THE HISTORY OF
CONTINENTAL PHILOSOPHY
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General Editor: Alan D. Schrift

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THE HISTORY OF CONTINENTAL PHILOSOPHY

General Editor: Alan D. Schrift

VOLUME 1

KANT, KANTIANISM, AND IDEALISM:
THE ORIGINS OF CONTINENTAL PHILOSOPHY

Edited by Thomas Nenon

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“Continental philosophy” is itself a contested concept. For some, it is understood to be any philosophy after 1780 originating on the European continent (Germany, France, Italy, etc.). Such an understanding would make Georg von Wright or Rudolf Carnap – respectively, a Finnish-born philosopher of language and a German-born logician who taught for many years in the US – a “continental philosopher,” an interpretation neither they nor their followers would easily accept. For others, “continental philosophy” refers to a style of philosophizing, one more attentive to the world of experience and less focused on a rigorous analysis of concepts or linguistic usage. In this and the accompanying seven volumes in this series, “continental philosophy” will be understood historically as a tradition that has its roots in several different ways of approaching and responding to Immanuel Kant’s critical philosophy, a tradition that takes its definitive form at the beginning of the twentieth century as the phenomenological tradition, with its modern roots in the work of Edmund Husserl. As such, continental philosophy emerges as a tradition distinct from the tradition that has identified itself as “analytic” or “Anglo-American,” and that locates its own origins in the logical analyses and philosophy of language of Gottlob Frege. Whether or not there is in fact a sharp divergence between the work of Husserl and Frege is itself a contested question, but what cannot be contested is that two distinct historical traditions emerged early in the twentieth century from these traditions’ respective interpretations of Husserl (and Heidegger) and Frege (and Russell). The aim of this history of continental philosophy is to trace the developments in one of these traditions from its roots in Kant and his contemporaries through to its most recent manifestations. Together, these volumes present a coherent and comprehensive account of the continental philosophical tradition.
that offers readers a unique resource for understanding this tradition's complex and interconnected history.

Because history does not unfold in a perfectly linear fashion, telling the history of continental philosophy cannot simply take the form of a chronologically organized series of "great thinker" essays. And because continental philosophy has not developed in a vacuum, telling its history must attend to the impact of figures and developments outside philosophy (in the sciences, social sciences, mathematics, art, politics, and culture more generally) as well as to the work of some philosophers not usually associated with continental philosophy. Such a series also must attend to significant philosophical movements and schools of thought and to the extended influence of certain philosophers within this history, either because their careers spanned a period during which they engaged with a range of different theorists and theoretical positions or because their work has been appropriated and reinterpreted by subsequent thinkers. For these reasons, the volumes have been organized with an eye toward chronological development but, in so far as the years covered in each volume overlap those covered in the subsequent volume, they have been organized as well with the aim of coordinating certain philosophical developments that intersect in a fashion that is not always strictly chronological.

Volume 1 begins with the origins of continental philosophy in Kant and the earliest responses to his critical philosophy, and presents an overview of German idealism, the major movement in philosophy from the late eighteenth to the middle of the nineteenth century. In addition to Kant, the period covered in the first volume was dominated by Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel, and together their work influenced not just philosophy, but also art, theology, and politics. This volume thus covers Kant's younger contemporary Herder, and his readers Schiller and Schlegel – who shaped much of the subsequent reception of Kant in art, literature, and aesthetics; the "Young Hegelians" – including Bruno Bauer, Ludwig Feuerbach, and David Friedrich Strauss – whose writings would influence Engels and Marx; and the tradition of French utopian thinking in such figures as Saint-Simon, Fourier, and Proudhon. In addition to Kant's early critics – Jacobi, Reinhold, and Maimon – significant attention is also paid to the later critic of German idealism Arthur Schopenhauer, whose appropriation and criticism of theories of cognition later had a decisive influence on Friedrich Nietzsche.

Volume 2 addresses the second half of the nineteenth century, in part as a response to the dominance of Hegelian philosophy. These years saw revolutionary developments in both European politics and philosophy, and five great critics dominated the European intellectual scene: Feuerbach, Marx, Søren Kierkegaard, Fyodor Dostoevsky, and Nietzsche. Responding in various ways to Hegelian philosophy and to the shifting political landscape of Europe and
the United States, these thinkers brought to philosophy two guiding orienta-
tions – materialism and existentialism – that introduced themes that would
continue to play out throughout the twentieth century. The second half of the
nineteenth century also saw the emergence of new schools of thought and new
disciplinary thinking, including the birth of sociology and the social sciences,
the development of French spiritualism, the beginning of American pragmat-
tism, radical developments in science and mathematics, and the development of
hermeneutics beyond the domains of theology and philology into an approach
to understanding all varieties of human endeavor.

Volume 3 covers the period between the 1890s and 1930s, a period that
witnessed revolutions in the arts, science, and society that set the agenda for
the twentieth century. In philosophy, these years saw the beginnings of what
would grow into two distinct approaches to doing philosophy: analytic and
continental. It also saw the emergence of phenomenology as a new rigorous
science, the birth of Freudian psychoanalysis, and the maturing of the discipline
of sociology. Volume 3 thus examines the most influential work of a remark-
able series of thinkers who reviewed, evaluated, and transformed nineteenth-
century thought, among them Henri Bergson, Émile Durkheim, Sigmund Freud,
Martin Heidegger, Edmund Husserl, Karl Jaspers, Max Scheler, and Ludwig
Wittgenstein. It also initiated an approach to philosophizing that saw philos-
ophy move from the lecture hall or the private study into an active engagement
with the world, an approach that would continue to mark continental philoso-
phy's subsequent history.

