke to Kant, as can be seen from the *Bemerkungen*.[39]

We know that Herder was not particularly happy with this review by Hamann. After complaining that no reviews had appeared in the *Briefe*, on 21 May 1765 he wrote:

> in the latest issue of *Lindau* great praise is given to Kant's *Beauty*, celebrated as La Bruyère of Germany. I am increasingly sharing this writing by my teacher whom I respect more and more and I am now almost of the opinion that your point of view [Hamann] in reviewing it totally diverges from his. However, the secret spring of the praise of the Swiss seems to be his Swiss style and his Rousseauian mentality since Rousseau always remains their God.[40]

Herder and Borowski refer to the same review, of almost fifteen pages, which appeared anonymously in the seventh volume of the *Ausführliche und kritische Nachrichten* in 1764.[41] The reviewer believes that this writing will give the author more fame among the public than many other scholastic writings produced by him and in which some errors have been made. The reviewer, therefore, shows that he knows Kant's other works. This writing is recommended for its content, and for its way of writing (extremely understandable and at the same time refined), not only to philosophers, but also to women and to all readers of any nationality. Like Hamann, the reviewer emphasizes that the aesthetic perspective is sentimental and subjective: the beautiful and the sublime are not about objects, but about the sensations they provoke in subjects. The reviewer considers a conclusion reached by Kant to be fundamental, without giving it the space it deserves. The conclusion is that with respect to nature's intentions, both the higher and the meaner sides of human beings lead to a noble expression, even if we are often too short-sighted to see it. In other words, in the great plan of nature, everything turns, even if not consciously or intentionally, towards the realization of morality in the world. This was a theme that Kant would develop in the 1780s.

In any case, with respect to this conclusion, the reviewer states that it is easy to ask numerous questions of the author, but the overall argument is clear: he does not want to turn human beings into angels or the damned.[42]

[39] Giordanetti 1999.

[40] Herder 1988, 38.

[41] *Ausführliche und kritische Nachrichten*, 7 (1765), 535–51. Most likely the reviewer is Johann Gottlob Lorenz Sembeck, the editor of the journal.

[42] *Ausführliche und kritische Nachrichten*, 7 (1765), 544.

His attempt is to reconcile human freedom with the causality of nature. The author does not always succeed in this attempt, but even in this case, according to the reviewer, we must still thank the author "for having drawn our attention to a truth that is not sufficiently recognized and which is undeniably important, and his attempt could push the deepest minds to better results."[43] The reviewer then quickly deals with the third and fourth chapters, sharing almost the entire section on the history of taste from its beginnings up to his time. The conclusion of the review is surprising. The reviewer suggests that Kant should put aside his commitment to philosophical writings and use his genius to serve the development of good taste, and provocatively he concludes with a rhetorical question: "would not it be enough for him to become the German La Bruyère?"[44] If we put aside the Kantian ambitions, unlike Hamann's review which sometimes gives the impression of his not having read the text with due accuracy, this account of the *Beobachtungen* is well informed and captures the salient points of the work.

On 9 October 1766 a new anonymous review of the second edition was published in the *Hallische Neue Gelehrte Zeitungen*.[45] This two-page review was largely laudatory and opened with the statement that "Kant belongs to that small group of German philosophers who thinks not only thoroughly, straightly and neatly, but also in a beautifully clear and natural manner."[46] The reviewer compares Kant to "Sulzer, Mendelssohn and Abbt."[47] This reviewer is also familiar with Kant's other writings, and has respect for them. The reviewer then proceeds to summarize the different parts very briefly, of which he does not particularly appreciate the third due to its slightly more frivolous and trivial ideas.

The *Neue Critische Nachrichten* also published a five-page review of the second edition in 1766.[48] However, it is a synthetic account which, unlike the previous reviews, focuses in particular on the third part of Kant's writing, on the beautiful and the sublime in men and women, and it dedicates more than a page to this topic, as if the reviewer had a particular interest. The reviewer is probably the editor of the journal itself, that is Johann Carl Dähnert, who had already dealt with the topic in his *Beyträge zum Nutzen und Vergnügen aus der Sittenlehre* (1754). A short announcement to the second edition also appears in the *Wöchentliche Nachrichten von Gelehrten Sachen* in 1766.[49] The work is characterized as refined and after a short list of the titles of the various sections the review focuses in this case on the taste of women and the differences of the different characters. It is not a long account, but it certainly invites the reader to read the book because

[43] *Ausführliche und kritische Nachrichten*, 7 (1765), 545.
[44] *Ausführliche und kritische Nachrichten*, 7 (1765), 551.
[45] *Hallische Neue Gelehrte Zeitungen*, 82 (1766), 651–53.
[46] *Hallische Neue Gelehrte Zeitungen*, 82 (1766), 651.
[47] *Hallische Neue Gelehrte Zeitungen*, 82 (1766), 651.
[48] *Neue Critische Nachrichten*, 44 (1766), 345–49.
[49] *Wöchentliche Nachrichten von Gelehrten Sachen*, 27 (1766), 340–41.

he will not be disappointed. The same review also appeared in the *Neue Zeitungen von Gelehrten Sachen* on 2 October 1766.[50]

The review that appeared in 1766 in the *Jenaische Zeitungen von gelehrten Sachen* has a decidedly different tone.[51] He certainly praises the refined rhetoric of the text but accuses Kant of having forgotten to mention all the immediate precedents on which his reflection is based, for example Longinus, Boileau, Huet, Gerard, Home, Meier, Baumgarten and Mendelssohn. The reviewer then explicitly admits that he completely differs from the author's methods of analysis and conclusions: Kant should have looked for the sources of the perception of beauty inherent in the natural laws that govern the soul. He should have compared the feelings of truth, goodness and beauty and should have discussed important topics such as when the sensations deceive and when they allow a reliable judgement, and all the differences and variations in the feeling of beauty in different individuals. Here, says the reviewer, "we find little of this."[52] Kant dwells on extrinsic observations without going into serious philosophical reflections. In short, everything that was exalted in some reviews is blamed by this reviewer, who evidently has more philosophical interests.

In 1767, two announcements of just a few lines appeared in the *Erneurte Berichte von Gelehrten Sachen* and in the *Allgemeine Deutsche Bibliothek*.[53] Meanwhile, in 1771 the third edition was also published by Hartknoch, which enjoyed two announcements in the *Russische Bibliothek*[54] and the *Gelehrte Zeitung*[55] and two longer reviews in the *Neue Zeitungen von Gelehrten Sachen*[56] and the *Auserlesen Bibliothek der neusten deutschen Litteratur.*[57] The first review in the *Neue Zeitungen* is little more than an announcement, which reiterates Kant's originality as a philosopher and also the importance of his writing. The review published in the *Auserlesen Bibliothek* is much more detailed. Kant's work is framed within the developments of the doctrine on the feeling of the beautiful and the sublime of the eighteenth century, and his contribution not only to the development of the fine arts, but also of psychology. In this sense, Kant's emphasis on feeling leads him to stand out among all his contemporaries. However, the reviewer then examines the different sections of the work without offering any critical insights. In general, therefore, the latest reviews have little informative value and only aim to announce the publication of the volume.

[50] *Neue Zeitungen von Gelehrten Sachen*, 2 October (1766), 626–28.

[51] *Jenaische Zeitungen von gelehrten Sachen*, 71 (1766), 625–26.

[52] *Jenaische Zeitungen von gelehrten Sachen*, 71 (1766), 626.

[53] *Erneurte Berichte von Gelehrten Sachen*, 2 (1767), 128; *Allgemeine Deutsche Bibliothek* , 2 (1767), 273.

[54] *Russische Bibliothek*, 1 (1773), 530.

[55] *Gelehrte Zeitung*, 2 (1772), 88.

[56] *Neue Zeitungen von Gelehrten Sachen*, 57 (1771), 793–94.

[57] *Auserlesen Bibliothek der neusten deutschen Litteratur*, 2 (1772), 269–74.

In 1765 a review of *Untersuchung über die Deutlichkeit* was published in the *Allgemeine Deutsche Bibliothek*.[58] The review, however, was aimed primarily at Mendelssohn's essay *Abhandlung über die Evidenz* with which the *Untersuchung* was published at the behest of the Royal Academy of Berlin. Upon inspection, therefore, the review is not immediately recognizable: Kant's name is never mentioned. The reviewer is anonymous and signed "B.". This initial identifies for sure the author as Resewitz.[59] While the examination of Mendelssohn is decidedly positive, the tone of the review of Kant varies. Resewitz speaks of thoughts that are mainly sketched, but not adequately developed and carried forward. He recognizes the audacity and originality of Kantian thought in detaching itself from the traditional method of doing philosophy and from the ideas brought forward by Mendelssohn. In the short space of four pages that he dedicates to Kant's writing, Resewitz focuses in particular on these new and original aspects that oppose him to the tradition that would associate mathematics with metaphysics in terms of contents and methods. The exposition of the contents is extremely concise, but faithful to the Kantian dictate, especially in showing the differences between mathematics and metaphysics. The point at which Kant asks whether the principles of morality reside in the faculty of knowledge or in feeling remains a little unclear, especially for a less accustomed reader. The reviewer's interest is centered on metaphysics, and he demonstrates his agreement with Kant's argument about its limits. For Resewitz the author already has in mind "a new philosophical system" from which much can be expected in the future: "the few information that have been provided to us so far are very clear and perhaps their connection and the method based on it will be the most correct we've ever had."[60] According to the reviewer, all this can be deduced, "if one has not misunderstood his tone of philosophizing;" also "from other philosophical writings" that have paved the way towards this direction. The mention of "other philosophical writings" is a cryptic reference to the possibility that Resewitz is the author of the reviews in the *Briefe*. This review however, unlike those published in the *Briefe*, has a very different tone. First of all, he does not report the most important Kantian passages, but the text is summarized in a very succinct way and finally the critical judgment is less acute and penetrating: it seems to be very similar to that of the other reviews. Therefore, the phrase "wo wir seinen Ton zu philosophiren nicht ganz misskennen," could mean that Resewitz did not read Kant's other philosophical writings, but that he was still aware of the contents, precisely through the reviews.

The last significant reviews of pre-critical Kant are to the *Träume*. The first was Herder's review which appeared in the *Königsbergsche gelehrte und politische Zeitungen*, on 3 March 1766 and was largely laudatory, so much so that it played

[58] *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek*, 1 (1765), 137–60.

[59] Parthey 1842.

[60] *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek*, 1 (1765), 154.

with the title of the work: a writing about dreams that make you dream.[61] The complimentary tone is accompanied by an exposition of the content, sometimes even emphatic enough to describe Kant's work as a dialogue between the author and a genius of philosophy, like Socrates speaking with his demon. The main interest of the reviewer, whose interventions are interspersed with the summary of the theses of the paper, is on the Kantian solution of the moral unity of the spiritual world acting in the world. The book was announced anonymously in the *Jenaische Zeitungen von Gelehrten Sachen*, on September 15 1766. The review states that in this writing a "mystical jargon that distinguishes a certain school among the Germans" dominates. The first part of the book is considered as original, or at least its sophistication makes the arguments at least appear as if new. The reviewer prefers the second part where the author rejects Swedenborg's false arguments but he never deals with Kantian ideas.[62] A short announcement of the publication of Kant's book is provided by Johann Georg Heinrich Feder in his *Compendium Historiae Litterariae Novissimae*. The review is polemical in stating that the author is as brilliant a philosopher "as he is a witty mocker" so much that "after reading these pages we doubted whether he wrote seriously or in jest."[63] Feder emphasizes how Kant distances himself from the metaphysical positions of the time, from the way of doing philosophy in a systematic manner and how with this writing he wants to make fun of these approaches. Where this might seem like a compliment, in the review, however, it seems like a lack of respect towards a philosophical culture that would have nurtured the author. According to Feder, taking Swedenborg's visions into serious consideration is a mistake. Indeed, for Feder one should protect philosophy from unnecessary questions, prejudices, fraudulent statements, and hasty contradictions of others. Kant's disappointment with the academic tone of philosophizing is excessive and Feder wonders at the conclusion of this review whether the author "would be able to criticize it so astutely if he had not first built a small system that he could then expand, modify, disassemble, and add when his further research found it useful." Feder therefore criticizes Kant's arrogance and his attempt not to find a metaphysics, while still basing himself on a philosophical system equally based on prejudices that only the author himself chose as correct.[64] On August 15 1767, an anonymous long review of five pages, probably written by R.W. Zobel, appeared in the *Neue Critische Nachrichten*. Unlike the other reviews the reviewer found the first part more appealing and amusing, even if sometimes Kant's judgements are considered too severe.[65] The reviewer summarizes pretty fairly the arguments without taking a position in respect of what Kant believes. The review praises Kant's originality in the field of metaphysics:

[61] *Königsbergsche gelehrte und politische Zeitungen*, 18 (1766), 71–73.
[62] *Jenaische Zeitungen von Gelehrten Sachen*, 74 (1766), 650.
[63] *Compendium Historiae Litterariae Novissimae*, 39 (1766), 308.
[64] *Compendium Historiae Litterariae Novissimae*, 39 (1766), 309.
[65] *Neue Critische Nachrichten*, 3 (1767), 257–62.

> Our readers will soon notice from this excerpt that the author is not exactly following the path of prevailing systems. He chooses his own path; and this is precisely the way to either make new discoveries in the fields of truth, or to lead other inquiring minds onto new tracks. It never hurts to reveal one's conjectures about the nature of the bodies, the nature of the climate, and the location of the regions, as long as one does not immediately sell them as a safe charter for travelers.[66]

Kant's originality is perceived positively, as is his method, however this perception remains only so long as Kantian philosophy does not want to hastily establish itself as a new system but remain a form of critical attitude towards metaphysics.

In 1767 Mendelssohn wrote a very short announcement of Kant's work. In the review Mendelssohn misspelled Swedenborg's name as 'Schredenberg', but he praised Kant's original thought in establishing a new method of philosophy. The announcement somewhat ambiguously stated:

> The witty profundity that the booklet is written with occasionally leaves the reader in doubt about whether Mr Kant wished to ridicule metaphysics or whether he intended to praise clairvoyance. Yet it contains important reflections, some original thoughts on the nature of the soul, as well as several objections to popular systems that would merit a more serious presentation.[67]

Once again, Kant's philosophy is highly regarded as innovative, but unfortunately not yet fully developed enough to create a new philosophical system.

5. Conclusion

The reviews of pre-critical Kant demonstrate a poor diffusion of his thought. He was often reviewed only regionally, if not exclusively in the press of his home town of Königsberg or in the periodicals published by the publishers which printed his works. There was no review abroad and this was probably also due to the language in which Kant chose to write his works in the German language.

All reviews agree that Kant's works were the reflection of a system of thought that was not yet complete, but only just sketched out. Kant's arguments were not fully developed or completely convincing and, in any case, had not had the impact that the author expected. What seemed to be missing was a systematic and architectural spirit in his works, a spirit typical of the philosophy fashionable at the time. However, the lack of a system was for almost all reviewers, counterbalanced by a marked originality, which was often also the cause of misunderstandings. This often happened, especially in the linguistic field, where Kant used ancient terms to express unconventional concepts. His thoughts were often confused and unclear, even if some intuitions are understood as flashes of genius. Kant

[66] *Neue Critische Nachrichten*, 3 (1767), 262.

[67] *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek*, 4 (1767), 281.

was represented as an incomplete genius, a radical thinker, closer to the great French and English intellectuals than to the German philosophical tradition.

Finally, it is clear that Kant's scientific works, which occupied him for a good part of his career in the pre-critical period, were not appreciated by critics. The solutions proposed by Kant were mostly considered unviable or in any case hypotheses with little basis in experience. On the contrary, in the same writings, what is always appreciated is the philosophical and metaphysical effort. Such judgments may undoubtedly have been influenced by the fact that the reviewers had more pronounced philosophical interests, but perhaps also because Kant's contributions to those disciplines were not perceived as significant. And indeed, no serious scientist of the time took up Kantian hypotheses. In general, what was interpreted as original in Kant's thought since his very first works was his idea of finding a secure method or path for metaphysics so that it could lead to a knowledge similar to science.

How much did these reviews impact on Kant? Primary sources that would allow us to reconstruct Kant's reactions are scarce. They undoubtedly mark the end of Kant as a scientist and strengthen his conviction that he should proceed towards a metaphysical investigation. Wolffians's criticisms of his works led him to further distance himself from the systematic or scholastic approach in favour of personal and original research into the method of philosophy. With respect to the problem of the relationship between mathematics and metaphysics, Kant would continue to work on the topic without ever finding a real solution, except starting from the *Prolegomena* (1783), and in any case he was unable to provide a convincing alternative at the time. Compared to the primacy of experience over concepts, Kant does not seem to have been understood, and in any case regarding the possible proof for the demonstration of God, his thoughts would change, albeit not radically, and certainly not in favor of the solutions proposed by his reviewers. Despite receiving criticism for his aesthetic subjectivism, Kant would continue to seek an objective path in the subjective and he would still maintain the idea that the experiences of the beautiful and the sublime do not concern objects, up to the *Kritik der Urteilskraft* in which he developed his complete theory. Perhaps also driven by the reviews, Kant continued to elaborate his logic by placing judgment at the center and trying to offer a real alternative to the logical and ontological proposals of the period which tended to focus on objects. In short, these reviews did not bring him the success he had hoped for, and he was ignored by the greats of the time such as Haller and Euler, but they suggested to him some paths on which to continue working and convinced him to abandon others that were perhaps beyond his possibilities, and beyond the development of science in that period, especially in the mathematical field.

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"A Related yet Foreign Element". Schleiermacher Reviews Fichte's *The Destination of Man*

Davide Bondì

Abstract: This essay focuses on a review of Johann G. Fichte's *The Destination of Man,* published by Friedrich D.E. Schleiermacher in the journal "Athenæum" in 1800. The author places the book within the context of the debates on the critical function of reviewing that took place between the Schlegel brothers and the Enlightenment writers of the *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung*. Schleiermacher's *Notiz* can indeed be seen as a genuine attempt at a *mise en abîme:* a review of the value of reviewing. Distancing himself from Fichte's rationalistic approach, and in line with Heinrich Jacobi's philosophy of religion, Schleiermacher rejects the universal concept of destination in favour of a morality based on the principle of existence (as openness and contact with the infinite). However, unlike the Schlegel brothers, he does not settle for a solipsistic and aestheticizing conception of man. Instead, he presents a theory that focuses on the progressive social formation of the original essence of the individual. The critical act of reviewing as a means of establishing formative relationships (*bildende Beziehungen)* with others.

Keywords: Review, criticism, individuality, Schlegel, Fichte, Jacobi.

1. A. W. Schlegel and the critical function of reviews in Enlightenment periodicals

The first issue of the "Athenaeum", which appeared in May 1798, contains an essay by August Wilhelm Schlegel entitled *Contributions to the Criticism of Recent Literature,* which echoes and expands on the journal's brief preface, the *Vorerinnerung,* describing the journal's aim.[1] In fact, the *Beyträge* focus on the philosophical vision and cultural purpose of the "Athenaeum", placing the journal in opposition to the kind of scholarly discourse that prevailed in German literary periodicals in the second half of the eighteenth century. The tensions between the strategies and cultural goals of Enlightenment journals are most evident in the passages on the function and value of the activity of reviewing. In fact Ernst Behler wrote that the authors of the "Athenaeum" conceived their forum "wie ein rezensierendes Institut" (Behler 1983, 19). This statement is more evaluative than descriptive, since the first reviews appeared in the fourth issue (August 1799), while the previous three contained essays, dialogues, rhapsodic reflections, and aphoristic fragments. And yet Behler was not wrong, for the

[1] Cf. Schlegel 1798b, and Schlegel 1798a.

