Gwen Griffith Dickson

Johann Georg Hamann's Relational Metacriticism



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For my family:

Each is at home in the heart of the Other.

FOREWORD

Attempts have been made since the 1950's to introduce Johann Georg Hamann to the English-speaking world; and yet it still seems true to introduce him as an obscure and neglected figure. Every decade sees another general introduction or survey published, and occasionally a monograph on a particular aspect of his thinking appears in English; but even his name is unfamiliar to most English-speaking philosophers and theologians.

The present work is neither a general introduction nor a study of a particular topic in his work. As it includes translations, commentaries and analysis of some of his central works, I hope it will be of interest on a general level and can serve as an introduction to his work for those who have not yet made his close acquaintance. In particular, however, its purpose is to suggest a certain way of looking at the underlying framework and tendencies of his thinking. I have dubbed his stance 'relational metacriticism'; an unwieldy label, perhaps, but one which I hope will be found useful and apt.

With a writer whose life and work are as inseparable as Hamann's, it is difficult not to give a short account of his life. I have resisted this temptation, apart from such information as is necessary for the understanding of each essay. Readers are encouraged to acquaint themselves with his biography, however, and anglophones may consult the work of Ronald Gregor Smith, W. M. Alexander, James O'Flaherty, or more recently and controversially, Isaiah Berlin.

Instead, the first chapter concerns itself with a story of Hamann's philosophical and theological context: the Enlightenment, and his ambivalent position within it.

The difficulties of Hamann's style ultimately mean that it begs the question simply to refer to his essays or to cite a passage to support an allegation; a claim that Hamann says or means something must be argued for and supported by a thorough exegesis of the passage in question. Hamann's evident delight in allusion (and elusion), his preference for teasing suggestion over self-explanatory proposition, as well as the conscious and deliberate disguises of meaning and intention all require not merely an

analysis of the essay in depth, but, more unusually, a paraphrase of even the first, superficial layer of meaning and sense. Since, however, my interest lies in doing rather more than simply giving an account of the surface meaning of an essay (even if in some cases this can itself be an original contribution to research in Hamann), I have decided to approach this task in the following manner: I have translated each essay and provided it with translator's notes to explain the most superficial layer of perplexities: circumlocutions, 'code' words and nicknames, literary, philosophical, biblical, classical or other references, and other such immediate barriers to understanding or problems of interpretation. These are contained in the second volume. Secondly, each text is dealt with in an 'Exposition', a linear exegesis of the essay to set out a coherent account of its meaning or message. This is perhaps best read in close comparison with the essay itself. Finally, the piece is subjected to a section of 'Analysis', in which the ideas of the work can be examined thematically, to explore and examine what they say or signify on a deeper level. The biographical *Sitz im Leben* of each essay is also given at the beginning of the relevant chapter. These explorations form chapters 2 to 6. A final chapter gathers the threads and takes the insights of 'relational metacriticism' a little further.

I have selected essays which I believe contain the main elements of Hamann's thinking on the philosophical issues that underlie theology: *Socratic Memorabilia*, *Aesthetica in Nuce*, the *'Herderschriften'*, and *Metacritique of the Purism of Reason*. I have supplemented them, as a kind of scherzo movement, with *Essay of a Sibyl on Marriage*; this essay fills in crucial insights for philosophical and theological anthropology.

Gründer has argued that Hamann's life contained four great periods of 'critique'; these four periods are the four acts of critique embodied in the essays I have chosen, beginning with *Socratic Memorabilia*. The deep personalism of Hamann's London experience of crisis and conversion, and the opposition Berens introduced between Enlightenment and faith, coupled with the apparent failure of the young Kant to indicate an attractive 'enlightened' approach to Christianity led to the dissatisfactions which erupt in *SM* in 1759. At this point the relational idea is just beginning to take shape. While the first layer of its argument is a Christian apologetic, its underlying philosophical convictions are the insistence on philosophy's place in human life and experience and the personal and relational character philosophy ought to

have; buttressed by the presupposition of a theological, relational hermeneutic: that history, life and philosophy can only be correctly interpreted when viewed as the locus or embodiment of the relationship between God and ourselves.

Aesthetica in Nuce stands out among the group of writings published together as *Crusades of a Philologian* for reasons of length, but also because of its subject-matter, ideas, and mode of expression. *AN* is a new treatment of the relational hermeneutic first adumbrated in *SM* and subsequently developed in the other major texts to be studied; the focus now is less on history as the mode of God's self-expression and communication to us, and more on nature, creation, and the arts (primarily literature, chiefly Scripture.) This entails a new philosophy of language, as well as a hermeneutic and philology now consciously developed over against Michaelis, which is not developed and presented systematically but rather is indicated, or even flaunted, in oracular sayings and obscure hints. In the deliberately rhapsodic and bombastic utterances, however, is made clear an understanding of language which overthrows its representing function and institutes language's other roles as primary: expression and communication. This conception of language as primarily expressive and communicative is then used theologically. The bond between humanity and God is depicted even more intimately with brief explorations of the idea of the creation of human beings in God's own image.

An essay by Hamann's dear friend and protégé J. G. Herder provoked an explosion of essays known collectively to Hamannians as the *'Herderschriften'*. The Berlin Academy's essay competition on the origin of language and Herder's prize-winning response to it occasioned a new and deeper exploration on Hamann's part into what was becoming a dominant interest of his: the philosophy of language. At the same time, the relationality of his thinking was becoming ever clearer. The Enlightenment's approaches to language Hamann now realizes are simply the corollary of the Enlightenment epistemologies (and theologies) which he has already decided to reject. Furthermore, he sees that these are grounded in what for him is a deluded philosophical anthropology. Linguistic philosophy, anthropology, epistemology and theology are now all interconnected for Hamann and must therefore be tackled together. The very separation of them (even notionally or methodologically) is a symptom of the Enlightenment disease. For Hamann, language, anthropology and epistemology are all united in our relationship with God, the creative Word. Language perhaps

is the symbol which brings them all to focus; as it is the embodiment of what we are and what we can do and know. All of these have their meaning in the context of our relationship to God, both in our direct experiential relationship and in the relational idea of the *imago Dei*.

Subsequent writings of Hamann's develop this approach in its differing directions. *Essay of a Sibyl on Marriage* is a foray into the realm of sexuality; to an extent, it represents an attempt to dismantle a mind-body dualism but more directly it is a vigorous critique of the hypocritical piety – in fact, blasphemy, according to Hamann's theology – of prudishness and sexual shame. The essay is important for its contribution in a different arena to the thesis of relationality, and so is included in the translations and given a concise exposition and analysis in the thesis.

I have selected what is in fact an unfinished and unpublished work as the most fruitful for examining the last phase of Hamann's underlying approach to the problems of philosophy and theology. *Metacritique of the Purism of Reason* is, as the title indicates, Hamann's early reaction to Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. Hamann remained dissatisfied with its limitations. Nevertheless, it contains some final distillations of Hamann's relational thinking on the area which had come to preoccupy him the most: the relationship between cognition and language. In its protest against the many binary oppositions and the structure of Kant's approach, it permits Hamann to formulate his own relational approach in contrast, and expound a version of the 'principle of the union of opposites'. In so doing, it allowed Hamann to observe that the whole of his 'authorship' (as he liked to call it) consisted principally in what he now called 'metacriticism': the critique of 'critical philosophy' (if one takes this, as Hamann does, to refer to philosophy from Descartes to Kant); the examination of the fundamental presuppositions of philosophy and theology, regarding the nature of humanity, the possibilities for human knowledge, the place of language, the relationship of the human to the divine.

Format of the translated essays

I have tried to lay out the pages of my translation to approximate as closely as possible those of Nadler's edition of Hamann's works. With Nadler's volume and page numbers given in the heading of each page, and Nadler's line numbers given down the left margin, it is hoped that this will facilitate comparison of the translation to

the original; and it also means that a single reference in the thesis enables the reader to consult either the translation or the original. It is obvious, of course, that an exact recreation of Nadler's schema down to which words precisely appear on which numbered line is not possible in all cases, given the very great differences between German and English word order and syntax. Moreover, Nadler reproduces Hamann's numerous emphases by putting spaces between letters of the emphasized words; thus greatly altering the number of words per line. Nevertheless, great care has been taken to create the same number of lines per paragraph and per page as in the Nadler edition. This requires in some cases small variations in the spacing of words on a line, but it is hoped that the advantages in greater convenience to the reader outweigh any aesthetic disadvantages. On the rare occasions where it has proved impossible to reproduce the correct number of lines in the paragraph (mainly in the footntoes), the numbering takes note of the difference from the original in the following ways: '1a' indicates an extra line in the paragraph, the number designating the original line whose content is contained in the excess line; while '1-2' indicates two lines which had to be reproduced in a single line.

Emphases in the Translations

Bold lettering indicates literary emphases.

Italic script is used for foreign words and phrases, and for titles of works. It is also used to indicate that a passage which I have translated into English, for the convenience of the reader, was cited by Hamann in the original language. The same applies to English itself: when Hamann cited an English author in the original, I put this passage in italics.

NB: Hamann's punctuation can be eccentric; I have preserved it in its original form, except when it obscures the sense of the passage.

Notes and References in the Translations

Hamann almost always gives a citation in the original language, except when he seemed to have an express purpose in doing otherwise. I have provided translations of most of these, except where it seemed to me that the feeling of the original language contributed to Hamann's intended effect (e.g. where a Latin citation seemed to convey a mock-scholarly tone, or a French citation a cultivated tone.) All translations from German, French, Greek and Latin are mine, unless otherwise indicated. Where

biblical citations extend beyond a phrase or two, however, they are given in the Revised Standard Version without being indicated as such. Occasionally I modify this with reference to Luther's German translation of the Bible, where it is clear that a verbal allusion is intended.

NB: Hamann's Greek is always without breathing marks or accents, (with the exception of N III, 37:7) and I have preserved this.

Hamann's notes are numbered as in Nadler's edition, in arabic numerals. An asterisk indicates that the note was not contained in the published version of the essay, but was handwritten by Hamann afterwards in the margin. Nadler has faithfully reproduced all these and numbered them into the sequence. This could be misleading, however, and some care needs to be exercised in interpreting these later notes. They may not at all have an explanatory function, but rather often reflect an association (often a biblical one) made by Hamann after the fact. My notes follow the essays, headed as 'Translator's Notes'; they are indicated with letters. The sequence they follow is:
a...z, then α...ω , then ♠, ♥ , ♦ , ♣ , then aa...zz, αα...ωω, ♠♠...♣♣.

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The role that 'relationships' play is no less important for the birth of this book than I claim it to be for Hamann's thought. It is only fitting therefore that some of the most important and influential of these relationships be acknowledged here. My family – Mary, my mother, my father, and Malie – have all been very supportive and inspiring, each in their own way. My mother deserves particular thanks for seemingly endless editorial work. My tolerant as well as insightful husband Andrew deserves special commendation for these as well as other useful attributes. Norman Ballantyne, Michael Barnes, David Mitchell, Antony Grayling and Diane Brewster have all played an indispensable role in reading, reacting, and pleasurably chewing over ideas. Thanks must go to Dr. John Milbank and Dr. Christoph Schwöbel for their encouragement, and Professor Oswald Bayer has gone out of his way in lending practical support.

As Hamann was to argue, we need instruction even in that which is natural to us. A special debt of gratitude and appreciation must go therefore to Dr. Joseph Laishley, who in all the various manifestations of this work was both a patient Socratic midwife as well as a creative and perceptive Hamannian meta-critic. My very

first exposure to his insightful and fruitful theological approach sowed the seeds of my own later style and attitudes; and he has subsequently been very generous and wise in nurturing their further growth. Over the years it has been equally exciting to explore his own insights as Hamann's; and as many hours of pleasure and profit for me have been spent pursuing our own reflections as have been spent unravelling those of the Magus of the North. As another *Meister* was alleged to have said, to a far less appreciative student: *Zweieinig geht der Mensch am best.*

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ABBREVIATIONS

References to Hamann's writings (see N below) refer simultaneously to Nadler's edition and to my own translations in the second volume; see the introduction to that volume for a fuller explanation of this. Generally speaking, all translations from German, French, Italian, Greek and Latin are my own; exceptions are made for certain famous texts, where a new translation might confuse the reader who wishes to compare the passage in a familiar translation. (Note that Hamann does not accent his Greek; so neither did I.) The abbreviations used for biblical books are the standard ones.

AN = *Aesthetica in Nuce.*
CP = *Crusades of a Philologian* (collectively).
CPR = *Critique of Pure Reason.*
D = *The Dispatch of the Reviewer.*
EAN = *Essay on an Academic Question.*
ESM - *Essay of a Sibyl on Marriage.*
HP = Herder's *Preisschrift*; followed by the page number ofthe edition whose details are in the Bibliography.
HHE = *Hamanns Hauptschriften Erklärt.* Arabic numeral refers to volume number.
HS = The *Herderschriften* (collectively).
KRC = *The Last Will and Testament of the Knight of the Rose-Cross.*
MPR = *Metacritique of the Purism of Reason.*
N = Nadler's edition of Hamann's Werke. The mode of reference is thus: N III, 21:5-7 = Nadler's edition, third volume, page 21, lines 5 to 7.
PID = *Philological Ideas and Doubts.*
SM = *Socratic Memorabilia.*
TR = *Two Reviews.*
ZH (followed by Arabic numeral) = Ziesemer's and Henkel's edition of Hamann's letters, followed by volume number. Page and line reference given as with Nadler.

I. EITHER–OR? NEITHER!

> The main features of the Enlightenment were the same everywhere: the autonomy of reason, the solidarity of intellectual culture, the confidence of its unstoppable progress, and the aristocracy of the intellect.[1]

1. Either–Or?

For all the familiarity of this portrait of the Enlightenment, a survey of the range of thinkers active and important in this period subverts such a uniform and homogeneous picture. The 'age of Enlightenment' includes not only card-carrying rationalists, believers in 'the autonomy of reason', like Descartes, Leibniz, and in their own ways, Voltaire and Kant, but also famous 'empiricists' like Locke, Hume, and the enigmatic Berkeley. One thinks typically of the flavour of Rousseau, La Mettrie, or Algarotti; but for every stereotypically 'Enlightened' philosopher like Christian Wolff or Moses Mendelssohn, there is an 'irrationalist', a Herder or a Jacobi or, in the world of aesthetics, a Dubos. Even the quintessential rationalist philosopher-libertine – Casanova – has an irrationalist counter-part in the Marquis de Sade.

A more thorough and catholic examination of the presuppositions and methodologies of the thinkers of the time therefore yields a less consistent picture. Instead of a uniformity of outlook or approach there seems rather to be common preoccupations but conflicting commitments; shared questions but opposed answers. One can see at the very least two strands differentiating themselves from one another with increasing emphasis, and both taking on greater force; the one from the power of Cartesianism, the other from the growth and increasing confidence of the natural sciences. In every subject-matter, the 'Either–Or' of rationalism or empiricism seems to become clearer. Despite the illusions one might have that an infinite number of philosophical positions are

[1] Dilthey, III, 131.

possible, a fundamental choice faces the philosopher: do I follow the route of Descartes or of Newton?

The commonality of Enlightenment thinkers, should one wish to identify or assert one, is perhaps better found in the questions which preoccupied them – questions which are recurrent in Western philosophy. These questions can be seen as an attempt to consider what human beings are, and how to understand their relationship to what surrounds them.

A primary question then for the Enlightenment was that of our relationship to the things around us, a relationship which Enlightenment philosophy dealt with or described as *knowing*. The possibilities for knowing were by and large arranged in a choice of two alternatives; the way of reason or the way of the senses. Indeed, it could be argued that where there is a strong mind-body dualism, not only *must* one's relationship to the world be described as an epistemological one, but moreover the problematic nature of knowing becomes exaggerated. Where *things* are identified with the body and *knowledge* with the mind – and where these two are conceived as in some way two different orders – epistemology becomes almost a category mistake. In a fashion reminiscent of early patristic christology, epistemology becomes a struggle with philosophical grammar: an attempt to predicate something of an entity which is not entirely proper to it, like trying to describe the colour of a smell. The unseemly spectacle of a windowless monad ripening its innate ideas in a pre-harmonized parallel to the world illustrates well the complexity necessary for an epistemologist of this persuasion.[2] Indeed, so strongly can this opposition be perceived, (and so problematic can this make an epistemology!) that we find Christian Wolff declaring – without irony – that for the soul to influence the body, or vice versa, requires a miracle. Descartes'

[2] Leibnizean monads, the basic units of reality, whether sentient or not, always perceive every other monad and represent it to themselves, even if this goes on largely unconsciously in most cases (in this case, it is a matter of '*petite*' perception, cf. *Monadologie* 20, 21, 23, 24). But monads are 'windowless', and nothing can enter them from outside (*'les monades n'ont point de fenêtres par lesquelles quelque chose y puisse entrer ou sortir'*, *Monadologie* 7); which raises the ticklish suggestion of how they perceive. Leibniz finds the answer in a robust theory of innate ideas: not merely are there tendencies of the mind, not merely are some ideas innate, but indeed all ideas are innate. Not every perception or representation is complete, of course; but they lie slumbering, as 'petite perceptions', until they are brought to consciousness, which happens when the monad is ripe for it. The timing of this event must take place according to a 'pre-established harmony'.

occasionalism, which requires God to 'produce thoughts in the soul on the occasion of the motions in the body, and contrariwise produce movements in the body on the occasion of the soul with its will', requires God to be continually working miracles.[3] In comparison to this, a pre-established harmony is a positively commonsensical solution, and Wolff adopts it[4]; the events occurring in the soul and senses are perfectly timed so as to occur simultaneously.[5]

For what might be called 'oppositional philosophy', whether rationalist or empiricist, describing the act of knowing entails the pairing up (or squaring up to each other) of two, almost rival entities: the knower (mind) and the object. One or other of them must effect the act of knowledge. Which is to be given the power to do so? Which of the two can be more safely entrusted with the perilous task of creating truth? For Wolff, as for Descartes and Leibniz, the precedence of one over the other is clear[6]:

> Because the soul produces sensations through its own[7] power, thus images and ideas[8] of bodily things do not come in from the outside, but rather the soul indeed already has them within itself, that is, in the kind and manner as is possible in one finite thing, not in reality, but rather merely according to its capacity, and simply develops them from its being in like wise as the order agreeing with the body, insofar as it itself is determined to make real the possible.[9]

And yet, a rationalist account such as that of Wolff, which privileges the mind over the senses, can positively stimulate a development in the opposite direction. For a start, even rationalists like Leibniz and Wolff had a version of the dichotomy later employed by Hume and Kant, in such different ways: that there is a twofold division to be found (somewhere) in knowledge. This distinction is usually found in a form that claims there are two kinds of knowledge, one corresponding to reason and one to the senses. Wolff, unlike Leibniz or Hume, saw the twofold division not in kinds of

---

[3] Cf. Wolff the fifth chapter of the so-called '*Deutsche Metaphysik*', *Vernünfftige Gedancken von Gott, der Welt und der Seele des Menschen, auch allen Dingen überhaupt*, §763-764.

[4] *Ibid.*, § 765.

[5] *Ibid.*, § 776.

[6] For the most part; though as shall be seen there are whiffs of empiricism in Wolff.

[7] *Eigenthumliche.*

[8] *Begriffe.*

[9] *Ibid.*, § 819f.

knowledge or truths, but as two parallel ways of knowing the same thing:

> We have accordingly two ways by which we can attain knowledge of the truth: experience and reason. The former is grounded in the senses, the latter however in the understanding. E.g. that the sun will rise tomorrow morning most know from experience, and they cannot say why it happens; an astronomer on the other hand, who knows the causes of the heavenly movements and understands the connection of the earth with the heavens, knows the same by reason, and can demonstrate that, why, and at what time this must take place.[10]

This recognition of a second way of knowing is in fact underlined by the firmness of Wolff's attention to the senses at the beginning of his *Preliminary Discourse on Philosophy in General*:

> By means of the senses we know things which are and occur in the material world. And the mind is conscious of the changes which occur within itself. ... For the present, it is sufficient to point out that knowledge acquired by the senses and by attention to ourselves cannot be called into doubt.[11]

For the empiricist, this might be represented as a welcome rebuttal, so far as it goes, over Descartes and Malebranche — and yet, paradoxically, it may be less a rejection of their position than a development of their thinking. Indeed, Alfred Bäumler can go so far as to claim:

> ...Malebranche was as important for this century as Bacon and Locke. That he dealt with the senses and imagination only to unmask them as deceivers was no obstacle. The *direction* of his investigation is what made the impression; the characterization of the evaluation could change and did in fact change.[12]

---

[10] *Ibid.*, § 372. This quotation rouses thoughts of Kant. For a discussion of the latter's relation to or indeed dependence on Wolff, see Hans-Jürgen Engfer, *'Zur Bedeutung Wolffs für die Methodendiskussion der deutschen Aufklärungsphilosophie Analytische und synthetische Methode bei Wolff und beim vorkritischen Kant'* in Schneiders, 48ff.

[11] § 1, 2. Despite the apparent anti-Cartesian sentiment, Wolff was heavily dependent on Descartes, especially at those points in his account where he felt he could not follow Leibniz. For a study of Wolff's relationship to Descartes, see Charles A. Corr, 'Cartesian Themes in Wolff's *German Metaphysics*', in Schneiders, 113ff.

[12] Bäumler, 172. Bäumler makes several assertions about the development of empiricism in Germany which surprise at first reading. In his view, for example, Bacon indeed was an important ancestor, with his legacy of

The 'evaluation' of the senses taken by later French empiricists was such that even Locke was found to be suffering from innatism, in his provision for not only 'sensation' but also 'reflection' as a source of mental phenomena. In Maupertuis and Condillac, for example, the category of 'reflection' was evaporated of content by their scepticism over whether any act of introspection or self-reflection is truly devoid of some physical sensation, some relation to the body. If such a dualism between sensation and reflection can be named, then, the opposition between them is only apparent. For Condillac, Locke was insufficiently faithful to his own presuppositions and method. While eliminating innate ideas, he did not eradicate the assumption of innate mental processes and operations; he failed to see understanding, observation and so on as activities which are learned and acquired. One must therefore continue the analysis to the highest level of the mind and its activities.[13] Such a lapse into the dangers of innatism or apriorism

inventio, iudicium, memoria, elocutio, which takes the world of the 'lower faculties' into account; Bäumler refers in particular to his idea of the improvement of the lower powers of the mind, and the concept of the 'emblem' as that which makes thoughts sensible. Nevertheless, he argues, Bacon's invitation to empiricism was only one inspiration alongside another, which in fact came from the rationalistic side. The expansion of logic did not come so much from Bacon's use of induction, he claims, but from the logic of discovery or *ars inveniendi* of Descartes and Leibniz (and, one might add, Wolff in following Leibniz.) On a parallel track, Budde was directly influenced by Bacon, but only in the psychological element in his division of logic (in Budde, a three-part division of *ingenium* into *inventio, iudicium, memoria*.) What is particularly significant in this is the psychological turn: the *ars inveniendi*, a matter of mathematical pure reason in Leibniz, 'appears here in a human environment (*ingenium*)'. In Bäumler's study, the meaning that *ingenium* takes on in Budde and Rüdiger is an essential presupposition for the new aesthetic's acceptance of *ingenium* among the faculties of knowledge. This development did not come through Bacon-Hobbes-Locke, he asserts, but Bacon-Budde. Locke, he claims, 'did not win over the greatest minds'; 'The doctrines of Locke and Berkeley, of Hume and Condillac, never gained unchallenged recognition in Germany. Much as Locke's influence seems to dominate here for a time, it was from the first confined within certain limits as a result of the systematic development of psychology by Christian Wolff.' (Cf. Bäumler, 170-171.) That said, the picture alters as far as Hamann is concerned, for in fact he had a knowledge of the British empiricists which was unusual for his time.

13 Cf. Cassirer, 100-101: 'Here too there is nothing which is not completely contained in the original sense elements. Mental operations represent nothing really new and therefore mysterious; they are indeed merely transformed sensations.'

threatens to undermine the reliability and certainty of human knowledge.

> Nature and knowledge are to be placed on their own foundations and explained in terms of their own conditions. In both cases flights into transcendent worlds must be avoided. No foreign element may be permitted to come between knowledge and reality, between subject and object. The problem must be placed on the ground of experience and solved there, for any step beyond experience would signify a mock solution, an explanation of the unknown in terms of that which is still less known. That mediation which apriorism and rationalism had looked upon as forming the basis of the highest certainty of knowledge is thus decisively rejected.[14]

Both empiricism and rationalism betray an uneasy awareness of our own fallibility, which must be correctively reinforced, and our knowledge thereby guaranteed, by recourse to something more reliable: either the reassuring sturdiness of material objects, or the indubitable purity of logical principles. 'Thus, because our senses sometimes deceive us, I decided to suppose that nothing was such as they led us to imagine' Descartes tells us, in a famous sentence surprising for its simultaneous scepticism and gullibility.[15]

Ironically, the rise in modern science may have had a hand in the direction that rationalism took in its quest for certainty: the changes in astronomy and the debates over secondary qualities and in what they inhere worked together to inspire a distrust in the reliability of our senses. An inherited Platonic scorn of appearances, coupled with a Manichaeistic suspicion of the material world and therefore our bodily links with it – our senses – now acquired a new, scientific ally. It was no longer merely mystics, but now also their opposites, scientists, who were convinced that things were not really as they seemed. In most cases, of course, it was not a matter of attempting to abandon the input of the senses altogether, but rather to subject them to a critical reworking, justification and interpretation by the powers of reason. This eventual triumph of reason over the senses had its foundations laid in the growth in intellectual self-confidence which began in the Renaissance and took a further twist in the Reformation; we may have found our senses to be unreliable, but our own faculties of reason more than compensate for the loss with their gain in authority and autonomy.

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[14] Cassirer, 97.

[15] Descartes, *Discourse on Method*, Fourth Part; p. 127.

As Descartes' and Leibniz' personal examples also indicate, the development in mathematics in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries provided further impetus for a comparably certain and reliable method and set of beliefs to be used in philosophy. This espousal of mathematics in turn precipitates a rejection of its presuppositions and method by Enlightenment empiricists.[16] A rediscovery of matter in the ontological realm implies a rejection of mathematics as an ideal method in the epistemological realm. Seeing matter as mere extension is unsatisfying for the empiricist, who is intrigued by the many other far more colourful qualities of the physical object under view. According to Buffon, mathematics is a science of pure speculation, simple curiosity, and utter uselessness[17]; its truths are tautological and arise from presupposed definitions and therefore it can deal only with very simple objects and yield little or no new information about the world. For Diderot, it kills the living concreteness of whatever is under study, while abstracting from it 'all its essential qualities'.[18]

It is therefore insufficient for human knowledge, and is so for two reasons or from two directions: not merely from consideration of the object, whose living concreteness is apparently killed off, but also from that of the subject. If knowledge is rooted in the senses, mathematics, particularly insofar as it claims intellectual purity and absoluteness, is misguided. Instead, all of our ideas are derived from our sense impressions – mathematics included, as Hume argues[19]:

> 'Tis usual with mathematicians, to pretend, that those ideas, which are their objects, are of so refin'd and spiritual a nature, that they fall not under the conception of the fancy, but must be comprehended by a pure and intellectual view, of which the superior faculties of the soul are alone capable. The same notion runs thro' most parts of philosophy, and is principally made use of to explain our abstract ideas.... 'Tis easy to see, why philosophers are so fond of this notion of some spiritual and refin'd perceptions; since by that means they cover many of their absurdities, and may refuse to submit to the de-

[16] For an illuminating discussion of this point, see Kondylis, 291ff., whom I partly summarize here.

[17] '*de pure speculation, de simple curiosité et d'entière inutilité.*' Buffon, 24 B.

[18] Diderot, II, 65f.

[19] Cf. also the discussion in Hume's *Treatise*, Book I, Part II, section IV; e.g. p. 45: 'When geometry decides any thing concerning the proportions of quantity, we ought not to look for the utmost *precision* and exactness. None of its proofs extend so far. It takes the dimensions and proportions of figures justly; but roughly, and with some liberty. Its errors are never considerable; nor wou'd it err at all, did it not aspire to such an absolute perfection.'

> cisions of clear ideas, by appealing to such as are obscure and uncertain. But to destroy this artifice, we need but reflect on that principle so oft insisted on, *that all our ideas are copy'd from our impressions*.[20]

In this case, the truths of mathematics arise from the senses and are not the products of pure reason, with absolute and eternal validity. As with Hume, for the French empiricists mathematics is tautological not merely in a purely logical sense, but also for a more 'subjective' reason: it only reflects back to us the presuppositions and definitions we have placed in it ourselves.

Whether mathematics is the guarantor of infallibility or a subjective system, the flight from fallibility conducts thinkers to another opposed choice: a stance on the reality of the 'outside' world, that is, idealism vs. realism. If the choice between rationalism and empiricism can be seen as asking: Is the desired stability, security and certainty to be *found in* objects, or *denied* them? it is only a further step to inquire whether reality itself is to be found in objects or denied them.[21] On the basis of this issue, our thinkers must then address the question: Is truth to be found in reference to a *correspondence to things* (which things 'guarantee' the truth of the statement), or failing that, perhaps then to be found in a *harmony of ideas*? Or, the rationalist might decide (as did Leibniz) that perhaps in the end truth is a matter of correct methodology, '*un usage exact des règles de la logique*', a matter of reason working correctly.

A corollary of these questions is the subsidiary question of what relationship these truths have to one another. Faith in reasoning and logic may lead the rationalist to believe that the whole of knowledge is containable within a single system, as illustrated

[20] *Ibid.*, Book I, Part III, Section I; p. 72.

[21] Admittedly, whether or not a thinker is to be considered an idealist is often a difficult issue to decide. It is a matter of dispute, for example, whether or not Leibniz is an idealist. Jansen argues that he is not; part of Jansen's argument is that many of those aspects of his thought that look like idealism are in fact features of his rationalism. (Jansen, *vid.* especially 63ff.) If one is specific in one's understanding of a 'realist' as one who maintains the independent existence of a reality outside the mind, and interprets the more 'mentalist' aspects of Leibniz' philosophy as rationalism, this argument has considerable force. Meanwhile, it seems a serious mistake to regard Berkeley as an idealist, as people commonly do. For Berkeley, things really are out there, whether *I* am perceiving them or not – thanks to an all-perceiving God. For an excellent treatment of this thinker, cf. Grayling. It is just wrong, says Grayling, to see Berkeley's position as entailing subjective idealism. (Grayling, 16-17; cf. also 96.)

both by Descartes and by Leibniz, with his vision of a *mathesis universalis* which would contain the whole of human knowledge. This may also tempt the philosopher to believe that the whole of reality is knowable and explicable:

> Those long chains composed of very simple and easy reasonings, which geometers use to arrive at their most difficult demonstrations, had given me occasion to suppose that all the things which can fall under human knowledge are interconnected in the same way. And I thought that, provided we refrain from accepting anything as true which is not, and always keep to the order required for deducing one thing from another, there can be nothing too remote to be reached in the end or too well hidden to be discovered.[22]

'The most ingenious way of becoming foolish is by a system' wrote Shaftesbury[23]; and this was a conviction ostensibly shared by most empiricists. Their rejection had several grounds. Systems entail the attenuation or distortion of those elements of reality less congenial to the presuppositions and principles of the system in question. Buffon and Condillac also called attention to the volitional basis of systems, in contrast to their apparent logic and impartiality; Buffon claimed that systems contained a fusion or confusion of the empirical and of knowledge with desires, intentions and passions, while Condillac argued that they were not in fact constructed out of logical thinking, but rather their basis was in the wishes and temperament of the constructor. Maupertuis added to this critique the assertion that systems such as Leibniz' are the worst affliction for science, for they are grounded in invisible being which cannot be confirmed or refuted by experience. Whoever constructs a system does not think of experience or nature, he claimed, but of his own work, thus confusing thought with reality.[24]

The irony in this polemic is that those who criticized systems did not refrain from constructing systems themselves; they merely claimed not to found them on prejudice and to reflect reality without arbitrariness. One finds, therefore, that Maupertuis can write a '*Système de la Nature*', wherein the system is of course thought to reflect the intrinsic order and the laws of nature itself, not his own presuppositions. He was joined by many others in writing a work of this title; and moreover, contrary to what one might expect from

[22] Descartes, *Discourse on Method*, Second Part; p. 120.
[23] In *Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinion, Times*, I, p. 290.
[24] Cf. Kondylis on the 'Ambiguities' of this rejection, 298ff.

empiricists, these *Systèmes de la Nature* are not detailed and exhaustive monographs on limited areas, but 'ambitious and voluminous'[25], all-embracing constructions. Even the epistemological concept underlying the *Encyclopedia* has this interest in totality lying behind it.

Kondylis argues that:

> Behind the epistemological objection stands the ontological one. One stresses the role of the empirical in the construction of a good system only because one has presupposed the value of the senses, or no longer sees them in a Cartesian fashion, in opposition to the mind, but interconnected to it.[26]

Ultimately, the empiricist no less than the rationalist must be able to give an account of the whole; '*sans l'idée de tout, plus de philosophie*' — for, according to Diderot, if phenomena are not linked one to the other, there is no point to philosophy.[27] For both the rationalist and the empiricist, then, ironically, a system is what is necessary to give this account. The difference, from the empiricist's point of view, is that it is the unity and structure in the things themselves, and not rationalist presuppositions or false abstractions, which are said to be reflected in a sound empirical system. That the primary empiricist commitment itself is a presupposition, and not an empirical, observable feature of the world was not remarked upon by the empiricists themselves; but according to Kondylis, 'The confession of empiricism is actually a highly *symbolic* act, a symptom of belonging to an *ideological* party.'[28] Even the foundational notion of empiricism, Thomas Aquinas' principle that there is nothing in the intellect that is not first in the senses, is an *a priori* principle which cannot be empirically given:

> The maxim... can by no means lay claim to factual truth as tested by a thorough-going empiricism. Yet not only empirical probability, but complete and indubitable certainty – indeed, a sort of necessity – are attributed to this maxim. Diderot expressly states, 'Nothing is proved in metaphysics, and we know nothing either concerning our

[25] Kondylis, 305.
[26] Kondylis, 300.
[27] Diderot, II, 15.
[28] Kondylis, 305; emphases mine. 'Ideological' translates '*weltanschaulich*'. Cf. also this pithy observation: 'One proceeds deductively in reality, but just *defines* the principles of deduction as given empirically, whereupon the whole procedure can be called inductive with an easy conscience.' (Kondylis, 306.)

> intellectual faculties or concerning the origin and progress of our knowledge, if the old principle: *nihil est in intellectu*, etc., is not evidence of a first axiom.' This statement is typical, for it shows that not even empiricism has entirely foregone the appeal to general principles and their *a priori* evidence.[29]

The desire for totality and for certainty, and the means chosen to attain both, have immediate repercussions for a philosopher's attitude towards language. If our eyes and ears can be mistaken, our minds err, so too our tongues can lie. If there is a fundamental unease about our intellectual fallibility, then the very richness of possibilities in our language – story, myth, reportage, misrepresentation – permits an anxiety over the true status of our descriptive language about the world and ourselves. Having delighted in the exposure of ordinary language's inaccuracies and inadequacies for philosophy, (a self-satisfying exercise repeated of course in the beginning of our own century), the *stereotypical* Enlightenment response is that of Leibniz' fond project of creating a new, rational, universal language adequate for the tasks of philosophy. The clarity, univocity, and manipulability of these words or this language mirrors a clear, logical and controllable world. The presupposed relationship of language to the world is thus something like the opening sections of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*; one in which words or names mirror things, and the arrangement of words mirrors the arrangements of things, the state of affairs. For this complexion of thought, language is representational, and its function is to name things.

Yet this 'stereotypical' rationalist reaction has its empiricist counterpart. That this representational view of language can be as much a presupposition of empiricist as rationalist philosophy is shown in our own time, after all, by Russell and Ayer. In the eighteenth century, it is presupposed and shown not only in purist rationalist projects but also in the empiricist accounts of the origin of language; in Condillac's story, for example, of two six-month old infants inventing language by pointing to things and naming them, inventing language to facilitate their barter and intercourse. A bias towards literalism and representationalism is thus shared by the two 'opposing' viewpoints; and it presupposes another opposition, in turn:

> Much of the force of critical philosophy's theory of meaning derives from a largely unstated dichotomy between *literal* and *figurative*

[29] Cassirer, 99.

> meaning. It is generally assumed that primordial meaning is literal or factual in nature, while figurative meaning is always secondary and parasitic. In this way it is possible to dismiss the latter as noncognitive and philosophically unimportant.[30]

Thus language is seen as being 'literal' (representational, factual) by its very nature or essence, and other styles of speech or writing are derivative (or indeed, deceptive). Language is not seen, for example, primarily as an address, whose function is to communicate and thus confirm and facilitate relationships.

How, then, is the relationship of human beings to God (and to each other) to be conceived? The classical Western philosophical approach has again been to cast the relationship into a problem of knowledge. The dilemma has thus been a conundrum of whether or how we can know what we have all but defined as the Unknowable. Is this something that reason can attain to, as held by Descartes, and indeed any other who furnishes a proof of the existence of God? Or is the transcendent instead to be roped off from the realm of pure reason, as in Kant's first *Critique*? The problem of the divine-human relationship is thus turned by Enlightenment philosophy into a question of human epistemological capabilities; an issue which also divides the dominant theological *Tendenzen* of Lutheranism and Catholicism.

2. Neither!

The opposed stances enunciated so far (e.g. rationalism-empiricism, idealism-realism) in fact share certain features; among them are: *doubt* as an underlying fear, motivating the quest for certainty in knowledge; *the Principle of Contradiction* as a fundamental tool in sifting ideas and/or perceptions and assessing their truth-value; and *a schema of subject-object*, in which one or the other is ultimately given the upper hand. It will be observed that all three of these features themselves exhibit a binary arrangement of opposition.

In this respect, it is worth taking note of a suggestive claim made by Kondylis. His thesis is that the question of the relationship between *Geist* [mind] and *Sinnlichkeit* [senses] is the central question of all philosophy[31], even when it does not manifest itself

[30] Gill, 38.
[31] Kondylis, 9.

in an obvious dualism, for even there it is present as an underlying structure of thought. This conflict can be 'translated' into pairs of concepts: subject-object, God-world, possibility-actuality, soul-body, intellect-senses, reason-instinct [*Triebe*], etc.[32] For Kondylis, this question is at the centre of Enlightenment concerns; indeed, 'the so-called Enlightenment' is 'an attempt or rather a variety of attempts to answer the question of the relationship between the mind and the senses.'[33] Kondylis' thesis is of relevance to the essential disposition to a binary pattern of thinking; it might well be that the ground of the 'Either–Or' I describe is indeed a fundamentally dualistic approach to our own being: a disposition to view our own selves as consisting of a pair of irreconcilable opposites – or at least, a problematic conjunction of two different natures – may well predispose the thinker to construct other philosophical problems in the same pattern. This would be particularly so in cases, such as epistemology, where the rivalry between the physical senses and the mind is the very point in question.

Kondylis also argues that even when the attempt is made to overcome the dualism of the mind and the senses, this dualism determines not only the starting-point and conditions of the exercise, but also its solution, which, so long as dualism is the starting-point, always consists in the absolutizing of one of the terms, and thus is no solution or overcoming of dualism at all.[34] Wolff is perhaps the best illustration of this claim. If this is accepted, then not merely mind-body dualism but also the tendency towards oppositional thinking can only be overcome by one whose presuppositions or starting-point do not include it. Hamann's fundamental stance is just such a position.

Hamann's reaction to the Enlightenment has frequently been understood as a simple and straightforward rejection. Rudolf Unger's monumental study of Hamann and the Enlightenment has cast a long shadow over twentieth-century attempts to understand Hamann; in particular, his interpretation of Hamann is as an 'irrationalist'. Isaiah Berlin's work on Hamann, undertaken in the 1960's under the inspiration of Unger, but published only recently under the editorship of Dr. Henry Hardy, sets out Hamann in the context of an absolute rebellion against the Enlightenment and its principles:

[32] Kondylis, 10.
[33] Kondylis, 19.
[34] Kondylis, 10.

> He hated his century with an almost pathological hatred, and attacked what was most characteristic in it with an unparalleled sharpness and strength. He was the first writer in modern days to denounce the Enlightenment and all its works, and not merely this or that error or crime of the new culture.... Hamann rose in revolt against the entire structure of science, reason, analysis – its virtues even more than its vices.... He attacked the entire outlook in every particular....[35]

Hamann interpretation has moved away from the picture painted by Unger and Berlin, and few would support such an unnuanced portrait of Hamann's reactions to his contemporaries. Attention nowadays is focused on the rather more subtle and complicated relationship Hamann had to his times; Oswald Bayer, indeed, describes him in fact as a *'radikaler Aufklärer'*.[36] Salmony has argued that Hamann's contribution cannot be seen in terms of an antithesis between rationalism and irrationalism.[37] Even Hegel observed that Hamann was not against the Enlightenment as such.[38] Hoffmann observes, 'Indeed, Hamann often found himself in constant, often fundamental confrontation with his time, but on closer inspection, there are always points of surprising connection and agreement, whereby the polemic certainly does not lose its seriousness, but does attain a certain differentiation.'[39] In my view, Hamann's position over against the thinking and thinkers of his time cannot be generalized simply as one of total rebellion; neither do I see the Enlightenment as so univocal, nor Hamann so single-minded in his differing from it. Insofar as the Enlightenment offered, at the very least, two options (rather than a single point-of-view), even if one only conceives of Hamann as an 'opponent' to the Enlightenment he would have had to fight on two fronts which are already opposed to one another. This at least would have introduced into the structure of the debate complexities and areas of agreement with one side or another, as well as opposition. Moreover, his stance *vis-à-vis* his contemporaries

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[35] Berlin, *MN* 22, 23, 30. This book appeared only after the present study was largely completed.

[36] A 'radical Enlightener', for lack of a more idiomatic translation. For those who read German, Bayer's recent *Zeitgenosse im Widerspruch. Johann Georg Hamann als radikaler Aufklärer* would be an excellent introduction to his life and work.

[37] Salmony, 195.

[38] Cited in Salmony, 196.

[39] Hoffmann, 149.

varied of course according to the issue in question and the opinions held by his interlocutors.

Beyond these introductory observations, the question of Hamann's relationship to the Enlightenment must be answered point by point, arising from his treatment of the issues that he addresses. One generalization is possible, however; in part because it is a structural one. Faced with the division of an issue or phenomenon into the structure of binary oppositions I have outlined, Hamann's position is to respond with 'Neither!' to this array of 'Either–Or' choices. Neither the mind nor the senses is the sole organ of knowing, nor is there a division of two kinds of knowledge. Neither the 'subject' nor the 'object' controls the act of knowing; better still to eschew the dichotomy of subject and object altogether. Knowledge can never be infallible and absolutely certain, but neither is it prey to total scepticism. Neither idealism nor realism is a satisfactory account of our relationship to the world. Language is not a pure philosophical tool, but it is more than adequate for our purposes. Many of the more specific questions posed by the Enlightenment, such as whether the origin of language is divine or human, are answered in a similar fashion — 'Neither!'

If it is safe to summarize this response, it could be summed up by saying that Hamann rejects the subdivision and thereafter the implicit opposition of elements which forces a potentially damaging choice between mutually exclusive options. He operates instead on the basis of the wholeness and underlying relationships between the phenomena in question. His thinking is, one might say, 'relational' rather than 'oppositional'. This stress on relatedness obtains on all levels: on questions of the self, on questions of the self and the world and others, and ultimately, for Hamann, in questions of the relatedness of the human and the divine.

3. Interpreting Hamann

a. Understandings and Misunderstandings

Hamann's relational approach has a number of corollaries, any one of which could be (or indeed has been) taken as Hamann's distinctive contribution to philosophy and theology — without the interpreter perceiving the underlying philosophical commitment of relationality which is the condition of their possibility. So many

features of his thought are striking, and rise to prominence later in the history of ideas, so that it is easy to seize upon him as the 'forerunner' of a particular movement, and interpret him thereafter in that context.[40] This process perhaps began with Goethe.[41] At any rate, he has been seen as the forerunner of *Sturm und Drang*, of Romanticism, of Expressionism, of Existentialism, of modern Irrationalism; he perhaps has been insufficiently appreciated as a 'forerunner' of twentieth-century personalism[42] or of modern trends in hermeneutics. Indeed, the time is ripe for someone to present him as the 'forerunner' of post-modernism. In fact, rightly understood, he will ultimately resist subsumption into this frame as he does all the others.

Hamann laid much greater stress on 'lived experience', on concrete human existence than did his contemporaries. Thus, there was a fashion in the 1950's and 1960's, particularly in the English-speaking world, to see him as a kind of early existentialist.[43] Hamann's influence on Kierkegaard in particular suggested this context in which to view him.[44] This may have served at the time to commend Hamann to the commentators' contemporaries. In practice, however, this tendency in Hamann-interpretation has passed with the waning of enthusiasm for existentialism, and it has become more of a historical curiosity than an area for hot debate.

For Hamann, the various striking features of our experience – ourselves, others, language, the world, ultimately God – are all inextricably related; and it is his conviction that a true and deep understanding of any of these cannot arise without consideration of its relationship to the others. The fact that, for example, an analysis of the philosophy of language must include a discussion of God, and that a discussion of God must make reference to

[40] For histories of interpreting Hamann, cf. HHE I, 9-140 and Wild, *MBS* 20-46.

[41] Goethe, for example, mentions his influence on a younger generation in *Dichtung und Wahrheit*. Cf. Goethe, XVI, 547.

[42] Perhaps this is because twentieth-century personalism is itself insufficiently appreciated. Bayer perhaps would want to add a qualification; he distinguishes Hamann's understanding of language from 'Dialogism' as well as 'Behaviourism', and observes that Buber is quite correct to start his history of the dialogical principle with Jacobi. Bayer, *VS* 288 and note 69.

[43] Cf. Lowrie, Smith as examples of this tendency among English-speaking writers.

[44] For a more recent treatment of Kierkegaard's reaction to Hamann, see the work of Stephen Dunning, especially 'Kierkegaard's "Hegelian" response to Hamann', reprinted in Bayer, ed., *NZSThR* 30, 1988, 3, 315-326.

sexuality and *vice versa* has frequently led to the designation of Hamann as a mystic. This is a rather loose charge, and one that Hamann rebuts at the time of writing *SM*; it also seems rather misguided, whether one takes it in a strict sense or as a term of abuse. Hamann lays no claim to having an extraordinary mystical or visionary prayer life; and an instinct towards holism coupled with a vision of God as involved in every detail of the world does not quite add up to 'mysticism'. It is difficult to avoid the impression, particularly with English-speaking writers, that this phrase is an unwitting admission of a failure to understand him.

Hamann has a particular interest in reclaiming aspects of human experience which were neglected in philosophy, such as sexuality. His unusual interest and frankness in this area indeed leads the distinguished Hamannian Josef Nadler to give it a prominence in his biography, which virtually represents Hamann as a sexualized Gnostic.[45] More broadly, the rehabilitation and defence of the emotions or 'passions', suspect as the seductress of autonomous reason, were a focus for Hamann's thoughts and crusades (it is largely for this reason that he is often credited as a prime impetus for the *Sturm und Drang* movement).

This interest in affect and the decentring of reason which accompanied it is in part what has given rise to his frequently being described as an 'irrationalist'. Further, his interest in a philosophy whose *Sitz im Leben* is not the library but the marketplace (indeed, bedroom) also led Hamann to reject the tendency to 'hypostasization', to make *things* out of activities (like reasoning). Hamann's well-known rejection of 'Reason' has usually been taken not for what it is but as a rejection of reasoning or being 'reasonable'. This leads, again, to the misinterpretation of his thought as 'irrationalism'. Unger's influential work has already been mentioned. One might also cite Weber[46] and Burger[47] as examples of how this conception can form the basis of the interpretation of Hamann's philosophy and theology. This understanding of Hamann has resurfaced in Berlin's recent book; his conclusion is:

> Hamann was a fanatic, and his vision of life, despite its sincerity and depth and the value that believers in God and theologians have perceived in it, is, as a general philosophy of life, grotesquely one-

[45] Nadler, *Der Zeuge des Corpus Mysticum*.

[46] *'Zwei Propheten des Irrationalismus, Hamann und Kierkegaard als Bahnbrecher...'*; cf. Bibliography.

[47] *Johann Georg Hamann, Schöpfung und Erlösung im Irrationalismus.*

> sided: a violent exaggeration of the uniqueness of men and things, or the absence in them of significant common characteristics capable of being abstracted and theorized about; a passionate hatred of men's wish to understand the universe or themselves in publicly intelligible terms and to rule themselves and nature in order to achieve ends common to most men at most times (to go no further) by taking such scientific knowledge into account. This hatred and blind irrationalism have fed the stream that has led to social and political irrationalism, particularly in Germany, in our own century[48], and has made for obscurantism, a revelling in darkness, the discrediting of that appeal to rational discussion in terms of principles intelligible to most men which alone can lead to an increase of knowledge, the creation of conditions for free co-operative action based on conscious acceptance of common ideals, and the promotion of the only type of progress that has ever deserved this name.[49]

The question of Hamann's treatment of reason is a question to be addressed throughout the present work, but some observations need to be made here.

First of all, anyone who views Hamann as an opponent of reason and reasoning *tout court* will have to account for a number of passages where he seems to ascribe to reason some kind of positive role. Reason, with freedom, is our noblest gift[50]; it is the foundation of marriage[51]; and indeed, reason is necessary for religion: 'without

[48] The implication that Hamann or his philosophy led to Nazism should not be made lightly, nor in my view is that claim easy to justify. On the broader question of whether 'irrationalism' led to Nazism, other views are possible and in my opinion more probable, if paradoxical. Hein, for example, observes that in Wittgenstein's view it is the Enlightenment and not its opponents that led to Stalinism and Nazism (Hein, 33). This is too vast a subject to be treated in a footnote; I will only say here that in my view *idealism* is more likely to lead to a denial of the reality (and therefore rights) of the Other than is any view which Hamann espouses. Ferdinand Ebner speculated at the beginning of this century that the consequences of idealism are misogyny and anti-Semitism; and I think that comes much nearer the mark than the easy assumption that 'irrationalism' as a philosophical programme feeds the kind of violence which decent people prefer to characterize as 'irrational'. After all, such organized and institutionally-sanctioned violence is most often 'rationalized' by the perpetrators and it is precisely *denied* that it is irrational and unwarranted. I would suggest that in fact the splitting-off of reason from emotion – Hamann's *bête-noire* – is more likely to lead to such atrocities than is the campaign to integrate emotion and the passions into philosophy. On the origins of group violence, see Ervin Staub (cf. Bibliography.)

[49] Berlin, *MN* 121-122.

[50] G VII, 342f.

[51] *ESM*, N III, 199:34.

reason, no religion'.[52] As far as irrationalism is concerned, Hamann's own reaction was: 'All forms of irrationalism presuppose the existence of reason and its misuse'; nevertheless 'our *existence* must be older than our *reason*,' and truth must be found not so much in 'a *Genesis* of the latter than in *Revelations* of the former.'[53]

Thus to be honest and faithful to Hamann, the interpreter must give an account that explains both Hamann's apparent antipathy and his apparent approbation of reason. James O'Flaherty, the doyen of English-speaking Hamann scholars, has recently given a systematic account[54]; his understanding turns on a contrast between 'discursive' and 'intuitive' reason. The Counter-Enlightenment, chiefly Hamann, rejected the former, but not the latter. The language of intuitive reason is that of image, metaphor, paradox, multivalence, parataxis, and is affective; as opposed to that of discursive reason, whose language is that of concepts, logic, non-paradox, univalence, hypotaxis, and is non-affective. Intuitive reason is 'that mode of thought which involves direct or *immediate* apprehension as opposed to discursive thought, which involves indirect or *mediate* apprehension.'[55] Hamann's position over against Kant, then, would be that he champions a different *kind* of reason.

In my view, O'Flaherty has given an illuminating description of how Hamann might be said to operate; but it is not the analysis I would offer myself. On the most immediate and superficial level, it is perhaps worth noticing that Hamann himself did not make use of the term 'intuitive reason' (*anschauende Vernunft*), though he had the opportunity to do so; for the term was created by Kant in a letter to Hamann to describe Hamann's characteristic way of thinking and writing. Thus the opposition of intuitive vs. discursive reason was available to Hamann, for him to appropriate and use, if he had felt that it hit the nail on the head. That he did not, in the way for example that he seized upon and made extensive use of the term 'metacritique' to contrast his own approach to Kant's, seems to me to be significant.

More profoundly, I think his deconstruction of reason is founded on a different insight, one which could be loosely described as 'nominalist'. There is no such *thing* as 'reason' — there is only reasoning. As a faculty, isolated as it were from its locus in the

[52] *Zwey Scherflein zur neusten Deutschen Litteratur*, N III, 231:10-12.
[53] N III, 191:21-27.
[54] In *QR*, also reprinted in essence in *NZSThR* 30.
[55] In *NZSThR* 30, p. 290f.

human subject, one might indeed describe it as universal and infallible, and its results as indubitable and certain. But if it is viewed as one activity a human being performs, alongside others – as *reasoning* – then one must acknowledge that it is subject to the same conditions that pertain in all our other undertakings. It has a biography, and a geography; it is guided by our interests and desires. Most importantly, for Hamann, it is inextricable from the rest of our personality and being; not only our passions, but also our beliefs, and above all, our language.

In my view, the context in which to understand his opposition to *conventional* treatments of reason[56], is in his relational instincts. Reason is not to be subjected to a process of 'hypostatization', or 'Prosopopoeia' as he later called it – the tendency to isolate human activities, identify them as faculties, and handle them in subsequent discussions as if they were entities; it must be seen in its 'intra-personal' relations, as part of the (fallible and particular) human personality. This has further repercussions on its relations to what is beyond the individual: 'Our reason must wait and hope – and desire to serve nature, not legislate it.'[57] 'God, nature and reason have as intimate a relation to one another as light, the eye, and all that the former reveals to the latter, or like the centre, radius and periphery of any given circle, or like author, book and reader.'[58]

The question, then, for Hamann (and his interpreters) is not: for or against Reason? The question is: what is reasoning anyway, and what should we claim on its behalf? It is not a question of what stance one should take on Reason, the nature of which is uncontested; precisely what reason is, is the question at issue.[59] This is a far more fundamental problem, with far-reaching consequences; it perhaps has only begun to be challenged and

[56] And not, for example, the treatment meted it by Hume.

[57] In a letter to Jacobi, ZH 5, Nr. 782, 265:30.

[58] ZH 5, Nr. 784, 272:14ff.

[59] There is broad agreement for the idea that Hamann was against a certain view of reason, rather than reason itself. For example, Reiner Wild writes, 'His critique was not aimed at reason itself, but rather the autonomy that the Enlightenment claimed for it' and mentions Adorno and Horkheimer in this context (Wild, *MBS* 34f.). Similarly Jørgensen: 'To Hamann's mind philosophy has a propaedeutic function and he does not attack reason proper. What he does attack is the idea of an *"allgemeine gesunde Vernunft"* [universal healthy reason] (N III, 189) as reason in reality is individual, limited and contingent upon the situation of the concrete human being. It is historical as all truth and even revelation.' (Jørgensen, *HBT* 55).

explored adequately in our own time. Those who assume that Hamann's dissatisfaction with the universality, infallibility etc. of Reason amounts to 'irrationalism', on the other hand, would seem to tacitly accept the Enlightenment's picture of reason; in which case Hamann is more radical and indeed perhaps more modern than they.

b. Hamann's Writing as Relational Metacriticism

Towards the end of Hamann's life, Herder and others tried to persuade Hamann to re-publish his works, scattered and piecemeal as they were[60], in a complete collection; this project did not in the end succeed. With characteristic concreteness and self-deprecation, Hamann wanted to call his Collected Works '*Saalbadereyen*' ('Quackeries'; the activities of a quack [in the medical sense], which can also mean 'Twaddle'). The individual volumes were each to be called a '*Wannchen*' ('little tub') — 'a play on his father's profession', Gründer has it[61], though not, as I shall argue, one without its own intrinsic significance. Prudently, Herder succeeded in talking him out of this eccentric, apparently trivial title. Hamann however insisted on his second choice: '*Metakritische Wannchen*'.[62] This self-designation of his work is pregnant; but clearly one insight that may be drawn from it, confirmed in his letters after 1784, is that in his own opinion the whole of his life's work can be summed up in the idea of 'metacriticism'. And indeed, Hamann is quite right to call his work metacritical. It would be inaccurate to describe his position *vis-à-vis* the Kantian critique, for example, as 'anti-critical'; for he would thoroughly agree with Kant that reason must be subjected to criticism. He would simply go further, and argue that 'criticism' itself must be subjected to criticism, or better, criticism must be subjected to 'meta-criticism'.

