

NEW ESSAYS ON THE PRECRITICAL

# KANT

*edited by*

TOM ROCKMORE



Humanity  
Books

an imprint of Prometheus Books  
59 John Glenn Drive, Amherst, New York 14228-2197

---

## HERDER'S REVIEW OF DREAMS OF A SPIRIT-SEER (1766)<sup>1</sup>

Marion Heinz

### INTRODUCTION

Johann Gottfried Herder commenced his study of theology and philosophy at the University of Königsberg on August 10, 1762. Thereby began his confrontation with the philosophy of his teacher Immanuel Kant, a confrontation which was decisive for his thought and continued his whole life.

Herder's notes from Kant's lecture courses are not merely the only remaining witness of the latter's teaching before 1770, they also document the engaged and independent encounter with this thought on Herder's part. This encounter emerges still more clearly in Herder's first philosophical work, *Versuch über das Sein* (1763) and his review of Kant's *Dreams of a Spirit-Seer*.<sup>2</sup> The latter text, which appeared on March 3, 1766, in the "Königsbergischen Gelehrten und Politischen Zeitung [Königsberg Learned and Political Newspaper],"<sup>3</sup> will be studied in some detail. For this document of Herder's debate with Kant has unjustifiably been almost totally neglected hitherto.<sup>4</sup> Understood historically, however, it is the last of Herder's public and at the same time substantial statements on Kant's philosophy before the publication of his *Metakritik* in 1799. There is no trace either in Herder's published works and letters or—insofar as can be ascertained—in his papers<sup>5</sup> of a reception of the most important Kantian text on the way to critical philosophy, "De mundi sensibilis atque intelligibilis forma et principiis [On the

---

This is an English translation of pp. 27–43 of Heinz's article "Sensualistischer Idealismus. Untersuchungen zur Erkenntnistheorie und Metaphysik des jungen Herder (1763–1778)," *Studien zum 18. Jahrhundert*, vol. 17. © Felix Meiner Verlag, Hamburg 1994. Reprinted with permission of the publisher.

Form and Principles of the Sensible and Intelligible World]."<sup>6</sup> It is hence all the more important to understand Herder's approach to the *Dreams*. The latter work follows Hume's insight that the principles of the soul's actions are not empirically cognizable. But also the possibility of nonempirical, rational knowledge of the soul is called into question. This skepticism forms the starting point for a revision of the foundations of metaphysical knowledge.

It is illuminating to see how Herder related to this forerunner of Kant's critical writings, not only for the development of the relationship between Kant and Herder.<sup>7</sup> Herder's discussion of this text is significant also for his own understanding of its central theme, the relationship of body and soul.<sup>8</sup> On the one hand, the dualism of matter and spirit which Kant expounds in this work is the position which Herder attacks right from the beginning. On the other hand, Herder takes up Kant's monadological and dynamic concept of matter for his own theory of the relationship of body and soul. Kant's philosophy is hence—as is the case in the "Versuch über das Sein"—at one and the same time the position which Herder attacks and the source from which he develops his own ideas. In his review of the *Ideen...* (1784),<sup>9</sup> Kant's criticism of Herder's assumption of an invisible region of efficacious and independent forces as dogmatic metaphysics, which "seeks to explain that which one does not grasp on the basis of that which one grasps even less," is based solely on the *Dreams* and not on the critical philosophy. Apparent as well is Kant's accusation that his student did not even understand the lesson in epistemology contained therein.<sup>10</sup>

### THE PROBLEM POSED IN *DREAMS OF A SPIRIT-SEER*

In a letter to Moses Mendelssohn from April 8, 1766,<sup>11</sup> Kant expounded in a concise form the problem of *Dreams* and the main points of its skeptical solution:

In my opinion everything depends on finding the data to the problem: how is the soul present in the world both in material natures and in other entities of its own kind? One must therefore find the force of external efficacy and the receptivity to suffer from without in such a substance, of which the unity with the human body is only a special form. Due to the fact that no experience is available to us through which we could identify such a subject in its various relations, which only and alone themselves are able of revealing its external force or capacity; given further that the harmony with the body is only the opposite side of the relationship of the inner state of the soul (of thought and will) to the external state of the matter of

our bodies and thus that in this harmony no relationship of an external activity with an external activity is discovered, and thus is not capable of resolving the question; given all that one asks whether it is possible to understand these forces of spiritual substances through rational a priori judgments. This investigation dissolves into another: namely whether one can find a primitive force, i.e., the first basic relationship of cause to effect, through rational deduction. Because I am certain that this is impossible it thus follows that if these forces are not given to me in experience, they can only be invented. Such invention, however, (*fictio heuristica* [heuristic fiction], hypothesis) cannot even allow proof of possibility, and the thinkability (the appearance of which comes for the fact that the impossibility of it is also not able to be proved) is a mere illusion, for this reason I dared to defend the dreaming of [Emanuel] Swedenberg himself, when somebody attacked its possibility. And my attempted analogy of a real moral influence of spiritual nature with universal gravitation is not really a serious opinion of mine, but rather an example how far one can go with philosophical inventions without encountering obstacles where the data is lacking and how necessary it is for such a task to find out what is necessary to the solution of the problem and whether the necessary data are lacking. If, however, we leave for the moment to one side the proofs from propriety or from divine purposes, and ask whether such a knowledge of the soul is ever possible from our experience which is sufficient to recognize the form of its presence in space both in relation to material as well as to beings of its own kind, then it will be shown whether birth (metaphysically understood), life, and death are something which we would ever be able to gain insight into through reason. Here the issue is whether there are not in this case real boundaries, which are not set by the limits of our reason, nor by limits of our experience, which contains the data to it.<sup>12</sup>

Kant's skepticism regarding the external efficacy of the soul and its capacity to be effected from without extended both to metaphysical and to empirical knowledge. The insight that the relationship of cause and effect is in principle unknowable through reason presents an obstacle to metaphysical knowledge. The only way left is to arrive at knowledge of these forces through the data of experience. But in the present case this way is also closed off. It is certainly the case that we have an inner experience of the efficacy of the soul in our *modi cogitandi* and we have the experience of the agreement of the inner state of the soul and the external state of the body (e.g., motion of an organ). However, the ways and means of the activity of the soul is not given to us as in external experience, such that we could recognize a causal relation corresponding to that between bodies. Thus, this fact of the external efficacy of the soul concerns something which is only thought, not

however given in experience. The data cannot be connected in one experience into a unified cause-effect relationship. According to Klaus Reich, this insight, together with the discovery of incongruent counterparts in space in the work *Über den Unterschied der Gegenden im Raum* (1768) is the most important insight for the genesis of critical philosophy to be found in *Dreams of a Spirit-Seer*.<sup>13</sup> In the latter work Kant abandons the parallelism of inner and outer which he still held in "Nova dilucidatio" and postulates that all data can be related with each other in one unified and, furthermore, external experience.