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different types of text that appeared within the pages of the "Athenaeum" were intended by its founders to serve as contrasting articulations of the same "critical function", that of reviewing *par excellence*. Thus any text that fulfils the same critical function, regardless of its literary or narrative form, can be regarded from this perspective as a kind of review.[2]

According to August Wilhelm, the presence of the *Notizen* explains the popularity of scientific journals, as they provide an effective way to communicate and reach as many people as possible. In fact, they not only reach a wide readership among those who are already interested in cultural issues, but also build a new and previously non-existent literary audience, thus increasing the number of scholars and influencing contemporary life. In order to achieve this, however, the journals and reviews, which constitute the most important element, must not only inform, explain, and comment, but also *be critical,* and this in a completely new way from the literary traditions that prevailed, for example, in the famous "Allgemeine Deutsche Bibliothek" founded in Berlin in 1765 by Friedrich Nicolai. Schlegel thus began to introduce some elements of marked departure and dissent from the Enlightenment mentality, distinguishing between two meanings of criticism that reflected two different intellectual functions. This was how he described the kind of criticism that was typical of traditional periodicals:

> When reviewing, one puts on official clothes: one no longer speaks in one's own name, but as a member of a community. Those who have their own unique spirit must subordinate it to the purpose and tone of the institution; and one wonders whether sharing in the dignity of the institution can compensate for the sacrifice, since one is always bound by a collective spirit. This can easily lead to a certain rigidity and conformity to rules, which is at odds with the animated freedom that is the common thread running through their creativity and sensitivity to what they produce. Moreover, this formal discourse claims a general validity, which can only be produced by the scientific application of scientific truths, but can in no case be extended to such things that only achieve definition in the mind of those who examine them thanks to a singular play of internal forces (Schlegel 1798a, 146–7).

Those who review, *sacrifice* their own name and wear official clothes, subordinating their voice to that of a corporation. Although he does not mention it, Schlegel was thinking of the style of the "Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung", the journal founded in Jena in 1785 by Friedrich Justin Bertuch, Christian Gottfried Schütz, and Cristoph Martin Wieland, to which the most important scholars of the time contributed: Kant, Humboldt, Fichte, Bruno Bauer, and he himself. In the "Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung", all reviews were anonymous, not only to protect the authors from possible censorship or retaliation, but above all because anonymity gave them scientific authority.[3] In the eyes of the readers of the time,

[2] Cf. Mastrogregori 1997.

[3] Cf. Napierala 2007, 97-113 and Conrad 2021.

the absence of any identification was proof of the impersonality of the judgement expressed in the review and thus guaranteed its claim to truth. The 'author' should speak neither in his own name nor in the name of the institution, but only in the name of the 'collective spirit', as an 'intellectual' embodying a universal function. Authorship could then be shifted from the voice of the individual to the voice of a supra-individual intelligence, which would ensure the transition from 'opinion versus opinion' to a shared truth, from sectarianism to objectivity.[4]

Only when these conditions were met could the magazine be perceived as a cultural device capable of transcending any biased perspective. For most people the review was convincing if the writers and the recipients shared the same principles; the former could be replaced by anyone else without harming the article, because the judgement was considered valid not as something personal, nor the expression of an intellectual circle, but as an expression of the dictates of reason.[5] Under the contemporary cultural conditions, Schlegel wrote, reviews were "institutions of general criticism" in which "despite all the differences of opinion, a certain uniformity still prevails" and the textual form of the review, which is its most important part, "must measure the most diverse things by the same criterion" (Schlegel 1798a, 144).

2. The principle of the individuality of criticism in the "Athenaeum"

The founders' intention was to distance the "Athenaeum" from this approach and to reject the magic circle of anonymity, impersonality, and universal validity of judgement. August Wilhelm, as the excerpt quoted above states, countered it with the "animated freedom of creativity and sensitivity" of individual scholars or well-defined circles of intellectuals. In this way, it became clear that the value of culture stemmed from an entirely individual element, an expression of the "unique play of inner forces" of the human soul. The new concept of 'criticism' therefore had to be rethought based on those same assumptions, grounded in specific conceptions and rooted in a profundity of life. The reviews were intended to represent the particular point of view of the group of intellectuals who edited the journal and, beyond a certain point, even of the individual scholars who were contributors to it.

The positions taken by August Wilhelm in the *Beyträge* had both a history and practical consequences that need to be briefly recalled. The polemic against the anonymity of the critic or against the rationalist conception of criticism was very widespread in the *Frühromantiker c*ircle. To give just one example, Friedrich Schlegel wrote the following to the editor of the "Philosophisches Journal", Friedrich Immanuel Niethammer, on the 27th of March 1796: "I hate anonymity and, strange as it may seem, I would not be able to judge so freely anonymously" (Schlegel 1988, 294). In fact, while the protection of anonymity may have en-

[4] Cf. Pabst 2004a.

[5] Cf. Pabst 2004b and Kronick, 1988.

sured 'freedom' from censorship or controversy with the authors of the books evaluated, it also imposed the observance of 'common sense' and a common standard. August Wilhelm nevertheless remained true to the position he had taken in the first issue of the "Athenaeum". In a short article dated the 30th of October 1799, which appeared in supplement 145 of the "Intelligenzblatt der Allgemeinen Literatur-Zeitung", he announced the severing of ties with Wieland's journal. The decision was motivated not only by the "increasing number of inconsistent reviews" that appeared in the journal, which "took criticism back thirty years", but above all by the "incompatibility" between the principles that guided its conception and the views of its editors (Schlegel 1799a). In the *Clarification of the aforementioned farewell,* the editors of the "Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung" adopted a very calm tone, insisting on only one issue:

> We would like to take this opportunity to reiterate some of the principles that we have publicly stated for some time and which we still adhere to: "The authors do not in any way seek to impose an agenda on those who write the reviews; each contributor is free to follow his or her own convictions" (Editors of A.L.Z, 1181).

Thus it was clear to the editors of the "Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung" that the "incompatibility of principles", to which Schlegel had referred in his farewell address, was due to a different understanding of the critical function of reviewing, leading the editors to defend themselves against the accusations by saying that they had never imposed general points of view on the contributors and had left them free to write according to their personal convictions.[6] The reply still needs careful consideration today, because it overturns a persistent *cliché*. Basically, it claimed that anonymity ensured a plurality of viewpoints and not the alignment of contributions to the editors' desired approach, even less to a universal logic. Schlegel was thus challenged on his own grounds, rebutting the analogy between anonymity and universal reason he had posited in the *Beyträge,* and the accusation he had levelled at the "Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung" was thrown back at the "Athenaeum". In the *Vorerinnerung*, in fact, it had been stated that internal voices would be given free rein, but external ones would only be accepted if it was felt that they could be sustained "*wie unsre eigenen*", as if they were their own (Schlegel 1798b, IV). Furthermore, already in the founders' correspondence regarding the purpose of the newly established journal, Friedrich had spoken of an 'individual-communal' character, of an "Einheit des Geistes".[7] In fact, the authors who contributed to the "Athenaeum" all belonged to the same circle, and while this was in keeping with the cultural strategy chosen, it also placed a limit

[6] The matter was extensively discussed in correspondence between the members of the *Frühromantiker* circle and with Goethe, cf. Härtl 1989 and Behler 1983, 13–58.

[7] F. Schlegel and A. W. Schlegel, 5. December 1797: "Durch Einheit des Stoffs kann ein Journal wohl eine gewisse Einheit erreichen, aber es wird dadurch aber sicher monoton – und [...] uninteressant, wie es doch selbst bey dem Philos. Journ. von Fichte verhältnißmäßig der Fall ist. Einheit des Geistes würde ein Journal zu einem Phönix s[einer] Art machen" (Schlegel 1986, 56).

on the principle, so strongly proclaimed, of opening the pages of the new platform to the perspectives of individuals. In short, individuality was allowed only for some, but not for everyone. And here lay the essence of the implicit connection: if individuality is violated even in a single case, it fails in general because it is itself, we might say, nothing more than the '*always* different'.

August Wilhelm's farewell was published in the "Intelligenzblatt" on the 13th of November. A few days later, on the 21st of the month, an open criticism of the "Athenaeum" by Ludwig Ferdinand Huber appeared in the "Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung".[8] August Wilhelm's last formal act before departing, however, was the publication at the end of the fifth issue of the "Athenaeum" of the complete list of the reviews he had written between 1896 and 1899 for Bertuch and Wieland's journal, so that they could finally be identified and traced back to him.

By this time, however, the column *Notizen* (literally 'notes') had already been introduced, fulfilling the criteria set out in the *Vorerinnerung* and *Beyträge.* In his introductory article, Friedrich Schlegel announced it as an "archive of time" and "to our taste", containing categorical and individual rather than formal and general judgements (Schlegel 1799b, 288). Friedrich Schleiermacher wrote four contributions to the column: a review of Kant's anthropology (Schleiermacher 1799), a review of Christian Garve's moral writings (Schleiermacher 1800a), and, in the sixth and last volume, he discussed both *Der Philosoph für die Welt* (1775) by the popular philosopher Johann Jacob Engel (Schleiermacher 1800b) and *The Destination of Man* (1800) by Johann Gottlieb Fichte (Schleiermacher 1800c). The reviews of Kant and Garve are unsigned, while the latter bear the initials 'S-r' at the bottom. However, to be fair, in the index of the last issue of the "Athenaeum" all the *Notizen* are signed with the initials of the authors' names. This is what August Ferdinand Bernhardi had wanted, who in that issue discussed Johann Gottfried Heder's *Metakritik zur Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (1799), initially meeting with resistance from both August Wilhelm and Schleiermacher, who did not consider it necessary because, as we know, they deemed it sufficient for each of them to declare their loyalty to the intellectual line of the journal. It is clear that the issue was very complex, oscillating between the assertion of a spiritual fraternity of individual character and the independence of each member of the circle, which should not be sacrificed to superficial agreement.

Irrespective of the discussion on the desirability of initialling the *Notizen,* to which we shall return at the end of this essay, Schleiermacher's paper on *The Destination of Man m*ust be seen as part of the polemic between the Schlegel brothers and the "Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung". Not only because he agrees with August Wilhelm and Friedrich's views on the need for criticism to be individual and based on life experience, but also because the content of the discussion of Fichte's book presents itself as an illustration and development of the theoretical demands made by Schlegel in the debate on anonymity. This is a *mise en abîme,* a review that speaks or implies a reference to the concept of reviewing.

[8] Cf. Huber 1799.

3. Jacobi's discussion of *Atheismusstreit* and Fichte's response

The previous section adopted an 'intellectual history' perspective, situating Schleiermacher's text within the contemporary debate on the critical function of reviewing and the relationship between intellectuals and the public. A brief reconstruction, in terms of the history of concepts, of the context in which the review appeared is now appropriate, with particular emphasis on Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi's discussion of Fichte's speculative philosophy. This will be followed by an examination of the structure of Schleiermacher's text from a narratological point of view, in order to link it with the analysis of its conceptual content. As we shall see, Schleiermacher's theses in many respects bring Jacobi's criticism into greater focus.

The *Destination of Man* can be read as a transitory culmination of the controversy over the atheism of speculative philosophy, an accusation that forced Fichte to resign his chair at the University of Jena. The author had responded to the accusation of atheism levelled against him in his essay *Appellation an das Publikum* (1799), in which he called on Jacobi to testify to and support the compatibility of his philosophy with the Christian faith. The latter thus collected in a short paper, *Jacobi an Fichte,* three letters dated the 3rd, 6th, and 21st of March 1799, in which he defended Fichte from the accusation of atheism, but made a clear distinction between his own religious conception and the moral concept of faith advocated in the last Fichtean essays, according to which God is the impersonal *ordo ordinans* of the human world (Jacobi [1799] 2004).[9]

The March letters made clear the inescapable difference between the 'truths' (*die Wahrheiten)* of reason and the 'true' (*das Wahre)* of faith. The latter could never become an instrument of knowledge, and whilst Fichte was undoubtedly to be regarded as the one who had made the transcendental system elaborated by Kant fully coherent, not even his perfect and accomplished idealism, his all-embracing philosophy, could erase this distinction. The true (*das Wahre)* consists, in fact, of an anticipatory understanding of one's own life and, at the same time, of a pre-reflective certainty of being.[10] The two aspects, the understanding of personal existence and the understanding of being, are grouped together in Jacobi's religious perspective because they are, when properly considered, the result of a single event, which consists in the perception (*Vernehmen)* or presentiment (*Anahnung)* of the *primary relationship* between the self and the personal God. They can only be separated from a didactic point of view, whereas in a concrete sense they are intuitively given as the two extremes of a relationship, the two sides of a double-faced herm. The perception of 'reason' (*Vernunft* from *vernehmen)* and 'sense' are completely distinct from the concepts and meanings produced by intellection and precede the philosophical system of knowledge and morality. This is precisely the point of greatest disagreement with Fichte,

[9] All the documents on *Atheismusstreit* are collected in Röhr 1991.

[10] Cf. Ivaldo 2017.

whose philosophical framework, according to Jacobi, enshrines consciousness, life, and existence - in a word, religion - within Egoity (*Ichheit)* or the 'impersonal personality' of the intellect. The human heart, Jacobi wrote, is replaced in Fichte's philosophy by the 'living corpse of rationality':

> For the sake of the certain progress of science, you must subjugate - oh, you cannot do otherwise - consciousness (the conscious mind) to the living corpse of rationality and make it *blindly* observant, deaf, dumb, and insensitive. You must sever to the very last fibre the living root, the heart of man (Jacobi [1799] 2004, 212).

Jacobi does not deny the sublimity of a moral doctrine of pure reason, the perennial conformity of man to himself in the conceptual sphere. He fully acknowledges this elevation above the sentient dimension and the sphere of material desire in the letters, where adherence to the anti-eudaemonistic perspective inaugurated by Kant in the *Critique of Practical Reason* is clearly stated. His disagreement with Fichte lies rather in the fact that, unlike the latter, he identifies the moral perspective with the living root of faith, with the very principle of life itself, which is ontological and not gnoseological or practical in nature:

> This unity [of morality] is not in itself the being, it is not the true. Alone, it is desolate, deserted, and empty. Therefore, the corresponding law can never become the heart of man [...] Transcendental philosophy must not rip this heart from my breast to replace it with a pure impulse of mere Egoity (*Ichheit)* (Jacobi [1799] 2004, 212).

Fichte carefully assessed Jacobi's objections to the structure of his philosophy and understood exactly what was at stake. The crux of the matter was the shift in the discourse on faith from the theological to the existential and ontological plane. The new need that arose in the field of ethical reflection was therefore not to align moral reason with dogma, as per the religious precepts of the eighteenth century, but with life and existence. In a draft reply to Jacobi's letters found among his papers, Fichte wrote: "I really do not know how and where we stand as adversaries. We agree on science and also on life" (Fichte [1799] 1979, 194). However, in the light of his interlocutor's remarks, he began to see the need to restructure the moral system from the concrete individuality of each person, by means of a rational deduction. The culmination in *The Destination of Man,* composed in the last months of the year, arose from an attempt to address this problem.[11] In short, it was necessary to show that freedom and the realm of moral ideas emanate from the very centre of existence. In his *Sittenlehre* of 1898, Fichte had already completely abandoned the Kantian notion of the conflict between the practical and the sentient spheres, between causality through freedom and *Begehrungsvermögen*. Jacobi's reflections now required him to move from the systematic level to the psychological and introspective

[11] On the complex history of the concept of "the destination of man", cf. Macor 2013.

level in order to focus on the genesis of the moral sense from the propulsive dimension. In the book published in 1800, we read "Unser gesamtes Denken ist durch unser Trieb selbst begründet" (Fichte [1800] 2018, 95).[12] Following the narrative norms of popular philosophy, his aim was to show the anthropological genesis of freedom, how it emerges in the immanent process of the development of the will, through the reflection that each subject is able to carry out on the impulses and doubts that it generates.

To this end, Fichte placed the 'individual' at the beginning of the process, characterising it as an empirical unit, a nexus of material needs, in which 'Egoity' (*Ichheit)* is already embedded as a potential. If freedom takes root in the individual through a series of finite actions, it cannot be understood as a "conscious knowledge" that opposes and suppresses existence, but must be understood as the self-determination of the subject, which is capable of enhancing life: "My will is mine, and it is the only thing that is entirely mine and depends entirely on me, and through it I am already a fellow citizen of the realm of freedom and of the activity of reason itself" (Fichte [1800] 2018, 123).[13] Precisely because the moral realm is not alien to existence, but is the expression of the will arising from it, its realisation does not take place in the sphere of speculative knowledge, but in that of 'faith'. That is, it is built on the foundation of existence itself, it is the knowledge of that foundation, the transmission onto an ideal plane of existential agreement and the certainty of one's own presence. In fact, in the third book, *Faith,* of *The Destination of Man w*e read:

> I have found the organ by which to apprehend this reality, and probably all other. It is not knowledge […] It is faith, that voluntary reposing on the views naturally presenting themselves to us, because through these views only we can fulfil our destiny (Fichte [1800] 1846, 73).[14]

4. Schleiermacher reviews *The Destination of Man*

Schleiermacher met Fichte personally in July 1799 in Berlin, where the latter had moved following his expulsion from the University of Jena. In the notes and essays before 1796 (which remained unpublished until they were included in the *Kritische Gesamtausgabe)* Fichte's name never appears, whereas the correspondence shows that the study of the moral system and the writings on reli-

[12] The bibliography on Fichte's book is extensive, so I will limit myself to mentioning Fonnesu 1993 and Münster 2011.

[13] Book III, *Der Galube*: «Mein Wille ist mein, und der ist das einige, das ganz mein ist, und vollkommen von mir selbst abhängt, und durch ihn bin ich schon jetzt ein Mitbürger des Reiches der Freiheit, und der Vernunfttätigkeit durch sich selbst».

[14] «Ich habe das Organ gefunden, mit welchem ich diese Realität, und mit dieser zugleich alle andere Realität, ergreife. Nicht das Wissen ist dieses Organ […] Der Glaube ist es; dieses freiwillige Beruhen bei der sich uns natürlich darbietenden Ansicht, weil wir nur bei dieser Ansicht unsere Bestimmung erfüllen können; er ist es»]. In this instance, an English translation of the book has been used, but see Fichte [1800] 2018, 92.

gion began in the summer of 1798.[15] That same year, in fact, Friedrich Schlegel had commissioned him to write an essay on Kant and Fichte, which was replaced by the review on empirical anthropology (Schleiermacher 1799). In the *Historische Einführung* to a volume of his works, Günter Meckenstock (1988) traced the genesis of the *Notiz* on *The Destination of Man.* It had been requested by August Wilhelm and Friedrich in December 1799, at the end of the most productive year of Schleiermacher's intellectual activity. In April he had finished and published the *Reden über di Religion,* and in November he had written the *Monologues,* the manifesto of Romantic Ethics, which was to be distributed in January 1800, only a few days after Fichte's book.[16]

Writing this review took the author much time and effort. He started in May and finished it two months later. In a letter dated the 28th of June to Friedrich Schelgel, he attributed the difficulty to the fact that *The Destination of Man* presented itself as a "verzwicktes verdammtes Buch", a devilishly complicated book (letter to A. W. Schlegel, 28. 6. 1800, n. 898, Schleiermacher 1994, 114). On closer inspection, however, it was not only due to this, but also to the apparent affinity between Fichte's doctrine and the moral conception set out in the *Monologues.* It cost Schleiermacher an extraordinary effort of concentration to allow the external dimension of his perspective to emerge through the critique, which was the main intention of the review. As Wilhelm Dilthey wrote in what is perhaps the most substantial book yet on Schleiermacher's thought: "die Kritik ist wie im Kampf mit dem Verwandt-Fremdartigen des Buches" (the criticism seemed to be almost in conflict with the related yet foreign element). (Dilthey 1870, 344). Another 19th-century scholar, Rudolf Haym, aptly expressed the complexity of the article submitted to the "Athenaeum":

> In fact, it was so refined that one could hardly have understood it without a thorough familiarity with the author's philosophical perspectives, so sophisticated as to reveal the reviewer's hard work and the battle he waged with each line between conflicting considerations (Haym 1870, 728).