The developments and responses to phenomenology after Husserl are the
focus of the essays in Volume 4. An ambiguity inherent in phenomenology –
between conscious experience and structural conditions – lent itself to a range
of interpretations. While some existentialists focused on applying phenomen-
ology to the concrete data of human experience, others developed phenomen-
ology as conscious experience in order to analyze ethics and religion. Still
other phenomenologists developed notions of structural conditions to explore
questions of science, mathematics, and conceptualization. Volume 4 covers all
the major innovators in phenomenology – notably Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, and
the later Heidegger – as well as its extension into religion, ethics, aesthetics,
hermeneutics, and science.

Volume 5 concentrates on philosophical developments in political theory
and the social sciences between 1920 and 1968, as European thinkers responded
to the difficult and world-transforming events of the time. While some of the
significant figures and movements of this period drew on phenomenology,
many went back further into the continental tradition, looking to Kant or Hegel,
Marx or Nietzsche, for philosophical inspiration. Key figures and movements
discussed in this volume include Adorno, Horkheimer, and the Frankfurt School,
Schmitt, Marcuse, Benjamin, Arendt, Bataille, black existentialism, French Marxism, Saussure, and structuralism. These individuals and schools of thought responded to the “crisis of modernity” in different ways, but largely focused on what they perceived to be liberal democracy’s betrayal of its own rationalist ideals of freedom, equality, and fraternity. One other point about the period covered in this volume is worthy of note: it is during these years that we see the initial spread of continental philosophy beyond the European continent. This happens largely because of the emigration of European Jewish intellectuals to the US and UK in the 1930s and 1940s, be it the temporary emigration of figures such as Adorno, Horkheimer, Lévi-Strauss, and Jakobson or the permanent emigration of Marcuse, Arendt, and Gurwitsch. As the succeeding volumes will attest, this becomes a central feature of continental philosophy’s subsequent history.

Volume 6 examines the major figures associated with poststructuralism and the second generation of critical theory, the two dominant movements that emerged in the 1960s, which together brought continental philosophy to the forefront of scholarship in a variety of humanities and social science disciplines and set the agenda for philosophical thought on the continent and elsewhere from the 1960s to the present. In addition to essays that discuss the work of such influential thinkers as Althusser, Foucault, Deleuze, Derrida, Lyotard, Irigaray, Habermas, Serres, Bourdieu, and Rorty, Volume 6 also includes thematic essays on issues including the Nietzschean legacy, the linguistic turn in continental thinking, the phenomenological inheritance of Gadamer and Ricoeur, the influence of psychoanalysis, the emergence of feminist thought and a philosophy of sexual difference, and the importation of continental philosophy into literary theory.

Before turning to Volume 7, a few words on the institutional history of continental philosophy in the United States are in order, in part because the developments addressed in Volumes 6–8 cannot be fully appreciated without recognizing some of the events that conditioned their North American and anglophone reception. As has been mentioned, phenomenologists such as Alfred Schutz and Aron Gurwitsch, and other European continental philosophers such as Herbert Marcuse and Hannah Arendt, began relocating to the United States in the 1930s and 1940s. Many of these philosophers began their work in the United States at the University in Exile, established in 1933 as a graduate division of the New School for Social Research for displaced European intellectuals. While some continental philosophy was taught elsewhere around the United States (at Harvard University, Yale University, the University at Buffalo, and elsewhere), and while the journal *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* began publishing in 1939, continental philosophy first truly began to become an institutional presence in the United States in the 1960s. In 1961, John Wild (1902–72) left Harvard to become Chair of the Department of Philosophy at Northwestern University. With a commitment from the provost of the university
and the Northwestern University Press to enable him to launch the Northwestern Series in Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy. Wild joined William Earle and James Edie, thus making Northwestern a center for the study of continental philosophy. Wild set up an organizational committee including himself, Earle, Edie, George Schrader of Yale, and Calvin Schrag (a former student of Wild’s at Harvard, who was teaching at Northwestern and had recently accepted an appointment at Purdue University), to establish a professional society devoted to the examination of recent continental philosophy. That organization, the Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy (SPEP), held its first meeting at Northwestern in 1962, with Wild and Gurwitsch as the dominant figures arguing for an existential phenomenology or a more strictly Husserlian phenomenology, respectively. Others attending the small meeting included Erwin Straus, as well as Northwestern graduate students Edward Casey and Robert Scharff, and today SPEP has grown into the second largest society of philosophers in the United States. Since those early days, many smaller societies (Heidegger Circle, Husserl Circle, Nietzsche Society, etc.) have formed and many journals and graduate programs devoted to continental philosophy have appeared. In addition, many of the important continental philosophers who first became known in the 1960s – including Gadamer, Ricoeur, Foucault, Derrida, Lyotard, and Habermas – came to hold continuing appointments at major American universities (although, it must be mentioned, not always housed in departments of philosophy) and, since the 1960s, much of the transmission of continental philosophy has come directly through teaching as well as through publications.