A number of areas, 'philosophical' and 'theological', can be and certainly have been selected, either as topics for examination within Hamann's work, or indeed as the central idea or hermeneutical key which unlocks his thinking: e.g. his theory of language[63], irrationalism[64], nature and grace[65], faith and/or

[60] Hamann himself did not possess copies of some of his own writings.

[61] HHE 1, 14. Hamann's father was a 'bather' or 'quack', one who administered healing baths and performed minor surgery and other doctoring acts.

[62] HHE 1, 14; cf. Nadler, 65-69.

[63] Unger, O'Flaherty. For titles of works, see Bibliography.

[64] Unger, Burger, Berlin *et. al.*

revelation[66], incarnation[67], creation and redemption[68], sex and the Trinity[69], etc. If Hamann himself is to be believed, however, the idea of 'metacriticism' unites or perhaps even underlies all these aspects, all his writings, all his interests. My contention is that an examination of this 'metacritical' layer to his thought is essential; not as the only proper mode of examination of Hamann nor as an alternative to the detailed studies of particular theological or philosophical themes or subject-matters, but as their complement or indeed undergirding.

This 'meta-criticism' or criticism of criticism concerns itself with the issues that must be attended to in relation to the act of philosophical reflection itself. It consists of attention to the fundamental stance or position on issues or insights that must underlie any work on philosophy or theology. Insofar as Hamann is dealing with these issues, and not offering an alternative system, his work is not so much 'unsystematic' as often stated, as 'presystematic': he is addressing the issues that must be recognized in any self-critical reflection, matters that must be presuppositions for anyone else's system; and thus cannot (indeed, ought not) themselves constitute a system.

Something further, however, is implied in this stance; and one which is also implied in the titles Hamann chose for the unrealized project of publishing his collected works. It is the 'curative' aspect of the metacritical task. For metacriticism does not offer itself simply as another specialism within the field of philosophy or theology, like 'epistemology' or 'christology': it claims to stand in some kind of corrective (or, ideally, preventative) relationship to existing thinking which has lost its way or which is having 'a misunderstanding with itself'.[70]

Richard Rorty has created a useful schema of two kinds of thinkers which illustrates this point well. He adumbrates this distinction first in his introduction, in claiming that there are philosophers whose work 'is therapeutic rather than constructive, edifying rather than systematic, designed to make the reader question his own motives for philosophizing rather than to supply him with a new philosophical program.'[71] Elsewhere he embellishes this

[65] Schoonhoven.
[66] Lieb, Alexander.
[67] Schreiner.
[68] Burger.
[69] Nadler.
[70] Cf. N III, 286:9-10.
[71] Rorty, 5-6.

with a distinction between 'hermeneutics' and 'epistemology' as the relevant disciplines to such philosophers[72]; the holism of hermeneutics inspiring this relational observation: 'This notion of interpretation suggests that coming to understand is more like getting acquainted with a person than like following a demonstration.'[73] His further job descriptions of both kinds of thinkers makes clear to us which category Hamann would belong to in his schema:

> Great systematic philosophers are constructive and offer arguments. Great edifying philosophers are reactive and offer satires, parodies, aphorisms. They know their work loses its point when the period they were reacting against is over. They are intentionally peripheral. Great systematic philosophers, like great scientists, build for eternity. Great edifying philosophers destroy for the sake of their own generation. Systematic philosophers want to put their subject on the secure path of a science. Edifying philosophers want to keep space open for the sense of wonder which poets can sometimes cause — wonder that there is something new under the sun.... [74]

There is no indication that Rorty is acquainted with Hamann; but it is interesting that his list begins with thinkers who were strongly influenced by Hamann (Goethe, Kierkegaard); interesting as well is the fact that Rorty's own work has been described as a 'Metacritique'.[75] I am of course suggesting that Rorty's description of 'edifying, therapeutic' philosophers is an attractive category in which to view Hamann and his work, and one in which his lack of systematization (and even his 'peripheral' standing in philosophy) finds a certain vindication. More specifically, however, I believe that this is a desirable context in which to understand Hamann's activity of metacriticism: that a critical examination of fundamental issues that affect theology and philosophy is not merely a legitimate task; is not merely a different kind of task to that of 'systematic' philosophers; but in some way a *therapeutic* task.

These metacritical issues, for Hamann, can be summed up as questions of language, knowledge, and anthropology: the relationship of language to reality (the problem of reference); the relationship of language and cognition; the possibilities of human knowledge and reflection (and therefore of philosophy) and the activity

[72] Rorty, 317ff. *et passim.*
[73] Rorty, 319.
[74] Rorty, 369-70.
[75] Cf. Bernstein, 197.

of human knowing in relation to human being and existence. For Hamann, most urgently and most controversially (then as now), ultimately these metacritical questions and answers must include a theological dimension. All these areas must include a reference to God, not merely as our Creator, of whom we are an image; but also our addresser and our partner in conversation, and fellow creator of language; as well as the ultimate source and goal of our knowing. Thus, in the three crucial areas of language, knowledge, and anthropology, God is the other term of an indispensable relation.

In my view, the key to understanding Hamann's approach to these problems can be found in the idea of relationship. In the order of being, the first and foundational relationship is to be found in the human-divine relationship that for Hamann grounds all being, knowledge, and language; but the relations of one human being to another are no less crucial for an adequate understanding of the phenomenon in question (speaking, knowing, reasoning). The same instinct to look for the relationships rather than the essences or substances of things continues in his examinations of each of these phenomena in turn, as we shall see.

Hamann's writings thus display a philosophical and theological approach which can with justification be styled as 'relational metacriticism'. The charge so often laid against his door – that his writings and thought are fragmentary, unsystematic and therefore severely limited in their importance and scope – can be answered not only with Hamann's own ('ideological') criticisms of the Enlightenment cult of 'system'; but also with the observation that Hamann's aim in the end was not to counter the dominant critical philosophy with a version of his own, but to engage in 'metacriticism'. This 'relational metacriticism' thus consisted of an examination and critique of the ruling presuppositions of his day, enlivened by seminal insights of his own.

My suggestion therefore is that the designation of Hamann's work as 'relational metacriticism' is an appropriate one, arising from his work as he seems to have understood it, but also arising from a style of examining his work which he did not undertake himself. This understanding of Hamann is also an enlightening one, with not only a hermeneutical but also a heuristic capability.

c. *The style might be the man...*

> The French[76] have a saying: *Le stile c'est l'homme meme*; Hamann's writings do not *have* a particular style but rather are style through and through.[77]

The aspect of Hamann's writing which is perhaps commented upon most frequently is the difficulty of his style, indeed, whether due to style or content, the difficulty of understanding him at all. I shall not attempt to describe his style or enumerate its challenges; readers shall discover these for themselves shortly.[78] Suffice it to say that Goethe observes that when reading Hamann, 'one must completely rule out what one normally means by understanding.'[79]

Several points first however ought to be made about his style, to correct easy misapprehensions. First of all, I think one can argue that it evolves with time; and moreover, I think that one can see several turning-points or milestones in its evolution. The extraordinary 'cento' style, the creation of a wholly new passage from a tissue of citations[80], seems to arrive on the scene with *AN*, and never departs; certainly, at any rate, there is no striking biblical cento in *SM*. I speculate that the project of *AN* inspired this kind of literary creation and left its permanent mark: *AN* was described as a 'rhapsody', that is, a poetic composition based on fragments of others' poetry. Another change comes over his style which can be observed in the *HS*, which are much more prone to wild, bombastic passages than anything in *SM*. I offer this suggestion with some hesitation: one might compare my rendition of Hamann in English with *Tristram Shandy* (the changes in Hamann's style come after its publication). The similarities in style are perhaps invisible in German[81]; but in addition to the surprisingly similar 'baroque expectorations' (as Hegel called them), the playful long-windedness, the profligate use of dashes, and a single

[76] It was Buffon, actually.

[77] Hegel, 209.

[78] For useful studies of his style, in the deepest sense, see Jørgensen's *Zu Hamanns Stil*, Elfriede Büchsel's *Untersuchungen*, Oswald Bayer's *Zeitgenosse*; in English, O'Flaherty's early *Unity and Language* should be consulted.

[79] Goethe, 550.

[80] As an example, see *AN*, N II, 213:15-214:22.

[81] I only noticed them after completing my translation, which makes them all the more striking.

unmistakable (if concealed) reference[82], there are peculiar little phrases in common, which only arise after *Tristram Shandy* appeared on the scene.[83] This may be a trivial point, but it does help to emphasize the *playfulness* involved in Hamann's style, which can be overlooked.

It perhaps also helps to underline another point. Contrary to Hegel's assumptions, as well as many since, Hamann's odd manner of expressing himself was not due to a kind of incapability on his part, an inability to express himself more clearly or more objectively. One need only to look at representative pages in the *Herderschriften*, and observe the striking alternation between paragraphs of bombast and paragraphs of pithy, condensed insights[84], to realize that both are fully under his own control. The same claim can be substantiated in a more scholarly way; Hoffmann demonstrates how an examination of Hamann's notebooks revealed how carefully he worked over and re-wrote his essays before publication.[85] The circumlocutions are deliberately introduced; the allusions conscious; the difficulties are all intentional. What can this mean? It does, of course, relate to the political situation of his time; as with the genre of biblical writing known as 'apocalyptic', the fear of repression and the threat of censorship often lead to apparent incomprehensibility as a form of self-protection. A more important factor may however be at work here, as I shall argue shortly.

What must not be overlooked, in my view, is the fact that Hamann's essays are so frequently attributed to some other character. These are often treated as a mere *nom-de-plume*. No one believes that the Knight of the Rose-Cross differs substantially from Hamann himself. In my view, however, the distantiation involved in this dissemblance must be respected. First of all, even in those cases where the *nom-de-plume* seems a mere circumlocution – the 'Kabbalistic Philologian', for example – it will still be

[82] The reference (quite incorrect, of course) to 'Dodsley and Company' as the publisher of *Two Reviews*. Cf. translator's note c to the essay.

[83] The interjection of *leyder!* into a sentence, which I translate as *alas!* (cf. N III, 23:29 as an example); the odd phrase which I translate as *thrice-blessed* (cf. N III, 31:24). Cf., in *Tristram Shandy*, 'Happy! thrice happy Times!' (Vol. I, Ch. XXI), 'thrice able' (Author's Preface), '—alas! I have nothing' (Vol. II, Ch. XVII), '—alas! 'twill exasperate thy symptoms' (Vol II., Ch. III), among many other examples.

[84] For this contrast on a large scale, compare the first few pages of *PID* with the last.

[85] Cf. Hoffmann, especially 60ff.

observed that the style of this author differs from that of other characters.[86] Much of the wildness of Hamann's style belongs more properly to a particular character than to Hamann-as-a-whole.[87] For all the underlying consistency of Hamann's views, a greater attention needs to be given to the diversity of perspectives that the creation of a number of fictional characters allows him. Plato's, Hume's and Berkeley's dialogues are handled with more circumspection; Hamann's characters deserve no less.

In my view, this challenging style and playful hiding behind masks is wholly in keeping with his fundamental philosophical approach. It forces a strong personal response from its readers: either one rejects him, without having invested a great deal in the relationship; or one brings to it the patient involvement in intricacy — and the willingness to play — which is more usually demanded by a love-affair or by psychoanalysis; and one hopes to gain a comparable ultimate intimate understanding. Hamann's readers must work to arrive at their insights; and moreover are left, ideally, with the challenging knowledge that the resulting meaning found in the essay cannot with an easy conscience be ascribed to Hamann or the *mens auctoris*, pure and simple. Hamann's interpreters must co-create Hamann's meaning in partnership with the author himself – an uneasy but inescapably 'relational' hermeneutical activity. This, arguably, is the least appreciated stroke of Hamann's relational genius.

[86] Compare, just as a single example, the ravings of the Kabbalistic Philologian in *AN* and in his brief outburst in Aristobolus' *Dispatch*, with the balanced prose of the Sibyl in *ESM*. Indeed, the passage in the *Dispatch* is a good case in point: for here one character 'interviews' (as it were), another, and the change in style between Aristobolus and the Kabbalistic Philologian is remarkable. Cp. N III, 23:27-24:13 with the rest of the essay, particularly the opening, where Aristobolus' style is at its most plodding.

[87] Berlin, who makes much of Hamann's alleged rage and 'blind hatred', etc., seems to have particularly fallen afoul of Hamann's playfulness, or more particularly, seems to have been completely taken in on occasion by the posturings of one Hamannian character or another.

II. *SOCRATIC MEMORABILIA:* HAMANN'S METHODOLOGICAL MANIFESTO

1. Introduction

In 1759, Hamann made his debut as a published author with *Socratic Memorabilia*. This was the essay that Hamann considered the beginning of his 'authorship', though he had written, in addition to student works and translations, *Biblical Reflections* and *Thoughts on the Course of my Life*, both of which were intended for reading only by his father and brother, and certain close friends.[1] *SM* was written after Hamann's London experience[2] of debauchery[3] and subsequent conversion, and thus marks the beginning not so much of a certain activity – writing – as of what

[1] Hamann's London writings have just appeared in an impressively researched new edition; see under Bayer in the Bibliography.

[2] Kracht stresses the importance of Hamann's London period for his epistemology, particularly for the development of his critique of reason (Kracht, 231). Hamann was already suspicious of systematizing, abstract reason in his pre-London period (Kracht, 258).

[3] Salmony, controversially, suggests that Hamann was bisexual, and proffers not only the London experience in which Hamann discovered that his close friend was 'being kept in a shameful fashion by a Lord', and reacted wildly; but also an alleged 'seduction' in Hamann's teenage years. (This latter Salmony supports by citing Hamann's dark hints in his post-conversion autobiography – one '...who taught me to turn to my own body...God forgive him and me!' [N II, 17; Bayer, *LS* 320:12f.]) Whether post-conversion self-accusations are usually balanced, and how far teenage tutelage in onanism counts as homosexuality, are matters I leave the reader to decide. Few have accepted Salmony's reading of the London affair; see Koepp and Fechner. Finally, Salmony (118-119) calls up textual support from *ESM*. One can read N III, 202:26ff. as an act between two men, as Salmony does, only if one has failed to recognize that the sibyl, the authorial voice of the essay, is female. The other passage Salmony cites, 201:23-202:11, which describes the transformation in the sibyl's reaction to her suitor, Salmony unaccountably thinks refers to different homosexual suitors – one rejected (the teenage seducer), the other acceptable (the London lover). — However, it is clear that Hamann had, at least by the time of penning *SM*, a more liberal attitude towards homosexuality than was common at the time – though he is quite prepared to pass snide remarks in *HS* about the King's alleged homosexual proclivities.

Hamann privately felt to be his vocation: his 'authorship' [*Autorschaft*].

Upon returning to Riga to the Berens House, for whom Hamann had made his fruitless journey to London, Hamann continued briefly in the employment of the Berens family, of which his school friend Johann Christoph Berens was a member. He fell in love with Berens' sister Catharina, who was 'in my eyes, more beautiful than the proudest lily'[4] and whom he felt sure God had given him for his bride.[5]

An enthusiastic convert to the Enlightenment, Christoph Berens appreciated his friend's intellectual gifts, and had counted on his serving the Enlightenment; consequently he was alarmed by his friend's conversion to superstition and '*Schwärmerey*'[6], and was openly hostile to his new-found religiosity.[7] This is usually assumed to be the reason that Berens refused Hamann permission to marry his sister Catharina, which as can be imagined shocked and greatly upset his friend; though it seems not unlikely to me that financial questions and differences in class between the wealthy Berens family and Hamann's humble circumstances played a part as well. At any rate, Hamann, as he later wrote to Lindner[8], could no longer work for Berens' brother Carl, and returned to his father's house in Königsberg, as he told Lindner[9], at the bidding of his father.

Berens was nothing if not a persistent friend, however, and therefore determined to continue the struggle and win his friend back to the cause of healthy reason. To this end, he travelled to Königsberg in June of 1759.[10] Once there, Berens enlisted the help of his friend, Immanuel Kant, and the three met on two occasions in July. The first meeting was friendly, at least superficially, as Hamann writes to his brother:

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[4] ZH 1, 288:35.

[5] ZH 1, Nr. 134, 287-289, 9-20.1.1759 to his father.

[6] Hamann's archaic spelling of *Schwärmerei*. The word paints a picture of enthusiastic, almost fanatical, visionary, ecstatic fantasy (for our purposes, always religious or quasi-religious in character). No one noun being adequate to translate it, I presume upon the reader's patience in leaving it and its cognates untranslated from now on.

[7] 'Let him leave off making this great noise about my praying, hand-folding, confessing, etc.' Hamann writes to Lindner (ZH 1, 306:21f.).

[8] ZH 1, 296:27f.

[9] ZH 1, Nr. 136, 9.3.1759.

[10] This may have been necessary because, as Hamann confides in Lindner (ZH 1, 296:22f., 10.3.1759) Hamann had resolved not to write to Berens and neither to open nor answer any letters from him.

> In the beginning of this week I was in the company of Mr. B. and Mag.[ister] Kant in the Windmill, where we had a farmer's supper in the tavern there; since then we haven't seen each other again. Between ourselves – our relations no longer have the previous intimacy, and we both made the greatest effort to avoid all appearance of this.[11]

But to Lindner he speaks of: 'a **secret** resentment against me, which holds the strongest genie of our friendship in chains – a **bitter** grudge against his brother, whom he counts as lost, and in contradiction to this fancy, wants to save and thinks he is saving...'[12]; and the second meeting took place in an atmosphere of some tension:

> He paid me a very long visit – I don't know how long I saw him – with Herr Mag. Kant, through whom he tried to test my conversion as through you. It was a holiday for me, on which I didn't want to wear my mask; and to tell the truth, I had the less need of it as his was so tattered that the white angel was almost eclipsed by the dark shadow which broke through. I promised to attend a colloquium with his new friend in two days' time. Instead of coming myself, my muse called the kobold of Socrates down from the moon and sent him a grenade, which consisted of pure little fancies [*Schwärmern*]. Because I love and treasure his little Magister as your friend; I frightened him off to prevent him taking this further. You say quite rightly: face to face, for perhaps the third person isn't necessary. And this I gave the little Socrates and the big Alcibiades to understand as best as I could. All my siren's arts are in vain; my Ulysses did not hear, ears full of wax and tied to the mast. So I will follow your good advice and say no more.[13]

Kant suggested at this second meeting that Hamann translate some articles from the French *Encyclopedia*[14], hoping the task would reawaken his interest in the ideas and ideals of the Enlightenment. As Hamann's letter tells us, a meeting was arranged for two days later, for a continued discussion between Hamann and Kant alone, but Hamann cancelled this meeting with a long letter on 27 July 1758.[15] It was pointless to attempt such a re-conversion. 'I must almost laugh at the *choice of a philosopher* for the purpose of bringing about a change of opinion in me.'[16]

[11] ZH 1, 362:14-19.
[12] ZH 1, 371:13-16.
[13] ZH 1, Nr 157, 398:28-399:8; to Lindner.
[14] ZH 1, 374.
[15] ZH 1, 373-381.
[16] ZH 1, 378:31f.

Clearly in Hamann's own mind, however, although the discussion was broken off, the issues it raised were very much alive; for in August of 1759 he wrote *SM*, dedicated 'to Nobody and to Two': 'Nobody' being the public, and Berens and Kant being the 'two'.

Against this biographical background, it is clear that this first published essay of Hamann's was of great personal significance, not merely as the beginning of his career but as an apologia. In his letter to Kant, he wrote that he could not think of writing an apologia for himself[17]; which rather suggests that it was this subsequent essay instead which took on the apologetic function. It therefore is a vehicle for all the religious passion and resentment of one who has already suffered at the hands of his friends for his convictions. The scope and impact of the essay extends beyond this, however; for his defence of religiosity takes a form of a counter-attack against Enlightenment presuppositions and prejudices, and thus constitutes a kind of philosophical and methodological manifesto for Hamann's subsequent theological and philosophical reflection. Thus, the essay is more or other than its title claims. As the author himself explains[18], despite the title it is by no means a historiography; neither a factual historical biography nor a serious scholarly philosophical study of the father of philosophy. Hamann had read neither Plato nor Xenophon at this time[19]; his sources on the life of Socrates were simply Thomasius' translation of Charpentier's life of Socrates and John Gilbert Cooper's *The Life of Socrates*.[20] It would no doubt please Hamann to observe that the author was at the time of writing *SM* as 'ignorant' as his hero and subject-matter. These alleged 'memoirs' must be understood as a defence of his 'superstition' and 'fanaticism', an attempt at conversion and perhaps even a call to repentance.

Understanding the literary devices is as essential in preventing misinterpretation as is understanding the genre. The dedication to 'the Two' calls it a 'mimetic work'; a letter to Lindner claims 'The entire work is mimetic....'.[21] We are warned, in the dedication to Berens and Kant, that Hamann is writing 'in a Socratic manner', and that this manner has analogy for its soul, and irony for its body (61:10-12). Analogies and ironies abound in this work, but

[17] ZH 1, 376:18.
[18] N II, 65:14-15.
[19] ZH 2, 117-118.
[20] Mann, 62. Cooper's work was published in London, 1749.
[21] ZH 1, 404:11.

there is a central analogy as the soul or central assertion of the work, and a principal irony in its embodiment.

Hamann's 'analogy', his 'mimesis' is perhaps best understood as a kind of typology. This typology is not used in the manner of those keen typologists, the New Testament writers; but rather employed to draw parallels between figures to imply some kind of (unspecified) kinship or relation which stops short of complete identification. In particular, it takes the shape of an appropriation, or still more a 'reclaiming', in modern parlance, of one who has been trapped in an uncongenial ideology; that is Socrates, a figure much beloved of the Enlightenment[22], and favoured by such rational men over the figure with which he is placed in parallel in this essay: Jesus Christ. By placing him in a parallel relation to the one who is despised, it is hoped (perhaps) that the readers might be converted to reconsider their dislike; or, if not, be forced to reconsider their admiration of Socrates.

Both Socrates and Jesus were rejected and unjustly condemned to death by their contemporaries, who failed to understand them; and this is merely one point of comparison between them. According to Blanke[23], Crito embodies Berens; the clothing of the Graces represents Hamann's own disguised way of speaking; Apollo is a type of Christian faith, (more correctly, I think, a type of the God who reveals himself to humanity), while the sophistical Athenians are the rationalists of Hamann's own time; Socrates' daemon is a *Vorbild* of the Holy Spirit; Socratic ignorance is Christian not-knowing but believing, etc. O'Flaherty provides his own exhaustive list and table.[24]

The 'analogy' or parallels do not stop there, however; for if Socrates is a 'type' of Christ, he is also a 'type' of Hamann; or at least, the instantiation of another way of doing and living philosophy than the sober, academic, rationalist life- and work-style of a Kant. The figure of Socrates therefore not only justifies Jesus to a rationalist age, but justifies Hamann's eccentric mode and approach to philosophy to the methods of Berens and Kant. Rather than being the sons of the Socrates they admire, they have the Sophists for their father: those who are attentive first and foremost to the philosophical *fashions* of their age, who value knowledge and wisdom for the power and prestige they confer, who

[22] Beiser, indeed, refers to Socrates as the 'patron saint' of the Enlightenment (Beiser, 26.)

[23] HHE 2, 13.

[24] O'Flaherty, *SM* (Appendix A), 207f.

delight in the professionalism and polish of rhetoric. Thus, while Socratic ignorance may be the parallel of Christian faith in the schemes of commentators such as Blanke and O'Flaherty, it is also the justification of Hamann's philosophical 'ignorance' and amateurism over against the sophistication of Berens and Kant.

Thus, the analogy which is the 'soul' of the essay is multiple: Socrates and his contemporaries are the types both of Christ and his contemporaries and of Hamann vs. Berens, Kant and the Enlightenment. This central insight or assertion is embodied in wave upon wave of ironies, both significant and passing; chief among them is this: that hero of the Enlightenment, Socrates, is reclaimed as the opponent of the Enlightenment's analogues, the Sophists and Athenians who put Socrates to death for the affront that he offered them.

2. Exposition

a. Title page and Dedications

The subtitle, 'For the leisure [*lange Weile*] of the public'[25] etc. (N II, 57) plays on the doubled meaning of boredom and free time or leisure in a self-mocking way. Such a trivial detail is not without its personal significance, however; for in contrast to the diligent Kant and the busy capitalist Berens[26] Hamann was unemployed and 'idle'. From his many long letters to Lindner in 1759 we can see that this was a sensitive subject, and one can conjecture several reasons why this should be so. Firstly, Hamann made himself unemployed, so to speak, in leaving his employment with Berens' family over the broken engagement with Catharina (and the larger issue of his unpopular religiosity.) He was idle by choice – and not by choice, for he had rather remain and work for Carl Berens as his brother-in-law (these were his plans as he expresses them to his father[27]) so the fact and shame of his unemployment was doubly painful, as he both bore the blame for the instigation of

[25] 'This public, what a Protheus it is! who can tell of all the transformations, and all the forms in which it is worshipped, and by which superstitious readers are deceived. A wounded officer, who reads — I know not what? — at leisure (*für die lange Weile*)....' (ZH 1, 368:4-7.)

[26] Cf. ZH 1, 371:1ff. for Hamann's opinion of Berens' energy and industry as expressed to Lindner.

[27] ZH 1, 288:27f.

it and grieved over the underlying cause of it. Secondly, his idleness, clearly something reprehensible to Berens, was coupled with his 'uselessness', in Berens' opinion, now that he was a religious fanatic. It was the other side of a double-headed axe that Berens wielded against him; we can imagine that Hamann thus outraged both the religious-philosophical ideals of the Enlightenment and the social-bourgeois ideals. Perhaps Hamann was also 'ungrateful', another charge against which Hamann seems to defend himself; ungrateful perhaps for all the efforts Berens made to facilitate Hamann's worldly success in matters financial and philosophical. Hamann's defensiveness first appears in letter 139 to Lindner:

> He should worry about me as little I do about him. I grant him his business; and he should grant me my leisure. Let him thank God that he can work; and I am equally indebted to him for the rest that he gives me. He need not boast and triumph. But in the hubbub of his work he will understand this speech as little as Croesus in the midst of his riches understood what a raving Greek said to him.[28]
>
> Whether my thoughts could have better fallen in with his without injuring my conscience? If that is a job, then let him put a price to it, so that I know how much my labour earns. I should **justify** myself — I will not, no matter how well I could do it. He comes too late with his accusations, and will obtain nothing for himself nor for me with them. A spirit for tearing down, not for building; in this consists the **glory** of a Hume. Our tearing down and building – Everything has its time, as vain as it is.
>
> A religious person is therefore useless and ungrateful – because I am. Ingratitude was only punished as a crime in Egypt; great people nowadays let their ungrateful clients go with a printed letter and do not worry about them. Useless; cry the limbs about the stomach. If I am useless to Journals, works of Praenumeration – and book-keeping – if the world looks on me as its sweepings; all the better for me. Lacking the diligence of a Martha is the better part! ...I can and want to work – and have worked – but as a useless servant: by preference for my friends and benefactors – not like a heathen and tax-collector – they have had their reward: honour and ingratitude.[29]

Hamann's refusal to obey the Protestant work ethic and seek the doubled glory of a successful businessman and a popular philosopher deserves this lengthy exposition, for it is woven into the portrait of a new way to do philosophy, of philosophical

[28] ZH 1, 303:37-304:6.
[29] ZH 1, 305:13-31.

heroism, which is to come in the essay. This theme will return in the Introduction; there we will find that one who is idle may have a better perspective on the history of philosophy than the professional.

Hamann's rejection of bourgeois and Enlightenment values is embodied in a rejection of 'the public', of whoring after popularity. This rejection receives bombastic treatment in his dedication to the public, 'Nobody', which is styled after the apocryphal account of Bel and the Dragon, in particular, larded with numerous other biblical references. (59:1ff.) The public – not a human being, 'nobody' – is of course a construct; no real person or persons but an image or ideal, in short, an idol created then served and worshipped by its 'high priests'. It should be observed that this idol 'bears upon its face' the feature of ignorance and curiosity; ignorance plays an important role in this essay, while 'curiosity' is a 'satyriasis' attributed to the Athenians – i.e. Socrates' public.

Two followers in particular are described. The first, Berens, is portrayed as working on the philosopher's stone (59:31), the substance the alchemists sought to transform base metals into gold – in short, a useful pun for Berens' twin interests of philosophy and making money. Of course, this is not a purely selfish endeavor, Hamann hastens to assure us (with evident sarcasm); Berens' argument would seem to be that the creation of wealth is the best way to promote the good of all, by encouraging the bourgeois virtues of industry and hard work (60:1-2). The encoded language of Hamann's typology has already begun in this paragraph with the phrase 'the mystical language of the Sophist' (60:3). The Sophists here are clearly not Socrates' contemporaries but the followers of the Enlightenment. This phrase is also an early example of Hamann's 'metaschematism'[30], as he was later to call it: the art of the kettle calling the pot black, so to speak. One applies an opponent's most hated description in a way that, paradoxically, is apt; one of Hamann's favourite assaults is the use of the designation 'mystical' for the language and arguments of the most abstract kind – in other words, for those who would most despise

[30] 'Metaschematism' comes from μετασχηματιζω, to transform, or transfer by means of a fiction or figure (cf., e.g., 1 Cor. 4.6). Oswald Bayer describes it, in Hamann's hands, thus: 'He sees himself in the mirror of another and the other in the mirror of his own experience; he puts himself in their place and sees the world in their eyes.' (Bayer, *ZW* 118.) With Hamann, this often implies a surprising reversal of expectations or of the status quo; when performed on an argument, it has the air of striking an enemy with his own weapons.

the vagueness and irrationalism of mysticism. 'The mystical language of the Sophists' is thus a designation for the abstract philosophical language of Enlightenment rationalists.

'The other' is portrayed as wanting to equal Newton in being a 'universal' philosopher (60:10f.). Perhaps this refers to Kant's work *Allgemeine Naturgeschichte und Theorie des Himmels oder Versuch von der Verfassung und dem mechanischen Ursprung des ganzen Weltgebäudes nach Newtonschen Grundsätzen abgehandelt*, or perhaps to Kant's interest in Newton generally. One may conjecture however that there is another layer of meaning, signifying something rather more ambitious, to the idea of being 'universal'. Presumably the desire to be a 'Warden of the Mint' (60:11) is rather more figurative, however. One of Newton's tasks as Warden of the Mint was to test the alloy content of the coins.[31] This aspect of 'criticism' or 'critique' however, is the one which is the most discriminating and developed (60:11-17); what we lack is a critique of ideas that has advanced to a comparable level. It is then a Warden of *this* 'Mint' that Kant presumably seeks to be: one who can tell us whether an idea is pure and unalloyed, and weighty enough to be considered a truth. This observation is a striking one, coming as it does twenty-two years before the publication of the *Critique of Pure Reason*.

'The little cakes' (60:18) which this essay constituted were not made to be palatable (60:20), but curative — indeed, purgative, as the conclusion of this dedication shows us, in a graphic image (60:20-24). If the 'little cakes' which Daniel threw into the mouth of the idol caused it to burst, the little cakes which Hamann throws to the 'idol' of 'the Public' will cause it to burst in another, rather more scatological (but figurative) way: the public will be purged of its philosophical constipation.

The dedication to the Two contains the clearest indications Hamann can bring himself to provide as to the keys to understanding this perplexing essay; its methods and typology, its purpose, and the spirit in which he would like them to understand it. He begins by drawing a contrasting parallel between the misunderstanding of the public at large and the understanding of one's intimates. The public read – and misunderstood – Aristotle's *Memorabilia*, and will read and misunderstand Hamann's *Socratic Memorabilia*. Only Alexander understood the former (61:7-9), and only the Two will understand the latter. The affection of friendship

[31] HHE 2, 69, note 21.

does not blind one to a work's faults, but rather endows it with a superior vision, such that it can distinguish in mould the growth of a microscopic forest (61:7-9). This seems to be a tacit acknowledgement that this essay will be incomprehensible to many; but that the private communications and past conversations between the friends will make understanding possible. Despite appearances, then, this essay should *not* be incomprehensible to Kant and Berens, should they have the good will and affection to work at understanding it.

Hamann then moves on to hint at both his use of typology or mimesis, and his purpose; flecked with appropriations of the epithets used against Hamann by his friends. He alerts them first to the use of typology – 'analogy and irony' – and claims they are traits of Socrates; and in this assertion of his attempt to write in 'a Socratic manner', he lays down the foundation for his own comparison to Socrates. 'Ignorance and confidence be as characteristic of me as they will; nevertheless here they must be viewed as aesthetic imitations', he continues (61:12-14). Blanke understands 'ignorance' and 'confidence' as Christian *Nichtwissen* and *Glaube*[32]; without disagreeing, precisely, for clearly this sentence is meant to reverberate on various levels, I think another philosophical aspect is intended: compared to the professional Kant, Hamann was 'ignorant', yet 'confident' in the face of sustained opposition to his new faith and ideology. These too may be further accusations levelled at Hamann by Berens; another letter to Lindner finds him defending himself against accusations of pride and stubbornness or obstinacy.[33]

A similar personal reference is surely intended in the epithets 'superstitious' and 'visionary', attributed 'metaschematically' to Xenophon and Plato respectively (61:15-16). Self-defences against superstition and enthusiasm [*Schwärmerey*] can be found for example in letter Nr. 139, again to Lindner:

> I know Gichtel and Böhme as little as our friend does; they are human, that is enough for me. God's Word and God's work is all that I base myself on....[34]
>
> If our friend thinks my present conviction of mind very regrettable, let him not see my enthusiasm (*Schwärmerey*) as an *alienum quid*, that could not befall him. He should not be upset for me, if my satisfaction serves him, for I enjoy it now, and will always have it in

[32] HHE 2, 75.
[33] ZH 1, 399:31f.
[34] ZH 1, 307:6-9.

> every fate that I commend to God.... If an enthusiast is a fool, then ask him in a cheerful mood whether he up to now does not recognize himself as one in his intentions and best works.[35]

The references to superstition and *Schwärmerei* are a submarine transition to the main idea of this paragraph (and of course, this essay): Hamann's religiosity. Hamann's enthusiasm – for Jesus as well as for Socrates – is simply to be seen as similar to that of two eminent and respectable thinkers, Plato and Xenophon. The point of this paragraph is to allude to the religious polemic of this work, and the need for its concealment. It would be easiest for Hamann to be as candidly fanatical as these two; but the opposition to his faith requires him to be as discreet about his religiosity as St. John Bolingbroke, author of *The Idea of a Patriot King*, and the 'English Platonist' Shaftesbury were about their lack of it (61:19-22).

The paragraph of 61:23-31 gives some indication of the kind of hermeneutical movement the reader must engage in to understand Hamann and his essay: not logical stepwise progression, but intuitive hops. This of course is communicated to the Two by analogy: Socrates recognized a thinker, Heraclitus, who required his readers to 'swim' – to move from point to point intuitively, by one's own powers, rather than being ferried from place to place by the logical thinking of the author (61:27-31). A little warning is implicit as well: do not criticize what you fail to understand (61:23-27).

b. Introduction

In the Introduction, Hamann compares the history of philosophy to the statue of Richelieu: a great artist turns his chisel to it, the monarch pays for it, Peter the Great promises it half his kingdom, if it could teach him how to govern the other half (62:3-12). One may understand from this three different relationships one may have to the history of philosophy: it may be used as a vehicle to display one's genius; or patronized to display one's wealth and power; or it may be treated as an oracle, which despite being 'dumb stone' is requested to dispense advice on how to manage one's affairs and achieve one's aims. Alternatively, if the reference to Peter the Great is to be understood as positive, it indicates an engaged, personal response to history.

Is Peter's behaviour approved or disparaged by Hamann in this passage? Blanke (initially) understood the episode negatively;

[35] ZH 1, 307:13-18, 25-27.

Kracht on the other hand, with Jørgensen, sees it as positive. It shows a living engagement with the past[36], or, in my language, is 'relational'. In Strässle's view there is both a positive and a negative point to this passage: 'What Hamann is getting at here – negatively – is the presuppositionlessness of thought (system) postulated by the Enlightenment and grounded on Descartes, and, what he – positively – anticipates with this is the insight into the historicality of thinking.'[37] This rests on Strässle's understanding of what is contained in the statue-history analogy: 'Nothing in history can be deduced as the result of given conditions procured by a presuppositionless system.' All human productions, those of thought as well as material ones, are mediated in a particular form which cannot be adequately expressed by means of concepts. The history of philosophy embraces both systematics and philosophy of history, as a statue can express both the changeable and the unchanging.[38]

With Peter the Great, the first christological reference creeps in; Peter the Great became a carpenter for the sake of his people, like Noah — and Jesus; the 'Galilean' of the 'schemer Julian' (Julian the Apostate) (62:8ff.). Peter the Great, the 'creator of his people', is compared to Pygmalion, with the observation that 'should our history become mythology', a creator of his people will have to be understood as poetically as a 'sculptor of his wife' (62:13ff.). Between these detached islands, one can conjecture the following bridge. As Hamann later speculates, perhaps history should be understood as mythology, and must be understood with some means other than our reason. The self-styled 'historical' religion of Christianity is derided as mythology. Perhaps this is so – and metaschematically, history too is mythology. Both biblical and philosophical or political history, to be properly understood, require a different methodology than mere reason. Being mythology, they require intuitive apprehension of their meaning, imaginative elucidation, creative insight. 'To be properly understood' ultimately means, for Hamann, to perceive God's work in and through history. 'Should our history become mythology' (a kind of shorthand for, 'should we see God's work throughout all our human history'), then we should have to understand the epithet 'creator of his people' as 'poetic' – for God alone is the Creator of his people.

[36] Kracht, 32f.
[37] Strässle, 76.
[38] Strässle, 76.

Hamann then goes on to provide examples of the first kind of relationship one may have with the history of philosophy; that of using it to display one's genius. (62:20ff.) Stanley, Brucker, and Deslandes are all mentioned and dismissed. Hamann offers instead his own conception of the kind of study one should make of philosophy: 'not as a scholar or a philosopher oneself, but rather as an idle observer of their Olympic games', or 'as a painter who steps back' (63:14-20). Here we have again the polemic of the idler – as Hamann observes in a footnote, one who is idle, αργος , is 'Argus' – many-eyed. Hamann wrote to his brother during June of 1759:

> The hundred-eyed Argus was one without employment, as his name indicates. There is therefore no glory in it, that an observer can better judge some things than those who have them under their hands; and there is no shame for the latter in improving their handiwork according to the observations of an idler.[39]

In the month of his confrontations with the Two, he wrote to Lindner, 'He who looks on the Olympic games like Pythagoras has as little desire as skill to run in them; but he looks on the victor without envy and on his rivals and himself without pity.'[40] Both these thoughts clearly were distilled and found their way into this single compressed phrase. This is no mere piece of self-justification, however, but part of a polemical platform as to the best preconditions for understanding. This passage is not to be understood as advocating a dispassionate detachment or objectivity. A painter who steps back from his painting, for example, does not in so doing suddenly become less involved and interested in his own work, but simply sees it from a vantage point that allows a broader view. One does not become less involved with the subject-matter, but rather becomes less myopic, and indeed the focus shifts from one's professional techniques back to the subject at hand.[41]

The implicit dryness and barrenness of 'detachment' and 'objectivity' in fact come in for criticism in the following paragraph, where we find that the colourful and even primitive style[42] of a

[39] ZH 1, 347:21-25.

[40] ZH 1, 368:19-21.

[41] Strässle characterizes the relationship between the portrayer and the portrayed as 'self-knowledge' — a suggestive idea. (Strässle, 79.)

[42] Jørgensen observes that according to rationalist theory, the writers of fables were popularizers of recognized, universal philosophical or moral truths, which they transmitted to the ignorant in figurative language — or else, the fable-writers themselves were 'natural simpletons' quite incapable of philosophical knowledge. (Jørgensen, *SMAN* 20.)

writer of fables, an Aesop or a La Fontaine, would be preferable in the history of philosophy to the 'painted philosophers' and 'their delicately mutilated portraits' provided by the historians of philosophy (63:21-26). A transition is then made to the striking description of the kind of philosophy Hamann will advocate: philosophical heroism. From Hamann's description, it is clearly passion that is called for, and not detachment or objectivity (63:31-37). Nor are professional scruples an advantage; such scruples might, for example, think that *Schwärmerei* and superstition would prevent proper understanding. Not so; these are necessary for understanding, for attaining the truth, for working the philosopher into a kind of Cuchulainian battle frenzy. Perhaps it takes an idle observer to realize this paradox; or, in earlier decades than the present, an existentialist; Blanke paraphrases the present passage thus: 'He means to say that if philosophical-historical books are to be brought to life (lit. to speak), our merely rational interest is not sufficient, rather we must be present with our entire existence.'[43]

Hamann then supplies examples of the 'engagé' response one ought to make to great persons of the past: Caesar pouring forth tears at the statue of Alexander, for he himself had achieved so little in comparison (64:1-2); Alexander in turn envying Achilles in having a 'herald of his fame', Homer, 'the blind Minnesinger' for he had none such to sing his own glory (64:2-3), and so on. These were all necessary to teach us that there were 'divine people' or prophets among the heathens as well as the Jews (64:7f.); people to speak to us directly in our own existence and to affect us, not simply to be studied dispassionately and prevented from moving us. For nature and history are not given to us to dissect and analyse dispassionately, they do not lie passive at our disposal. Rather than aggressive analysis, our stance towards them should be receptive hearing. (64:12ff.) What we are meant to see and hear, moreover, is the presence of God, his invisible being; and this is precisely what could never be found by rational analysis but only by 'superstition' and '*Schwärmerei*'. To proceed incorrectly in trying to learn from nature and history is therefore not merely impolite but fruitless, as such an investigator can never come to a significant knowledge or understanding. As mentioned earlier, Buffon represents a new style of natural history; one which rejects the mathematical and deductive presuppositions and procedures of

[43] HHE 2, 92.

Descartes in favour of experience and observation. Montesquieu's work displays a delight in concrete detail, but this is in part subverted by an underlying assumption that human nature is always the same, under its various manifestations. Both Buffon and Montesquieu share materialist (and crypto-universalizing) assumptions[44] which Hamann rejects; and insofar as these determine their accounts, they must in Hamann's view remain 'poets' against their will — a metaschematic reproach for those who pride themselves on their historical understanding which claims to achieve objective knowledge, fact, truth (64:15ff.).

Hamann then invokes the providence of God which preserves or neglects the works of the ancients; if some are missing, we should not mourn them, for it was not God's will that we should have them (64:19-31). I have not been able to find a source or reference for the 'artist' who attempted to throw a lentil through the eye of a needle (64:32-65:2), but the meaning of the simile is clear. It matters not whether one has one bushelful or two with which to attempt this feat; nor will a third bushel make possible what you have failed to do with the first two. If you have wasted two bushels of lentils in trying to throw them through the eye of a needle, you should certainly not be provided with a third, for you clearly do not know what to do with them. Likewise, the misuse the scholars make of the ancients – since they do not recognize them as 'clouds of witnesses' – makes quite irrelevant the fact that the third bushelful of ancient works is missing; it would be wasted as they attempted to achieve the impossible: that is, to divine their true meaning without reference or witness to God, to understand them without permitting them to speak to one's own life and existence. Should God have bothered to provide them with another bushel of ancients, it would be as redundant as those already available, and one would have to throw them overboard to keep up the price of those already on the market, as the Dutch were said to have done with their spices (65:4-5).

'None has ventured to do as much for history as Bacon has done for physics' (65:6-7). Bolingbroke unwittingly perhaps came closest, in suggesting that ancient history was historically unreliable (65:7ff.) Metaschematically, Hamann takes up this sceptical suggestion and returns to the idea of history as mythology: something whose significance cannot be exhausted by the use of

[44] Strässle explores the connections between the two thinkers, a relation suggested by Hamann's juxtaposition. (Strässle, 80ff.)

reason, 'neither analytical-critical nor descriptive-empirical'[45]; indeed, its true meaning can never be discovered in such a fashion (65:9-13).

Hamann disclaims any intention to be a historiograph of Socrates (65:14f.) – least of all, one understands, a historiograph in this sense. He merely writes 'memoirs' – a somewhat disingenuous claim. Yet a greater claim is made, implicitly, and expressed as a wish. Socrates was not best understood by the 'professional', by Plato, indeed, the latter positively misunderstood and distorted him. Rather, it was the amateur, the humble tanner, who understood his hero the best (65:24-31).

Kracht comments on an apparent contradiction, in which Hamann disclaims any interest in writing 'historiography', yet spends the Introduction discussing the right understanding of it.[46] My own understanding of this paradox is that Hamann's disclaimer is to be understood as a rejection of the approach that finds 'truth' in accuracy of detail and the absence of 'interpretation'. The examples given of empathetic, personal understanding of one's 'hero' (62:3-19, 64:1-11, 65:24-31) demonstrate wherein 'truth' lies.

c. First Section

In the First Section (66:1ff.) Hamann's main theme is the fact that Socrates had a midwife for a mother and a sculptor for a father. From this, Hamann unfolds a discussion about the manner in which Socrates performed his philosophy, in analogy to the professions of his parents. The concealment of our minds, thoughts and concepts, which implies a certain inaccessibility to dissecting reason; the humble attitude one must take in assisting this process – these are attributes which are drawn from the idea of Socrates as midwife (66:3-19). Less gentle and benign is the deconstructive side of Socrates as pedagogue (66:20-30); even a certain violence is necessary in hewing away what should not be there, and here, subtly planted by the author, we see the seeds of Socrates' fate. Although the parallel is not drawn, it should be perceptible to any reader of the Gospels that this 'hewing away' of what should not be there was also the activity that made Jesus so unpopular with his contemporaries. Blanke also draws the parallel between Socrates'

[45] Strässle, 84.
[46] Kracht, 28-29.

clothing the Graces, as was not customary at that time, with Hamann's concealment of his Christian witness in this essay.[47]

Hamann then rounds on those who 'imagine the merit of the sculptor in Socrates to be so great that they do not recognize the wise man [*Weiser*]; who deify the sculptor in order to be better able to mock the carpenter's son' (67:15ff.). Clearly, this is the first overt christological parallel. Admittedly the division between Socrates as sculptor and as wise man is difficult to understand. Superficially we hear contrasted Socrates the craftsman and Socrates the philosopher; but surely the followers of the Enlightenment did not elevate Socrates' manual skills at the expense of his philosophizing. And yet, from the Hamannian point of view, perhaps this is what they have done. Socrates, the dialectician, the educator of youth — the 'sculptor' — inspires the admiration of the enlightened. But Socrates the 'wise man' — whose wisdom was a repertoire of myths of climbing ladders and growing wings, and believing in gods and a little personal daemon — is a *Schwärmer* whom the enlightened despisers of religion would much rather overlook.[48] The claim that Socrates' sayings are testimonies against them is a reference to Jesus' saying that Moses himself would testify against the Pharisees (Jn. 5.45). The final sentence makes clear the typological kinship between the followers of the Enlightenment and the Athenians who put Socrates to death.

It is an audacious leap, to be sure, to move straight from assimilating Socrates to Jesus to discussing the former's sensual predilection for handsome youths, but this is precisely what our author does. Unlike other authors of the time, e.g. Charpentier, Hamann makes no attempt to deny Socrates' homosexuality; nor does he see any need to condemn it. Instead, for those who may feel less comfortable than he with seeing it as a 'beauty spot of his morals' (67:30f.), he places it in a context in which homosexuality appears more natural and acceptable than it would in Hamann's time (67:27ff.). Further, he asserts that Socrates was not undisciplined or incontinent in his desires, did not merely lust

[47] HHE 2, 110f.

[48] It is possible to hear a pun in '*Weiser*', wise man, or alternatively, guide, pointer, indicator; and to remember that Socrates the 'sculptor' is Socrates the pedagogical philosopher. Thus the crime is to worship Socrates the philosopher and neglect Socrates as prophet, pointing forward to Jesus; to honour the 'sculptor' and mock the 'carpenter's son', as did the rationalist atheists of the Enlightenment. One could also, on hearing 'wise man', to think of those pagans who came to honour the new-born King of Kings.

after young men's bodies but sought a 'pleasure in a harmony of inner and outer beauty' (68:5ff.); and that a friendship without sensuality is in fact undesirable and inhuman (68:2ff.). A final mitigation, the idea among the ancients that beauty was a footprint of the divine (68:7-10), leads onto a further Socrates-Christ parallelism. We think too abstractly and in too masculine a fashion, Hamann says ironically, to pay attention to such insignificant details; after all, even religion says God makes no distinction of person (68:10ff.). He will send the promised redeemer-hero, 'the fairest of human children', in the ugly form of a man of sorrows, covered in stripes, disempowered. Jesus' contemporaries were scandalized by the idea; Hamann's contemporaries are scandalized by the idea of God appearing as a man at all, whatever his appearance. Ironically, it is the pagans who are accustomed to such an idea (68:20ff.), and could presumably have accepted Jesus just as they accepted Socrates – who, as Hamann does not point out, but Alcibiades does, was hardly the fairest of human children himself – until their sophists, like the 'Pharisees' and the eighteenth century rationalists, were affronted at the 'parricide' (68:23), the ugliness, the sheer anthropomorphism of the Incarnation. Irony unfolds on irony; this affront at 'parricide' itself became parricide, as the witnesses to the Father were both of them killed.

Hamann then makes another assault on the Enlightenment predilection for Socrates, by uncovering an underlying contradiction in it. Modern-day thinkers find the idea of divine revelations through comets, oracles, and the like distasteful and ridiculous. Socrates did not; so what will his Enlightenment followers make of this folly? Do they not accept the Delphic oracle's praise of Socrates as the wisest of all? 'The best intellects of our time have maintained that on this occasion the priestess was a prophetess, and inwardly are pleased over their resemblance to their father Socrates, who thought it quite proper to play the idiot or to believe in gods' (68:28-32). This however goes against the grain of Enlightened thinkers, whose disposition is to 'demythologize' as we would now call it. Rigorous empiricists must demythologize; they refuse to recognize anything supernatural or any fulfilment of superstitious expectations. Sceptics such as Bayle on the other hand (69:6) say that the faith in these 'miracles' is what works wonders; that is what creates the fulfilment of these signs and oracles. Ironically, Hamann is happy to absorb this idea and to metaschematize it, siding with the sceptics against the

empiricists. Indeed, it may well be, in modern parlance, that our subconscious is at work in this divination; that cures are psychosomatic, etc. It is easier for Apollo to 'philippize and socratize' than for us to be Apollo; it is easier for God to accommodate himself to us than vice versa; why should he not govern his intentions through our psyche, our gullibility, rather than through the remote and complicated machinery of the firmament? (69:15-20).

d. Second Section

The Second Section deals with Socrates' ignorance: the fact that he, acclaimed the wisest of all, repeatedly insisted that he knew nothing. Hamann details the benevolent activity of Crito in attempting and failing to educate Socrates (70:2-14); it is easy to hear echoes of Berens in this[49], as it is to hear 'one who knows nothing and one who has nothing' as the twin reproaches from Berens; that he was useless both as a capitalist and as a philosopher. One can imagine that the parallelism between Socrates and Hamann extends to the poor reception they both received from the sophists and sophisticates of their respective ages. Nevertheless, the darling of the Enlightenment himself was ignorant, indeed, even ignorant of the shame of ignorance, unlike 'rational people', as Hamann observes sarcastically (70:16-18).

The offence of Socratic ignorance is explained in the paragraphs of 70:19-27, 28-32; albeit connected by a submarine bridge. That a private individual can allege that he knows nothing should not be an affront; but that the most intelligent and cleverest of individuals can make the same confession negates any claim to knowledge his hearers might make and calls into question the limitations and relativity of human knowledge itself. As Blanke observes, the conversation and preoccupations of the hypochondriac often produce a similar disposition in us[50]; and by extension Socratic ignorance according to Hamann would seem to have an analogical displeasing effect on one's epistemology.

Hamann then holds together the idea of Socratic ignorance with the assertion of Apollo, through the Delphic oracle, that Socrates was the wisest of all (70:33ff.). As Hamann asked in the first section, which was lying? Here Hamann provides the synthesis to the thesis of Socrates and antithesis of Apollo by assimilating the

[49] Cf. Blanke, HHE 2, 127.
[50] HHE 2, 128.

words of the oracle with the command on the threshold: 'Know thyself!' 'Sophocles and Euripides would not have become such great models for the stage without the art of dissecting the human heart. Socrates however surpassed them both in wisdom, because he had progressed further in self-knowledge than they, and knew that he knew nothing' (71:7-11). Wisdom is not to be found in the accumulation of facts and learning; wisdom is to be found in self-knowledge. Apollo told everyone this even before they crossed the threshold (71:11f.). Apollo however goes on to take the lesson further in answering Charephon's question as to who was the wisest of all, that is, who best knows himself? The answer is: Socrates; for knowing oneself means knowing that one knows nothing, that is, knowing the limits and conditions of one's knowledge. Apollo was a careful and attentive pedagogue in leading his followers to this truth; after all, God did not leave himself without witness, not even among the pagans (71:15-21). Yet because the modern-day sophists cannot accept the 'foolishness' of divine oracles, and must reject them as poetic flourishes incidental to the interest of the story – (this conclusion is unexpressed) – they are unable to benefit from this noble truth and insight. This, perhaps, is a case of their misuse of the ancients, to which Hamann alludes in the earlier simile of the abuse of lentils (64:32-65:2).

Hamann then indulges in some methodological, hermeneutical and linguistic observations which indicate that the meaning and significance of words and ideas arise from their relationships (71:25-28; 32ff.); an example being his juxtaposition of the Socratic saying and the Delphic inscription (71:28-31); he provides other, biblically-based examples (71:34-72:5).

Further, as meaning is not to be found merely in the words themselves but also in these relationships, it is also not to be found simply in the *mens auctoris* but in that of the interpreter as well; as 'rays of light become this or that colour according to the surface from which it refracts to our eye' (72:9f.). In this way Socrates' assertion that he knew nothing carried a variety of meanings and forces, as Hamann goes on to illustrate.

Chief among the various meanings of the utterance is the point which Hamann illustrates at length with an analogy of card-playing (72:18-73:2). Socrates' avowal of ignorance was a rejection of the lust for knowledge which possessed the Athenians, the Sophists; it was his refusal to join in this vice. It was not, Hamann goes on to tell us, the 'ignorance' of the sceptics. It was *Emp-*

findung; the use of the word at the time included notions not only of 'feeling' but also 'perception' or even 'sensation', and thus carries connotations of receptive awareness and response, with a strongly physical undertone. Commentators writing in German may be spared the task of translating it, but they are still obliged to understand it, and Jørgensen's bent is to hear the background sense not as emotion, but as the 'immediate, unreflective perception or experience of a situation.[51] Metzke sees it in terms of faith, though as Kracht observes, these two are not the same thing. He provides no definitive answer himself.[52] Strässle brings out its historical nature.[53] Swain suggests that this be seen as an attempt to translate Hume's 'sensation'.[54] This has some plausibility if the discussion of scepticism immediately following has Hume as its target. I think rather that it is meant to translate precisely Hume's word 'feeling' – as when Hume describes belief as a 'feeling'; a 'feeling' which nevertheless is foundational to reason and philosophy. Whatever single word one chooses to embrace all the possibilities in the German word, the attitude indicated is a non-deductive, holistic, receptive and perceptive relationship to reality. Socrates' profession of ignorance was therefore a recognition of reality; not a philosophical doctrine, a methodological doubt, an unassailable position of scepticism — and there is a world of difference between the two. One is a live animal, the other a skeleton (73:11-12); this zoological metaphor eases Hamann into the deployment of metaphors derived from Aesop's fable of a donkey who clothed himself in a lion-skin to deceive and frighten other animals (73:13ff.). A fox, however, who had heard the donkey braying, remained unconvinced (the donkey's undisguisable ears are presumably Hamann's own comic embellishment, [73:15].) Sceptics, who imitate certain features of Socratic ignorance, show themselves for the donkeys they are. Their hypocrisy, which is 'ludicrous' (73:17), is this: they feign 'ignorance' as a sophisticated and cynical device, to reveal and display their philosophical cleverness and shore up their intellectual pride. This feigned ignorance therefore betrays the fact that truly they know nothing. True Socratic ignorance is the knowledge and acceptance and even

[51] Jørgensen, *SMAN* 48.
[52] Kracht, 52-53.
[53] Strässle, e.g. p. 88.
[54] Swain, 348.

the frank avowal of one's own limitations. Not a formula, but a disposition, a *Haltung*, as Blanke puts it well.[55]

Is Hume the target here? He is clearly in Hamann's mind in the following paragraphs; and there is no particular reason to think not — no particular reason, that is, apart from the emphatic tone of summary disparagement. Hume is usually accorded greater respect (and in 74:2 is called 'honourable'), and the paragraphs following, after all, indicate an *acceptance* of Hume's deconstruction of reason.[56] So if Hume *is* being clever in arguing a 'sceptical' position, it is in aid of Hamann's own project of dethroning universal, infallible reason, and is far from 'hypocritical' (73:17).