Reflecting on his own writing in a letter to Friedrich Schlegel, Schleiermacher stressed "the art of saying the most between the lines". By this he was not referring to the use of metaphorical or allusive language, but to the complex rhetorical-narrative construction of the review, the technique of "*Supplieren"* and "*Combinieren"* with which the different parts of the text are interwoven (letter to F. Schlegel, 8. 8. 1800, n. 928, Schleiermacher 1994, 190). The formal structure of the note was not a mere dressing, but a carefully considered syntactic articulation capable of conveying the content. The mockery or devilry ("Teufelei") or, as the *Frühromatiker* put it at other times, the sublime impudence ("erhabene

[15] Cf. letter from F. Schlegel, July 1798, n. 483 (Schleiermacher 1999). For an accurate reconstruction of the relationship between the two scholars, see Meckenstock 2022.

[16] In Italian literature, the most accurate reconstructions of these works can be found in Moretto 1979, 157-317; Brino 2007, 13–125; Giacca 2015, 13-175; Bondì 2018.

Frechheit") of reviewing, which became the hallmark of the literary production of the "Athenaeum", lay in this particular case precisely in the connection between content and narrative structure.

The Destination of Man is divided into four parts: a preface and three chapters, entitled *Zweifel, Wissen,* and *Glaube:* doubt, knowledge, and faith. Schlegel called the book a *Mono-Dia-Monolog* because the first and last chapters were written in the form of a monologue of the *Ich* and the second in the form of a dialogue between the *Ich* and the *Geist (*F. Schlegel to Schleiermacher, wohl Anfang August 1800, n. 922, Schleiermacher 1994, 179). In the review Schleiermacher does not offer a description, explanation, or commentary on the text, but, as Manuel Bauer observed, proposes a formal mimesis of the book under review, repeating its narrative structure and using the same lexicon.[17] Through this hermeneutic ploy, he takes up Fichte's challenge to the reader to identify with the protagonist in order to retrace all the stages through which the *Ich* passes until the triumph of Egoity (*Ichheit).* If the *transference* Schleiermacher proposes succeeds, not only is the book understood, but it is also demonstrated that an 'other' individual, and thus every individual, regardless of his or her peculiar nature, can take the same path and reach the common moral destination. On the other hand, when they do surface, the objections immediately appear alienating and caricatured, and the attempt at identification results in a total reversal that could not have the same force in any other situation. The criticism does not come from the outside: the evidence is shattered from within by the failure of a living witness who has become entangled in the difficulties. For example, at the end of the second part of the review, which corresponds to the chapter entitled *Zweifel,* if the reader, confronted with the doubt provoked in him by the contrast between the "mechanistic view of reality" and the "consciousness of freedom" (the third Kantian antinomy), does not manage to make the qualitative leap that would allow him to transcend the sentient state and reach the sphere of reason, as the *Ich* does successfully in Fichte's book, it follows that the reader's path will not be the same as the protagonist's, and therefore their destination will also be different. The former would remain entangled in doubts that do not diminish: "so stehen meine Zweifel noch immer und wöllen sie miteinander nicht zerstören" (Schleiermacher, Friedrich D.E. 1800c, 289), and therefore it would be better for him to take a different path.

The dissonance with Fichte's approach thus manifests itself in the reader-reviewer's abortive attempt to identify with the book's protagonist on a structural and narrative level. It is precisely the impossibility of empathy or *Einfühlung* that demonstrates that individuals have an untransferable ontological consistency[18]. Then again, if they were interchangeable, they would become mere means or instruments of reason's overall plan. *Existence* or *life,* which Fichte posited as necessary at the beginning of the process, would then be reabsorbed into the common goal:

[17] Cf. Bauer 2011, 243–57.

[18] Cf. Moretto 1991 and Thouard 2007, 163–68.

> I still cannot entirely rid myself of the unease that the title causes me [...] For how can one who believes in freedom and independence, or who even wants to believe in them, even ask himself about the destination of man? And what can this question still mean after the other has been asked: what am I? Should the destination of man refer to a doing, for which I must exist, or to a becoming? A contingent becoming within me, set in motion by an external determination? Impossible! If, then, the whole of existence exists only for reason, then doing and becoming also only exist for reason [...] By now the personality [of the individual] has long since disappeared and sunk into the perception of the goal; it is now considered, honoured, and loved only as one of the instruments of the infinite rational purpose (Schleiermacher, Friedrich D.E. 1800c, 286-287 and 295).

About a century later, according to Désiré Roustan's notes, Henri Bergson inaugurated a course at the École Normale Supérieure in 1898 with these words: "The crux of Fichte's early philosophy is the 'I' [...] Why [...] this designation, the '*I*'? In fact this concept has nothing personal, nothing individual about it" (Bergson 2003, 29). Yet for Schleiermacher freedom always remained inseparable from individuality, from the question "What am I?". Therefore, there cannot be a common destination; rather it must be pursued by each individual according to the specific destination engraved in his or her own existence. In the *Monologues,* the scholar admitted that he himself had once believed in the equality of existence and the common moral purpose:

> For a long time, too, it was enough for me to have found only reason, and, venerating the equality of the single existence as something unique and supreme, I believed that there was only one right way for everyone, that behaviour had to be the same for all, and that each individual differed from the other only because each was assigned his or her own condition and place. It was only in the diversity of external actions that humanity showed itself to be different; man, the individual, was not a peculiarly constituted essence, but a single element and everywhere the same (Schleiermacher [1800] 1988, 17).

However, he eventually abandoned this conviction: "It has become clear that each man must represent humanity in his own way, through a peculiar blending of his different attributes, so that he can reveal himself in every way and realise, in the fullness of infinity, all that can flow from his breast" (Schleiermacher [1800] 1988, 18). Commenting on these words, Claudio Cesa (2010, 623) said: "The particularity of each individual does not lie in infinite instances of an entity called man, but in the fact that each man 'represents' humanity in all its specific characteristics".

One might wonder whether this approach does not lead to ethical individualism, eventually enclosing ethics in the sphere of the individual and separating it from the social dimension[19]. However, this is not the case because according

[19] Cf. Brino 2002.

to the doctrine set out in *Reden* (1799), each individual is constituted through a nexus of 'co-participation' with the infinite that guarantees the individual an original openness. The infinite itself exists exclusively in the particularity of the finite, and so the latter cannot be included as part of a larger totality or be subordinated to any universal plan[20]. It is precisely the inherently open nature, guaranteed by the fundamental relationship between consciousness and the absolute, that underlies the individual's ethical need to flourish in the world. To this end, Schleiermacher introduces the concept of the 'highest good', which he had first examined in an essay in 1789 (Schleiermacher [1789] 1984). Even then, the term was understood in the sense given to it by Aristotle, rather than that in Kant's reconsideration of it in the *Critique of Practical Reason.* For Schleiermacher, the highest good is not a reward for our virtue to be obtained in the hereafter, but the quintessence (*Inbegriff)* of worldly moral achievements, the curved line of all moral goods that we can attain in this life. In striving for the 'highest good', without ever being able to attain it definitively, the individual expresses his potential, becoming more and more himself through moral behaviour that connects him with other beings constituted like himself. "The individual does not open himself to others just to understand, appreciate, and love them," wrote Giovanni Moretto (1979, 271), "above all, he opens himself to them because only in union with them can he form (*bilden)* his own individuality and make it perfect".

As mentioned earlier, there is a very close link between the philosophical position that emerges from Schleiermacher's text on *The Destination of Man* and the concept of reviewing itself. Reconnecting to its existential foundation, to the particular feeling of each individual, reviewing must fulfil a critical function as a living testimony of the work brought to the level of an individual reflection. Only in this way does it leave the court of reason, though in truth not to attain the status of genius and be raised to the aesthetic plane of the creation of works, of "works of art", as the Schlegel brothers sought (Schlegel 1799b, 285). Instead, it leaves the courtroom to allow for a free attempt to understand the other within the horizon of a productive ethics. Whatever the reasons for that strange acronym 'S-r.', for us it could be seen as a sign of a moral conception of individuality that is distinct from the aesthetic meaning the Romantic circle gave to the term. When Friedrich Schlegel read what his *synphilosophiren* friend had written, he made the following comments in a letter:

> Your critique of Fichte interested me more than anything else, I will read it again and again, there is much to learn from it. Perhaps another *Mono-Dia-Monolog* could be written from it. In fact, I have never seen or heard such a review (F. Schlegel a Schleiermacher, wohl Anfang August 1800, n. 922, Schleiermacher 1994, 179).

Schleiermacher was aware that his text would not be well received by Fichte, and he repeatedly expressed his concern to August Wilhelm and Friedrich that it might spoil the relationship between the *Frühromantiker* and the author of *The Destina-*

[20] Cf. Vattimo 1968, 37–66.

tion of Man. The latter never made his displeasure known to Schleiermacher himself, but in a letter dated the 16th of August 1800, he wrote to Friedrich Schlegel:

> I did not speak to Schleiermacher either before or after the publication of his critique of the *Bestimmung des Menschen.* I do not understand some of the remarks, but I still see that he has placed the final outcome of the third book too close to what you call 'Spinozism', quite contrary to my intention. In my view, that mysticism belongs entirely in the realm of transcendence, which man no longer understands. For me, faith in freedom and autonomy remains inviolate in the finite thinking of man. According to form. Depending on the matter, a plan of what I am to become is mapped out and defined for me. Now, there is no external force pushing me towards it, not even that of infinity, rather it is I who push myself towards it (Taken from Meckenstock 1988, LXXXX).

For the group of Romantics the affair was brought to an ideal conclusion by August Wilhelm's full approval on the 20th of August: "As for the [review of] *Destination,* it is a masterly piece of finesse in irony, parody, and seemingly respectful archdevilry" (A. W. Schlegel to Schleiermacher, 20. 8. 1800, n. 933, Schleiermacher 1994, 207).

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New Frontiers in Reviewing: Experimental German Philosophical Review Practices around 1800

Tom Giesbers

Abstract: This paper introduces a grouping of experimental philosophical review journals around 1800, situated around editors associated with German idealism and German realism. By examining one journal edited by Reinhold the degree of experimentation is demonstrated within the context of experimental journals as well as established philosophical review standards in the second half of the 18th century. Among the transformations are the review length, scope, the use of mockery and literary style.

Keywords: Philosophical reviews, history of philosophy, critical standards

'This review *kills*.'
Steffens to Schelling, 1800

1. Introduction

What is a reviewer allowed to write in order to further his or her critical arguments or to add rhetorical force to his or her opinions? By and large, we adhere to certain standards when we review something in print. These standards of reviewing have been codified and are generally accepted. For one, only in extremely exceptional cases is it acceptable to connect printed ideas to the character of an author. This specific connection was not always beyond the pale in reviewing.

In this paper I will draw attention to a period in philosophical reviewing, around 1800 where these standards were decidedly less codified and where existing standards were open to renegotiation. I argue that there was a specific group of journals that represented an experimental thrust in philosophical review practices, which experimented with the scope and form of the review format as well as the underlying standards of reviewing. From a broad historical perspective, this group is significant because it produced a counter-reaction in the 19th century, mainly by scholars aiming to understand German idealist thought. This likely contributed to the overall codification of review practices in particular and the public role of criticism in general.

Within this experimental group of journals, I will focus mainly on Reinhold's journal *Beyträge zur leichtern Übersicht des Zustandes der Philosophie beym Anfange des 19. Jahrhunderts* (1801-1803) (hereafter: *Beyträge*) because it mate-

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rialized in-between two significant extremes of review experimentation, *after* Fichte's unsuccessful attempt to launch a journal that aimed to review whole scientific disciplines and *before* Schelling and Hegel's now infamous *Kritisches Journal der Philosophie* (1802-1803). I believe that Reinhold's journal is important as a midway point because it operationalizes many of Fichte's ideas on critique through experimental form and scope and thereby prefigures and even inspires many review practices that would be employed by Schelling and Hegel.

Terms like "tone" and "style" are often employed as collective terms to identify departures from the norm of writing. While sometimes valuable in individual instances, in general the use of these terms obfuscates the underlying principles and strategies employed, since it creates the expectation that these are merely matters of style of writing. My aim is to make these matters specifically cogent within a space of experimentation with reviewing practices allowing for a broader understanding of changes in philosophical reviews and how they reflect but also incite the tenor of philosophical discourse. One might also expect an extended engagement with the readership constructions in the republic of letters.[1] While this might indeed be profitable for even longer historical developments, I lack the space to do so, and moreover it is exactly the readership construction which becomes increasingly eclipsed by other principles behind reviewing.

In analyzing these review practices, I will abstract from the actual philosophical arguments as much as possible, in order to focus on the interrelated transformation of criticism and reviewing. It is my hope that this abstraction will allow for a better understanding of the transformations in review practices. However, in seeking to understanding the reasons behind the need to experiment with the review it is important to consider several aspects of the second half of 18th century philosophical, public and scientific discourse as well as dominant review practices, which I will mostly introduce in section 2. Consequently, I will characterize the experimental group as it leads up to *Beyträge* in section 3 and Reinhold's *Beyträge* itself in section 3. Finally, I will explore responses and reception in section 4 and draw conclusions about the broader transformation of criticism in section 5.

2. The Critical Landscape of German Philosophical Reviewing in the Second Half of the 18th century

There are three journals that put forward what were, in contrast to what would happen around 1800, fairly conservative review practices in philosophy during the second half of the 18th century, leading up to 1800: *Briefe, die neueste Literatur betreffend* (1759-1765), *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek* (1765-1806) and the *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung* (1785-1849) (hereafter respectively *Briefe,*

[1] Anne Goldgar's *Impolite Learning. Conduct and Community in the Republic of Letters, 1680-1750* offers many hints as to how one could contrast this period in the republic of letters with the experimental review journals around 1800 (Goldgar 1995).

ADB and *ALZ*). I will outline the overall character of these practices and the most significant ways in which these journals can be connected to the contributors of the group of experimental journals.

Although there is a significant difference between the overall rationalism of *Briefe* and *ADB* on the one hand, and the Kantianism of the *ALZ* on the other, all three journals clearly operate within the overall framework of the Enlightenment. That means that they generally held some antagonism with theological authors, and that they were generally concerned with making the pubic more rational and free. In this, they conform to larger trends during the 18th century.

As Van Horn Melton demonstrates, the 18th century was preoccupied with publishing reviews because it was thought that this would stimulate the public to read more (Van Horn Melton 2001, 93). The theological attacks on the Kantian and general Enlightenment review journals were echoes of attacks on popular and Enlightenment novels earlier in the 18th century (Van Horn Melton 2001, 111). Most of these attacks can ultimately be brought back to the concern that these reviews and the books that they praised would spoil or tarnish the readers in some way. By and large, by the second half of the century the theologians had recognized the turning of the tides. The goals behind reading had changed. No longer was reading merely undertaken for religious edification and moral instruction. Now, reading fed an interest in the world, typified by a veritable obsession with the intermingling of public and private affairs (Van Horn Melton 2001, 111).

On the subject of reviews in the 18th century, Van Horn Melton remarks that criticism and taste had become intimately bound up (Van Horn Melton 2001, 115-6). Criticism was an expression of taste and having taste was not possible without proper criticism. Friedrich Nicolai's aim of reviewing every published German book in the *ADB* should therefore be seen as an attempt to make the reading public more discerning (Van Horn Melton 2001, 115). I follow Van Horn Melton with his claim that this interconnection between criticism and taste has a tactical value, in that it allows the critic, particularly the reviewer, to speak on behalf of the public, giving their judgments the air of a superior validity. No doubt, the anonymity of the reviewer, which was a standard practice in these journals, adds to this air of presenting a universal judgment. Van Horn Melton does not describe malice to this tactic, because it in fact follows from the Enlightenment commitment to produce agreement and consensus through clear reasoning (Van Horn Melton 2001, 116). We should, however, not underestimate this effect and the value of this strategy for individual authors and editors.

One review journal functioned as the gold standard of Enlightenment reviewing throughout the middle part of the 18th century. *Briefe* was immensely influential, mainly due to the editors and reviewers involved with it: Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, Moses Mendelssohn and Friedrich Nicolai. Mendelssohn wrote most of the letters dealing with philosophy and philosophical literature. His contributions are especially important due to his conflict with Johann Georg Hamann, which is, as I will later show, in a sense a first siege of the bulwark of rationalist philosophy. This siege would later be followed by Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi's attacks on Kant and Fichte, as final manifestations of philosophy

as a fully rationalist project (much of which would contribute to the critical reviews in *Beyträge*). One can disagree with these labels, but not with the fact that Hamann and Jacobi saw a methodological continuity between rationalism and idealism. This second siege is tinged by the ways in which Hamann and Mendelssohn initially clashed, and particularly by the way in which criticism was conducted in Mendelssohn's reviews during this time.

First, we must consider the principles of criticism and reviewing that were put forward in this journal. The principles that can be drawn from this will function as a model for analyzing the ways in which the 1800 group of review journals can be considered experimental.

In an early letter Mendelssohn complained about the 'universal anarchy' among 'young people' who 'judge everything; laugh about everything' (Mendelssohn 1759, 130). This sets the scene, far in advance of Kantianism, of a new generation that is losing all respect and has no standards for judging. For them 'the best world is a flight of fancy, the monads are a dream, or a joke by Leibniz, Wolf is an old windbag, and Baumgarten a dark dreamcatcher [Grillfänger], [since] they were silly enough to transform that which Leibniz had put forward in jest into a system' (Mendelssohn 1759, 130). Although this perception of universal anarchy seems to be at the basis of any generational conflict, this letter functions as a call to arms to defend the standards of criticism, rather than merely uphold established views. In other words, it is not that they disagree, but the way in which they disagree, a subject that rationalist philosophers were particularly sensitive to:

> They care little for proof behind the propositions they have adopted, because they *want* to be convinced. Even less do they think of the difficulties that are solved by the popular system, or those difficulties connected to it. Truth itself becomes, through the way in which it is adopted, a prejudice. [Vorurtheile] (Mendelssohn 1759, 133–4).

For Mendelssohn, this called for the cultivation of better critical standards. A reviewer must be able to counteract the rhetorical effect of a book, in order to allow the reader to be more critical. In a later contribution to the journal this leads him to conclude:

> The author must first think of the progress of science and after that of the comfort of the reader. The first takes precedence, while the reader is obligated to sacrifice his comfort (Mendelssohn 1760, 242).

Most journals around this time and probably well into the 20th century, before sales numbers and target demographics emerge as important metrics, operate under the constraint of a readership that is constructed through critical analysis. This readership may be real, imagined or ideal and the articulation of this readership might be put forward at the outset, or only articulated much later in the lifespan of a journal. In the abstract, this prospective improvement of the German reading public largely overlaps with Enlightenment ideals of being better able to think, reason and judge, but it should not be forgotten that in

practice, the results of these principles vary greatly depending on the critical analysis initially used to construct the view of its prospective readership. We will call this first principle *the interconnection of mission statement with a diagnosis of prospective readership*.

Not only were the conditions of the critical review theorized, but also the conditions of the validity of criticism of published reviews. With this the editors put forward a mechanism through which they could be held accountable for their criticism, in effect a sort of procedure of critical appeal. The editor of *Briefe* argues that one must demonstrate at least some ability to engage with the arguments or a facility to reason, otherwise your criticism will be ignored (Nicolai 1762, 32). This is undoubtedly also a basic condition of legibility and conceivably. How, after all, would one be able to engage with a criticism if it is unclear what the criticism is? But this stricture also gatekeeps the critical debate, excluding based on social class and level of education. One can only develop reasoning that is recognized within a discipline by being educated in this discipline. We will call this second principle *the standards of critical appeal*. It must be remarked that this second principle, by virtue of the exclusion involved, strengthens the construction of readership involved in the first principle because it pre-selects those who engage with the criticism on the terms in which it was put forward, thereby only acknowledging the readers that were intended to engage with the journal.

In a way, the *Atheismusstreit* changed this hegemony of critical appeal, since many non-philosophers and academics publicly engaged in the charges of Fichte's atheism, especially for him as an educator.[2] This, in connection with the attempts to make Kantianism a public philosophy (efforts spearheaded by Reinhold's early Kant reception), likely contributed to the standards of public criticism in philosophy becoming more dynamic and crossing more social lines. Not only were criticism by non-philosophers considered (such as Jean Paul's *Clavis Fichtiana Seu Leibgeberiana*, see section 3), but philosophers were also allowed to experiment with criticisms that did not adhere to established standards, utilizing for instance the ad hominem and less than fully comprehensible prose. These established standards could be effectively flaunted using literary devices, resulting in many critical reviews crossing the boundaries of philosophical text into literary text. All of this contributed to a unique moment in the popularization of philosophy during which the experimental journals emerged.