The transatlantic migration of continental philosophy plays a central role in Volume 7, which looks at developments in continental philosophy between 1980 and 1995, a time of great upheaval and profound social change that saw the fruits of the continental works of the 1960s beginning to shift the center of gravity of continental philosophizing from the European continent to the anglophone philosophical world and, in particular, to North America. During these years, the pace of translation into English of French and German philosophical works from the early twentieth century as well as the very recent past increased tremendously, and it was not uncommon to find essays or lectures from significant European philosophers appearing first in English and then subsequently being published in French or German. In addition, the period covered in this volume also saw the spread of continental philosophy beyond the confines of philosophy departments, as students and faculty in centers of humanities and departments of comparative literature, communication studies, rhetoric, and other interdisciplinary fields increasingly drew on the work of recent continental philosophers. Volume 7 ranges across several developments during these years – the birth of postmodernism, the differing philosophical traditions of France, Germany, and Italy, the third generation of critical theory, and the so-called
“ethical turn” – while also examining the extension of philosophy into questions of radical democracy, postcolonial theory, feminism, religion, and the rise of performativity and post-analytic philosophy. Fueled by an intense ethical and political desire to reflect changing social and political conditions, the philosophical work of this period reveals how continental thinkers responded to the changing world and to the key issues of the time, notably globalization, technology, and ethnicity.

The eighth and final volume in this series attempts to chart the most recent trends in continental philosophy, which has now developed into an approach to thinking that is present throughout the world and engaged with classical philosophical problems as well as current concerns. The essays in this volume focus more on thematic developments than individual figures as they explore how contemporary philosophers are drawing on the resources of the traditions surveyed in the preceding seven volumes to address issues relating to gender, race, politics, art, the environment, science, citizenship, and globalization. While by no means claiming to have the last word, this volume makes clear the dynamic and engaged quality of continental philosophy as it confronts some of the most pressing issues of the contemporary world.

As a designation, “continental philosophy” can be traced back at least as far as John Stuart Mill’s *On Bentham and Coleridge* (1840), where he uses it to distinguish the British empiricism of Bentham from a tradition on the continent in which he sees the influence of Kant. Since that time, and especially since the early twentieth century, the term has been used to designate philosophies from a particular geographical region, or with a particular style (poetic or dialectical, rather than logical or scientistic). For some, it has been appropriated as an honorific, while for others it has been used more pejoratively or dismissively. Rather than enter into these polemics, what the volumes in this series have sought to do is make clear that one way to understand “continental philosophy” is as an approach to philosophy that is deeply engaged in reflecting on its own history, and that, as a consequence, it is important to understand the history of continental philosophy.

While each of the volumes in this series was organized by its respective editor as a volume that could stand alone, the eight volumes have been coordinated in order to highlight various points of contact, influence, or debate across the historical period that they collectively survey. To facilitate these connections across the eight volumes, cross-referencing footnotes have been added to many of the essays by the General Editor. To distinguish these footnotes from those of the authors, they are indicated by an asterisk (*).

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INTRODUCTION

Thomas Nenon

While the term “continental philosophy” as a name for a philosophical direction or tradition did not come into wide use until the second half of the twentieth century,¹ there is nonetheless some justification for identifying Kant and those followers and critics who were influenced by his work in a substantial way as an origin for a tradition that would much later identify itself as “continental philosophy.” For it is indeed true that most of the philosophers who have accepted this description of themselves during the past half-century take seriously the philosophical contributions of Kant and those who were most strongly influenced by him in Germany and France in the nineteenth century. This has historically not been the case for philosophers in the analytic tradition, in contrast to which “continental philosophy” has defined itself. Over time, this has changed somewhat with respect to Kant himself. P. F. Strawson’s *The Bounds of Sense*² opened the way for philosophical discussions within analytical philosophy that took seriously some of the epistemological and metaphysical arguments presented in the *Critique of Pure Reason* so that questions about “transcendental claims” and “transcendental arguments” are now an accepted part of the analytic discussions of theoretical philosophy. Moreover, John Rawls’s appropriation of Kant has proved to be so influential within analytic ethics and social and political philosophy that “Kantian” approaches and positions are not only discussed, but also widely held by many prominent analytic philosophers in those areas. However, this has not yet occurred with regard to the other figures who followed

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Kant and whose work is described and analyzed in this volume. Within continental philosophy, by contrast, the direct or indirect influence of these figures can hardly be overstated. Hegel, Marx, Kierkegaard, and Nietzsche, for instance, have long belonged to the standard repertoire of discussions in continental philosophy. A course on “nineteenth-century philosophy” has commonly been offered in departments with an interest in continental philosophy or even the history of philosophy, usually taught by philosophers who think of themselves as experts in continental philosophy. Yet Hegel’s own work is unthinkable without the contributions of figures such as Herder, Fichte, and Schelling, as the following essays will document; it is well known how much Schopenhauer’s work had an influence on Nietzsche; Kierkegaard heard lectures by Schelling in Berlin that had a strong influence on his critical dialogue with Kant and Hegel; and the figures described in the last two chapters – Bauer, Strauss, and Stirner, on the one hand, and the “French utopian thinkers,” on the other – were sources of inspiration and critical analysis for the younger Marx as well.