The sceptic can only be countered with the simple fact: 'Our own being and the existence of all things outside us must be believed and can be made out in no other way' (73:21-22).[57] Hamann deals concisely in the next two paragraphs with the complicated issue of belief and scepticism, but the essence of the argument is contained in this opening assertion. If one were to elaborate on his behalf, one would argue that it is no shame or disadvantage for religion to be based on faith alone, for reason to be unable to prove it. Reason alone is unable to prove even the most self-evident empirical fact – my own existence[58] – or the most indubitable conclusion from an

[55] HHE 2, 133.

[56] I believe Hamann reads Hume, as I do, not for example as *really believing* that 'there is no such thing as causality, only regularity' – which is how Hume is generally taken. Rather, on the contrary: causality is indeed believed in, and that is the point: that it is *believed in*. We believe in causality, which however reason cannot prove and we cannot therefore rationally justify — but so much the worse, not for causality, *but for reason*, if it is unable to cope with such a fundamental and indispensable notion. Hume intends to deconstruct not the reality of causality, but the power of reason. Cf. Galen Strawson, *The Secret Connexion*, for an excellent treatment of this issue.

[57] Kracht asks if this means that 'truth' becomes merely 'subjective-arbitrary certainty', which he thinks the context does not permit; rather, 'faith' must be understood as 'absolute', and through it knowledge 'in an undoubted objective sense' is possible. (Kracht, 55.) As can be imagined, I find the subjective-objective opposition misguided. The faith-reason-knowledge constellation is indeed 'subjective' in that it is undeniably personal, but only if we understand 'subjective' as opposed *neither* to 'truth' *nor* even to 'objective', where the latter means 'undistorted' and 'shared'. In understanding the knowledge of history, Strässle finds the subjective-objective opposition inappropriate; for not only the object of knowledge but also the knowing subject is historical (p. 88).

[58] Hamann clearly finds Descartes' methodological doubt *insufficiently* hyperbolic.

ancient syllogism and a universal *a posteriori* conclusion: that my existence shall come to an end. All knowledge, whether knowledge of my own existence or knowledge of God's existence, thus shares the same status: it must be believed, it is grounded in an ultimate trust.[59] That reason is in no way the sole respectable ground of knowledge is shown in the fact that 'tasting and seeing' (74:4-5), such basic building-blocks of experiential knowledge, do not themselves arise from reason. This latter observation has its theological point as well, of course, because it is by 'tasting and seeing' that we know that God is good (Ps. 34.9, also 1 Jn. 1.1). Knowledge of God is paradoxically – at least on a metaphorical level – more akin to fundamental experiential, empirical knowledge than to the conclusions of reason.

Hamann was perhaps the first to perceive the theological fruitfulness, the positive aspect to the understanding of reason and faith that arises from Hume's thought. He certainly preceded Kant in this. With hindsight, Hamann says of himself in letters to Jacobi, 'I was full of Hume when I wrote *SM*, and p. 49 of my little book refers to this' and 'I studied him before I wrote *SM*, and am indebted for my doctrine of faith to the same source.'[60] It is passages such as the present one that give Hamann his reputation for 'fideism', which will be discussed in the section of analysis.

Hamann then draws a parallel between the work of the philosopher and the poet, artist and composer. The philosopher must observe the same rules of harmony as the latter two; the philosopher 'is as subject to the law of imitation as the poet' (74:9-10). The truths of the poet are as true as the reason and doctrines of the philosopher. In what do these truths consist?

Blanke offers two interpretations of Hamann's assertion that the philosopher is subject to the law of imitation: 1) Hamann reacts negatively to the law of imitation, insofar as (Hamann is said to believe that) artistic creation is an original creation and not mere external, superficial imitation. Nevertheless he acknowledges the law, seemingly, (in as it were a kind of social or interpersonal understanding of the word 'imitation'); and even says the philosopher too is subject to this law; meaning philosophers are not self-sufficient; each learns after the other, and is not a '*Selbstdenker*' (one who thinks for himself) but a '*Nachahmer*' (imitator). 2) The theoreticians of art meant one should imitate only 'beautiful

[59] 'To grasp something in faith is to grasp it in its historical form in an immediate (i.e. original) and personal relation.' (Strässle, 86.)

[60] ZH 7, 167:9.

nature'; i.e. nature in so far as it conforms to classical ideas. Hamann is said to oppose this; but imitation has not lost every positive meaning for him. 'As the poet should understand and portray authentic, original nature from the inside out by means of the imagination, so is the philosopher's task by means of reason to think through the final thoughts of reality and reproduce them in their systems of knowledge.'[61] Jørgensen pinpoints the issue thus: the concept of 'imitation' includes the notion that *Phantasie*, imagination re-work the authentic reality in favour of harmony – which Hamann opposes.[62] For Kracht, the problem lies in the fundamental fact that the portrayal is *created*; and, as with reason, this entails a departure from reality.[63]

The point for Hamann is in my view that 'truth', to which both the philosopher and the poet aspire, requires an honest portrayal of reality, which requires a proper relationship with it.[64] What is wanted is not a 'delicately mutilated portrait' (63:26) nor a dainty 'mantelpiece figurine' (63:4), portraits which are distorted in order to be more aesthetically pleasing. Rather, what we want from poets and philosophers are (to use Hamann's two examples) a poetry which acknowledges personal tragedy and a philosophy which takes on board the evils of existence. Hamann is not concerned here to reject 'mere external imitation' as opposed to 'inner creative genius'. Nor, (*pace* Kracht), is the sheer fact of human creativity and involvement the problem. The 'painter who steps back' is, after all, *painting*. I find no support for the implication that Hamann holds a naively realist or objectivist view of how we perceive and know — a vision of purely passive accuracy. It is the distortion of 'false imitation', whether for aesthetic reasons or for accomodation into a philosophical system that is his target[65]; and this is opposed to a sensitive and honest relationship to reality. This is clearly as necessary for the philosopher as for the poet or painter. Moreover, as Hamann goes on to tell us, and illustrates with the examples of Voltaire and Klopstock, 'Fate' forces us to confront reality; even if

[61] HHE 2, 143. O'Flaherty seems to have not only a quite different understanding of this passage of Hamann to my own, but also a quite different understanding of the point of Blanke's two interpretations. (O'Flaherty, *SM* 200-201.)

[62] Jørgensen, *SMAN* 52.

[63] Kracht, 56-57.

[64] Strässle is quite right to say that an ethical moment is essentially inherent in faith and *Empfindung*, in contrast to 'philosophical reason' and 'poetic imitation'. (Strässle, 87.)

[65] This issue receives more attention in the following chapter,

our reason or imagination has been able to argue otherwise. Imagination therefore, however glorious or important, is not the creator of faith[66], because faith means an honest relationship with reality – which is prior to its creative depiction or philosophical interpretation.

Hamann returns more explicitly to the theme of Socratic ignorance, but the crucial relational idea remains.[67] The 'oracular saying' is clearly intended to draw together the wisdom of the Delphic oracle and of the apostle Paul – a daring comparison for a conventional Christian (74:20ff.). This alliance, rather than opposition, between two sources of revelation usually opposed is underlined by referring to Paul as 'the great teacher of the heathen'. The function of the biblical citation is to draw together the themes of Socratic ignorance with the relational idea introduced in the discussion of faith: to know oneself as ignorant is to be known by God. This entails a death (74:30) – a death, we have learned, that must simply be believed – which brings forth life and a higher knowledge. This paradox, however, is unknown and unknowable by the sophists, because they lack the humility of ignorance and the knowledge of faith. This assertion is produced via a chain of biblical references linked associatively, both deliberately and unconsciously, as the footnotes and the time of their insertion indicate (some after the fact, as they occurred to him subsequently). The one footnote present here in the first edition refers to the Song of Songs, and is necessary for the business of noses and towers (74:34). The beloved's nose is 'like a tower of Lebanon, overlooking Damascus' (Sgs. 7). 'Damascus' for Hamann clearly recalls, and symbolizes, Paul's conversion; this is the insight which the 'nose' of a sophist cannot reach; the nose, as it were, constituting the organ of understanding (or perhaps perception) in this complicated construction. The nose of a sophist is a mere molehill, from which one has a comparatively poor view.

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[66] Kracht feels this sentence can only be understood as a criticism of imagination; it is productive and therefore incapable of yielding an adequate portrayal of reality. (Kracht, 59.)

[67] Strässle connects this with history. For Hamann, *Empfindung* is a presupposition for historical understanding. The understanding of history must develop from experience and encounter. 'That means: the presupposition of understanding is an immediate and personal relation to the historical fact.' (Strässle, 98.) Further, (Socratically), there is no historical understanding without questions (99f.) — which again implies a personal relation. Moreover, questioning in turn presupposes a being-addressed (*Angesprochenwerden*, so redolent of Emil Brunner!) (100f.).

Socrates may have lacked the full Christian revelation; but Hamann goes on to discuss next what revelation Socrates might have possessed (75:3ff.). It is that enjoyed by Homer and Shakespeare, both 'amateurs', ignorant of the rules of art.[68] It is genius. In Socrates, this genius – the inner voice that speaks to him and features prominently in his stories and tales of himself – is what fertilizes him, as a virgin's womb can be made fruitful (75:12f.). In short, Hamann implies, Socrates' genie was the Holy Spirit (or an antetype of it, so to speak) and the creative receptivity of Socrates in his ignorance is to be seen as like that of Mary in her purity.

Hamann then goes on to furnish a list of nine possible rationalistic explanations for this piece of superstition, Socrates' daemon (75:14-25); some relatively sensible and offered by previous scholars, and some wild and clearly of Hamann's own imagination. Blanke sees this discussion of Socrates' daemon as the 'positive' side of his ignorance[69], and hence the discussion continues on Socrates' ignorance without a transition. In my view, the intervening section on faith and proof was entirely concerned with the question of ignorance and knowledge, expanding the discussion into the realm of the relationship one must have with reality, and how this humble relation entails a relationship with God – not so much knowing God as being known by God. We are told this ignorance leads to a higher knowledge; and being known by God and the higher knowledge this entails are precisely the matter at hand in the discussion of the daemon; conversely, the matter of Socrates' daemon is an aspect of his ignorance.

This ignorance is the pre-condition for understanding Socrates and 'all the peculiarities of his manner of teaching and thinking' (75:32-33). Hamann goes on to argue for the naturalness of his methods of teaching. Light can be thrown on what seems at first a surprising assertion: that Socrates was indifferent to 'that which is called truth' (76:5). It may be that the qualification *'that which is called'* is an important one; this being what the sophist considers truth, and not the knowing and being-known of the wisely ignorant. Hamann's letter to Kant written at the time also contains these exclamations:

> More damage can be done with truths than with errors, if we make a nonsensical use of the former, and can modify the latter through

[68] A charge made by Gottsched, cf. Unger, 678, note 89, and my translator's note w.

[69] HHE 2, 150.

> routine or luck. How many orthodox can go to the devil, despite the truth, and how many heretics go to heaven, despite the ban of the dominant church or the public.[70]
>
> Truth would not let herself be approached too closely by highwaymen, she wore one garment on top of another so that one doubted being able to find her body. How frightening if they had their way and saw that frightful ghost, the truth, before them.[71]

Much later he writes, to J. A. Eberhardt in 1772, '...but as for no other interest than the interest in knowing the truth (do not be frightened by my blunt confession) – of this hyperbolic interest I have neither a concept nor a feeling.'[72] This would seem to indicate partly a disinterest in some supposed abstract, timeless 'truth'; but also the lack of ambition to dominate reality that a lust for knowledge for its own sake sometimes constitutes. It is no coincidence that the first citation above from Hamann's letter to Kant is preceded by a reference to the Tower of Babel; nor that truth is represented in the second quotation by a woman trying to protect herself from a violent assault, resisting domination and violation. This kind of ambition for truth that represents a desire to control reality by knowing it, however, is not the same as the 'thirsting ambition for truth and virtue and a fury to conquer all lies and vice' which is characteristic of the 'heroic spirit of the philosopher'. The latter attitude is one of a servant, a knight in service of the truth which he knows as one knows the lady one serves; not as one 'knows' the lady one assaults and conquers. This latter form of 'knowledge' is one of which a heroic philosopher is ignorant. The 'Socrateses of our time', however, 'infinitely deviate' from this ignorance and therefore do not live up to their master's example; they should not be followed in their understandings of Socrates' teachings and virtues (76:10-13).

In the conclusion of this section, we are given to understand that Socrates' ignorance was the perfect prescription for the faults and follies of his contemporaries (76:23ff.); we can fill in for ourselves that Jesus too was sent to the people of his time with the proper antidote to their hypocrisies and errors. Hamann concludes this essay on Socrates' ignorance by making explicit what he has implied at various points in the piece thus far: Socrates no less than Jesus, St. Paul or the Hebrew prophets was sent by God as a witness to the truth (77:5-15).

[70] ZH 1, 377:10-15.
[71] ZH 1, 381:8-11.
[72] ZH 3, 7:12-14.

e. Third Section

The Third Section changes somewhat abruptly in style, and abandons argument and overt polemic for a stripped-down, more biographical style. Incidents and details from the life of Socrates are raised and allowed to slide away without having a specific point or moral drawn from them, least of all the obvious christological parallels; no doubt, as Blanke suggests, because Hamann assumes that the parallels are quite obvious to his readers[73]; but also I think because he felt a definite change in style and texture were called for. Stripped of christological references, the narrative moves swiftly to its denouement with a feeling of inexorability. After the long discussion of a single theme in the previous section, suddenly the angle of focus is changed. Nothing should distract us now from the hero and his fate.

The first topic of discussion is Socrates' participation in military campaigns (78:1ff.). Blanke's interpretation of the relevance of this to Hamann's central theme is:

> Whoever like Socrates is dead to the arrogance of knowledge and only listens to his inner voice, is a fighter and saviour when life is threatened, and may experience that God imparts help to him. Christological connection: in the stress on the saving Socrates, who stands up for others and saves them from the danger of death, may be concealed a reference to Christ.[74]

The motif of self-sacrifice for his friends, Alcibiades and Xenophon, is clearly a christological reference (cf. Jn. 15.13 in particular); but the former idea I find less convincing. More to the point is the theme of the 'heroic spirit of a philosopher', the 'philosophical heroism' that the true study of philosophy entails. It is not merely that Socrates behaved like a hero in the most obvious sense, for clearly philosophical heroism is not meant to be coterminous with military heroism; but this more subtly concerns the involvement of Socrates in 'real life', the 'real world', his eschewing of academic philosophy for a philosophy of the world and the marketplace. Instead of leading a sheltered and cloistered life of leisured academic reflection – like Kant? – Socrates was a man of action.

Socrates' daemon, apparently, forbid him to participate in politics; when he did so eventually, moreover, his unfamiliarity with the ethos made him ridiculous. A comparison of this

[73] HHE 2, 168.
[74] HHE 2, 169.

description with Hamann's source, Charpentier[75], indicates that Hamann has strengthened the idea of Socrates' clumsy political etiquette. Blanke's interpretation of this is that in Hamann's understanding, Socrates disobeyed his inner voice in engaging in politics; and:

> When Socrates was disobedient to his inner voice, he made himself ridiculous and impossible. Unwritten moral of the story: whoever is unfaithful to the call of his conscience will fail at everything. Hamann thinks perhaps of himself and the temptation Berens and Kant had subjected him to. He should cooperate with the translation of the French *Encyclopedia* and win for himself the approval of the public. Hamann recognized the danger that lay for him here, and rejected these demands, in order to (unlike Socrates) hold firm to his inmost commission.[76]

This seems to overlook the affectionate tone in Hamann's depiction of his hero's bumbling at the vote-collecting and other little formalities. Far from seeing this as a punishment for disobedience, one gets the impression that he relishes Socrates' incompetence in petty matters of procedure and worldly sophistication; it is perhaps yet another example of Socrates' *laudable* 'ignorance'. With it is an attendant innocence of the corruption or vanity of the machinery of power; instead of seeing it as a failure, perhaps we are meant to see it as parallel to the fact that Jesus was not an active member of the religious institutions of his day, and perhaps was not *au fait* with the points of procedure that the Sanhedrin might follow. But what stands in strong contrast to Socrates' incompetence in formalities and ethos is his unwavering commitment to truth and justice, in the case to which Hamann alludes, in which Socrates refused to go along with an unjust condemnation.[77] Perhaps this anecdote is best understood as saying: 'Socrates, though amusingly clumsy and ignorant about the niceties of political procedure, nevertheless was the only one who was true to the heart of politics, that is, the preservation of justice' – like his 'double', Jesus. That is, like both his 'doubles'; for this understanding does better justice to Blanke's perception of Hamann's likeness to Socrates in this respect than Blanke's own interpretation. Socrates' charming incompetence – his attendant quality of being untouched by worldly power – is another justification for Hamann's refusal to engage in the world, to exhibit a *'bürgerliche Nützlichkeit'*

[75] Cf. HHE 2, 170f.
[76] HHE 2, 171.
[77] HHE 2, 171, provides Charpentier's version of the incident.

[bourgeois usefulness]. There may well be a further significance to this relish in Socrates' incompetence in worldly matters, coupled with the discussion of his literary incompetence which follows. Both these ineptitudes ought to disbar him from the admiration of the sophisticates of the Enlightenment, no less than does his 'foolish' belief in gods and oracles.

Socrates, we are told in the paragraphs 78:20-79:10f., was no author, and in this he acted in harmony with himself. He had no need of writings; his philosophy was for every place and situation: the marketplace, the battlefield, a dinner party (a Symposium, presumably), a prison, were his schools, and whatever he happened to encounter of human life and intercourse were sufficient for him to sow the seed of truth (78:23-27). In other words, there was no reason for Socrates to write in order to fulfil his vocation of philosophical heroism, and it would have been unlike this philosophical man of action to do so. Hamann continues, however, to give us four other, less flattering, reasons for this literary vacuum.

Socrates was not guilty of being a pedant in his lifestyle, and indeed he knew how to entertain even young, raw people; but at the same time it is said of him that he would stand motionless while teaching for days and nights on end, so that he was more like his statue than his own self. So his books perhaps would have been like these soliloquies and monologues of his (78:27-79:2).

This lack of confidence in Socrates' literary style is made more explicit: one suspects that Socrates had no talent for writing from the attempt he made at writing lyrical poetry while in prison, on the instruction of a dream (79:5-10). This anecdote Hamann has also embroidered to the detriment of his hero. Charpentier does not mention the command of a dream (simply a beautiful woman appearing, like Brünnhilde to Siegmund one supposes, with an announcement of his impending death). Still less does he relate the experience of a lack of creativity; he simply notes that in prison Socrates wrote a hymn to Apollo and Diana, and set a fable of Aesop in verse. Hamann has reworked this latter comment; Socrates, unable to devise his own theme or subject-matter for lyrical poetry, resorts to versifying Aesop. This may contain a further christological reference; it may suggest a common love for concrete imagery and figurative forms of speech, as Jesus used parables. (Cf. also 80:7!)

Hamann's love of coarse humour and concrete detail is perhaps responsible for his elaboration of a third possible reason for

Socrates' scribal failure; that he also lacked the domestic peace, quiet, and cheerfulness which a philosopher requires in order to write, interrupted as he was by the evacuations of Xanthippe's chamber-pot (79:11f.). This allows Hamann to detail lovingly little examples of Socrates losing his temper; this, of all things, provides another christological parallel (79:31-34).

The fourth and final reason for his hero's literary unfruitfulness is a stylistic one: that, in comparison to Xenophon and Plato, as a sculptor his style would have been too 'plastic' and less 'painterly' than theirs (80:1-9). In the 'plastic', that is, concrete and sensuous nature of Socrates style, we see the prototype not so much of Christ as of Hamann himself. Nevertheless, as Alcibiades at least understood, the crude form incarnates something of great value; this was overlooked in Socrates, in Jesus, and, Hamann foresees, in himself.

The example Hamann provides cunningly functions as a transition to the discussion of Socrates' death; and he continues immediately to this end with no further preparation. Hamann sketches Socrates' end with quick, deft brushstrokes; like Homer, he was unjustly punished by the Athenians (80:22-24); like Christ, he was unjustly sentenced to death for outraging the distorted moral, religious and political sensibilities of his contemporaries (80:25f.). Hamann indicates that, as with Homer and Christ, Socrates was quite innocent of this charge (80:26ff.). Innocent, that is, of the charge of godlessness; Hamann makes a point of disproving Socrates' alleged impiety. Hamann makes no attempt to acquit him of the second charge (80:32ff.), however, that of corrupting youth; firstly because it is so obviously false, secondly, because it is so obviously true: Socrates was indeed guilty of corrupting the Athenians' sweet tooth (to borrow the simile of Socrates employed by Hamann in the passage of 80:10ff.). That a sweet tooth itself is a corruption, that healing perversity is to corrupt corruption, is the central irony that Hamann sees in the death of both his heroes.

Several features of this account seem to me to be obvious parallels to the Passion story. First, Socrates' demeanour before his accusers is portrayed in a way very like that of Jesus before the Sanhedrin and before Pilate (81:1-4). Secondly, the little detail of a religious feast-day preventing the execution of the death sentence is striking (81:9-11). A third parallel is contained in note 59. On

the day of Socrates' death, the Temple of Ephesus burned down. This obviously evokes Mk. 15.38 and parallels.[78]

A fourth striking parallel which again has not been noticed (or is at least not mentioned) by either O'Flaherty or Blanke is the little ironic anecdote which I cannot help but nickname Socrates' post-resurrection appearance; that is, the appearance to a Chian named Kyrsas (81:12-17). Here, like Jesus, Socrates appears and converses with a follower of his.

O'Flaherty may miss this striking echo by reading 'said to have appeared' as referring to Kyrsas, not Socrates.[79] O'Flaherty offers this anecdote, followed by the concrete detail of the famed wine of the island of Chios, as an example of Hamann's *'Stilbruch'* – his 'delight in juxtaposing to [that which is elevated] that which is lowly, eccentric, or even trivial.'[80] No one would wish to deny that this is indeed characteristic of Hamann, but perhaps Blanke comes closer to the purpose of this particular concrete detail in suggesting that Hamann, by mentioning the outstanding wine, is hinting that one might find the origins of this supernatural experience in this.[81] I would only elaborate that if so, this is not intended to be a 'rationalistic explanation' for a supernatural event – particularly as Hamann has mocked rationalistic explanations earlier in the essay with evident relish (cf. 69); it is simply a piece of cheerful deflation. This oenological aspect of the story also evokes the story of Emmaus, and perhaps that of the miracle at Cana as well. The point of the anecdote in my view is simply to create yet another parallel with Jesus, in that both Socrates and Jesus appeared to 'followers' after their deaths.

The third section carries the final typological seal to this essay. If Socrates was the prophet of the pagans, one should expect that he would meet the prophets' fate (81:18-22): misunderstanding, persecution and finally death at the hands of his contemporaries, to whom he was sent by God. Hamann thus claims Socrates' prophetic witness, his divine sending, his mission to convert his people, as his most important, most salient characteristics – not

[78] It is surprising that neither Blanke nor O'Flaherty, otherwise so thorough on this topic, mentions these parallels. (Perhaps they took them for granted?)

[79] He translates, *'Nach seinem Tode soll er noch einem Chier, Namens Kyrsas erschienen seyn'* [my emphasis] as: 'After his death a Chian named Kyrsas is said to have appeared...'. (O'Flaherty, *SM* 183.)

[80] O'Flaherty, *SM* 78f.

[81] HHE 2, 185.

his wisdom, his fathering of philosophy, or whichever other traits were so attractive to Hamann's enlightened contemporaries.

In the Final Address (82:1-15) irony and disguise cease.[82] Hamann confronts his readers (most especially Berens and Kant, of course) with the choice of serving the truth, in which case one may expect poverty and rejection, or serving the public, in which case one may expect comfort and security (82:2-7). He himself has already made his choice.[83]

In his final sentence, which occupies a paragraph to itself (82:8-16), Hamann removes the veil entirely from the Socrates-Christ Jesus typology, and with an *ab minori ad maius* argument accounts for the death of Socrates' antetype. His death would be even crueller than that which was inflicted upon Damiens, who made an assassination attempt on Louis XV, and died terribly after several months of torture. As this event was widely discussed at the time[84], we may suppose that to be the reason that Hamann tosses it in at this point, given his predilection for marginally relevant asides inspired by contemporary news stories; all the same it seems an oddly anti-climactic and secular note to strike at the end of such an essay. It is clear at least that he wants to highlight the irony of the respective treatments of Socrates, Jesus, and Damiens; the one deserving the best treatment, in Hamann's eyes, receiving the worst. (This structure seems to indicate a certain sympathy for one who attempted to murder a self-made 'Father' of his people, grandson of a self-made God.)

3. Analysis

One can with good reason view this essay as Hamann's 'methodological manifesto'. It is clear that he did intend it as his statement of intent, his profession of faith to Berens, Kant, and the world. In addition, however, it functions as a (partly unconscious) declaration of his presuppositions, his approach and his method. In

[82] Blanke calls it an '*Appell*' (HHE 2, 188).

[83] Blanke supplies the biblical references Mk. 7.28 for 'crumbs' and Acts 3.2 for 'alms'. I am not convinced that these biblical references are entirely to the point: neither the pet dogs nor the man lame from birth suffer poverty, deprivation and hunger for the sake of Christian witness; though perhaps the general air of being marginalised is relevant. The reference to Luke 22.36 for 'sword' is more plausible. What springs to mind in connection with robbery is Mk. 3.23-27.

[84] HHE 2, 191.

particular, it means that the selection of issues with which Hamann deals both in detail and in passing betray the 'relational' approach that became his own.

One might take notice, even before dealing with aspects of his *thought*, of the evolution of Hamann's *style* as a self-conscious relational device, forcing the reader to participate in the writing, to provide the bridges and ferries which he himself knows are lacking. It presupposes the idea which he raises in the essay: that no small part of the meaning of an utterance is provided by the perceiver (cf. 72:6ff. et passim); the implication is that this is not unwanted 'subjectivity' or wanton projection of alien meaning, but rather is the perceiver's proper contribution to the task of understanding. The elusive and suggestive quality of his style also calls upon and makes use of the reader's prior relationship to Hamann, the '*Affekt* of friendship' which he declares is necessary for the best and deepest understanding (61:7-9). Hamann demands of his reader that they become involved and immerse themselves in his thought and style; the alternative is incomprehension.

a. The Relational Hermeneutic of Philosophical Heroism

What most distinguishes Hamann's heroic philosopher from the more common contemporary understandings of the task of the philosopher is the passionate quality the philosopher possesses: 'a thirsting ambition for truth and virtue, and a fury to conquer all lies and vice'. No doubt Hamann was in a mood of defiance, and sought metaschematically to elevate 'vision and superstition' to virtues rather than tolerate their rejection as philosophical vices. Nevertheless, it is also equally the case that this is intrinsic to his approach, and is in the style of philosophizing he extols in Socrates; passion of this kind is a crucial feature of his portrait of the ideal philosopher, in marked contrast to Enlightenment ideals of objectivity and lack of bias.

What have passion and philosophical heroism to do with a philosophy based on relation? Quite simply, the relationship is the ground and the reason for the passion: the passion arises from a prior involvement and commitment; passion clearly does not arise from a situation of detachment. Thus, the philosophical hero does not begin a neutral and dispassionate task in obtaining the facts of a situation; rather, a prior and fundamental commitment to the truth ferments the soul into a state of battle-frenzy to defend and avenge it. The knight of philosophical heroism therefore lives in a

relationship to his lady, Truth; a relationship which the highwayman denies, or violates.

Passion is presumably inimical to objectivity; and if the philosopher must be in a battle frenzy for the truth, it is clear that cool objectivity cannot be the main prerequisite for the philosophical task. On the other hand, it is also obvious that Hamann's approach is not mere subjectivity, that is, the validation of any interpretation or portrayal of reality one wishes to project from oneself. The philosopher, after all, is as subject to the law of imitation as the poet; or as Hamann also suggests, Socrates would be quite right on reading Plato to protest, 'What does this young fellow mean to make of me?' (65:29-30). Subjective distortions are possible, and are to be avoided. The distortion does not arise from commitment to the subject-matter, however, but presumably from another source. The context of the example of Plato's treatment of Socrates suggests that the motive for distortion is found in the activities of the 'professional' philosopher, which provides the opportunity for self-aggrandisement at the expense of the subject-matter, or the mutilations that are inevitable (in Hamann's view) when one is seduced by a grand philosophical system and seeks to force reality into it. These dangers, whether or not one wishes to consider them as dangers of 'subjectivity', do not arise from a selfless commitment to one's subject or 'hero' and a desire to serve one's hero and the truth.

If there are dangers to projection, or to an approach which feels itself entitled to adapt one's subject-matter to suit one's methods and prejudices, what takes the place of objectivity as a 'check' to prevent this? Hamann replaces 'objectivity' with two ideas: that of gaining a broader perspective and that of being true to one's 'hero'. The idea of working 'as a painter who steps back' acknowledges that it is indeed possible to become too engrossed in the fine details of one's work; the Introduction makes clear that this is a danger for the professional, and one which the many-eyed Argus is able to ameliorate (63:18-20 and footnotes). The cure for this, however, is not to cultivate dispassion and scientific disinterest; that merely facilitates self-deception, the delusion that one is guaranteeing reliability while one is simply cultivating the false air of professionalism that endangers sympathetic understanding in the first place. Instead, one steps back from one's work – to see it from a new perspective, and more importantly, to provide fresh views of the subject-matter itself. If one should have a healthy distantiation

from anything, it is not the subject-matter but one's own activities, skills, techniques, and professional knowledge.

Ironically, to see objectivity as the safety-catch which guarantees correct interpretation, to place the necessary controls on interpretation in the mind and attitude of the knowing subject, could in fact be seen as a 'subjectivist' solution. That is, it is one that relies on the mind of the subject for its execution; 'objectivity' is a (subjective) state or quality of 'mind'. For Hamann, the control against misunderstandings arises in neither the knowing subject nor the known object but in the relationship one has with the subject-matter. We are told, for example, that Simon the Tanner, Socrates' close friend, would have provided the most accurate account of Socrates' thought (65:24-31); Hamann wants nothing more for himself but to understand his subject – his hero – as well as Simon the Tanner. The truest understanding of one's subject, even if that be the history of philosophy, is the understanding of a friend. We find this idea earlier in the essay as well, in the dedication to the Two. Where strangers see only mould, the enlightened and affectionate eye of friendship can see deeper (61:7-9); which means both to value what others might scorn, and also to *see what is truly there*. The eyes of affection do not cloud one's perception and judgement and prevent accurate evaluation and understanding – love is not blind – quite the opposite. Warmth and sympathy are not perils but rather necessary pre-conditions for the deepest and truest understanding.

Hamann, then, for the ground and security of the hermeneutic relationship provides a relational solution. The controls on the interpretative situation arise neither from the careful disposition of the subject, nor from some supposed dominance of the object which should make misinterpretation impossible. Rather, it is the dynamism of the relationship between the two which provides the necessary challenges and corrections to one's understanding. If this sounds a precarious arrangement to an objectivist, who would like to see understanding more rigorously guaranteed, one could respond that this arrangement is no different from the conditions of knowing and attaining an understanding of another human being. In that situation, it is again only the relationship and acquaintance between the two which can challenge and correct misunderstandings. Indeed, it seems that this situation of friendship was Hamann's model for the hermeneutical situation, as is shown by the examples of Simon the Tanner and the

perception of friendship which can detect a microscopic forest in mould.

From the point of view of hermeneutics, one of the most interesting passages is found in the second section (71:25-72:10):

> A careful interpreter must imitate the scientists. As the latter place a body in all kinds of arbitrary connections with other bodies and invent artificial experiences to determine its properties; so the former does with his text. I have coupled the Socratic saying with the Delphic inscription; now I will make some other attempts to make the energy of the same more sensible.
>
> Words, like numbers, have their value from the place in which they stand and their concepts are in their definitions and relations, like coins, changeable according to time and place. ...One sees that the same truths can be expressed in quite an opposite spirit.
>
> Moreover that sentence, even if it wells up from a single mouth and heart, bears an infinite number of associated ideas, given to it by those who receive it, in precisely the way that rays of light become this or that colour according to the surface from which it refracts to our eye.

The hermeneutical approach advocated here is one that places the text in combinations and relations with others, to elucidate its meaning not by dissection but by juxtaposition, by seeing how it behaves in relationships. This is so because language and its concepts only have their meaning in relationship to their context. They are not the universal, timeless and unconditioned tool that the rationalist imagines, or that Leibniz for example desired in his calculus. One thinks of Anatole France's simile:

> ...the metaphysicians, when they make up a new language, are like knife-grinders who grind coins and medals against their stone instead of knives and scissors. They rub out the relief, the inscriptions, the portraits and when one can no longer see on the coins Victoria or Wilhelm or the French Republic, they explain: these coins now have nothing specifically English or German or French about them, for we have taken them out of time and space; they now are no longer worth, say, five francs, but rather have an inestimable value, and the area in which they are a medium of exchange has been infinitely extended.[85]

Words, 'like numbers' – surely this is a little dig at those rationalists for whom mathematics was the embodiment of unchanging certainty – have their value from their relations. The act of stripping or attempting to strip all the particularity from

[85] Anatole France, *The Garden of Epicurus*; cited Rorty, 368.

them does not render them neutral and therefore precise and universal, any more than a defaced coin possesses infinite value and range. Hamann goes further than France did in this citation, for he includes concepts as well as words in this characterization. Texts, then, only achieve their meaning and power when viewed in their relations, and this relational fertility is such that further and greater meaning is revealed in them when one places them in artificial relations, sets them in contexts they had not previously enjoyed; as Hamann did in holding together the claim of Socratic ignorance and the utterance of the Delphic oracle. New light is shed on both by their new relation.

The assertion of the hermeneutical importance of context is made the more unusual and interesting by the indication of what this context includes. For the context in which the sentence finds its meaning includes the interpreter. The sentence receives a further halo to its meaning from the receiver, as colour arises from the relationship between light and the eye (72:8-9). This analogy is a useful one for Hamann; for it was recognized that colour was not a primary quality, yet it is clear that it is not a purely subjective hallucination. The phenomenon of colour does not occur due solely to light, to the object, or to the eye, but arises in their interrelationship. So too with meaning. Socrates' single utterance, 'I know nothing', is found to acquire its meaning in the relation it bore to different hearers; the change of hearer entailed a change of meaning (72-73). It is important to notice that this change of meaning is not attributed merely to a change of intention in Socrates, but is one for which the hearers in their differing situations are also partly responsible.

Hamann's understanding of pedagogy, of the cross-roads as it were between epistemology and human relations, shows a similar impulse toward 'intersubjectivity'. His two models are borrowed from the vocations of Socrates' parents: midwifery and sculpture (66-67). Socrates was 'modest enough' (66:16f.) to see that his own teaching was a matter of assisting his interlocutor to give birth to the baby; a matter of enabling rather than instructing or inculcating. In following his father, he had to be rather more violent, in excising or even hewing away the flaws, faults, vanities and errors of his conversational partners (66:24ff.); but again he was responding to the unique position of his interlocutor rather than imposing some prior scheme. Both models illustrate the intersubjective or relational pattern that he has already applied to interpreters and texts. The situation of teaching, like the

hermeneutical situation, is a dynamic arrangement to which all contribute actively; neither 'subject' nor 'object' is passive.

Worthy of examination is Hamann's suggestion that 'the whole of history' is perhaps better understood as mythology (65:9ff.). This implies that a different hermeneutic is required than what one might suppose to be appropriate for history. Instead of the objectivity and the empiricism which seek no further significance for events than is found on the positivist level of history, a true understanding of history, one which can uncover its real meaning, can only be obtained by a different method of understanding. A mythological understanding requires a mode of interpretation which can somehow uncover symbolic meanings and significance in an event or narrative. Whatever the mental processes necessary to do this (free association?), Hamann is not interested in cataloguing or systematizing them; but at any rate they are clearly not logical or deductive ones. Imagination, sympathy, intuition are the qualities desired; neither reductive analysis nor empirical observation.

The treatment and interpretation of myth must do justice to its peculiarities. One vital and important feature of myth which the sensitive interpreter must acknowledge is its *inexhaustible quality.* Even when one elucidates and interprets the myth, the myth remains for the next interpreter or generation; indeed, the myth remains for the present interpreter to continue to enjoy and admire. A single 'translation' does not exhaust its fertility. This fact is a necessary corrective to the hubris of a hermeneut, as Hamann would see it. The confidence that one could know the whole of reality and give a satisfactory account of it contains an implicit relish of the dominion that such knowledge gives; the phenomenon has been known and known exhaustively, once and for all, and no further attention to it is necessary. In contrast, a hermeneutic of mythology must be happy to return to its subject-matter repeatedly, setting it in new 'artificial connections' to shed further light on it, to develop new insights and understandings of it.

It should be noted, in this discussion of history being rather like mythology, that mythology would more customarily be *opposed* to history – e.g. in the opposition of whether the Bible is 'historically true' or 'only mythology'. As a believer, Hamann does not take the conservative line of arguing against an understanding of the Bible as 'mythology' and claiming it instead as 'history.' His approach is characteristically metaschematic: not merely the Bible but the

whole of 'history' is 'mythology'. Indeed, to 'dissect a body or an event down to its first elements' is not merely bad-mannered but 'is to want to trap God's invisible being, his eternal power and divinity' (64:13-15). What is 'mythology', of course, but speaking about God(s) in an anthropomorphic way, discussing the allegedly transcendent in a concrete fashion? The paradox and irony that Hamann flaunts has a theological ground to it. The underlying justification for these assertions is that God mediates himself in a relational way through history and nature. This is the ground for why nature and history are put in parallel, as serving the same function through different senses: nature 'for our eyes' and history 'for our ears' (64:12-13). The function in both cases is for God to communicate with us (this theme is expanded in *AN*). Biology or the study of history are equally mistaken in trying to come to a full knowledge of the truth with a destructive micrological analysis. The deepest truth behind anything, whether it be a body in nature or an event in history, is the relationship with God that it mediates; this relational truth can never be known except by the '*Affekt* of friendship', the relational form of knowing exhibited in friendship. Therefore, even academic subjects must be known in a relational or intersubjective way, precisely because they too are embodiments of a relationship, a friendship. They can never be truly known or fully understood by a mode of knowing that is a form of epistemological domination in action. In addition, even historical figures are to be understood in a religious light as 'witnesses', a theme which appears fleetingly and allusively throughout the essay.

Hamann is here firing across the bows of a form of religiosity or a world-view which is offended by the 'impropriety', indeed, scandal of the transcendent God being embodied in concrete history and nature; the understanding common to both rationalists and deists. Hamann's rebellion against this form of rationalist scrupulosity or excessive refinement comes to a head in this essay in a typological way. It is disguised in the familiar motive of the 'scandal' of the promised redeemer appearing not in a beautiful form but in a weak and abused shape, frightful to look upon (cf. 68:10-24). This is the contradiction which scandalizes 'healthy reason' – that of the 'Jews', Jesus' contemporaries, and of Hamann's own latter-day 'Muslims' (68:16-17) – those who believe, for rational reasons, in a single transcendent being but cannot defend the idea of a Trinity or of christology to the tribunal of their reason. 'The pagans were accustomed to such contradictions'

(68:20f.); ironically again, the very pagans whom the *Aufklärer* admired: the paradox of gods being embodied in human form, even if unsightly, was quite acceptable to them.

This sublime paradox of the transcendent God revelling in immanence and making use of it to communicate to us and establish a relationship with us underlies the ideas in the conclusion of the First Section as well (68:36-69:20). Hamann deals with the beliefs of pagans and 'primitive people' in divine signs and oracles; noting both 'sceptical' and empirical reactions to this embarrassment. Hamann sublates the sceptic's objection that such signs and communications from God are fancies of our own mind. Indeed, they are; for our own selves and psyches, no less than nature and history, are relational media; *loci* in which God can consolidate his relationship with us: 'it seems more human and more suitable for a God to govern his intentions through our own fancy and chimerae than through such remote and costly machinery as the firmament and the spiritual world' (69:16-20). Such objections are paradoxically true: for it is easier for God to 'philippize' or 'socratize', that is to accommodate himself to us, than for us 'to be Apollo'.

b. Knowing and Socratic ignorance

In a certain sense, these latter doctrines are anti-empiricist. This does not mean, to be sure, that these ideas are rationalist in their presuppositions. The importance of experiential knowledge and perception is reinforced throughout. Nevertheless, Hamann maintains a tension between valuing the empirical while rejecting a more reductive empiricism or positivism: empirical, experiential knowing is the true essential medium of knowledge, yet the end of knowledge is not material; or at least, no more material than human love.

In contrast to this mitigating of empiricism, much of what follows in this discussion is a critique of rationalism and its presuppositions. Ripe for criticism are its ideas of what the limits of knowledge and the contents of knowledge are, what the basis of knowledge is, the uses to which knowledge is put, and, if one may elaborate on two of Hamann's images, both the promiscuity and the rape of knowing. Also criticized are scepticism, of both a rationalist-idealist variety and a positivist variety.

On the face of it, for Hamann the boundaries of knowledge are much smaller than for the rationalists. The most fundamental expression this can find is in the assertion that even our own being

must be believed and cannot be known in any other way. There Hamann would seem to go a long way down the road with sceptics; certainly as far as concerns the possibilities of what can be known and the certainty with which it can be known. If so, however, this is an assertion not of the nature of reality but of the human existential condition; this claim is supported by the appeal to Paul, with the citation of 'If anyone thinks he knows something...' (1 Cor. 8; 74:20-27). The discussion of knowing here then is less a matter of a philosophical examination of the limits and possibilities of knowledge, like Locke's, or Kant's later critique; and more of the human implications of knowing and not-knowing. It is not so much the epistemological mechanics of knowing as the resulting effect knowledge has on us that is of interest to Hamann here; his main target being the hubris and arrogance that he associates with rationalism.[86]

Consequently, in attempting to relativize the kind of knowing beloved of his opponents, Hamann challenges what the real content of 'knowledge' is or ought to be. His handling of the Delphic oracle makes clear what he considers true wisdom to be (70-71), with the implication that if his contemporaries valued the ancients as much as they claim, they ought to agree. Principally, wisdom is a knowledge of the human heart; and for that reason, the runners-up to Socrates are Sophocles and Euripides. These two are poets; not knowers of the system of nature and of the levels of being. Greater still than knowledge of the human heart in general, however, is that specific knowledge which Socrates possesses: self-knowledge.

Paradoxically, then, the scope of knowledge for Hamann is ultimately much greater than what can be achieved by the rationalist, for what can be known by the Hamannian knower is something that can never be known by reason: the deep and personal knowledge of oneself; and in knowing oneself, knowing that one is in a relationship to God; and thus, ultimately, knowing God in relationship. Other forms of knowledge are merely 'labyrinths of learned sophists' (77:6f.) from which one must be led to 'a truth which (lies) concealed', 'a secret wisdom' (77:6-8). These labyrinthine, sophistical kinds of knowledge are those of which

[86] The moral interest that underlies this essay is made more explicit in a later comment: 'Socrates' calling, to transplant morality from Olympia to earth and to put a little delphic oracle into practice, agrees with mine, that I sought in an analogous way to honour and to promulgate a higher holiness, to the righteous anger of our prophets of lies and appearances.' (Mann, 63.)

Socrates can claim that he knows nothing, while remaining the wisest of all.

Although it does not receive extensive treatment in this essay, it is clear that the foundation of knowledge is not reason, but primarily the senses. 'Tasting and seeing' (74:4-5) are the basis of knowledge, against the rationalists – but against the empiricists, the knowledge that this confers is not merely a matter of flavours and appearances. Empirical knowledge, properly interpreted – that means 'as mythology' – conducts us directly to personal knowledge of a meta-empirical but still non-rational kind.

As one might say 'I don't drink' to a drunk who invited you to share a bottle, Socrates and Hamann say 'I don't know.' To know, in this context, is apparently to engage in a self-indulgent and ultimately harmful activity; or to judge from Hamann's card analogy, an immoral activity akin to cheating. Knowing for knowing's sake is a vice, or even an addiction. 'The Athenians were curious' (76:28). This was 'satyriasis' (76:29), arising from a kind of epistemological promiscuity. Knowing deeply may ultimately be a relationship; if so, there is a style of forming and quitting relationships easily and shallowly in epistemology as well as in human relations. Knowing something for the sake of knowledge, for the power and the novelty that this confers, is akin to knowing someone in passing for the purposes of having sex with them. Both cases imply a quick mastery or even dominance, while deeper kinds of knowing and richer potentials are passed by with a lack of perception, sensitivity and commitment. It was this kind of easy and inadequate – if wide-ranging – knowledge that Hamann opposed in his contemporaries, as he saw Socrates did with the Athenians and sophists.

There is another form of epistemological fornication, however; the wanton assault on and violation of truth. Here one can usefully contrast the knight of philosophical heroism with the highwayman of Hamann's letter to Kant. The one is in a frenzy to avenge and protect truth, while the other is determined to possess and control it. The knight serves his lady and lives in a relationship to her; the highwayman or rapist denies the fact of human relatedness and attempts to snatch what one may not enjoy without it: the pleasures without the responsibilities, snatching the truth and knowing it for the pride, pleasure and power of doing so; not in order to serve it.

Knowing therefore is not the possessing of information or knowledge, but being in a relationship to reality and being, to

truth. Not only can we not dominate knowledge and the known, we cannot even know our own knowing: 'As our skeleton is concealed, because we are made in secret, because we are built below in the earth, how much more so are our concepts made in secret, and can be seen as the limbs of our understanding' (66:10-13). Even our own creative mental processes are a mystery to us. Not even in giving birth to our ideas can we master and control the process.

Relations are reciprocal; thus if our knowing is understood as taking place in a relationship, then we should expect to find some kind of counter-movement. Hamann indeed does provide an account of this, as a kind of apex of Socratic not-knowing and knowing: if we know that we know nothing, then we shall be known by God. If we know nothing, 'from this **nothingness life** and **being** sprout forth newly-created in a higher knowledge' (74:30-32). It is important to notice that this does not mean that we remain helplessly ignorant, passive; Hamann does not annihilate human goodness and activity and powers by placing them in the context of a relationship with God, as can be the tendency in some strands of reformed theology. 'Genius', in a two-fold sense of brilliant mental gifts and an inspiring spirit, is what replaces ignorance in Homer, Shakespeare, Socrates (75:3ff.); perhaps also in ourselves. The point of relinquishing our inadequate knowledge, our 'natural wisdom', is not to humble the human being and leave it grovelling in the dust. The humbling is followed by apotheosis; we die to live, and cease to know in order to breathe in a 'higher knowledge'. This is so not arbitrarily, or for some purely paradoxical reason, but because for Hamann the false mode of knowing *prevents* the higher knowledge arising as surely as promiscuity and rape prevent a profound relationship.

It is this underlying sense of knowledge consisting in a relationship to reality that grounds Hamann's rejection of scepticism, for all his apparent deployment of it against intellectual pride (compare 73:13-15 with 73:21-22). Against the idealist forms of scepticism, that is, a methodological doubt of one's own senses or a sophisticated philosophical position that moves towards solipsism, Hamann can simply deploy it against itself (as one does with relativism): 'You speak truer than you know; you clearly do know nothing.' This real ignorance in other words completely undermines any power to convince that the sceptic's assertion may hold. Against the more complex form of scepticism of an empiricist like Hume, the treatment must be more complicated. Hamann is happy to relativize the rationalist faith in abstractions

by deploying Humean skepsis of even the most fundamental principles, like causality. Ultimately, if 'our own being and the existence of all things outside us must be believed and can be made out in no other way' (73:21-22), then religious faith stands in no more problematic position than other commonsensical beliefs like my existence and causality. This is what produced Hamann's first great excitement with Hume; and his delight in placing faith on the same plane with humble empirical experience is evident: 'Faith is no work of reason, and therefore cannot be subject to any attack of the same; because **faith** arises as little from reason as **tasting** and **seeing**.' (74:2-5.)

The usual interpretation of Hamann's relationship to Hume is that Hamann deploys Hume's critique, his skepsis, without of course following Hume's atheist conclusions; instead, Hamann espouses a kind of fideism. This is a common perception among American interpreters, of which Redmond is a good example: '[Hamann's] own position might best be characterized as a form of extreme fideism, meaning thereby that he believed the proper foundation for religious belief was exclusively that of a faith held to be impervious to the criticisms of reason.'[87] Blanke represents a variation on this approach. His understanding is that objective correctness of a truth and personal subjective '*Angesprochen-werden*' are on two different planes[88]; his understanding, in common with many of his time, (both American and German), has a pronounced existentialist flavour. Thus, after enumerating the three respects in which Hamann's understanding derives from Hume – that Hamann like Hume preserves a marked opposition between belief and proof; that in Hamann as in Hume faith is directed towards the existence of all things and our own existence, not only in God but also being, reality; and that faith is an 'instinct' prior to all conscious knowledge[89] — the point at which he is said to go beyond Hume is in relating belief to the belief in one's own death, which requires that faith involves the whole person; a personal understanding of faith which he derives not from Hume but from the Bible.[90] I would not agree with Blanke that Hamann

[87] Redmond, 97; cf. also 104, paragraph 2, where he likens Hamann's 'fideism' to that of Tertullian. For a more perceptive and more subtle American analysis of Hamann's use of Hume, cf. Swain.

[88] HHE 2, 140.

[89] 'Habit' would be a better word than 'instinct' with reference to Hume; while I hardly think that faith is an 'instinct' for Hamann either.

[90] HHE 2, 142.

preserves a marked opposition between belief and proof; in my view, Hamann's use of Hume (throughout his lifetime) is to erode precisely this distinction (which Blanke's second point ought surely to indicate). Nor do I think the belief in one's own death occupies at all the importance for Hamann that it seems to have for Blanke; its use as an illustration in this essay is surely more flippant, more ironic, (and perhaps more Socratic) than a serious, existential confrontation with the idea of one's mortality.

At any rate, the idea that Hamann is a 'fideist' requires at the very least some correction and precision. To begin with, it comes dangerously close to creating an opposition between knowing or proving and believing; and such dualisms and antitheses are precisely what Hamann is trying to overcome. If there is an antithesis or opposition present, it is between two different kinds, or better, two different attitudes towards knowing: 'promiscuity'-'rape' vs. 'relationship'. Generally speaking, however, Hamann manages in his work as a whole to retain the tension that is lost in such a description as fideism.

The first mistake in this account is to see – or unconsciously fall into portraying – knowing and believing as two different mental activities, to wit: 'with some objects, knowing is the appropriate mental process, while with other areas believing is what one ought to do; Hamann differs from most by asserting that believing is the appropriate activity for everything.' This picture is erroneous (even, to a certain extent, for Hume as well). Believing is not an intellectual activity undertaken *instead of* knowing; believing is a relation, an underlying disposition of trust and openness, indeed, as Hume would have it, is presupposed in the act of knowing. Like Socrates' ignorance, it is 'perception'; perception of the true state of affairs. Faith is not the result of a mental process, neither proof nor imagination, as Hamann goes on to argue (74:18-19). Wessel is right on target when he phrases it 'Hamann means something more by his notion of belief than mere epistemological trust.' [91]

The other inadequacy in the 'fideist' view is the lack of attention to what, for Hamann, faith would consist in. Swain's article contains an interesting examination of Hamann's *Glaube*, faith — which is Hamann's translation of Hume's 'belief', but in Swain's view also a 'rhetorical *coup d'etat*' in its assimilation of the idea of Lutheran faith. Swain claims: 'Hamann's conception of faith is very much closer to Hume's idea of belief than one would at first

[91] Wessel, 435.

suspect. In my judgement, Hamann committed himself to an understanding of "faith" in terms of Hume's philosophical analysis of "belief".' Swain in particular defends this with the notion of the 'naturalness' of belief for Hume, which finds its way into Hamann's conception of faith.[92] Only the theological dimension is lacking in this account; the perception of the divine-human relationship that underlies Hamann's conception, which is the true ground of faith's 'naturalness'.

For Hamann, ultimately faith is neither a mental activity of believing, nor 'an "openness" to the activity and presence of God in reality'[93], though this comes somewhat closer. It is more solid, dynamic and active than that; it is not a disposition but an actual relationship with God. It is a relationship with God therefore which is the ground of religion, not a willingness to believe; for this alleged willingness, even if it escapes the intellectualist bias of a position that sees religious belief as grounded in logic, proof and argument, is nevertheless no less Pelagian, no less one-sided.

Because such an account misperceives the role that relationality plays in Hamann's thought, it is unable to see that Hamann does not follow Hume in his scepticism, as Redmond seems to think.[94] Scepticism about the claims of rationalism and naturalism to be able to know all there is about reality was certainly central to Hamann's deconstruction; but scepticism in the more specific philosophical sense is alien to Hamann, as should be clear by now. Both the limits to what may be believed, which cause Redmond concern, and the existence and nature of reality are disclosed in one's relationship to it. Redmond's vague understanding makes clear the inadequacy of his account:

> No longer enamored [sic] of reason and science by virtue of scepticism, Hamann seems to have thought that the truth about God and the world would assert itself upon its own terms in the lives of men and women. At least in the religious domain, it is somehow by reference to faith and its demands that sound beliefs are to be distinguished from unsound ones.[95]

Both Hamann's critique of 'reason and science' and his own positive account are richer and less obscure than this understanding allows. For one thing, in the interaction of the

[92] Swain, 348.
[93] As Redmond has it, clearly dependent on Alexander (Redmond, 105).
[94] Redmond, 105, 107 et passim.
[95] Redmond, 105.

relationship Hamann imagines, neither partner need 'assert itself', and activity/passivity are not assigned exclusively to one party or the other. Truth need not assert itself, nor does it yield itself submissively to be quarried out by the knower. 'Being true' is a quality of the relationship such as that between Socrates and Simon the Tanner; and it is not 'somehow by reference to faith' but a matter of 'keeping faith' with such a relationship that distinguishes sound beliefs from unsound ones.

This first analysis then suggests that the picture of humanity's existence in relationship to God and to others and the world underpins Hamann's entire thought, whether it is his epistemology, hermeneutic, or his avoidance of scepticism. The implications of this relational view are further explored in the investigation of *AN* which follows.

III. *AESTHETICA IN NUCE:* THE RHAPSODY OF A PHILOLOGIAN

1. Introduction

Aesthetica in Nuce is the longest and greatest essay in a collection of essays published together in 1762 as *Crusades of a Philologian*. It comes after one of the periods of intense research and study which punctuated Hamann's life but which are insufficiently appreciated for the light they shed on his scholarship.[1] Hamann went in for impressive and intensive study programmes, lasting for several years; one of the most important for our purposes is the great study scheme of 1759 (the time of *SM*) to 1763. This one in particular included language study (Greek, Hebrew, Arabic, to which Hamann later added Chaldean – Hamann was already fluent in French, English and Italian) as well as the usual intensive survey of philosophers and theologians. Other topics in his self-set courses included patristics, Plato, Cicero, Horace, Luther, Voltaire. This study was systematic, is well-documented in his notebooks[2], and illustrates the breadth of his intellectual activity, from detailed compilation and scholarship to the wild, 'crusading Philologian', and something in between: his scholarly and critical translations (Hamann was obliged to provide a dozen translations from English every year for Kanter's journal).[3] As Hoffmann observes, there is much in common with Goethe here; but even Goethe did not go in for organized and intensive three-year reading programmes.[4]

A little explanation of the title of the larger collection of essays will aid understanding of the essay which is arguably the most important in the group. In a letter to Nicolai[5] Hamann gives an

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[1] Volker Hoffmann, however, pays particular attention to Hamann's scholarship, its methods, subject-matter and character. Cf., in particular, 29-64.

[2] Cf. Hoffmann, 50-69.

[3] Hoffmann, 69.

[4] Hoffmann, 74.

[5] ZH 2, 195:1ff., 4.3.63.

explanation of his use of the word 'crusade'. He refers to a report of an establishment of the Teutonic Order in Prussia, where they had constructed subterranean labyrinths around their castles, a sort of fictional 'Jerusalem' in which they could carry out mock crusades in order to fulfil their vows. In Hoffmann's view, the concepts Hamann cites – *'hilaritas', 'pocula', 'crapula', 'Hierusalem ficta', 'ludibundi'* – underline the playful aspects of the establishment, so that it is not surprising that Hamann characterizes his use of this title as a 'provincial joke'.[6] This, coupled with his use of the head of Pan on the title-page, designated as 'the philologian in effigy', where the author's name ought to be, emphasizes the humour. Hoffmann thinks the use of the word 'provincial' moreover represents a fight of the periphery against the centre, Berlin. Two further military associations confirm the polemic associations of the title[7]; and of course it refers as well to the expedition to Arabia which Johann David Michaelis undertook as part of his linguistic researches.[8]

The idea has taken hold, largely through the work of W. M. Alexander, that Hamann's self-designation as a 'philologian' is almost entirely to be understood as a pun; 'philology', 'love of the Word'[9], is simply a characteristic metaphorical way of describing his writing. Volker Hoffmann's excellent study of Hamann's philology has done a great service in taking Hamann's self-description seriously; he refutes the idea that 'philologian' is to be understood just as a Christian metaphor; and *contra* Alexander[10] it was not replaced in his late work by 'spermologian' as the self-designation of choice.[11]

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[6] Hoffmann, 129-130.