Of course, the editors of *Briefe* also articulated many internal standards for reviewing. What we would now call the impartiality of a review was actually constructed out of several different principles. In response to the complaint that the reviewers only look for errors, it is countered that they also look for beauty (Nicolai 1762, 42). They add that a few brief words of carefully formulated praise are more valuable than many pages of empty compliments. The actual standards follow from the reasons why more attention is paid to the errors

[2] See for instance *Schreiben eines Vaters an seinen Sohn über den Fichtischen und Forbergischen Atheismus*, written by 'G' (G 1798).

than to the beauties of a work in a review: i) the journal is correcting for a trend in Germany to highly praise mediocre works, ii) the reviewers write for the initiated in the field that the book is published in, those who are perfectly capable themselves of appreciating the beauties of a work, iii) it is important to unmask seeming beauties as actual errors, and iv) the reviewers are hard to please because they measure everything by the very best that has been produced recently and by the ancients (Nicolai 1762, 43-7). Reasons (i) and (iii) resolutely follow the first principle we have distinguished, allowing us to see how this diagnosis of readership translates to specific review practices, in this case the de-emphasizing of praise in order to stimulate critical faculties and the attempt to offer what educated readers cannot themselves discern. Reasons (iii) and (iv) provide us with new critical principles, to wit the third principle of *unmasking a rhetorical or aesthetic attempt at veiling a lack of argumentative rigor,* and the fourth principle of *universal standards of comparison*, including ancient and recent works on the same critical scale.

Interestingly, all of these reasons directly relate to a supposed public task that the reviewer is serving in his critical actions. This concept of the German reader that the journal is subservient to is mainly composed through another critical analysis. For instance, the public has been fed too much praise for mediocre work, therefore it needs to learn to distinguish good works from bad works (i) and it needs to learn to distinguish supposed beauties from actual errors (iii).

Much of this is maintained but also transformed in the experimental journal landscape. We will consider the particulars of *Beyträge* in section 4, but from the outset we can already observe that beauty is not something the critical reviews published there emphasize at all. What matters to Reinhold there is the degree to which a line of reasoning can be seen as leading up to or contributing to his own position. One could say that he is still distinguishing seeming beauty from actual error when, reviewing his competitors, he attempts to show where their position is amenable to his own and where their supposed errors emerge, but the emphasis is much more on the virtue of argumentation rather than the beauty of the review object. After shifting from his initial intent (see section 4), Reinhold is most certainly writing for the initiated, although some effort is made to retain clarity when he abandons the position of the reviewer and puts forward his own position. Consequently, much more time is spent on criticism than on praise, even more so as the critical responses to *Beyträge* start piling up. The focus on the history of philosophy makes the principle of the universal standards of comparison especially important for Reinhold, as it would become for many philosophers during the 19th and 20th centuries, when it became commonplace to hold up every new publication against the best quality of work produced in the history of philosophy.

Of special interest in *Briefe* is Mendelssohn's review of Rousseau's *Julie, ou la nouvelle Héloïse* (1761) and the conflict with Hamann that emerged from it. It is, first of all, of interest because it places some serious strictures on how review standards can be applied to literary texts, particularly if those literary texts aim to make philosophical points, like Rousseau's letter novel. Mendelssohn is

concerned by the fact that he believes Rousseau has not understood the subject of love from experience (Mendelssohn 1761, 273-4). He believes that this deficiency is evident in the fact that Rousseau aims to evoke the experience of love through hyperbole and proclamations. The standards he puts forward are that one should write and argue from one's own experience and that only a modification of lived experience can stir the reader through the verisimilitude. In effect, this constitutes an attack on the use of literary devices in order to give the reader an understanding of a subject matter. The use of the literary form also draws out the limits of the review format for Mendelssohn, since he remarks that he cannot convince the reader of this failure of verisimilitude through examples, but that the one must read the whole letters in Rousseau's book. Evidently, here there are limits in evidence-based reviewing that are particularly relevant when a book employs literary devices in order to make philosophical arguments, which have to do both with an extended length and lack of direct focus on argumentation from lived experience. Mendelssohn's views are most likely typical of philosophical discourse and attempt to separate its own scientific discourse from literary style. It is exactly this separation which will be brought into doubt by many of the experimental review journals.

It was Mendelssohn's review, much of which attempted to articulate the limits of reviewing such a work as *Julie*, which started a conflict with Hamann, who at that time had launched an allegorically veiled attack on rationalism, which Mendelssohn also reviewed.[3] We find a counter-review in Hamann's response to Mendelssohn's review of Rousseau's *Julie* (Beiser 2009, 235–40). Hamann used an ad hominem reference in order to relate Mendelssohn's Jewishness to his arguments as a reviewer: 'Who is this aesthetic Moses who may prescribe weak and paltry laws to free citizens?' This reference explicitly questions the authority of the reviewer and the principles he uses to prescribe how a book should be written or read. We later find an allusion to Hamann's analogy between philosophers and jews, both being more concerned with the letter than the spirit, in Jacobi's comment in *Jacobi an Fichte* on circumcision, which shows a special connection between Hamann's attack on rationalism and the later realist-idealist discussions (Jacobi 2004, 196).

Mendelssohn subsequently wrote a counter-review to this counter-review, in which he adopted Hamann's own review practices, particularly his penchant for dark allusions. The root of this conflict was review standards. If we look beyond his rationalist commitments, Mendelssohn argued that a work of literature needs to be cogent enough for the reviewer to be able to demonstrate its merits, while Hamann argued that greatness is evident to those open to it, making the review nothing more than a testimony. A middle way is not explored. In response to the conflict, Mendelssohn invited Hamann to contribute to the

[3] For an extended discussion of this conflict, see: Beiser, *Diotima's Children: German Aesthetic Rationalism from Leibniz to Lessing* and Hammermeister, *The German Aesthetic Tradition* (Beiser 2009; Hammermeister 2002).

journal, which would likely have forced Hamann to articulate his own review practices, but this offer was rejected.

Jacobi, who was also a contributor to *Beyträge*, can in some sense be seen as Hamann's disciple. Jacobi's attack on Mendelssohn during the so-called *Pantheismusstreit* around 1785 was initially planned with Hamann's advice.[4] Therefore, when Reinhold publishes a posthumous review by Hamann on Jacobi's recommendation he is in many ways perpetuating an older conflict between Hamann and rationalism. This makes the publication of Hamann's review a kind of triumphant return of Hamann's style of criticism.

We can now turn towards two other dominant review journals. Nicolai's *Neue Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek* had set out to review every book published in the German territories. Fichte fought a highly public conflict with Nicolai, on whose character he even published a book, *Friedrich Nicolai's Leben und sonderbare Meinungen* (1801), which in many ways echo's Hamann's criticism of Mendelssohn as a reviewer. Fichte argues that Nicolai measures all of his reviews by the limited understanding that he personally has, and that this prism leads him to reject worthwhile work, among which, of course, Fichte's own (Fichte 1801, 82-96). As personal as this attack is (which is part of the intensification of the ad hominem in reviewing around 1800), it also, like Hamann, questions the standards of the reviewer as relatively obscure to the reader.

Finally, the *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung* was an established institution in reviewing philosophical publications.[5] When it was edited by the Kantian Christian Gottfried Schütz, it effectively cemented Kantian philosophy as the dominant philosophy and even having a review published represented a certain level of recognition in the philosophical discipline. As such, Reinhold and Fichte both occasionally published reviews in the journal. As experimental as the contributors to the experimental group of journals were, both stylistically and methodologically, virtually all of them considered themselves as operating in the wake of Kantian philosophy or in some way elaborating on Kant's critical philosophy.[6]

In terms of review practices, the *ALZ* has been contrasted with the Schlegel brothers' *Athenaeum*, specifically as a clash between the late Enlightenment and early romanticism.[7] For our purposes, this perspective is too broad and not specific enough. Too broad because it considers the relationship between these journals from the perspective of broad historical labels, and not specific enough

[4] See Beiser's *Fate of Reason: German Philosophy from Kant to Fichte* for an account of this conflict (Beiser 1987).

[5] The values of comprehensiveness, impartiality and anonymity are discussed in *Archive der Kritik: Die 'Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung' und das 'Athenaeum'* (Napierala 2007).

[6] It might be objected that Jacobi was famously critical of Kant. This is certainly the case, but he also admitted that Kant had transformed the philosophical landscape in a way that made the limitations of philosophy abundantly clear. This makes Jacobi's antagonistic relationship with Kant extraordinarily complex.

[7] Stefan Matuschek considers this appraisal in *Organisation der Kritik. Die Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung in Jena 1785-1803* (Matuschek 2004).

because I would argue that the conflict between *ALZ* and *Athenaeum* must be seen in the broader context of experimentation with review standards. The fact that the Schlegel brothers explicitly set out to 'destroy the *ALZ*' is rooted in the critical authority that this journal claimed during this time.[8] Although there is certainly more nuance to that aim, one of the principal reasons that the Schlegel brothers and probably many other authors who contributed to the experimental journals found the critical dominion of the *ALZ* so odious was related to the loose rule that reviews must be published anonymously (Napierala 2007, 97–113). One of the effects of this edict is that the critical authority of the reviews were transferred to the editors, rather than the authors of the reviews.[9] August Wilhelm Schlegel certainly committed an act of insurrection against this authority when he published a list of his reviews in *ALZ* in the *Athenaeum* in 1800 (Matuschek 2004, 9). It should be noted that the practice of publishing reviews anonymously was a longer one, also followed by the *Briefe*. Both of these journals seem to take their inspiration from Lessing in this matter.[10]

3. Extended group characterization

Any characterization of the experimental journals as a group will necessarily be incomplete due to the limited space available. For this reason, I have chosen to highlight one specific journal extensively in section 4. It should also be noted that this is a tentative grouping, to which, in all likelihood, other journals could be added.

1798-1800: August Wilhelm Schlegel and Karl Wilhelm Friedrich Schlegel (Ed.), *Athenaeum*
1799/1800: Johann Gottlieb Fichte (Ed.), Unsuccesful attempt to establish a journal
1801-1803: Karl Leonhard Reinhold (Ed.), *Beyträge zur leichtern Übersicht des Zustandes der Philosophie beym Anfange des 19. Jahrhunderts*
1802-1803: Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling/ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Kritisches Journal der Philosophie*
1803-1805: Friedrich Bouterwek (Ed.), *Neues Museum der Philosophie und Litteratur*
1803-1805: Karl Wilhelm Friedrich Schlegel (Ed.), *Europa*

[8] From a letter cited by Matuschek in *Organisation der Kritik* (Matuschek 2004, 8). See also Napierala in the same volume (Matuschek 2004, 106–7).

[9] This also led to challenges of intellectual authority, which Schelling, another editor among the experimental journals, pointed out when he characterized the *ALZ* as a 'collective' of 'heterogenous things'. This exchange, and the anonymity of the *ALZ* is discussed by Stephan Pabst in *Organisation der Kritik* (Matuschek 2004, 23–4). See also Mark Napierala in the same volume (Matuschek 2004, 107–10).

[10] This issue is admirably untangled and given more nuance than I can offer here in *Organisation der Kritik* (Matuschek 2004, 10–12).

I have grouped these journals together because they are specifically connected through the discipline of philosophy and the increasingly polemical discussions about philosophy around 1800. Beyond the experimentation with review standards, these journals can most reliably be related through Jacobi and Fichte. Karl Wilhelm Friedrich Schlegel was a student and later a close collaborator of Fichte's.[11] Schelling was at one point a discipline of Fichte and later criticized Fichte with Hegel. Bouterwek was a kind of remote disciple of Jacobi. Finally, Reinhold considered himself at one point a Fichtean and later a Jacobian. Considering these connections to Jacobi and Fichte, it is not surprising that we find much of the impetus behind the experimentation with critical standards and the review format with these authors. Jacobi's contributions to the *Pantheismusstreit* and the *Atheismusstreit* had shown the public at large that there were different ways of critical assessment and different kinds of things to assess (systems of thought, for instance). Fichte's attempts to organize criticism around the progress of society in general and a scientific field in particular, which culminated in his unfruitful attempt to start a critical journal, demonstrated that review standards should aim at the fundamental principles of a scientific field, particularly of philosophy. In utilizing these review standards, a much more experimental approach to delivering criticism effectively became possible.

These experiments were also made possible by a certain outsider privilege. Many of the editors of these journals were relatively young academics (Schlegel, Schelling, Hegel, Bouterwek) or, at the time operating from academic appointments that commanded less respect (Reinhold, Fichte).[12] In this position, these editors could afford to publish critical reviews that partook more of the polarization and radicalization that popular controversies such as the *Pantheismusstreit* and the *Atheismusstreit* had dealt in. Although these controversies certainly caused a critical reassessment of thought, many of these philosophers were young enough to remember that they were also uncannily popular among students, which certainly was not of no financial concern in attracting students to their lecture halls. The fact that most of these reviews were no longer published anonymously, as was the standard in *Briefe* and *ALZ*, must bear some relation to this overall attempt to gain prominence, although transparency was of course one of the key values of the Enlightenment.

Certainly these experimentations genuinely engaged with more pamphlet-like textual structuring in order to advance what the authors saw as the correct way of thinking, but these experimentations were also meant to draw the appetite of a reading public for philosophical texts which had been greatly expanded by these controversies. No longer could a new system of philosophy count on aca-

[11] Since I cannot examine it more closely, see Napierala's contrasting of *ALZ* with *Athenaeum* in *Archive der Kritik*, in particular the second half of the book (Napierala 2007).

[12] There is also a kind of generational conflict at play in the public reception of idealism. Fichte, for instance, condemned Bardili's insults towards 'transcendental idealist youths' (Fichte 1997, 450).

demic reviews, but also on such diverse responses as a collection of letters from a preacher (Eberstein 1799) or a (supposed) letter from the father of a concerned student (G, 1798). In this sense, these experimental journals were catching up to a transformed, more popularized publication landscape.

Fichte's unrealized journal plan was significant because it was in part conceived with Schelling and the Schlegel brothers. It displays a clear dissatisfaction with other review journals: 'the essential thing is to not review singular books, but to work on overviews [Uebersichten] of an entire field' (Fichte 1973, 326). In the written plan Fichte puts forward the notion of 'Kritik', criticism, as the central activity of the proposed review journal (Fichte 1981, 425). The journal was to present criticism of 'the course of the human mind [Geist]' to accurately gauge whether there are 'advances, retreats or circularities' and 'designate the timely character of the dominant views in a field'. This approach is consistent with Fichte and transcendental idealism's pairing of systematic unity and structuring of the sciences with classic Enlightenment ideas of advancing humanity through science and art, unified by a critical mind.

Fichte speaks of 'the critic' in a very modern sense, as the specific role of the reviewer. The critic proceeds from his knowledge and overview of his science as a whole and holds this against 'the measure of the temporal appearance [Zeiterscheinung]' (Fichte 1981, 425-6). This means that the critic judges a book against already existing knowledge and his understanding of the scientific field. In essence, Fichte is calling for a scientific contextualizing of a work, and its appraisal against an established state of the art. This also has specific consequences for the tone of the review: since the perspective is from the 'high region' of the scientific field, the person disappears, except in poetry, where the 'individuality' of the author is of relevance. In other words, for such an academic journal, an ad hominem argument is unacceptable because the author does not concern the critical reviewer.[13]

Relatively new in this period is the focus on the importance of understanding the history of the human mind *for criticism*, which would later also be championed by Hegel, who exerted a large influence on the 19th century intellectual approach to historiography. Fichte formulates this approach rather pointedly in relationship to the task of reviewer: 'this journal establishes a *mere knowing*: a pragmatic temporal history of the human mind' which has a '*practical use*' in that it points the way for further development, can identify novelty and repetition and allows one to demonstrate 'non-understanding' [Nichtbegreifen] (Fichte 1981, 425). We can understand this as a transformation of the principle of the universal standards of comparison, in that an understanding of historical contributions is not considered to be a merely theoretical pursuit, which is beyond reproach, but a measured assessment by an expert in the field who does not put

[13] It is perhaps significant that it is not Fichte, but Unger, the prospected publisher, who adds that the reviewers will remain anonymous in order to secure their identity (Fichte 1981, 426).

forward historical comparisons from conservative motivations, but rather for a practical use, in order to measure to what degree a new work or approach allows for a progression in the field.[14]

Although Fichte's plan for a review journal is not the earliest example of an experimental review journal (it is antedated by the Schlegel's *Athenaeum*, which appeared one year earlier) it is representative of the basic transformation of review standards put forward by the journals in this experimental group. On the whole they put much less stock in the authority of the reviewer, and the critical review is embedded in a more systematic approach to scientific research and increasingly abstract universal standards. Although many authors in this group are, at times, at odds with one another, as philosophers they share a deep commitment to and respect for critical thought and the scientific process. This means that they at times demand a lot from themselves, from each other and from the reader. This is a curious reversal of the authority of the reviewer during the earlier periods of the 18th century. Only very rarely are they concerned with their own clarity, or the possibility of trying the readers patience or intellect. In a sense, this is the effect of an enormous respect for the mental abilities of the human being. This is then, the group's own version of the principle of the interconnection of mission statement with a diagnosis of prospective readership: their diagnosis is, by and large, that the prospective readership should not be patronized, and wants to be challenged. Only in this way can the greatest depth of thought be attained.

Finally, Fichte's plan does not discuss the activities of the critic at length. We do not gain a clear view of the ways in which he believed that using literary elements in order to make philosophical points was valid. A brief look a Fichte's life should make it abundantly clear that, although he employed such methods scantly, possibly due to a lack of literary talent, he generally admired such attempts. As a young man, he was greatly influenced by Rousseau who employed such methods routinely. The way he responded to more literarily inclined attacks on his position during the *Atheismusstreit* strengthens this conclusion. Not once did he complain about Jacobi's Hamann inspired analogies in *Jacobi an Fichte*, and when the Jacobian novelist Jean Paul published a literary review of his position Fichte did not seem to mind the form of this text and remained on friendly terms with Jean Paul.[15] Most famously among the editors of these experimental journals, Karl Wilhelm Friedrich Schlegel especially employed literary elements and the literary form productively in order to offer criticism. On the other hand, while literary elements and form were utilized precipitously in this experimental group of journals, it was never explicitly discussed in terms of what distinguished a bad use of literary elements from a good one in offering

[14] It is in this specific use-oriented sense that Fichte used the word 'pragmatisch', likely inspired by Jacob Hermann Obereit (Breazeale 2013; Hüttner/Walter 2021).

[15] It is likely that Fichte did not view this a critical review because of its literary form, and because he believed it actually makes some insightful remarks on the *Wissenschaftslehre*.

philosophical arguments. This leads me to conclude that it was not an essential part of the critical principles employed by this group, but rather a way of emancipating philosophical criticism from a previously established format. We will return to concrete examples in the next section.

We will now consider how Reinhold's journal functioned in the wake of these transformations of the principles of the critical review and the transformation of the form of the review that was slowly being popularized.

4. Reinhold's *Beyträge* as a significant middle point in the development of review practices in the experimental journals

To contextualize Reinhold's motivations behind editing *Beyträge*, we need to first consider at what point in Reinhold's career it is published. Although originally a monk, Reinhold would soon join the popular Enlightenment. He was an early convert to Kant's philosophy, which he ultimately developed into his own *Elementarphilosophie* (roughly in the 1786-1797 period). After that, he briefly became a Fichtean (1797-1798), before being convinced of the validity of Jacobi's critique of idealism (1798-1801). *Beyträge* was composed in a period during which Reinhold sought to synthesize Jacobi's and Fichte's position, and these commitments led him to convert to a position that had recently been put forward by a relatively unknown gymnasium teacher, Christoph Gottfried Bardili, who was, coincidentally, also Schelling's cousin. This would not be the final time that Reinhold would change his position since from 1806 to 1823, he was preoccupied with developing a philosophy of language and truth.