To put it rather pointedly: one of the main differences between continental and analytic philosophy has been that Kant and the figures described in this volume have remained an important part of the continental philosophical tradition, but their work has not generally been regarded as philosophically significant and relevant for the analytic tradition of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Even more importantly, Kant and the other figures whose work is analyzed in this volume have remained not just historical figures, but rather integral and living parts of the tradition of continental philosophy where their philosophical positions continue to be taken seriously and serve as a point of departure for current discussions of philosophical issues. This has always been the case for Kant and Hegel in particular, but increasingly in the past few years also for some of the less well-known figures such as Herder, Fichte, and Schelling. Part of the intent of this volume is to reinforce this trend and to introduce readers to other figures in the decades following Kant whose work was not only influential in its time, but also still deserves serious critical consideration today.

3. Although, as Terry Pinkard notes in his essay in this volume, this situation has recently been changing with respect to Hegel.
4. An exception would be the movement within American philosophy that came to be known as “process philosophy,” oriented on the work of Alfred North Whitehead, Charles Hartshorne, and Paul Weiss, whose thought is in many ways reminiscent of Hegel’s. By the 1960s and 1970s, however, this was no longer part of the mainstream of American analytic philosophy, but more a movement of its own; and even this movement locates its historical roots less in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century philosophers who are included in this volume than on the history of philosophy as a whole.
5. Consider, for example, the importance of Kant in the oeuvre not only of Jürgen Habermas, but also of Michel Foucault.
The notion of an “origin” also conveys the sense of a new beginning. Certainly Kant’s own description of his critical turn in terms of a “Copernican revolution” suggests that he himself thought that his approach to traditional problems in metaphysics represented a completely new way to address those problems. And subsequent readers have tended to take him at his word on this point, seeing Kantian philosophy as the new point of departure from which they must begin or as a particularly new and unique threat to the insights attained by previous philosophers, religious traditions, or even common sense. At the same time, though, Kant clearly locates himself within the framework of the main directions in modern philosophy, namely rationalism and empiricism, and within the predominant intellectual movement of his age, the Enlightenment. Hence even Kant himself was aware that his new approach to traditional questions was not an absolute beginning, but was rather the culmination of a discussion that had begun with the advent of modern science and modern philosophy and in a certain sense can also be located within the arc of the history of philosophy as a whole that goes back for him to Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics.

In fact, one of the distinguishing marks of the tradition of philosophy that Kant establishes is a keen sense of the awareness of one’s own place within an overarching historical development. This is in some regards ironic in light of his claim to have solved the problems once and for all in a way that would make further philosophical progress on these issues superfluous, even though his political essays suggest that further political progress is not only possible, but also necessary and perhaps even inevitable. The essays of this volume show how this conception of thinking as essentially located within a specific historical context comes to take center stage in the philosophers who follow. Of course, Kant was not the first philosopher of his age whose work exhibits such an awareness. One hallmark of the Enlightenment movement as a whole was its emphasis on the notion of “progress” as the gradual unfolding of reason in history.

When the Prussian Academy of the Sciences posed the prize question “What is Enlightenment?” in 1783, part of the motivation for the question was the perception that the age of Enlightenment had already reached its zenith, so that when Kant characterizes his own age as the “age of Enlightenment,” he is locating himself and his thinking in terms of a movement and historical developments that had formed the background for his work, but was about to enter a new phase. Moreover, when Kant, in the essay that represents his response to that question, describes enlightenment as the process of liberating oneself from the self-imposed tutelage that results not from a lack of understanding, but from a

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lack of resolve or courage to use one’s understanding without the guidance of another, he is also taking a position that goes beyond the previously predominant rationalist themes of the Enlightenment. The emphasis in Christian Wolff’s (1679–1754) variation of Leibnizian philosophy that had been Kant’s philosophical starting-point before the critical turn, had been on the primary task of enlightenment as the development of the intellect by making concepts clear and distinct in order to lead to correct beliefs that will then serve as inevitable catalysts to right action.\(^7\) As we will see in Chapter 1 below, Kant will rather see the primary role of philosophical clarification in vindicating common sense by adopting some philosophical positions that are at first every bit as counter-intuitive as the view that the earth goes around the sun in order to justify our everyday beliefs about our ability to experience natural objects in the world. More importantly, though, in the moral realm he will see his philosophy of pure practical reason as combating false theories that could undermine our healthy natural instincts about right and wrong. In the essay “What is Enlightenment?” he is going even further by attributing a lack of enlightenment to false dispositions such as timidity and lack of resolve while acknowledging the barriers placed by social institutions such as the church and insecure rulers who fear that free-thinking individuals will threaten their power.

Of course, even before the appearance of this essay and Kant’s critical works, there had been other criticisms of certain one-sided tendencies within the Enlightenment movement. Two prime motivating factors for the Enlightenment were the development of modern natural science and the power of the new model that it offered, and the emergence of middle classes who, at least according to their own self-understanding, depended more on their individual initiatives, skills, and knowledge than on inherited privileges for their prosperity. Each of these trends will continue to play a role in the further intellectual and artistic developments at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries, but with some important modifications.