How does Herder react to this his teacher Kant's important development of 1766? Like Mendelssohn,<sup>14</sup> Herder could not clearly make out the unifying thematic and skeptical result of this work which approached "often the mood of Tristram Shandy."<sup>15</sup> He could, nonetheless, see that it contained "some great characteristics for a plan," "which the author could best set forth and apply."<sup>16</sup> It is not by accident that Herder compares Kant with Socrates in connection with the emphasis on the skeptical method. In other words, this method appeared to Herder as a means to tease out ideas and not as a procedure to define the boundaries of knowledge.<sup>17</sup>

## SPIRIT AND MATTER

According to Herder, the first chapter of the first part contains a new definition of the concept of spirit, then a discussion of whether such spirits exist, and a new hypothesis to explain the interaction of body and soul.<sup>18</sup> Herder seems to agree with Kant's exposition of these points: "The author, who takes the fortunate analytical way, always to philosophize *kat' anthropon* (from the human), adds certainly only something negative to the normal understanding of spirit; but this is a quality which gives to the whole difference of spirit from matter a clarity not to be found hitherto."<sup>19</sup> Thus, Herder praises both Kant's method and the results gained in this work. In order to "disentangle" the "hidden meaning" of the concept spirit, Kant follows the procedure of "analysis" which he himself put forward in the work "Concerning Precision" as the method of philosophy: "I shall compare my ill-understood concept with all its different applications. By noticing with which cases my concept is compatible and with which it is inconsistent, I hope to unfold the concealed sense of the concept."<sup>20</sup>

In terms of content, what is at issue is the differentiation of spirit and matter. The *Physical Monadology* (1756) had already shown that Kant was close to the position of Wolff in his understanding of monads. Wolff had substantially altered Got-

fried Wilhelm von Leibniz's doctrine of monads in the direction of a return to Cartesian dualism.<sup>21</sup> According to Wolff, bodies should also be accorded the rank of substances, if only derived ones. Not every monad is *vis repraesentativa* since there are also *elementa rerum naturalium*, known as *atomi naturae* which have no perceptions.<sup>22</sup> With this conception of two different forces, a *vis repraesentativa* of the soul and a *vis motrix* of the body Wolff approached Descartes's dualism.<sup>23</sup>

In the *Physical Monadology*, Kant named two classes of monads without, however, explaining the difference between them.<sup>24</sup> In relation to the concept of monad, defined as a simple substance<sup>25</sup> which does not consist of a number of parts of which one can exist without the other, Kant gives the following footnote: "Since the purpose of my account is only to treat of the class of simple substances which are the primitive parts of bodies, I give notice in advance that in what follows I shall use the following terms as if they were synonymous: simple substances, monads, elements of matter, and primitive parts of bodies."<sup>26</sup> In the *Dreams of a Spirit-Seer* Kant presents the following distinction between material and immaterial monads, already cited in Herder's notes of Kant's lecture course: "beings, therefore, which lack the quality of impenetrability, will never constitute a solid whole, no matter how many of them are united together. Simple beings of this kind are called immaterial beings and if they are possessed of reason they are called spirits. But simple substances which yield an impenetrable and extended whole when they are compounded together, are called material entities, while the totality of such substances is called matter."<sup>27</sup>

Important in this distinction is, Herder stresses that immaterial substances are only negatively and externally distinguishable from material substances. According to Kant, material and immaterial substances are to be considered with respect to their inner states and with respect to their external relations.<sup>28</sup> Our own inner state is known through inner experience and by means of an argument from analogy we accord every living thing, i.e., everything which is self-moving as we are, those same forces which we find in ourselves: thought and desire.<sup>29</sup>

Certain knowledge of the inner state of material monads is lacking. Kant accepts Leibniz's hypothesis that the elements of matter have dark representations as having a high degree of probability.<sup>30</sup> Even if one wanted to grasp the difference between immaterial and material substances in such a way that one defines the former positively as possessing the faculty of reason, nothing would be gained for the valid distinction between spirits and material elementary parts. This is the case because the possibility of the agreement of the inner state is not excluded and the differentiation with respect to the external presence is not accomplished.

"Now although such substances were in themselves endowed with the faculty of reason, externally they would nonetheless be indistinguishable from the elements of matter, in the case of which one is only acquainted with the powers of their external presence; as for what may belong to their inner properties—of that one has no knowledge whatsoever."<sup>31</sup> As concerns immaterial monads, the difficulty consists in the fact that there is no positive concept of their external presence; they are distinguishable from material monads only through a positive concept. Forces are not recognized through analysis, but through experience.<sup>32</sup> The only form of external efficacy which is immediately given in experience is impenetrability effected through repulsion. We have no direct experience of any other form of external efficacy. It follows that the presence of a soul in space cannot be concretely conceived without this unthinkability being seen "as a known impossibility."<sup>33</sup> Although immaterial beings are possible, they cannot be justified either by experience or reason. According to Kant, the phenomenon of life speaks for the assumption of the existence of immaterial natures in the world and the placement of the human soul in this class. "That in the world which contains a principle of life seems to be of an immaterial nature. For all life is based upon the inner capacity to determine itself voluntarily. On the other hand, the essential characteristic mark of matter consists in the filling of space in virtue of a necessary force which is limited by an external force operating against it. It follows from this, therefore, that the state of all that which is material is dependant and constrained."