These regular changes of position have given Reinhold the reputation of being somewhat mercurial, and only his period of Kantianism and propounding the *Elementarphilosophie* has been extensively integrated into the scholarly history of classical German philosophy.[16] However, a more charitable reading could claim that there are some throughlines, some systematic commitments that facilitated the shifts in his position. In this sense, the abandon with which Reinhold changed his position could even be described as admirable. It did, however, lead to him making enemies, and the story of *Beyträge* is, in a way, the story of Reinhold making enemies of most of his former allies and receiving ridicule for his shifts in position.

There is a definite sense in which Reinhold's position can be seen as *realist*. Although he seems to have less of a systematic commitment to Jacobi's realism (Giesbers 2017, 140-156), his support of Jacobi certainly led to Reinhold and *Beyträge* being seen as committing to the label of realism as an alternative to idealism. Jacobi had coined his own type of realism in 1787 (Jacobi 2004, 9–100) and had explicitly declared himself part of a group of realists (Giesbers 2017, 1–4, 40–98; 2020; 2023). Elsewhere, I have defended the claim that it is

[16] This is not to say that initial studies of his later periods have not been put forward (Bondeli 2020; Giesbers 2017, 139-155; Valenza 2023).

plausible that he was referring to a proto-realist group of acquaintances (Giesbers 2017, 17–39).

Around 1800, this group also had explicit adherents, who were in various senses sanctioned by Jacobi, such as Johann Gottfried Herder, Jean Paul, Friedrich Köppen and Johann Neeb (Giesbers 2017, 99-139, 156-168, 199-205). To complicate matters there were also authors who were inspired by Jacobi, but who were developing their own kind of practical realism, such as Bouterwek and Friedrich Rückert. In this complicated landscape, *Beyträge* was initially seen as an attempt to bring together realists, but due to Reinhold's editorial choices it would emerge as a journal that attacked all but Reinhold's own kind of realism.

Reinhold's new commitment to Bardili placed him under a self-descriptive realist label: 'rational realism'. This new type of realism would slowly erode Reinhold's relationship with Jacobi, whom he had recruited as a contributor to *Beyträge*. As Reinhold elaborated on his Bardilian realism, it became clear to Jacobi that it was impossible to reconcile the methodology behind this realism with his own and that it could be more properly grouped with idealist methodological excesses, than Jacobi's more methodologically modest practical or negative realism (Giesbers 2017, 42–48; 2020; 2023; Sandkaulen 2019, 154)[17] Although it was slowly creating hairline fractures in this alliance, the introduction of a new kind of realism which is explicitly used to circumvent the excesses of earlier realism and idealism is a strategy that was spearheaded by Jacobi. In that sense, Reinhold was inspired by Jacobi's critical and rhetorical strategies.

It seems that the review project behind *Beyträge* was initially conceived in a markedly different way than what ultimately ended as the six volumes that appeared from 1801 through 1803. The main reason for this is the rapid pace at which the experimentation with review standards was proceeding during this period. Reinhold's new position had evoked reviews that would employ similar experimental forms that he had pioneered in the first two volumes. As a result, he started to published fewer and fewer contributors, and *Beyträge* became the main way in which Reinhold was defending himself from other experimental review journals.[18] Initially, Reinhold had conceived of the perspective of the journal as 'comments of an observer on the state of German philosophy at the start of the 19th century' (Bondeli 2020, xviii). This initial mission statement aimed at the scientific standards of the objective observer about the state of German philosophy, in a similar vein to Fichte's proposed journal. The 'easier overview'

[17] Friedrich Köppen's wrote the closest thing we have to a sanctioned Jacobian realist criticism of rational realism (Giesbers 2017, 149–53).

[18] Reinhold wrote the vast bulk of the contributions. Bardili contributes four letters (one which is 103 pages in size), Jacobi contributes one article (of 110 pages), Köppen contributes one article and a posthumous review by Hamann is also published. Bondeli has argued that the way Reinhold publishes exposition of his position changes during the publication span, from a focus on the identity of pure thinking to an analysis of applied thinking (Bondeli 2020, xvi). Volumes 3-6 are therefore less focused on reviewing and more on defending rational realism, naturally leading to fewer published contributors.

in the title of the journal is most likely a reference to these scientific standards, evoking an encyclopedic project with the implicit assumption that the prospective readership is confused by the sheer volume of publications in philosophy.

It was a conflict with Fichte in 1800 that likely transformed this initial mission statement into something much more partisan and critically complex. Previously, Fichte had become the subject of criticism in Jacobi's famous open letter *Jacobi an Fichte* (1799) and Jean Paul's review article *Clavis Fichteana* (1800). Both of these texts employed experimental review strategies, such as an extended situating of the author of the review within a metaphorical review space, Jacobi as a prophet waiting at the door of the lecture room, and the offering of a metaphorical key which unlocks Fichtean thought. While Fichte privately sought to obviate what he believed to be a misreading and lack of exposure to his ethical thought in Jacobi, it is striking that he did not at all object to the ways in which these reviews employed experimental writing forms. Considering the stakes, Fichte had every reason to take offense at the lack of conventional argumentation and literary ambiguity, like Mendelssohn before him. These review ventures appeared at the height of an already personally injurious public controversy (the *Atheismusstreit*) which culminated in Fichte losing his position in Jena. I believe that Fichte's amenability to the form of these reviews can partly be explained by the fact that he admired the experimentation of these reviews (another part of the explanation, as I have argued elsewhere, can be found in the fact that Fichte had some systematic sympathy for the realist position put forward by Jacobi and Jean Paul) (Giesbers 2017, 198, 268). This is borne out by the fact that the very next review that Fichte penned, the review that would cause Reinhold to change the project and tone of his *Beyträge*, employed some of the same experimental strategies.

Reinhold declared his commitment to Bardili's position by reviewing the book in which it was put forward in *ALZ*. Fichte, who was already disappointed with Reinhold's attempts to distance himself from the *Wissenschaftslehre*, wrote his own review of the book in *Erlanger Litteratur-Zeitung* (Fichte 1973, 332). This review is important for the transformation of review practices, because it is in essence a review of Reinhold's review. Reinhold would later acknowledge that it was indeed a review of his review and this is even more plausible due to the fact that Fichte would ask the publisher to send Reinhold a copy of the publication, instead of Bardili (Fichte 1973, 332). In this letter, Fichte argued that this criticism is directed at Reinhold publicly because he remained unreachable privately (Fichte 1973, 332). It is unclear in what sense Fichte considered Reinhold unreachable. Perhaps he simply did not respond or perhaps Fichte considered him *intellectually* unreceptive. Whatever the case, with this public airing of critical misgivings that were initially expressed privately Fichte follows Jacobi's strategy of publishing his correspondence with Mendelssohn. Later, it would provoke Reinhold to publish his correspondence with Fichte in *Beyträge*. Evidently, Fichte believed that there is critical value to publishing these supposed personal errors of reasoning as an exemplar of broader problems in reasoning, which trumps the faux pas of publishing private thoughts. In essence, this is

also Fichte's view of the function of criticism: to provide some insight into the broader place and value of specific claims.

Fichte calls Bardili's system a reworking of Reinhold's *Elementarphilosophie* which, in the context of the counter-review, suggests that Reinhold has not learned from the errors of his previous position (the position he held before becoming a Fichtean) (Fichte 1981, 435). As a counter-review, the text functions rather ingeniously as a criticism of Reinhold and his failings as a reviewer. For instance, when Fichte argues that oftentimes an author does not know what he is truly proposing, he is criticizing Reinhold's inability to draw out the implications of Bardili's position, both as an adherent of this position and as a reviewer who is failing his critical task (Fichte 1981, 436).

Fichte employs metaphors and analogy in a similar way as Jacobi and Jean Paul had employed towards him. In the title of the book, Bardili had called his contribution a 'medica mentis', a mental medicine. Fichte bitterly mocks the pretense of this medical metaphor. He uses this medical metaphor in order to refer to the book as an amateurish dissection of the I, whose 'viscera' are splayed about (Fichte 1981, 446). He would later also mock Reinhold as suffering from the 'dubious symptoms' produced by Bardili's way of philosophizing (Fichte 1973, 356-8). This implies that Reinhold suffers from the same 'traces of insanity' as Bardili had displayed by having such a high opinion of himself (Fichte 1981, 449).

Beyond these experimental review strategies, Fichte is also no stranger to intentional provocations, for instance when he asks 'Is mister Bardili a horse himself?' in response to the fact that Bardili implies that he knows how a horse reasons (Fichte 1981, 439). He continues this banality by association when he admonishes Bardili's disrespect for the public through the general disarray of the book, arguing that Bardili might as well have made his remarks *to* a horse (Fichte 1981, 448–9).

The impact of Fichte's counter-review was fittingly described by Henrik Steffens in a letter to Schelling: 'This review *kills*' (Plitt 1869, 321). Schelling later repeats this verdict in a letter to Fichte: 'This review truly kills' (Fichte 1973, 368). Some weeks before this counter-review would be published, Fichte wrote to Reinhold that he had heard that Reinhold was working on an 'anticritical philosophical journal' with Bardili and Jacobi (Fichte 1973, 356-8). After the counter-review appeared Reinhold obviously decided that *Beyträge* would be the site of entrenched philosophical warfare, where weaponized review experimentation could legitimately be used in order to demonstrate the importance of rational realism. A brief look at the preface to the first volume (written in November 1800) will illustrate this point: "the philosophical revolution is ending, we need to follow a foundational new road (Reinhold 1801-1803, 1:iv)".

Drawing on a popular metaphor for the innovations of the Kantian philosophy, Reinhold argues that its revolution is ending. Bondeli points out that Reinhold also believes that the revolution has ended because it has attained its goal, not because it has failed (Bondeli, xxxvi). Reinhold does not merely employ this metaphor as a reference to drastic change, but also in the sense of warfare. This

specific characterization of Kantian philosophy, as a revolution that sweeps the nation, that conquers and unseats the powerful is borrowed from Jacobi (Giesbers 2017, 143).

The revolution metaphor is also how Reinhold elaborates on his use of what I have called the principle of the interconnection of mission statement with a diagnosis of prospective readership: "The *revolution* in *German philosophy* has ended up differently than its instigators and friends had hoped, differently than the opposition had feared (Reinhold 1801-1803, 1:iii)".

Fully exploiting the analogy with the French revolution, Reinhold is arguing that the revolution in German philosophy has also developed differently than was expected, even as he himself, as a former revolutionary, had expected. The state of philosophy has taken an unexpected turn for all involved, and critical reassessment is required. Reinhold argues that he is in the best position to offer this critical reassessment, since he was an active participant: "I have taken part in every 'turn' [Wendungen] of the revolution, I was not merely a spectator (Reinhold 1801-1803, 1:v)".

He anticipates that his status as a fervent revolutionary in German philosophy might make him especially vulnerable critically. This is the point at which he radically breaks with the impartial mission statement that he had initially envisioned for *Beyträge*:

> Am I not wrong a *fourth* time? Is not *this true and genuine end*, that I announce and describe in this *Beyträgen*, and due to which I wish the *new century* well – again only the beginning of a new bend [in the road of philosophy]? (Reinhold 1801-1803, 1:v-vi).

This peculiar temporalizing of several turns in the revolution in German philosophy, neatly established by Reinhold's own position shifts, organically introduce the problem of critically assessing the history of philosophy as a necessity for the understanding of the present and future of philosophy. This is why Reinhold wants to demonstrate that in the 'history of the new and newest philosophy' 'the *whole transcendental turn* [*Umwälzung*]' merely exhausts subjectivity (Reinhold 1801-1803, 1:vi).

These two temporalizing aspects put forward in the preface, the history of philosophy and the concept of a "newest" philosophy, represent some of the most important ways in which Reinhold transforms the content of the review. We will return to these aspects after we have considered some of the formal aspects of experimental reviewing that were put forward by *Beyträge*.

Whereas the traditional review format utilized by *Briefe* and *ALZ* is a relatively brief text spanning only a few pages, *Beyträge* followed *Athenaeum*'s experimental attitude to the size of the review, by shifting to long review articles, some of which appeared in multiple installments. It can even be said that the way in which Reinhold conceives of the journal in his first premise raises the possibility of shifting the locus of the review entirely to the journal. One can no longer open the review journal and select an isolated review to engage with. Reinhold envisioned the journal as a review of the state of philosophy, a vantagepoint that

can only be achieved by looking at the journal as a whole in the context of the critical thrust of its diverse types of review articles.

Reinhold used this variation of types of review article as a way of building a case. A case, of course, for his own position, but also a case for a certain critical assessment of the state of philosophy. A notable inclusion among these types is the letter. Reinhold publishes several letters that he had received from Bardili. A review journal such as *Briefe* ostensibly published letters as well, but these were wholly constructed as open letters to the public. Melton remarks that significance of letters or the epistolary literary format 'served to construct a public arena where readers and writers were engaged in a real or imagined dialogue' (Van Horn Melton 2001, 100). This ties into an 18th century obsession with 'rendering the private public', which also governed the autobiography trend which Rousseau's *Les Confessions* epitomized (Van Horn Melton 2001, 101). The reader is meant to be enticed by the publication of private correspondence, but the publication of these letters is also part of the attempt to personally appeal to readers, by tying responsibility for the critical review to the character of the critic. On the whole, this represents a move away from the aesthetics of the objective scientific review, in favor of the personal convictions and fortitude of the critic. The inclusion of letters by Bardili and even more so of review articles by other authors stands on an uneven ground with the way in which Reinhold envisions *Beyträge* as a journal with a singular critical thrust. Perhaps this in some way explains why, as the volumes appear, Reinhold slowly becomes the sole author of the reviews.

It is highly significant for *Beyträge*'s contribution to experimentation with review standards that it publishes a posthumous review by Hamann. We have seen that Hamann can in many ways be connected to the dissatisfaction with critical review standards of prominent journals in the 18th century, by his explicit confrontation with Mendelssohn, or by his influence on iconoclastic writers like Jacobi, Herder and Jean Paul. His review, an early version of what would become *Metakritik über den Purismus der Vernunft*, is the absolute first review of *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, which Hamann was able to write because he was friends with the printer (Reinhold 1801-1803, 2:206).[19] Up until this point it had never been published and it mainly circulated among admirers of Hamann. It is extremely likely that Reinhold and Jacobi chose to publish it in this journal not merely for its criticism of Kant, but also as a prototype for the new review strategies that they wanted to popularize.

Some notable aspects of this short review include Hamann calling the transcendental dialectic the 'pudenda', the vulva, of pure reason, and Kant's discussion of the paralogisms and the antinomies a 'euthanasia' (Reinhold 1801-1803, 2:210). This use of brusque metaphors, beyond the fact that they are obviously

[19] It is not surprising that the experimental journals coincided with a resurgence of interest in Hamann. Herder, of course payed homage to Hamann by naming his integral commentary on the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* after Hamann's metacritical method. This caused many responses, among which a book which sought to reconnect the metacritical method to Hamann: *Mancherley zur Geschichte der metacritischen Invasion* (Rink 1800).

designed to scandalize the reader, are in fact ways of replacing the traditional arguments in reviews with a way of conveying the *effects* of a philosophical work in an abbreviated way. We have seen versions of this strategy in Jacobi's and Jean Paul's review articles on Fichte, as well as in Fichte's counter-review of Reinhold. In essence, this strategy is another way of facing the very real limitations of the review. One can extend the length of a review up to a point, but nothing can approach a book length response or an integral commentary. Reviewing is essentially the abbreviation of criticism, and these brusque metaphors are effective ways of doing this abbreviating, while engaging the reader's attention sharply, by way of a point of comparison that not only expresses the limitations of an argumentative structure, but also how one should feel about these limitations. It is then up to the reader to fill in the argumentative gap between the review object and the assessment. This may seem like a radical response to the limitations of the review, but it must be remarked that reviewing is always already abbreviating and omitting lines of critical and philosophical argumentation by virtue of the limits of its length.

Another way of abbreviating lengthy arguments is to develop a critical vocabulary that can be evoked in lieu of these arguments. Reinhold attempts to do this by synthesizing Jacobian and Bardilian realism, which were already deeply embedded in criticism of philosophical methodology. Evoking this terminology also evokes this established line of criticism. This strategy is especially evident when Reinhold employs Jacobi's and Herder's criticism of 'empty' [leere] forms and words in opposition to the Kantian 'pure' [reine] vocabulary, for instance when Reinhold argues that rational realism's connection between logic and metaphysics fills these empty forms (Reinhold 1801-1803, 1:xvi, 1:55, 1:60, 1:87, 1:135, 1:144). Rather than discussing individual situations in which a specific approach fails to capture lived experience due to a failure to rehabilitate metaphysics, it is expressed for all cases as a general methodological problem by invoking this vocabulary. A drawback of this approach is that it highly depends on the readers being initiated in a specific philosophical discourse. It is for this reason that this vocabulary often seems mystifying and impenetrable to a reader who is some decades or more removed from this discourse.

Reinhold also utilizes labeling in this particularly aggressive critical vocabulary. Most notably this practice is used to group enemies in a way in which they become susceptible to a diagnosis of a specific historical framework. Of particular note here is the label 'newest philosophy' [neuesten Philosophie] (Reinhold 1801-1803, 1:iv, 1:vi, 1:120). This is a response to the 18th century obsession with novelty that Melton has observed (Van Horn Melton 2001, 93-4). By using this label pejoratively, Reinhold is drawing in timeless associations with novelty: that it is fleeting fashion, that most of its adherents are young, etc. The label had up to that point become associated with the popularity of the Kantian philosophy, a synonym for young idealists who, more radical than Kant himself, sought to change society through idealist principles (Eberstein 1799). In this exact sense, Reinhold, freshly distanced from Fichte who was a major source of inspiration for these youths, embraces this pejorative label to characterize a general lack of

rigor and an avalanche of philosophical publications. In this way, he integrates a pejorative label within his critical vocabulary. Strategically, this is a boon to the effectiveness of his criticism, because in addition to the argumentative complexity that the label synthesizes (in this case a collective criticism), he also harnesses the social antipathy associated with this label. He positions *Beyträge* as a way to critically review these new philosophers.

Complementary to this critical diagnosis of his age, Reinhold writes critical reviews of the history of philosophy which strategically relabel many positions in the history of philosophy. As a result, he is able to broadly assess centuries of philosophical contributions as leading to his own rational realism. The resultant groupings are based on either conceptual development (improvements on a concept) or progressive development (wherein philosophers reiterate on each other's work) and often a combination of both. The labels are frequently some variation on the realism-idealism dichotomy (such as grouping Leibniz and Spinoza under 'demonstrative realism') (Reinhold 1801-1803, 2:iv-v, 2:30), and Reinhold's critical assessment is often that a philosophical position adheres to an improper mixture or dualism of both labels. For example, he argues that Fichte adheres to 'practical realism' and 'theoretical idealism', Bouterwek adheres to 'practical realism' and 'skeptical idealism', and Schelling adheres to 'physical realism' and 'theoretical idealism' (Reinhold 1801-1803, 2:iv-v). Interestingly, this strategy would later also be employed by Schelling and Hegel, who popularized its use to the degree that we still find it in the 19th and 20th centuries. Although it is highly reductive of historical, methodological and argumentative complexity, its appeal is quite clear: it allows one to bring enemies into the fold, while keeping them at a distance.

To write a critical history of philosophy in this taxonomizing way is another clear example of experimentation with the form of the review. Reviewing the history of philosophy also introduces the philosophical system as an object of review. This was also the subject of Köppen's contribution to *Beyträge*, 'Einige Gedanken über philosophische Systeme überhaupt und insbesondere die Wissenschaftslehre', in which he reviews Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre* as a philosophical system among other systems (Reinhold 1801-1803, 2:141). The fact that the philosophical system became a suitable object of review is a demonstration of the extremely numerous attempts to present a philosophical system in the wake of Kant and Fichte.