The two names Kant mentions in conjunction with modern natural science are Copernicus and Newton; two centuries earlier, Descartes and Hobbes had cited Galileo as their model. What united all of them was that the mathematically oriented mechanistic model advanced by modern physics changed the general view of the world. Exceptionless laws that hold for all kinds of objects replace observations about general tendencies of different kinds of things, and blind causal explanations seem to make teleological explanations superfluous.

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7. Werner Schneider’s work *Die wahre Aufklärung: Zum Selbstverständnis der deutschen Aufklärung* (Freiburg: Alber, 1974) provides an excellent summary and overview of this development along with several examples of lesser known figures whose languages and approaches remain strongly indebted to this rationalist legacy.
At the same time, this seems to raise problems about determinism and how to account for freedom, and therefore for moral and legal notions of individual accountability. It also seems to present a picture of nature as a complicated but ultimately blind, perhaps even lifeless machine. So we will see part of Kant's interest and attractiveness for subsequent thinkers in his attempt to reconcile causal determinism within nature, on the one hand, with the idea of freedom and human moral agency, on the other. Others, for instance Herder, will try to reconcile mechanism and teleology along Leibnizian lines; and following him and Kant's political writings, Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel will try to show how mechanistic explanations at a micro-level do not preclude seeing history itself from an overall teleological perspective. All of the figures covered in this volume stand under the sway of the power of the model of modern natural science, but all of them seek alternatives to a simple mechanistic approach to traditional philosophical problems and to our everyday insights about the world and our place within it. Some of the key categories that will arise as alternatives to this model are concepts such as “life” and “spirit” that will continue to play an important role in response to the challenges posed by the natural scientific model well into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Similarly, the concepts of “culture” and “history” that emerge as central philosophical themes during the period covered in this volume will remain crucial concepts that call for different ways of thinking and different scholarly and scientific approaches than those of modern natural science. It is therefore no accident that these concepts have played a particularly strong role in the continental philosophical tradition, which has defined itself since its inception as an attempt to avoid the reductionist tendencies of philosophies that are too one-sidedly under the sway of the model of the mathematically oriented natural sciences.

The notion of “freedom” in a somewhat different sense is connected with the second overall modern trend mentioned above, that is, the emergence of the new middle classes. “Freedom” here has a social and political connotation according to which individual human beings should have greater latitude in making their decisions and determining their own fates. As modern societies gradually began to shift from agrarian to commercial and then later eventually to manufacturing societies, new groups became predominant who would come to be called the “middle classes”: “middle” in the sense of something in between the hereditary aristocracies, on the one hand, and the powerless agricultural workers, that is, peasants and serfs, on the other. In Germany, the development took place somewhat later than, for instance, in England and France, but

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8. Herder’s work represents an important milestone in this regard as the notion of culture shifts from the Enlightenment notion of a set of skills to the shared habits and dispositions of a people. See the essay by Sonia Sikka in this volume.
by the eighteenth century it was well underway there as well. As opposed to England, where manufacturing began much earlier and the colonial enterprises gave rise to a very large number of rich merchants and traders, the commercial classes in Germany were represented primarily by independent handworkers and smaller merchants and traders. Even more predominant, especially as representatives for the Enlightenment as an intellectual movement, was the growing class of educated administrators and professionals – teachers and professors, pastors, lawyers, doctors – some of whom served the commercially independent classes, but most of whom were in the direct or indirect employment of the many German states still ruled by monarchs or other hereditary aristocracy.9

By the second half of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century, a completely new class had emerged. The new middle classes came to have the means and the desire to buy journals and books, attend concerts and plays, and buy sheet music to play at home. The reading public expanded significantly and came to include women as well. Lutheran clergy had a great deal more independence within the much looser organization of that Church than had traditionally been enjoyed by the Catholic clergy. With the increasing religious tolerance that followed the Peace of Westphalia that had ended the Thirty Years’ War in the previous century, educated Jews were coming to be included in intellectual life as well. In the wake of all these changes, the role of the artist changed from being an artisan or decorative artist employed by the Church or the aristocracy to that of an independent agent creating and producing art as a profession for consumption by these new middle classes, thereby also gaining an artistic freedom previously impossible for them and emblematic for the freedom in thinking and acting to which the rest of the middle classes aspired. In some ways, then, the artists became the symbols for the middle classes as productive, independent, and creative – at least in their aspirations and, to some extent, in their professional and personal lives as well. Consistent with this trend is the concept of the “genius,” given a conceptual and theoretical grounding in Kant’s *Critique of Judgment*, but at the heart of all of the subsequent philosophical reflections on art and artistic creation as well.

Of course, development in literature and music had not waited on the kind of philosophical justifications that Kant and his successors provided. The literary movement of *Empfindsamkeit* that had developed a new literary language of sentiments and emotions that connected this emerging circle of writers as friends and collaborators, was at its heights in the early 1770s. Arising out of personal relationships and the letters that these friends composed, circulated,

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and read together publicly, it popularized a new genre, the epistolary novel.\textsuperscript{10} Its better-known, unruly cousin that flourished at about the same time was the\textit{ Sturm und Drang} movement, which stressed the passions, strong natural drives and urges, and the right of subjectivity, first in plays, then later in Germany’s most famous epistolary novel, Goethe’s \textit{The Sorrows of Young Werther} in 1774. Both of these movements were consciously directed against the one-sidedness of rationalistic description of human events in literature, the tendency toward conventional moralizing, and a rule-governed aesthetics that modeled artistic production on the technical craftsmanship of other productive enterprises – be they artistic or not. Art would come to be closely associated with, and often seen as an expression of the subjectivity of the author who creates it. During the period covered by this volume, these tendencies within literature would lead to classicism, which tried to strike a balance between subjectivity and rules, between reason and the emotions, on the one hand, and romanticism with its enthusiastic endorsement of the rights of subjectivity and the passions and emotions that motivate action, on the other.