Since he assumes two substances, Kant is faced with the Cartesian problem of the interaction of body and soul. The proposed hypothesis<sup>34</sup> for solving this question, which can be found already in Herder's notes of Kant's lecture course,<sup>35</sup> can be accepted as an original variation of the influence-theory:<sup>36</sup> It is original insofar as Kant is in a position to assume an interaction of material and immaterial monads due to his distinction between two kinds of predicates in each form of substance. He is able to do this without getting into the difficulty of postulating a direct effect of fully heterogenous forces on one another. As Kant assumes representation to be an inner determination of the elements of matter as well, both substances are at least partially similar. Thus the following hypothesis is possible: "It seems that a spirit-being is present in the matter, with which it is combined in the most intimate fashion; and it seems not to act on those forces which inhere in the elements and in virtue of which they are related to each other; it seems rather to operate on the inner principles of their state."<sup>37</sup> Because the soul has an effect on the inner principle of the material monads, it effects, on the one hand, in a mediated way, external changes. "On the other hand, according to such principles the soul would, even in

these inner determinations [of the monads of their bodies], construed as effects, intuitively cognize the state of the universe, the cause of these determinations.”<sup>38</sup> In other words, the soul recognizes external changes as mediated through the effects of these changes on the inner state of the elements of their bodies.

This theory is an attempt to explain how the external effects of the soul can be positively understood without ascribing forces of attraction and repulsion to the soul. To do so would entail making spiritual and corporeal monads indistinguishable. The soul differs from the body in that it is “not present through the force of impenetrability in space.”<sup>39</sup> It follows that corporeal elements can be where the soul is and that the soul has no particular place in the body.<sup>40</sup> The soul is thought of as acting and suffering from within the body. Its recognition is recognition of the inner state of corporeal monads. Because the soul knows the states of corporeal elements from within, it has the same relationship to them as God has to the things he has created: It is the divinity of the body.<sup>41</sup>

The weakness of this “theory” has already been mentioned: We experience only the external effects of bodies on one another. The way in which Kant depicts the possible efficacy of the soul on the body is for that reason merely a possibility, a mere thought which cannot be demonstrated either by empirical or by a priori means.

Kant’s metaphysical wish to expound the difference between material and immaterial natures in order to guarantee the possibility of freedom and immortality becomes quite clear in the *Dreams*. To counter the hypothesis that the external presence of the soul is not distinct from material substances Kant presents the following argument:

But in that case one would no longer be able to recognize with certainty any distinctive characteristic mark of the soul, which distinguished it from the raw elementary matter of corporeal natures. And then the idea jokingly proposed by Leibniz that in drinking our coffee we may perhaps be swallowing atoms destined to become human souls would no longer be a laughing matter. But in such a case would not this thinking I be subject to the common fate of material natures? Just as it had by chance been drawn from the chaos of all the elements in order to animate an animal machine, why should it not at some time in the future, when the contingent combination has been dissolved, return once more to that chaos of elements?<sup>42</sup>

As Kant himself says, these consequences are alarming and demand therefore a rethinking of the premises.

The difference between both natures is conceived from this point of view. Given that the immaterial natures are denied the forces of matter, attraction and repulsion, they are not subject to the mechanical laws of motion. Since these substances are themselves the cause of change, they are free.<sup>43</sup> Conversely, material substances which have “inner activity as the ground of external efficacy,”<sup>44</sup> cannot determine themselves. Since their inner states are clearly not changed by themselves, they depend on causes of which are either material objects or immaterial substances. In other words, material substances are either determined through mechanical laws, or they simply serve as means to the ends of immaterial beings.

Herder’s judgment about this part of Kant’s argument can be seen in the general context of his position, which will be quoted here in full: following the already quoted sentence, “The author [i.e., Herder], who takes the fortunate analytical way, always to philosophize *kat’ anthropon* (from the human), adds certainly only something negative to the normal understanding of spirit; but this is a quality which gives to the whole difference of spirit from matter a clarity not to be found hitherto,” Herder continues:

Given that corporeal concepts envelop us so fully, that it is very difficult for us to be able to think a form of efficacy in a space when the principle of efficacy does not have a form of (so to speak) spiritual impenetrability at least in regard to an other entity, which in its [spiritual] nature would be identical with it, then it must be admitted that this [Kantian] hypothesis will only then gain philosophical certainty, when the concept of space is fully analyzed, and the concept of force is understood a priori. So long as this is impossible, the author’s hypothesis will remain the most sure among all existing systems of the interaction of spirit and body, because it claims the least, and comes the closest of all to the origin of the concept in the word *spirit*, which presumably owes its origins not at all to a philosophical discovery, but rather to a delusion, to which ignorance and provisory judgment gave the word spirit.<sup>45</sup>

As the first sentence shows, Herder judges Kant’s hypothesis regarding the body-soul problem in the first chapter in the context of the second chapter, which contains the idea of a community of spirits. Herder’s talk of “spiritual impenetrability” can only refer to Kant’s comparison in the second chapter of the moral world, which is determined by the law of the general will, with the physical world, whose unity is determined through Newton’s law of gravitation.<sup>46</sup> This means that in spiritual relationships something like impenetrability occurs, i.e., a form of cur-

tailment or limitation of the sphere of a spiritual being through another such as in legal relationships. Herder here makes clear—as he later does in a more extreme way—that he is uninterested in this idea. For someone familiar with Herder's view in "Versuch über das Sein," it is clear that he holds this Kantian idea to be impossible. Insofar as Herder's critique relates only to the transference of physical relationships to the spirit-world, it applies to Kant's true opinion, as indicated in the latter's remarks in his letter to Mendelssohn.<sup>47</sup> Herder's critique aims, however, at the idea of the *mundus* as such in a manner unrelated to the qualities of the physical field. This becomes clear from the last sentence of his commentary to the first chapter in the context of the commentary on the second chapter. In what follows I will pursue this more closely. For the moment it will suffice to say Herder's agreement to the first chapter represents nothing more than a concealed polemic against the second. In essence, he prefers the first chapter to the second chapter, whose speculation he finds untenable.