[7] Hoffmann, 130f.

[8] Cf. Translator's note xx.

[9] The Word who was Christ, in the Johannine understanding.

[10] Alexander, 60.

[11] Hoffmann, 133ff. On the subject of the term 'spermologian', much nonsense has been written. Most commentators are seduced by the associations it bears for English or German ears. Salmony is the most creative of all. His extensive study of the term places it against a background of Gnosticism, especially of the Barbellian variety, in which there were 'semen-cults' and even 'semen-communion'. (One must remember however that these allegations come from the cults' opponents. Salmony moreover does not entirely convince in his claims that Hamann was aware of these cults and their alleged practices.) Stoic notions of the *logos spermatikos* (of which Hamann *was* aware) are pushed aside with too much haste; and Salmony misunderstands the referents for the term, taking them always to refer to Hamann himself; e.g. in N III, 45:27 (in *Philological Ideas and Doubts*),

The inability to credit Hamann's claim to philology can skew the understanding of *AN*, for its motivation and overriding concern is the issue of the understanding and interpretation of texts — what we nowadays would call 'hermeneutics' rather than 'philology'. Principally, this essay (like most of the essays in *CP*) deals with the outstanding figure of Michaelis and the impact he had on biblical exegesis and hermeneutics. Hamann's *AN* then must truly be seen as a 'philological debate'[12], over the nature, method and spirit of hermeneutics – above all, biblical interpretation; and, as far as Hamann is concerned, a wider exploration of the theological and philosophical implications of the stance taken. This in no way means however that the debate is between two colleagues who deal with the same issues in a broadly similar fashion but dispute the details; as Hoffmann observes, 'the opposition between Hamann and Michaelis consists... less in an *a priori* opposition of particular conclusions than in a different conception of philology, including the respective hermeneutic implications'.[13]

If Hamann has a principal opponent, he also has a principal ally in Bacon.[14] As Jørgensen observes, there had been a revival of interest in Bacon on the continent; in particular, amongst the French philosophers who interested Hamann and drew much of his fire: Diderot, d'Alembert, Voltaire. And yet Hamann was perhaps more aware of the differences between them and Bacon than they were themselves. Bacon was defending science against the theologians, Hamann was defending Christianity against the neologians, but they had in common a defence of the tradition of a

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where the term refers to C. T. Damm. A similar problem in interpreting the character referred to with the term besets Alexander, whose account is otherwise more reliable. — A spermologian, in Greek, is a babbler; the 'sperm' in the term comes from the Greek for 'seed', and the image is from a bird who hops about picking up one seed then another. In other words, the word suggests an academic dilettante who picks up bits and pieces here and there and waffles on about them (as opposed to one who is steeped in the subject and has much of value to say). That is not to say that all sexual overtones must be excluded from our understanding of the term in its every appearance, of course. But applied to others it is a term of abuse; and applied to himself, a gesture of self-deprecation and a reference to his academically marginal status, rather than a declaration of his fascination with sex and bodily fluids.

[12] Hamann's own description of the essay, N II, 197:14.

[13] Hoffmann, 168.

[14] For Hamann's knowledge of Bacon, see Jørgensen, *HBT* 50-53. This study is indispensable for understanding the relationship of Hamann to Bacon, and therefore for understanding much of *AN*.

harmony between a double revelation of God: in Scripture and in Nature.[15]

Hamann tells us on the first page of his essay that he intends to make use of Bacon in his philological debate; so it is well to preview here some of the points in Bacon's philosophy which Hamann deploys. Bacon saw vestiges of God everywhere in nature and pointed them out[16]; he made no distinction between the sacred and the profane[17]; and he advocated the use of imagery and figurative language.[18] Bacon also recommended the use of imagery, because of its indirectness, to effect a conversion in the face of resistance:

> This required a double use of imagery oscillating between the use of *'ad illustrationem'* and *'ad involucrum'*. On this background his study of Bacon during the period from the composition of *Socratic Memorabilia* to *Crusades of a Philologian* makes it very probable indeed that Baconian stylistics and poetics played an important part in the development of Hamann's unique style; the parallels are evident.[19]

Finally, Bacon's writing on magic plays into Hamann's hands. He distinguished between a magic that was a harmful superstition, consisting of ridiculous practices[20], and an 'old and honourable' version, which he wanted to use for his own 'applied metaphysics'; i.e. a science of forms and final causes.[21] The magic of the Persians was a vision of the harmony of all things; Bacon considers this the stem from which grew philosophy of nature, God, and humanity; it was a *'philosophia prima'*, a *'scientia universalis'*. The 'Magi', as 'magicians', stand for true philosophers; interpreters of Christian revelation in nature and in history. 'The title of "Magus" could thus express what was the deepest motive of Hamann's polyhistoric studies: to find out and point out to others the vestiges of the biblical God in philosophy, history, in the relics of oriental poetry, in Greek and Roman literature and mythology.'[22]

The title of *AN*, as is often observed, plays on Baumgarten's *Aesthetica*; but the relation between this essay and Baumgarten's aesthetics has not been explored as a rule. And yet there is much

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[15] Jørgensen, *HBT* 50.
[16] Jørgensen, *HBT* 57.
[17] Jørgensen, *HBT* 59.
[18] Jørgensen, *HBT* 63. The importance of these three points will become clear.
[19] *Ibid.*
[20] ES I, 192-3, 559-60, 608; II, 81.
[21] ES I, 235, 362.
[22] Jørgensen, *HBT* 69-70.

of relevance in Baumgarten's work. First of all, Baumgarten wants his aesthetics to be more than an account of beauty; he wants to create a new *ars inveniendi*, a new logic of discovery. As such, he recognizes the primary role that must be given the senses.[23] Aesthetics for Baumgarten is a doctrine of the senses and experience; he includes in his panoply of human faculties the sensuous (as well as the rational) logic of discovery (*ars inveniendi sensualis*), that of experience (*ars experiendi*), of observation (*ars observandi*), and experiment (*ars experimentandi*). Like Hamann, his interest is in the whole person; and indeed the education of the *whole* person is the programme of *Aesthetica*: 'The doctrine of the "improving" of the senses aims at the completion of the ideal of education. In place of the human being as an *ens ratiocinans* is the conception of an well-rounded, developed personality. The demand to look after the *senses* is only a symbol of this general bent.'[24] The philosopher, too, is to be seen in this light; for the philosopher is a *homo inter homines*.[25] Given the importance of Bacon in *AN*, it is worth observing how important Bacon was to Baumgarten's work as well. Bacon's logic, his account of *inventio*, *iudicium*, *memoria*, *elocutio*, his understanding of the 'emblem' as making thoughts sensible – these were all themes that could find a home in Baumgarten's new aesthetic.[26] The notion of making thought and meaning visible is here as well. Examples therefore (in particular, fables) are felt to be crucial to understanding and communication; they are the means whereby it becomes possible to impart concepts and thoughts. The universal is merely a means to categorize and characterize the particular.[27] In abstraction itself however there is always a loss[28]; Bäumler claims that the kernel of *Aesthetica* is 'the serious and deepest protest against abstract rationalism'.[29] His

[23] Martin Knutzen – who taught both Hamann and Kant in the University of Königsberg – provided an outline of Baumgarten, and, in addition to an *ars inveniendi* ***rationalis*** (emphasis mine), recognized an *ars inveniendi* ***sensualis*** in Baumgarten's work (cf. Bäumler, 191.)

[24] Bäumler, 208.

[25] *Philosophus homo inter homines, neque bene tantam humanae cognitionis partem alienam a se putat. Aesthetica* §6. My desire not to translate the phrase as 'man among men' is not as anachronistic as it may seem; for this principle finds its context in Baumgarten's *Philosophical Letters to Aleotheophilus* (1741), which makes the point specially that it was intended to be read by women as well as by men.

[26] Cf. Bäumler, 170f.

[27] Cf. the discussion in Bäumler, 210ff.

[28] *Aesthetica* § 559.

[29] Bäumler, 224.

treatment of the 'lower powers', as Wolff designated them, involved a new estimation of their value, embodied in a new terminology (instead of being *'confusa'*, in opposition to 'clear', he designates them as *'sensitiva'*.) When sensuous speech is perfect, it conveys a host of united though various sensuous ideas; and then, *'oratio sensitiva perfecta est poema.'*[30]

Finally, it is perhaps not irrelevant that Baumgarten met with rejection from Moses Mendelssohn; for Mendelssohn is the target of several of Hamann's attacks in this essay. Mendelssohn claimed that feeling played too great a role in Baumgarten's theory[31], and claimed that Baumgarten provided us with a *'Poetik'* and a *'Rhetorik'* but not an 'Aesthetic'.

In a sense, then, Baumgarten too is Hamann's 'Euthyphron' – though one whose influence needs more 'purging' than does Bacon's (cf. Hamann's note 2). His Wolffianism, though modified, Hamann would reject; and yet, insofar as it takes the form of cultivating and advocating the 'lower powers', the sensuous, he is a welcome fellow-traveller, at least for as far as he travels on the same path.

There is a paradox therefore at the heart of Hamann's use of the word 'aesthetics'. Truly, his essay is an 'aesthetics' even less than Baumgarten's, and would deserve Moses Mendelssohn's censure even more, for it is a 'poetics' and it certainly is 'rhetoric'! Above all, it concerns itself with what we would now call 'hermeneutics', for the question of the act of interpretation itself is at the heart of the project. Nevertheless, the essay is far more concerned with αισθησις (*aisthesis*[32]) itself than a philosophy of aesthetics normally is. Although, perhaps surprisingly, Hamann does not play on the Greek word at the heart of the matter to make his point, the insight that it embodies – that 'aesthetics' cannot be what it is without the proper valuation of the senses – is one of Hamann's main concerns in his aesthetics in a nutshell.

[30] *Aesthetica* § 9.

[31] A misunderstanding, in Bäumler's view, cf. 116ff.

[32] Perception by the senses, especially feeling, though also seeing, hearing, sensation.

2. Exposition

If the title *'Aesthetica in Nuce'* conveys a considerable amount of important information about the essay's nature, character and intentions, so too does the designation of the essay as a 'rhapsody in kabbalistic prose'. The initial meaning of 'rhapsody' comes from ραπτειν (*rhaptein*), to sew or stitch together, and from there, ραψωδεω (*rhapsodeo*), I recite poems. A *rhapsodos* or rhapsodist is one who recited epic poems, occasionally his own but more often 'sewn together' from bits and pieces of Homer and other poets. Thus in the word 'rhapsody' we find combined first the notion of a fragmentary artefact, unsystematic in character; and secondly, an enthusiastic declaiming or poetizing.

A further layer of meaning comes from Hamann's invocation of Plato's *Ion*, cited in notes 29 and 62. Note 62 tells us that the rhapsodists are 'interpreters of interpreters'. Thus to the twofold association we now can add a third, namely that this activity of selection, juxtaposition and declamation involves interpretation. Not only that; further, the interpretation involved is *of* a prior interpretation. The passage in *Ion* tells us that it is God who speaks through the poets, and that they are in a sense interpreters of God; those who recite the poets, therefore, are interpreters of intepreters. (This, perhaps, is Hamann's aesthetic in a nutshell.) In Hamann's hands, this means that the initial act of poetry is already an interpretation of nature (which is a text by the Creator); an interpretation that is further interpreted by the rhapsodist. Turning our gaze now to Hamann's polemic against Michaelis (*et al.*), one might also imagine that this description of the Rhapsodist as an interpreter of interpreters indicates that he sees himself as performing a kind of exegesis on an exegete, Michaelis.

If 'rhapsody' evokes 'fragmentary', 'enthusiastic declamation', and 'hermeneutical', what are we to make of 'kabbalistic'?[33] The word itself means tradition, transmission; insofar as the Jewish Kabbala indulged in allegorical interpretation, with systems of interpreting numbers, letters, etc., for their supposed symbolic meaning, and so on, it clearly implies the understanding of a text which is difficult, obscure, whose meaning is not to be found on the

[33] I am utterly in agreement with Lumpp that one must not take Hamann's use of the word too literally here; indeed, it is surprising that some do.

surface, and so on. The reader of Hamann has no difficulty in seeing the applicability of that notion.

As to a further significance to the word, Hamann gives us a nudge and a wink here as well. Kabbala is associated with hermeneutics for Hamann, as we know from N III, 23:10-16, where (following Leibniz) 'Kabbala' is used to refer broadly to language whose meaning is not literal but is to be found in the right understanding or sense (*Verstand*) and use of words. Thus, like 'rhapsody', it contains the notion of 'hermeneutics'. Both words share an aspect of dealing with a prior tradition, not in mere repetition or citation, but in a hermeneutical way. The one does so by using recondite religious exegesis on the text, the other by the creative yet interpretative reworking of an ancient text to produce a composition whose language and vocabulary are not wholly original, but which is not simply a reproduction of the original — precisely what Hamann does himself in this essay.[34] The two notions also embody between them relations to the two aspects of the ancient world which feature in *AN*: the classical world and the biblical.

The word 'rhapsody' may in fact have been seized upon from a passage in Michaelis, in a commentary on Hebrews, where he claims that some of the writings attributed to Paul are 'mere' rhapsodies, pieced together from the style and speech of his other letters.[35] It would be thoroughly characteristic of Hamann to seize upon something described by an opponent as 'mere', and champion it. Hamann's use of the word 'Kabbala' likewise might have a Michaelian counter-blast behind it; for Michaelis is unsympathetic to this: '...The Jews ascribe a particular holiness and completely divine origin to the Hebraic language, right down to all the tiniest traits of the letters, in which the cabbalist [sic] seeks a manifold of idle mysteries. They reckon one of its divine advantages to be that it expresses the essence of things, in which they are echoed by a host of credulous Christians....'[36] Hamann must set his face against this. Language is holy; and moreover, the tiny details are not trivial, but bear God's presence no less than the profound truths[37].

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[34] And, from this point forward, continues to do. *SM*, for example, does not display examples of that extraordinary Hamann genre of the 'cento', which features so strikingly in his work after this point.

[35] In *Einleitung in die Göttlichen Schriften des neuen Bundes*, Göttingen, 1750, p. 289. (Cited in Lumpp, 31.)

[36] Cited in Lumpp, 31.

[37] Cf. also the beginning of *KRC*, N III, 27:2ff.

If that is an 'excess', as Bacon suggests[38], Hamann is happy to acknowledge his own excessiveness. Further, as Lumpp says, Hamann would not be prepared to concede that the mysteries discovered in the text are 'idle'.[39] But another issue is presupposed in Michaelis' utterance, and that is whether or not language has the power to communicate 'the essence of things' — a question which will occupy Hamann right up to his encounter with Kant's first *Critique*. For as we shall see, he is not a literal-minded realist; and yet Michaelis' apparent assumption that language cannot communicate the 'essence of things' betrays to Hamann's mind an inadequate conception of language.

The motto on the title page is from the Book of Judges, from the triumphant song of Deborah and Barak after the defeat of Sisera and his army.[40] Lowth had used this episode as an example of 'Prosopopoeia', a genre which he rated highly. In describing this he emphasized how detailed was the description of the serving girls imagining the booty, how lively their portrayal. Michaelis too had written an extensive note on the passage.[41] Hamann returns, more dramatically, to this passage in an enactment of 'holy Prosopopoeia' (201:22ff.).[42] That later enactment forms the context of interpretation for the phrases here; it depicts him as lusting after the second volume of Lowth on sacred poetry as the servant girls lusted after booty. Lumpp draws the conclusion that the Philologian waits in vain, as did the mother of Sisera, for the work like the warrior is 'dead'.[43] If that understanding of the identification of past and present personalities is correct, why then does Hamann put himself in the role of Sisera's mother, on the side of the enemies? (And the mother of Michaelis, it would seem?) He does not, in fact; he puts himself in the place of *Deborah*, impersonating her enemies; this Prosopopoeia is a double-personification. The imagined booty, described here on the title page, never materializes; that is the point of Deborah's gloating.

The second Hebrew quotation is from the Book of Job; Elihu is no longer able to hold his tongue, hearing the advice Job is

[38] See Hamann's note 21.

[39] Lumpp, 32.

[40] One may assume that not many of Hamann's contemporaries could have understood the citation in its original (unpointed) Hebrew — apart from Michaelis.

[41] Cf. Lumpp, 33, note 13.

[42] Lumpp observes, 'Fundamentally the whole piece is a Prosopopoeia, written ... for Michaelis.' (Lumpp, 33.)

[43] Lumpp, 33.

receiving from his friends. Lumpp understands Hamann as Elihu and Michaelis as Job.[44] Hamann therefore has the role of counsellor and preacher; and like Elihu, he will not have the final word; that is for God, who Himself will set Job straight. I am not sure myself how far we are to assign roles and accompanying circumstances to the citation of this passage from Job; the passage itself conveys the sense of urgency, impatience, even drama that explains the passion of this text. I would point out that Elihu's outburst introduces a long sermon – as here – and that it is followed by an apocalyptic revelation – as Hamann calls for and describes in the closing pages of this essay. Insofar as Elihu does not have the final answer to Job's problems, it relativizes Hamann's own utterance as well, in a characteristic piece of self-deprecation.

Lumpp provides a division of the essay into sections in an attempt to clarify its structure.[45] I would modify his version slightly, and divide the essay in the following fashion:

197-201:21 – Rhapsody, Part I: on Creation
  200:25-201:21 – Author's remarks
201:22-203:13 – Prosopopoeia; address to the 'Rabbi'
203:14-211:13 – Rhapsody, Part II: The 'Texts' that are Nature and Scripture
  203:14-205:17 – First Section
  205:18-19 – First Interruption (self-mockery)
  205:20-209:11 – Second Section
  209:12-15 – Second Interruption (self-mockery)
  209:16-210:6 – Third Section (on Antiquity)
  210:7-211:13 – Conclusion on Nature & Scripture
211:14-214:25 – Apocalyptic Discourse:
  211:14-213:14 – Hyperbole
  213:15-214:25 – Apocalypse
214:26-216 – Concluding Remarks on Poetics
217 – Gloss

Passages from Horace bracket the essay. The first is a solemn, sacred invocation; the closing Ode one is tempted to describe as Horatian 'apocalyptic'. In both cases, the god of Horace's ode is a God who speaks from a whirlwind; ruling the universe by the move of an eyebrow, hurling thunderbolts. The Philologian appears as

[44] Michaelis also writes of Elihu; cf. Lumpp, 33, note 17. Cf. in particular: *'Deus intervenit, immodestae disputationi finem facturus'*, which seems apposite.
[45] Lumpp, 34-41.

the 'Muses' priest', singing sacred songs not heard before (a rhapsodist, in other words), shunning the secular and profane. (I take this as a snide reference to the issue of whether sacred and profane literature should be interpreted with the same methods.) An obvious slight is cast upon Frederick the Great, as 'the King' (and therefore it is a slight on his Berlin circle); for though 'fear of him' may grip the masses, he himself is under the dominion of God.

Hamann's Muse, we are immediately told, is not a delicate, *stile galant* sort of Muse with a lyre or a fine paint-brush; she wields a shovel.[46] Wheat must be separated from chaff when it comes to the writings on sacred literature[47]; this Muse's task is not the creation of beauty, but the sifting and sorting out, the interpretation and defence of truth. Further, with the evocation of Mt. 3.12, the implication seems to be that the Philologian is styling himself after John the Baptist, announcing the coming of Christ.

The Philologian greets Michaelis, the 'archangel' of the 'relics of the language of Canaan' – a clear reference to Michaelis' essay on the means of understanding the 'extinct Hebraic language'. The title 'archangel' refers to the archangel Michael, perhaps. Lumpp also thinks of αγγελος, 'messenger', and angels as mediators; Michaelis was the mediator of Lowth.[48] He rides on 'fair asses'.[49] This is a reference to Deborah's song: 'Tell of it, you who ride on fair asses, you who sit on rich carpets and you who walk by the way. To the sound of musicians at the watering places, there they repeat the triumphs of the Lord....' (Jgs. 5.10-11.) In the *'First Hellenistic Letter'* which precedes this essay, Hamann claims that the style of the Kingdom of Heaven is perhaps the most meek and humble; he compares 'the outward appearance of the letter' to the 'unbroken foal of a donkey' – like that donkey and foal of a donkey who carried Jesus into Jerusalem.[50] The third *Hellenistic Letter* contains the following:

> One must deduce from the *Beurtheilung* that the Hebraic language is like that apocalyptic beast who was and is not, yet is. Extinct, according to the title; — wounds, mortal wounds ... — that one must join in anew:

[46] I do not think that Lumpp can be right in seeing Michaelis as Hamann's muse, even as a piece of irony. (Cf. Lumpp, 42.)
[47] Sacred poetry, i.e. the work of Lowth/Michaelis.
[48] Lumpp, 43.
[49] *Schönen Eselinnen*, as in Luther's translation of Jgs. 5.10.
[50] N II, 171: 26f. Cf. Mt. 21.1-7; cf. also Zech. 9.9.

Aurum de Arabia
Thus & Myrrham de Saba
Tulit in ecclesia
Virtus asinaria —[51]

With the help these two passages, Lumpp explains the present passage thus: 'Michaelis however does not notice that God makes His entrance among humanity with this outwardly lowly Word, rather he [Michaelis] sits himself proudly upon it and misuses the Word of God in an academic race with other scholars.'[52] 'Michaelis with the help of Arabic wants to help the extinct Hebraic language up from its mortal wounds, which in Hamann's conviction fundamentally can only happen with the appearance of God, when the eschatological image is fulfilled' (*Aurum de Arabia* etc.) 'Now, however, ...Michaelis drags gold, frankincense and myrrh from Arabia into the Church – basically in vain – and that is – asinine virtue.'[53] One might draw this line of interpretation in a little more closely to Hamann's own reference (note 1) of Jgs. 5.10: those who ride on fair asses – the Word of God – should be singing the Lord's praises, not triumphing in a scholarly contest.

The Kabbalistic Philologian, on the other hand, is a 'wise *Idiot*': an amateur, a lay-man, as opposed to Michaelis as the philological and theological professional. He will borrow Euthyphron's stallions for the philological debate (this recalls Michaelis' comment on Elihu, see note 44 above.) Hamann reports Socrates' suggestion that he make use of the divine madness/the divine wisdom that came from his contact with Euthyphron. As with Hamann's deployment of Elihu, there is a suggestion of self-deprecation here as well: for now, he will allow himself to go a little mad; tomorrow, a priest or sophist (Michaelis?) will be able to cure him.

We know who Euthyphron is, for Hamann is kind enough to tell us in note 3.[54] Perhaps Bacon's stallions are the senses and the passions – perhaps his writing on magic – perhaps his emphasis on concrete and figurative language – or perhaps no one thing in particular.

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[51] The *'Beurtheilung'* is Michaelis' writing on how to investigate the 'extinct' Hebraic language. The apocalyptic beast is found in Rev. 17.8.N II, 181:21–182:7.

[52] Lumpp, 44.

[53] Lumpp, 44-45. He observes (note 16) that the little verse is based on Isa. 60, especially v. 5.

[54] According to Lumpp, Michaelis does not make use of Bacon, but Lowth cites him, as does Benson (*vid.* Hamann's note 23). (Lumpp, 48.)

In a series of comparisons largely drawn from Goguet, Hamann outlines the priority of the concrete, the individual, over the refined and the systematic[55]: 'Poetry is the mother-tongue of the human race...' (197:15-18.) Two borrowed 'stallions' may be pulling his chariot here: Bacon and Baumgarten. For Bacon, as Hamann's note 3 shows, also claimed a temporal priority for the concrete and colourful over the logical and discursive; and Baumgarten indeed claimed that the more concrete an utterance, the more poetic.[56] And yet for both Bacon and Baumgarten, it appears that the use of parables and imagery is a matter of choice for the author. For Bacon, parables are desirable as a means of conveying unfamiliar truths to listeners[57]; while in Baumgartenian aesthetics, figurative language is the product of *Witz* or *ingenium*[58], a later addition or decoration of an utterance to render it more sensible and colourful. Hamann goes further: parables, pictures and poetry are *truly prior* to abstractions, concepts, deductions; they are not artful decorations or ornaments, nor mere didactic illustrations. 'Poetry' (one must take this in a broad sense, to include all 'poetic' or figurative language) is not a derivative form of language, nor a sophisticated refinement; it is our most basic way of perceiving and communicating — our 'mother-tongue'.

This portrait of a primal state of affairs, a world of imagery, painting, song, bartering, wild dancing, and a good night's sleep is not the idyllic fantasy it may seem. 'Seven days they sat – and opened their mouths' (197:20-21) in its original context does not, as one might imagine, preface the utterance of sage, mystic oracles, in a scene of natural beatitude. It in fact comes from Job: 'And they sat with him on the ground seven days and seven nights, and no one spoke a word to him, for they saw that his suffering was very great.' (Job 2.13.) And when, in the following verse, Job does open his mouth to speak, it is to curse the day of his birth (Job 3.1.) This is followed by his friends' vain attempts at consolation and theodicy. So far from being the joyous, vaguely pagan picture it seems, it is a rupture of the picture of a Nature whose imitation would be 'beautiful'. No handsome shepherd piping to his fair shepherdess; rather, suffering and inexplicable tragedy are built into this

[55] O'Flaherty says of this passage that Hamann 'inverts the notion of progress as held by his adversaries.' (O'Flaherty, *QR* 75.)

[56] Cf. as already cited, '*Oratio sensitiva perfecta est poema*'.

[57] Cf. ES I, 520, 667; also Jørgensen, *HBT* 64.

[58] Or 'wit' in Locke's sense, (ingeniousness in seeing new connections) but not in our modern sense.

'imitation of nature' from the very start. Nevertheless, there is still the feeling of a portrait of a more original, more 'natural' way of living and speaking; and a picture of language in which silence too plays a part, room for deep reflection as well as a sense of wonder.

The conviction that human knowledge, understanding, indeed, happiness are grounded first in imagery is further underlined in the paragraph beginning at 197:22ff. Here too is the first introduction of an important theme: the senses and the passions. Their language is imagery; it is by this means that they perceive the world (lines 24ff.). The first 'explosion' of creation, the beginning of light – of all that is visible (note 4, Eph. 5.13) – is the beginning of the possibility of sense-perception *and* of *enjoyment* of nature. The two are inextricable. Further, one cannot separate the notion of light from John 1 with its christological background. Jørgensen cites N I, 112:21-25:

> All the works of God are signs and expressions of his properties; and so, it seems, is the entire physical nature an expression, a parable, of the spiritual world. All finite creatures can only see the truth and the being [essence] of things in parables.[59]

It is important to notice in this passage the emphasis on *sensuous* revelation. As the first utterance and first creation, being that of light, began 'the *perception* of the presence of things' (emphasis mine), so too is God's revelation sensuous (198:1f.) – not 'spiritual' or 'mystical' nor 'intellectual'. Moreover, it is clear that creation and revelation are coterminous — this re-telling of the creation myth of Genesis 1 is described as 'the sensuous revelation of his majesty.'

At the pinnacle of the creation of the world to be enjoyed by the senses, and the 'sensuous revelation' it represents, is the creation of humanity; it is the 'crown', for in this world of imagery, it is in the image of God. This truth was revealed, it would seem, even to the pagans (198:5f., 10), who also recognized that the body is the 'image' of the 'secret self' hidden within us. Hamann takes this *imago Dei* concept so strongly that it can function as the hermeneutical clue to any riddles in human nature; all our 'complicated knots' are thus resolved and correctly understood. Not, however, without an insoluble mystery at its core; for this masterpiece of creation, the 'crown' of *sensuous* revelation, has an

[59] Cited Jørgensen, *SMAN* 82.

unknowable core of '*invisibility*', an invisibility which we share with God – for all his perceptible, sensuous self-revealing.

Hamann's picture of the natural human state continues with descriptions from the Hebrew Scriptures. Into this picture of creation is introduced the same disruption that occurs when Gen. 3 follows on Gen. 1-2. For the reality of sin is introduced, albeit gently, with the mention of 'fig-leaves'.[60] 'But GOD the LORD made tunics of pelts'; this Hamann sees as a picture of God's compassion, his concessions and loving care. This introduces the opportunity for a parody of Goguet, whose ideas of the origin human customs were rather more rationalist and naturalistic than Hamann's. Even from the purely human point of view, Hamann pokes fun at Goguet's naiveté; for clothing is not primarily for warmth, but is due to a sense of shame – an acquired sin, (cf. *ESM*, 199:28-32). This shame is inseparable from self-discovery, self-knowledge. Hamann also takes the opportunity for a jibe at Lessing, in style as well as content. Lessing's rational, humanist moral stance on fables[61] is shown to be inadequate in the face of the fundamental facts of human existence – knowledge, guilt, desire, corruption. The serpent, an animal character, as in the fables, was instrumental in Adam becoming acquainted with the so-called constancy of animal nature, with its lusts and desires. Lessing had claimed that passion obscures and clouds reason; beneath the humour here, Hamann has a serious point: that passion is an ineradicable part of this so-called 'constancy of animal character'. It is this animal nature of Adam's that stirs up the parts which he suddenly feels the need to cover – with a pelt 'borrowed' from other animals. The delusory promise that he might be like God – that he might enjoy a godlike 'intuitive knowledge of past and future events' – resulted in the end in Adam propagating something very different for posterity – original sin.

The striking phrase of 198:28 – 'Speak, that I might see you' — is spoken first by Plato's Socrates to a handsome youth whose merits he was supposed to assess. Hamann now attributes to humanity the 'desire' for a self-revelation on the part of another; humanity receives its answer in creation. Again, creation and revelation are one and the same. Now, however, we learn more precisely that creation is an 'address' [*Rede*], it is speech; creation and revelation are now given a linguistic nature: creation, worldly

[60] The first food, clothing, and poetry were all botanical!

[61] About which Hamann commented to his brother, 'Beautiful nature seems to have been transformed into *galant* nature.' (ZH 2, 172:1, 2.4.1760.)

reality is 'word', as we shall be told in *KRC*.[62] Self-revelation, knowledge of another, are interdependent with language and speech; even an 'invisible' God must speak to be seen.

Furthermore, this address is embodied in, mediated by, creation and the creatures themselves. The image of divine-human relationship which is given here is not of a private, one-to-one relationship between a man and his god; but of a broader community of relations, in which indeed the whole of creation takes part.[63] Thus the whole of creation is united in a relationship of dialogue and revelation.

This speech of self-revelation is heard all over the earth and in every dialect. And yet – for whatever reason, the rupture of sin, or the nature of a fallible universe (198:32f.) – we cannot just read off from the world the nature and being of God. We have members of dissected poets, *Turbatverse*, to deal with — one might say, we have the raw materials and fragments for a 'rhapsody'.[64] We must gather, reconstruct, interpret, bring to life these fragments in a 'new' poem (which is the oldest). With this task arises the question of human responsibility, one might say human 'hermeneutical' responsibility. With this hermeneutical task is introduced the possibility of error, of not-seeing, or mis-construing and mis-interpreting. At the very least, inevitably there is personal involvement, human creativity, subjectivity, and all the precariousness that implies. And yet the Author and Poet has placed this task in our hands; not merely to hear and receive this address, but to interpret and imitate, and – more boldly still – 'to bring it to its destiny'. An extraordinary degree of Divine Dependence is suggested by this notion; it has pleased this condescending, self-revealing God to make the speech of his self-revelation rest on the creative and communicative activity of his creatures.[65]

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[62] 'Every phenomenon of nature was a word', N III, 32:21.

[63] Oswald Bayer, in a thoughtful article on this subject (*Schöpfung als "Rede an die Kreatur durch die Kreatur"*) sees the creaturely imparting of the address as referring to the mediation of Jesus Christ: *'Jesus Christus ist der Schöpfungsmittler'* (p. 61). This is a good point; but it seems that Bayer understands this creaturely mediation to be exclusive to Christ for the most part (p. 62). I do not think that the present passage supports that notion; the communication and revelation of God is for the whole of creation to share in — even day and night 'tell forth', as Hamann's use of Ps. 19 shows.

[64] Again, this takes in Michaelis, who in the Preface to Lowth's work sees in Moses' speech *'disjecti oratoris membra'*.

[65] Though presumably Lumpp would see this otherwise; for he seems to see the 'poet' of 199:3 as God himself — what sort of Poet must it be, he marvels, to bring nature to its destiny! This can only be the 'Poet at the beginning of

Our activity with respect to the dissected and jumbled verses of nature is a *rhapsodic* one, and it is a three-fold task which is allotted: to scholars, philosophers, and poets. In the concise formula of 199:1-3 much is said, or implied. First of all (contrary, perhaps, to popular belief), Hamann does grant a role to the 'scholar'; the Michaelis or the natural scientist. The faithful observer and recorder of nature has an indispensable job to do. The poet, meanwhile, does 'imitate' nature – Hamann gives a qualified support to this notion. His opposition to the aesthetic of art as the imitation of beautiful nature lies elsewhere. As for philosophers, however; their task is a hermeneutical one. It is neither the passive task the empiricist imagines it to be; nor as dominating a role as that of the system-building rationalist. It is receptive and responsive, but also active and creative — like a rhapsodist, it preserves the pieces of verse but gives them a new life by being woven into a new context (which is interpretative). This notion of philosophy as consisting essentially of interpretation remains with Hamann to the end of his life, as we shall see.

The passage of 199:4-9 raises many questions for the reader. Speaking is translation; but from what to what, precisely? Or, if the understanding of 'a human tongue' is unproblematic, what is 'a tongue of angels'? This may well evoke a Pauline passage[66] but in this case the biblical reference does not go far towards solving the riddle. Xavier Tilliette has written an entire article on this topic, which gives a useful survey of the various interpretations which have been offered[67]; his own conclusion is that the tongue of angels

> is the language of God only in so far as it is the speech of God, and nevertheless not an actual language of God, in that it is produced 'through the creature'.... God reveals himself through the creature, through the human being as receiver and hearer (tongue of angels), to the human being as seer and answerer (human tongue).[68]

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days', 2 Cor. 4.6; cf. also 206:20. (Lumpp, 55-6.) True, it is an awe-inspiring task to bring nature to its destiny; but Hamann is not afraid elsewhere – with Rom. 8:19-23 as his support – to portray creation as in some way dependent on or subject to our decisions and agency (cf., in the present essay, 206:22-31, and in *KRC*, N III, 32:15-21).

[66] 1 Cor. 13.1.

[67] 'Tongue of angels' = 'language of God' (most, as Fritz Blanke); 'language of God' then is either the language of creation [*Schöpfungssprache*], i.e. nature, (W. Koepp, M. Th. Küsters) or the language of revelation (nature and history) in general (M. Seils). (Tilliette, in *ACTA I*, 66-7.)

[68] Tilliette, 75.

There are several mistakes, in my view, that can easily arise when one attempts to interpret this passage. The first is to take it as some kind of policy statement or doctrine in itself, from which to unfold an entire philosophy of language and epistemology. Rather, one must see it against the polemical backdrop of the controversy with Michaelis. Lumpp cites a passage from Michaelis which in my view is indispensable for understanding this passage. It addresses the controversy on whether or not the Bible is inspired: the Bible is 'a *translation*, of which the original text is lost[.] *The things*[69] *alone were divine,* and the prophets, apostles and evangelists *translate them into human words,* and could err when doing so.'[70]

Secondly, it is mistaken to tidy up the sentence into a binary schema, in which one sees God on one side (the tongue of angels) and humanity on the other. It also seems to me a mistake to assume that the 'human tongue' is unproblematic, and simply means 'language as such'.

Thirdly, it is equally a mistake to see the whole thing as a question purely of human linguistic and epistemological capabilities. If it is a distortion to create a two-tier system with God and humanity strongly juxtaposed, it is equally misleading to see the whole event as taking place 'within' the human being, so to speak, e.g. as a statement of the relationship of thought to language.

The citation from Michaelis gives the crucial interpretative background to the use of words. The Bible is a 'translation', the '*Sachen*' or 'things' are the original text, which is 'divine' (in Michaelis' view, apparently, the 'translation' is not.) Basing oneself on this, the 'tongue of angels' – mediators between heaven and earth – the 'things', the 'thoughts' are the original divine revelation, the divine-human encounter which is interpreted and written ('translated') in nature and Scripture. The tongue of angels, one might say, is the *disjecti poeti membrae,* the fragments of the original divine 'literary composition'; and the 'translation' is what Hamann has described as the activity of the scholars-philosophers-poets. The 'original text' of the primal human-divine encounter, which takes place in the context of creation, is a *linguistic* encounter – is itself a language. This is a primal world of images and symbols, not analysis and derivative signification.

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[69] *Sachen*; as in Hamann's text (things into names = *Sachen in Namen.*)

[70] *Erklärung des Briefes an die Hebräer*, Bd. I Frühjahr 1762, p. 69f.; cited Lumpp, 56.

> The invisible being of our soul reveals itself through words – as creation is a speech whose line stretches from one end of heaven to the other. Only the Spirit of God can have told us the wonder of six days so profoundly and comprehensibly. Between an idea of our soul and a sound which produced through the mouth is precisely the same distance as between mind and body, heaven and earth. What an incomprehensible land connects these separate things! Is it not humbling for our thoughts, that they cannot become visible as it were in any other way than in the coarse clothing of arbitrary signs and what a demonstration of divine omnipotence – and humility – that he wanted to and could breathe the profundity of his mysteries, the treasures of his wisdom, into such confused gibberish, the servant's form [that is] the tongue of human concepts.[71]

This is *not* however a matter of pre-linguistic vs. linguistic thought: both sides of the equation are a 'language'. The 'thoughts into names' phrase might betray otherwise — yet *is* naming the primary act of language, or is conversation? Any mother knows that in the ongoing conversation that comprises the development of language in the baby, the activity of giving names to things arises at a comparatively late stage. Calling his name, addressing him, singing, reciting nursery rhymes, imitating the infant's noises back to him all precede teaching him the names of objects. No; in the passage in question, the stress seems to be that even 'thought' is *already* linguistic, and putting it into speech is a *translation from one 'language' to another* – not a first linguistic encoding. It is interesting in this respect to observe, in the citation from ZH 1, 393 above, that concepts are themselves described as a tongue. Concepts are the language (indeed, the gibberish) into which divine wisdom is translated. Thus the process of 'translation' is not a first rendering in language; it represents at most a process of increasing thematization; in the language of Polanyi's epistemology, a move from the subsidiary, embodied, tacit to the focal, the conceptual, the explicit. But first of all insofar as there is no superiority attached to the explicit and the conceptual for Hamann, and secondly, as divine communication seems to take place in the primal and primitive language of images, it represents a reversal of the usual values of the Enlightenment towards clarity and conceptualization. Insofar, moreover, as Hamann uses but alters Michaelis' original terms, he signals a rejection of Michaelis' position, namely: Not merely the writing of the Bible, but indeed *speaking itself* is a 'translation'. The Bible is not in a peculiar posi-

[71] ZH 1, 393:28-394:3. Cited by Jørgensen, *SMAN* 86-88.

tion in this respect; all attempts at articulation are in some sense derivative of a more divine 'original'; this is not the sign of a problematic text, but is rather the nature of human experience and speaking. It calls forth and embodies a more vital world, a prior world however which is already made for, by and in language.

The 'signs' that we make of the images we first experience can be 'poetic', 'historical' or 'philosophical'; this is the enumeration which Hamann places side by side with Wachter's delineation of the stages in the evolution of writing (kyriological, symbolic or hieroglyphic, and characteristic). Lumpp marries the two schemata in this fashion:

> These signs can...first of all depict the things themselves...: Hamann calls this language of signs *poetic*. Secondly, there can be a 'symbolic' relationship between the things and their signs...: he calls this *historic*, perhaps because etymologies frequently lead back to an original imagistic foundation, because the history of the 'transmitted' meanings contains an 'authentic' one and thus makes up the 'symbolic' structure of the sign. This relation between the sensuous-factual and the intended meaning recurs in Hamann's typological view of all the historical; with the historical or symbolic or hieroglyphic sign the connection between the sensuous characterization and the meaning should be conceived *typologically*. Third the signs of human language can be arbitrarily taken by agreement...: these Hamann calls *philosophical*, since it is the measure from the thinking person to nature, a self-made system of concepts by which reality is measured.[72]

These additions of Hamann's should be heard against a background of Bacon, who divided these sciences according to the faculties of the human mind: history imputed to memory, philosophy to reason, poetry to phantasy.[73] It also recalls Hamann's three-fold division of work (199:1-3) which would confirm the notion that the 'tongue of angels' in some way corresponds to the text of nature. This also emphasizes that the act of speaking, of bringing into speech is already analysis, interpretation.

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[72] Lumpp, 57.

[73] *De Dignitate et Augmenti Scientiarum*, Book II; this is cited in Hamann's note 11. Theology too is divided in a three-fold fashion: *ex historia sacra, ex parabolis,* and *ex praeceptis et dogmatibus*. Poetry is divided into *narrativam, dramaticam,* and *parabolicam*. The discussion of the latter contains Bacon's division into *ad illustrationem* and *ad involucrum*; the latter in particular is for parables of mysteries.

The 'profound prophecy' (cf. note 10) which Socrates puts on the lips of Thamus is a reaction to Theuth's[74] claim for the invention of writing. Theuth declares of writing, 'Here is an accomplishment, my Lord the King, which will improve both the wisdom and the memory of the Egyptians. I have discovered a sure recipe for memory and wisdom.' Thamus' response is:

> 'Those who acquire it will cease to exercise their memory and become forgetful; they will rely on writing to bring things to their remembrance by external signs instead of on their own internal resources. What you have discovered is a recipe for recollection, not for memory. And as for wisdom, your pupils will have the reputation for it without the reality: they will receive a quantity of information without proper instruction, and in consequence be thought very knowledgeable when they are for the most part quite ignorant. And because they are filled with the conceit of wisdom instead of real wisdom they will be a burden to society.'[75]

Socrates goes on to draw a comparison with painting, which may be relevant given that Hamann does the same in the note in question. The productions of paintings look like living beings, but when questioned they make no reply; similarly with written works: they can only return the same answer over and over again.

> 'Besides, once a thing is committed to writing it circulates equally among those who understand the subject and those who have no business with it; a writing cannot distinguish between suitable and unsuitable readers. And if it is ill-treated or unfairly abused it always needs its parent to come to its rescue; it is quite incapable of defending or helping itself.... Now can we distinguish another kind of communication which is the legitimate brother of written speech, and see how it comes into being and how much better and more effective it is?... I mean the kind that is written on the soul of the hearer together with understanding; that knows how to defend itself, and can distinguish between those it should address and those in whose present it should be silent.
> Phaedrus: You mean the living and animate speech of a man with knowledge, of which written speech might fairly be called a kind of shadow.
> Socrates: Exactly.[76]

(One might suppose Hamann to have sympathized with the notion of a piece of writing which was misunderstood and unable to

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[74] Hamann, unlike Plato in *Phaedrus*, calls the god by his Egyptian name, Thoth, the scribe of the gods.

[75] *Phaedrus*, 275; cited in the translation by Walter Hamilton, Penguin Books.

[76] *Ibid*, 275-6.

defend itself.) This sentiment seems to be behind the ideas of 199:8-12; that 'written speech' is a shadow or the 'wrong side of a tapestry', a reflection of a more radiant reality (or solar eclipse). It 'shows the stuff', but not the skill of the workman – God, we may suppose. While the previous life of these metaphors was *'ad illustrationem'*, as illustrations, in Hamann's hands however (so he tells us) they are 'for covering the naked body'. In addition to the evident delight in nudity, this is a very Hamannian moment.[77] It embodies an interplay of revealing and concealing which betrays Hamann's simultaneous desires to be understood and to conceal his meaning. One uses metaphors to communicate, reveal and make clear; yet Hamann was in agreement with Bacon about the advisability of using metaphors to conceal and disguise, as well, when one has no confidence that the truth will be understood: 'so that they may indeed see but not perceive, and may indeed hear but not understand.'[78] This recalls Hamann's own image of truth wrapping one garment after another around her naked body, for fear of being too closely approached.[79]

The Bible is the translation of a more striking original, as a solar eclipse can be reflected less glaringly in a vessel full of water; in this torturous fashion we can unravel the phrase 'Moses' torch' – the little imitative flame of the Pentateuch, or more precisely, the images of the creation story in Genesis. The reason for understanding it this way is given in the following sentences: as the universe has a heaven and earth, with waters above and below in the Hebraic cosmogony, so too does the intellectual world. Bacon distinguished between two kinds of knowledge, both of which are 'like water' – one like the rain which falls from heaven, and one like the dew which rises up from the earth. 'The former', the waters above our hemisphere, is the knowledge of revelation, and Hamann pictures it with an image from Revelations: the waters before the throne of God.[80] The latter kind of knowledge, that of human experience, rises up out of the sea — but it is also given by God, in Hamann's opinion: the biblical passage indicates that it is

[77] 'Hamann uses both these images expressly not in order to adorn, but rather the images themselves contain the concealed truth, that is expressed in no other way than *in* them.' (Lumpp, 58.)

[78] Mk 4.11-12.

[79] ZH 1, 381:8-11.

[80] Lumpp thinks that behind the image of the throne is the notion of God's almighty Providence (1 Kgs 18). (Lumpp, 59.)

just a little cloud, as little as a man's hand, but with prayer and intercession it becomes a torrential rain.

In Lumpp's words, we move now from nature to history, the other dimension of the world.[81] The creation of the world, of nature is the '*mise-en-scene*'. The creation of humanity, who acts upon this stage, is on the other hand 'dramatic' poetry. 'The former happens through the word' – God creating by a word as in Gen. 1 (this is also an unexpressed christological idea of the Logos, through whom all is created; cf. Jn. 1). 'The latter', however, happens 'through action [*Handlung*].'[82] God acts to create human beings, in the Gen. 2 account, as opposed to doing so by a simple word. Strässle writes: 'Action is ... language as the form of revelation, language as event and the result of an event, that, although concealed, runs through the reality of human language as through every aspect of reality.'[83] Hamann's desire is that our understanding of the activity of God the poet, of both epic and dramatic poetry, lead to the same response of those depicted (psalmist, Mary, Paul): appreciative praise. As the end of the essay will tell us, 'Give Him the glory!' — this is the 'oldest aesthetic' (217:17f.).

Adam, who has thus been created by an action, is a hieroglyph (200:11): that is, a picture of something, but which contains some further symbolism – a picture of a symbolic or representative thing; in other words, in the case of Adam, representing ourselves ('the history of the entire race'). As we have already seen in 198:15-27, the story of the Fall, this history is an ambivalent one.[84]

The 'character' of Eve, however, is at a later and more advanced stage than the 'hieroglyph' (according to Wachter's scheme); now the representation involved is not the depiction of a thing *or* a symbol, but rather is the signification of a word — which is already a signifier. And yet Eve is an 'original' text, of nature, and God's

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[81] Lumpp, 59.

[82] 'And *actio, actio, actio* has always been the sanctuary of my Kabbala and philology of spiritual [emotional, psychic] remembrance.' ZH 3, 76:7, 3.4.1774, to Herder.)

[83] Strässle, 115.

[84] In Lumpp's view, however, this history goes well beyond Fall: Resurrection and Ascension (Jn. 20.15-17) is the fulfilment of this promise, that what was built from a clod of earth shall be like God. That happens however only through God's free action in his creature (Rom. 9.21). That the human being has a body, is earth, is according to God's promise a 'sign' that God will rescue him and make him like Himself. As shall be seen, Lumpp's understanding of the various passages that speak of humanity as being the image of God is strongly christological. (Lumpp, 59-60.)

economy. This nature and economy – human nature – is not obvious, written on the forehead like the mark of Cain (or the *Shema*); it is hidden. This therefore refers back to 198:1-10 and the 'hiddenness' of our nature. Adam and Eve are now history and nature, as well as hieroglyph and character. Both of them – humanity, in other words – are the text with which one also must deal, the jumbled verse. As with nature, and history, humanity is a mixed-up-text which in reality is the image and revelation of God.

This anthropological reflection as well as its imagery forms the thematic bridge to the next paragraph, 200:17-24. This plays on the creation of Eve from Adam, and also continues the reflection on the question of the proper understanding of the human being, on what is the accurate portrait of humanity, whether poetic – the imitation of 'beautiful' nature? – or philosophical/theological. With the use of the word 'virtuosi', Hamann conjures up the message and tone of Mendelssohn's claim: 'In Nature there can be much that is unnatural in imitation. Before Nature can serve the virtuosi as a model, it must first be subjected to the rules of aesthetic probability.'[85] This suggests the notion of an aesthetic standard in which Nature is found wanting. This suggestion confirms Hamann's suspicion that the phrase, 'the imitation of *beautiful* nature' embodies an implicit rejection of what is natural, but not found pretty or pleasing. This paragraph explores that notion as applied to *human* nature. (The phrase, 'the present aeon' recalls the Johannine use of this word, with disapprobation; the present aeon is that which finds Christ's assumption of human nature displeasing.) At any rate, God the Lord lets fall a deep sleep — not on Adam, but on this fine and pretty creature, an 'Endymion' whom the moon goddess desires and visits during his slumber. (Hamann again interweaves biblical and pagan motifs with skill.) The creature created from this sleep and exploitation is the new superman envisaged by Young, who saw no reason why heaven's latest edition of the human soul should not be the most correct and the most beautiful; as humanity continues in its progress there is no reason why we should not be a great advance, morally as well as intellectually, on the ancients. The next generation will joyfully appropriate this ideal image of the human being and claim it as its own; and yet Hamann has made clear that Young's vision was not a close-up: rather it is in a flattering soft-focus, and retouched, perhaps, had Hamann these metaphors to

[85] In the 168th *Literaturbrief*; see tranlator's notes κ and ξ.

use. Young's and Mendelssohn's comments suggest that in creating nature and humanity, God has done an inferior job, on which we could greatly improve.[86] Hamann's own reaction to the notion of the rococo beauty or otherwise that exists in human nature, and the idea that the poet or artist should imitate 'beautiful' nature, is trenchantly summed up in a letter: 'A thirst for vengeance was the beautiful nature which Homer imitated.'[87]

This theme is part of the background notion of the paragraph which follows, 200:25-34, and Hamann still has Moses Mendelssohn in mind. Mendelssohn is here described as a Levite of modern literature, passing by as the Levite passed by in the parable of the Good Samaritan. The citation from Acts underlines the point made in the previous paragraph: what God creates, and deems worthy, you have no right to declare unclean.[88] Hamann makes clear that he expects rejection on these same aesthetic grounds (delicacy and emotion), and further provokes with not merely introducing the passions and the senses, but the topic of excretion as well. Mendelssohn's excreta, we are to understand, would not be of the normal offensive kind, but more aesthetically pleasing.

The theme of attractiveness is carried over into the renewed attack on Lessing, 201:3ff. Here Hamann uses an ode by Horace, in which one can avoid attack by monsters and wolves by singing of a sweet, pretty lady. 'Typological', in this context, means that the ode is the antetype for Lessing. This is aimed of course at Lessing's avoidance of the passions, as we have seen in connection to the fables; now it is his anachreontic poetry Hamann has in his sights. Human nature, human desire, human existence for Lessing — unlike Homer, Aesop or Hamann — are not a matter of vengeance and lust, sour grapes and dirty nappies.

Lessing's judgement on Wieland[89] is turned back onto Lessing himself (201:9-12). One can certainly distinguish between one's

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[86] As 'Philo' suggests, in refutation of the design argument, the world might be 'only the first rude essay of some infant Deity, who afterwards abandoned it, ashamed of his lame performance; it is the work only of some dependent, inferior Deity; and is the object of derision to his superiors: it is the production of old age and dotage in some superannuated Deity; and ever since his death, has run on at adventures, from the first impulse and active force, which it received from him.' Hume, *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion*, 166.

[87] ZH 2, 157:12: '*Rachsucht war die schöne Natur, die Homer nachahmte.*'

[88] As we have seen, Mendelssohn criticized Baumgarten for the unseemly degree of emotion his aesthetic was said to contain.

[89] Cf. translator's note τ.

fundamental existence and one's activity; and indeed, *ad hominem* arguments are invalid. Nevertheless, there is such a thing as hypocrisy; and the distinction between life and work cannot be an absolute one philosophically nor can a good friend succeed in maintaining it in practice. 'So' – Hamann clearly applies the following verses to Lessing – one who feels that passion obscures matters ought not, for his own safety, venture into the orgy of the fine arts, or he risks being torn apart, as were Pentheus and Orpheus.

What might seem a curious connection between 'metaphysics' and fine arts is illuminated by the knowledge that Baumgarten's work preceding his *Aesthetica* was *Metaphysica*. 'Metaphysics' then is in no way to be taken very strongly, that is, very literally. There is a certain irony behind it, of course, for if the passions are inappropriate to art, what does the art become? An arid, scholastic philosophy? Or an account of art which requires initiation into the 'orgies'? Hamann's note 18 gives us a picture of Pentheus and Orpheus as Bacon understands them in his metaphor: the wrong kind of investigation; idle curiosity, sage advice. The implication with Hamann then is that the orgies require wild abandon. One can expand however on Bacon's exegesis of the images and draw one's own conclusions about the 'hieroglyphic' meaning of Pentheus and Orpheus, both of whom were destroyed by frenzied orgiasts. The lesson of Orpheus and still more of Pentheus[90] for Hamann's contemporaries might be this: resistance to passion and religious worship — still more, resistance to passion *particularly in* religious worship — has violent, indeed, fatal consequences. The senses and the passions are Ceres and Bacchus; the point is thus made that it is the *senses* and the *passions* who are the deity.[91] Moreover, the orgies are in the service of *God!* The point however is also made that, as far as 'beautiful' (human) nature is concerned, it is *the senses and the passions* who are its nurturing 'foster-parents' (God, perhaps, is understood to be the natural parent) — and not rococo prettiness or *stile galant* harmony. Thus the Philologian calls upon them to grace his endeavours: in particular, his Prosopopoeia which follows next.

[90] Cf. Euripides' *Bacchae*, in which Pentheus first is hostile to the sacred mysteries of Bacchus, then attempts to investigate them in disguise (in other words, not involving himself in them but standing apart as a 'dispassionate observer') and finally is torn apart by the women.

[91] One should hear the phrase, perhaps, as: 'But it is the *senses* who are Ceres, and it is the *passions* who are Bacchus...'

This Prosopopoeia is introduced with a little explanation. It is addressed to a 'master in Israel', who is Michaelis.[92] Fontenelle's judgement on personification (i.e. Prosopopoeia) vs. mythology is cited ironically; should the fastidious tastes of Mendelssohn, Michaelis and Lessing be offended by the robust colour of orgiastic myth, Hamann will oblige them with a 'less limited and more fertile' – and, more importantly – a more *fashionable*[93] genre. He will oblige them, that is, if he as a mere nut[94] giving its aesthetics in its nutshell can be counted among the more imposing mouthpieces one usually finds.

The Nut now speaks; if we do indeed understand this Prosopopoeia as the personification of a nut, it at least explains why it can only speak in gestures for the time being (201:30). The Nut first compares itself to Sisera's mother lusting after booty as it (i.e. the Nut) lusts after the second volume of Lowth. (As we have already observed, the identification is not ultimately with Sisera's mother, but to Deborah, in multiple Prosopopoeia; i.e. Hamann personifies a nut personifying Deborah personifying Sisera's mother.) The booty taken by Sisera will be booty taken after a victory; this would seems to indicate that Hamann feels Lowth's second volume might vindicate him over against Michaelis.

Hamann's note 21 refers us to Jn. 3.11, which follows right after the occurrence of the phrase 'master in Israel' (Jn. 3.10, cf. 201:19); from the dialogue with Nicodemus, it runs 'Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen; but you do not receive our testimony.' This refers to the gestures and *sermones fideles*. The note is an extended citation from Bacon, which again shows a way in which he is Hamann's 'Euthyphron' – with the ambivalence that is present in Socrates' allusion. Should Hamann's readers think him excessive and out of control, that is only 'the coarsest ignorance'; excessive it may be, but not involuntary or out of control. The 'excess' is deliberate, a conscious stylistic affectation; and Bacon is forced to imply that this excess is quite appropriate to the genre.[95]

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[92] Cf. translator's note ψ.

[93] Cf. translator's note ♠.

[94] '*Si NUX modo ponor in illis*' (201:21.) *Nux* can also mean a nut-tree; and this of course recalls the 'botanical' poetry of the Hebrews, the tree metaphors met with earlier (cf. 198:11-14 and relevant notes and discussion).

[95] This defence of his style is perhaps still necessary today!

One implication of this 'excess' is apparently that 'all other philosophy is profane and heathen.' This perhaps is the manner in which the 'baptized Rabbi', Michaelis, is guilty of this first excess.