In music there was a similar development at this time. Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750) served his entire professional career in the employment of the aristocracy and the Church, and Joseph Haydn (1732–1809) spent his career with the wealthy aristocratic Hungarian Esterházy family. Both of them are renowned as much for their craftsmanship as their originality, but Haydn’s case is an interesting one because he did leave an indelible mark on the history of musical composition through the key role he played in the establishment of specific forms of the symphony and of chamber music that seemed to exhibit the balance and rationality consistent with the demands of the intellect that led them to become canonical for at last the following century. Contrast this with the well-known career of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–91), who constantly and vocally chafed at his dependency on his ecclesiastical and aristocratic sponsors as he increasingly took on the role of a musical entrepreneur, marketing his music at public concerts in the newly created symphony halls and public opera houses\textsuperscript{11} that were open to the well-to-do of all estates. Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827), too, began his career under the sponsorship of several prominent aristocrats, but even as he continues to accept their sponsorship, he sells himself

\textsuperscript{10} See Monika Nenon, \textit{Aus der Fülle der Herzen: Geselligkeit, Briefkultur und Literatur um Sophie von La Roche und Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi} (Würzburg: Könighausen & Neuman, 2005).

\textsuperscript{11} Public opera houses had been introduced in Italy in the seventeenth century. The first in German-speaking countries was in Hamburg in 1678, but by the end of the eighteenth century, they were open in several other German cities including Vienna and Munich, where Mozart’s opera were performed. The national theatre in Mannheim is the oldest dramatic theatre in Germany, opened in 1779. Schiller’s play \textit{The Robbers} premiered there in 1782 in the presence of the author.
to them in market terms – going to the highest bidder, so to speak – while he reduces his dependency on them through public performances of his work and through the sale of the sheet music of his chamber compositions. Franz Schubert (1797–1828) never even had a professionally paid regular position, making what little money he did from publishing his music and giving private lessons. For each of them, “freedom” meant economic independence as well as the artistic independence that they associated with it. It meant the increasing ability to control one’s own destiny and to use art as an expression of one’s own views and sensibilities according to one’s own best instincts instead of subordinating oneself to someone else’s dictates and tastes.

At the same time, however, it remained true that most of the educated members of the groups from whom the leading representatives came – the professors, pastors, and teachers – continued to depend on the church or the state for their employment. Hence the German Enlightenment had always been more typically reformist than revolutionary in tone, assuring church hierarchy and the rulers that an enlightened public would more reliably recognize the truths of religion and the benefits that accrue from enlightened leadership within the bounds of the monarchic order than a people led by superstition and emotions such as fear, and that the other benefits that accrue to such a state would include the greater prosperity and success that follows from a better educated and enterprising populace. Against this backdrop, rationality and subjectivity were not seen as opposites but rather as complementary under the right circumstances. Autonomy, rightly understood, does not have to lead to instability and disorder.

This was particularly the case for religion. By the middle of the eighteenth century, reinterpretations of traditional religious doctrines were becoming quite common. Particularly in the Protestant states, it had long been acceptable to reinterpret or reject many traditional teachings and beliefs as “superstition” and to reinterpret them in line with what is acceptable to reason. The Reformation’s own shift of emphasis away from the authority of the institution of the Catholic Church and its traditional beliefs in favor of an emphasis on each individual subject’s ability to receive grace, understand the Scriptures, and follow his own lights had opened the way for a theology that could re-examine other traditional beliefs and reinterpret them according to the lights of reason as well. Stories from the Scriptures about miracles could be read as metaphorical accounts about the power of spiritual healing and not historically reliable accounts about natural events. The truths of historical religion could be understood as allegorical messages about one’s moral duties, stories that were taken at face value by the less educated and those at less advanced stages of human development, but that had become increasingly unnecessary for those who were capable of understanding and following the dictates of reason alone. The essay on “The Education of Humanity” (Die Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts) by the famous playwright
and author Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729–81) is one of the clearest and most succinct examples of this general tendency. It describes different stages of the development of human societies along the model of the intellectual and moral development of an individual human being who in childhood follows moral rules not out of internal motivations, but out of fear of punishment and hopes for rewards. As development progresses, the individual increasingly comes to understand the inherent rationality of these rules, internalizes them, and acts simply out of insight into their rightness. So, too, at earlier stages of development, religion has all sorts of taboos, superstitions, and fantastic stories about vengeful gods, horrible punishments for evildoers, and direct interventions by the gods on the behalf of those who obey them. As human rationality progresses through the ages, these are replaced by ideas of a just God with laws that benefit humankind, then later by the image of God in the form of one perfect human being, Jesus Christ, who can serve as a model for all human beings, until finally, at the stage of complete maturity and enlightenment, we come to understand the divine principles in all of us through our ability to reason, act morally, and acknowledge the transcendent dignity of all of our fellow human beings. Even in the modern, enlightened age, however, not everyone will be capable of such rational insights and autonomous moral actions, so religion continues to serve as an appropriate moral compass for those individuals or classes who have not yet reached full intellectual and moral maturity.