### HERDER'S CRITIQUE OF THE DOCTRINE OF TWO WORLDS

Let us first turn briefly to the content of the second chapter of the first part of *Dreams*. This chapter deals with the laws of efficacy of immaterial beings, which in distinction to mechanical laws of material nature "are called pneumatic, and, insofar as corporeal beings are the mediating causes of their effects in the material world they are called organic."<sup>48</sup> In analogy to the material substances, which are conjoined by space, time, and the interaction of physical forces which make up the whole of the material world, immaterial natures are conjoined through their causal laws into a great whole, "which could be called the immaterial world (*mundus intelligibilis*)."<sup>49</sup> All immaterial beings conjoined with a body into the unity of a person or a living being belong at the same time to two worlds.<sup>50</sup>

Kant finds evidence in the form of "a real and generally accepted observation"<sup>51</sup> for a systematic constitution of the spirit-world in moral feeling.

As a result [of moral impulses], we recognize that, in our most secret motives, we are dependent upon the rule of the general will. It is this rule which confers upon the world of all thinking beings its moral unity and invests it with a systematic constitution, drawn up in accordance with purely spiritual laws. We sense within ourselves a constraining of our will to harmonize with the general will. To call

this sensed constraining "moral feeling," is to speak of it merely as a manifestation of that which takes place within us, without establishing its causes.<sup>52</sup>

According to "to the order of nature,"<sup>53</sup> this points to the prospect of a life after death. In such a life, when the soul separates from the body, it loses consciousness of itself as a human being, but receives consciousness of itself as a spiritual being which has been obscured in life.<sup>54</sup>

It is remarkable that the theologian Herder did not react with enthusiasm or even with sympathy to the "prospects of eternity" opened up here. This is shown by the following commentary:

This new spirit-world to which the author and perhaps some extraordinary and out of the ordinary geniuses may have the key, is nevertheless the building of a creative philosophical imagination, which projects on earth such a systematic conjunction of invisible things, as it is first found in the heavens. This spirit-world displays the astuteness and attention of its creator in showing his system from all sides.<sup>55</sup>

This is ostensibly based on spiritual community. Yet would not organic community be sufficient? The center point of attraction is not a spirit-world, but rather simply the world of living beings. Generally speaking the hypothesis is more interesting as a synthesis than if the facts are taken into consideration.<sup>56</sup>

Kant's two worlds doctrine is suspect for Herder. He argues against the hypothesis of an unmediated community of spirits epistemologically and philosophically. According to Kant, soul and spirit are, as forms of immaterial substances, distinguishable; the latter has reason which the former lacks, but both can exist either conjoined with bodies or separated from them. On the contrary, Herder stresses the Aristotelian concept of soul as the principle of life of the body. The view that there are only souls or that we only know souls would mean that for us there are only immaterial natures in unity with material natures. For Herder, the concept of spirit, which stands for incorporeal, immaterial principles, owes its origin to a delusion, because the existence of such beings cannot be demonstrated either through experience or through reason.

Herder makes use here of Kant's methodological reflection concerning the origins of spirit. According to Kant, this concept cannot "be treated as one abstracted from experience,"<sup>57</sup> because beings of this kind are not given in the senses. For Kant, this concept was, like many others, produced through covert and obscure inferences made in the course of experience.<sup>58</sup> Since immaterial beings

cannot be known, it must remain open whether spirit belongs to the category of concepts which are "nothing other than a delusion of the imagination," or whether it is to be counted among the true, "for even obscure inferences are not always erroneous."<sup>59</sup> Herder, who ignores Kant's skeptical considerations, infers that the category of spirit is a mere delusion since their existence cannot be proved. A thing whose existence cannot be demonstrated is merely imaginary. He gives up Kant's idea that in the case of unknowability the possibility must be left open. Herder takes up the position of experience and on that basis rejects all metaphysical speculation.

This position can easily be recognized as that of empirical psychology, which Kant had outlined in the lecture course announcement for the winter half-year 1765–1766 in the following way.<sup>60</sup> The branches of *metaphysica specialis*, psychology and cosmology, are based on the Cartesian distinction between *res cogitans* and *res extensa*. In terms of the division of all things in general, or the subject-matter of ontology, Kant maintains that the things of the world can be subsumed under the two classes of "all living things which present themselves to our senses" and "all nonliving things in general."<sup>61</sup> Empirical psychology deals with the first class, "which is really the metaphysical science of human beings based on experience"; "to which for the sake of analogy there is added empirical zoology, that is to say the consideration of animals."<sup>62</sup> This discipline is methodologically distinguishable from rational psychology by the fact that it derives knowledge through experience, not through reason. The subject-matter of empirical psychology, which is defined differently, deals with "living things which present themselves to our senses," i.e., with objects which demonstrate determinations different from those of material substances. Yet since it is not demonstrable in experience, "in what concerns the term soul, it is not yet permitted in this section to assert that the human being has a soul."<sup>63</sup>

Similarly it is unclear whether Herder defends the concept of immaterial substance. For someone concerned with experience, the soul cannot be understood as an immaterial substance. Kant shows that it is also possible to assume thought and desire as particular properties of the soul understood as an element of matter.<sup>64</sup>

Herder's own words can serve to sum up his epistemological objections to the idea of a *mundus intelligibilis*: "[T]hus we wish perhaps to be at the surest point without metaphysics." Experience displays the difference between the dead stuff of nature and living beings. True to the standpoint of empirical psychology, Herder leaves the issue undecided about whether there are souls as immaterial principles or not. He does say that there are souls but does not characterize their nature. What Herder decisively opposes is the assumption of immaterial principles, which exist

independently from bodies.<sup>65</sup> Immaterial principles can be accepted if and only if they are conjoined with bodies to form living beings. Only in this case is there an indication in experience of something other than material beings.