Reinhold gratefully experiments with these reviews of the history of philosophy, for instance to introduce a *recent* history of philosophy, allowing him to look at the history of philosophy from the perspective of the newest philosophy and to counterpose the history of philosophy with the newest philosophy (Reinhold 1801-1803, 1:iv, 1:vi). This critical assessment forms the backbone for Reinhold's more contemporary reviews in *Beyträge*, as well as his contributions defending rational realism.[20] Throughout these reviews of the history of

[20] It should be noted that Reinhold does not explicitly engage in critical historiography, despite the fact that he had previously demonstrated some interest in the subject.

philosophy some throughlines appear. First of all, he conceives of the history of philosophy as the history of the problem of knowledge of reality. Ethical problems follow from that problem if they are referenced at all. Secondly, Reinhold considers the history of philosophy as a way of self-accounting. These articles are a way of historicizing his previous positions in the context of trying to articulate a solution to the problem of knowledge of reality. Finally, the history of philosophy is used as a new kind of critical authority, which can be utilized to legitimize or delegitimize a new line of thought. Since he considerers rational realism to be a new line of thought which is competing for the reader's attention, it was important for Reinhold to first construct and then draw on this authority.

A history of philosophy can also be characterized by those it discusses (and those it doesn't). Assessing the review articles in this way, an interesting picture emerges: Reinhold is synthesizing the historical canons of Kant (Bacon, Descartes, Locke, Wolff) and Jacobi (Hume, Leibniz, Spinoza). This new canon is followed by a modern trinity: Kant, Jacobi and Fichte, with Schelling as a capstone which introduces God as a problem for rationality. This is a testament to Reinhold's most enduring influences during this time.

If we compare the contributions to *Beyträge* with the principles of critical reviewing that we have previously drawn from *Briefe*, an interesting perspective on the nature of *Beyträge*'s experimental role emerges. We have seen that Reinhold certainly intended to mix the mission statement of the journal with a diagnosis of prospective readership, but that the confrontation with Fichte forced him to employ experimentation with the review format as defensive measures. As a result, the supposed reader who needs a better understanding of the philosophical literature is greatly deemphasized. We see this also in the brief moments when Reinhold directly addresses the reader, where he is apologizing for his lack of clarity, or confiding in them, all functions of the exposition of his own position.[21] As a result, the principle of standards of critical appeal are unimportant for *Beyträge*, since this principle is aimed at putting forward guidelines through which the readers can engage with the verdict of a review. No doubt a perceived disinterest in critical engagement contributed to the highly polemical, even satirical way in which the journal was received (see section 5). There is, however, a way in which *Beyträge* is more empathetic to its objects of criticism, particularly in its total disregard of the principle of the unmasking of rhetorical or aesthetic attempts at veiling a lack of argumentative rigor. The journal completely and earnestly trusts that that which it reviews was put forward in good faith, and that there has been no attempt to deceive. When it adjudicates criticism, it assumes that those it criticizes have stumbled into faulty reasoning. This attitude is a result of the overall enthusiasm for philosophy that pervaded after the emergence of Kant's philosophy. Finally, *Beyträge* employs the principle of universal

[21] 'I know, that I will not be understood in what I am saying about the true spirit of philosophy *by most readers*' (Reinhold 1801-1803, 1:43). See also: (Reinhold 1801-1803, 3:iv, 6:34, 6:145, 6:147).

standards of comparison far more extensively than before, particularly due to its attempt to review the history of philosophy. While it is true that the projected progressive development in the history of philosophy meant that a full endorsement of Aristotle, for instance, was impossible, the way in which new works are held up against the arguments and concepts developed in the history of philosophy meant that it was possible to compare solutions to problems offered by the ancients and compare them to solutions offered by Reinhold's contemporaries.

The possibility of freeform contributions to *Beyträge* in *form* and *scope* also results in contributions that are larger in *size*. Jacobi's *Ueber das Unternehemen des Kriticismus, die Vernunft zu Verstande zu bringen, und der Philosophie überhaupt eine neue Absicht zu geben* appeared in 1802, but was heavily delayed and was most likely the inspiration for Reinhold's approach to experimental review articles throughout the journal. Jacobi had recited it in full when Reinhold visited him in 1800, and it impressed him so much that he begged Jacobi to let him publish it in *Beyträge* (Jacobi 2004, 261-2). The review article discusses Kant's philosophy in-depth, but this ultimately also serves as a critical assessment of the state of philosophy in the wake of Kantianism. It employs some of the same review strategies that Hamann used in his review, for instance when the connection between the subject and the 'thing that exists for itself' is characterized as a 'cryptogamy', a concealed marriage (Jacobi 2004, 269). This metaphor in fact expresses the critical thrust of the text: in Jacobi's view, Kant, time and again, depends on bringing two disparate pairs together without explaining their union. This critical assessment serves as a warning to philosophers, to not overplay their hand by assuming that our fundamental relationship to reality is wholly conceivable. Here too, the scope of the object of the critical review necessitates an increased length, as Jacobi decides to combine Hamann's abbreviating metaphors with extended argumentation and analysis.

5. Reception, responses and transformations

Reinhold's contributions to *Beyträge* are now mostly known because they drew intense criticism from Schelling and Hegel. First in Hegel's *Die Differenz des Fichteschen und Schellingschen Systems der Philosophie* (1801) (hereafter *Differenz*) and later in their own experimental review journal, *Kritisches Journal der Philosophie* (1802-1803). The first book's subtitle is 'perspective on the first volume of Reinhold's Beyträge' and it is as much an emancipation of Schelling from Fichte as it is a renunciation of Reinhold's supposedly lacking critical assessment of both philosophers as closely related. In this sense, at least, the book is another counter-review.

The book also responds to Reinhold's attempt to use the history of philosophy as a way to criticize a philosophical system, to 'treat it historically' (Hegel 1968, 15). Hegel argues that one should not utilize the history of philosophy as a way of comparing systems, but as a way of gaining an understanding of the historical manifestation of philosophy (Hegel 1968, 16). This is a way of radicalizing the principle of the universal standard of reviewing, since Hegel's standard

is an Absolute which always stays the same, necessitating a more nuanced understanding of the historical appearance of a system. Reinhold is criticized for his dismissal of other historical systems as 'preliminary practice' and 'ideosyncracies', leading only to his own system (Hegel 1968, 18). Hegel does not reject the history of philosophy as a critical object, but rather the presumptive way in which Reinhold criticizes it. In the last section of the book, it becomes clear that Hegel believes that Reinhold has tacitly introduced a new object for reviewing: philosophy itself. The point of contention is, however, that Reinhold has incorrectly assessed philosophy in its essence and practice (Hegel 1968, 118).

The *Kritisches Journal der Philosophie* follows Reinhold's convention of formulating reviews around a specific issue, which also relates to a broader point. Adopting both the letter format and a more experimental approach to fictionalization in reviewing, the first volume contains a 'Ein Brief von Zettel an Squenz', written by Schelling, referring to fictionalized versions of Reinhold (Zettel) and Bardili (Squenz), as characters from Shakespeare.[22] Zettel complains about Hegel's review of *Beyträge* in *Differenz* (Hegel 1968, 191). Interestingly, the review is used to preempt a renunciation of the disrespectful tone of the review-book, by having Zettel say Hegel 'is only interested in ridiculing us, which I cannot endure, because I am a soft donkey who needs to scratch when one tickles me' (Hegel 1968, 191). Doubling down on the ridicule, Schelling also suggests that Reinhold cannot take what he dishes out.

This donkey analogy, as a way of assessing the situation, seems highly inspired by Hamann, albeit with a more literary bend.[23] The reference also applies to the way the letter ultimately discredits Reinhold, as a fool who never knew how the philosophical revolution would develop, and who cannot be trusted now (Hegel 1968, 191). The text also makes some psychological observations, in order to show that Reinhold's shift from Fichte to Bardili was not out of a love of truth, but rather that the position of being Fichte's student irked him (Hegel 1968, 192). This indicates that Reinhold's character is now more the subject of review than his philosophical position, which Hegel had already reviewed by ridiculing it. Evidently, the assessment is that Reinhold's position is so unserious that we must be dealing with a whim of his character. The text acknowledges another debt in their experimental review practices when it references Fichte's counter-review by having Zettel praise Squenz' 'horse-like imagination' (Hegel 1968, 193). Although it is certainly an escalation to employ this ad hominem, one could also imagine that Schelling was particularly irked by the consequences of Reinhold's abandoning the principle of unmasking. If philosophers do not write inherently deceitfully, any conclusion about their supposed errors immediately relates to

[22] These names are derived from characters in the German translation of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Casting Reinhold as a weaver (of the imagination) is most likely a reference to Jacobi's contribution in *Beyträge*, where the faculty of the imagination is characterized as a weaver (Jacobi 2004, 280).

[23] The donkey is also a reference to the Shakespeare play.

their character, as lacking attention or rigor. Given the fact that Schelling obviously did not admire the quality of Reinhold's analysis, this implication must have seemed particularly presumptuous. Perhaps the ad hominem employed here should be seen as a more explicit version of what was merely implied in *Beyträge*.

Hegel famously took the ad hominem a step further, towards an ad nominem of sorts, when he made light of Krug's name (Krug also means jug) as an empty vessel with no content of its own (Hegel 1968, 184). This is an extreme example of the union of critical vocabulary, labeling and the abbreviation of complexity of argumentation by the critic. In a sense the absolute trust in the earnestness of those whose systems Reinhold reviewed naturally lead to these personal attacks, since a supposed error in reasoning is then easily taken up as a failure of character, easily identified by a comical instance of nominative determinism.

While Reinhold's rational realism became a preferred point of mockery for Schelling and Hegel as one of the problematic tendencies in recent philosophy, it is remarkable to what degree Schelling and Hegel adopt and further develop Reinhold's contributions to the experimental period in reviewing. As bitterly as they mock Reinhold's lack of philosophical rigor, the confrontation with Reinhold's dual project of expositing rational realism and experimenting with review practices raised questions that allowed Schelling, and Hegel especially, to articulate their views on philosophical methodology. The problem of reviewing now explicitly became the problem of philosophical criticism, as a thoughtful practice, rather than a problem of publication.

Beyond the fact that they largely radicalize the approach to experimental reviewing, Schelling and Hegel largely follow Reinhold's interpretation of the principles of review standards. This is particularly evident in the introductory essay, *Ueber das Wesen der philosophischen Kritik überhaupt, und ihr Verhältniß zum gegenwärtigen Zustand der Philosophie insbesondere*. Here they, like Reinhold, thoroughly endorse a universal standard of criticism, which they call an 'unchangeable model [Urbild] of what is the case [die Sache selbst]', or 'the idea of philosophy' (Hegel 1968, 117). This introduction challenges many of the conclusions about the limitations of philosophy that Jacobi had put forward in his review article on criticism. The authors (both Hegel and Schelling contributed) recognize that this universal standard, since it is the idea of philosophy, can by no means be understood by those who are not philosophers (Hegel 1968, 118). In this sense there is a clear limitation on the social recognition of philosophical criticism, which marks a sharp departure from earlier 18th century egalitarian approaches to universal standards of criticism. Within the field of philosophical criticism, they argue that *systematic* elaborations of this idea are more praiseworthy than 'free' elaborations, although those deserve some praise too for following this idea (Hegel 1968, 119). At the same time, and this is where the universal standard becomes especially important, it is the task of criticism to untangle the personal way of expositing from the idea of philosophy that is expressed in it. Criticism is, in this sense, a revelatory act which shows the universal standard in individual expositions. In a way, this is Schelling's and Hegel's version of the principle of unmasking, although they are of course not concerned with the in-

tentions of the author, but rather with unintentional idiosyncrasies that might distract from the idea of philosophy.

In line with the conflict with Reinhold, the *Kritisches Journal* also instigated many personal disputes which revolved around reviewing each other's work. In other ways it was merely responding to review-books published by authors who felt some kinship with the realist cause. Hegel's attack on Wilhelm Traugott Krug, savage as it was, can also be seen as a response to a series of publications by Krug that develop his own position by reviewing idealist publications (Giesbers 2017, 301-4). Similar observations can be made about Schelling's and Hegel's attacks on Jacobi, Köppen, Rückert, Jakob Salat and Christian Weiß. In many ways, they did not start the battle but inherited Fichte's opponents, and significantly intensified this battle through experimental review techniques.

Parallel to this intense experimentation with the review format and standards, a rival enterprise of reviewing was slowly taking root, which is the lexicon, dictionary or encyclopedia as a way of structuring a critical overview. For instance, Salomon Maimon's *Philosophisches Wörterbuch, oder Beleuchtung der wichtigsten Gegenstände der Philosophie* (1791) discloses Maimon's views through the structure of a dictionary. Later in their careers, Krug would write many variations on *Handbuch der Philosophie und Philosophischen Literatur* (1820) and Hegel would write his *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse* (1817). Of course, there were many lexica throughout the 18th century. If one compares these prior publications with Maimon, Krug or even Hegel, there is a striking contrast in terms of the heavy editorialization of topics and arguments in these later ventures.

There are clearly strategic advantages to structuring critique around this lexicon format. It feigns the appearance of an objective scientific discourse from the outset, even if singular entries oftentimes convey highly idiosyncratic views. Even Fichte's proposal for a journal had some encyclopedic qualities (Fichte 1981, 425-426). For many of these authors this format allowed for a better union of their dual functions as philosophers, as critics of philosophy and as teachers of philosophy. Beyond its critical thrust, the format also functions well as a teaching handbook. Under the guise of an overview of philosophy, it quickly allowed philosophers to impress their views on young students.

Given the highly polarizing methods of the experimental review journals, it is not surprising that, over the course of the 19th century, these rival review lexica gained more prominence. I cannot characterize this nuanced contrasting over time in this limited space. We will now turn to a broader historical perspective on the transformation of critical review standards from the vantage point of our examination of *Beyträge* and its immediate impact.

6. Beyträge in relation to the broader transformation of critical standards

In order to place *Beyträge*, as a representative of a group of experimental review journals, we must first look backwards to understand the general development that these journals should be seen in. There is a clear way in which these

authors are operating in the wake of Kant's philosophy. It was Kant who introduced many of the strategies they employed, such as labeling, and the criticizing and canonizing of the history of philosophy. Why for instance, is Hume a skeptic according to Kant, rather than an empiricist (Kant 1787, B792, B844)? A generation of philosophers spent an exorbitant amount of time reading and rereading Kant's critical work, and discussed them in both an educational and a socio-political context. It is therefore not surprising that they picked up some of Kant's strategies for criticism and self-positioning. Obviously, they employed these strategies in an increasingly radical way, to the point that these might be unrecognizable to orthodox Kantians.

The explosion of experimental review practices led to more moderate, or at the very least seemingly moderate responses which we see employed in Krug's handbooks and dictionaries. During the 19th century, extended employment of experimental review practices led to a consensus on which practices are allowed in reviewing. This codification seems to have a largely tacit character, akin to other transformations in the history of knowledge. This codification is clearly in effect in the prohibitions on the ad hominem, and to a lesser degree on the use of metaphor. One could also argue that boundaries have been set, at least tacitly, on the use of the history of philosophy. It is probably more correct to say that we tend to disapprove of the overt or transparent creative use, since we still find creative ways of dealing with it well into the 20th century, particularly in French philosophy. On the other hand, since Kant it has almost become a standard practice for a philosopher to, when he or she gains notoriety, put forward his or her own canon in the history of philosophy, to essentially create one's own tradition of thought. In a way this draws on practices in critical reviewing established by Kant and radicalized by Reinhold, Schelling and Hegel, by uniting the exposition of one's own position with a critical assessment of the history of philosophy. By and large this is also an expression of professional attitudes now widely spread among philosophers, summarized as the idea that the practice of philosophy is inseparable from the history of philosophy. Understanding this moment in critical reviewing around 1800 helps us understand the roots of these professional attitudes, and the ways in which they are tied to universal standards and criticism.

We could also argue that the 19th century and the early 20th century saw efforts to reach consensus on the standard definitions of labels (to the detriment of the historical complexity behind their development). These codifications in philosophy also played some part in the general codification of standards in criticism in society, particularly as German academic discourse gained international prominence in the 19th century.

Of course, there have also been some resurgences of the spirit of experimental reviewing in the 19th century. The most famous of these can undoubtedly be found in an early publication by Friedrich Engels and Karl Marx, *Die heilige Familie, oder Kritik der kritischen Kritik* (1844). As, in some sense, disciples of Hegel who employ materialism as a label to critically assess idealism, the use of these strategies demonstrates that they were in fact employing the critical strategies

of the younger Hegel to criticize the older Hegel as well as their Hegelian contemporaries. We can also see their taking up these experimental review practices as a revolutionary act, breaking with accepted standards of criticism in order to show the pressing social need for a new direction in theory.

The focus on a specific journal has allowed us to investigate how the transformation of critical standards and the experimentation with the form and content of the review allows for a broader perspective on the disparate philosophers involved. With this perspective, we can look beyond what seem like fundamental philosophical disagreements, to see what unites them. It also provides a novel explanation of the excessively personal and unpleasantly mocking tone of some of these attacks. In a sense, even more so than the love of philosophy, it is the commitment to expressing this philosophy with an emerging critical approach to reviewing that brings this group together. Such an intellectual unity has up to now only been darkly expressed in broad terminology like post-Kantianism and romanticism.

And yet, significant future research remains to be done. I have focused on a particular connection from Fichte to Reinhold and Jacobi to Schelling and Hegel, but in many ways, *Athenaeum* is one of the first experimental review journals, and should be studied as such. It should also be explored how lesser-known authors respond to this intense discussion of critical standards and reviewing, such as Bouterwek in *Neues Museum der Philosophie und Litteratur.*

Finally, I believe the practices of this group of experimental review journals raise questions that are still relevant today and bring into focus codifications which are still being challenged. The question, brought to a fine point by Hegel and Schelling after intense experimentation, is: what delimits philosophical criticism? We have seen that there is something in particular about the systematic way in which philosophers present arguments that makes the traditional review format especially untenable and difficult to engage with, on all three sides: author, reviewer and reader. This untenability necessitated bold experimentation with the textual length, the scope of the review (the kinds of critical objects), the relationship between work or thought and character, and the value of mockery and non-philosophical prose such as literature and brusque metaphor.

In not a few of these cases, the problem of untenability is obviated by a synecdochic approach, where there is abbreviation or simplification of argumentative complexity, by making a part representative of the whole.[24] This is accompanied by an increasingly abstract principle of a universal standard, culminating in the introduction of the idea of philosophy. The particular problematic of criticism in philosophy as a discipline also leads to the elimination of various egalitarian principles surrounding reader accessibility, in favor of a more intense allegiance to a universal standard.

This period displays a specific transformation in the possible objects of critical review, which naturally led to the question of how objects of criticism can

[24] Similar arguments about a work representing the whole, in this case in literature, were made in *Athenaeum* (Napierala 2007, 200).

be connected. How should one relate disparate objects like the single work, the collective thought of an author, a philosophical system, a philosophical movement or a specific line in the history of philosophy? It was overwhelmingly the increasingly abstract principle of a universal standard that facilitated these connections.

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"Contributions to a Kantology". Schleiermacher's Critical Assessment of *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*

Riccardo Martinelli

Abstract: The paper examines Friedrich Schleiermacher's 1799 review of Immanuel Kant's *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*. Schleiermacher's critique, published anonymously in the *Athenaeum*, adopts a harsh and ironic tone, deeming Kant's work as trivial and flawed. Schleiermacher argues that Kant's attempt to reconcile systematic and popular elements within his anthropology led to its failure, coining the term "Kantology" to refer to a superficial study of Kant's personality rather than a substantive contribution to anthropology. Schleiermacher contends that Kant's anthropology is internally inconsistent and overly reliant on a rigid distinction between physiological and pragmatic anthropology. According to Schleiermacher, this distinction oversimplifies human nature by neglecting the necessary unity between bodily and mental aspects. The paper highlights how Schleiermacher's review is an important critique of Kant's *Anthropology*, providing insights into both Kant's and Schleiermacher's philosophical views. Schleiermacher criticizes Kant's approach as falling into "lower realism," missing the transcendental and "higher realism" that he associates with religion and human freedom. Despite its acerbic tone, the review is seen as a valuable contribution to the study of Kant's anthropology and Schleiermacher's philosophical development. Schleiermacher's review raises fundamental questions about the compatibility of Kant's anthropology with his broader critical philosophy and offers a re-evaluation of how Kant's ideas on human nature, freedom, and history are integrated into his system of thought.