Not just in his views about religion, but in Kant’s overall approach, his own thinking certainly fits within these parameters. His later work on religion is consistent with the reinterpretation of Christian doctrine in terms of the tenets of pure practical rationality, and his famous essay on Enlightenment also employs the language of human development and maturity. Moreover, he – along with Lessing and others – believes that Enlightenment, properly understood, leads not to social and moral disorder, but rather to free and rational assent to the overall social order in a more or less well-functioning and just state so that subjectivity and lawfulness are not only consistent with each other but can be mutually self-reinforcing principles.

As we have seen, however, there were others who were not as sanguine about the conformity between enlightened subjectivity and the established social order. The Sturm und Drang movement, for instance, reflected the impatience of many, especially young, people over the repressiveness of the established orders and conventional morality. It invokes the power of nature and the passions in asserting the rights of subjectivity even when they were not necessarily subordinated to the overall goals of the state and social order. At the opposite end of the spectrum, within the established order, especially with the transition from Frederick the Great to Frederick William II in Prussia and as part of the reaction to failed reforms in the Austrian Empire, there was a reassertion of the rights of
tradition and the need for limits on what should be publicly discussed and propagated. Even some of those who advocated freedom of thought and religion for the educated, were not necessarily in favor of removing limits on public speech for fear of confusing the members of the lower orders who continued to obey out of habit and whose underdeveloped rational capacities did not render them susceptible to the constraints imposed by enlightened reason alone.

It is against this background that the monumental event of the age, the beginning of the French Revolution in summer 1789 decisively and irreversibly raised the stakes. It called into question two key assumptions that had guided the enlightenment movement, at least in Germany, until that time. As we have seen, the first is the view that increasing enlightenment does not necessarily lead to conflict with the established social and political order, but rather can strengthen it through gradual reform; the second is that progress in one area of human cultural development will be reflected in progress in other areas as well.

On the latter point, one can follow Kant who, in his lectures on “Anthropology in a Pragmatic Regard” (AA VII, 322), had distinguished three different dimensions of human development. The first he calls “technical.” It involves the development of our intellectual skills and techniques for dealing with nature and material objects. These range from our ability to understand causal relationships to our ability to produce objects that help us improve our lives through technologies such as construction of shelters and agricultural techniques, as well as the production of increasingly useful and productive technologies of goods that make life more pleasant. The second dimension he calls “pragmatic.” It concerns social skills, for example, the development of speech, manners, and social arrangements that allow us to deal with each other more skillfully and effectively. At an advanced stage, these might include development of wit, rhetorical skills, and proficiencies in the arts. Finally, he lists “moral cultivation” as the most important of them. These are not the same as pragmatic skills. For instance, the skilled rhetorician may not actually be concerned with the truth of his case or the good of the audience but is rather simply interested in manipulating the audience for his own ends, whereas the morally responsible speaker would speak honestly and with the best interest of the community in mind. Although each of these dimensions of cultural development is distinct, the overall optimism of the enlightenment project was that they would progress more or less in tandem. The advances in modern science were occurring at the same time that advances in trade, commerce, and production were contributing to a greater prosperity for the middle classes; advances in administration skills and public policy were seen to support this development and hopefully lead to greater prosperity and justice for all; refinements in the arts would not only make life more pleasant, but lead to refined sensibilities that would make human beings more receptive and responsive to others; advances in knowledge and understanding would lead
to greater social and religious tolerance that would remove a source of conflict and eliminate the previous destruction caused by religious wars and repression; increasingly enlightened rulers would see the benefits of free and open societies that make their states more prosperous and powerful and make their regimes more stable by reducing the tensions between the rulers and those they govern. Progress on one front implied progress on all of them. The French Revolution made clear that much of this progress depended on specific political conditions and assumptions about their continuous improvement that turned out to be questionable. So it became clear that questions about the actual progress of enlightenment would also be tied to the political circumstances in which it is pursued.

Of course, even before the French Revolution, important voices had called assumptions about the mutual reinforcement of progress in these different dimensions into question. Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–78), above all and most notably, had claimed the opposite, namely that increasing civilization was leading to increasing moral degradation. Rousseau shared the Enlightenment’s optimism about the basic perfectibility of humanity and he endorsed its striving for freedom and call for the recognition of individuals based on their virtues and skills. Indeed, he was renowned for resenting his dependency on the beneficence and good graces of the wealthy and powerful of his age whose power rested not on merit but on inherited privilege, and whose exercise of their power was often arbitrary and even ruthless when it was threatened. For him, the means to human perfection was not through advances in civilization with its increasing material wealth and accomplishments in the arts, but rather through a return to nature in order to restore a natural harmony for which the technical, artistic, and administrative achievements of modernity are at best distractions, but have more often served as impediments to human flourishing and happiness. He thereby gives voice to the disappointments and frustrations of those who have become impatient with progress towards a better and more just society in which there will be a more direct relationship between achievements and rewards, in which individuals can have greater control over their own fates and be less dependent on the whims and favors of those who rule. For Rousseau, who found himself forced to flee both France and Geneva to avoid retaliations, the reactions of those whom he criticized or whose interests he threatened in his writings confirmed his view that their own interests were not aligned with those who were concerned with genuine human progress. The rising expectations of the citizens in the age of Enlightenment were not always met by the political institutions governing the societies in which they lived.