Herder also objects to Kant's practical arguments in support of the hypothesis of a spirit-world. In opposing the thesis that moral feeling is to be interpreted as dependence on the general will, Herder takes the side of Shaftesbury. For Herder, this feeling is centered not in a spirit-world, but in the world of living things.<sup>66</sup> Moral feeling is not to be understood as the appearance or effect of the laws of a purely spiritual world, but rather as a (sensory) organ of a living being, which experiences in it its systematic combination with its own kind. From the beginning Herder objects to the Platonizing legitimation of morality in placing himself on the side of empiricism. The Platonizing legitimation of morality, which Kant puts forward here for the first time as a possibility, but then defended in 1770,<sup>67</sup> consists in taking the law of the general will as the general moral law.<sup>68</sup> In 1766 Herder's objections do not apply to Kant's true conception, but rather merely to a hypothesis which the latter puts forward in order to fix the boundaries of reason. Their ways part finally with the publication of Mendelssohn's *Phaedo* (1767). For Kant, this work was the occasion to revise the doctrine of moral feeling as the principle of morality.<sup>69</sup> Herder's letters and commentaries concerning Mendelssohn's *Phaedo* show that he held firm to the position of 1766.<sup>70</sup>

It is important to note that Herder's objections never apply to Kant's true opinion,<sup>71</sup> but rather always only to hypotheses which were put forward in connection with the latter's skeptical method. Thus Haym's statement that Herder is a "Kantian of 1765"<sup>72</sup> could with good reason be adapted to say that he remained a "Kantian of 1766." As concerns Kant and Herder, this text marks a parting of the ways. For Kant the two worlds, which he here proposes, become central for the distinction between the phenomenal and the noumenal. Herder pursues a philosophy of the living, which, indeed, according to Kant's opinion at that time, was the only legitimate consequence of his arguments.<sup>73</sup> It is remarkable that Herder's review is formulated without any consciousness of this. It, hence, expresses an opposition between Kant and Herder, which at that point did not yet exist.

It is fair to say that Herder misunderstands Kant's skepticism. For Kant skepticism derives from the inconceivability of the external efficacy of the soul. Herder understands the unity of immaterial and material evidenced in the phenomenon of life as a datum of experience, which is binding for all theories. While for Kant experience also fails to tell us about the acts of the soul in space,<sup>74</sup> Herder takes the phenomenon of life as evidence for the unity of soul and body. From the

standpoint of the critical philosophy, Herder is a dogmatic empiricist. This is already apparent from his starting point in the experience of the spiritual and corporeal constitution of the one and the same being as the datum for theory. Herder's later effort to combine a Spinozistic metaphysics with a two-aspect theory of substance is already perceptible in his reaction to Kant.

## NOTES

1. This article appeared originally as a chapter in my book, *Sensualistischer Idealismus Untersuchungen zur Erkenntnistheorie und Metaphysik des jungen Herder (1763–1778)*, Studien zum 18. Jahrhundert, Band 17. (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1996) pp. 27–43. I would like to thank Dr. Felix Ó Murchadha (Wuppertal) for translating it into English.

2. See *Kants gesammelte Schriften* (Berlin: Königlich Preußische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1910), vol. 2. See also *Theoretical Philosophy, 1755–1770. Immanuel Kant*, ed. D. Walford (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992). For an account of the work which is rarely discussed in the secondary literature on Kant, see J. Ebbinghaus, "Kant und Swedenborg," *Jahrbuch der Auslandsamtes der deutschen Dozentenschaft* (1943), pp. 80–94. K. Reich discusses the problem which this work poses and its way toward a "solution" in his introduction to Kant, *Träume eines Geistersehers. Der Unterschied der Gegenden im Raume*, ed. K. Reich (Hamburg: Meiner Verlag, 1975), pp. v–xvii.

3. *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 2, p. 327; Kant, *Theoretical Philosophy*, p. 321n. Kant had taught as early as in the "Einzig möglicher Beweisgrund" (*Kants gesammelte Schriften*, 2, p. 114 ff.) that the world of living things is not explainable according to mechanical laws. For an account of the association of the concept of life and anthropology in Kant, see H. Heimsoeth, "Empirische Anthropologie auf der Basis der Stufenordnung und Gesetze des Organischen," *Studien zur Philosophie Immanuel Kants II. Methodenbegriffe der Erfahrungswissenschaften und Gegensätzlichkeiten spekulativer Weltkonzeption* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1970), pp. 67–85.

4. B. Suphan, "Herder als Schüler Kants," *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie* 4 (1873): 225–37. Suphan supplies a table of contents of the review and sets forth some connections with Herder's fragments. See also *ibid.*, pp. 10ff. See as well A. Tumarkin, *Herder and Kant*, (Bern, 1896). Although here there is no detailed analysis of the review, nonetheless its significance is correctly assessed and discussed in some respects. See also Rudolf Haym, *Herder nach seinem Leben und seinen Werken* (Berlin, 1880–1885) I, p. 48.

5. This has been checked through detailed descriptions of the manuscripts in the catalogue of Herder's papers.

6. *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 2, pp. 385–420. Translated in L. W. Beck, *Kant's Latin Writings: Translations, Commentaries and Notes*, trans. by J. Handyside with revisions by L. W. Beck (New York: P. Long, 1986), pp. 135–92.

7. Tumarkin, *Herder and Kant*, p. 17.

8. See also, for example, J. G. Herder "Zum Sinn des Gefühls," "Grundsätze der Philosophie," *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. B. Suphan (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1967–1968), vol. 32, pp. 227–31.

9. *Kants gesammelte Schriften* 8, pp. 43–66.

10. When for example Kant remarks in relation to the invisible region of forces that not alone are here the causes unknown, but also every experience is absent such that one can quote as justification nothing more than the "mere despair of finding any information in any knowledge of nature and the forced resolve to seek it in the fruitful field of the poetical" (Kant, "Review of Herder's Ideen," p. 54), in this Kant repeats exactly the position of *Dreams of a Spirit-Seer*.