Keywords: Kant, Schleiermacher, Review, Anthropology, Realism

1. "One of the most heinous things published in the *Athenaeum*."

In 1799 the journal *Athenaeum* published an anonymous review of Immanuel Kant's *Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht*, which had appeared the previous year. The reviewer, Friedrich Schleiermacher, uses unusually harsh tones. The book, we read, consists of a "collection of trivia" and is the "negation of all anthropology," in place of which it may offer some "contributions to a Kantology", whose object is the everyday idiosyncrasies of the man Immanuel Kant, for whom "affects and much else that comes to the mind are properly treated as means of digestion."[1] August Wilhelm Schlegel, editor of the journal with his

[1] RPA, *passim*. I will refer to the English translation of Schleiermacher's review as RPA (= Review of Pragmatic Anthropology), and to Kant's reviewed book as Pragmatic Anthropology (PA). This paper is a modified and expanded version of Martinelli 2023.

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brother Friedrich, spoke in this regard of "one of the most heinous things published in the *Athenaeum*."[2] Wilhelm Dilthey, who was undoubtedly empathetic towards Schleiermacher, asserts that the aforementioned review constitutes an "inexcusable and unjustified offense" which "adds personal insinuations to a judgment that is not supported by scientific evidence" (1970, 490). No doubt that the harshness of tones disturbs the admirers of Kant – or perhaps uncritically galvanize those who cultivate a negative image of the Prussian philosopher. In either case, this is an unfruitful way to approach this review. In order to impartially verify the extent to which Schleiermacher's judgment of the work is, or is not, well-founded, and useful for modern readers, it is necessary not to be swayed too much by the heavy-handed "personal insinuations" of which Dilthey spoke. At the same time, however, style cannot be entirely separated from content, especially in a review and least of all in this review. The text is a dazzling philosophical *tour de force*, as Schleiermacher conceived it. It forces the reader to make an effort of interpretation *of the review* that is unusually disproportionate to the text under review. Manuel Bauer (2019, 245) has shown how Schleiermacher was massively influenced, at the time, by Friedrich Schlegel's style and approach to the genre of the book review. Schleiermacher presents himself as an "ironic, disrespectful" reviewer who proceeds with "immense self-assurance" and "distinguishes himself from the crowd of embarrassed critics" insofar he is the sole scholar unafraid to present "a harsh reckoning with a work of the aging philosophical grandmaster from Königsberg, which is regarded as unsuccessful." (Bauer 2019, 245–46).

Those with a philosophical inclination would then be well advised to delve beyond the surface-level observations on the harsh tone of Schleiermacher's review and instead focus their attention on the interpretative structure that underlies it. In terms of the current state of research, two principal areas of study can be identified: that of Kant research and that of Schleiermacher studies.

The dismissive tone of the review undoubtedly contributes to its unfavorable standing among Kant scholars, as evidenced by the paucity of studies dealing with this text.[3] As a consequence, the review has not been sufficiently capitalized upon for an interpretation of Kant's anthropology. Form this perspective, two key elements deserve particular attention. Primarily, Schleiermacher perceives the reviewed work as a coherent and integral component of the Kantian system of thought.[4] This assertion is in stark contrast to the long-dominant interpreta-

[2] Quoted and translated from Auerochs (2017, 92). Schleiermacher replied (*ibid.*): "I am wholly blameless. I perceive no impropriety in a news regarding an anthropological study." In fact, the review is anything but mere "news."

[3] Among the exceptions, cf. Frierson 2003; Cohen 2008b. There is a mention in Louden (2011, 77), with reference to Cohen 2008b.

[4] According to Frierson (2003, 1), Schleiermacher would rather show that Pragmatic Anthropology "contrasts strikingly with the rest of Kant's philosophy." The reason for this misunderstanding is that Frierson analyzes only one part of Schleiermacher's text (the one I will discuss in § 2), neglecting its remaining section.

tion. For an extended period, scholars have tended to isolate this work from the remainder of the Corpus Kantianum and to diminish its significance as an inadequately conceived late production, or even as a legacy of the traditional scholastic psychology that managed to survive – albeit in a somewhat enigmatic manner – the critical turn.[5] Schleiermacher's strategy is wholly distinct from that of the aforementioned critics. Aligned with Kant's philosophizing, Pragmatic Anthropology is particularly suited to the revelation of certain inherent limitations. These are manifest here with particular clarity due to Kant's incorporation of the consequences pertaining to human beings that arise from critical philosophy. Secondly, Schleiermacher emphasizes Kant's (PA, 233) unfortunate endeavor to reconcile the "systematic" aspect with the "popular" character of exposition. The "reciprocal destruction" [*wechselseitige Zerstörung*][6] of these two aspects lies at the heart of the specific shipwreck of Pragmatic Anthropology. This particular failure, in his view, reinforces the inherent flaws that are derived from the First and Second Critiques.[7] This observation identifies a genuine issue. One of the reasons for the ongoing misunderstandings surrounding Kant's Anthropology is the inherent tension between its systematic and popular aspects. This tension, I believe, should be resolved in favor of a systematic exposition of the ideas expressed in the work. It is not the purpose of this discussion to undertake such a complex analysis, but it is evident that Schleiermacher's review provides an essential preliminary step in this process, as it calls for the fulfillment of this desired outcome.

Furthermore, the review is of considerable value in view of an analysis of the intellectual development of the young Schleiermacher and his confrontation with Kant's ethics.[8] Nevertheless, the text is accorded less attention than might be anticipated.[9] It is only recently that some of the critical examinations

[5] The interconnection between Kant's anthropology and German scholastic psychology has been overstated in the past decades. One of the most prominent figures in this discussion is Norbert Hinske (1996). For a more recent perspective on Kant's anthropology, see Sturm (2009); for a discussion, Martinelli (2010). This paper will demonstrate how Schleiermacher's perspective in the review serves to reinforce the argument that Kant's anthropology is only loosely connected with scholastic psychology.

[6] RPA, 18. Cf. Schleiermacher (1984a, 368).

[7] The present study will demonstrate that Schleiermacher did not take into account Kant's *Critique of the Power of Judgement*, which constitutes a shortcoming of his analysis of Pragmatic Anthropology in the review (see below, § 4).

[8] For a survey of the critical positions on this issue, cf. Bondì (2017, 209-212). Add to this the position of Robert Louden (2000, x), who notes a certain ambiguity in Schleiermacher's pronouncements on Kantian ethics.

[9] An exception to this is the work of Nowak (1986, 252), who, however, posits that Schleiermacher accorded "systematic priority" to a conception of man "thought of as a free agent", while Kant's concept of man "based on the doctrine of faculties" disregarded man as a free agent. This is a gross misrepresentation, that can be attributed to the adoption of the traditional interpretation (Nowak 1986, 249-250), which holds Kant's anthropology to be entirely contingent upon the scholastic psychology of Wolff and Baumgarten. Schleiermacher explicitly rejects this type of interpretation and bases his critique of Kant's anthropology on entirely different grounds, which Nowak is then unable to discern.

of Schleiermacher's thought have begun to consider this review.[10] It seems probable that the difficulties encountered in formulating a general interpretation of Pragmatic Anthropology may be a contributing factor to this apparent reticence. This undoubtedly presents the interpreter with a significant challenge in dealing with Schleiermacher's critique of the work.

In order to address this shortcoming, it is necessary to present now a number of fundamental concepts pertaining to Kant's anthropological perspective. Scholars are still engaged in efforts to define the identity of this work. As this is not the appropriate context for a detailed discussion of the various interpretive options, I will simply present the reading of the text that is currently being increasingly accepted as the correct one. In Kant, the discipline of anthropology emerges as a significant outcome of his critique of metaphysics. More precisely, the discipline follows on Kant's epochal divestment of the philosophical notion of the soul, which remained a dominant concept in the thought of Descartes, Leibniz and their followers. Once rational psychology has been dismissed, along with its associated paralogisms, Kant was left with the task of avoiding two competing approaches to the study of the human mind: psychological empiricism, as exemplified by Locke, and the medical-physiological theories of his time, which were suspected of espousing materialist views. The combination of these starting conditions resulted in Kant's pragmatic approach to anthropology, which incorporated the traditional subject matter of empirical psychology but transformed it into a novel philosophical project. In the initial section of the text, entitled Anthropological Didactics, the author presents a comprehensive examination of the concepts of knowledge, feeling and desire. Rather than focusing on the faculties themselves, the analysis is concerned with the ways in which humans utilize these faculties, which are often inadequate and ineffective. The results of the preceding analysis converge in the second part (Anthropological Characteristics) around the concept of character, which elucidates the potential and responsibility of human beings. Kant draws here on his own philosophy of history to illustrate the positive implications of this concept, demonstrating how anthropology can contribute to the enlightenment and civilization of the "citizen of the world" by exposing the challenges and limitations that impede progress.

It is somewhat ironic that Schleiermacher's review shares with the work under review a fate of marginalization, for similar reasons: it appears that scholars are unable to integrate these writings with the rest of the respective authors' works. More than the content itself, in both cases it is the style that presents a great obstacle to comprehension. The style of the Kant's book and of Schleiermacher's review represent two opposing extremes. Kant's "popular" prose is perceived as overly accessible, perhaps even too much, while Schleiermacher's is characterized by a sophisticated and nuanced approach, incorporating irony and multiple layers of subtlety. This ultimately results in a paradoxical situation, whereby the review may appear to be more challenging to comprehend than the original work itself.

[10] The topic has been discussed by Arndt (2013, 367-368). See also Giacca (2014, 148–53).

2. Kant the transcendentalist

Schleiermacher begins the review by noting the little interest raised among the public by the Kantian text, which would not have been reviewed until then.[11] This can be explained, he suggests, by the fact that reviewers mostly limit themselves to quoting excerpts from the volumes they review: except that the one in question is not much suitable, because it offers a "collection of trivia" as to content and the "most peculiar confusion" as to form. (RPA, 15) But even scrupulous reviewers, those who like to write *about* the book reviewed and not merely quote from it, have a justification for their silence. Precisely by considering the work from the point of view of a genuinely pragmatic anthropology it offers far less than the average individual already knows on the subject. Nevertheless, Schleiermacher suggests, there is a point of view from which the reviewed volume presents interest:

> a book that has little worth when one takes it for what it professes itself to be, can be of significance when one takes it for its opposite, or as something else. And in this light the book appears to be excellent, not as anthropology, but rather as the negation of all anthropology. It is at once claim and proof that something like this, intentionally set up in the same way Kant often expressly sets forth and specially constructs empty subjects in his division of the sciences or of their objects, is impossible in accordance with the idea set forth by Kant, whether it be carried out by him or in terms of his line of thinking.[12]

The reviewer ironically insinuates that the book is, in fact, part of a subtle dissimulation strategy: Kant would have wanted to show what anthropology *is not*. Schleiermacher plays on the fiction that Kant deliberately intended to write a flawed work.[13] "Anyone who reads the preface with care – he writes – […] will be easily convinced that such could have been the opinion of this worthy man alone" (RPA, 16). This highly sophisticated, and yet somewhat cheap rhetorical device is nonetheless important because, as will be seen, it is used by Schlei-

[11] For the record, this is incorrect. In fact, "within a year and a half of its publication, at least eleven reviews of Kant's *Anthropology* came out." Frierson (2003, 1).

[12] RPA, 15-16.

[13] Bauer (2019, 248-249) offers an exemplary explanation: "Kant is said to have deliberately arranged everything attributed to the book in order to show the impossibility of what is asserted. In this view, the divergence of text and author's intention is interpreted as part of the author's intention. Kant suddenly becomes a modern Socrates who consciously involves the reader or conversational partner in paradoxes in order to ultimately arrive at a resolution that he has always known. The audacity of this view shows that the review claiming this, itself proceeds with a great deal of irony. It is not just claimed that a paradox has been discovered. Rather, the claim itself is such a paradox, as Kant's text supposedly presents it. Schleiermacher's text performs what he claims. If Schleiermacher's critique of Kant's anthropology is that it only seeks to demonstrate its own impossibility, then the same applies to Schleiermacher's critique. It should be clear to the reader that the claim that Kant consciously constructed the contradiction, is an ironic claim by the reviewer. The supposed praise turns into bitter mockery by making use of the Socratic irony that was previously attributed to Kant."

ermacher to substantiate his rather unusual charge of *realism* leveled at Kant, which we shall have to deal with in the next section (§ 3).

Schleiermacher then comes to a more substantive claim: there is a fatal flaw in Kant's problematic approach. The basic distinction between anthropology in the "physiological" and "pragmatic" sense - a distinction (note) he believes to be grounded in Kant's "way of thinking" [*Denkungsart*] – makes both impossible. Given the importance of the issue, it is appropriate to first summarize Kant's pronouncement on the subject. Kant wrote:

> a doctrine of the knowledge of the human being, systematically formulated (anthropology), can exist either in a physiological or in a pragmatic point of view. Physiological knowledge of the human being concerns the investigation of what *nature* makes of the human being; pragmatic, the investigation of what *he* as a free-acting being makes of himself, or can and should make of himself. (PA, 231)

In Kant's system, as noted above, anthropology follows from the critique of reason, which proves, prior to any empirical investigation, that man actually *is* a free being. This is out of the question in anthropology.[14] The discipline is not in the business of proving anything in this regard, either positively or negatively. The question then arises of how to configure empirical knowledge of man in light of the results of critical philosophy. According to Kant, the (transcendentally proven) fact of human freedom makes research into neurophysiological processes corresponding to acts of human thought futile. What matters is to see what use human beings make, as free beings, of their mental faculties, and how to procure improvement in this regard. Hence the need to knock out physiological anthropology and the consequent turn toward the pragmatic dimension.

Back to the review now. Denouncing the one-sidedness of the distinction posited by Kant, Schleiermacher proclaims that "the physiological and the pragmatic are one and the same, only directed differently." (RPA, 16) In support, he notes that this is based on two conflicting assumptions: "all free choice [*Willkühr*] in human beings is nature, and all nature in human beings is free choice". In what follows I will return to the meaning of this puzzling formulation in more detail. For the time being, suffice it to note that Schleiermacher identifies the space of anthropology in the combination of the two indicated moments (physiologic and pragmatic): "anthropology should be just the unification of the two, and can exist only through their unification." (RPA, 16)[15]

Schleiermacher takes this formulation for granted and offers no explanation. However, its meaning and origin are far from obvious.[16] At first, one might think

[14] From the very first page, Kant defines Pragmatic Anthropology by stating that it investigates what the human being "as a free acting being makes […] of himself." (PA, 231) Freedom is not demonstrated here: it is taken as a necessary condition for a sound treatment of anthropology.

[15] Many years after this review, Schleiermacher will emphasize the complementarity of soul and body in his Berlin lectures on psychology. Cf. Brino (2011, 131).

[16] Cf. Mariña (2008, 13). Andreas Arndt (2013, 363-364) shows how embarrassing is to point to Schleiermacher's contribution to anthropology. If one understands the discipline as a

of the broad set of tendencies referred to when speaking "of human being as a whole" [*der ganze Mensch*]: a scientific and literary *topos* in vogue at the time.[17] But the risk, at best, is to remain vague. That Schleiermacher's idea of anthropology could be traced back to a historiographical category in which the medical doctrines of the time play a key role is rather unlikely. In any case, this lineage cannot be taken for granted in the absence of some piece of evidence. A far more promising move is to consider the role of Schelling. Remarked by Dilthey in the second volume (unpublished) of *Leben Schleiermachers* (Dilthey 1996, 468-469), the influence of Schelling on the Breslau theologian is now widely acknowledged.[18] In the *Lectures on the Method of Academic Study*, Schelling states that the "true science of man must be based on the essential and absolute unity of soul and body, i.e., the Idea of man; empirical man is but a relative manifestation of the Idea." (Schelling 1966, 65)[19] Needless to say, this attitude necessarily leads to an unappealing condemnation of Kantian pragmatic anthropology. In an altogether similar vein, with reference to the determining motives of action, Schleiermacher (1984c, 214) observed that "it is absurd to think that the human being can be divided. The entire entity is interconnected, and constitutes a unified whole." Later I will try to show, in the light of *On Religion*, how Schleiermacher tried to flesh out this insight and shed some more light on his idea of an anthropology, resulting from the union of the two principles mentioned above.

Before illustrating the *pars construens* of Schleiermacher's idea of human beings, we need to pause and reflect on his reasons for dissenting from the Kantian perspective in the review. In the terms of the previous quotation from Schelling, who speaks of the "essential and absolute unity of soul and body," we might ask whether, according to Schleiermacher, Kant's anthropology was guilty of neglecting the soul, or the body. Answering this question has paramount importance for the understanding of Schleiermacher's review. In light of the idea of transcendental freedom developed in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, one might think that Kant would neglect the *bodily* dimension. Indeed, Kant will be frequently accused of reducing the real individual to a mere transcendental function: devoid of flesh and blood, incurably alien to "life," the transcendental subject would ignore the dimension of the lived body altogether. "No real blood flows in the veins of the knowing subject" - Dilthey (1989, 50) famously wrote - "constructed by [...] Kant, but rather the diluted extract of reason as a

"foundational systematic recourse to a knowledge about the nature of man," then no concept of anthropology "can be discerned in Schleiermacher," since any "empirical description of human nature" detains a subordinate significance for him.

[17] For the concept in general cf. Schings (1994); with reference to Schleiermacher, Herms (2017, 214).

[18] Manfred Frank (2005, 18) insisted on the "connection with Schelling, affirmed by Schleiermacher himself (but never satisfactorily investigated)."

[19] Cf. Crouter (2005, 161), van Zantwijk (2002, 115). See also chapter five of Purvis (2016, 86-108).

mere activity of thought."[20] Kant's choice to neglect *physiological* anthropology is a move that seems to reinforce this accusation. Not only in the Critique of practical reason - where he could be justified - but even in approaching anthropology Kant would incredibly have managed to keep the corporeal out of the door, thus neglecting "the whole man." However, care must be taken: even assuming the legitimacy of this criticism, it must be clear that this does not mean that Kant neglected the body *in favor of the soul*. Precisely this would have been inconceivable to him. Indeed, from the *Critique of Pure Reason* we know that Kant considered the concept of "soul" to be philosophically unserviceable. Kant could never have accepted Schelling's formula of an "absolute unity *of soul* and body" as the foundation of anthropology, an idea that seems close to Schleiermacher's thinking instead.

The question remains, therefore, whether Schleiermacher imputes to Kant the neglect of *the bodily dimension*, in light of the transcendental conception of freedom in the *Critique of Practical Reason,* or the neglect *of the concept of the soul*, in light of the doctrine of paralogisms in the dialectics transcendental of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. As we shall see, at different lines of the review he imputes *both* to Kant. Most critics draw attention to the moments where the first allegation, that of neglecting the body, is brought against Kant. However, I believe that in Schleiermacher's eyes the greater fault is the other, that of neglecting *the soul*. Only in this sense can one explain the accusation against Kant of "realism".

Let us begin with Schleiermacher's first allegation, that of neglecting the body. In this regard it is useful to quote in full a long passage from Schleiermacher's review, parts of which have already been anticipated.

> The antithesis between physiological and pragmatic anthropology, grounded in Kant's way of thinking and quite originally set up here, makes both impossible. Indeed, at the root of this division lie two correct but opposing claims: all free choice [*Willkühr*] in human beings is nature, and all nature in human beings is free choice. However, anthropology should be just the unification of the two, and can exist only through their unification; the physiological and the pragmatic are one and the same, only directed differently. The old psychology, which thank God is no longer at issue now, abstracted from the latter of these two propositions, and could therefore not answer the question of how it is then possible to reflect on the mind, if in this reflection there is no freedom, and hence no guarantee of its truth. Kant wants to ignore the first proposition, since, as is well known, the "I" has no nature for him. This gives rise to the question: Where do the "observations about what hinders or promotes a mental faculty"[21]? come from, and how are these observations to be used for the mind's expansion, *if there are no physical ways to consider and treat this expansion* in terms of the idea that all free choice is at the same time nature? (RPA 16)

[20] In the omitted part of the quote, Dilthey also refers to Hume and Locke in this regard.