His writings struck a strong chord with many, not just those who were frustrated with the lack of social progress, but also among those who had come to see rationalism as too far removed from the needs and sentiments of concrete
human beings and who were dissatisfied with a view of the intellect that was set at odds with nature and who found constraints of universal and bloodless rules oppressive. Part of the problem, then, was a lack of progress in political institutions. Another part concerned the notion of progress itself and whether it was to be seen in overcoming nature or in finding a way to live more harmoniously with nature. This latter development should not necessarily be seen as a departure from the overall project of the Enlightenment, but as an internal corrective to its one-sided emphasis on the intellect. The goal remains the happiness of individual subjects not in a transcendent world, but in this life. However, this means that the intellect should no longer be seen as a completely independent source of motivation and guidance, but rather must be aligned with concrete human needs and emotions if it is to be effective.

We have already seen how this corrective pertained not just to French society prior to the Revolution, but was consistent as well with literary and artistic developments at the same time in Germany. Moreover, German society during the second half of the eighteenth century faced some of the same problems, and its states shared some of the same flaws as France. The states were still run by more or – in many cases – less enlightened monarchs. The death of a monarch could lead to a complete reversal by his successor of whatever progress had been made under his reign. Even in the city-states like Hamburg, powerful patrician families operated more like an aristocracy than as members of an open civil society. The Peace of Westphalia had ended the religious wars that had ravaged Europe in the previous century, but the European powers were all in a more or less constant state of tension that intermittently erupted into armed conflicts as each strove to increase its wealth and power at the expense of its neighbors. The great powers England, France, and Spain, and the Habsburg monarchy had been at odds for centuries and much of the drain on the French finances that increased the tensions that eventually led to the Revolution can be traced back to the escalation of those conflicts during the second half of the eighteenth century. But on a somewhat smaller scale, the same was true for the lesser German states as well. Prussia as an ascendant power had gained it at the expense of its neighbors in Denmark, Poland, and Saxony, and its plans for further expansion still put it in direct conflict with Austria. During Kant’s own lifetime, a Prussian setback had led his home city of Königsberg to fall under Russian rule. For even the most enlightened monarchs, among whom Kant and most of the Prussian intellectuals counted Frederick the Great, the need to support their wars led to repeated conscriptions, increased taxes, and the search for other new sources of revenue.

For Germany’s intellectuals, who were at the same time for the most part civil servants, the appropriate response was not to advocate sweeping new forms of government, but to continue to press for reforms within the bounds of the
existing social orders. The idea of radically different social orders or a social order that was not mediated through the institutions of the state seemed inconceivable to them. Even those who, like Kant, recognized that states often or usually act out of non-moral or immoral motives, believed that progress was nonetheless possible because the enlightened self-interest of the individual citizens and the rulers would force them to make the appropriate reforms in order to keep their states stable and prosperous. Up until the Revolution, the choice did not seem to be between enlightenment and the existing social order, but rather how to continue the process of enlightenment within that order.

The French Revolution changed everything. For those in the ancien régimes who were always suspicious of reforms and the new freedoms that came with them, the French example served as a dramatic and irrefutable confirmation of the dangers of underestimating the consequences of allowing reforms to go too far or too quickly. Many of those who had initially welcomed the opportunity for a rapid expansion of freedoms for the bourgeoisie were appalled at the reign of terror that soon followed. Napoleon’s later invasions served to unite the rival German states against the common enemy so that the idea of a German national culture, if not for a long time a German national state began to arise. Against this background, the idea of a German Kultur, in which the individual finds his or her place within an organically developing social network and through artworks that reflect both the individuality of their creators as well as the historical and social background in which they arise, took root. This was supposed to be an alternative to the French notion of a “civilization” that overemphasizes wealth and material objects and places an overemphasis on individuality at the expense of the common good and a common identity. And finally, the very notion of the state itself and its institutions now comes into play. In a well-functioning society made up of intellectually and morally enlightened individuals, is there any need for a state at all? Are state institutions by their very nature not repressive, or is there an essential role for institutions in guaranteeing that individual liberties are secure? On the one side, what one might call the “romantic view,” stands the idea that progress will eventually lead to the elimination of the need for a state. The idea of the Greek polis of independent individuals with very little organizational structure, acting according to a common consensus, becomes a popular notion standing for the first of these two alternatives. Fichte, the early Hegel, and Marx advocate this position. The most famous articulation of the opposite view, what one might call the “realist” position, is the later Hegel’s Philosophy of Right from 1827, in which appropriate institutions are defended as the necessary realization of freedom itself. For Hegel in his mature thinking, institutions are not impediments to freedom, but rather appropriate institutions are necessary preconditions for the assurance of the rights and welfare of each individual and individuals necessarily find their identities not in their particularity, but rather