11. See the reprint in the appendix to Kant, *Träume eines Geistersehers*, pp. 87ff. Translated by F. Ó Murchadha.

12. *Ibid.*, pp. 90ff.

13. See K. Reich, ed., *Über das Verhältnis der Dissertation und der Kritik der reinen Vernunft und die Entstehung der Kantischen Raumlehre. Einleitung zu Kant: De mundi sensibilis atque intelligibilis forma et principiis/Über die Form und Prinzipien der Sinnen und Geisteswelt*, (Hamburg: Meiner, 1958), pp. xivff.

14. See the review by Moses Mendelssohn in the *Allgemeine Deutsche Bibliothek* 4, no. 2 (1767): p. 281: "The witty profundity, with which this small work is written, leaves the reader at times in doubt whether Mr. Kant wished to make metaphysics ridiculous or the spirit-seership believable." Translated by F. Ó Murchadha.

15. Herder, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 1, p. 126. This is evidenced by Herder's warning: "The whole work may not have enough unity and one part does not have enough connection to the other." (SCSI, p. 130).

16. Herder, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 1, p. 130.

17. See *ibid.* Due to this misunderstanding, Herder is himself able to accuse Kant of not remaining enough "with the Data" (*ibid.*, p. 129.)

18. Herder, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 1, 127ff.

19. *Ibid.*, 128.

20. *Kants gesammelte Schriften* 2, p. 320; Kant, *Theoretical Philosophy*, p. 308.

21. For an account of the concept of monad in Leibniz see W. Janke, *Leibniz. Die Emendation der Metaphysik* (Frankfurt V. Klostermann, 1963), pp. 9–89; for an account of the transformation of monadology within the school-philosophy see H. Heimsoeth, *Atom, Seele, Monade* (Mainz: Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur, 1960), pp. 77–127; H. Poser, "Zum Begriff der Monade bei Leibniz und Wolff," *Akten des II. Internationalen Leibniz-Kongresses 1975* (Studia leibnitiana. Supplementa, 14), pp. 383–95; M. Casula, "Die Lehre von der prästabilierten Harmonie in ihrer Entwicklung von Leibniz bis A. G. Baumgarten," *Akten des II. Internationalen Leibniz-Kongresses 1975* (Studia leibnitiana. Supplementa, 14), pp. 397–414.

19. Christian Wolff, *Psychologia Rationalis* (Frankfurt, 1740; reprint, Hildesheim: J.

Ecole, 1972), § 644; *Cosmologia Generalis*. (Frankfurt, 1937; reprint ed. by J. Ecole. Hildesheim 1964), § 186, 187.

23. Christian Wolff, *Anmerkungen zur Deutschen Metaphysik* II, §§ 215, 251. A. G. Baumgarten brought about a return to Leibniz, so that one can talk of a Leibniz renaissance in the middle of the century, which Baumgarten gave rise to and which was directed against Wolffianism. See A. Bäumler, *Das Irrationalitätsproblem in der Aesthetik und Logik des 18 Jahrhunderts* (Halle: Bachgesellschaft, 1923; reprint, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche, 1967), p. 233.

24. For an account of Kant's monads doctrine see Heimsoeth, *Atom, Seele, Monade*, chap. 16; E. Adickes, *Kant als Naturforscher* (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1925), vol. 1, II section; K. Vogel: *Kant und die Paradoxien der Vielheit. Die Monadenlehre in Kants philosophischer Entwicklung bis zum Antinomienkapitel der Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (Meisenheim: K. Vogel, 1975).

25. Immanuel Kant, *Monadologia physica*, Werke in sechs Bänden, ed. W. Weischedel (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche, 1975), vol. 1, p. 523. Translated as "Physical Monadology," in Beck, *Kant's Latin Writing*, pp. 117ff.

26. Ibid., fn. E. Adickes summarizes the difference between Leibniz's and Kant's monad doctrine in the following points:

- (1) in place of the doctrine of preestablished harmony Kant defends a *influxus physicus* (physical influence);
- (2) physical monads are no longer appearances of our senses only in spatial relations, but rather real substances, which take up space;
- (3) the goal of Kant's reworking is to replace Newton's concept of the atom with monads, which possess forces of attraction and repulsion.

See Adickes, *Kant als Naturforscher*, p. 164.

27. *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 2, p. 321; Kant, *Theoretical Philosophy*, p. 308. This Kant formulates also as follows: The spirits can indeed occupy a space but lack the capacity of filling a space (*Theoretical Philosophy*, p. 323). See also Herder's Metaphysics Lecture notes in *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 28.1, p. 47: "Thus there are simple substances, of which many taken together constitute a matter: others, which cannot constitute a matter. The former are material monads, the latter immaterial." Material is defined as *extensum impenetrabile* (impenetrable extension).

28. According to Vogel, Kant differentiates between inner forces (in Leibnizian terms, *denominatio intrinseca*) and outer forces (*denominatio extrinseca*) and explains that inner forces are fundamentally unknowable (Vogel, *Kant und die Paradoxien*, pp. 235 ff). His presentation is, however, in need of correction:

- (1) As early as in Herder's Metaphysics Lecture notes Kant distinguishes between force and substance in a different manner from Leibniz: "[T]he substantial contains the first real basis of all inherent accidents, it is not a force, rather it has force: We can never examine this first real basis." (*Kants gesammelte*

*Schriften*, vol. 28.1, p. 25.) Because with real effects something is replaced by something else in the nexus of the real basis, this relationship cannot be understood in accordance with the law of identity. Substance can only be thought by means of the concept of force in respect to its relationship to the accidents. Only through experience can it be known how this force is to be defined (see also p. 24).