If, however, it is an 'excess' to treat the Scriptures like an oracle, applying them to all matters, there is another excess which is the reverse. This is indeed an 'excess', though it 'appears at first glance sober and modest', and it is one of which Michaelis is guilty: investigating the sacred Scriptures with a hermeneutic used for profane texts. But this hermeneutic neglects the divine authorship of the Scriptures, which for Hamann as well as Bacon gives them a depth of meaning that cannot be exhausted by historical-critical exegesis.

Hamann adopts Michaelis' own turns of phrase in lines 1-8: Michaelis had rejected the notion that the Bible was like the *Orbis pictus* or *Exercitia* of Muzelius[96]; one does need other linguistic aids to understand it, and moreover the 'perfection' of the Bible cannot be understood in this way, because the Greek of the New Testament is 'certainly very imperfect'. The notion of perfection evokes the note about Bacon: Michaelis sees the New Testament as linguistically or literarily very imperfect; he might seem to dispute then the 'first excess' of Bacon, which Hamann wilfully commits here. And yet paradoxically this presupposes the existence of a perfection, or implies that a perfection *ought* to exist in the Bible, which does not and perhaps ought not: a perfection of language and style which is *not* human, is tailored neither to the human authors nor to the human readers. The 'Rabbi' presupposes such perfection in Scripture, that Scripture itself cannot live up to his exacting literary and linguistic standards.

Hamann strikes at this notion of perfection broadside. The *Orbis pictus* and *Exercitia* are too learned for children; the proper understanding of the Bible *a fortiori* requires a far higher level of knowledge than children (or indeed, most people) possess, according to Michaelis. According to another, however, we must precisely become children to understand it; indeed, those who wrote the documents were a 'childish' and 'foolish' people. Hamann thus looks *less* for perfection than Michaelis does; it is a central feature of his theology that God's self-revelation is on our terms, fallible though they may be.

Behind this disagreement lies another disagreement, this time over what constitutes 'understanding' the Bible: fluency in the

[96] Cf. translator's notes f and g.

original language, understanding of the historical context, an account of its textual and editorial history? Or a mystical intuition of the meaning and intentions of the author? The letter, or the spirit, in other words? Or, alternatively, a pre-understanding that thinks itself to be in some kind of relationship with its author[s], an assumption that one is being addressed with a special message, a willingness to respond to that message?

This introduces the issue addressed on page 203. With help from Paul and the letter to the Romans, the contrast of the letter and the spirit is intertwined with the contrast of dead and living (a contrast which appeared earlier, 201:20f.). The *style* as well as the language of Paul's argument in Romans has left its mark: one has here, as there, the swing of a pendulum between two undesirable extremes, each vehemently rejected.[97] One could also say that the argument has the structure of 'Either'–'Or'—'Neither!' In this case, 203:2-5 and then 5-9 reject first exegetical idealism, then exegetical materialism. Hamann deplores an idealist hermeneutic, which dissolves the natural in a kind of exegetical Platonism; whether the reference is to 'heaven' or 'the mind', words ('the infinite combination of [letters into] arbitrary signs') do not lose their relation to more mundane matters. One must be 'attentive to the given letters, as the only vehicle for grasping the spirit,' he writes to Jacobi. 'When one has *data*, what does one need *ficta* for?'[98] On the other hand, in the present passage Hamann rejects with even greater vehemence what he calls[99] exegetical materialism, 'the meritorious self-justification of a scribe', based on the dead letter. Indispensable though the text, the word, the letter is, such a study in no way *exhausts* the meaning and significance of a text, particularly not *this* text, whose life, purpose, 'spirit' (or Spirit) is an address. To do so is to make the spirit a slave of the letter.[100]

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97 Cf. Rom. 3.29-31; 6.1-2, 15-16; 7.7-13; 8.31.

98 Cited in Hoffmann, 185f.

99 In his 'Little attempt at an index on the single letter P'; which contains a reference to the present page under the heading, 'Philologian is annoyed with exegetical materialism'; N II, 239:35.

100 'One would do justice neither to Hamann nor to Michaelis if on the grounds of the sharp polemic in *AN* one generalized their respective positions as the opposition between "letter" and the "spirit"-philology, both exert themselves for the letter and the spirit of a text, but Hamann believes from the perspective of his religious starting-point that the Spirit, analogous to God's free disposal of self-privation and incarnation, can be forced neither by securing oneself methodologically nor by research expeditions, nor by the historical-critical method, while Michaelis strives for a text-immanent

Michaelis, then, knows the New Testament better than he understands it (203:10f.) Exegetical study cannot trap the other party in a free dialogue; the Spirit, the best interpreter of its own works (204:1), 'blows where it will'. The exegete does not have disposal over it or its meaning; and even with the weapon of new hermeneutical methods, true understanding still requires that one 'read the signs' (203:11ff.) The closing inverted comma (at 203:13) shows us that the Nut's prosopopoeic speech has come to an end.

Michaelian exegesis is in danger of destroying the 'precious writing', the Bible; 'sooner weaken the mighty power of the law' as Hamann deploys the classical citation to exclaim. ('Law' must be understood in a Pauline tone of voice.) Interestingly, it is the senses and passions (Liber and Ceres, cf. 201:14-15) which must come to our aid to defend the precious text.

Hamann's note 23, after acknowledging the source and context of his outburst of 203:14-15, introduces the work of George Benson and raises the question of unity and multiplicity in a text. It is tempting to draw the initial conclusion that the 'unity of meaning' demanded by Benson 'destroys the precious writing.' (This demand draws a 'double-meaninged' [*zweydeutig*] smile from the Philologian.) Lumpp evidently understands Benson's 'Papism' (though the latter rails against Catholicism) in primarily moral terms, as his citations and examples indicate; Papism, Lumpp writes, 'honours the creature more than the creator'.[101] My inclination is to understand the failing characterized as 'Papism' as something else, indeed, the issue under discussion: the desire to impose a single correct interpretation unity of meaning of the state of affairs.[102] This honours the creaturely interpreter more than the freedom and creativity of the Divine Poet, as the note goes on to explain: if one is actually in a position to fathom the single, exhaustive meaning of a biblical text, one must have 'the key to heaven (which the Catholic Pope is said to have inherited from Peter) and hell'.

The 'unity' of meaning which Hamann 'readily grants' is a consistency of address, a coherence in the message. But this can, in

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mediation of letter and spirit gained by profane-philological methods.' (Hoffmann, 186-7.)

[101] Lumpp, 73, note 7.

[102] This understanding has some support in the fact that Hamann uses Catholicism as a half-metaphor for a kind of monistic totalitarianism; one must beware of systems, for example; for one who has one views it as a Catholic views his Church, we are told in ZH 6, 350:17.

Hamann's view, 'co-exist' with multiplicity; there are indeed a variety of meanings for a text: 'literal or grammatical, carnal or dialectical, Capernaitic or historical'. Benson writes:

> The common and grammatical, or the rhetorical and figurative meaning of words; the time and place; the character and circumstances, in which the speaker or writer found themselves, and the relation that every passage has with the main purpose, or the context; all these the interpreter in most cases will teach, as he can easily distinguish between history and parables and allegories, and literal representations from the mystical and figurative.[103]

Hamann's taxonomy uses, but significantly alters, Benson's. In place of Benson's twofold schema of literal vs. figurative, Hamann creates a multiplicity of possible 'meanings': literal or grammatical, carnal or dialectical, Capernaitic or historical. He first changes Benson's 'common' to 'literal'; significantly, he does not recognize the *literal* use and understanding of words as the most basic one ('common and grammatic'). This grammatical level may be literal, but is not allowed to be (as Benson implies) the way ordinary people and ordinary language function by default. He adds a contrast of 'fleshly' [*fleischlich*; carnal] and dialectical to his list, perhaps building on the distinction of 'letter' and 'spirit'; and finally adds a juxtaposition of 'Capernaitic' and 'historical'. The historical meaning of a text is the specialism of Michaelis; but the 'Capernaitic' presumably refers to Mk. 1.21ff., in which Jesus enters the synagogue at Capernaum and teaches with authority on the Scriptures. Thus there may be a meaning which yields itself to the kind of investigation which Michaelis carries out; but there is a kind of interpretative hermeneutic of preaching authority which Jesus performed on the Scriptures of his tradition, which can never be revealed by an academic scholarship which is 'terrified of the spirit and life of the Prophets' and feels more academically respectable when it limits itself to textual analysis.

All of these levels of meaning, however, are '*mystical* to the highest degree'. Furthermore, none is dependent on an eternal, unchanging text that fell down from heaven; but rather they all depend on 'momentary, ethereal, arbitrary, secondary conditions and circumstances'. Meaning is therefore situation-dependent and potentially changing, and indeed fragile. One must undertake a pilgrimage, as the metaphors used of arduous journeys and

[103] Benson, *op cit.*, 20; cited Jørgensen, *SMAN* 104.

odysseys[104] tell us. Not scholarly researches so much as adventures are required (cf. 211:5ff.).

This is in the sharpest contrast with the hermeneutical confidence (or pride) of Benson, who tells us that the interpreter can 'easily distinguish' the kinds of meaning involved, in order to teach his listeners. Such a hermeneutical hero in Hamann's view must have a superhuman degree of wisdom, discernment and authority – the keys to heaven and hell – if he is in a position to tell us what the single meaning of a biblical text is — 'if he wishes to entrust to us the projects that imaginative authors... forge'. These projects, of course, are the biblical writings, and the point is made that their authors write in order to convert – a purpose which is neglected, indeed, vitiated by materialist exegesis. (The introduction of Muslim themes perhaps evokes Michaelis and his trip to Arabia.) This aim, repentance and conversion, is the 'spirit and life of the Prophets' — but this heart and soul of the biblical texts is precisely what Michaelis and his school shy away from. But this in fact violates the 'meaning of words', this figurative only child is sacrificed, as was Isaac — or rather, precisely as Isaac was *not*; for the 'oriental wisdom' of faith which guided Abraham they turn into a river of blood, the slaughter of meaning. The implications of this may well be too strong to stomach for materialist exegetes. The final citation in this lengthy footnote is from Bengel, and refers to Mt. 1.20, in which an angel appears to Joseph in a dream, reassuring him about Mary's conception of Jesus. Here, too, is another only child who is sacrificed.[105]

Back in the main text, Hamann turns to the question of authorship and interpretation (203:17ff.). The *Urtext* with which the philosopher deals is nature, for the theologian, it is Scripture; and their activity is interpretation [*Lesarten*]. This recognition of the status of nature as well as Scripture as a text implies recognition of an author. This author is the best interpreter of his works — so Michaelis tells us.[106] But the difference between Hamann and Michaelis is in their answers to the question: who is the Author? And how does he speak? Does God, as Michaelis

[104] As Benson used Homer, so does Hamann.

[105] Lumpp gives meaning to the deployment of this citation in this context in the following fashion: 'For the Bible is indeed an *address* to the human being, a language-*event*, not a fact. The latter would be the concealed origins, too abstract to be comprehended, the other such a fullness of concretion that has no end.' (Lumpp, 74.)

[106] Lumpp cites Michaelis: '*qui eius auctor fuit, idem sit solus interpres*' (Preface to Lowth, XXXI). (Lumpp 75f.)

maintained, speak only through miracles, in which all other causal factors or agency can be discounted[107] — or *through* all human factors, all creatures, all authors[108], all events in history as well? (204:1-3.)

The 'Book' under consideration (204:4 again emphasizes the point that creation is a text) shows us that God's revelation is not only through blood, fire, smoke and miracles, but is contained in the whole of creation. This means, incidentally, that we ourselves are 'text'; to and through whom revelation and 'authorship' take place (cf. 198:28ff.). We are both receivers of the text and the text itself. The notion of God's 'universal concepts' is of course ironic in part; it reminds us of the point made both by Baumgarten and by Bengel: that abstract things must be made concrete. They are 'dark beginnings', not finished, mature products; they do not represent a higher, more refined stage so much as an unthematized obscurity. These 'universal concepts' only become fit for transmission to humanity by moving 'through' the creature, being translated from a tongue of angels into human language.

Our other text, 'the *books* of the covenant', contain secret articles which God wanted to impart to us: the *unity* (Hamann's emphasis) of the 'Prime Mover'. This unity should be understood as a sublation of Benson's unity of meaning, and helps to explain the ironic agreement Hamann professed for this notion while he dispatched it scornfully. Insofar as the book of the covenant tells us that God is one — in *this* sense, it is appropriate to speak of a unity of understanding and meaning in this 'book', and in *this* sense, too, we can use the word 'universal', for the address of this speaker is to all. The unity is found in the consistency of the message and the address, as well as in the being of the Speaker and Author – not in the question of how many meanings can be given to his text. This unity and universality do not abolish but rather encompass and co-exist with the multiple and the particular: this is indicated in the fact that the language of God is heard in every *dialect* (and climate; 204:8 and 198:31-2). The universal – which can only be predicated of God's self-revelation – is found only in the concrete particular; and it is 'universal' not in

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[107] With regard to 204:1-3, Lumpp again cites Michaelis: 'Miracles are the only sign through which God can explain his revelations as divine.' (*Einleitung in die Göttlichen Schriften des neuen Bundes*. Göttingen 1750. p. 294.) (Lumpp, 75 note 3.)

[108] Even through 'reluctant witnesses' such as Voltaire and Caiaphas! (205:1-3, note 30.)

the philosopher's sense, but in the theologian's – that is, it is not free from all particularity, but ranges over the whole universe. (The universe itself is, after all, not 'universal' in the philosopher's sense but is rather just a very large particular!) This unity is not a monolithic sameness, but a union of opposites, a unity which embraces all extremes (204:9-14).

In the Hamannian aesthetic, 'devotion' is involved in philosophy and poetry, and politics too.[109] But – an absolutely *crucial* question – is such an aesthetic *in good taste?* — As for taste, who better to tell us than Voltaire? Hamann wickedly abuses Voltaire[110] (and Jn. 4.23) in the metaschematism of 15-20, extracting from his words an implication that good epic poetry needs a robust religion, a rich mythology behind it — which is sadly lacking nowadays.[111] Hamann uses this to strengthen his favoured notion of pagan religion and mythology as congruent and continuous with Christian revelation. He also uses it, and misuses Bacon (note 28), in a piece of miniature Prosopopoeia, (a kind of meta-Prosopopoeia, which personifies mythology!) Quite why Hamann chooses to depict mythology in this fashion as a winged youth, is difficult to understand. Lumpp provides an array of biblical reference to explain Hamann's padding out of the Baconian reference, but the list is occasionally far-fetched and still does not explain what Hamann is getting at.[112] The original text does not, as in Nadler, make a new paragraph of 205:1ff., which begins 'Voltaire, however...' . This seems to indicate that the Baconian-Hamannian image is meant to contrast with Voltaire and his Caiaphastic-Herodian reasoning. The winged youth – an angel? Cupid?[113] – gently and happily plays his pipe, enjoying a harmony with nature; with hesitation, one might interpret it thus: mythology is a messenger of God (an angel) who is at home with God's text, the text of nature.

Voltaire, meanwhile, prophesies without meaning to, in other words, witnesses to the unity of God's revelation in mythology and religion, pagans and Scripture. But if one's theology is a watered-

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[109] 'Rightly understood, poetry too, corresponding to nature and Scripture, is the worship of God (204:15ff.), Hamann gives us to understand with the play on the Gospel of John.' (Lumpp, 76.)

[110] But admits as much (note 27).

[111] Lumpp cites Voltaire: '...Religion (the foundation of epic poetry) is today no longer what it was...' (Lumpp, 76f. note 5). Therefore we cannot successfully slavishly imitate the ancients.

[112] Lumpp, 78.

[113] Cupid, as the God of Love, is placed in parallel with the Christian God of Love in *ESM*, 199:6.

down neology, a denatured natural religion, then it is impossible to equal, let alone surpass pagan poetry (cf. translator's note ζ). Mythology, indeed, is more valuable than the de-mythologized Enlightenment religions. The roots of poetry and theology are in myth; so poetry and theology, as well as history, will wither if severed from it.[114] But who cares, Hamann asks with heavy irony, as long as we have 'astrologers' and other sundry false priests in our courts; there follows a satire on declining standards of scholarship, particularly at the Berlin court.

Having borrowed Euthyphron's horses, the Philologian is in danger of getting bogged down, like Sisera in Jgs. 4.15[115] (205:18-19). I understand this as a humorous piece of self-deprecation. It is followed, however, by something of a grand gesture: 'Mythology here! Mythology there!' ('When one employs fabulous images in a novel manner, they will surely make a grand effect' writes Fontenelle.) — But this image of mythology permeating our understanding of creation is an unpopular one. And yet it ought not to be, according to the dominant aesthetic. Hamann's opponents cannot have it both ways; either nature is the 'beautiful' object we should imitate, or the reductionist, materialist (and far from beautiful) view of nature is the true one. Even in the view of the spirit of the age, the un-beautiful accounts of the natural scientists cannot substitute for poetry, the imitation of beautiful nature — still less for a 'tasteless doctrine of fables' (the Bible, mythology). The natural sciences too, however, are 'readings of nature', as is philosophy (203:17) and poetry; as acts of interpretation, they stand or fall on the same ground. For Hamann, poetry is not the 'imitation' of nature but its 'interpretation'; likewise with science and philosophy.

Our insertion into nature, the mode of our relation to it, however, are the slandered senses and passions (206:1-3); remove them and we cannot perceive it. Yet that is what 'your lying, murderous philosophy' has done – 'cleared Nature out of the way' while

[114] 'Ancient mythology was also poetry as the language of images of divine reality, translation from a tongue of angels into a human tongue. In *mythos* that world found its comprehensive expression. It founded the unity of the poetic world in the divine, because reality was shot through with divine action. Through mythology that pagan world became sensual speech and a unified poetic image. This perhaps is what Hamann means, when in connection with Voltaire he regrets the loss of mythology.' Lumpp notes the efforts made by Klopstock, Herder and the German Romantics towards a new mythology. (Lumpp, 77.)

[115] 'Sisera alighted from his chariot and fled away on foot.'

nevertheless demanding that the poet imitate it. One recalls again Moses Mendelssohn's comment, which would seem pre-eminently to embody the contradiction Hamann has in view here; that Nature must be submitted to critique before it can be used as a model for the artist or poet.

Those who tell the truth are at risk of persecution; this is true no less of those who tell the truth about nature and aesthetics than it is of the Hebrew Prophets and of Christ[116], as Hamann's allusion to the behaviour of the Pharisees and Pontius Pilate indicates. *How* they have cleared nature out of the way is clear: by abstractions; by preferring the pleasing picture to the diverse reality of nature, (human and otherwise) – vengeance, excrement, and all; by killing the 'living concreteness' of nature. It is better, however, to understand nature according to its own natural divisions than to dissect and 'flay' it.[117] Should this be true, Bacon too must be stoned and persecuted for testifying to the truth.

In the passage which follows, (206:16ff.) most commentators[118] understand 'one single truth' to refer to Christ, who in the next paragraph is referred to as the 'light of creation'. Thus there is no opposition understood between the single truth ruling like the sun which is day, and the many small lights of night. I understand this passage differently, and do not hear the single light 'ruling like the sun' as a phrase of approbation at all. In addition to the political overtones of 'rule' – which clearly suggests Frederick the Great – there are also the associations aroused by the totalitarian rule of the 'Sun-King'. Thus, in analogy to the monarchy of kings, I think this monistic totalitarianism again refers back to the question of a unity of meaning as proposed by Benson (and rejected by Hamann): 'a single truth ruling' is the dominance of a single meaning. As for the christological interpretation, it is hard to see that Hamann can speak with approval of Christ 'replaced' by the many lights of night (206:16-17). The relation of the first and second sentences of the paragraph is clearly one of opposition and replacement. Insofar as it is clear that the poet and thief who does his work in a secret and hidden way is God (which the biblical references confirm), and the 'night' is the time of God, it is difficult

[116] Cf. also *SM*, 3rd part.

[117] Bacon: *'Melius autem est naturum secare, quam abstrahere' (Novum Organum I,* Aphorism 51). Jørgensen observes that there is a pun in the contemporary translation of *abstrahere – abziehen, schinden*, to flay. (Jørgensen, SMAN 112.)

[118] As an example, Lumpp, 80-81, referring to Rev. 21.23.

to see how God's work, in a night of many stars, could be 'in place of' the work of Christ. Therefore in my view the talk here is of a monolithic, single-insight system organized around a single truth; as opposed to the multiplicity of meanings and understandings with which God the poet is 'in love'. The light of Christ is not the ruling sun, but the 'small light' which despite its humility 'surpasses a whole host of suns in splendour'. (Note 32 tells us that his light is borrowed – the relation of the Second Person of the Divine Trinity to the First.)

The following paragraph (206:22ff.) goes on to tell us that this small light is the light of the world (Jn. 9.5), the first-born of creation (Col. 1.15). On its light the colour, the richness, the variety (not the prettiness and decorum) of the world depends. The well-being of the whole of creation is related, however, not only to the presence of Jesus but also to our *perception* of God's revelation and the first-born of creation. It is striking to see that the light *can* apparently be quenched; this is a strongly *relational* picture in which the Logos does not just exist in aseity, in and of himself; but can actually be 'snuffed out' by our lack of response. This again pushes us towards the surprising notion of God's dependence on our reception; though some might disagree with this formulation, which might seem to compromise God's transcendence.[119] It must, of course, be correctly understood: yes, God is supreme (and will triumph over the likes of Frederick the Great, etc.) but God, as one who seeks us out for a relationship, indeed, created us already within a relationship that almost seems to precede the existence of creation[120], has chosen to put himself at the mercy of our response.

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[119] It must be said after all that Hamann is frequently happy to compromise God's transcendence, in the way that he feels God has done himself — in the notion of divine condescension, willingness to take on what is most lowly, even disgusting, and so on.

[120] Bayer addresses an 'anachronism' of 198:28-30 as a problem (*SR* 60f.): Creation apparently must pre-exist itself, if it desires God and makes this request of God which is only *answered by* the act of creation. I make sense of this logical puzzle by metaschematically applying a Lacanian notion: that even before it is born the baby already is given a role and identity in the structure of a family, has a place and a unique position there (e.g. a woman carrying her first baby and planning to have several has already created an identity for the unborn child, not as her 'only child' but as an 'elder sibling' – though not only *are* there no other siblings, but the child itself has not even been born. He or she, even as an only child, already has the identity in the family of 'older brother/sister'.) In this way, to unpack Hamann's anachronism mythologically and anthropomorphically as well as metaschematically, we had a 'pre-existence' in God's structuring an identity for

The dependence of the rest of creation likewise on our religious decisions is illustrated in 206:25, and in a parallel passage in *KRC* (N III, 32:15ff.).[121] The passage in *KRC* is the utopia, the present passage is the dystopia. Luther claimed that if one does not have a God, one has an idol; that is the background to Hamann's picture here.

> This consequence of the Enlightenment Hamann recognized clearly: nature either becomes grey matter, with which the human being can do what it will, or it becomes his idol, so that what is 'natural' is purely true and good. Either it is tyrannically misused or else passionately embraced.[122]

In both this passage and the parallel passage in *KRC* this picture is the context for the introduction of Hamann's belief that we are in the image of God; and in both passages this is not found in the possession of reason which was said to separate us from animals, but in an act of language: *naming*. The act of naming animals, indeed, is for Hamann the act which shows our 'analogy to the Creator' (206:32). Naming is analogous to creation by the word of the mouth; language as establishing a relationship but also as conferring order and authority comprises our God-likeness; as *KRC* tells us, the first children of creation were called to 'rule by the word of their mouths' (N III, 31:33) in 'the world which was prepared for [them] by the word of [God's] mouth' (32:10). The association is thus made between naming and creating, between language and creativity therefore, as well as between language and authority. This 'resemblance' to God[123] gives humanity its 'meaning and stamp', and on our bearing of this divine responsibility the well-being of nature depends (207:1-2).

This Godlikeness of relatedness is the foundation for fidelity and faith in nature. This *imago Dei* suffuses our relationship to

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us (and creating our desire) as his children, even before the creation of Creation 'from nothing'.

[121] As far as the parallelism between *AN* and *KRC* is concerned, it may not be coincidental that it was the Kabbalistic Philologian who was called upon, but the Knight of the Rose Cross who came. Cf. N III, 19:24-29ff. (the call for the Philologian in the review of Herder) and 23:4-9, 23-24:13 (Aristobolus' mockery of the Philologian, unable to rise to the challenge), with the Knight's appearance on p. 27 — crying *'Fauete linguis!'* from the Ode of Horace with which the Philologian begins *AN* (N II, 197:3.)

[122] Lumpp 81.

[123] The debate over how best to understand this notion is addressed in the Analysis section below.

nature and its creatures; we act in the likeness of God, and nature responds by revealing God to us, showing us His 'affability'[124] (207:5). Every sense impression we receive from nature reveals 'who the LORD is' (207:7); every act with which we respond in turn to our fellow creatures reveals that we are made in God's image, that we 'share in the divine nature, and that we are His family' (207:8-9).

There is of course a christological aspect to this situation, as Hamann's citation of Col. 1.15 hints (note 36).[125] However, whatever the original meaning of the passage from Colossians, in my view the 'image of the invisible God' is here given a wider reference. The image of the invisible God is indeed to be found in *all* his creatures.

But now the kabbalistic Philologian calls again for his muse, not merely to bring a shovel but purifying fire (and soap!) The purification is depicted in a fashion which is the *opposite* to what convention might lead us to expect: unlike Kant's later *Critique*, abstractions are not to be purified from the senses, but rather the other way around: the *natural* use of the senses must be purified from the abuse, indeed, the violence of abstractions. Again Bacon is called to Hamann's support, this time to elucidate a contrast between the poor portraits of nature painted by abstracting philosophers and the 'true stamp' of creator. These are *'pledges'* (207:6, note 40); and with this word 207:1-9 is now revealed as, so to speak, a proleptic exposition of this citation of Bacon. Hamann creates an interesting parallelism between 'concepts of things' and the 'name of the Creator'; both can only be understood in relation to the other, as the previous discussion of God's 'dependence' suggests; and if we misunderstand the 'things' we shall misunderstand the one who created them.

This misunderstanding is described as a 'mutilation' (cf. 208:11ff.). This mutilation is keenly felt, and pungently expressed; Hamann calls up the image of castration. Hamann's contemporaries – 'pagans', 'Greeks' instead of Christians – would never become so involved with the Bible as to castrate themselves because of it,

[124] The most natural translation of *Leutseeligkeit*, which I translate at 207:5 as 'friendliness'.

[125] Lumpp, 82, and Bayer *SR* both see the passages on these topics as christological. For Bayer, the formula of God's address 'to and through the creature' refers to the mediation of Christ, and he explicitly rejects a revelation of God in all creation (cf. *SR* 61, 62). These passages therefore are interpreted in terms of the Lutheran doctrine of the unity of creation and Creator in Jesus Christ. This issue will be discussed in the Analysis.

as did Origen of Alexandria (with the 'Gnostic' key to salvation: the mutilation of the body) on reading of those who make themselves a eunuch for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven, Mt. 19.12.[126] Are, however, the present day Greeks any the wiser if they 'castrate' themselves figuratively? If their abstractions sifted out the vowels from a text, as they sift out the senses and the passions from human nature, and sift out Christ, (the Alpha and Omega[127]), the first-born of creation, from nature herself; they could not possibly understand the text. Hamann illustrates this with a phrase from Homer's Iliad – quite unsuccessfully, one might think, for we can understand the sentence without difficulty; but of course there is no question but that the 'meaning and euphony' are disfigured. The choice of the text is not random, of course; it is an evocation of the passions, indeed, of the *Rachsucht* that constitutes the 'beautiful nature' which Homer imitated.[128]

But while Hamann's opponents *sift out* vowels, they also point in vowels and glosses and *marginalia* into 'the text of nature'[129], overwhelming it like the Flood — which more or less achieves the same destructive effect as sifting out and mutilating. The transformations of nature and human nature which God or the gods worked to woo and persuade the human race – Zeus' self-transformations in pursuit of his loves, the transformation of Lot's wife into a pillar of salt, 'alchemical' transformations of water into wine – are nothing as compared to the achievements of these Masoretes. They transform nature to make it blind, so that the blind might guide the blind (Mt. 15.14) (as we are to be guided by nature, that is, 'imitate it'); or better, they have blinded themselves with the doctrine of Epicureanism – nature as a blind watchmaker. They wish to be prophets who receive their wisdom and inspiration – and *interpretation* – not from God but from themselves. They want to rule over nature, but not with the ordering word, still less to relate to it *via* the senses or passions; for they bind their hands and 'feet'[130] with Stoicism, the repression of the passions. That 'feet' is something of a euphemism is clear from the castratory overtones of *fistulieren*, which I have translated as 'pipe' (cf. translator's note dd), as well as from what follows immediately.

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[126] Cf. below, 208:12-15.

[127] Rev. 1.8.

[128] ZH 2, 157:12.

[129] One recalls again Michaelis as *scholiast*, commentator (cf. 198:13).

[130] Cf. ZH 3, number 350, which is cited and discussed in the next chapter; 'feet' is a displacement for genitals.

These thoughts introduce another polemic with castration as its theme (208:11ff.). 'Do not yield your members to sin as instruments of wickedness, but yield yourselves to God as men who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments of righteousness,' Paul writes in Rom. 6.13; and Hamann borrows his language but not his point. If the passions are *signacula* of manliness – and ultimately, then, of its Creator – they are then intrinsic to being human and are not dishonourable.[131] One cannot have it both ways. Either these are aspects of nature, which we are to take for our model, or we may expunge them as dishonourable, and must then abandon the claim that we are imitating nature.

Origen returns again as a bad example. Do Lessing and Mendelssohn[132] take the 'letters of reason' (*letters*, not spirit, cf. 203) as literally as Origen took Mt. 19.21? The King rewards such behaviour; those who 'castrate' their passions are his 'favourites' – I intend this translation of *Liebling* to evoke the older euphemistic meaning of 'favourite'. These priests may be the eunuch servants of Cybele, but they are not the true priests of nature. Nature's priests are 'strong spirits' – a phrase which implies a certain degree of passion.

A philosopher-king like 'Saul' – Frederick the Great – sets 'monastic rules' which outlaw sex and passion. Metaschematically applied, an exegete like Michaelis composes rules for interpretation which exclude the passion of subjectivity. But it is passion, and passion alone, which gives body to abstractions and hypotheses and voice to images and signs. O'Flaherty, elucidating his schema of intuitive vs. discursive reason, understands this reference to the speed or slowness of inferences to refer to the swiftness of intuitions as opposed to the slower pace of deduction.[133] As far as the exegesis of the present passage is

[131] This point will be made even more strongly in *ESM*.

[132] Lumpp sees this passage as aimed at Lessing and Moses Mendelssohn. (Lumpp, 84.)

[133] 'Intuition, or more properly, intuitive reason is, therefore, defined as that mode of thought which involves direct or immediate apprehension as opposed to discursive thought, which involves indirect or *mediate* apprehension. The immediacy or speed of apprehension that characterized intuition is aptly described by Hamann as "the monosyllabic flash" as of lightning (*"der einsylbichte Blitz"*), implying that discursive reason would be polysyllabic, i.e. illuminating the truth only step by step or gradually.' O'Flaherty, in *NZSThR*, 290-1. Cf. also *QR*. I would simply want to repeat my reservation of Chapter 1, that it is not a question of comparing two

concerned, the rhetorical question is there to subvert the superiority of rule-guided inferences in favour of the immediacy and primacy of 'passion' (*qua* subjectivity, as the next paragraph will illustrate) and its world of imagery. Images are immediate and direct, rather than slow and indirect like inferences. The 'rolling thunder of eloquence' derives not from reasoning and abstraction, but from passion; as do the lightning flashes of insights and revelation which, as Hamann uses Shakespeare to suggest, unfolds heaven and earth.

But why should the Philologian 'paraphrase' One Word (Christ, or better, 'Logos'?) to those ignorant of the honour of being Christian? (cf. 210:3-6.) The importance and salience of the passions, of human interests, are visible in all our activity: our propensity to appropriate what is 'universal', or remote, and apply it to ourselves, and contrariwise to extend our personal experience over the whole of the human world (see note 45: 'to portray everything as similar to ourselves and to spread our portrait over the whole of nature'). Every insight is extended into a larger world-view; every grand system contains the tiny point of someone's perspective and opinion. This is an anti-objectivity polemic: all our work is grounded in the passions and senses.

But now the Philologian imagines that no one is listening but Michaelis (209:12). In his Preface to Lowth, Michaelis stressed the difference between poetry and rhetoric, and saying that many praised the poetry of Hebrews and assumed that they would have an outstanding quality to their rhetoric; they admire Isaiah and maintain that there could not have been a greater and more fiery orator; but in fact he must have been a very raw speaker. 'If a speaker imitated him, he would not be understood by most, would be held as bombastic and overblown by scholars, and what Cicero narrates of the Greek poet could easily have befallen him; that all to whom he read his poem, made off and only Plato was left.'[134] Hamann's metaschematism (209:12-15) then shows Hamann taking on the mantle of Isaiah. Michaelis also mentioned the passage with the leech (from the end of the *ars poetica*: Horace compares a mad poet or a '*recitator acerbus*' with a leech). The Philologian likewise will not leave off until he is finished, no matter how few have stuck with him so far.

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different kinds of *reason*. (Though I could accept the formula: two different styles of *reasoning*.)

[134] Cited in Lumpp, 85.

The paragraph of 209:16ff is a kind of pun on Platonic epistemology; we 'remember' antiquity as if all knowledge was contained there, and there was 'nothing new under the sun'. But why do we glorify Greeks, and not the Hebrews? Why is the ancient wisdom of the Hellenistic world acceptable, while the beliefs embodied in the Bible are 'mythological'? It is ironic that we admire the ancients 'to the point of idolatry' while we reject the anti-idolatrous sentiments of the Hebrew Scriptures as primitive and anthropomorphic; this 'cursed contradiction' infects the writings of the day, in which one ancient world is extolled and the other despised (except when it suits, as Nicolai's example shows).[135]

As far as the portrait of human nature which the ancients show us, it is a picture we observe and swiftly forget: it shows us passion of all kinds, including wrath, a thirst for blood and for vengeance. We are more like Narcissus than Rembrandt; far from lovingly including all our the flaws in the portrait[136], we are willing to lose our real life for the sake of the lovely image we imagine.[137] Indeed, not only our life, but our senses (210:37) and our body: *o utinam nostro secedere corpore possem! Votum in amantem novum* (210:35-36); *nusquam corpus erat* (210:45).

Salvation, however, comes from the Jews and not the Greeks.[138] The Christians, like Nicolai, have disappointed; they are not willing to be called such; they do not recognize the honour in the name. They are thus more fastidious than God, who was quite happy to take on our 'name' in the title 'Son of Man'.

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[135] Lumpp gives details of the 11th part of the *Literaturbrief*, to which Hamann refers, cf. Lumpp, 87ff. He cites in note 8 passages from the book which Nicolai reviewed so unfavourably (cf. translator's note ss.) Of these, I find particularly relevant in the present context: 'So great a cause as we have to admire our forefathers, Hebrews, Egyptians, Greeks, Romans and Arabs: such foolishness it is, that we dare to place ourselves, with our poor scholarship, above them in thinking. Among them none bore the name of a scholar, or a wise man, who had not attained a sufficient knowledge of nature.... They built on the foundation of experience, and attention to nature meant more to them than the logic of Aristotle. With us it is the reverse....' *Lyrische, Elegische und Epische Poesien, nebst einer kritischen Abhandlung einiger Anmerkungen über das Natürliche in de Dichtkunst und die Natur des Menschen.* (Anon.), Halle, 1759, p. 70f.

[136] **'The mistake of looking at oneself** is indispensable to self-knowledge.' (***Der Fehler sich selbst zu sehen** ist zur Selbsterkenntnis unentbehrlich.*) ZH 2, 68:16.

[137] Jørgensen sees this as a play at Winckelmann (Jørgensen, *SMAN* 122).

[138] Lumpp sees 210:1-2 ('I have not yet seen them...') as a jibe at Mendelssohn, whose works had already appeared (Lumpp, 89 note 15).

The Spirit likewise is not too fastidious to take on the world and language of humanity for its artistic materials (210:7ff.). Hamann adopts a parable from Bacon: if matter is Penelope, being courted by philosophers, then the one who appears in the form of a beggar (or slave?[139]) is the true lover and spouse, who will finish off the false rivals. In a rather anti-Manichean thrust, God/Christ is the lover or indeed spouse of matter. This we ought to know – for Homer has *translated* it (speaking is translation!) into Greek. This passage seems to confirm my reading of 199:4-5, for Homer's original activity in writing is already a 'translation' of the events.

But now Hamann raises the *real* question: not how do we go about understanding the extinct language of the Hebrews, but how do we *raise the extinct language of nature from the dead?* (211:5f.) With Michaelian scholarship, with Michaelian 'pilgrimages' to the East?[140] Or with Hamann's philological 'crusades' and Bacon's reflections on magic? As we have seen, Bacon spoke of a 'magic' which recognized a harmony of all things[141]; this is the magic of the East which the Magus of the North desires; *it* should be our booty – not the spoils of Sisera (the exegetical works of Michaelis and/or Lowth). Here too is the best context for understanding the 'unity of meaning' in Hamann's sense: Persian 'magic' as Bacon described it is Hamann's kind of philosophy or theology, in which the understanding of God, nature and humanity are all interrelated and integrated. Magic as Bacon describes it in Hamann's note 51 notices the relatedness of the 'architecture' and 'fabric' of things natural and civil. This similarity of the 'architectures' we design and the natural fabric of things is no mere similitude but reflects a fundamental relatedness.

Only these crusades and pilgrimages to East for their holistic philosophy of nature, God, and humanity alone could revive nature's language.[142] This is not a task for those committed to rococo decorum and *stile-galant*, who praise ancient poetry while they shun Achilles' wrath. The only way is through 'hyperbole'; a pun, for it also means 'a still more excellent way' as Hamann's note

[139] Phil. 2.7.

[140] O'Flaherty: '...Hamann made his own arduous pilgrimage to Arabia in his study of the Koran in the original language.' (O'Flaherty, *QR* 74.)

[141] *Vid. supra*, p. 77; also Jørgensen, *HBT* 68f.

[142] Lumpp: 'The correct answer to this question (211:5f.) can only be: it is impossible. And therefore the philologian's answer is a prayer, that God might let the language of his holiness sound again and make known his name among the Christians who are the enemy of Christ.' (Lumpp, 92.) My understanding differs somewhat, as can be seen.

tells us (this 'more excellent way' in 1 Cor. 13 is love). As with Michaelis' description of Isaiah's putative rhetorical style, overblown biblical bombast is called for. Thus, Hamann provides us with exactly that — and from Isaiah himself (211:14ff., cf. translator's note a). This pastiche of Isaiah begins Hamann's own Apocalypse.

What Hamann calls for is a new apocalyptic revelation of God, what he desires is what occurred with the arrival of the magi from East: that people come, see and worship (cf. 217:17-19), including those who are nominally Christian (but ashamed of it). Let wise men come from the East, so long as they bring their riches – Hamann observes that we are not particularly interested in their 'magic'. These wise men are like Michaelis; and Hamann points out a fundamental folly, irony, or indeed, hypocrisy: their interest is not really in humbly learning from the ancient culture[143]; they harbour a sense of superiority, a secret scorn for the beliefs and wisdom of the ancients while yet they profess admiration for their arts and culture. Let them dupe their Kings, the Danish king who was persuaded to pay for Michaelis' expedition, as well as Frederick the Great; let these exegetes reject 'childish' writing and 'childish' religion; but may God not let these 'children' be unavenged.

How can we then swallow this purgative truth, so difficult to stomach; how to make it harmless as did Elisha? (211:25.) This question relates back to 211:5, the question of resurrecting the extinct language of nature: now we need to know what to do about the abused language of Scripture. The paltry sacrifices[144] offered up by scholarship do not atone for rebellion against the Creative Spirit which they embody. Neither their scholarship nor their creative theologizing will bring back the Spirit, who inspired the holy people (human authors of the books of the Bible) to speak and write, to stand firm in good times and bad.

Our apocalypse now contains revelations about Christ, in another ambitious cento.[145] Christ's first sign (212:10) is in Hamann's view a hermeneutical one, indeed a rhapsodic, kabbalistic, Capernaitic one: the interpretation of an old text by a

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[143] Cf. *SM*, N II, 68:28-32 and 76:13f.: Socrates was quite happy to play the fool and believe in gods, which is more than his self-styled admirers are prepared to do.

[144] Lumpp sees a parallelism, so to speak, in 211:27-31; the orthodox are 'oxen' and the free-thinkers 'goats'! (Lumpp, 93.)

[145] For the biblical allusions to this cento, cf. translator's notes j, k.

new appropriation and application. Hamann thus chooses to interpret Jesus' behaviour in the story of the wedding of Cana as an act of placing himself in relation to the Hebrew Scriptures (*via* a metaphor of old and new wine.) This understanding he shares with Augustine, whose christocentric hermeneutical principle he cites. This is to apply to scripture, as we have seen it does to nature.

But Hamann cannot pass by an opportunity to bait Michaelis once more. Hamann's note 54 is an extended pun on the word 'Punic', which permits him to taunt Michaelis' treatment of the Punic Augustine. He begins with a playful introduction, which yet has a serious point, which we could summarize as: 'Ambiguous speech is the wittiest and best, not only in jokes but in serious matters.' This must be heard as a sharp contrast to the desire for a 'unity of meaning'! Punning is indeed a *virtue* (Hamann emphasizes), according to the 'casuistic definition'. Michaelis – who is ambiguous himself – nevertheless does not appreciate figurative language as much as Augustine; Hamann's use of Augustine shows that (at least in Hamann's understanding of him) he can indeed understand the oblique, the figurative — reading in Christ where he is not written. Michaelis on the other hand in Hamann's view clearly fails to 'understand Christ' even where he is explicitly written into the text. This is barbarism (perhaps a reference to the etymology of the word; a lack of linguistic sophistication).

Hamann juxtaposes his citation of Augustine with one of Luther. In its context it deals with predestination; but Hamann's note 55 on accomodation indicates that he does not mean to deal with predestination[146], but rather he has 'accommodated' the words of Luther: re-interpreted them (as a rhapsodist!) The associative link is wine; the strong wine is not the doctrine of predestination (which is irrelevant here) but the christological hermeneutical principle which Hamann has introduced. The wine now is the revelation of Christ, as with 212:10-14, and 14-213:1.

This reading is confirmed by what follows (213:6ff.), which speaks of God's self-revelation to the point of exhaustion. (Again, we see that Hamann is quite happy with anthropomorphism verging on blasphemy.) The theme of Christ as God's revelation continues; but it is to be noticed that Christ is the climax of God's revelation in nature, Scripture and history, not the *sole* revelation; before him come 'creatures and seers, poets and prophets', indeed

[146] Lumpp seems to think so, 96. (Hence he sees 'Accommodation' as a term of Rhetoric rather than as an adaptation to a new context.)

'reasons and figures'. This christological discussion finds its climax as Hamann breaks out into a hymn of praise (but immediately subverts the pious tone in his own note 56).

Now the Apocalypse reaches its eschatological climax with a long apocalyptic cento (213:15-214:22). It gives us what we would expect from the genre: to wit, a graphic picture of God's future action when He finally comes, the dismal state of the world before that happens, the dire fate of God's (i.e. the human author's) enemies — and obscurity.[147] Although Hamann (ostensibly) forbears from calling his learned opponents (ingenious sophists) 'stupid devils' (cf. Mt. 25.41, cf. 214:12f.), on the apocalyptic Day of the Lord they certainly will be so called. A donkey's head, doves' droppings – item of trade and barter when times are desperate[148] – are the price which the exegetical sophists put on God's word. Hamann goes on to paint the traditional colourful picture of the state of affairs on the Day of the Lord (214:1ff.). The last martyr God shall lead out from the destroyed city; this of course refers to Lot fleeing Sodom, but given Hamann's predilection for referring to Berlin as Sodom, perhaps it has a contemporary referent as well; after all, it is always a fitting question whether an apocalyptic narrative does refer, as claimed, to the future or in fact to the miserable present.

The angels of 214:13 we must assume number Michaelis, the archangel, among them. Their *senses* have been so crazed by reason that they cannot perceive the Lord even as the devils do (214:14-15). You laugh at the early signs of disaster, Hamann asks them, in an adroit synthesis of biblical and pagan images of doom; will you laugh at the apocalyptic hour? Ravens feed Elijah when there is a drought ordered by the Lord – more hardship is in store. Yet Hamann's enemies manage not to recognize God in Christ (214:20), and they persist with their idols (214:21-22). As translator's notes y and z indicate, proposals have been made to see Calvinism and Catholicism as the idolatrous faiths. (Whether one follows Lumpp's or Jørgensen's attributions of the opera and the mosque to Rome or Geneva makes little difference in the end, as their underlying interpretations agree.) One might not understand 'opera and mosque' as epexegetical on 'Geneva and Rome', however. Geneva and Rome can thus be Calvinism and Catholicism, where an abomination might be 'apotheosized', while the opera or mosque might be where it is 'purged' or 'pumpkinized'.

[147] For the biblical allusions to these centos, cf. translator's notes w and x.
[148] Cf. 2 Kgs. 6.25.

Here one might recall Hamann's tendency to call enlightened deists 'Muslims'; perhaps the 'opera' refers to the divas of Sans Souci, if not to Rousseau's efforts in this area. Hamann thus could be lashing out both at theologians and philosophers in this sentence.

The closing sentences of the apocalyptic (214:23-24) tell us that the apocalyptic is sacred[149] (the 'two snakes' are a sign of this); meanwhile the apocalyptic Philologian is off.

Consequently we have a change of authorial voice in the passage of 214:26ff. The christological backdrop remains, for the observations on the birth of a genius refers both to Jesus and to Klopstock. (The reference to 'children' recalls 211:23-24.)

Against Michaelis, the Kabbalistic Philologian defends paronomasia. The origin of play on and with words is central to language; rhyme and the pun are fundamental and primitive to our language and (interestingly) *sense-representations,* he tells us (214:31f.). This ability to play with words, to experiment with sameness and difference is fundamental as a way of seeing, thinking, learning. One might note here the dual meaning (indeed, the pun!) of 'images', which has played such a role in this essay: as a picture of something, thus resembling itself; as figurative language, thus resembling something else.

In the paragraph of 215:5-16 Hamann places Klopstock in a parallelism of the 'oldest poets', that is, of the Bible, and thus draws a parallel between Lessing on Klopstock and Michaelis and Lowth on Hebrew poetry. Thereby he applies Lessing's criticism of Klopstock's verse to the Bible — and indeed, to Homer (17ff.); but why is Homer praised and Klopstock and the Bible disparaged? This recalls the critique of 209:16-25.

Hamann's little parable about the Lettish people and their verse (215:18ff.) makes his theological point: a divine accommodation to human aesthetics is implied in a doctrine of revelation. God, who is happy to take the form of a slave, trims his voice to the established metre, to paronomasia, in all its figurative senses; indeed to our senses and passions, and our need for images, and our delight in punning. But Hamann in characteristic fashion[150] will not make his point explicit, though his critics would welcome the opportunity to burn his essay with their 'curling irons'.

A further idea is contained here. Strässle rightly points out the intimate connection between language and history for Hamann,

[149] 'So don't piss on it!'

[150] See the endings of *KRC* and *MPR*.

citing his early letter to Lindner: 'In the language of a people we find their history. Since the gift of speaking belongs to the advantages of humanity, I am surprised that no one has yet made an attempt to investigate the history of our race and our soul from his angle.'[151] Strässle finds in this observation an entire 'programme'.

The essay (ostensibly) ends as it begins: with a citation of Horace. At the beginning, it set the solemn ritual tone; here it seems to describe the aftermath of an apocalyptic outbreak of storm, destruction, hardship, terrors. The ordeal of course refers to God's judgement, 'the Day of the Lord' — but also, self-deprecatingly, to the experience of reading Hamann's essay. (The Capital, meanwhile, is not so much Rome as Berlin.)

Hamann now provides us with a gloss (217); in my view this is another example of Prosopopoeia; it is a speech put on the lips of the 'first reader'. I suspect this refers to Michaelis, the glossator (*scholiast*, 198:13), and the 'only reader' in 209:12-15. Hamann spares Michaelis the trouble of reviewing his work. His reaction, not surprisingly, is one of rejection: it is all in vain. He mocks his own polyhistorical tendencies; things are dragged in by the heels from all over; there are plenty of figures; notes ('asterisks' were used to indicate footnotes in the original text; the footnote numbers stem from Nadler) and there are certainly plenty of dashes ('obelisks') — which he perhaps has absorbed from *Tristram Shandy's* style.

But at least he sums up Hamann's aesthetic rightly, and puts it in a nutshell: worship God. Give *him* the glory, who made the text of nature.

3. Analysis

a. 'Aesthetics'

The reader of *AN* might be forgiven for wondering: what is 'aesthetics'? Lumpp, indeed, writes that it is not so much a new conception of the world and poetry (as Unger maintained) but is rather '– to exaggerate – a religious pamphlet.'[152] The exposition ofthe essay has revealed that Hamann's 'aesthetics' is not a doctrine of the beautiful, nor a generalized theory of the fine arts,

[151] ZH 1, 393-4, 3.8.1759. Strässle, 76.
[152] Lumpp, 144.

but takes its name far more literally than that: it is an account[153] of the senses, of sense-experience. Taking up the way left open by Baumgarten (and Wolff before him), it is an exploration of the world of the 'lower faculties'. 'Aesthetics' could be seen as an epistemology of the senses. *AN* is therefore an investigation of the senses and sense-experience and of the role they play in human nature, in human understanding, indeed in human language. Jørgensen writes:

> The title itself, with the play on Schönaich, seems understandable without anything further, but contains more than the modern reader might suppose at first glance. Hamann could presuppose the reader's knowledge of the actual meaning of this relatively new word. The *Aisthesis*, sensuous knowledge, was indeed the starting-point for Baumgarten's definition of aesthetics as *scientia cognitionis sensitivae* and *ars pulcre cogitandi*. Hamann plays exactly on that, perhaps valuing it differently than did the Leibniz-Wolff pupil Baumgarten. Sensuous knowledge was for the faithful empiricist Hamann the first and only possible and suitable mode of knowledge for human knowledge, no '*facultas cognoscitiva inferior*', that indeed possessed its own value, but which can lead to a higher, clearer knowledge of reason. The expression of this knowledge of the symbolic world is sensuous, symbolic language — poetry — and the question of knowledge generally *and* of poetry is indeed the theme of this aesthetic, which is shown clearly on the first page. The aesthetic question reveals itself as the question of the ground and beginning of all experience and revelation, which can be imparted to the human person.[154]

Aesthetics as the doctrine of *aisthesis* then is the fundamental issue of the many topics that cluster together in *AN*; not merely 'anthropological' questions of knowledge, nature and experience, but also the theological questions about God's creation and revelation which presuppose the answers.

This fundamental doctrine of the senses then feeds into an 'aesthetic' in the more usual sense; and yet even in its most conventional usage, Hamann's aesthetics is less concerned with beauty than with our relationship with nature. The connection is to be found in the contemporary notion of art as the imitation of (beautiful) Nature. This conception of art is too passive, for it implies that the artist simply records what is there; the artist's contribution and the difficulties faced being largely ones of

[153] For a study of Hamann's poetics, see Lumpp; for a study of his hermeneutics and philology, see Hoffmann.

[154] Jørgensen, *ZHS* 375.

technique. Nevertheless this aesthetic is covertly too *active*; as Moses Mendelssohn's claim[155] indicates, the author or artist is in fact first to *judge* nature by some prior standard and alter nature where necessary — before 'imitating' it. The pretensions this aesthetic has to realism are false, for the Hamannian; what is this artefact which is held up for imitation? Whatever it is, it is not nature as it really is. To this picture of humanity's relation to nature as one of artistic imitation, Hamann opposes his own suggestions. Our first relation to nature is found in the world of imagery. The notion of the generation of images suggests an interaction which is creative and interpretative – thus conscious of its departure from purely passive recording – yet potentially far *truer* to the reality which it interprets, for it does not seek to alter its partner in relation (nature) to suit its own taste and opinions. This synthesis of the figurative and the representative leaves room for 'paronomasia' – for play, for the departure from the literal – and for symbolism.

The second feature of our 'aesthetic' relationship to nature is to be found in the notion of 'fidelity' to nature. This notion of 'being true' should not surprise the reader of *SM*. Here in *AN*, it becomes part of his *theological* aesthetic, for Hamann connects it with the theory of the *imago Dei* which is at the heart of his anthropology: 'This analogy of the human being to the Creator imparts to all creatures their value and their stamp, on which fidelity and faith in all of nature depend.' (206:32-207:2.)

For Hamann, the poet – or philosopher or theologian – is not to 'imitate' nature, but to interpret it. A further dimension of interpretation, then, which the notion of imitation lacks, is the implication of the existence of a third term in the relationship: for the notion of interpretation suggests the existence of an author of the interpreted phenomenon, the creator of an 'objectivated meaning', to use Betti's term. In this way, the *interpretation* of nature points to a Creator in a way that the *imitation* of nature does not.

[155] Cf. translator's notes κ, ξ.

b. Hermeneutics

i. Hermeneutics in general

Several themes return from *SM*: the emphasis on the empiricism of perception and interpretation reappears, more strongly worded, as an insistence on the role that the senses (and the passions) play in interpretation. The corollary of this – the role that subjectivity has to play therefore in interpretation – is also developed from *SM*; hermeneutics is now not merely a personal, involved activity but is positively passionate. The hermeneut must not 'venture into the metaphysics of the fine arts without being initiated into the orgies and Eleusinian mysteries'; in which the two gods worshipped are the senses and the passions. Indeed, it is passion alone which gives life and meaning to the text (208:20-22).

As with *SM*, this is not a license to limitless subjectivity, in the sense of a wilfully projected meaning onto the text which reveals more about the interpreter than the author or the text itself. Hamann is too clear-sighted to fall into this trap in his desire to avoid objectivism.[156] As Hoffmann observes, Hamann's long citation of Bacon in note 21 indicates that his invocation of Kabbala and his style are tactical devices.[157] The lack of discipline that many fear in subjectivism Hamann deplores as much as any; and describes it as the 'flooding' of a text with one's one irrelevant glosses, which turn its 'beauties and riches' 'to water'[158]; or as the activity of 'prophets who dream up their own inspiration and interpretation'[159] rather than receiving it from a better source.

Hamann's defence against this danger is not Michaelis' however. Hoffmann analyses the differences between the two on exegesis. Hamann repeatedly interprets the tendency of modern exegesis to reduce and make oneself secure with methodological rules as 'fear' (e.g. 204:26-30). In the attempt to achieve the desired understanding of the text, and to ensure against misunderstandings, Michaelis produces a codex of rules; this is his self-protection. 'The rational certain knowledge sought in the text

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[156] Hoffmann shares this view, 192.

[157] *Ibid.*

[158] Cf. 207:21-23. In its context of course this refers specifically to the 'text of nature'.

[159] Cf. 208:5f.

corresponds to the "hermeneutical rules" grounded by reason.'[160] Hamann however knows the rules but uses them with a certain freedom. Rules are for Hamann similar to reason: a negative quantity, which might on occasion facilitate intuition but can never replace it. The evidence of the text cannot be forced, and there is a phase of rule-work which cannot be avoided, but which exists in part to prepare the interpreter through the uncovering of rule-immanent contradictions for the break-through of an unexpected insight. 'Thereby an element comes into interpretation that cannot be reduced to a rational method; indeed only through this it seems can the aliveness of interpretation be guaranteed.' For Hamann 'interpretation in general, and with it also philology, is grounded in a spontaneous, pre-rational basis, which shows aesthetic, literary and religious traits. *Vis-à-vis* contemporary exegesis, in this seemingly traditional stance Hamann preserves insights which in the modern understanding of hermeneutics as in philology have again attained significance.'[161]

'Monastic rules', Hamann calls these rules which seek to protect the interpreter (in the guise of protecting the text) by forbidding the intrusion of passions.[162] Passion gives life to interpretation; but with the 'aliveness' of interpretation, the freedom from the security of rational rules, an element is introduced into the picture of the hermeneutical act: a moment over which we have no disposal; something which 'comes to us' and is not legislated. This freedom for the interpreter and freedom of the text is a dangerous one: if we are not to flood the text, and yet if the spirit of the letter 'blows where it will' and not where we will, how is the interpreter to give spirit and life to images and signs? How are we to bring the dissected members of poets to their destiny? This, in Hamann's hands, introduces the notion of interpretative responsibility. The safeguards against wilful abuse are not found in rules, but in relationship: as in *SM*, the idea is to be 'true' to your subject. It is not for prophets to dream up their own inspiration and interpretation; that is to arise from the respectful relationship with the author and the text. There are no further safeguards for this than there are against misunderstanding in any other relationship; and it may not seem secure enough for those whose security is found in method and rules – those who are 'terrified of the spirit and life of the Prophets', (note 23) whose spirit and life was their relationship

[160] Hoffmann, 189.
[161] Hoffmann, 190.
[162] Cf. 208:20f.

with their God. And yet, this hermeneutical approach is in fact *less* 'subjective' (in the worst sense) than one which secures itself with rules: for the seeming objectivity of rules deceitfully conceals the subjectivity of the one who devised them, and passes itself off as detached from self-interest and prejudice.

