

George di Giovanni, ed.
Karl Leonhard Reinhold and the Enlightenment.
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Those with philosophical interests that extend to the development of German idealist philosophy in the decades following the appearance of Kant's critical philosophy in the 1780s have many reasons to be grateful to George di Giovanni. Besides his many translations and interpretative writings, di Giovanni has introduced many Anglophone readers to less well-known but crucial figures of the period. Thus in the mid-1990s he presented important works of F. H. Jacobi (*The Main Philosophical Writings and the Novel Allwill*, Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press 1994), while a decade earlier together with H. S. Harris, he translated and edited works of a number of other key figures of this period in the volume *Between Kant and Hegel: Texts in the Development of Post-Kantian Idealism* (Albany: State University of New York Press 1985). Among these was Karl Leonhard Reinhold.

Reinhold is generally known as an early popularizer and would-be systematizer of Kant's critical philosophy, effectively becoming the first 'Kantian' philosopher when he took up the newly formed chair of 'critical philosophy' at the University of Jena in 1787. In 1794 Reinhold was replaced by J. G. Fichte, who came to loom much larger than his predecessor, relegating Reinhold to 'transitional' status. But Reinhold had effectively initiated the post-Kantian project of 'unifying' Kant's system, his own attempt being to try to ground it in the so-called 'principle of consciousness'. For most of the period since the appearance of *Between Kant and Hegel*, English-readers have been restricted to the 50-odd pages from Reinhold's 1791 text, *The Foundation of Philosophical Knowledge*, translated there, but recently the situation has started to change. In 2005, Reinhold's *Letters on the Kantian Philosophy* appeared (ed. Karl Ameriks, trans. James Hebbeler [Cambridge University Press]), and a full translation of his seminal *Essay on a New Theory of the Human Capacity for Representation* is slated to appear in 2011 (trans. T. Mehigan and B. Empson [Walter De Gruyter]). The volume under review is a very welcome addition to the hitherto sketchy critical literature on Reinhold.

After a helpful introductory presentation by di Giovanni, the following seventeen essays (eight in English, five in German and four in French) are grouped under four headings: 'Reinhold, Freemason and Educator of Mankind' (essays by Ives Radrizzani, Jean-François Goubet, Martin Bondeli, Peirluigi Valenza and Michael Gerten); 'Reinhold and the Historical Turn' (Daniel Breazeale and Karl Ameriks); 'Reinhold in Struggle with Religious and Moral Issues' (Alessandro Lazzari, Karianne Marx, Claude Piché, Marco Ivaldo); and 'Reinhold and Systematicity: Theory of Science and Theory of Mind' (Faustino Fabbianelli Brigitte Sassen, Sven Bernecker, Petra Lohmann, Jeffrey Reid). The volume then closes with a further 'Sources and Materials' appendix consisting of a presentation (by Karianne Marx and Ernst-Otto Onnasch) of two short talks from Reinhold's pre-Kantian days in Vienna, and a presentation and outline (by Erich Fuchs)

of three sets of student notes from Reinhold's Jena lectures on Kant's theoretical philosophy.

De Giovanni characterizes Reinhold's outlook as caught somewhere between the late enlightenment and the early romantic age, a positioning that marks its strengths and weaknesses. When Reinhold first encountered Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* in the mid-1780s he was already a philosopher with a mission. As Karianne Marx points out in her essay, when he first took up and championed Kant's critical philosophy in his series of 'Letters' in *Der Teutsche Merkur* in 1786, Reinhold already had well-formed 'enlightened' ideas about the role of reason in life that gave him a particular perspective on Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. But as she points out, the interpretation he offered of Kant's postulated moral basis for religion on the basis of his reading of the first *Critique* came to be somewhat out of step with Kant's own version that appeared in the *Critique of Practical Reason* in 1788. In subsequent 'letters' Reinhold had to adjust his interpretations in response to this moving target, initiating a game of catch-up with Kant himself, and then with those 'post-Kantian' idealists who took Kant's views further.

This type of constant re-interpretation of his existing philosophical commitments in fact seemed to characterize Reinhold's entire life. Originally ordained a Catholic priest, while practicing in Vienna he had come to find a home within another tightly knit, closed society to which one pledged allegiance—the freemasons. (Ives Radrizzani in his essay in Part 1, shows the depth of Reinhold's engagement with the life of the masons, and even within that of their even more shadowy offshoot, the Bavarian Illuminati, and connects it centrally with his deep commitments to the goals of Enlightenment reform.) For Reinhold, the idea of existence within a secret society with its projects of social engineering was clearly at one with his general Enlightenment activism devoted to the education of humankind and the creation of the conditions under which humans could express what he took to be their essentially rational characters. It was his distinctly *practical* conception of rationality informing his involvement with the masons as well as his later dealings with students (the subject of Jean-François Goubet's essay) that provided the particular twist he gave to Kant's idea of the 'primacy of practical reason', a twist that was in many senses at odds with Kant's own intentions.