- (2) The relation of real basis to accidents as real effects is not to be identified with the relation of internal and external force. Changes of the internal and external states occur and corresponding to these changes are inner and outer forces or principles (see *ibid.*, p. 25). Kant speaks of the fact that we "perceive in ourselves the inner principle of thought and desire" (*ibid.*, p. 115; see also especially *ibid.*, p. 145, where Kant deals with the inner and outer nature of the soul). The difference between inner and outer is defined through the concept of space: External changes are changes in space and that means changes which relate to the coexistence of monads thus to their relationship among one another.
- (3) Vogel misinterprets the problem of *Dreams of a Spirit-Seer*: The problem is the unknowability of the external efficacy of the soul, the real possibility of which, however, according to Reich, is already suggested by Wolff's concept of space ("spatium adeo resultat ex possibilitate coexistendi [space arises precisely from the possibility of coexistence]"), such that merely the "how" can be an object of speculative discussion. See Reich, *Über das Verhältnis*, introduction, pp. viii ff.

29. See *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 28.1, p. 115. See also Immanuel Kant, *Lectures on Metaphysics*. The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant, trans. Karl Ameriks and Steve Naragon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 308.

30. See *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 2, p. 328.; Kant, *Theoretical Philosophy*, p. 315. Kant, *Lectures on Metaphysics*, p. 7. In saying this Kant is not, however, claiming that matter itself has a faculty of representation. The argument, which is very similar to that found in Etienne Condillac's "Essai," is as follows: "for many substances of this kind, connected together into a whole, can after all never constitute a unified thinking entity." See also *Kants gesammelte Schriften* 2, p. 328; Kant, *Theoretical Philosophy*, p. 315; Etienne Condillac, "Essai sur l'origine des connoissances humaines," ed. J. Derrida. (Paris: 1973), pp. 108 ff. For an account of the history of this argument see B. L. Mijuskovic, *The Achilles of Rationalist Arguments. The Simplicity, Unity and Identity of Thought and Soul from the Cambridge Platonists to Kant* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974).

31. *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 2, p. 328. Kant, *Theoretical Philosophy*, p. 308.

32. *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 2, p. 370; Kant, *Theoretical Philosophy*, p. 356.

33. *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 2, p. 323; Kant, *Theoretical Philosophy*, p. 311. In respect to knowability the relationship between material and immaterial substances can be represented as follows:

	internal determination	external determination
material substances	unknowable	knowable
immaterial substances	knowable	unknowable

Thus both substances can never be unified in one experience, whether inner or outer.

34. Kant explicitly distinguishes such guesses from scientific hypotheses (*Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 2, p. 371; Kant, *Theoretical Philosophy*, p. 357). The term is used here in a nonterminological sense.

35. *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 28.1, pp. 145 ff.

36. For an account of Kant's systematization of these theories concerning the association of body and soul (occasionalism, preestablished harmony, influence theory) in relation to Baumgarten, see Herder's Metaphysics Lecture notes, *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 28.1, pp. 102ff.

37. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 326; Kant, *Theoretical Philosophy*, p. 315.

38. *Ibid.*

39. *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 28.1, p. 146.

40. *Ibid.*

41. *Ibid.*

42. *Ibid.*, p. 314.

43. For an account of the difference between animal volition and human freedom, see Herder's Metaphysics Lectures notes, *Kants gesammelte Schriften* 28.1, pp. 99, 117.

44. *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 2, p. 328; Kant, *Theoretical Philosophy*, p. 315.

45. Herder, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 1, p. 128.

46. *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 2, p. 328; Kant, *Theoretical Philosophy*, p. 322.

47. Kant, *Traume eines Geistessehers*, p. 91.

48. *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 2, p. 329; Kant, *Theoretical Philosophy*, p. 316.

49. *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 2, p. 329; Kant, *Theoretical Philosophy*, p. 317.

50. *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 2, p. 333; Kant, *Theoretical Philosophy*, p. 319.

51. *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 2, p. 333; Kant, *Theoretical Philosophy*, p. 320.

52. *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 2, p. 335; Kant, *Theoretical Philosophy*, p. 322. For an account of Kant's ethics in the middle of the 1760s, see D. Heinrich, "Hutcheson und Kant," *Kant-Studien* 49 (1957–58): 49–69; K. Reich, *Kant und die Ethik der Griechen* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1935); K. Reich, *Rousseau und Kant* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1936); J. Schmucker, *Die Ursprünge der Ethik Kants in seinem vorkritischen Schriften und Reflexionen* (Meisenheim, 1961). See also Herder's lecture course manuscript, *Immanuel Kant. Aus den Vorlesungen der Jahre 1762 bis 1764. Auf Grund der Nachschriften Johann Gottfried Herders*, ed. H. D. Irmscher (Cologne, 1964), [*Kant-Studien. Ergänzungshefte*; 88], pp. 89–178. Selections from these notes are to be found in Kant, *Lectures on Metaphysics*.

53. *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 2, pp. 336ff; Kant, *Theoretical Philosophy*, p. 324.

54. *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 2, p. 332; Kant, *Theoretical Philosophy*, p. 319.

55. Thus Herder suggests that the cosmology projected in the "Allegemeine Naturgeschichte und Theorie des Himmels" forms together with the psychology developed here *one* system.

56. Herder, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 1, p. 129.

57. *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 2, p. 320; Kant, *Theoretical Philosophy*, p. 320n.

58. *Ibid.*

59. *Ibid.*

60. "Immanuel Kant's announcement of the arrangement of his lecture course in the winter half-year 1765–66," *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 2, pp. 305–18; Kant, *Theoretical Philosophy*, pp. 291–300. For what follows see H. Heimsoeth, "Empirische Anthropologie," pp. 67ff.

61. *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 2, p. 309; Kant, *Theoretical Philosophy*, p. 295 (translation modified).

62. *Ibid.*

63. *Ibid.*

64. *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 2, pp. 325ff; Kant, *Theoretical Philosophy*, pp. 313ff. Locke's discussion of this possibility inspired widespread debate. See John Locke; *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. with a foreword by P. N. Niddich (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), bk. 2, chap. 23, § 32, pp. 313 ff. For a presentation of the debate in England see J. W. Yolton, *Thinking Matter. Materialism in Eighteenth Century Britain* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983). For an account of French and German materialism see F. A. Lange, *Geschichte des Materialismus und Kritik seiner Bedeutung in der Gegenwart*, ed. and intro. A. Schmidt (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1974), pp. 311–425.