As we have seen, for Hamann exegesis must be neither materialist nor idealist. Both exegetical materialism and idealism cut out the three-way relation — of Author, Text and Reader — of relational interpretation. Materialism leaves out the author as an Other with desires, intentions and aims, as Hamann indicates in note 23; where we are reminded that the interpreter among other responsibilities must be entrusted with 'the projects that imaginative authors, in a critical place, forge....' Exegetical idealism, on the other hand, bypasses the bodily text in a delusory leap to the spirit, the imagined *mens auctoris*. The text, however, is the very *concretion* of meaning and creativity, and for Hamann as the lover and champion of the concrete, it is the only way we have access to its creator. Hoffmann argues that Hamann's opposition to exegetical materialism is not to be understood as an exegetical idealism 'in the sense that a connection to the "spirit" of the text makes any efforts on the text [*Wortlaut*] superfluous.' The accent changes with the polemical situation; against Lessing and the debate over Reimarus' *Fragments*, he can defend the wording of the Bible over against a spiritual evaporation of the actual text. Even as late as 1786 he is writing to Jacobi that with every human utterance one must be 'attentive to the given letters, as the only vehicle for grasping the spirit. When one has *data*, what does one need *ficta* for?'[163]

Relational hermeneutics, in contrast, unites text, author and interpreter (therefore letter and spirit, 'matter' and 'idea') in a reciprocal union that overcomes both materialism and idealism. The text mediates between the author and the interpreter and is the only way the creator can be perceived and appreciated. The Creator, however, does not vanish behind the text; the text is an invitation to dialogue, not a self-sufficient entity that can be cut loose from its author and examined in this anti-human fashion without a serious loss of meaning and significance. Nevertheless, although 'the author is the best interpreter of his words' (204:1), these 'words' may be creatures, events, or indeed 'blood and fire and smoke' – in short, phenomena which are not self-explanatory,

[163] Hoffmann, 185-186; letter to Jacobi of 25.3.86.

certainly not capable of a literalist still less fundamentalist understanding. For all the importance of an author, recovering a supposed *mens auctoris* is not the end of the hermeneutical act. This is the case for several reasons, as far as Hamann is concerned. First of all, there is no single meaning to a text that can be ascribed to the intention of the author; Hamann's note 23 which speaks of the author's 'project' also details a list of levels of meaning – 'literal or grammatical, carnal or dialectical, Capernaitic or historical' – of which the author's kerygmatic intentions form only one (the Capernaitic, perhaps). These meanings, further, are not dependent on the will and intentions of the author, nor for that matter on the subjective pre-understandings of the interpreter but on 'momentary, ethereal, arbitrary, secondary conditions and circumstances'. Thus he allows for an intriguing degree of change, of accident, of *vulnerability* in meaning (and interpretation) in a way that is striking in an eighteenth-century thinker. But at the same time a degree of independence of the text from author *and* interpreter is created; not a self-sufficiency, but an absence of domination by either creator or critic. 'But where does the riddle of a book lie? In its language or its content? In the plan of its author or in the mind of the interpreter?'[164]

These factors help to explain why Hamann rejects the Bensonian idea of a unity of meaning. To permit, *a priori* and by decree, only a single meaning to exist in a text is too authoritarian. Above all, it constitutes a domination of the text *and* its author by the reader; for although it might seem to emphasize the author to a degree that seems undesirable for some modern points of view by recognizing only a single meaning which presumably is coterminous with the authorial intention, in the end it is far too restrictive even for that limited understanding of what meaning is. Even if one excises the possibility of unconscious intentions on the part of the author, of accidental meanings which nevertheless the author would embrace if they were pointed out, and restricted the author to one purpose or intention per text; still, a unity of *purpose* does not support the existence of a unity of *meaning*. Not even the author may 'intend' or 'mean' a pun or *double entendre*, even in support of a single aim. The use of language is restricted to the literal or to the most simplistic of figurative language. Unsubtle

[164] ZH 5, Nr. 784, 272:16-18, Christmas, 1784, to Jacobi.

Prosopopoeia is permitted[165], but not the Paronomasia despised by Michaelis and beloved of Hamann. Fontenelle's claim that 'the art of personification works a field much less limited and more fertile than ancient mythology' (cited by Hamann in note 20) is clearly offered by the Rhapsodist with heavy irony; for in his view it is Prosopopoeia with its (apparently) single meaning which is limited, in comparison to the richness of meanings available in the figurative language of mythology.

Hamann thus can be allied with neither the most radical and fashionable nor the most conservative movements in present day hermeneutics and literary criticism. The same, we shall now see, is true of his place with respect to biblical exegesis.

ii. Biblical Hermeneutics

The fundamental controversy in biblical hermeneutics that is presupposed by the polemic of *AN* is the distinction between the sacred and profane; whether sacred texts are to be interpreted in a manner different to that with which secular texts are handled. Hamann does not distinguish sharply between sacred and profane hermeneutics as does Michaelis. 'Hamann separates neither the two areas of sacral and profane hermeneutics, nor levels their particularities on the grounds of a normative understanding of philology, rather he unites both spheres in a *communicatio idiomatum* which does not shy away from contrast.'[166] This can be seen in his typical conflation of biblical with pagan citations, which led Michaelis in his review of *CP* to accuse Hamann of an irresponsible misuse of biblical expressions.[167]

Theologically, we might add that ultimately for Hamann this distinction between the sacred and the profane is subverted. If one views the sacred-profane distinction mirrored in the topic of Scripture-Nature and considers Hamann's treatment of this question, it is clear that this coupling is a *distinction* but no opposition. God is the author of both Scripture and Nature; God in Hamann's view therefore speaks not only through the Bible but through the pagan authors as well, as we have seen in *SM*. There is a *unity of revelation*, and therefore a *unity of interpretation* is the appropriate response; not a different methodological approach

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[165] Interestingly, Hamann maintains a certain reserve towards allegorizing interpretations (as with Herder's interpretation of Genesis, which will be discussed in the next chapter). Cf. Hoffmann, 194.

[166] Hoffmann, 169.

[167] *Ibid.*, 169.

to the two 'classes' of writing. This same deconstruction of the opposition is related to his treatment of and understanding of the reason-revelation or natural-revealed theology dichotomy, which will be examined later.

An issue that arises from the question of the handling of 'sacred literature' is the question of the perfection to be found (or not) in the Bible. Here Hamann's stance is clear. He is not of like mind to the biblical conservatives who 'presuppose such perfection in Scripture' (cf. Hamann's citation of Bacon, note 21), which rests its faith on the supposed 'perfection' that must be ascribed to its language, transmission, and all such accidental details. On the other hand Hamann is most certainly not at one with Michaelis in declaring the Bible to be 'certainly very imperfect', in any way that betrays a sense of linguistic and literary superiority to the human authors (and therefore an implicit reproach of the Divine 'Author'). Ultimately, perhaps, the perfection or otherwise of the Bible is not an issue for Hamann because (unlike Descartes, for example) perfection for Hamann is not a fundamental category of metaphysical understanding, not the central feature of God's essence or the root concept of his model of God. In that sense it might simply be irrelevant. The issue of perfection is however *made* important for Hamann, for it strikes at a fundamental question of divine-human relations. The Bible, whatever the source of its inspiration, is written by human authors, and it is addressed to human beings to evoke a very 'human' and personal response. Perfection (were it even possible) would be *inappropriate* in these circumstances; indeed, such perfection would be a 'certainly very imperfect' way for a perfect God to communicate with humanity. A dominant theme of Hamann's religious thinking, from the time of his conversion onwards, is the theme of divine condescension: that God communicates with us on *our* terms, in *our* fashion, within *our* limitations. Paradoxically, then a perfect God knows to communicate *im*perfectly with imperfect creatures. This also has certain repercussions for human freedom of response, in interpreting, in not hearing the address. We may 'deny God or be a beast'; the freedom of interpretation and response remains a gift.

This same freedom attends on 'understanding Christ' — the Augustinian phrase Hamann borrows to suggest a kind of hermeneutical christocentrism[168]; that is, Hamann's typology. Typology in Hamann's hands is not a naive, fundamentalist way of

[168] Cf. 212:14ff.

reading the Hebrew Scriptures. The autonomy of the Jewish authors is respected in the same way that Hamann respects the paganism of antiquity. Jews and pagans are allowed their difference; their non-Christian meaning is not obliterated in a hermeneutic that would argue for 'understanding Christ' in a non-Christian text as the *single, correct meaning*. This should be clear alone from Hamann's rejection of unity of meaning in the first place. In *SM*, it was clear that whatever Hamann's typological manipulations, he was not under the delusion that Socrates saw himself as a forerunner of Christ, nor that Socrates (or Plato), if he had not done so, *should* have. Hamann's placing of Socrates and Christ in parallel was a creative-hermeneutical act (one might say a *rhapsodistic* one) that, by creating a new relationship, created a new world of possible meanings and insights. Hamann's fondness for biblical typology is no different. The creation of a relationship between older and newer, which in this case also serves to emphasize the unity of God's revelation, as an interpretative act is designed to stimulate figurative, dialectical, Capernaitic or indeed mystical meanings and interpretations[169] – but not literal, grammatical or historical ones. Hamann's typology cannot be understood with a crude understanding of meaning and authorial intention as a presupposition. It should be seen as the textual and christological parallel to his treatment of God's revelation in nature: we should see nature, and *truly see* it, in its own right; yet see God in and through it. That this does not make for pantheism, or a kind of docetism of nature, nor imply that the phenomena of nature are somehow illusions, should be clear. The autonomy of Nature, its difference from God, is respected, but by seeing it in relation to God a new layer of meaning is created. In the same way, to 'understand Christ' in pagan or Jewish scriptures is not to make an anachronistic historical-critical solecism, nor does it abolish the non-Christian status of non- or pre-Christian writings. Rather, it creates a new framework for interpreting, and thus creates a new network of associations and personal insights.

Hoffmann's understanding of Hamann's use of typology is along these lines: typology produces a relationship between the Old Testament and the New Testament on the foundation of a salvation-historical continuity and the tension it contains between promise and fulfilment. It operates with levels of meaning that go beyond the mere run of the words. Michaelis does not reject it as

[169] Cf. Hamann's note 23, 203:33-36.

such (as does Semler). Indeed he defends it in certain circumstances against misuse; but to do so, he drastically restricts its use: images, like words, must have only one meaning at a given point. As is Hamann, he is concerned with multiplicity and unity, but the differences between the two are not to be overlooked:

> While Michaelis is concerned with the certainty and reliability of the interpretation of the holy Scriptures, with the help of exclusively rational methods and rules, whereby typological interpretation is assigned a limited preserve and the unity in the meaning of a univocal interpretation of the text dominates one-sidedly, with Hamann it seems the unifying experience of evidence lies in an act of faith, which [being] not only rational permits a much freer relationship to the possibility of there being many levels of meaning in the text.[170]

All of these themes channel into a fundamental question which is behind much of the polemic of *AN*: what constitutes the 'true' understanding of the Bible? The historical-critical method? An understanding of the relevant cultural context and literary genres? Secular poetics? All of these, Hamann recognizes, constitute a level of understanding; indeed, they are indispensable to the understanding of the letter. But that this constitutes the *only* kind of understanding possible is anathema to Hamann; it amounts to exegetical materialism. Its disregard of human authors as well as human readers is, perhaps, almost antisocial. The letter is our only access to the spirit; but it is the spirit which draws us into a relationship with the author. Hamann would not want to speak of a single true understanding of the Bible; all modes of study and interpretation are revealing, but only of the particular dimension of meaning and significance that *is capable of discovery when using that methodology*. At the very least, however, we are entitled to say that in the polemical context of *AN* Hamann's principal grievance was the severance of the biblical texts from their kerygmatic aims and the denial of the invitation to a relationship with God that the Jew or Christian believe these texts (as well as pagan texts) represent.

Hamann therefore differs from the biblical conservatism or indeed fundamentalism to which a careless reading might assimilate him. Certain fundamentalist attitudes towards inerrancy, for example, Hamann could not accept. Hamann most certainly does not reject what the fundamentalist does: figurative

[170] Hoffmann, 188-189.

language, ambiguity, indeed, error; nor does he reject the academic biblical investigation which the hard-core fundamentalist eschews. (His own intensive linguistic and philological study of Hebrew, Christian and Muslim sacred writings must be recalled.) His happiness with the idea of a biblical text as a literary product like others is above all shown in his delight of speaking of God as an author. God indeed, is a *poet* – and not, for example, a Preacher! – an image of God which indicates unambiguously a delight in the literary qualities of the biblical texts. The letter is not a husk to be cast aside, a system like a Morse code whose only value lies in the communication of its message, which lacks any beauty or aesthetic value of its own. This recognition of God as an author, however, does not obscure Hamann's recognition of human authorship; and here he differs in some ways from modern trends in literary criticism.[171] In fact, one might say despite his apparent conservatism, he does *more* justice to the human authorship of the texts than does the historical-critical method of Michaelis. The desires and kerygmatic intentions of the biblical authors are appreciated, and indeed given the courtesy of a response. To recognize an author's or redactor's aims but not to respond to them (even with a polite refusal) could be seen as a curiously cold and indeed de-personalizing way to behave to another human being whose work one professes to respect. For all that Hamann recognizes a distinction between literary activity and kerygmatic purpose, this is no dichotomy; and as long as one does not respond to the author and the text in the way they most ardently desire, there is inevitably a dimension of significance and experience which is *not* extracted from the text.

As far as the relations between the author and the interpreter are concerned, Hamann's free use of the terms 'rhapsody' and 'Kabbala' constitute a kind of model or paradigm of hermeneutics. These terms stress the importance of prior tradition in interpretation (and as far as a Christian hermeneutics is concerned, the prior traditions *both* of the pagan classical world and of the Judeo-Christian, biblical heritage). With the notion of tradition comes the idea of a limiting context; yet also inherent in the two terms is the implication of freedom contained in the dimension of creativity

[171] What would Hamann have made of this, I wonder: 'We do not suppose, to begin with, that the signs... are the vehicle for messages that are in principle communicable. We don't start off by saying to ourselves: someone or something is *speaking* to us here, so I must try to understand.' (Jean François Lyotard, *'The Tensor'*, 9.)

which they suggest.[172] Hermeneutics is thus seen as a response, and not pure self-generation. This model therefore restores the possibility of a three-way relation of author, text and reader to interpretation.

c. Language

Language forms the matrix in which Hamann's doctrine of the senses is first explored. Language is set out at the beginning of the essay as the context for the investigation into the senses: 'Poetry is the mother-tongue of the human race...' (197:15ff.). This paragraph illustrates the primacy of the concrete over the abstract, which is summed up epexegetically in the declaration of 197:22-23: 'The senses and the passions speak and understand nothing but images.' We see here the hoofprints of Baumgarten and Bacon, Hamann's two 'borrowed stallions': for both, as we have seen, thought must be made visible and concrete (whether to reveal or to conceal!) Hamann's achievement, however, is to nail down the world of the concrete, of imagery as prior, primary, fundamental; rather than viewing parables as ornaments created by genius or as literary devices. Further, the function of 197:22f. is to anchor the generation and receptivity of images in the realm of the sensuous; that is, without creating a dissecting taxonomy of the human self, Hamann points to the senses as the 'faculty' which deals in imagery. Language remains the crux of the issue, however; Hamann's curious observation on paronomasia[173] is best understood in this context. 'Language' and 'sense-representations' are united by Hamann in the phenomenon of word-play. Indeed, rhymes and puns delight in the sensuous reality of a word, its sound and the feel of it in the mouth, temporarily seeming to triumph over its meaning — only to yield again to the primacy of meaning over sound with their gift to the word of a new layer of reference. If this is a childish and trivial way of dealing with language and writing poetry, as Michaelis seemed to feel, Hamann preempts this by situating this play at the very beginnings of human utterance. Crucially, this phenomenon is not a purely

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[172] Cf. Hoffmann: 'When Hamann places his philology under the programme of "Kabbala", that does not mean interpretation of the text at will in the sense of an arbitrary polyvalence and application, but rather a combination of restriction and freedom in relation to the text.' (Hoffmann, 193.)

[173] 'If rhyme belongs to the genus of **Paronomasia**; the origin of the same must be almost as old as the nature of language and our sense-representations.' (214:31-33.)

sensuous one, not a question of sound detached from meaning. For when one plays with the form, one plays with the meaning and creates new possibilities of meaning.[174] 'Ambiguous speech is the wittiest', 'also in serious matters' (212:24ff.). Punning is a 'virtue'.

The fact that images are the language of the senses explains why the notion of images and the concrete (and the opposition to abstraction) runs like an *idée fixe* through this work. Imagery and the concrete include both the notion of the senses and of figurative language, two of Hamann's dominant interests in *AN*. Most importantly, however, the backdrop of the colourful concrete world is the scene in which Hamann stages his great drama: the event of God's self-communication to humanity in nature.

The main *philosophical* question that arises with respect to language is the question after its relationship to 'things', to reality or nature. To fasten on a question raised by Michaelis' treatment of the Kabbala[175], is it one of the 'divine advantages' of language that it can express 'the essence of things'? This, according to Michaelis, is something only the 'credulous' can believe. Or is the relation of language to 'things' more clumsy, less incisive, less direct? Hamann as a virtual nominalist of course would have little truck with any serious discussion of an 'essence of things', but he will not tolerate any theory of language that treats it as a lamentably blunt pencil. And yet, language *has* been blunted, and not merely blunted, we might say, but bludgeoned: 'how shall we raise the extinct language of nature from the dead?' (211:5f.) This denaturing of language has taken place by the demands that Nature be made pretty and probable before we may speak of it; but above all, by the disempowerment of language that occurs when one doubts its capacity to adequately reveal the world. Hamann's conception of language and speech as a 'translation' reveals that at the basis of his thinking there is *no* language-world dichotomy; language, after all, is part of the world, and moreover the 'world' or 'reality' or 'things' *are* already somehow linguistically conceived, so that speech is not a first depiction or description or representation but a *translation* of something that already is a 'text'.

This raises associations in the modern (or perhaps better, post-modern) mind of the popular suggestion that there is no access to reality apart from language. If this can describe Hamann's attitude, it must be correctly understood. Unlike twentieth-century

[174] Paronomasia then is like a paradigm for Hamannian hermeneutics, with its simultaneous creativity yet fidelity to a prior original.

[175] *Vid. supra*, 77.

versions – 'outsidelessness' as Brinkman has described Cupitt's position[176] – this is not a kind of linguistic claustrophobia, an expression of a post-Kantian despair at ever getting at the things in themselves, a frustrated nostalgia for a pre-critical idyll where the knowledge of things was unproblematic and therefore the connection between words and things secure and unquestioned. In Hamann's hands, the fact that perceiving and understanding are inseparable from speaking is commonsensical; one no more need despair over it (nor contest that it is so) than one would trouble oneself over the fact that there is no access to sight without eyes. The fundamental difference lies in the root (perhaps even unconscious) attitude or picture of what language does. The believer in outsidelessness essentially reacts to the difference which metaphysically must exist between object and word, between state of affairs and linguistic account – the 'non-literalness' of language's 'translation', we might say – as implying a distortion by language, an obscuring by language of how things 'really are'.[177] For Hamann, however, language does not 'screen off' reality; it does not obscure, conceal or distort the rest of reality, but *reveals* it, indeed, is the only organ or mode for its revelation and communication. That there is no access to reality apart from language does not mean that language has managed to insert itself permanently between us and the objects of our knowledge, and is determined forever to make mischief between us. It is because only language can make the world known and understood to a linguistic being. For Hamann, such metaphysical difference as exists between language and the rest of the world is *creative*, and endlessly productive of new layers of meaning. It is not like an inaccurate and imperfect report; but rather bears the fruitful difference yet identification which a symbol bears, which opens up a new world of non-literal meaning. The subjective, interpretative moment that arises in human speaking is a clarifying and revelatory moment – just as one doesn't quite know or understand what one means oneself until it has successfully been put into words. This common phenomenon demonstrates that the 'translation' of speaking, as Hamann calls it, is not a bad photo-copy of a clearer original, but the very moment of bringing into being and knowing in the first place.

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[176] Brinkman, pp. 53-58.

[177] 'Cupitt's targeted enemy [is] the absolute reality, or those realities screened off from us by the ubiquitous fallibilities, in religion especially, behind the fallibilities of time and of language.' *Ibid.*, 57-58.

d. Humanity

i. The foster-parents of beautiful nature

What is a human being? A lovely Endymion — or a wrathful Achilles? The pretty picture, the flattering portrait, the corrected Nature that constitute the anthropology of Hamann's opponents are false answers to the question. In their place Hamann shows us a godlike creature, yet no Endymion: one who knows the reality of human wickedness, dirtiness, and passions of all kinds.

Hamann's enthusiasm for the passions is arguably the most eye-catching feature of *AN*. Less immediately obvious is the subtlety with which this anthropological question interconnects with the other issues of the essay. The role the passions have to play in hermeneutics has already been discussed. Further, however, the passions relate us to nature: 'Nature works through the senses and the passions. Whoever mutilates her tools, how might they perceive? ...Your lying, murderous philosophy has cleared Nature out of the way....' (206:1-2, 4-5.) If Hamann complains that his opponents 'clear nature out of the way', it is both Nature and human nature that he has in mind; human 'nature' as a 'text' gets the same treatment as Nature in a rococo painting. The distortion of both take place in the same way: with a denial of the reality of evil and ugliness as well as good and beauty, of disruption, emotion, and desire as well as order, harmony and reason. The example of Narcissus shows us what happens when self-observation becomes delusional. It is the paradox of Narcissus that, though he was enraptured by bodily beauty, his love was for a bodiless image (*bibit visae correptus imagine formae. Spem sine corpore amat, corpus putat esse, quod umbra est.*) – pure, conceptual. Tellingly, the moment of self-recognition – the end of self-deception by one's own image in a mirror – leads not to self-understanding but to a futile desire to flee one's own body. Ironically, this is fulfilled for Narcissus, but only in death – his body is lost, transmuted into a pretty little flower.

To remove the passions is to 'mutilate' ourselves[178], indeed, to lose our life; but Hamann's concern goes beyond a desire for holism or an interest in the role emotions play in the psyche. The question he raises: 'Once we have removed the passions, how might we then perceive?' indicates the role that the passions play even *epistemologically*, in sense-perception and understanding. Desires, inter-

[178] 208:11-19.

ests, subjectivity are involved in all mental activity; they guide, direct, and focus it: the remote is made relevant, the singular made general, the universal made personal and the local made universal; individual insights are turned into the foundation of a universalizing system, and every universalizing system contains a personal guiding interest (208:28-209:6). 'In brief, the perfection of projects, the strength of their exposition, the conception and birth of new ideas and new expressions, the work and rest of the wise, their consolation and disgust in it, lie in the fruitful womb of the passions buried before our senses.' (209:7-11.) As we have seen with language, the passions for Hamann do not distort the truth but facilitate our reception of it. This recalls the acceptance of subjectivity in *SM*, but has acquired greater anthropological or epistemological depth and content.

Above all, these passions are God-given — and therefore not unclean, as Hamann's allusion to Peter's dream in Acts 10:9-16 shows.[179] Peter has a dream in which he declines to eat animals and reptiles and birds of the air, saying he had never eaten anything 'common or unclean'.[180] God's response is: 'What God has made clean, you must not call unclean.' This Hamann meta-schematizes to the world of human existence: God has made us, passions, desires, excrement and all; and what God has made, we must not call unclean.

God has chosen, after all, to reveal himself in the material, concrete, unclean and imperfect world; his revelation is a 'sensuous' one (198:1). The condition of possibility for this theology of revelation is a doctrine of sense-perception which explains the latter as our mode of insertion into the world, our locus of relation to it. 'Nature works through the senses and the passions. Whoever mutilates her tools, how might they perceive?' (206:1-2.) Our perception of nature, of 'things', is inextricable from our insightful perceiving of God's revelation in nature; both begin and end with sense-experience. The two themes are finally united on p. 207, where God and our understanding of the 'things' of nature are placed in parallel:

> The more vivid this idea of the image of the invisible God is in our minds; the more able we are to see and taste, to contemplate and feel with our hands, His friendliness in His creatures. Every impression of nature on the human being is not only a reminder,

[179] Cf. 200:25-201:3.

[180] 'Thus will he berate the philologian in his heart – for readers of orthodox tastes there can be no common expressions or unclean vessel'. (200:32-33.)

> but also a pledge of the fundamental truth: who the LORD is.... Oh for a muse like the fire of a goldsmith, and like the fuller's soap! She will dare to purify the natural use of the senses from the unnatural use of abstractions, whereby *our concepts of things are as mutilated* as *the name of the Creator is suppressed and slandered*. (207:2-7, 10-14. Hamann's emphases omitted; italics mine.)

The senses then are not only the way of perceiving and receiving the world; they are also – precisely *because* they perceive the world – the way we perceive and receive God's revelation. Any distortion in the one distorts the other; and abstractions, as both Baumgarten and Bacon claimed, are a principal means of distortion. Hamann's citation of Bacon (note 40) tells us that 'arbitrary abstractions' create 'foolish and apish images of worlds'; whereas both truth and pragmatism reveal 'the creator's own stamp upon creation.' The Author of Nature has therefore ordained it that His work should be 'read' and understood, the author's stamp perceived, in this way: by the senses.

ii. The Decree of the Poet

Hamann's own positive answer to the question about humanity is given succinctly in two images: we are 'text', written by the Divine Poet; and we are in God's image.

The notion of the human person as a 'text' has several implications. First and foremost, it introduces the notion of an author. It thus places us in a relationship; and while we can be viewed and interpreted dissociated from this relationship, the fullest and deepest possible understanding is only available when one asks after the author's desires. The possibility yet also inadequacy of an anthropology *apart from* God are thus well depicted in this image.

We are a moreover text of *God*, through whom as well as to whom God's self-revelation takes place; we are the locus of God's authorship. We are not merely the receivers of a text of revelation which requires interpretative understanding, we are still more the text of revelation itself, and require a hermeneutic of ourselves. This is necessary not only for self-understanding, but for the revelation of God to be complete: to understand the 'secret articles' and 'universal concepts' which God desires to impart (204:4-8).

This self-revelatory text is a text in the author's own image. The passages in *AN* that invoke the notion of the *imago Dei* are

numerous.[181] Wherein is this likeness to God to be found, however? The first passage, 198:1-10, speaks of us being in 'divine form', and alludes to an 'invisibility' we share with God, the existence of a 'secret person' within us; 'each is a miniature counterpart of God' it concludes. The second passage, 200:4-6, recapitulates the creation scene of Genesis (*qua* 'dramatic poetry') and speaks of our creation in order to 'have dominion'. The third passage, 206:32-207:9, speaks of our 'analogy to Creator', which is found in our ability to name; and describes the reciprocal relationship we have with the rest of Creation: it reveals to our senses who the Lord is, and we respond accordingly, to demonstrate our participation 'in divine nature, and that we are his family.'

Lumpp has decided views on the way in which an analogy between the human and the Creator should be taken:

> If Hamann speaks of an 'analogy of the human being to the Creator', it is by no means an anthropological statement [*Feststellung*] but rather the Law and the Gospel: the human being *should* and *is permitted to* be similar to God; [but] as a sinner he does not stand in 'this analogy'! ...Behind the word 'analogy' for Hamann stands the Pauline concept of the *obedience of faith*.[182]

Whatever Lumpp's theological programme here[183], it is hard to see that he has accurately described Hamann's. As far as what he proposes Hamann's understanding to be, an obedience to the Law hardly seems to be in question here; faith is not pictured in this essay as a question largely of obedience but as a very different style of relationship. Nor is there any textual support here (or, for example, in the *Herderschriften* or *ESM*, as we shall see) for the idea that being created in the image of God means that we *should* be like God; but fail to, being sinners. Hamann does not hold out the *imago Dei* as a project and a challenge, still less as one at which we as sinners fail. If we are each a 'miniature counterpart to

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[181] Cf. 198:1-10, 200:4-6, 206:32-207:9.

[182] Lumpp, 82 note 22. Emphases Lumpp's. He takes Elfriede Büchsel (with whom I agree) to task for her understanding of this notion, as a misunderstanding 'exactly in Herder's fashion'. The Herderian question of course will be examined in the next chapter; but against Lumpp I would argue that Herder's misunderstanding was not to see ourselves as being made in the image of God, but to take the human being *out of* the fundamental relatedness to God and see him as independent.

[183] Is it impertinent to wonder if there is a fear of the very 'Catholic' notion of analogy at work here, particularly given the desire to anchor it firmly in a Pauline idea?

God' this is not because we have attained a high moral standard; it is simply how we are, by God's own decree. It is difficult, therefore, to see it as anything *other* than an 'anthropological *Feststellung*' when Hamann tells us that our 'analogy' to God gives us our meaning, our value, our 'stamp' or character (206:32-207:1ff.); indeed, this 'analogy' is described as the hermeneutical clue to understanding ourselves (198:1-10). Further, the 'anthropological statement' of 198:1-10, which so strongly urges an *imago Dei* as a part of our being, is immediately followed by an attention to the story of Adam's Fall (original sin) – which does not seem to vitiate it. Lumpp's stern interpretation of the passage of 206:32-207:1ff. can hardly be squared with the final sentence of this paragraph, and the biblical reference it contains: 'Every counter-effect of the human being in creatures is a letter and seal of our share in the *divine nature*' (emphasis Hamann's), which latter phrase is supported by a reference to 2 Pet. 1.4: 'partakers of divine nature.'

Perhaps the greatest problem with Lumpp's interpretation is this: if we enjoy a 'likeness' to God, it is a pure gift of grace, and is nothing merited or earned. Lumpp's apparent concern that we must strive to deserve the gift and be worthy of it with our obedience – to *show* ourselves as being like God, by virtue of our moral behaviour – is thoroughly un-Hamannian. In seeking to dampen down the anthropological confidence and optimism of Hamann's doctrine of the *imago Dei*, he in fact attaches too much importance to human moral striving and its success or failure. In doing this, Lumpp in my view comes too close to an un-Hamannian heresy: the '*prolepsis* of trying to be like God', the '*harpagmos* [which] was the *proton pseudos*'.[184] It is certainly tempting to speculate as to whether Hamann might find the notion that we *ought* to try to be like God morally as a kind of Pelagian pride.

For one interesting point about the Hamannian *imago Dei*, as it shows itself in *AN*, is this: our Godlikeness is not destroyed by sin. There is no great drama of the Fall and redemption here, but a startlingly matter-of-fact tone, a refusal to be impressed with our own sinfulness, or, as it were, to afford it the gratification of scandal. This matter-of-factness serves to highlight Hamann's theology of Divine Accomodation; taking the focus off ourselves and back onto God as gracious, compassionate and loving: '...the first human clothing was a rhapsody of figleaves. But GOD the

[184] *Konxompax*, N III, 224:20f., 25. *Prolepsis* indicates a trying to have something too early, *harpagmos* is a snatching or a theft; *proton pseudos* is 'the first lie'. These notions will receive some attention in Chapter 5.

LORD made tunics of pelts, and put them on – our ancestors, whom the knowledge of good and evil had taught shame' (198:13-15f.). The Fall is simply described as 'a rhapsody of figleaves'; the term 'rhapsody' emphasizes the fragmentary, piecemeal human attempts to cover oneself. God, however, takes the Fall in his stride and accommodates Himself to it: while Himself having seen no prior need for His humans to cover their genitals, He nevertheless responds to their newly-felt need – the product of their rebellion – in a practical fashion, by making them sturdier garments than they could fashion for themselves. This 'affable' God of Hamann's has not ordained that we '*should* and *are permitted to*' bear His image, yet being sinners, ultimately fail to do so.

Insofar as our Godlikeness is given a specific content in these passages, we can identify it first as being grounded in dominion and 'naming'. Two of the relevant passages speak of our relationship of stewardship to the rest of nature; once this is in the context of being created in God's image (200:4-6) and once in the context of the 'gift' bestowed on Adam: that he might name animals and thereby acquire an authority and responsibility in relationship to them. *ESM* will add a third dimension to this package: our Godlikeness is also grounded in our sexual creativity and reproduction; and this too involves 'naming', indeed, 'naming' as attendant on reproduction is what is unique to human sexuality.

The other aspect that is described as Godlike in *AN* is the 'invisibility' we share with God. We do not have disposal over one another, any more than we have over God; at the heart of each of us is a mystery as inaccessible as God's own being:

> Finally **GOD** crowned the sensuous revelation of his majesty with the **masterpiece** of humanity. He made humanity in **divine form**; – – made it in the image of GOD. This **decree** of the Prime Mover solves the most complicated knots in human nature and its character. **Blind** pagans recognized the **invisibility** that the human being shares with **God**. The **covering** form of the body, the **countenance** of the head, and the extremities of the **arms** are the **visible habit** in which we walk; but are actually nothing but an **index** of the **secret self** within us; *Each is a **miniature counterpart** of GOD.*' (198:1-10.)

To be known, we, like God, must reveal ourselves; we are not an open book. The revelation in both cases is interrelated. Both are physical: God's self-revelation in the material world, and ours in

our body, which is the 'pointing finger' (198:9) of the secret self within us. Both, moreover, shed light on each other; God's Being, perhaps surprisingly, explains the complications of our own *via* the theology of the *imago Dei*, and this 'decree' that we are made in God's image 'solves the most complicated knots in human nature and its character.'

Hamann's anthropology in *AN* could perhaps be summed up succinctly, using his own language with its particular associations, by saying: we are a translated text. We are created in the image of God; a work of art that shews the stuff, but not the workman's skill.

e. The Divine Poet

One of the most interesting things at work in this essay is the breakdown of the reason-revelation dichotomy that is the result of many of Hamann's utterances. There is a clear theological reason for this: to put it in language not his own, Hamann sees no opposition between grace and nature. All of nature is 'graced'; Hamann does not speak of a creation that is deprived of God's presence, or a nature which is pure matter. We have already seen this theological disposition at work in Hamann's anthropology, where even a state of sin does not destroy our likeness to God, as the Fall did not destroy relationship with God, but merely prompted Him as it were to adapt to the new circumstances. Some may object to the degree of anthropomorphism, or even the 'dependence' of God that this implies; Hamann's response to this objection will be seen in the next chapter.

At any rate, this relaxation of the tension or indeed deconstruction of the dichotomy between what is 'natural' and what is 'graced' extends not only to theologies of nature and of humanity, but to his theology of revelation. On the strength of it, Hamann can imagine the difference between 'natural' and 'revealed' theology not as separate categories, dealing with different subject matters and using different methodologies, but as similar to the difference between the understanding of the same painting had by a painter and by a layman:

> What does the difference between natural and revealed religion say? If I understand it rightly, between the two there is no more than the difference between the eye of one who sees a painting

> without understanding the least thing about painting and drawing or the story which is portrayed, and the eye of a painter.[185]

This undoing of the natural/revealed opposition in theology has its philosophical parallel in epistemology: Hamann's use of Bacon's epistemology, and his image of knowledge as 'two waters' makes clear his position that empirical knowledge too is from God. Ultimately, for Hamann, creation and revelation are coextensive.

Because creation is, God's revelation is sensuous. Creation indeed is described by Hamann as 'the sensuous revelation of his majesty' (198:1). We, 'the masterpiece of humanity' (198:2) are the 'crown' of this sensuous revelation. Our identity as the revelation of God has already been explored under the image of 'text'; here, one need only stress that the revelation to (as well as through) us is a communication to our senses. At points throughout the essay, Hamann even emphasizes God's love of matter; indeed, his use of the story of Ulysses and Bacon's analogy show God to be the 'spouse' of matter.[186]

Repeated stress is laid throughout the essay on the claim that God's revelation is through the *whole* of Creation: in the paragraph 198:28-199:3 ('Speak, that I might see you!'), where creation is described as an address to the creature, through the creature; at the top of page 204 (204:1-3), where God 'may speak through creatures', events, or blood and fire and smoke; in the paragraph which follows (204:4-14), which describes the 'book of creation' which has concepts which God desired to reveal to creatures through creatures, a self-revelation of God's unity, which is mirrored even in the 'dialect' of his works; in the passage of 206:32-207:9, which has already been examined for its anthropological implications, and which shows a reciprocal revelation of God between ourselves and the rest of creation; the claim that Nature & Scripture are 'materials' of the 'beautiful, creative' Spirit (210:7-8); and finally the anthropomorphic suggestion of 213:6-8, which describes God as exhausting himself with self-revelations not merely in Nature and Scripture, but also through creatures and seers, reasons and figures, poets and prophets before finally speaking through his son. The impact of these passages is such that I cannot agree with the christocentric interpretations of Lumpp and Bayer:

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[185] N I, 303:38-304:4. (Cf. Bayer, *SR* 57-58.)
[186] 210:8-211:4.

> That creation as the address of God is not only 'to' the creatures but also 'through' the creature, means the worldly mediation of this address and expresses nothing other than the mediation of creation by Jesus Christ.[187]
>
> It has already been maintained that the formula of creation as the 'address *to* the creature *through* the creature' does not mean the mediation of the world in general, but is intended as a christological statement. That is seen from the whole context of *Aesthetica in Nuce* and from other Hamann texts. In terms of content the christological point of this formula is in complete agreement with Luther's challenging thesis in the disputation *Von der Gottheit und Menschheit Christi* (1540): There, in Christ, is the Creator and creation one and the same (*Ibi creator et creatura unus et idem est*). ...The identity of Creator and creation is not absolutely true; that leads to the '*deus sive natura*'. Rather, it amounts to the being of Jesus Christ.... Luther's thesis of the unity and identity of the Creator and the creature does not apply to the universal destiny of humanity and the world generally, because *sin* has corrupted the original world, original nature and its language, brought it to a confused speech or muteness....[188]

It seems clear to me that the passages in *AN* which touch on this subject clearly speak of God revealing himself through the whole of creation, and not simply through Jesus Christ; this is perhaps clearest in the last passage cited: '*After* GOD had exhausted himself through nature and Scripture, through creatures and seers, through reasons and figures, through poets and prophets, and run out of breath: *then* in the evening of the day he spoke to us through His Son....' (213:6-9; emphases mine, Hamann's emphases omitted). Indeed, the revelations of the 'universal concepts' which God desires to reveal only become fit for transmission to humanity by moving 'through' the creature, being translated from a tongue of angels into a human language (204:4ff.). We are to sense, to see, taste, and feel God's 'friendliness' '*in his creatures*' (207:5, emphasis mine) and not, for example, 'in his son alone'. This is supported by the parallel passage in *KRC*: '*Everything* the human person heard from the beginning, saw with its eyes, looked upon and touched with its hands was a living word; for God was the word.' (N III, 32:24-26, emphasis mine.) Clearly this passage which speaks of the Word has important christological overtones in its evocation of the christologically-understood 'Word' of the Fourth Gospel, but equally clearly the revelation of God is found in '*Everything* heard, looked upon, touched...' (*'Every phenomenon of*

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[187] Bayer, *SR* 61. Cf. Also Lumpp, 82.

[188] *Ibid.*, 62. The Luther reference is WA 39/II (92-121), 105,6f.

nature was a word', 32:21.) To argue that Hamann's view of God's revelation must only be christologically understood is to insist upon an implicit opposition or indeed competition between Christ and creation, which is to my mind un-Hamannian.

The disagreement with Bayer may be more apparent than substantial, and may rest on a word which betrays two different understandings of what is involved: for Bayer speaks of the *identity* [*Identität*] of Creator and creation. In my understanding of Hamann, to speak of God's revelation through all his creatures does not imply (still less require) an *identity* of Creator and creature; the notion of relationality dispenses with that. A relationship preserves difference as well as connection; 'identity' in fact destroys the relationship by destroying difference. A mediation of God in creatures, a relationship of immanence[189] in creatures which does not amount to pantheism is easy to grasp if one makes use of Hamann's own metaphor: of author and text. The simultaneous intimacy and distantiation of an author and a text is perhaps the best vehicle for grasping the self-revealing relationship of God in the world in Hamann's theology.

Just as God's revelation is depicted by Hamann as extended through the whole of nature, similarly, God's revelation is in the *whole* of history. God does not restrict himself to Christian historical events, nor even just to Judeo-Christian history, but speaks through pagan history, texts, and 'prophets' as well. This confirms the broad indications of *SM*, where Hamann provided us with the biblical justification for this 'ecumenism' in revelation: that God does not leave himself without witnesses. Even where the historical circumstances do not fit the narrower limitations of denominational zealots, Hamann's God is happy to speak through whichever prophets, poets and seers are at hand. The advance on *SM* that *AN* represents is found in the theology of revelation which undergirds this open-mindedness; an area which was not addressed in its own right to the same extent in *SM*; and secondly in the corresponding

[189] Though Bayer has this to say about the immanence of God in the world: 'It is better to speak of God's alternating restriction of [his] freedom and of love than of God's transcendence and immanence of the world. In his freedom God has distance to the world, in that he accepts it, in order to address it and in such an address places himself over against an other (address *to* the creature). In his love he relates himself to the world in such a way that he... enters into it and makes himself a creature* as the mediator of creation (address *through* the creature.)' *SR* 61. *This is of course christologically understood. – GGD.

attention to the hermeneutical question that is related to it: the question of the interpretation of sacred and 'profane' texts.

What it amounts to is this: Hamann's vision is of a unity of revelation: in the material world as in the spiritual dimension of life; in nature, as well as in the products of humanity: history, scripture, and mythology; and finally, in humanity itself. The whole of creation is God's revelation; we are its crown.

IV. THE *HERDERSCHRIFTEN*: THE A AND Ω

1. Introduction

Hamann's '*Herderschriften*' is the group title commonly given to a set of essays dating from the early 1770's (found in N III, 15-60). They are so called because the stimulus for these essays came from Herder's prize-winning essay on the origin of language, submitted to the Berlin Academy in 1770. The dominant theme in Hamann's essays therefore is language, not merely its origin, however, but also its nature, its place in human nature or being, its relationship to thought and knowledge, its function in divine-human relations. Other ideas and themes surface as well, however: epistemology, the relation of humanity and the divine, and a series of political and economic attacks on the Prussian King and his administration; this latter aspect was no doubt influenced by the post in the administration which Hamann took up in 1767.

The dominant concern however is the thought of Herder, Hamann's junior by fourteen years; and with whom he had an intense friendship. The two men met in Königsberg, where Herder was a student; they may have met through Hamann's father, who performed an eye operation on Herder, or perhaps they met previously, at Kanter's bookshop in which they both passed many hours. The friendship they formed was fed not only by common academic interests and mutual admiration but clearly by a personal compatibility as well. The twenty-year old Herder's letter to Hamann after the latter's departure on his abortive journey to meet Moser contains not merely an effusive and heartfelt poem of eight stanzas on their farewell, but also a conviction of their continuing friendship: 'But no! let it not be the last kiss that I give you, as I write this to you, [and] which you throw to me, as you read it: for I know you love me more than I can love myself, love not according to prejudice.'[1] The personal as well as philosophical importance Hamann had for Herder is shown in their mutual nicknames, here mentioned in a letter from Herder two months later:

[1] ZH 2, Nr. 268, 259:25-27.

'...here I have felt your absence, often passing the hours of the night in thoughts, remembering with a sigh from the heart those times when insignificant Alcibiades lay on the breast of Socrates....'[2] The associations awoken by this utterance are not irrelevant. Alcibiades did not precisely 'recline on the breast' of Socrates on the occasion he describes in the Symposium; that position of devotion was taken by another Beloved Disciple with his Master.[3] Both relationships – the pagan and the Christian Master and the Beloved Disciple of each – seem to lie behind Herder's picture of his friendship with Hamann; the idealization is even more evident further on: 'But I unite myself still more closely to you when I read your writings: oh, if only my Apollo were near me!'[4]

Hamann returned to Königsberg, but was not long reunited with his friend before the latter left for Riga to take up a post as a teacher at the *Domschule*, headed by Hamann's other close friend, Lindner. Their correspondence shows their continuing personal as well as philosophical friendship, with Hamann not only writing out long citations from his reading (such as of the new edition of Leibniz's *Nouveaux Essais*[5]), but also giving Herder personal advice, such as to 'Think less and live more.... Do not abandon yourself too much to the mass of your pet ideas.... Shouldn't your genius for music be more useful to Riga than your archaeological efforts. Are you already too old to learn at least a little drawing, and would you not have the opportunity to take up some painting in the company of your students; or does your sight hinder you in that.'[6]

The friendship continued by correspondence, and by rare and treasured visits once Hamann took up a post as secretary to the *Hofrat* Tottien in Mitau, which he held from June of 1765 to January 1767, at which point the death of his father (in September 1766) necessitated his return to Königsberg. Kant's friendly intervention procured for Hamann a post at the Excise Administration from May of 1767, thus bringing Hamann into closer contact with Frederick the Great's political and economic policies and their effects.

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[2] ZH 2, Nr. 271, 266:1-4.
[3] Cf. Jn. 13.23.
[4] ZH 2, Nr. 271, 266:6-7.
[5] ZH 2, Nr. 286.
[6] ZH 2, Nr. 301, 330:30f; 331:6-11. (Hamann's idiosyncratic punctuation.)

Herder, meanwhile, pursued his own academic interests, conscious of Hamann as the 'guiding genius' [*Schutzgeist*] 'of his authorship'[7], perhaps unconscious initially of the divergence of his theological ideas from those of his elder friend. The exchange of letters, ZH 2, Nr. 349 (pp. 408-415) (from Herder) and Nr. 350 (pp. 415-418) (to Herder) show their differing poetic-theological approaches: Herder moving towards a poetic and creative demythologizing, Hamann towards a no less poetic and creative – but far 'cruder' –anthropomorphism.[8] After this exchange of letters Herder does not write again until November, which Hamann does not receive until January of 1769; three letters to Herder are finally answered in March of 1769 in which Herder speaks of them diverging from one another; 'You complain over what is unsatisfactory in my letters, you in yours are no longer the old Hamann – soon we will no longer understand one another.'[9] That misunderstanding is patched up, but in Herder's next letter[10], he announces his intention of leaving his post in Riga and travelling abroad. This was to be the last letter Hamann was to receive from Herder until 1772. A letter written to Hamann in October 1769 from Nantes after his six weeks' travel was never sent; it happens to observe, perhaps a trifle resentfully, that 'the dreams of six weeks teach us more than years of reflection on books and Hamannian pastoral letters.'[11]

Nothing more was heard directly from Herder for several years, though Hamann inquires of him from mutual aquaintances, asking (perhaps only partly facetiously) if their friend Herder was still alive, and when and whether his *Preisschrift* would be published[12]; and lamenting on one occasion, 'Herr Herder seems to have completely forgotten me; the last letter I had from him was before he went on board in Riga.'[13] In the intervening period, however, the Berlin Academy set for its 1770 essay competition a question on the origin of language; Herder wrote a treatise on it and won the prize. It was subsequently published; praised by Hamann before he read it, savaged in a review by Hamann after he read it.

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[7] ZH 2, Nr. 326, 369:32.
[8] This letter is cited on page 209.
[9] ZH 2, Nr. 358, 437f. 437:12-14.
[10] ZH 2, Nr. 360, 447-451.
[11] ZH 2, Nr. 369, 481:30-32.
[12] ZH 3, Nr. 373, 6:26f.
[13] ZH 3, Nr. 371, 3:16-18, 12.9.1770.

Three more essays on the subject came from Hamann's pen before the two resumed a warm but slightly awkward correspondence.

Hamann was the one to write first:

> 'My dear old friend, I embrace you after a long time and write full of giddiness! [*Schwindel*] So many of my friends have reported that you no longer understand me, and this is a bad omen for our friendship, in which you can assume me as unchangeable as is possible for us poor mortals. You will see from the enclosed pages that the review was dispatched; and as for the rest I care about it as little as you have cause to do.... It would be infinitely precious to me to receive a long report from you.... I embrace you with all the tenderness of a countryman, friend, and merciful writer....'[14]

Herder answers warmly, full of disclaimers and recantations of those aspects of his essay which had distressed Hamann.[15]

Presumably this letter reached Hamann while he was busying himself with *Philological Ideas and Doubts*; despite the fact that Hamann received this letter in August of 1772, he does not answer until October, claiming (somewhat disingenuously, one must feel) that he had not had time to read Herder's letter properly until today's breakfast.[16] By this time *PID* was complete, and he can announce the fact to poor Herder:

> 'I have finished my first and last piece of work, which I can dedicate to no one else but you. As soon as it rolls off the presses, the first copy will be in your hands. To make you lusty and make your mouth water, and so that you will dream about me at night, read here the frontispiece'.[17]

(Further justification for the delay in answering is given with the complaint that Herder forgot to include in his letter his new address.) 'Everything that your letter said to me about our misunderstanding ...my soul had anticipated.... I laugh now at my Socratic wrath, that a disciple like Herder should be weak enough to go whoring after the beautiful spirits of our century and their *bon ton*.'[18]

Given the suspense of Herder's long silence and Hamann's intense interest and curiosity in his friend, it is difficult to believe Hamann could have left Herder's first and long-awaited letter

[14] ZH 3, Nr. 375, 7:32-8:12.
[15] ZH 3, Nr. 377, 1.8.1772.
[16] ZH 3, Nr. 378, 15:27ff.
[17] ZH 3, 15:30f.
[18] ZH 3, 16:30-17:1.

unread from August till October. Reading through the correspondence of these two friends, one sees that Hamann usually devours Herder's letters on arrival with great eagerness, more often than not answering on the same day; and this under the best and calmest of conditions. Given the precariousness in which their relationship stood, the long absence of communication from Herder, the anxious affection with which Hamann held out the olive branch, etc., I find it highly improbable that Hamann could have 'not found the time' between late August and October to read Herder's long-awaited reply. It seems far more likely that Hamann felt himself obliged to pretend that *PID*, critical and satirical to the point of cruelty, was written if not before he had received, at least before he had *read* and accepted Herder's olive-branch and recantation. Moreover, one suspects that Hamann wanted to imply that the final section of the essay, in particular, had been written independently of Herder's recantation and self-justification for several reasons: it will be his claim in this section that Herder is truly innocent of the heresy ascribed to him, and was forced to accomodate the ideas of his age – in short, what Herder himself claimed in his letter, which Hamann claims 'his soul had anticipated'. Moreover, only the cruelest of friends could continue to savage a beloved, if wayward, protégé who had already apologized and recanted his heresy so obsequiously. And, no doubt, Hamann also wanted to claim credit for 'defending' and 'justifying' Herder even before the latter had explicitly accepted the proffered olive branch.

2. The *Preisfrage* of the Berlin Academy

The question set by the Berlin Academy in 1769 was '*En supposant les hommes abandonées aux leurs facultés naturelles, sont-ils en état d'inventer le langage? et par quels moyens parviendront-ils d'eux mêmes à cette invention?*' The question of language and its origin had been exercising the Academy for several years. Maupertuis and Süßmilch, both members, had taken up the question with opposing results. Maupertuis, in *Dissertation sur les different moyens, dont les hommmes se sont servis pour exprimer leurs idées* of 1754, had argued against the thesis of a divine origin, such as that of William Warburton ('God, we there find, taught the first Man Religion, and can we think he would not, at the same time, teach him Language?') Süßmilch's response was written in 1756 (not published until 1766), *Versuch eines Beweises,*

daß die erste Sprache ihren Ursprung nicht von Menschen, sondern allein vom Schöpfer erhalten habe. In the meantime, the Academy had set another question, on the influence of language on opinion. This competition was won by Michaelis, who is dealt with in Hamann's *Essay on an Academic Question* [*Versuch über eine akademische Frage*] in *Crusades of a Philologian.* (N II, 119-126). The 1769 question essentially invited an answer to the dispute between Maupertuis, erstwhile President of the Academy, and Süßmilch.

Herder was, in part, to follow his friend and mentor in rejecting the two bald extremes between Maupertuis' crude naturalism and Süßmilch's naive supernaturalism; nevertheless, his account in the end falls on the side of naturalism, in asserting a human origin for language, which is '"divine" in a certain sense' – that is, a figurative one – while his particular ire was saved for the naiveté and circularity of Süßmilch's 'higher hypothesis'.

3. Herder's *Preisschrift*

Herder's *Preisschrift* does in many ways show the influence of Hamann, particularly because he rejects much of what Hamann rejects. Anthropologically, he shows himself to be Hamann's pupil in his insistence on the wholeness of the human person; that 'reason' and all other supposed faculties are abstractions and not separate faculties in themselves. He does reject Süßmilch's version of the 'higher hypothesis', but he also rejects naturalists as well. He refutes the claim that language merely arose out of the natural cries and gestures of the human being (Maupertuis) and also that it was a self-conscious rational invention based on convention and agreement (Condillac). Thus, to a certain extent, he avoided the 'Either-Or' that was before him. He also remains true to his Hamannian anthropological insights. Language is grounded in emotion [*Empfindung*], as the natural cries thereof; yet it also requires reason: reason and emotion at once, and always together. That is what separates him from the other advocates of the human hypothesis; language arises neither from animal cries of emotion nor from abstract and sterile pre-linguistic reasonings: inventing sounds to go with ideas.

The essay is in two parts [*Teil*], each with subsections [*Abschnitt*]. The first two subsections of the first part are the most important for Hamann. The first section of the first part begins with the claim, 'Even as an animal the human being had

language.' (HP 253.) All the passionate emotions of its body found expression in sounds, in cries. It is nature's maternal blessing that these sounds are not for ourselves alone, but can awaken feelings in other similar creatures as through an invisible chain. 'These sighs, these sounds are language. There is therefore a language of emotion, which is an immediate law of nature.' (HP 254.)

These natural sounds, however, which we have in common with animals, are not the main content of human language. 'They are not the actual roots, but the juices which enliven the roots of language.' (HP 256.) Indeed, Herder marvels at philosophers who find in this natural language the origins of human language; for all animals express their emotions in sound, but no others have given rise to human language (HP 263). Herder criticizes Condillac's, Rousseau's and Maupertuis' theories on the origin of language, and claims that they all err because their conception of the difference between animals and humans is wrong (HP 263-266). 'It is certain that the human being is greatly inferior to animals in the strength and certainty of its instincts, indeed that he does not have what we call in so many species of animals capabilities [*Kunstfähigkeiten*] and drives [*Kunsttriebe*].' (HP 266.) Each animal has its sphere; the narrower and more restricted the sphere of its activities, the more certain and infallible its instincts (HP 267f.). But humanity has no such uniform and narrow sphere in which it carries out only one activity; its 'powers of the soul' [*Seelenkräfte*] are extended over the whole world (HP 268f.), and it has no one direction for its representations or imaginings [*Vorstellungen*] and therefore no *Kunsttrieb, Kunstfähigkeit.* The languages of animals that govern their activities are innate and natural, but human beings have none that corresponds; moreover their senses [*Sinnlichkeit*] are weakened and their capabilities slumbering; they have no innate language even to express their lacks. Yet this contradiction cannot exist in nature; in place of instincts some other power must lie within the human being (HP 270).

In this first section we see a number of points that are opposed to the trends of Hamann's thought. First, Nature has replaced God as creator of humanity and its disposition and nature – it is even Nature which gives humanity its original blessing! Secondly, the paradoxical relation of humans to animals in this account is one Hamann will reject. On the one hand, Herder initially calls humans' animalian grunts and cries 'language' – an insufficient understanding of the latter for Hamann; yet in rejecting this

picture himself, Herder postulates a far greater distinction between animals and humans than Hamann wants to endorse.

Herder opens the second section of the first part by saying he does not intend to postulate some 'language-creating faculty' like a *qualitas occulta* in human beings. Yet 'Gaps and lacks cannot be the character of his species: or nature would be the strictest stepmother to him, as she is the most loving mother to every insect' since she provides it with all the instincts it needs for life. There must however be some 'compensation' for this lack; which itself would be the character of its species, as natural to it as instinct is to animals (HP 270).

> Indeed, if we found *precisely in this character the cause of those lacks, and precisely in ... these lacks ... the kernel of its replacement*: this ...would be a genetic proof, that the *true direction of humanity* lies here, and that the human species differs from animals not in degree but in kind. ...And if we found in this new-found character of humanity even *the necessary genetic reason for the arising of language for this new kind of creature*, as we found the immediate cause of language for that species in the instincts of animals, then we have reached our goal. In that case language would be as essential to the human being – as being human. As can be seen, I do not develop this from some arbitrary, or social powers, but rather from the universal animal economy.[19]

This disposition the human has, that extends its range of perceptions and activities over the whole world, can be called what one wishes – 'understanding, reason, consciousness' – as long as one does not take these for separate powers (HP 271-272). It is rather 'the entire direction of all human powers; the entire economy of his sensuous and perceiving [*erkennenden*], his perceiving and willing nature.' (HP 272.) Or rather – 'it is the single positive power of thought, which, connected to a certain organization of the body, is called reason in humans, as it is called *Kunstfähigkeit* in animals; which is called freedom in the one, and instinct in animals.' (HP 272.) Herder continues to emphasize, in Hamannian fashion, the fallacy of separating reason from the rest of human activity. There is no particular activity where we use reason by itself. The proper conception of reason is 'the entire disposition of his thinking power in relation to his sensibility [*Sinnnlichkeit*] and drives [*Triebe*].' (HP 273.) This is opposed to instincts, and if we had them, we could not have reason (HP 273).