In his introduction di Giovanni portrays Reinhold's adherence to the *abstract* ideals of the classical enlightenment as in tension with just those features of post-Kantian idealism that came to be skeptical of this feature of the eighteenth-century outlook. But if his attempts at systematization were part of this Enlightenment outlook, as Michael Gerten urges, it was this commitment to systematicity that led Reinhold to continually reshape his own philosophical ideas in his attempt to adjust to the rapidly changing terrain of European thought through the 1790s and into the 19th century. Thus from his own pre-Kantian phase, Reinhold progressed from expositor and popularizer to critical re-interpreter and systematizer of Kant, issuing in different versions of his own 'elementary philosophy' in the first half of the 1790s (see especially Bernecker's essay). The same search for consistency, however, subsequently led him to abandon this project in the mid-1790s to become a follower of Fichte, only to then move from Fichte to

Jacobi, and then convert to the ‘rational realism’ of Christoff Bardili, and after that to go on to espouse his own linguistic-based philosophy.

It is this theme of this constantly self-transforming character of Reinhold’s philosophy that enframes many of the interlinking particular studies making up the third and fourth parts of this volume. These essays are invaluable for anyone wanting to understand both the architecture and dynamics of Reinhold’s views and the complex situation within which post-Kantian idealism was born. But they also provide a particularly relevant background from which to appreciate the more schematic essays by Daniel Breazeale and Karl Ameriks making up Part 2 of the volume, with their focus on Reinhold’s role in the historical turn in German philosophy. I think one can confidently say that from now on Reinhold will no longer be able to be omitted from discussions of the background to Hegel’s elaborate historicization of reason. (Reinhold’s influence on Hegel is also the specific topic of Jeffrey Read’s essay in Part 4.)

In ‘Reason’s Changing Needs: From Kant to Reinhold’, Breazeale argues that in *Letters* Reinhold had taken Kant’s idea of the ‘needs of reason’ in an explicitly historical way, seeing such needs as changing over time. (Piché’s essay in Part 3 also pursues the complex issues of Reinhold’s appropriation of Kant’s concept of the needs of reason and is usefully read in conjunction with these two essays.) As the *Letters* develop, this idea itself develops into a more explicit claim about the development of reason over time via a process involving the resolution of conflicts *within* reason. ‘What really changes over time’, Breazeale notes, ‘are the efforts of reason to explain the *grounds* of its (common sense) judgments concerning god and immortality, not the judgments themselves’ (102). That is, reason *itself* came to be seen as having an internal logic governing its own development. ‘According to Reinhold, it is not simply that the needs of reason actually *have* developed in the way just described, but rather that they *necessarily had to develop in precisely this manner, in accordance with an internal logic of their own*’ (104). Breazeale concludes his essay with a set of questions for further exploration including those of Reinhold’s influence on Hegel, questions that are in turn taken up and examined by Ameriks in his contribution.

The constitutive tension in Reinhold’s thought stressed by di Giovanni—his commitment to a type of Cartesian foundationalism while at the same time relating developments in philosophy to concrete historical realities—also appears in Ameriks’s ‘Reinhold, History, and the Foundation of Philosophy’. Ameriks attends to Reinhold’s attitude towards the role of *feeling* played in Kant’s account of one’s awareness of the ‘fact of reason’—an attentiveness that chimes with the role of aesthetics in Reinhold’s moral pedagogy, brought out in other essays. (In relation to this it should not be forgotten that Reinhold was the principal philosophical teacher of many of the Jena ‘*Frühromantiker*’.) By stressing the role of feeling in awareness of the ‘fact of reason’ Reinhold thus seemed perched on the cusp of a radical divide separating Cartesian approaches to philosophy, stressing the role of consciousness as epistemic foundation, and non-Cartesian approaches, emphasizing the dependence of thought on something less overtly cognitive. In Ameriks’ words, ‘Reinhold was thus both the catalyst of the “Cartesian”, non-historical strands of post-Kantianism, which repeatedly led to a dead

end, and the initiator of the non-Cartesian, historical strands of post-Kantianism, which provided a fruitful new paradigm for philosophical writing' (116). It seems then that we may be doing Reinhold a disservice to take his most well-known work, *Foundations of Philosophical Knowledge*, at face value. Rather than regarding it as yet another foundationalist tract, we should not ignore its apparently intended status as an historically particular and specifically targeted intervention within the pedagogy of humankind, informed by an historical conception of reason and its changing needs.

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