65. If Herder would understand living things positively as the unity of differences, he could not take up a position against the possibility of immaterial substances, which exist independently of bodies, for predicates of the nexus are only accidents of substances.

66. See Earl of Shaftesbury; *Enquiry Concerning Virtue or Merit*, standard edition, vol. 2, (London, 1900), pp. 66, 88ff. See also the positive mention of Shaftesbury in Herder's letter to Kant dated November 1768, in J. G. Herder, *Briefe. Gesamtausgabe 1763–1803*, ed. Nationale Forschungs- und Gedenkstätten der klassischen deutschen Literatur in Weimar (Weimar, 1977), vol. 1, p. 119. More generally see I. C. Hatch, "Der Einfluß Shaftesburys auf Herder," *Studien zur vergleichenden Literaturgeschichte* 1 (1901): 68–119.

67. Kant, "On the Form and Principles of the Sensible and the Intelligible World," section II, § 9, *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 2, p. 396; Beck, *Kant's Latin Writing*, p. 158ff; See in relation to this, Reich, *Kant und die Ethik der Griechen*, pp. 9ff.

68. As the finishing part of *Dreams of a Spirit-Seer* shows, Kant still defends here the standpoint of moral-sense philosophy, which he indicated in the announcement of the lecture course for the winter semester 1765–1766 (*Kants gesammelte Schriften* 2, pp. 372 ff, 311 ff.; Kant,

*Theoretical Philosophy*, pp. 328 ff. and 297 ff.) Nonetheless the employment of Rousseau's conception of the *volonté générale* as a principle of morality appears here as a conceivable possibility. However, it appears in a form which clearly deviates from the later conception: It is certainly the case that according to this "model," which conceives the psychical world so analogously to the physical that the nexus of substances is defined through reciprocal curtailment, the law of the general will is the basis or principle of morality, for namely the moral feeling should be merely the effect of this association of the spirit-world. Thereby, however, that Kant assumes that in the state of community with the body the consciousness of the soul is obscured from its participation in the region of spirit, the law of the general will can after all not assume the function of being the subjective basis of determination of the will, a function which will later be assigned to it. See K. Reich, *Rousseau und Kant* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1936).

69. The thesis that "Kant's change of position in moral theory" was occasioned by the appearance of Mendelssohn's "Phaedo" has been developed by Reich in *Kant und die Ethik der Griechen*, pp. 11ff.

70. In a letter to J. G. Hamann dated November 22, 1768, Herder states, "I have recently played with the idea during some cloudy hours like Diogenes with his barrel to become a student of Socrates and to write a fourth dialogue to the three of Mendelssohn's, but a dialogue of doubt. . . ." (Herder, *Briefe*, vol. 1, p. 114); in a letter to C. F. Nicolai dated December 27, 1768 Herder suggests getting his planned dialogue be published as a review in the Allgemeine Bibliothek [General Library] (see Herder, *Briefe*, vol. 1, p. 127). Due to the imminent journey to France in May 1769 this plan did not come to fruition. Among Herder's papers are the arrangements for this and a page of exposition. See *Catalogue of Papers*, p. 198, capsule 25, no. 77 and 78; a reprint of no. 78 in Herder, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 32, p. 200. Herder summarizes finally his doubts in two extensive letters to Mendelssohn. The first letter dates from the beginning of April 1769 (Herder, *Briefe* vol. 1, pp. 137–43. Herder reacted with a second letter, dated January 12, 1769 (Herder, *Briefe*, vol. 1, pp. 177–81) to Mendelssohn's answering letter from February 5, 1769 (printed in Mendelssohn, *Gesammelte Schriften, Jubiläumsausgabe*, ed. F. Bamberger (Berlin, 1929–38. 12,1 [Briefwechsel II, 1], pp. 182–87.) Herder's debate with Mendelssohn concerning the Phaedo has hardly been noticed in the Herder research hitherto. See however the recently published H. Adler, *Die Prägnanz des Dunkels* (Hamburg, 1990), pp. 171 ff.

71. See the third chapter, practical conclusion drawn from the treatise as a whole. *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 2, pp. 370ff.

72. Haym, *Herder*, vol. 1, p. 55.

73. *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 2, p. 370ff.

74. *Ibid.*; according to Kant it can only be known from experience, that I think and determine myself voluntarily, but "all judgments such as those concerning the way in which my soul moves my body or the way in which it is now or may be in the future be related to other beings like itself, can never be anything more than fictions."

## THE VOCATION OF BEING HUMAN

*Kant's Early Practical Philosophy, 1747–1765*

Alfred Denker

In this paper I will discuss the development of Immanuel Kant's early practical philosophy.<sup>1</sup> I intentionally use the word "early" and not "precritical," because Kant had already developed the basic doctrines of his mature practical philosophy before his so-called Copernican revolution took place. In other words, it makes no sense to speak of a precritical ethics.<sup>2</sup> This often overlooked fact may also have important implications for the interpretation of Kant's transcendental idealism. The precritical Kant was not as uncritical a philosopher as some scholars would like us to think. Since writings on moral issues are so scarce in Kant's early philosophy, the interpretation of his early ethics presents us with its own special difficulty. To a large extent we have to extrapolate his ethical theory from the essays on theoretical philosophy, in which he discusses problems of moral philosophy. We only find an outline of a systematic exposition of his ethical doctrine in his *Prize Essay, Investigations of the Clarity of the Principles of Natural Theology and Morals*. Other important texts for the interpretation of his practical philosophy are his *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime* and the remarks he later wrote in his own copy of this essay and the notes J. G. Herder took at Kant's lectures on practical philosophy between 1762 and 1764.

### I. THE PROBLEM OF BEING HUMAN

It is a well-known fact that Kant was educated in the Leibnizian-Wolffian school.<sup>3</sup> Kant's early essays show not only ample evidence that he adhered to the ratio-