[19] HP 270-271. In quotations from Herder, I have replaced his double inverted commas – which he uses merely for emphasis – with italics.

From these discussions Herder, as he puts it, 'comes to the point':

> The human being in the condition of reflexion [*Besonnenheit*] freely working for the first time has invented language. For what is reflexion? What is language?
> This reflexion is characteristically his own, and essential to his species: so too is language and his autonomous invention of language. Invention and language are therefore as natural to him as being human....
> The human being displays reflexion when the powers of the soul work freely, so that in the entire ocean of sensations which rush through his soul, he distinguishes a wave, if I may express it thus, retains and directs his attention to it, and is conscious of himself attending to it. He displays reflexion when, from the entire floating dream of images which steals past his soul, he in a moment of waking collects himself, lingers deliberately on One image, takes it in calm, bright attention, and can distinguish attributes that are these object and no other. He displays reflexion therefore, when he can not merely recognize all properties vividly or clearly, but rather can recognize one or more as distinguishing properties: the first *Actus* of this recognition gives a clear concept; it is the first judgement of the soul.[20]

This occurs through an attribute or better a marker [*Merkmal*] that he separates and retains clearly. 'Well then, let us cry "Eureka!" to him! This first marker of reflexion was a word of the soul. With it human language is invented.' (HP 277.) Herder gives the example of a human being observing a sheep and later recognizing it by its distinctive bleating (HP 277f.).

> He recognized the sheep in bleating: it was a composed sign, by which the soul clearly reflected on an idea – what else is that but a word? And what is the whole human language, but a collection of such words?... Language is invented! just as natural and necessary to the human being, as being human.[21]

Herder reviews where others have sought the origin of language: the superior articulation of the human's organs of speech; the noises of passion; the imitation of nature and its noises — Herder rejects all of these. Least of all was it mere convention (HP 278-279). After casting aside these propositions of naturalism, he also rejects Süßmilch's supernaturalism, accusing him of circularity (HP 279ff.). Süßmilch argued that reason is impossible

[20] HP 276-277.
[21] HP 278.

without language, and concludes, 'No human could have invented language himself, because reason is necessary to invent language, consequently language must have been there before reason was'. Herder agrees on the necessity of reason for language; but adds:

> If reason was not possible for a human being without language, well, the invention of the former is as natural, as old, as original, as characteristic as the use of the latter. ... Without language the human being has no reason, and without reason no language. Without language and reason he is not capable of learning from divine instruction; and yet without divine instruction, he has no reason and language — where will we get to from here? How can a human being learn language from divine instruction, if he has no reason? And indeed he has not the slightest use of reason without language.[22]

This leads Herder to explore the phenomenon that in many languages, word and reason, concept and word, language and cause have one name, 'and this synonymy contains its entire genetic origin. Among the Orientals it is a most familiar simplicity [*Idiotismus*] that acknowledgement of a situation is called its namegiving; for in the foundation of the soul both events are one.' (HP 286.) So language is the expression and organ of understanding, an artificial sense of the soul (HP 286).

Apart from phrases, and little motifs of which Hamann makes parodistic use, the third section of the first part (HP 287-318) contains little that is crucial to Hamann's critique. It largely concerns the role of sound and hearing in the phenomenon of language, hearing being the 'mediator of the senses' ['*mittleren der Sinnen*'].

The second part finds Herder expanding the range of his study to cover the breadth of human civilization and culture, as well as consolidating his earlier claims.

> Since here there is no metaphysical separation of the senses...: the Genesis of language is as much an inner urgency as the urge of the embryo towards birth at the moment of its maturity. The whole of nature storms on the person to develop his senses, until he is a person. And as language begins from these circumstances, then the whole chain of circumstances in the human soul is of a kind that the latter develops language.[23]

Herder formulates four 'laws of nature':

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[22] HP 281.
[23] HP 321.

1. 'The human being is a free thinking, active being, whose powers are exercised in progression; therefore he is a creature of language!'[24]

2. 'The human being is, in accordance with his disposition, a creature of the herd, of society; the development [*Fortbildung*] of language therefore is natural, essential, necessary to him.'[25]

3. 'Since the entire human race could not possibly remain one herd: therefore it could not also maintain One language. Therefore the formation of different national languages became necessary.'[26]

4. 'So as according to all probability the human race makes up One progressive whole from One origin in One great economy: therefore too do all languages, and with them the whole chain of development.'[27]

Before concluding, however, Herder turns to final refutations of the 'higher hypothesis' of a divine origin of language.

What is a divine origin of language, than
either: I can not explain language from human nature: consequently it is divine? The opponent says *I can explain it from human nature, and explain it completely* – who has said more? The first conceals himself behind a blanket and calls out: 'Here is God!' the latter places himself visibly on the stage, he acts – 'see! I am a human being!'
or: a higher hypothesis says: *Because I cannot explain human language from human nature: then no one can explain it completely — it is absolutely inexplicable* – : does this follow? The opponent says: *to me no element of language in its beginning and in all of its progressions from the human soul is incomprehensible: indeed, the entire human soul is inexplicable to me, if I do not postulate language in it. The entire human race* would no longer be *a natural species* if it did not *develop language* — Who has said more? Who is talking sense?
or finally the higher hypothesis says indeed: not merely can no one comprehend language from the human soul: rather I see *clearly the cause* why because of its nature and the analogy of its race *the human being could not invent it.* Yes I see *clearly* in language and *in the essence of divinity why none but God could invent it.* Now the conclusion follows; but now it also becomes the most grievous nonsense. It is as demonstrable as that proof of the Turks for the divinity of the Koran: 'who else but the prophet of God could write thus?' And who but a prophet of God could also know that only the prophet of God could write thus? No one but God could invent language! No one but God however can realize that no one but God

[24] HP 319.
[25] HP 332.
[26] HP 340.
[27] HP 347.

could invent it! And what hand would dare to measure out not only language and the human soul perhaps but also language and the Godhead?

A higher hypothesis has *nothing in its favour*, not even the witness of the oriental scriptures, which it calls on; for this clearly gives language a human beginning in the naming of the animals. Human invention has *everything for it* – and *absolutely nothing against it*: Essence of the human soul and elements of language; analogy of the human race and analogy of the continuation of language; the great example of all peoples, all times and parts of the world.

The higher origin is, as pious as it seems, thoroughly ungodly: With every step it trivializes God through the lowest, most imperfect anthropomorphism. The human [origin] shows *God in the greatest light*: his work, a human soul, creating and developing language by itself, because it is his work, a human soul. As a creator, as image of his being, it [the soul] constructs itself this sense of reason. The origin becomes divine therefore only in a respectable sense, insofar as it is human.

The higher origin is *useless* and highly damaging. It destroys all the efficacy of the human soul, explains nothing, and makes everything, all psychology and all the sciences inexplicable – for along with language human beings receive all the seeds of knowledge from God. So is nothing then from the human soul? The beginning of every art, science and knowledge is therefore always incomprehensible? The human [origin] *allows for no step forward without the best prospects*, and the most fruitful explanations in all parts of philosophy, and in all the categories and activities of language. The author has furnished some here and could furnish a host of them.—

How pleased he would be if he has with this treatise crushed a hypothesis which, viewed from many angles, can only serve to reduce the human spirit to mist, and has long served to do so! He has precisely for this reason gone beyond the command of the Academy and has furnished no hypothesis: for what would it be, if One hypothesis outweighed the other or was equal to it? and how does one tend to view all that has the form of a hypothesis, but as philosophical novels – *Rousseau's, Condillac's* and others? He has striven rather *to gather solid data from the human soul, from human organization, from the construction of all ancient and primitive languages, finally from the entire economy of the human race*, and to prove his proposition as the firmest Philosophical Truth can be proven. He believes therefore to have fulfilled the will of the Academy with his disobedience better than he would otherwise have done — [28]

Thus ends Herder's essay.

[28] HP 355-357.

Since Hamann's critique of Herder spreads itself over several essays, and moreover takes a number of forms, many of them oblique, it would be helpful at this point simply to identify some of the main points which will be the target of Hamann's attacks. Almost every point which I have mentioned in my account of the *Preisschrift* is the object of Hamann's irritation, ridicule, satire, or parody. Therefore I shall restrict myself to calling the reader's attention to only the most central and fundamental of Hamann's grievances.

Hamann's theological concerns focus on the deistic implication in Herder's account: that God and humanity are somehow competing for honours. An attribution to God of creative activity is an affront to human dignity; Süßmilch's higher hypothesis 'dishonours the human spirit', 'reduces it to mist', 'destroys the effective power of the human soul'. One must therefore accept the 'either-or' of divine or human invention of language; but Hamann's unhappiness with this approach extends beyond the purely linguistic concern.

Herder's human being cannot consist of gaps and lacks; he must be whole, powerful, and efficacious if he is to be worthy of the job of creating language; he must be distinguished from the rest of sentient creation by a lack of instincts and a capacity for reflexion. These are points with which Hamann cannot wholeheartedly agree; they require in his view a rather inflated conception of human nature and capabilities. Further, despite the stress on the social nature of language and the importance Herder gives it in the second part, the initial act of inventing language is performed by a solitary individual working quite independently of any other human creature. This too is too high an estimation of the human individual, while being too low an estimation of human sociality.

In terms of the conduct of the argument itself, Hamann will find it circular or self-contradictory in a number of respects. The chicken-and-egg question of reason and language (each requiring the other and therefore both needing to be present in the creation of either), which in Herder's view bedevilled Süßmilch's account, has not been adequately resolved by Herder himself. Secondarily, Herder's treatment of the human's lack of instincts does not accord well with the energetic integration of language as a natural, impulsive, 'sense of reason' built by the human being as the bee, by instinct, builds his cell. These points amount to an account of what it is to be human, as Herder himself perceived in the essay; but for

Hamann it is an account which is as unsatisfactory as is Herder's account of the origin of language specifically.

4. The Essays of Hamann's *Herderschriften*

The essays subsumed under the group title of the *Herderschriften* consist of the following:

Two reviews with a supplement, concerning the origin of language. [N III, 13-24.] These two reviews and the essay were published originally in the *Königsbergische gelehrte und politische Zeitung*. The first is a review of Tiedmann's *Versuch einer Erklärung des Ursprungs der Sprache* (1772); the second a review of Herder's *Preisschrift*. The *'Abfertigung'* or *Dispatch of the Reviewer* (of Herder's essay) is written in the persona of Aristobolus, previously used by Hamann in discussion of Michaelis' *Preisschrift* on the relationship of language and opinion, *EAQ* (N II 117-126). This *Dispatch* attacks Hamann's review of Herder; satirical in the extreme, it purports to prove (among other things) that the origin of language is in the instruction by animals of humans; this proof being achieved by a parodistic use of Cartesian method.

The Last Will and Testament of the Knight of the Rose-Cross on the divine and human origin of language. [N III, 25-33.] Written in 1772, it is backdated to 1770, ostensibly as Hamann's – or rather, the mysterious Knight's – own answer to the Berlin Academy's question; it was in fact written before the *Dispatch*, though published afterwards. In addition to numerous attacks on the current philosophies and politics, Hamann sets out his own solution to the problematic: language has neither a supernatural origin, in God teaching human beings language, nor a human origin, in human beings spontaneously inventing language for themselves; rather, its origins are to be seen as simultaneously human and divine, but in a way quite different from Herder's deistic solution.

Philological Ideas and Doubts on an academic prize-winning essay [N III, 35-53] is ostensibly Hamann's first 'serious' treatment of Herder's *Preisschrift*. There is a sudden 'turn' towards the end of the essay; the previous sentence is left unfinished and Hamann suddenly breaks forth in praise of the young victor Herder, even calling on the Berlin Academy to elevate him to President. This eulogy probably was written after correspondence between Socrates and Alcibiades established Herder's (putative) renunciation of his

heresy; nevertheless the praise is, no doubt, as ironic and sarcastic as the attack.

Au Salomon de Prusse [N III, 55-60] (written in French) is an attack on the King (Salomon de Prusse was Voltaire's name for this enlightened despot), one of Hamann's most fiercely-hated targets. Hamann actually hoped to have this essay 'placed in the King's bed-chamber', or failing that, published —- neither ever took place.

Monologue of an Author [N III, 67-79] is ostensibly written by the mandarin Mien-Man-Hoam, who is trying to sell the two essays *PID* and *Au Salomon de Prusse* to Nicolai (Hamann's publisher in Berlin) in order to raise funds to return home to China; and in his attempts to do so, interprets the essays and praises them highly. Correspondence on the matter is, of course, to be sent to the Magus in the North (Moser's nickname for Hamann). Sadly, not even this charming piece of persuasion could persuade Nicolai to publish such a dangerous pair of essays.

5. The *Two Reviews*: Exposition

Dietrich Tiedemann's essay was another entry for the Berlin Academy's competition. Beiser (unlike Büchsel) considers Tiedemann's essay 'a neglected but noteworthy contribution to the origin of language debate', and sees his position as not unlike Herder's: attempting to find a way between the extremes of reductivism and supernaturalism. In Beiser's view, the essential difference between Herder and Tiedemann is that the former rejects and the latter accepts the possibility of prelinguistic knowledge.[29]

It is not difficult to discern from Hamann's succinct and scathing review what most displeases him in the work. The stance of the author, he feels, is sufficiently indicated by noting the table of contents; this is enough to reveal the author's fundamental – and inadequate – conception of language. Language is merely the aggregate of words; a 'collection of sounds'. A word is a sound which is connected in the speaker's mind, as it is uttered, with a certain idea or conception. Finally, the question of the nature and origin of language can be dealt with via an analysis of the parts of speech, as the list of the parts and sections of his essay seems to indicate.

[29] Beiser, 135.

That this understanding of language and of the relationship of language to thought is simplistic and misguided – not to say either rationalistic or mechanistic – is a conviction for which Hamann argues not merely in these essays, but throughout his lifetime, finally in *MPR*. He does not trouble to oppose his viewpoint to Tiedemann's here, in the misplaced confidence that Herder will as it were perform this task for him (N III, 16:20-22). Instead, he confines himself to mockery and satire; and to the echo in the final line of his own earlier account of the relationship between language and being in *AN*.

Herder's essay indeed provides a more Hamannian portrait of language than does Tiedemann's, but this is hardly a point noticed and appreciated by the reviewer; for whom the distinctly un-Hamannian humanism and the rejection (and manner of his rejection) of the 'higher hypothesis' is an impossible stumbling-block. Part of Hamann's irritation is perhaps that in Süßmilch Herder has attacked a weak and unworthy representative of the 'higher hypothesis', and thus has not merely taken an unsatisfactory position on the question of language, but also has not dealt honestly with the deeper theological issues at stake. One of the most crucial of these issues is the relation of humanity to God , and fundamentally, the theological or religious nature of the human being itself.

This in fact is the first point to which Hamann turns, raising a point in the conclusion of the essay and ignoring all the argument and theory which has gone before. Those who argue for a divine origin to language are said to hide behind a blanket and cry out, 'Here is God!', while Herder places the language-creating human being proudly on stage, where it cries, 'See! I am a human being!' Herder's parallelism between the two must have struck Hamann powerfully. The former act – to hide behind a blanket and claim, improbably, to be God – is one which no doubt Hamann could appropriate. Is it not an apt, if coarse, parable for Hamann's own understanding of God's willingness to reveal himself through what is humble, lowly, even ridiculous? At the same time, the humanistic pride of leaping upon the stage and declaring '*Ecce homo*!' is full of 'action, in the theatrical sense' (17:28); and ultimately for Hamann is empty and laughable. Does the discovery, and announcement, of one's being a human being require a considerable degree of reflection? Does it not better apply to the 'unreflective' and 'all-too-human' critic (17:34) — who is not

ashamed to bear the standard of the man of whom '*Ecce homo*!' was said?

More seriously, however, is the beginning not merely of a parallelism, but an opposition, the foundations of which Hamann lays or exposes in the first paragraph: that the higher hypothesis 'dishonours and obscures the human spirit'; that God and humanity are rivals, the existence and power of the one threatening the self-respect and autonomy of the other. Throw away the blanket, and with it the silly claim on behalf of God, and stand proudly on the stage and be what you are! That is, be what you are, without reference to God – for the image of the blanket and the claim for God could well be adopted as a crude metaphor not only for God's revelation, but also for God's immanence in humanity; but this insight, precious to Hamann, is foreign to Herder's account.

Instead, Herder offers us the arrogant claim that nothing about language, and about humanity, is inexplicable to him (17:37-18:5). The arrogance of this assertion Hamann tactfully excuses (or rather, ironically if subtly points up) with the observation that 'both parties perhaps say more than they intend to'.

Herder further assures us that Genesis itself is on his side, rather than Süßmilch's, in its account of the naming of the animals. Hamann makes use of Genesis as a parable of the origin of language in his own essay, *KRC* (and as we have seen, in *AN*.) The Genesis stories had in fact been a topic of interest to Herder for several years, as can be seen in his *Fragments* and in their correspondence[30], where Herder makes an attempt at demythologizing the Fall while Hamann responds with an anthropomorphism so daring as to be obscene or even blasphemous to some.[31] Hamann's sole response in this essay to this use or misuse of scripture in support of human self-sufficiency is to subvert it in a footnote. 'On the first of April Adam named the wild animals by a divine charism.' Büchsel sees in this the suggestion of an April Fool's Day joke[32]; this may well be implied, but I believe in addition the more serious point is being made that the ability to name animals (thus instituting language) was only possible by the means of a divine gift to do so: if the first human being was the mother of language, bearing it and giving birth to it, God was the father and midwife. This, incidentally, is another hint towards

[30] Cf. particularly ZH 2, Nrs. 349 & 350.
[31] The *euphemismo* letter is cited on page 209.
[32] HHE 4, 138.

Hamann's own approach; the unity of the divine and the human in the creation of language.

Indeed, Herder argues, despite the piety of the higher hypothesis, it is truly impious in its mode of speaking about God – that is, it uses lowly, unworthy anthropomorphisms. Two crucial issues are dealt with in Hamann's paragraph (N III, 18:17-29). First, the question of 'proper' religious language and anthropomorphism arises. Herder seems to be in the trap of thinking our conceptualization – that is, our linguistic formulation – can give an adequate account of God's transcendence; hence, primitive anthropomorphisms, entailing primitive and childish belief, are impious and must be outgrown. But Herder does not recognize in this the difference between what we can say about God, that is, what we can give adequate space to in our linguistic constructions, and the totality of what we claim to believe about God. In short, to use anthropomorphic language and anthropomorphic notions, like God participating in creating human language, does not have a non-transcendent God as a necessary corollary; because religious language is only partially able to convey transcendence.

But to what extent is religious language incapable of conveying our theological ideas and insights? For Hamann, the lowly and the unworthy is precisely that which God selects for revelation; as with creatures, so also with language. Hamann is quite aware, on the one hand, of the 'unsuitability' and 'inadequacy' of anthropomorphism and pictorial language, as his letter to Herder alone shows.[33] It is simply that he is also aware of the greater inadequacy, as he sees it, of any other form of language, in particular, abstract language; and as God continually seeks the 'lowliest and unworthiest' and not the grandest aspects of the world with which to identify himself, thus he seeks the despised and 'childish' language of image and anthropomorphism for revelation, and not the refined and sanitized language of philosophers. Thus, Herder, it would seem to Hamann, is far more squeamish about anthropomorphic religious language than is God himself; and consequently, his sophisticated account is more like 'Galimatias', nonsense, than 'privileged anthropomorphism' (N III, 18:27-9).

The second issue touched on in this paragraph is the suggestion of an origin for religious language that is both human and divine; how this is to be interpreted and what understanding of God such an interpretation presupposes. Herder here inadvertently wit-

[33] ZH 2, Nr. 350, 415:22-23, 25-30-33; 416:14-18, and esp. 22f. Cited on page 209.

nesses to the truth, as we can see by the allusion to Dt. 8:15, where Pharaoh's magicians are forced to acknowledge the truth against themselves, God's finger at work (18:25-29); acknowledge it, that is, while neither recognizing it nor being converted by it. So it is with Herder; the formulation of his words acknowledges a simultaneously human and divine origin of language; but not at all in the relational fashion Hamann wants to assert. Rather, it is 'in a sense' divine – that is, in a figurative sense, as can be seen in the introduction to his *Roman von den Lebensaltern der Sprache*:

> See this tree...see it, as it is: you will marvel, be astonished, and cry out, 'Divine! Divine!' But now see this tiny seed...you will still cry out, 'Divine!' but in a worthier and more rational way.[34]

What is 'divine' for Herder is the glorious human being, creature and image of God in its creative activity. Herder is therefore arguing from a virtually deist perspective; God's 'involvement' in the process, which gives it the status of 'divinity' (in a qualified sense), is limited to his creation of the creator of language; thereafter the assertion of any further involvement on God's part is considered degrading to the human being and its independence, self-sufficiency, and creative power. Such a deistic theology is at war with the heart of Hamann's relational insights. The deistic God is as unrelated, uninvolved and impersonal a God as can be conceived. But not only is such a God *neutral*, by virtue of being uninvolved; this God must be covertly *opposed* to human activity. To put it at its simplest: if God and humanity are not involved in an activity or creation together, any activity or creativity that is asserted of God is asserted to the exclusion of human involvement and human responsibility. It is surely this deistic God, incidentally, and not the relational God found in Hamann's theology, that paves the way for Feuerbach's later critique of theism.

That Herder must, inevitably, see divine involvement in opposition to human creativity is borne out by a passage cited by Hamann (18:30-36f., cf. HP 357): that the higher hypothesis is damaging because it nullifies the efficacy of the human soul and makes all arts and sciences incomprehensible, for then they too like language must come from the hand of God. One begins to think that Feuerbach merely completed the critique that Herder had begun and was unable to carry through because he did not see,

[34] HHE 4, 18.

as Feuerbach did, that it might be fruitless to attack God's involvement in human activity and at the same time retain a God at all. Unconscious of the atheistic trend of his thinking, but perhaps vaguely uncomfortable with a godless though God-created world, he retains a small place for the creator in the creature; God's glory is now only left in the activity of his creature. This (ironically for Hamann) is said to show God 'in the greatest light'; for this fine human soul creating and developing language 'is his [God's]work'. (18:20-23; HP 356.) The anthropological side of the coin to Herder's deism is humanism, seemingly a way forward through the Scylla and Charybdis of a 'naive' supernaturalism that an Enlightened thinker such as Herder would find impossible to hold, and an atheistic rationalism which Herder, as a Christian preacher, must also reject. But such a coupling of humanistic anthropology and deistic theology is in danger of transmuting God, 'the father of fiery spirits' (28:2) into a god like Wagner's Wotan, glorified in his creation Siegfried at the very moment he is being supplanted by him, his own power shattered by the sword he forged for his child.

Yet, at the very moment when the relationship between God and human beings is reduced to its minimum, paradoxically Herder comes up with a highly 'relational' suggestion: that the origin of language is both human and divine. It is divine, however, only because of the sole content that can now be given to 'divinity': the creativity of the human being who is the 'image of God'; and not because, as for Hamann, the human is the privileged locus of God's revelation, nor because being human, *de facto*, entails relatedness to the divine.

Thus, for Hamann, the formulation of Herder's words are revelation; while the content Herder gives them is almost blasphemous; blasphemous in its refusal to recognize God's continued activity in human linguistic creativity. Hamann's own ideas about what a 'simultaneously divine and human origin of language' means will be articulated in his subsequent essays.

For the present, Hamann raises several more points in passing by citing – and twisting – Herder's own words. Herder had claimed to have gathered a mass of data, but could easily have gathered more. Hamann does not doubt that Herder could have massed a *legion*. I suspect that this is an allusion to the legion of unclean spirits infesting a demoniac in the account of the Gadarene swine.[35] Hamann cannot resist further sniping at Herder with

[35] Mk 5:10 and parallels.

Herder's own weapon: the mockery of the circularity or at least the conviction of one who feels he has proven his thesis indubitably, as the Turks proved the divinity of the Koran (19:11ff.). Finally, Hamann tells us that 'Areopagites of the archaeo- and neo-logical persuasion will always find "in the midst of gaps and lacks" the "kernel of compensation".' (19:16-18.) Areopagites, after Acts 17:22ff., are presumably those who do not know God; while 'neology' was the kind of demythologizing, rational theology undertaken by Enlightenment deists. I suspect 'archaeology' is to refer to Herder's interests, in his time at Riga (1765-1769), in the ancients and in Hebrew scriptures; Hamann in a letter describes his interest as 'archaeology'.[36] Thus, 'archaeo- and neo-logy' catches both Herder's avowed interest and his unwitting alliance in a neat wordplay. 'Gaps and lacks', according to the *Preisschrift*, could not make up our human nature – something which Hamann disputes in a letter to Herder[37] – rather, our nature contains 'the kernel of compensation', which for Herder will be reflexion (essentially, reason). One surmises from the pregnant sentence of 19:16-18 that those who do not truly know God, that is, have a relationship with a personal God, but worship unknown gods and busy themselves with academic researches into the belief and sacred writings of the ancients, will always find some way of exalting humanity rather than accepting its inevitably lacking and partial nature.

The reviewer does not take it upon himself to defend the higher hypothesis; this will be undertaken not by 'Hamann' (in *proprio persona*). Instead, he calls upon an avenger, the Kabbalistic Philologian to take on this quixotic quest. After a final parody of the exuberance of the style of Herder (19:30f.), he again reframes the linguistic question: no mere academic exercise, but a theological, and indeed, moral matter. Attempts to create and control language from the viewpoint of human autonomy and self-sufficiency are like the attempt to build a Tower of Babel; the human invention of language is not the beautiful and poetic activity of Genesis 2, the naming of the animals, but is rather the activity of Genesis 11. This is the 'human origin of language', and it has a moral consequence, as is shown by the evocation of James 3:6 (19:34): the tongue as a flame, a 'world of unrighteousness' in itself. Linguistic activity has its eschatological element: it will be liberated, like the rest of creation, or destroyed like the Tower of Babel.

[36] ZH 2, Nr. 301, 331:7.
[37] ZH 3, 34:33-35.

6. Exposition of the *Dispatch of the Reviewer*

This piece, despite its dating and the order in which it appears in Nadler's collection of Hamann's works, was actually written after *KRC*, as internal dating shows: the conclusion of *KRC* speaks of Hamann's son's 'eventual sibling' (33:20, note 22); at that point, as a hand-written note in the margin informs us, his Anna Regina was in labour with their second child. The *Dispatch* however portrays Hamann as 'cooing and smiling away over the cradle of my little maid' (24:2-3). This little supplement to the two reviews is not the defence of (a worthier form of) the higher hypothesis called for by the reviewer of Herder's essay; quite the contrary. Written by 'Aristobolus', the putative author of *EAQ*, it is the philosophical 'finishing off' [*Abfertigung*] of said reviewer and his higher hypothesis. Hence, a certain hermeneutical sensitivity is needed in working out what are Hamann's intentions – all the more so as in fact the enemy arguments, paradoxically enough, frequently make the point Hamann himself wishes to make. The interpreter therefore cannot either assume Hamann's consent or his dissension to the arguments of Aristobolus.

The game is made all the merrier by the fact that the parody is not just of content but also of methodology. Hamann, or rather, Aristobolus, makes parodistic use of the *more geometrico*, the method of popular philosophy at the time, but above all of Cartesian method; namely the second rule, divide each of the difficulties encountered into as many parts as possible; the third, to think in an orderly fashion, beginning with the things which are simplest and easiest to understand, and gradually by degrees reaching toward more complex knowledge; the last, always to make enumerations so complete, and reviews so comprehensive, to be certain nothing would be omitted.[38] Using this method, 'Aristobolus' 'proves' that the origin of language is to be found in the teaching of humans by animals.

The first step is to raise the question of how language must first have been imparted (20:9-12). Here Aristobolus' first question indicates a not uncommon confusion in the contemporary treatments of the subject of the origin of language: the obscuring of the distinction between the manner in which language is acquired now and the way in which language first arose; or as Aristobolus

[38] Descartes, 120.

puts it: 'Whether the first, oldest, original language was imparted to human beings in precisely the same way as the transmission of language occurs nowadays?' (20:10-12) The deliberate confusion surrounding the word 'language' – as a phenomenon or as a particular tongue? – is an important part of the satire; as is the unquestioning fashion in which this first question is decided (cf. 20:13-19 and 29-35). The paragraph which these little satires on his contemporary philosophical 'yes-men' bracket between them (20:20-28) functions as a little Aristobolian critique of reason. How is it possible to know and understand the origin of a phenomenon, when it must lie outside the reach of our experience? How can we know something for which we have no analogy, no 'guiding thread of similarity' (20:24-25)?

Aristobolus is unwilling to take on the challenge of claiming to find a way of knowing the unknowable (or 'pre-knowable') (20:29f.). He will certainly not explore the tension, or even contradiction, just raised, which besets the entire question itself. The hundredth sheep (20:31f.), (no doubt a black one), will be left in solitude to contemplate the conditions of possibility for even being able to approach an answer to the question of the origins of language; Aristobolus will hurry back to the other ninety-nine, who all agree that the origin of language can be found by an examination of how language is transmitted in the present day. Having settled that question, he moves to the second question of his investigation: 'by what way nowadays does the imparting of language occur?' (21:4-5.)

There are, he tells us, three possible ways: the way of instinct, of invention, and of instruction. Here the possibilities for satire on particular thinkers' solutions begin. The first way must be rejected, because the testimony of both general experience and the occasional bizarre particular example indicate that language cannot arise simply from some kind of instinct. The claim that 'ear and tongue relate themselves in fact so immediately to each other' (21:14f.) may refer back to Herder's discussion of hearing as the primary sense, the mediator of the senses. However, the second way, that of invention, must also be rejected: 'Invention and reason indeed presuppose a language, and can be thought of without the latter as little as mathematics without numbers.' (21:24-26) On the presupposition that reasoning is impossible without language, the idea of a reasoned invention of language is circular and thus must be rejected. This point is made without overt reference to any particular thinker, of course; and it is indeed one on which Herder

would agree, as his critique of Süßmilch shows. Yet the circularity of which Herder accused Süßmilch – that humanity could not learn language without reason – is even more telling in Herder's account: *a fortiori*, humanity could not *invent* language without reasoning (even if the latter is described as 'reflexion'). Indeed, someone who suggests such a thing might 'recently with the principle of contradiction seem almost to have denied all reflexion' (21:23-24); if, as Herder maintained, 'reflexion' was the distinguishing mark of humanity, a little reflection might show that Herder's own answer to the problem does not obey the principle of contradiction. In a piece of Hamannian metaschematism, Herder's own argument is used against him. The destruction of the two 'ways', that of instinct and of invention, are therefore an example of Hamann making himself visible behind his Aristobolian mask. For Hamann does agree that human contact is necessary in order to learn *languages*; still more does he agree that invention and reason *presuppose language*. All the more so, then, must he reject Herder's account, while the two are in agreement over these two premises.

The solution of the second question leads to the third. If language must have arisen by instruction, as it now is propagated, we must inquire whose instruction is responsible (21:30f.). Three possibilities present themselves: instruction by humans, by God ('the mystical theory') and by animals. The first two are speedily dismissed; the first answer because it is obviously circular, and the second answer being defective, but for reasons apparently too numerous to be elaborated (21:34ff.). Such is the inadequacy of the approach of those who oppose the higher hypothesis: their 'rationalist' rejection of a theistic approach for 'irrational' reasons; their sophisticated lack of academic rigour and integrity.

Referring to Scripture, the classics, and contemporary philosophy – not only Voltaire's Pangloss, and Helvetius, but also the Leibnizean 'principle of sufficient reason', Locke's theory of the *lumen naturale*, the famous Enlightenment *Encyclopedia*, etc. – Aristobolus then proceeds to show how animals have the leadership and priestly rights of the first-born (Num. 3:12), according to all systems (indeed, in both 'creationist' and 'evolutionist' systems, to use our terms, animals are the first-born!) Here the mass, indeed, the 'legion' of examples and proof which Aristobolus – like Herder – can summon in support of his theory. There are, at any rate, two covert references to Herder; the first is the evocation of Prometheus (22:15), for this was a *Leitmotiv* in Herder's essay. The

second is the backhand reference to Genesis 3 (22:17f.); for Herder had gone some way towards re-interpreting the Fall in a positive light in his Riga letters. Characteristically, this (sinful!) desire to know all for the power which omniscience confers, which was the motivation for the Fall, is attributed to the project of the *Encyclopedia*; for as the Prince of Dessau tells us, the Frenchman is true to neither God nor man. There is, less obviously, a third connection to Herder's essay: did not Herder argue exhaustively for the superiority of humans to animals; their difference in kind, not degree; the inferiority of their language, their narrow forms of communication, to ours; the way in which their instincts and *Kunstfähigkeiten* are replaced by reflexion and language in us? For the thorough and profound Aristobolus, this is as little the case as the human invention of language.

If Aristobolus were a leisured academic like Hamann's rivals, he could support his theory with spurious physiological evidence to show a derivation of human organs of speech from that of animals; or trace the birth and history of language with a pseudo-science ('chart its horoscope'). The use of 1 Cor. 13 shows how inadequate our knowledge of the origin of language is, despite the confidence of the academics — it only shows a poor image of 'what needs an apocalypse for its revelation.'[39]

Aristobolus, however, will not relinquish the solution to the riddle. It is based on a 'persiflage', that is, a frivolous manner of

[39] Büchsel suggests that we are to understand the evocation of 1 Cor 13 as a reference to the seemingly unbroken '*System- und Erkenntnisfreude*' of Hamann's contemporaries, erecting a Tower of Reason to heaven; coupled with the political-ideological analogue of absolutism. Hamann's proof-parody is a kind of critique of reason, that grows from the root of knowledge of God and self-knowledge. 'The look in the dark mirror presents the ultimate contradiction of human existence, which the Bible calls sin.' (HHE 4, 155f.) The question of language for Hamann, I agree, begins to encompass the broader theme of self-knowledge. I am not convinced that for Hamann the fundamental existential truth we see is 'ultimate contradiction' and 'sin'; the first, oldest, original speech for Hamann was a happy divine-human dialogue. The origin of humanity and of language are interrelated, as *KRC* will tell us. Given the argument of 20:20ff., I think the theme of this section invoking 1 Cor 13 is a critique of epistemological overconfidence — a hidden, but dominant thrust of the essay; as in the Corinthians passage, the aim is to relativize the incomplete knowledge of the present dispensation in favour of another kind of knowledge, or another way of knowing. Thus, the origin of language only can be known as a riddle, or as a glance in a dark mirror; if this is one of the implications or corollaries of this sentence, it finds its fulfillment in the later 'riddle' or 'myth' that is the answer of the Knight of the Rose-Cross to the question of the origin of language.

treating a subject. The language of the gods we know is French; and the French battle-cry? — *'En supposant les hommes abandonées aux leurs facultés naturelles, sont-ils en état d'inventer le langage? et par quels moyens...?'* — In short, the Academy's own question was a 'persiflage' in French, a frivolous way of dealing with a subject which for Hamann borders on the sacred, and no one ought to take it seriously; it was moreover in Hamann's eyes a battle-cry of rebellion against the divine initiator of language.

Having completed his proof, Aristobolus then moves to 'finish off' the author of the Herder review; he begins by remarking that clearly the reviewer is a 'stranger in Israel' (23:6), that is, as in the Emmaus story, someone who does not know anything of what has been going on lately if he does not realize that the Philologian he called upon to avenge the higher hypothesis has been transformed by his masters into an overworked servant (of the very regime he so despises).

The name of the 'Kabbalistic Philologian' allows Aristobolus to digress on the question of 'Kabbala', citing Leibniz. What are we to make of this citation? Clearly we are being reminded of the importance of the 'right understanding and use of words.' (23:15f.) My understanding is that Hamann is indicating that an element of 'divination', of 'mystery', in short, of intuitive or creative or even speculative thinking, is necessary perhaps in all understanding, but certainly in understanding the Kabbalistic Philologian and this essay, lest anyone be so foolish as to attempt to interpret this essay and its putative author in a straightforward and literal fashion. The paragraph concludes, for those who may have noticed the parodistic content of the persiflage but missed the parodistic method, by indicating its object: the method of Descartes (23:21ff.).

As for our Philologian, suspense is built up for the arrival of the avenging Knight on the scene, for Aristobolus dispatches the reviewer altogether (so as, perhaps, to make the Knight's appearance all the more dramatic, for we had given up hope). Aristobolus' portrait (23:23-24:6) shows a man content to live a narrow but happy domestic life, 'godly and content' (for, according to 1 Tim 6:6: 'There is great gain in godliness with contentment'); wanting only to coo over his children, but forced by his intellectual interests to lead an impoverished life rather than one of bourgeois comfort. The final sentences however contain what Hamann juxtaposes to the complex of ideas and beliefs he rejects: that the peace in the heights is greater than Reason; that loving Christ is better than speaking with the tongues of angels and humans. The Kingdom of

God, the 'system' of which Jesus is the architect and cornerstone, is set against the truth-distorting systems of the philosophers, and 'patriotism' for the Kingdom of God against patriotism for Prussia and Frederick the Great.

After an observation that this essay will probably be ascribed to the philologian himself, just as Xenophon and Miguel de Cervantes ascribed their works to others, Aristobolus concludes his essay.

Despite the absurdity of the essay and its conceits, in it Hamann-Aristobolus has made some important contributions to the debate. Apart from apparently minor clarifications and distinctions, there is to start with an interesting methodological question. In the epistemologically optimistic climate of his age, this methodological question seems not to have aroused any anxiety in other contributors to the debate; but Hamann has derived benefit from his contact with Hume. How are we to know the origin of a phenomenon, which is beyond our experience? 'And how will it be possible to set out on the right track of such an investigation?' (20:20-28.) Secondly, with his swift dismantling of two proposed 'ways', Aristobolus has weakened Herder's account fatally. The way of instinct is ruled out in two ways, one theoretical and the other empirical: cases where individual human beings have grown up without human contact show that they invariably lack language and thus demonstrate that a solitary human being cannot give rise to language by and of himself — as Herder's creator of language did. *PID* will later argue that Herder's account amounts to a description of language being created by instinct (45:17-25). The 'way' more explicitly advocated by Herder, the way of invention, as we have seen, is as circular as Herder claims Süßmilch's to be.

We have then, despite the alleged intentions of the author, an essay which does not 'dispatch the reviewer'. Rather, this little piece by 'Aristobolus' prepares the ground for the deconstruction of Herder which follows.

7. Exposition of *The Knight of the Rose-Cross*

This was Hamann's next writing after his review of Herder's essay; it represents the 'doubts and oracles' called for by the reviewer. It therefore precedes Aristobolus' 'Dispatch'. It was, however, published with the spurious date of '1770': the date of the Berlin Academy's competition and therefore of Herder's essay. Hamann wanted this essay to be seen as his (or the Knight's) own answer to

the Berlin Academy's question, and not specifically as a rebuttal of Herder. The piece was actually written in 1772; and on several of the exemplars the printed date 1770 is crossed out by hand and corrected to 1772.[40]

Hamann's *nom de plume* as 'The Knight of the Rose-Cross', unlike that of Aristobolus, is unprecedented in his *oeuvre*. One may safely assume that the 'Knight' aspect of the name is associated with the figure of a quixotic 'avenger' of the 'Dulcinea' of the higher hypothesis (19:28); its bold defender and champion. 'Rosenkreutz' evokes a tangled web of associations: alchemical, Rosicrucian, Masonic, and christological; but above all Lutheran, as Hamann describes in a letter to Herder.[41] 'His coat of arms was a red heart with a black cross in a white rose.' It is quite possible that the name of 'Rose-Cross' was meant to evoke privately this association for Herder, quite apart from any readers fortunate enough to possess a detailed knowledge of evangelical heraldry; but the other associations are not irrelevant.

On the title page are several citations. The first is a phrase from 2 Corinthians, which frames the believing witness that Hamann meant this essay to be: 'I believed, therefore I spoke.' This dedication may be understood as opposed to another motivation for speaking, or writing: the desire for fame, acceptance and recognition, which Hamann sees in Herder's *Preisschrift*. We are also told on the title page that this essay is 'speedily translated from the original hieroglyphic manuscript [*Cariacaturbilderurschrift*] by the handyman of the Hierophant'. Producing 'speedy translations' was now Hamann's profession; though admittedly not from *Caricaturbilderurschriften*. The 'images' or 'pictures' or 'hieroglyphs' might, as Büchsel suggests, refer to the emblems and hieroglyphs of the secret societies, or to the pictorial nature of biblical language and of Hamann's own biblical picture at the end of the essay[42]; one might also think of the hieroglyphs and rich illustration of alchemical texts. One might further think of the scheme elucidated by Wachter on the evolution of writing, cited in *AN*[43], in which 'hieroglyphic' and 'characteristic' represent stages of that evolution; the passage from *AN* in question is the one in which speaking is said to be 'translation' from a language of

[40] Cf. N III, 419.
[41] ZH 2, Nr. 286, 302:4ff.; in January of 1965.
[42] HHE 4, 171.
[43] Cf. N II, 199:4-9, especially lines 6-7, and Hamann's note 9.

images. This little motto might therefore be a backward glance at the earlier thoughts of *Aesthetica in Nuce*.

The fuller citation for the phrase, 'I too shall make a Hierophant', is 'There is a chapel at Eleusis; see, here is one too. There is a Hierophant there; I too will make a Hierophant.' The context is that the teacher-pupil relationship demands something more than mere imitation; the example given is of foolish, unauthorized imitation of Eleusinian mysteries. The background theme of teacher-pupil relationship may be intended to refer to Herder, who sincerely thought himself to be following Hamann's insights in his *Preisschrift*, but clearly had not absorbed them. Closer to hand however Hamann simply indulges in a spot of 'one-up-manship': 'Herr Herder has written an essay on the mystery of the origin of language and made himself a Hierophant on the subject; see, I can too.'

We are certainly meant to hear a reference to Herder's *Preisschrift* in the citation on the back of the front cover (26). Herder told us in his essay: 'The incendiary point, where Prometheus ignited heavenly fire in the human soul, has been made out — with the first marker language was created.' (HP 287.) Hamann's response is to stress that this was 'A gift of gods to humanity', a tradition handed down by the ancients, who were nearer the gods than we. Both instances of the 'gods' – *'DEORUM'* and *'DIISque'* – are emphasized in capital letters, to make precisely the point which Herder denies: that the gift of Prometheus, if one likes to call it that, is a *divine* gift.

At the very head of his essay, we are enjoined, *'Fauete linguis!'* Hamann does not give the reference; it comes from the Odes of Horace, Book III, Ode 1, line 2. The first two stanzas of this ode formed the beginning of *AN*[44]; one may assume that as well as evoking the themes of this ode for their own sake, Hamann intended us to refer back to that essay. There is an immediate reason why this should be so; if one imagines *'Fauete linguis!'* to be on the lips of the 'Kabbalistic Philologian', it is not inappropriate to find it if not on the lips of the Philologian at his second appearance, then on those of the Philologian's successor. It is also, of course, possible that the citation indicates that themes from *AN* will re-appear here, as we shall see.

The essay proper begins with the presupposition that underlies Hamann's assertion of a 'simultaneous divine and human origin' of

[44] Cf. N II, 197:2-9.

language: the interrelatedness of human and divine. It can immediately be seen how this presupposition differs from Herder's implication that the 'workings' of God threaten the integrity and activity of humanity. It is worth borrowing Hamann's patristic christological analogy, the use of the technical christological term '*communicatio idiomatum*' (27:12f.), used to refer to the interrelationship of the divine and human natures in Christ, to underline the fact that for Hamann, not only in christology are the human and divine not separated nor fused, confused or mixed, but in the whole economy of nature as well. If Herder's opposition between divine and human activity did not satisfy, a 'mystic' fusion of the divine and the human is no better: it dissolves the relationship, collapsing it into an undifferentiated whole. Hamann is not asserting the *identity* of the human and the divine; nor, however, is he saying, as Herder did, that these things are 'in a sense' divine; where 'divine' virtually becomes a mere word of approbation or admiration. This would be indicated alone by the fact that Hamann, quite unlike Herder's praise of magnificent oak trees, is predicating this divinity of even 'the most repulsive secretions of the human corpse'. What Hamann asserts is the inextricable relatedness of the human and the divine; this is done by his assertion of God's intense and intimate involvement with the world, even to its smallest and most repulsive details. This recalls the willingness of *AN* to embrace all aspects of human existence: 'What God makes clean, you must not call unclean.' (Cf. N II, 200:25-201.3.) At the same time, this intrusion of God into the whole scheme of nature does not force humanity out (still less constitute pantheism); for 'Everything divine... is also human' (27:9f.); whether in activity or passivity, we act in accordance with our own nature.

This principle of *communicatio idiomatum* is proposed, then, as the basic principle of Hamann's anthropology, epistemology, and understanding of nature; therefore also his understanding of the origin of language. Language is 'at the very least a gift of *alma mater* Nature' (27: 15f.). In this he might seem to be walking a part of the way down the road with Herder; particularly as not merely the gifts or abilities but also their use must lie within our nature (27:18f.). Yet these very points – that language and its use are 'natural' to us, 'as natural as being human', as Herder argued – are used to found the assertion 'then certainly the origin of human language is *divine*' (27:20f., emphasis mine). This is buttressed by a footnote of classical citations. Tertullian makes the point for

Hamann that those who *discover* what is essential to life (or to humanity) are of course not those who *created* or *instituted* these things. Herder's first speaker, who with the aid of a bleating sheep called forth the first word, would not be the *inventor* or *creator* of language, but its *discoverer*. Simply put, how could God be the creator of language? By creating a human race to whom language is natural and essential — 'GOD is the creator of the mind, as well as of the voice and language', Lactantius tells us in Hamann's footnote; this institution being universal, as the final citation observes. Thus, our mother Nature may have given us this gift; yet it is 'malicious idolatry' (27:17) to attribute to Nature this creation, as Herder does — still more to attribute to humanity this creation, as Herder goes on to do.

Nevertheless, although language is divine in its origin since it was created by God through nature – in our nature – it is however so inescapably grounded or incarnate in the human, that non-human beings, when 'speaking', are always said to do so in a fashion analogous to the human. It can be seen in no other way; for the human is the measure of all things (27:21-27).

This account not merely of divinity but also of humanity is not a popular one, as the Knight goes on to observe; the fashionable thinkers of his age prostrated themselves before 'Epicurean' systems (27:29). Epicurus saw the universe and humanity in purely mechanistic terms; and sought to eradicate superstition and the belief in supernatural intervention, believing in the existence of gods but denying their involvement with human beings and the world. His successors are the Enlightenment materialists, like La Mettrie, one of many who wrote a '*Système de la Nature*'. Hamann opposes the materialist kind of god to his own. The opposition of an impersonal potter to a personal father (28:1-3) is important; the denial of God's creation of humanity is for Hamann not only a denial of human dignity, but more crucially, the denial of the personal love and relatedness to a God one calls Father.

The certainty which a materialist or empiricist – or at least, scientific – world-view claims for itself has been eroded, for Hamann, by the scepticism (or sarcastically, the 'robust faith') of Voltaire and Hume (28:4-7). If these scientists are hazy in their criticism of their own methodology and epistemology, why should we trust their knowledge of far-away things (28:7-10)? Indeed, what should be the starting-point for the investigation of the origin of language: the stars, 'the delusion of Chinese and Egyptian horoscopes' (28:14) the Knight asks, subverting the modernity and

rationality of the natural sciences by describing them in terms of ancient 'superstitious' kinds of astrological knowledge. Surely 'a single human pair', the first human beings, are a preferable starting-point for the examination. Here we get our first hint of the Adam-Eve picture he will construct so elaborately later. The groundwork is already being done, as the Knight reverses the usual associations one has with the two approaches, in his meta-schematic contrast of the 'superstition' of the 'mathematical observational mind' (28:11) with the 'hypothesis' of the Genesis story (28:13). This 'hypothesis', moreover, will appear in 'geometric clarity' (28:15) — a clear reference to the geometric method of Wolff, and perhaps, as Büchsel suggests, to the '*clarté*' sought by the Berlin Academy in the prize-winning essay.[45]

Moscati's lecture, in which he claimed the human bipedal gait is an 'inherited and unnatural' trait (28:16ff.) provides the Knight with a useful point of departure to challenge Herder's apparent assumption that what is 'natural' must be 'innate' in an almost fully-fledged form. The Knight could as well argue that eating and drinking 'must be no innate human idea, but rather definitely an inherited and unnatural custom' (28:25-28). The point of this argument is not truly reached until 30:35ff., in the final paragraphs before the Knight gives his own mythological picture of the origin of language. In the meantime, however, 'everything, everything argues for this proof' (28:29), as with Herder's. Büchsel points out that his argument (parodistic, of course, in style as well as method) is deduced in four steps: firstly, from the essence of the human stomach (cf. 28:30ff.); secondly, from the element of hunger and thirst ('Attraction' is from the jargon of the contemporary mechanistic and materialistic philosophy) (cf. 28:33ff.); thirdly, proof from the '*analogia gentium*' (cf. 29:2ff.); fourthly, from the practical example of how children learn to eat (cf. 29:6ff.).[46] It is also the case that this echoes Herder's argument.[47] This then serves as a springboard for Hamann's political attacks on the regime of Frederick the Great, which form a kind of counterpoint to the four steps, or are practical examples thereof. The essence of the human stomach, therefore, is like the all-consuming nature of the regime, which swallows everything; secondly, its greed and its desire to turn everything (even manure) to its material advantage illustrates 'the element of hunger and thirst' (28:32-33); and

[45] HHE 4, 179, note 8.
[46] HHE 4, 181f.; textual references mine, supporting Büchsel's argument.
[47] Cf. translator's note m.

finally, the 'analogies' are used to point out the disparity of wealth between the imported French officials and courtiers, and the increasing poverty of the indigenous population. This comparison is made all the more pertinent, or indeed impertinent, in the comparison between a wealthy 'Fritz' and an impoverished 'Fritz'; Fritz being Frederick the Great's nickname.

Whatever his material circumstances, every Fritz has something in common with every other: he would never have learned to eat had his minder not spoon-fed him as an infant. In his proof, the Knight has uncovered a central point missed by those who wished to argue that language (or bipedal walking) must be a human invention, rather than intrinsic to human nature, because it is taught. That is, that the fact that such acts as eating and walking must be taught to children does not prove that these acts are not essentially human. To eat with a spoon or to speak a language must be taught, but to eat and to be linguistic are essential to human nature, and the phenomenon of teaching is simply a sign that we can only become what we are through personal relationships. At the same time, the fact that these activities are essential to human nature does not entail the fact that each specimen of the race is capable of inventing the activity of themselves without instruction; and here Hamann refutes Herder. The same weapon can be used against both opponents.

The picture of the little infant taking in his pap and producing a result at the other end gives Hamann an opportunity to have a bit of Humean fun. There is no *physical* connection between cause and effect, he tells us; and the fact that one duty of the mother in tending her infant results in another must simply be a 'great miracle' — 'of digestion' (29:9). Faith that an effect will follow a cause, this 'spiritual and ideal' connection of causality, must be 'superstition'. This passing reference returns us to the sentiments of 28:4-15; that is, the fact that the convictions that underlie the methods and ideas of natural science are no less volitional than those of religion.

Eating and drinking therefore must be a human invention, like walking and like language, the Knight decides ironically. 'What a magnificent solution the invention of eating and drinking is, if one thinks of Hume's epistemological interpretation of the category of causality – and especially for those who have an insoluble problem in the unity of the person in body and soul!'[48]; for eating and drink-

[48] Büchsel, HHE 4, 183.

ing hold body and soul together! (cf. 29:14.) Presumably it was the invention of those first human beings which one finds in Rousseau's and Moscati's accounts, who lived on a diet of acorns; according to Rousseau, it was by observing the example of animals that human beings learned which foods were edible and which poisonous[49]; and, one could argue, it was the indirect tutelage of bleating sheep that inspired the invention of language according to Herder — though admittedly the first natural language was more like a pig's 'grunting' than a sheep's 'bleating' (29:17f.). This makes pigs, incidentally, both 'rivals' (29:22) and 'subjects' as well; one thinks firstly of Herder's hierarchy in which animals are our inferiors, and secondly of the regime of the king: *PID* makes the parallelism clearer: 'the human being is related to cattle as leader to subjects' (37:26f.). The motif of the pig, in particular the common diet shared by humans and pigs, permits Hamann to introduce another allusion to make a biting political point. Another famous occasion on which man and pig shared a common table was in the parable of the Prodigal Son; when the latter was so impoverished that he longed to eat the husks the pigs were eating. As in that tale, the 'sons' of the Knight's country were not so fortunate as the swine; and the Knight pleads that they at least be given husks, like the Prodigal Son; while the French colonists and the court feast.

Hamann's next attack on the King takes a much more personal, not to say insolent, character. There were rumours of homosexuality, or eunuchhood, connected to the king, and also to his brother Heinrich and their home on the Rhine, Rheinsberg, where they entertained philosophers (including Voltaire), poets, musicians, etc. According to their sister Wilhelmina, the Margravine who later made Bayreuth into a cultural haven, Fritz at sixteen caught a venereal disease. Some historians believe, based in part on his indifference to women in later life, that his doctors botched the cure, operating on his penis in such a way as to render him impotent.[50] The impression that he was homosexual may also have arisen from or been strengthened by the fact that, deprived of any affection from his father, he tended to form intense and intimate friendships with young men. The passage of 29:27-30:2 therefore collects from a wide range of sources a string of allusions, seemingly designed both to conceal and to reveal their reference; all bitterly mocking the philosophical and sexual activities of the

[49] HHE 4, 183, cf. note 29.
[50] Nelson, 114.

monarch: he is guilty not merely of sophistry but of sodomy as well (29:27, 33). Yet there is a point to be made beneath the pornography: Frederick was widely praised (and it would seem, mocked) for his famous tolerance. Yet this tolerance – that one may have sex as one wishes, just as one may pray as one wishes – 'reeks... of a *glans regia*' (30:1f.). Lamia was told that a special unguent was for the '*glans regia*', and so too is the tolerance: Frederick was the first to have need of both sexual and religious tolerance, and his bestowal of this on his subjects has a less than altruistic motivation. But what good is the freedom to '*prie Dieu*' or to '*f---*' '*comme l'on veut*'[51] if one cannot eat? Clearly the equation of sexual and religious tolerance was for Hamann the clearest expression of the false 'tolerance' and 'liberality' of this kingdom, whose king on accession to the throne had written *Antimachiavel* and who had become, in Hamann's words, a Meta-Machiavelli.

Truly, the Knight of the Rose-Cross knows of no real paradise of religious tolerance; and in his last will and testament he cannot bestow the kind of blessing he would like. Instead, his countrymen are 'cursed' (30:7ff.), as in Psalm 129, and referring to the enemies of Zion; they are as nothing, and must be ashamed of their ancestors. The fact that this is pronounced in French lends weight to the interpretation that this shame is of being German (cf. 33:5f).

The Knight returns to an examination of the monarch's 'tolerance' (30:11ff.), a sexual tolerance, as the overlays of allusions indicate: 'fantasy', 'Paradise' (cf. translator's note α), 'Sotadian', and the Sea of Salt – location of Sodom. But this tolerance is a shallow one, for that 'part' (the sexual part, one may assume) is mortal (30:14-15), and is surely secondary in importance to sheer survival, and still more, to the life of the soul which is threatened by the antireligious programme of the Court and the Academy. The 'paradise' of liberal tolerance offered by Frederick the Great is false; and paradoxically it prevents us from living in the true 'Paradise', represented by the Tree of Life (30:16), as best we can, by enjoying reasonable health, and most of all, intimacy with God. Here another foundation stone is laid for the later portrait of the first humans' intimacy with God, evoked by the Tree of Life.

At the same time, however, the notion that the king is the absolute ruler, a cruel and murderous ruler (Herod, 30:19) if an educated and linguistically-polished one (Atticus) (30:20) is an illusion, for it is God who rules (as the Horace Ode tells us); and 'all

[51] Cf. Hamann's note 9.

laws' etc. cry out an eschatological warning of judgement: Christ, the '*Controleur-General*' is coming to reverse the present unjust situation (30:32ff.).