[21] With this quote, Schleiermacher refers to PA, 231.

> Considering the argument analytically, Schleiermacher's two theses are:
> (1) *free choice in human beings is nature*, and
> (2) *nature in human beings is free choice*.[22]

In this passage, Schleiermacher adopts the critical line consisting in imputing to Kant the neglect of the bodily dimension, and laments that for Kant "there are no physical ways to consider and treat this expansion" in terms of proposition n. (1), that is, "the idea that all free choice is at the same time nature." It is affirmed that Kant neglects n. (1), while scholastic psychologists instead neglected n. (2), precluding themselves from understanding man as a free being. Schleiermacher is adamant that Kant's pragmatic anthropology has nothing in common with scholastic psychology: rather, the two disciplines have diametrically opposed points of view. He is certainly right about that.

It seems unlikely, however, that Schleiermacher's primary concern was Kant's apparent neglect of the bodily dimension. Even a cursory examination of Schleiermacher's writings suggests that this is an implausible hypothesis. A comprehensive analysis of the review reveals that this is not the case. The passage quoted above represents merely the initial portion of a more intricate argument, which ultimately culminates in the diametrically opposed assertion that Kant neglected the soul. This allegation is considerably more integrated with the remainder of Schleiermacher's oeuvre than the aforementioned claim. Thus far, Schleiermacher's critique merely asserts that Kant's arguments are internally inconsistent when viewed through the lens of his own premises. This does not imply, however, that the premises in question can be accepted unreservedly.

3. Kant the realist

In order to comprehend Schleiermacher's subsequent assertions, it is essential to keep in mind the above illustrated distinction between the two opposing propositions: in human beings, free will is intrinsic to nature, and nature is intrinsic to free will. Schleiermacher asserted that the discipline of anthropology is concerned with the reconciliation of these two aspects. He proceeds to elaborate further:

> No one will marvel at the misunderstanding of this antithesis, united here in an anthropology, in virtue of which Kant throughout refers nature to the corporeal, to the body, and to the mysterious relation of the mind [*Gemeinschaft des Gemüths*] to it. Rather, one sees here more than before how that which appears

[22] The concept of free choice [*Willkühr*] requires elucidation. Schleiermacher (1984c) identifies three forms of specification of the faculty of desiring: instinct, free choice and will. The will is the sole faculty that reflects a rational approach (that of responding to certain maxims), whereas free choice encompasses a determination with regard to an array of potential alternatives. Cf. Blackwell (1982, pp. 40–41). It seems probable that Schleiermacher considers "free choice" to be the most appropriate term when discussing anthropology in RPA.

> to be but a pure deification of free choice is at bottom quite *closely related to a hidden realism*, to which Kant still pays secret and idolatrous homage after he himself had overturned and demolished it. (RPA 17, *emphasis added*)

In contrast to the aforementioned criticism of Kant's disregard for the bodily element, sacrificed on the altar of his abstract transcendentalism, Schleiermacher now laments that "Kant throughout refers nature to the corporeal, to the body". From a formal standpoint, this dialectical transition is substantiated by the aforementioned rhetorical device, which posits that this non-anthropological discourse is a kind of fiction of Kant: in a manner reminiscent of a consummate illusionist, he reveals and conceals elements according to his purposes. However, Schleiermacher's argument concerning "realism" is substantial.

Schleiermacher's accusation of realism does not make much sense unless we contextualize it. In this respect, it is particularly important to compare the review in question with his contemporary work *On Religion. Speeches to its Cultured Despisers* (Schleiermacher, 1988a). This is especially relevant given that the section 'Notizen' (Book reviews) in this issue of the *Athenaeum* opens with a comprehensive review of Schleiermacher's book written by Friedrich Schlegel, but unsigned. The text is immediately followed by Schleiermacher's equally anonymous review of Kant's Pragmatic Anthropology, which invites the reader of the journal to make a comparison and observe a striking contrast between the two books reviewed.[23] In *On Religion*, Schleiermacher introduces the concept of 'higher realism' [*höherer Realismus*], which is supposed to represent the summit and true culmination of idealism, whereas Kant's lower form of realism in Pragmatic Anthropology misses this level entirely.

Let us see how this happens in more detail. In the second speech of *On Religion*, Schleiermacher (1988a, 23) contrasts the viewpoint of religion with that of metaphysics and morality, which "see in the whole universe only humanity as the center of all relatedness, as the condition of all being and the cause of all becoming". Metaphysics "proceeds from finite human nature and wants to define consciously, from its simplest concept, the extent of its powers, and its receptivity, what the universe can be for us and how we necessarily must view it"; morality "proceeds from the consciousness of freedom; it wishes to extend freedom's realm to infinity and to make everything subservient to it." By contrast, religion "breathes there where freedom itself has once more become nature; it apprehends man beyond the play of his particular powers and his personality, and views him from the vantage point where he must be what he is, whether he likes it or not". (Schleiermacher 1988a, 23) The terms of the dichotomy used in the review of Kant are presented in a less cryptic form here. In religion, as Schleiermacher writes here, "freedom itself has once more become nature." Accordingly, from the perspective of religion, the conjunction of nature and freedom

[23] As Bauer (2019, 245) puts it: "The differences between the author being reviewed and the reviewer are blurred, as are those between the reviewers, especially as Schleiermacher is obviously trying to adopt Schlegel's style of writing."

is actualized. In contrast, as has been demonstrated, the absence of this union is precisely what renders Kant's anthropology unsuitable.[24]

Schleiermacher builds upon his argument concerning the function of religion in relation to the domain of theoretical systems.

> And how will the triumph of speculation, the completed and rounded idealism, fare if religion does not counterbalance it and allow it to glimpse a *higher realism* than that which it subordinates to itself so boldly and for such good reason? Idealism will destroy the universe by appearing to fashion it; it will degrade it to a mere allegory, to an empty silhouette of our own limitedness (Schleiermacher 1988a, 24; *emphasis added*)

It is Spinoza who provides Schleiermacher with the inspiration for this higher realism. While metaphysics and morality adopt a perspective that is finite in nature, religion takes a stance that is infinite. Indeed, religion is willing to posit the existence of a "system of intuitions" of the universe (Schleiermacher 1988a, 26). Nevertheless, it would be wrong to assume that religion negates the existence of metaphysics and morality. Rather, it coexists with them, providing a potential for transformation. This allows for the culmination of idealism, both moral and metaphysical, in the hoped-for higher form of realism.

This elementary analysis allows us to gain a deeper insight into Schleiermacher's review of Kant, and to interpret correctly what he means when he states that the aforementioned *deification of freedom*, as he puts it in the review (see above), leads to Kant's hidden realism. Schleiermacher and Kant both concur that the supersensible world is unknowable. Schleiermacher, however, differs from Kant in his refusal to endorse the latter's covert reinstatement of the supersensible world and the revaluation of the transcendental ideas as postulates of practical reason. In fact, then, Kant's celebrated worship of human freedom is underpinned by a realist perspective: *Kant's anthropology is guilty of occupying, as it were, the theoretical space that should belong to religion*. But there is a stark contrast in perspectives. As an anthropologist, Kant fails to recognize the connection to the "higher" realism and instead falls into an impoverished "lower" realism, which is a grotesque anthropological parody of religion.[25]

[24] Cf. Arndt (2013, 367-368).

[25] Against this reading, it has been argued that Kant's concept of "nature" is employed in Pragmatic Anthropology in two distinct senses. On the one hand, it is utilized to denote the set of cerebral conditioning factors that fall within the purview of "physiological" anthropological inquiry, which results in a misguided perspective. Conversely, however, throughout the text and especially in the Anthropological Characteristic, Kant (e.g., PA, 198-199, 224) also refers to "nature" in a teleological sense. In doing so, he is consistent with his analysis of teleological judgment from the third Critique and with his writings on the philosophy of history. The distinction between these two aspects is pivotal to Alix Cohen's (2008, 5) response to Schleiermacher, in which she proposes to distinguish between 'natural' anthropology (in the sense outlined above) and 'physiological' anthropology. Kant rejected only the latter, not the former. This is an important point, and one that should be the subject of agreement.

Schleiermacher considers Kant's system of philosophy to be fundamentally flawed. Once religion and the higher dimension is overlooked, Kant's realism becomes simplistic and reductionist. This is evident in his approach to anthropology, which is then "completely alienated from its natural tendency to be ascetic, in the highest sense of the word (a goal that must be somehow achieved in every real treatment of it), and, to the contrary, in a very meager sense, becomes 'dietary' [*diätetisch*]" (RPA 17). It seems likely that Schleiermacher is referring to the conclusion of the *Metaphysics of Morals*, the Ethische Methodenlehre, whose second section is entitled Ethical Ascetics. In this text, Kant (1996, 597) posits that ascetics "is a kind of *regimen*" [*Diätetik*] for keeping a human being "[morally] healthy".[26] However, he goes on, "*health* is only a negative kind of well-being: it cannot itself be felt" unless something is added. In this way, Kant's "moral dietetics" rehabilitates Epicurus, offering a more optimistic perspective that counters the somber attitude of the Stoics. Kant's prescription for maintaining an "ever-cheerful heart" is an important contribution to his discourse on asceticism. It suggests that asceticism, when practiced with a positive outlook, can avoid becoming a gloomy and severe discipline, which could otherwise lead to unhealthy outcomes. With this in mind, Schleiermacher offers the ironic observation that Kant's anthropology fails to recognize the elevated concept of moral dietetics, as articulated in the *Metaphysics of Morals*, and instead becomes a simplistic doctrine of physical health. In the event, then, Kant "comes back to the physiological": accordingly, "rest after work and the joys of a good table always recur as important", while "affects and much else that comes to the mind are properly treated as means of digestion" (RPA, 17). Schleiermacher reiterates here the aforementioned rhetorical device, positing that Kant deliberately developed this part of his doctrine to illustrate the opposite of what he says explicitly, that is, to show the inextricability of pragmatic and physiological realities. For the reviewer, Kant's emphasis on the physiological simply makes evident that his objective was to "make a contradiction graphic." (RPA 17) In fact, however, Schleiermacher draws attention to the sections of Kant's work (PA 377) where the pinnacle of "highest moral-physical good" is identified in the dinner party, meaning that engaging in pleasant conversation among the guests serves to elevate the bodily experience of the meal itself.

This marks the advent of a transformation of anthropology into a "Kantology," as perceived by the reviewer. Biographers have demonstrated that even in his advanced years, Kant continued to receive visitors in the manner he had done on a regular basis in the past. (cf. Kuehn 2001, 334, 421) This provided him with a brief interlude of diversion from the sustained periods of concentration he applied himself to during the working day. However, this respite was not merely a source of relaxation; it was an intellectually rewarding diversion that

[26] The translation of this sentence was integrated with the word 'morally' from the German original "*moralisch gesund*" (Kant 1914: AA VI, 485). In this context, we need to distinguish clearly between the *moral* dietetics of the Metaphysics of Morals and the *physiological* attitude of Pragmatic Anthropology, lamented by Schleiermacher.

was firmly embedded within his broader philosophical pursuits and imbued with a profound moral significance. Clearly, Schleiermacher regarded the concept of a "highest moral-physical good" as spurious and reprehensible.[27] In a paper devoted to the concept of the *supreme good* in and of itself, he criticized Kant for admitting the feeling of happiness into it, thereby paving the way for an improper conceptual promiscuity: the "connection of highest good and happiness undermines the entire Kantian moral philosophy at its foundations." (Schleiermacher 1984b, 95). It is therefore unsurprising that he reacted negatively to the notion of happiness being represented almost as a prandial satisfaction in the above mentioned chapters of Kant's book.

Finally, Schleiermacher's critique extends to the *style* adopted by Kant. He criticizes the failure to reconcile the systematic approach with the prevailing popular style of the work: systematics "has been ruined by striving for what is popular" (RPA 18). Indeed, at least within the field of Anthropological Didactics, Kant adopts the overarching framework of the traditional scholastic psychology, loosely following the order of topics set forth by Baumgarten in his *Metaphysics*. Nevertheless, this systematic arrangement does not align with Kant's conceptual framework "precisely because this deeper thinking and farther seeing author understands the mind from another perspective, and separates its different modes of action otherwise", meaning not in accordance with the psychology of the faculties, "so that his divisions do not at all agree with this traditional framework and thus his observations also cannot be integrated with it". The unfortunate consequence is that the popular style prevails in this work.[28]

Consequently, Schleiermacher concludes by identifying a number of shortcomings that further exacerbate the issues previously outlined. Kant's "admiration of wit" and of "mannered wordplays", the "complete lack of knowledge of art, and especially of poetry", the treatment "of the female as a deviation of the male, and thoroughly as a means," and a "description of peoples, which smacks much of the joys at the table": all of these are "contributions to a Kantology" which are recommended only to the "blind admirers of this great man" (RPA 18).

In this prediction, Schleiermacher was incorrect. Pragmatic Anthropology would instead provide the greatest source of embarrassment for Kant's followers, and most of all for his "blind admirers". It seems likely that they would concur with many of Schleiermacher's criticisms, but would attribute the shortcomings of the work to Pragmatic Anthropology alone, viewing it as an unfortunate consequence of the philosopher's advanced age.

[27] In fact, Kant (PA 377) makes it clear that "the two kinds of good, the *physical* and the *moral,* cannot be mixed together": they would neutralize themselves. But since it is difficult to "prevent mixing in practice," we need to break down the "end of happiness" by "counteracting agents (*reagentia*)", in order to ascertain "which elements in what proportion can provide, when they are combined, the enjoyment of a *moral happiness*."

[28] In his coeval review of Fichte's *Destination of Man*, Schleiermacher (1988b) also expresses reservations about the "popular" style in philosophy. A parallel analysis of these two reviews must be postponed to another occasion.

4. An evaluation of Schleiermacher's review

Schleiermacher's interpretation is of significant interest to modern readers. He explicitly recognizes the fundamental integration of Pragmatic Anthropology with Kantian philosophy as a whole and is thus able to grasp the large extent to which the book diverges from traditional scholastic psychology. It is noteworthy that several contemporary scholars would refute both of these claims. Schleiermacher's dismissive review takes an alternative direction. The concept of freedom as defined by Kant in his transcendental philosophy is not readily compatible with empirical observations of human behavior. In other words, Kant is consistent with his own philosophical position when he characterizes anthropology as a pragmatic discipline, yet he is unable to fully implement this approach. In addition to this, Kant's approach to Pragmatic Anthropology is misguided, as the Didactics formally follows the table of contents of the traditional faculty psychology, which results in the "popular" aspects becoming the primary focus, while remaining on a superficial level. As a result, the physiological dimension is reaffirmed and becomes even more dominant than the pragmatic one.

Despite its harsh tones, Schleiermacher's review can facilitate a reappraisal of Pragmatic Anthropology, albeit in a paradoxical manner. Indeed, it is my contention that Schleiermacher's two primary critical assertions are accurate. First, Pragmatic Anthropology is entirely independent of scholastic psychology. Second, it is fundamentally aligned with Kant's philosophy. It represents exactly the kind of anthropology that must follow on the fundamental tenets of Kant's philosophy: the rejection of transcendental ideas, in particular of the concept of the soul (First Critique), the unwavering affirmation of human freedom (Second Critique) and the conviction in a regulative order of nature, manifesting itself in human history as well (Third Critique). Schleiermacher, along with numerous subsequent critics, fails to acknowledge the significance of this orientating source of Pragmatic Anthropology: the *Critique of the Power of Judgement* together with Kant's philosophy of history. The fact that the review concludes with an analysis of the character of the people is highly significant. Schleiermacher omits the extensive concluding section of the work on the Character of the species, in which Kant addresses a multitude of issues pertaining to his philosophy of history, morals, and politics.[29] Schleiermacher's neglect of this section has wide-ranging implications. The reviewer fails to recognize the particular form in which Kant's 'realism' – that is, the anthropological examination of corporeal constraints that interact with human capabilities and concerns – becomes 'higher' in its own way. Kant repeatedly demonstrates, as he has elsewhere, that the natural world, understood in a providential sense, offers a range of incentives that can compensate for human shortcomings, including laziness, mediocrity, foolishness, and evil. It should be noted that this is a regulative principle and not a matter of scientific certainty. However, this discrepancy between the in-

[29] The tendency to overlook the Anthropological Characteristics persists until recent times. Cf. Sturm (2009, 509). This holds particularly for the concluding section.

dividual's destination and the nature of the whole is pivotal for an understanding of Kant's Pragmatic Anthropology.

A comparison with the reading – which is somewhat cautious, but far more measured – of Pragmatic Anthropology offered by Goethe is instructive. In a letter to Schiller dated 19 December 1798, Goethe notes that the work is of considerable value but must be sampled gradually, in small doses. When taken together, it is unedifying. Goethe (1890, 145) primarily takes issue with Kant's portrayal of humanity in a "pathological" state. However, he acknowledges that the approach, characterized by its "spiritual richness," offers a "stimulating" treatment under the specified circumstances. Schiller (1890, 146) responds that Kant's writings often exhibits a pervasive "pathological" quality, that imbues his practical philosophy with a "gruff" [*grämlich*] aspect. However, Schiller suggests that this pathological aspect may be appropriate in an anthropology. Consequently, there are authoritative contemporary responses that, while identifying some critical elements of the Kantian approach, do not dismiss it, as Schleiermacher did, on the grounds of its incompatibility with an alternative conception of anthropology.

Schleiermacher's review not only offers a stylistic update for the art of reviewing books, but also provides an insight into the potential for a new approach to philosophical discourse. From this perspective, Schleiermacher's critique of Kant's "Kantology" can be seen to prefigure several of the later unmasking of the *allzumenschlich* aspect of philosophical knowledge, as exemplified by Feuerbach[30] – who was Schleiermacher's auditor – or Nietzsche and beyond, extending to prominent new critics of Kantian anthropology with considerable followings, including Heidegger and Foucault. The fact that the reagent capable of triggering this process was precisely Kant's Pragmatic Anthropology is not a mere coincidence. The introduction of an anthropological moment into philosophy, to which Kant makes a significant contribution (in this respect he thinks of the *Weltbegriff* of philosophy), will arouse controversy among many thinkers as an improper lowering of the level of philosophizing – as an "inferior" realism, in the sense explained above. For example, Schleiermacher observes that Kant "irrevocably proved that it is impossible to reflect on the particulars that are found in inner experience if one does not somehow begin the business at a higher level." (RPA, 18) He regards Pragmatic Anthropology as a concept that is as novel as it is unwelcome. In a manner that is critical of Kant's observations on the subject (PA, 369), he ironically refers to the book as the "newborn's cry" of this particular form of philosophy. Nevertheless, Schleiermacher observes that, in a physical exercise, the configuration of muscles and the extremities of the limbs

> come to light more strongly the more nearly it approaches the limits of physical strength, so too in the case of this effort (expressly undertaken with such an intention) the form of the mind and the limitation of its individual parts was presented in manifold ways more exactly than otherwise. (RPA 19)

[30] Andreas Arndt insists on the process whereby authors close to anthropology such as Feuerbach and (later) Dilthey were inspired by Schleiermacher. See Arndt (2013, 363).

Although he acknowledges this function in Kant's 1798 book, namely, demonstrating 'the form of the mind' and 'the limitation of its individual parts', Schleiermacher questions the fundamental connection between such an endeavor and the domain of philosophy.

Such arguments will inevitably result in a growing disillusionment with the field of anthropology and the emergence of an anti-humanist discourse characterized by disdain. This perception of anthropology as a formidable and potentially lethal challenge to philosophical thought is a misguided and simplistic view. It is not my intention to ascribe a pivotal historical significance to Schleiermacher's review. It would be erroneous to propose that such a brief publication could have initiated such extensive historical and philosophical processes. Rather, Schleiermacher's review of Kant's book represents the initial manifestation of a pattern that will subsequently recur throughout the history of philosophy. Once again, the reviewed text is attributed a feature that is in fact characteristic of the review itself, which may be regarded as the "newborn's cry" of a philosophical genre. This pattern is revealed with a clarity and precision that are rare to encounter, thus enabling the identification of the distinctive features that render a re-reading of the review both fruitful and meaningful in the present context.

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