At this point (30:35ff.) Hamann returns to pick up the philosophical thread, of which 28:16ff. represented the first stitches. If such basic activities as walking and eating and drinking[52] are impossible for the human being without instruction; how can we possibly conceive of this same creature inventing language unassisted (apart from the presence of sheep)? How could language be 'a self-sufficient invention of human art and wisdom' (31:4, 6f.)? Hamann exposes a central irony here: on the one hand, we are encouraged to take an animalian, materialistic, reductionist view of the human being, and on the other hand we are expected to believe that *this Urmensch* was capable of *inventing language* all by itself. Our philosophers create gold from base metal, dream up miraculous 'treasures of fruitfulness' (31:7f.) in human nature which are capable of inventing language, the 'emptiness of their bag' or of their conception of humanity magically produces a strong and powerful spirit [*Geist*]; but, judging from their own writings, their own uses of language, should we be confident in their powers of discernment? After all, their 'magic' is a perfectly 'natural' one (not 'unnatural' like walking or eating;) this natural magic is 'automatic reason', a philosophy which, once its Systems and Method have been created, is capable of generating explanation after explanation; one which, ultimately, is founded on a confusion of language. Another way of expressing what is conveyed by 'automatic reason' is in Hamann's later assertion that the difficulties lie in the 'womb of the concept' (31:21). Such mistakes cannot be eliminated by correcting one or two points, which is why the Knight feels no need to take on his opponents in hand-to-hand combat (31:18). The error lies in the fundamental presuppositions and method, the 'womb' of their thinking, and any errors lopped off in hand-to-hand combat would simply spring anew from there. He therefore has not launched a thorough attack on all their errors, but simply confined himself to a single, anthropological point: the 'nonsense', which in its account of the origin of language transforms our primitive ancestors into 'thrice-blessed inventors of an art' (31:24). This cavalier dismissal has something of the feeling of Herder's treatment of his opponents.

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[52] And more? Büchsel's interpretation of the 'masterpiece' as referring to 'the divine-humanness of love, marriage and procreation', HHE 4, 191, note 4.

At this point the Knight gives, as it were, his own answer to the *Preisfrage* of the Academy. It will not take the form of a logical argument position, but rather is a myth; still, as *PID* will argue, so was Herder's literary portrait of the first human to speak.

The paragraph of 31:27ff. sets the stage for the Knight's reworking of the Genesis story of Adam and Eve. It portrays his version of the mythological Golden Age (cf. the 'precious era' of 29:19f.); in this account, a certain sexual aspect of paradise is implied, in the humans' shameless nakedness and the ambiguity of a 'navel' 'which never lacks for drink'; this is Hamann's answer to Frederick's Sotadian paradise. More to the point, however, we find the first human beings absolutely surrounded by language, by the voice of God, which is virtually their food and drink – and one which is 'natural' for them. Finally, their growth and maturity is also couched in political terms: but their political vocation is to make love, give birth, and populate the earth, and to 'rule *by the word of their mouths*' (31:33, emphasis mine). The twin obsessions of the essay, that is, language and politics, are finally united in one vocation.

This political calling raises the thorny question of inequality; an Enlightenment problem that Herder found inadequately dealt with by Rousseau. With an intuition that the present state of affairs is not how it was 'in the beginning' one has recourse to 'the natural' as normative, and thus attempts to explain the origin of inequality, in order to ground the present inequalities of the state in something rational. Hamann rejects this attempt, opposing the original biblical picture of the equality of the first children to the Enlightenment idea of the 'natural'; and showing the subsequent inequality to be the result of the sin, of the Fall; more precisely, God's institution after the Fall (Gen. 3:16f.). This theme of inequality, and tyranny, returns in 32:15ff.; indicating that, contrary to the ideology of the divine right of kings, political oppression and domination were not part of the original ideal institution. It is possible, insofar as this refers to animals as well, that Hamann intends a further joust at Herder and his hierarchy of humanity above animals, in kind and not degree.

The myth itself (continued in 32:8ff. and 32:21ff.) shows Hamann deliberately adopting the unblunted anthropomorphism that Herder shrank from in his letters to Hamann and his own *Preisschrift*. God not merely speaks audibly, for example (31:30f.); God, as in Gen. 3.8, has an evening stroll (31:30f.), and even plays on the earth with his human children (32:14f.).

Another important theme is the status and dignity afforded the human children; the 'first monarch', whose countenance angels longed to see. This creature was formally introduced by God himself to the world 'prepared by the word of his mouth'. This picture of humanity contrasts with both the animalian *Urmensch* brought forth from a sump or slime (27:32), but also with the proud creature of Herder, defiantly independent of God, who introduces himself on the stage and proclaims his being.

The myth portrays the first human pair as being surrounded by language, not merely in the loving conversation of God, but in the very economy of nature itself: every phenomenon is a word; every word a pledge; a pledge of this union of God and humanity (32:21-24), the *communicatio idiomatum* spoken of at the start of the essay (27:12ff.). A 'word', we are told, is itself the symbol of divine and human relatedness, indeed, union. The context in which the human being first comes to be, first comes to experience itself and its world, is 'word', is language; and this language is no civilized skill, but is relatedness to God; living in language means knowing God, 'for God was the word' (32:26). The origin of language, or better the first human speaking, then, was no self-sufficient invention, but an answer, a response to a previous address. As inadequate as the idea of language as a spontaneous bringing-forth of sound to express an inner idea is the notion of language as civilized artifice that must be inculcated in each succeeding generation; language is neither an independent faculty which we self-sufficiently possess, nor something foreign to our nature in which we must be drilled, like table-manners. Whether we speak of the 'first human beings', or of every child, our first speaking is a response to being spoken to. Surrounded by language, then, the first human pair spoke, much as children surrounded by the conversation and addresses of their mother first come to speak; this first utterance was not the complicated, rational exercise of Herder's first speaker, but is as easy and natural as child's play (32:28) — paradoxically, far easier and far more natural than it was for the human inventor to invent what was natural for him. The reason that this is so – and the reason for the fundamental *communicatio idiomatum* – is that 'human nature [is] like the Kingdom of God' (32:28ff.). If the origin of language is to be found in human nature, this is the human nature in which we should find it – human, yet the Kingdom of God. The origin of language, then, is to be found in the irreducible and indissoluble relationship of the human person to the divine; it is created in that 'union of

opposites', and hence its origin is neither 'supernatural' nor merely human, but simultaneously human and divine.[53] This basis of relation is the essential element, or context, which Herder and his contemporaries missed in their account of human linguistic creativity.

At this point the Knight breaks off, feigning reluctance, afraid of wearying his listeners; but of course, Hamann has said as much as he wishes to say. He contents himself with having made his pilgrimage (32:35-33:2); this perhaps more than anything else tells us what he considers the appropriate attitude and procedure for such an investigation: not self-confident rationalism or the 'investigative spirit' of his contemporaries, proceeding by logical deduction; but humility, perhaps even repentance (suggested by the garb in which he undertook his pilgrimage), and the arduous, ascetic, and ultimately transforming journey undertaken by the alchemist. This reverence is not hyperbolic, when one considers the terminus of the pilgrimage: the Word, the Alpha and Omega (33:2); for these terms suggest a christological reference, and with it a further layer of meaning and of holiness to the discussion of the 'word' and language; all layers of Hamann's association with 'Word', however, contain the mediating aspect of the Johannine Logos; all are instances of God's self-communication.

Hamann then adopts the style and tone of the great man, who has fought for right and now faces his own death (33:3ff.). Along with ritual blessings on his descendants, the Knight of the Rose-Cross concludes by issuing an invitation to those who are not afraid of being or becoming German; a reference, no doubt, to the invading French administrators. The consecrated ribbons, candles, etc. may be, as Büchsel suggests, references to such things beloved by secret societies and lodges of Freemasons.[54] The essay would not be complete, of course, without further slurs on the monarch, his protégé Algarotti, and his French court. A final blessing is pronounced on those who 'wait two or three, indeed four years' for this will; this of course refers to the deception of the publication date. The Knight finally concludes with a citation that closes the essay as the 2 Cor. citation opened it: 2 Tim. 2:19: 'The Lord knows who are his.'

[53] Metzke writes, 'Word and language for Hamann are essentially not emanations but relations. They are the fundamental relation in which we stand, in which I encounter Thou and reveal myself.' (Metzke, 131/251).

[54] HHE 4, 202, n.5.

Although writing 'in ignorance', as it were, of Aristobolus' essay, the Knight has answered Aristobolus' methodological question. How does one give an account of unknowable origins? The Knight's suggestion is that the myth of the first human pair is preferable to the theories of scientists' and mathematicians' (28:4-15). In short, the genre for making sense of a beginning or origin is to write a myth; for this is a genre which permits not-knowing, intuition, wisdom, the anthropomorphic involvement and depiction of God, as well as human 'history' (as *SM* and *AN* suggested). Hamann's use of Genesis to write a 'myth' of the beginning of language paves the way for the (mis-) treatment of Herder in *PID*, where he recasts Herder's version of the origin of language in another, rather different, pastiche of Genesis (cf. 46:5ff.).

Two further crucial points have been raised in this essay. One is the anthropological question that lies behind the debate of the origin of language. What is a human being? And of what is it capable? The second is the introduction of the idea couched as *communicatio idiomatum*, Hamann's own answer to the problem. The Knight's relational picture of the human being allows language to be fully 'natural' to the human being – as Herder desired – but without the circularities of Herder's account. For 'natural', for Hamann, does *not* mean or entail 'self-sufficient'; as the analysis and discussion of eating, drinking, and walking showed. This conception, that 'naturalness' still entails a dependence on others, is an anthropological lock in which the key of relationality fits.

8. Exposition of *Philological Ideas and Doubts*

a. Ideas

In a letter to Herder dating from the beginning of the year following the writing of *HS*, Hamann writes to Herder: 'Gaps and lacks – is the highest and deepest knowledge of human nature, through which we must climb our way up to the ideal — ideas and doubts – the *summum bonum* of our reason.'[55] Herder had claimed, in his *Preisschrift*, that 'gaps and lacks' could not form the basis of our human nature. For Hamann, whatever our human nature might be, our ignorance of it is precisely what Herder was most anxious to deny. In our knowledge and the fruits of our reason, we

[55] ZH 3, 34:33-35.

cannot expect to attain a comprehensive picture of the totality of human nature. The claim that ideas and doubts constitute the *summum bonum* of our reason justifies the unsystematic approach that Hamann takes in this essay, the only one of his *'Herderschriften'* in which he deals with Herder's essay in anything approaching a comprehensive fashion. To attempt a comprehensive and systematic refutation of Herder point by point, however, is not his aim; rather, he intends to fire a few well-aimed and well-sharpened arrows at a few highly vulnerable points: to mention several fundamental 'ideas' and to voice several devastating 'doubts' is all that is required. At the same time, it provides the essay with a structure, which begins with Hamann's own 'ideas' on the subject-matter, chiefly language and epistemology, and continues with his 'doubts' about Herder's account.

The remaining idea in the title – 'philological' –hardly needs further explanation at this point.

Hamann begins his essay with one biblical and one classical citation. The 'it' in the psalm quotation is the tongue, in particular, the false tongue; and there is no reason to think that, dislocated from its context, Hamann wants it to mean otherwise. In that case, it relates to the citation from the letter of James that occurs at the end of Hamann's review of Herder's *Preisschrift* (19:34).[56] Büchsel, after inquiring after various referents for the 'it' in question (feminine gender in German) – such as the *Preisschrift*, or Hamann's own work – raises the possibility that the 'sharp arrows' of the strong [*stark*] refers to the activities of the neologian Johann Starck. In that case, it would mean something like 'Herder with his *Preisschrift* has associated himself with someone like Starck.'[57]

It is an interesting but not wholly convincing suggestion. It seems to me preferable to connect this sharp arrow of a tongue with the sharp spear of a tongue in the Pindar citation; in which case both would be playful if somewhat disingenuous apologies for the ferocity of the author's attack on his young friend. At the same time, the association of tongue with language is not irrelevant; the power of the tongue is precisely the power of language.

This particular Pindar ode is a hymn to a young victor, hence much of the ode could be deemed relevant to the matter at hand, as Hamann suggests.[58] Büchsel notes that Pindar's odes were likely to have a personal association for Herder; he worked on the odes

[56] HHE 4, 207-8.
[57] HHE 4, 208.
[58] Cf. Translator's note a.

during his time in Riga, discussed them with Hamann in conversation and in letters, borrowed a copy from Hamann and had excerpts made for him by his friend.[59]

Lest we attribute too evil a will to the attack that this essay represents, or perhaps too acute an envy, we are assured: 'Nor would I dare to wring from him the crown that sits on his head with so much glory.' Both this and the Pindar ode Hamann wrote in later. And indeed, though Hamann will find much to attack in the essay, its dramatic and effusive conclusion will support this contention; however flawed the essay, Hamann will not begrudge the esteem and favour bestowed on his young protégé by the King's Berlin Academy; still less does he wish such approval for himself. This, of course, is less ingenuous than ironic.

On the back of the title page (36) is another citation, this time neither classical nor biblical, but it carries no less self-parody than its forerunners, and is of equal relevance to the conduct of the essay. It is from another review of Herder's essay, concerning its style, which 'should be no model for others'. Herder's style will, of course, be a model – but also a target – for Hamann's parody; in its uses of Herderian words and coinages; to be sure, but above all in the dramatic 'hymn on a Pindaric lyre to the Pythian victor', a high parody of what one might call Herder's 'language-creation myth' (cf. 46:5ff.).

Hamann's essay can be divided into three parts. The third part of the essay (48:24ff.), represents a dramatic turning point, in which Herder, whom Hamann had up till now 'fought with blindfolded eyes' is suddenly praised and heralded as victor and hero; this section consists largely in parody and satire. The first two sections comprise the 'Ideas' (37-41:12) and the 'Doubts' (41:13-48:23). In the 'Ideas' Hamann deals with many of the underlying ideas, assumptions and presuppositions of Herder's work — without once mentioning him by name, or even giving a hint that this is his subject matter; one must deduce that this is the underlying theme of these seemingly unconnected reflections on language, epistemology and anthropology. In the 'Doubts' he turns to deal more explicitly with the *Preisschrift*, quoting extensively from it — yet again naming neither it nor its author. Instead, he refers to it as 'the latest Platonic argument for the human origin of language'. Herder is only mentioned by name in 48:23, the last word uttered before Hamann breaks off into the eulogy. It is a

[59] HHE 4, 208; cf. ZH 2, Nr. 323, 449:33.

device which suggests the author has only just realized who the author of the *Preisschrift* is; and on doing so immediately ceases his criticism and turns instead to praise of the friend 'whom I had until now fought with blindfolded eyes.'

It is interesting, and significant, that Hamann begins his essay by invoking the aid of Aristotle, in 37:1ff. and also in the footnotes; much of the pattern of the critique will be the opposition of Plato and Aristotle.

Herder had begun his prize-winning essay with the claim that 'Even as an animal the human had language' (HP 253); in that all the feelings of our bodies and passions of our soul find expression through cries and sounds. A suffering animal like Philoctetes cries and whimpers; language is the natural function of this machine. Much of the beginning of his *Preisschrift*, as we have seen, is devoted to the argument of this fundamental relationship between emotion and language; e.g. 'These sighs, these sounds are language. There is therefore a language of emotion, which is [an] immediate law of nature.' (HP 254.)

Hamann in a single paragraph demolishes not just Herder's striking opening sentence, but also a major presupposition of his concept of language (37:1-10). What Herder had taken for 'language', the basic self-expression of pain and pleasure, is to be regarded as 'voice'; 'voice' is what we have 'even as animals' (and, according to Aristotle, in common with animals). Cries of pain and pleasure are 'voice' and not 'language'. 'Language' itself does not have the expression of emotion as its primary function — still less its origin. Voice and hence emotion are not to be isolated from language, however; as Herder asserts it may well be the root and stem and nourishing sap (37:9-10); but it is not the entire tree itself. This refusal to equate emotive cries and expressive sounds with language, incidentally, also refutes those followers of what might be called the 'natural cries and gestures school', such as Maupertuis, who found the origin of language in these bestial noises. Herder, incidentally, rejects this approach later in his essay; that he rejects that language can be derived from these cries surely exposes the inadequacy of calling them 'language' in the first place.

Having thus eliminated one of Herder's foundational assertions, Hamann next turns his hand to another: 'The concept of *degree* and *kind*', which Herder used to distinguish humanity and animals, we are told 'relates very arbitrary similarities and the opposition of this relation has little influence on the knowledge of

things themselves.' (37:11-13.) The distinction of 'different in degree' and 'different in kind' is essential to Herder's argument; as he asserted that humanity differs from animals in *kind*. Hamann asserts firstly that this is not a useful distinction; and secondly that in fact it does not hold. It is not useful, because the distinction itself is arbitrary and not part of reality; hence it is not a useful guide to knowing reality. That humanity differs *in kind* from animals Hamann disputes, for it 'does not only have **life** in common with **animals**; but also its **organization** as well as its **mechanism** is more or less similar, that is, by **degree**' (37:18-20) and not kind. Indeed, human beings differ from animals, but not in the way Herder maintained. The answer is to be found not by some essentialist ('Platonist'?) definition, but (in an 'Aristotelian' fashion) by observing their concrete existence, the differences in how they actually live: 'The main difference ... must therefore be in the form of life.' (37:20-22.)

Taking, as it were, a cursory glance at conditions of human life, Hamann rules out the factor of social living as the distinguishing mark of humanity; ants, wasps and termites, according to Aristotle, were also gregarious; while human beings are at times and at others are not. The author takes this to mean that the 'true character of our nature consists in the **critical** and **magisterial** office of a political animal' (37:24-26). Hamann interprets Aristotle's κρισεως and αρχης as 'critical and magisterial' (elsewhere, 'archontical') 'office'; here he goes beyond Herder's distinction between humanity and animals on a biological or essential basis, and claims the difference is found in a way of life and a function in relation to others. It was used to define a 'citizen' in Aristotle, while Hamann chooses to extend the description to the whole species. It is clear also that 'critical' will take on a different content than the juridical overtones of Aristotle's observation; and 'political' will have a wider meaning than simply the social. This is perhaps best seen at the end of the 'Doubts', where we are told 'In criticism and politics consists therefore the whole canon of human perfection' (48:22-23). To some extent 'criticism' seems to cover some of the area conveyed by the term 'epistemology' (cf. esp. 39:18f. and what precedes it), as it will for the later Kant, and as it did in the dedication of *SM*. 'Politics' will cover both our wider social relations, as in 39:18; but also the realm intended by modern use of the term: the relations of the governed and their governors.

This assertion, however, that our true nature consists in this designation must not be taken uncritically as an honest assertion

untainted by irony. To begin with, it is immediately given an ironic and dubious twist by the end of the very same sentence: '...and that consequently the **person** is related to **cattle** as **leader** to **subjects**.' (37:26f.) The fact that he draws the analogy of humans-animals and ruler-subjects should alert us to the fact that he is preparing the ground for his later political attacks, which are no less frequent in this essay than in *KRC*.

Moreover, also in contrast to Aristotle, he immediately sets this supposed 'honour' within the context of being created by God[60]; and relativizes the glorification of humanity that this critical and magisterial destiny might imply: this office reflects not our own capabilities and powers, as it might do in Herder's hands, but rather refers us immediately to the 'grace of the All-giver' (37:28-38:3). Moreover, this picture of humanity at its peak of authority is immediately balanced by a reminder of the worst of humanity; not only can we be gods, but worms as well (37:28-38:7); perhaps this also relates back to the question of whether there is a difference of *kind* or *degree* between humanity and animals, or indeed, humanity and worms. More importantly, it sets all talk of human worth and value within the context of relationship with God, not merely in explicitly introducing the 'All-Giver', but in the sheer fact of 38:6f. being a biblical citation. What is distinctive and characteristic of humanity is this honour: that we are in a special relationship with God; and if we are different from animals it is by virtue of this gift. That this gift, or this relation, has its serious personal and moral consequences is shown by the context of David's confession.

Hamann then sets out – without explanation – what apparently is the intrinsic quality that he finds distinctively human: freedom. Without it there is no possibility of moral behaviour; nor even recognition of good and evil itself. It is an essential presupposition for understanding humanity, 'indispensable to human nature' (38:27f.). It is freedom, we find, and not 'political and critical office' that is the maximum and minimum of our nature (38:10-11): the first condition of possibility for our powers, but also its final and greatest development. Freedom is both the fundamental drive and the goal of our powers (38:11-13).

It is worth asking, 'to what is this assertion opposed?' What was the drive and the goal for Herder's language-creating creature?

[60] 'Inner worthiness' and 'merit' perhaps reflect Luther's 'Little Catechism': *'ohn all mein Verdienst und Würdigkeit'* – 'worthiness' is my translation of *Würdigkeit* and 'merit' of *Verdienst*.

Something like self-expression or self-fulfilment. Herder had mentioned human freedom, in passing, placing it within his framework of the disposition that sets humanity apart from animals, 'call it what you will, understanding, reason, reflexion'; 'it is the single positive power of thinking, which... is called reason, in human beings.... which is called freedom in human beings and instinct in animals.' (HP 271-272.) Freedom, therefore, in Herder's system means not being determined and run by instincts; and it is grounded in our capacity to *think*. It is also, therefore, equated with reason. Hamann accepts that freedom means, in part, that we are not wholly determined by instincts, but brushes aside its equation with a single intellectual capacity (reason); it is rather the unity of all our powers, and the purpose of their development (38:12f.).

Moreover, he insists on an aspect of freedom that was wholly lacking in Herder's account: both the political implications and the consequences for moral responsibility of this anthropological fact; that is, that freedom means that we are not only not determined by instincts, as Herder argues (HP 266ff.), but also not by the *sensus communis*; just as the ruler is similarly determined neither by some intrinsic force nor justified by some extrinsic authority (38:14-16). We ourselves are our own legislators, our own law-givers; but also the first to be affected by our own legislation (38:16-17). This division of the individual into various characters – legislator, subject, neighbour of the subjects – foreshadows the division of 40:16-25.

One danger in regarding freedom as Herder does, that is, as an inner disposition, is that 'external' and interpersonal, or political aspects of freedom are ignored or devalued. Hamann, in his private battle against the authoritarianism of Frederick the Great, is well aware that the assertion of freedom as an inner disposition demands a political freedom and autonomy; indeed, the two are not separate. One's political and moral autonomy is in a reciprocal relationship with one's own 'inner' freedom; we may legislate our own laws, but we are the first to be affected by them.

Hamann does not disagree with Herder that freedom presupposes the ability to think; but firstly, thought is no less dependent on freedom; and secondly, a proper understanding of freedom – and therefore, a proper understanding of humanity – requires better treatment. One could say he reverses the order of the relation of phenomenon and context found in Herder; for Hamann, freedom is the *context* in which to place thinking and learning, and

not the other way round; and thus, it is not so much that the phenomenon of freedom presupposes thought (and hence is subsequent to it, as it were); rather, it is the case that thought (and learning, and all that depends on it) presupposes freedom.

Further, in the sentence that asserts this (38:18ff.), he once again grounds the discussion in terms of a relationship to God, by means of a reference to James 1:25: those that look to the 'perfect law of freedom' will be blessed in their *doing*. The irony, or even contradiction, of there being a 'law of freedom' would not have been lost on Hamann. The associations or interpretations of this notion are many: the *'perfect'* law – as opposed to the laws of the present regime – is one of liberty, not oppression; the perfect law is the law of Christ; the law of Christ spells freedom, on many levels of being; that is, it is not a new imposition of rules but is liberation; and moreover, in its context in 38:18f., 'the law of freedom' is the part of the very institution of human nature on which all other capabilities rest, it is not a set of regulations but the order and harmony of our being which makes our 'doing' possible. The final clause takes up the theme of human imitation (38:20f.), which Herder had grounded in reflexion, and Hamann once again calls Aristotle to his support with an extensive citation from *De Poetica* 4. In a personal letter to Hamann in 1768[61] Herder raised an issue which the two had previously discussed: 'how did we *come to be*, from creations of God, what we now are, creations of *humanity*?'[62] In short, Herder raises the question of the origin of human evil. Herder professed that, although he was an enthusiastic Rousseauian[63], Rousseau had not succeeded in his attempts to explain the origin of inequality and evil, in answering the central question. 'How did it happen, that the person from the situation of Nature passed over into the present evils? if in his nature lay the enclosed treasure of capabilities, of inclinations etc., which for his happiness must remain enclosed, why did God give him this kernel of wrongness? how did it germinate?'[64] Herder thereupon re-interpreted Genesis 3 in a psychologizing fashion, and proposed Adam and Eve in imitating the snake as the 'imitative animal of Aristotle'.[65] In the *Preisschrift*, as Elfriede Büchsel points out[66], in

[61] ZH 2, No. 349, 408-415.
[62] *Ibid.*
[63] *'Eifriger Rousseauianer'*, 409:15.
[64] 409:16-20; idiosyncratic lower cases are Herder's.
[65] *'Nachahmende Thier des Aristoteles'*, 410:1-12.
[66] HHE 4, 219

dealing with Rousseau, Herder proposes reflexion as the crucial factor in the difference between imitation and 'aping'.[67] But Hamann here replaces 'reflexion' with 'freedom' as the crucial condition of possibility for human imitation. Moreover, with Aristotle's stress on learning, and the pleasure of learning (note 6), Hamann reintroduces an idea important (in a comical fashion) in *D* and *KRC*: that imitation and learning are the ways in which language arises and is continued; not in a moment of genius in an individual.

Herder's human invention of language takes place spontaneously, as it were, without the aid of another to imitate. The aspect of human instruction indeed is the indispensable basis of Herder's account of how language *develops* and *continues*; and Herder paints elaborate pictures of family life and linguistic instruction, yet curiously can conceive the initial invention of language as taking place wholly independently of it. This is also a crucial factor in Hamann's disagreement with Herder's account. Imitation and learning, as opposed to the self-sufficient and solitary invention proposed by Herder, require others, a relationship; it implies human dependence and interdependence. This essential relatedness is necessary for imitation; which itself is necessary for the '*Erziehung und Erfindung*' which Herder takes such pains to assert. His thought has turned against itself; he has implied a human independence and self-sufficiency in the origins of the phenomenon which he must later deny in the phenomenon's continuation.

That freedom for Hamann forms the ground and the context for all our mental activity is underlined once more in the following sentence: '**Consciousness, attentiveness, abstraction** and even **moral conscience** seem to be for the most part **energies** of our **freedom**.' (38:22-24.) All our intellectual activities arise from and are fuelled by our freedom. It is worth noting that, although 'consciousness, attentiveness, and abstraction' were all important factors at the moment of language-creation as Herder envisioned it; yet Herder's pet term 'reflexion' is not included in this list; and that, on the other hand, considerations of moral conscience played no part in Herder. It is also worth observing that the term 'energies' again recalls Aristotle. These varied aspects of humanity are united in the entelechy of freedom; all, along with freedom, are

[67] '*Nachäffung*'.

characteristic of the human person, but none is its 'Platonic' essence.

As before, however, this description of human faculties must immediately be placed in the socio-political context so lacking in the first part of Herder's essay. Not only do all these 'undetermined powers' *belong* to freedom (38:25), but so does the 'republican privilege to be able to contribute to one's destiny'; this too is 'indispensable to human nature' (38:26-28). The limited sphere of animals may, as Herder argued, determine the orientation of all their powers and drives (38:28f.); while in contrast the perspective of the person 'extends to the **universal** and as it were loses itself in the **infinite**' (39:1-3); if this is true, however, it simply illustrates the fact that we are 'political animals', with the critical and 'archontical' task, right, and privilege not only of contributing to our culture, but to our social and political existence and destiny.

The connection of 39:4ff. to what precedes it is not immediately clear. Hamann alludes to Aristotle's comparison of the soul to the hand; the one being the instrument that uses instruments, the other being a form which employs form, 'and sense is a form of sensible objects.' What is clear is that it introduces the following section, a discussion of epistemology which deals with the question of the relation of the senses and the understanding: 39:7-19. With the citation from Aristotle, Hamann has begun his epistemological discussion not from a general examination of consciousness, for example, but rather from a concrete and observational standpoint. What is required is not an isolated study of the dissected consciousness and the act of knowing, but rather, observation and reflection on understanding and how it functions in the concrete life of the person. Hence, although the sensuous, bodily images used in this epistemological discussion are generally typical of Hamann, more importantly they are also tactical. Perhaps, in a mild way, they are intended to shock; but most of all they are intended to assert the bodiliness of thinking and knowing.

Several things, therefore, are to be noted in the first section of this paragraph, (39:7-14), which uses the analogy of the stomach and digestion. Firstly, the senses and understanding are in a relationship of equality: the senses are not the lowly servant of the dominant understanding, any more than the stomach is the servant of the arteries; indeed, the image would almost seem to suggest the reverse, that the vessels are the servant of the stomach. Secondly, not only are both equal and to be equally

valued, but both are dependent on the other. Indeed, understanding is dependent on the senses, but the senses too are dependent on reason, without which they themselves 'could not administer [their] office' (39:10). Thirdly, exegetically, we here observe the clearest attack so far on the secret enemy: rationalism, or even idealism. This is the heart of Hamann's 'Aristotle-Plato' opposition, and the hermeneutical key to his idiosyncratic use of these philosophers and the adjectives derived from their names. Knowing is not a task performed solely by the mind, by reason, to which faculty all else must submit. Reason itself, as well as knowing, are entirely dependent on the senses; and hence knowing and understanding are inescapably 'bodily' acts.

The final sentence making use of the gastric image introduces the duality that is expounded in the latter section of the paragraph (39:14-19): 'there is nothing in our entire bodies that has not come through either our stomach or our parents' (39:12-14); this duality is repeated subsequently in different forms: stamen/menstruation, revelation-to reveal/tradition-to transmit. This articulates the dual nature of human knowing and understanding, *vis-à-vis* other people and one's community; the duality miscast by Herder. On the one hand, we do absorb and digest things for ourselves, on the other hand we do learn and receive from those around us. 'Stamen' ['*stamina*'], evoking what is 'germinal', 'seminal', thus would be the personally creative, generative aspect of our reason, its own capacity for insight. That even this original creative faculty does not function self-sufficiently and independently of God would seem to be indicated by the use of the theological term of revelation [*Offenbarung*]; all the more as it is something we 'take for our own property' and 'transform'. Interpreting the image of 'menstruation' ['*menstrua*'] is rather more difficult. To clarify the intriguing use of the term, Büchsel provides a definition from a contemporary Encyclopedia, which shows the analogical use to which the word was put by alchemists: a dissolving juice ['*Auflöse- oder Scheide-Safft*'] which on account of its ability to penetrate and dissolve bodies placed together, therefore had unitive properties.[68] I suspect that *Scheide* – in Hamann's hands, at least – would be a double entendre, signifying both *scheiden* (to separate) and *Scheiden* (vagina).

On this understanding it would possibly signify both the analytic and synthetic activities of reason. What is given to us we

[68] HHE 4, 223, note 4.

'take for our own property', dissolve or 'transform in our own juices', and synthesize in our own original fashion. The '*menstrua*' aspect moreover has a duality inherent in the concept of tradition: it is something we receive, but also something we pass on; 'menstrua' as connoting menstruation is the giving forth and passing on of what is already part of oneself. Thus it forms a contrast in both respects to the conceiving, generating principle of 'stamen'.

This two-fold nature of knowing, in which we appropriate and integrate what is passed on to us and then go on ourselves to contribute to the tradition, captures the fundamental human duality of giving and receiving from our community, our tradition. It is this reciprocal relation between the individual and the family, community or tradition, in which neither takes the dominating role, which Herder was unable to grasp adequately. It is this too which develops and strengthens our critical and archontical vocation (39:17ff.); indeed, this apparently *is* our critical and archontical vocation, in part at least: the task of a political animal, to dissolve what is given us in our own juices, as well as conceiving our own ideas, and to pass it all on to the community.

These higher aspects of being can only be known by analogy to the 'animal economy' (39:20ff.) — perhaps referring not only to animals as such, but to the physicality of his previous epistemological metaphor. Therefore, although the visible, abbreviated half of human being which Herder objected to as an insufficient understanding of humanity can only be fulfilled by the knowledge of the spiritual economy, this itself cannot be known apart or independently from the bodily and 'animalian' aspects of existence. Paradoxically, these very gaps, lacks and occult qualities themselves reveal a relation to the Creator, as even Voltaire is made to witness (note 8).

Hamann continues the discussion of this duality of knowing and experience in 39:25ff. Here, with the image of the 'wineskin' Hamann includes in his argument not only the idealists but also Lockean sensualists, with whom the naive reader might assume Hamann is in agreement.[69] He accepts Herder's interest in 'instruction' and 'imparting' and even his key-word, 'markers'; but here they serve to stress not Herderian human capability but Hamannian human interdependence: these lacks, far from negating us, make us 'all the more capable of the enjoyment of

[69] Cf. Herder's similar '*Man sei Leibnitzianer oder Lockianer*' – whether one be a Leibnitzian or Lockian.

nature through **experiences** and of community with his race through **traditions**.' (39:27f.) As Büchsel observes, it is significant that Hamann refers to 'enjoyment' of nature rather than to knowledge.[70] Not merely our knowledge, but even 'our reason' is no innate capability, but 'arises from this twofold lesson of sensuous **revelations** and human **testimonies**, which are imparted according to similar **laws**, as well as through similar **means**, namely markers.' (39:25-40:2.) Hamann, so often inaccurately described as an 'irrationalist', does not deny the importance or use of reason; what he does is far more interesting: he integrates it in his epistemology and his anthropology to the point where it is fully de-hypostasized. Herder had attempted, in a Hamannian fashion, to deny that reason was some self-sufficient, isolated faculty; yet he was not as successful as Hamann in giving an account of it that so thoroughly involves it not only with the senses (the lesson of sensuous revelation, 39:30) but also with the 'community' and 'tradition', with learning and instruction.

Our reason is thus not only inextricably related to our senses, it is also related to others, and hence must be seen in the context of both an intrapersonal and an interpersonal unity. Misguided philosophers, however, 'have always given truth a bill of divorce, by separating what nature has joined together and vice versa' (40:3-5). Even Herder runs the danger of the psycho-philosophical equivalent of unitarian heresy (40:5ff.), in his understanding of reflexion as that distinguishing characteristic of humanity that enabled the first speaker to bring forth speech, actualizing the germinal potency already within him. For Herder and his language-creating man, 'everything comes out of that which already is', as Hamann's note 10 ironically has it. Herder's 'entelechy' is that 'single positive power', which he characterizes now as freedom, now as reason.

One of Hamann's most urgent anthropological insights, however, is quite contrary to this unitarian approach, and it comes to the surface in the two paragraphs of 40:3-15. For a true and comprehensive understanding of our own human being, a '**recognition** of several distinguishing earthly attributes is necessary.' (40:14-15.) Firstly, what is 'essential' to the human being is not any *one* principle: reason, reflexion, will, even freedom; for a true understanding of humanity it is necessary to acknowledge many different characteristics. Secondly, these

[70] HHE 4, 225.

different attributes are not to be isolated from one another. The wilful abstractions of philosophers, their false analysis and separation, or 'divorce', does violence to reality (truth); they are simultaneously guilty of 'sodomy', or false synthesis, putting together what nature did not intend. Thirdly, to build a system based on a single principle leads to 'heresy'; a system which is dazzled by a single insight overbalances and neglects every other aspect of the phenomenon. Instead, one must attain a concept of the 'fullness in the unity' of being human and not make an attempt to derive it from a single principle. That this is a serious, even sacred matter is indicated by his use of the term 'heresy' for these woefully mistaken anthropologies; an ironic usage, of course, but serious nevertheless; it is further emphasized that this issue of unity is no mere philosophical puzzle but a Mystery, indeed, religious in character (40:10ff.). It is likely that this phrase too is a touch ironic; certainly the idea that the inner and outer person are so opposed belongs more to Hamann's opponents (including Herder) than to Hamann himself.

Thus Herder, for all his insistence that reason and other imagined 'faculties' were not to be seen as isolated principles, was nevertheless guilty of beginning to construct a system (unsystematic though the essay is) from a single anthropological principle, that of reflexion.

Hamann then provides a parable of this complex human unity in 40:16ff. The human person is a fruitful field, which takes in what is 'sown' and develops it further; the person is moreover the result of what it has taken in, made its own, and produced, in other words, the son of the field. As the materialists assert, we are indeed the recipients of what is 'planted in us', a passive field; and yet we are also, as the idealists maintain, ourselves the source of our knowledge and experience insofar as the seeds planted in our field are our own. (This recalls the epistemological division of 'stamen' and 'menstruation'.) Yet, against both the empiricists and the idealists, we are more than this, and not merely by virtue of the juxtaposition of the two opposed theses.[71] We are also the 'king' of the field, dignified with our 'critical and archontic office'; we are

[71] For a useful treatment of the materialist vs. idealist anthropologies rejected in this passage, cf. Johannes von Lüpke, *Anthropologische Einfälle...* in *NZSThR* 30, 225-268; esp. 238ff. As he there argues, one is not to choose between materialism and idealism. Neither physical existence nor spiritual existence are to be derived from the other. Both are 'moments' in a 'communication-event'; they find their unity in their divine origin.

ourselves in the position of administering our field, choosing to plant the moral equivalent of either good seed or enemy weed, or both, in our field. The insufficiency of the one-sided systems of materialism and idealism are cast aside with the rhetorical question, 'What is a field without seed?' (40:20f.) Finally, all these aspects are a single unity, which once again is placed in the context of a relationship to God: *God's field.*

With a wicked parody of Herder's phrases and style (40:26-41:3), Hamann distils his 'ideas' before turning to his 'doubts'. The origin of language is, as Herder maintained, as thoroughly natural as the origin of any of our activities or skills (41:7-8); because we are capable of learning and creating, and delight in doing so (41:4-6), as Aristotle maintains (note 6). At the same time, however, our abilities and our participation in our 'apprenticeship' constitute no self-sufficiency or independence from others and from God; our learning is neither an act of original creative genius, as invention implies, nor the result of our recognizing our own innate knowledge. Here again the seeds of the attack against the latest 'Platonic' argument for the origin of language are being sown: does not Herder's account of its invention imply a kind of Platonic epistemology of recognition?

b. Doubts

Hamann's 'Doubts' can be divided into four main parts. The first is an introduction, 41:13-42:15, which is a pastiche of Herder's style. The second part Hamann himself titles 'The Platonic Argument for the Human Origin of Language'. It begins at 42:16 and runs ultimately to 46:4, and itself falls into five sections. In 42:18-43:8 Hamann sets out his own distillation of Herder's comment, largely in direct quotations and without comment. His critique is contained in two sections, 43:9-43:34 and 45:7-45:25, the latter of which is concentrated on a single objection. Sandwiched between them, 43:35-45:6, is a section which intertwines criticism of Herder with the style of political satire already familiar from the Knight's Testament.

The final section of the second part, 45:25-46:4, is a spoof on the theologian C. T. Damm, and it provides the excuse for the third part: an intonation of the Latest Genesis in the Oriental Dialect, to the glory of the Pythian victor and accompanied with a Pindaric lyre. This pastiche, which manages to combine Herder's style with thematic material from the Genesis creation myth, runs from 46:5-47:6. As we might expect from the accusation of 42:6f., this is not

merely a mockery of Herder's style but has a polemical point behind it. The final part, which begins at 47:7, concludes the criticism before the sudden breaking off at 48:23 and the leap into eulogy.

With a tapestry of Herderian phrases, Hamann in the first part of the doubts excuses himself from a systematic critique ('It is difficult to contend with a victor', sighs note 12b); claiming to concentrate on a single doubt: whether Herder was in fact serious at all about proving his thesis or was merely 'touching' it (41:25ff.). The references (note 13) for the question of whether the thesis was proven or only 'touched' [upon] provides us with two interesting citations of Horace odes, which represent the two alternatives which Hamann is proposing here: some delight in gathering Olympic dust in the race; others, though, have the surety of victory's palm without the dust. An essential hermeneutical key to these passages is Hamann's custom of referring to the King and his court as 'Olympia' (*vid. infra* also, 45:29). Hence, I suggest, Hamann asserts there are some who with prodigious effort try to win the favour of the King and his Academy; by going to such extreme lengths as, for example, firmly proving their thesis, as Herder claimed to have done. Perhaps, however, one can get the glory without the dust and effort by, for example, accepting the King's and Academy's presuppositions and assumptions, catering to their philosophical prejudices and thus winning their favour without having to provide a solid and defensible argument. Which was Herder's real intention?

This doubt was awoken by an 'ocean of markers' (42:1); alleged characteristics of Herder's essay which were in fact Herder's criticisms of Süßmilch and the higher hypothesis: circularity, consisting in 'hidden, refined nonsense', the invocation of what one might call *qualitas occulta ex machina*, and the exploitation of contemporary philosophical jargon (42:2ff.). Herder's final 'marker' or 'attribute', however, is Hamann's own invention: that Herder's account is more 'holy and poetic' than Genesis itself.

Hamann's exposition of Herder's argument is accurate and concise; he concentrates however not on Herder's depiction of the actual moment of creation (that, appropriately, he saves for his parody as the Latest Genesis, 46:5ff.) but on the assertions about humanity, reflexion, and language, their respective natures and humanity's capacity for language.

His critique adopts once more the parody of Herder's style and introduces a single observation, without amplification. What

Herder describes in his account of the human being inventing language is the movement from perception, according to Leibniz the state in which one has impressions, to apperception, a state of self-consciousness and self-awareness. This in fact is another brick in the building of Herder's crypto-idealism. Language is not primarily the medium of communication with another, even if it initially in Herder's account may have been prompted by a sheep; rather perception is swiftly transmuted to apperception. Language then becomes an organ of the mind (43:2), the instrument that facilitates thought and one's own inner dialogue, 'In brief **"This first attribute of thought became the word of the soul! With it human language is invented!"** Ευρηκα!' (43:11-13). Not, therefore, in interpersonal dialogue, and in response to a previous address does language arise, but in the inescapable need for markers of qualities and ideas, and other such instruments for one's own thought and reflection.

Hamann continues his assessment, making use of an anecdote in a treatise on preaching by J. J. Spalding, *Oberkonsistorialrat* in Berlin, whom Hamann calls 'Court-preacher to the Solomon of the North'[72]; i.e. 'high priest' (43:14) to Frederick the Great. The connection of this story with Herder's *Preisschrift* may seem rather obscure, but it consists in the structural and logical parallels between the simple country preacher's sermon which Spalding derides and Herder's essay: both could be said to contain 'a negative and a positive part' which contradict each other. (Another unexpressed parallel is the 'most inward affliction' with which Spalding listened to the dreadful sermon on the Trinity, and with which Hamann read his wayward protégé's essay.) It is not so much tact that leaves this parallel unexpressed, as the fact that Hamann wishes to use the device of 'inward affliction' for another, political, purpose. Hamann, the King's 'civil servant', forced to carry out the harsh tax policies of the King's 'political arithmetic', had had his wages summarily reduced by 5 Thaler per month.[73] The village preacher was presumably poor in spirit – *Geist* – therefore, punningly, in intellect (43:26). Hamann, alas, is poor in a more literal sense.

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[72] ZH 3, 18:34f.

[73] We learn of this from a letter to Herder in which, incidentally, he first informs him of *PID*: '...started at 16 th. p. month, with much effort brought it to 30. Now I am reduced to 25. But I will die like Simson [sic] and avenge myself on the Philistines of the *arithmetique politique*.' (ZH 3, 17:37-18:3.)

The paragraph of 43:27 begins to make the parallel between Herder and the preacher clearer: Herder too contradicts himself in his negative and positive parts. The apocalyptic animal (43:31; cf. Rev. 17:8) 'was, and is not', just as Herder's person is, and is not an animal. The human being is not an animal because it lacks the instincts of an animal, indeed, stands above the animal by its difference in kind, not degree. The reason why the human being is nevertheless an animal Hamann will demonstrate below, 45:7ff., after the political satire. For the present moment, we must be comforted by the thought that only such a creature could be the inventor of language, given that no animal *can* and no God *may* invent language (43:31ff.; HP 285-6).

The negative part of the thesis, that the human being is not an animal, would apparently be easy pickings for one seeking philosophical fame (43:35-44:11). The route to philosophical fame is depicted as 'laps in the stadium' (43:36), recalling the Horace odes of note 13 and therefore the Berlin Academy's essay competition; as 'loquacity in **impertinent** notes on a meagre text' (43:36-7); or as a philosophical commentary on two Latin words, which may well be the '*homo sum/ecce homo*!' which is the covert theme of Herder's essay (43:38; cf. translator's note q); worst of all, as being a 'writer for great minds and still greater fools' (43:39), and this is, we are forced to conclude, what he considers Herder to have become.

The great minds and greater fools, one imagines, must be the ruling philosophers of Sans Souci, for immediately Hamann enters into a flourish of combined political and philosophical satire. The main targets for the satire of 44:1-12 are the King's philosophical efforts and the cultivation of the French language. The latter is described with a little circumspection as barbaric and full of *bettelstolz*, Hamann's cheerful germanization of *orgueilleuse pauvreté*; the insult is delivered via an apparent insult to German (44:7-10). The same technique is used to abuse the king, via a jibe allegedly at Hamann's own unwritten work, which could have been venerated as Algarotti's was, or re-issued in extracts by the King, as was Bayle's *Dictionary*. The implication of course is that the re-issue amounts merely to reheated leftovers (44:5-6).

However, as it does not serve his purposes to carry out such a critique, he will freely concede (with no lack of irony) 'that the human being is no animal and has no instincts' (44:14-15), particularly given the power Herder attributed to such instincts (44:15-23). Before engaging with the positive part of the Platonic

argument, however, he gives us a devastating concrete example of Herder's anthropology, that is, a human being standing above animals in kind, not degree, etc.; as well as of Hamann's own account of Aristotle's 'critical and archontical office', which Hamann interpreted ironically at the beginning of the essay as 'standing above animals as leaders to subjects.' (44:24-45:6.) This creature is the monarch, portrayed in terms of Herderian vocabulary and categories, which perhaps slyly indicate a certain reference to Wolff as well (cf. translator's note β).

With his political spleen thus vented, Hamann leaves his anti-monarchical satire for the time being and returns to make a specific assault on Herder's anthropology, the 'positive part' of the 'Platonic demonstration.'

> What does the entire positive part of the Platonic argument say more positively and expressly, than that the person thinks and speaks by **instinct** — that the **positive power** to **think** and to **speak** are **inborn** and **immediately natural** — that it, like the **instinct** of animals, is carried along, dragged on or directed to the point of a **marker** — that with the first **word** the entire **language** was invented, despite the **law** of **eternal progression**; – that the **invention** of language is as essential to the person as the web to the spider and the honey comb to the bee—and that nothing more is necessary but to **place** the human being in the **situation** of reflexion which is his **own**, in order yet to invent that which is already **natural** to him — (45:13-25)

This is the 'circularity' to which Hamann referred earlier (42:3f.), as well as the train of thought which entails that, despite Herder 's best efforts, his human being is still an animal. Herder had spent a considerable amount of effort and ink in asserting that language, along with reflexion, reason, etc. are innate and immediately natural to the human being. This is a necessary step, one might argue, if one is to assert that it is possible (and hence, natural) for human beings to invent language by their own powers. Yet this insistence on the innateness and naturalness of language damages Herder's case from two directions. Firstly, as Hamann points out, it is circular, indeed nonsensical, to hail the human being with a 'eureka! (once it is 'placed in a situation of reflexion') because it has 'invented' that which is already natural to it. Secondly, if reflexion is juxtaposed to instinct as our 'compensation' for our lack of instinct, reflexion and therefore language simply become *our version* of instincts: that is, what is innate, inborn, what we do naturally, and – here is the ultimate circularity – *unreflectively*. What is innate, inborn, natural to us,

we need not reflect on in order to perform, just as the bee need not reflect on cell-building, much less consciously invent it. So if this innate capacity, which requires no reflection, is itself 'reflexion', how can one escape circularity?[74]

Moreover, despite Herder 's own 'law of eternal progression' and the pains he takes to give an account of the continuation and development of language, we find 'with the first word' language as a whole was invented. As Herder informs us, the older, experienced bee is no better than the young bee at building cells; instincts exist fully ripened and need no development from the start. So too, alas, with Herder's 'instinctive' language; it does not develop and mature with time and experience, as do human capabilities and skills.

There is, however, one way in which this 'Platonic' argument could be rescued from at least some of its hopeless circularity; and that is if 'knowing', 'learning', and 'inventing' are in fact *recognition*; if, in fact, Herder is wholeheartedly Platonic in his epistemology. This possibility is left unarticulated, however, at this point.

Instead, he justifies his earlier assertion that the latest Platonic argument is 'more supernatural, holy and poetic' than that of Genesis. He builds up to this by inveighing against C. T. Damm, who in 1772 published *On historic faith*, in which he tries to identify the 'poetizing' [*Erdichtungen*] of the Old Testament ('poetizing' meaning what is not historical and conceals a bias) in order to gain from the biblical texts an independence of reason, which contains the seeds of 'natural religion'. He – like Herder, both in his *Preisschrift* and in the letter to Hamann of 1768 – reinterpreted Genesis 3 to suit his taste, particularly remodelling the figure of the tempter; and he had maintained a Platonic division

[74] As Lüpke observes, while Herder's treatment can be dubbed 'idealist', so too are there 'materialist' elements, and among these he identifies this same point, namely the description of *Besonnenheit* as 'inborn and immediately natural'. 'The idealist picture of a being gifted with godlike reason turns into the materialist picture of an animal thinking and speaking "by instinct." ' (Lüpke, 241f.) Hamann too makes use of materialist elements of anthropology, though not uncritically, when he wants to oppose idealist conceptions of reason and human nature, in *Zweifel und Einfälle über eine vermischte Nachricht*. (Lüpke, 247ff.) Lüpke's description of Hamann's own position is 'theological materialism', in which the Incarnation resolves the binary opposition (257); thus making his alternative correspond exactly to Luther's (264f.).

between sensuousness and reason.[75] Thus, one could say, not only in the rationalizing of religion and in the 'de-mythologizing' (or 'de-poetizing') of vivid biblical imagery, but also in the seeds of idealism and the separation of sense and reason (parallel, and related to, a separation of 'poetry' and 'meaning' of a text) we find in Damm the full-flowering of what Herder's *Preisschrift* is already germinating. Hamann finds a characteristically graphic image for this act of hermeneutical violence: castration of one's [divine] father (45:31-37). Damm, in violating the 'poetic private parts' of his father – God – repeats the outrage of Kronos on Uranos. This audacious phrase, Büchsel suggests, refers to the biblical testimony of the Holy Spirit to the creation and the Fall[76], which the philosophically 'orthodox' shamelessly doubt. It is unclear from the placement of the footnote whether Büchsel is explaining the 'erection' or the 'holy person' as the biblical testimony. The 'holy person' in my opinion is clearly 'God the Father'; this is obvious not only from the parallelism with Uranos, but also from Hamann's letter to Herder in response to the latter's 'demythologizing' of Genesis:

> ...My coarse imagination is never able to imagine a creative Spirit without genitalia.... Since anthropomorphism can extend not only to the ear, eye, hand and mouth, we can think of a creative Spirit in our form with precisely the **euphemismo** for the understanding of which at least a night-gown or some oriental clothing is necessary, if we want to imagine what the mystics express as: **covering his feet**. Through this, therefore, that a creative Spirit covers his feet, arises that which under the German name th--- attracts so many wrinkles to aesthetic noses, and by another name, more moralistic or metaphysical, to philosophical noses. [77]

The holy person's 'thing' or *Gemächte* as it is in 45:35, and not the 'holy person' himself, is the 'poetic' account of creation found in Genesis; the *Gemächte* serving as a double reference to the created text and the creating *euphemismo*.

Hamann will not castrate Herder's text, cutting off its vital poetic parts, robbing it of its poetic power; he will on the contrary intone it in not merely a poetic but sacred and solemn fashion. He will accompany himself on a 'Pindaric lyre' (46:1); one must take this as a reference to the citation of Pindar on the title page, 'along with many other passages from this ode.' In this 'fragment of the

[75] HHE 4, 245.
[76] HHE 4, 246.
[77] ZH 2, Nr. 350, 415:22-33.

latest Genesis', which is the third part of the 'Doubts', Hamann proceeds to perform the reverse of Damm's and Herder's textual vandalism: instead of stripping the 'poetry' and 'myth' from the biblical text and re-interpreting it into a rational account, he festoons a philosophical hypothesis with drama and poetic language: he *re-mythologizes* a 'rational' text, not, of course, in order to give it its 'poetic power', but to show it for the 'supernatural, holy, poetic' account it really is. It is an extraordinary composition, which, in Herder's fashion, re-interprets the Fall as a positive act, expressing the desire to move 'beyond one's limits, to expand oneself, gather knowledge, enjoy foreign fruits, imitate other creatures, elevate reason, and to want to be oneself a gathering-place of all instincts, all capabilities, all kinds of enjoyment, to be like God (no longer an animal) and to know.'[78]

What is created, as we already understand, is a non-animal and animal — not the human image of God, as Genesis has it. Our Herderian non-animal differs from animals not in degree but in kind – of *instinct* (46:11); for as we have seen, reason, reflexion, language in Herder's account are all effectively reduced to instincts, as Hamann sees it. Nevertheless, our non-animal has no instincts; in particular, as a Platonic *androgyne* (46:12), it lacks certain vital instincts in which Hamann has a lively interest. It would be an injustice to Hamann, however, to view this introduction of a Platonic Androgyne as merely a lascivious joke on the idea of Herder's humans lacking certain basic instincts. After all, the self-sufficiency, the absence of lack and aching need that Aristophanes' creatures exhibit in their original spherical state[79] is also exhibited by the Herderian creature, even if the latter's self-sufficiency has a more linguistic and social than sexual reference.

In the second paragraph (46:13-21) the Platonic Androgyne has the difficult task of fulfilling its vocation – both its original blessing in Genesis (a sexual and reproductive vocation which is problematic for an androgyne) and its disposition from Aristotle of critical leadership – while remaining mute and dumb (46:13-14). This is not impossible for our Androgyne, however, thanks to its Platonic self-sufficiency: it need not taste an external fruit to have its eyes opened, it merely needs to *recognize* (Platonically) the fruit of its inner and its outer instincts (46:16-17) – respectively its reflexion and its language – and then its mouth (not its eyes) will

[78] Herder's answer to the question, 'What is the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil?', from Herder's letter to Hamann of April 1768, ZH 2, 410:25-30.

[79] Cf. Aristophanes' speech in Plato's *Symposium*.

be opened (46:17-18). At that point, however, it will be full of its instincts – reason, reflexion, language all being mere instincts – and paradoxically at this moment the 'rational animal' loses any claim it has to being something other than an animal (46:18-21), because its two distinguishing characteristics – the possession of reason and the freedom from instincts – abolish one another.

Now we come to the climactic moment of the creation of language. As the tone increases in solemnity, the Herderian phrases become increasingly tangled; in particular, Hamann introduces and builds up the accretion of references to 'inner' and 'outer'. The other dominant notion is 'instinct'; and with these tools, already subjected to critique, Hamann executes his parody until it unravels into a cry of praise.

The solomonic 'I have found' is not the proud cry of the Greek inventor, eureka! as in the equivalent moment of Herder's essay. Instead, in Hebrew it is connected with a reference to Eccles. 7:29 in Hamann's note 16; *'trouvé'* being the French equivalent of the Hebrew word which Hamann uses in 47:1. The fact that this citation is given in French may be, as Büchsel suggests, because 'discourse' relates immediately to the Academy's competition.[80] A more obvious and more satisfactory explanation is that precisely what the Platonic Androgyne has discovered is lots of discourse — *'beaucoup de discours'* — language.[81]

The context of the event is changed from Herder's account as well. If one recalls that Hamann introduced the forbidden fruit into this 'Latest Genesis' (46:16f.), then the creation of language – 'recognizing the fruit' – now corresponds not to the naming of the animals, but to the Fall. And indeed, the Platonic Androgyne is now 'like God', with its 'divine organ of the understanding' (47:2); (Herder tells us language is the organ of the understanding; Hamann has added the 'divine', presumably to fulfil the correspondence to the Fall.) Herder's protoplast of language has sought what Adam and Eve sought: self-sufficiency and independence from God, and it has been rewarded. All intellectual activities, all philosophical prejudices and faiths are based on this rock of language; even 'oriental poetry', like Genesis 1-3, must buckle before it.

[80] HHE 4, 250, note 19.

[81] Luther's translation would only have offered Hamann *'viele Künste'* in place of *'discours'*.

Only at this point, 47:8-14, do we receive the first overt explanation or justification of why Herder's argument is labelled 'Platonic':

> because it proceeds from the neological technical term of reflexion, as a 'single point and shining spark of a perfect system' and in the end goes back to a Greek Synonymy, and because the Platonists went on and on ad nauseam about the Λογος ενδιαθετος or ενθυμηματικος and λογος προφορικος, the inner and outer word....

Several distinct complaints can be detected in this brief 'explanation', justifying the charge of 'Platonism':

The first complaint is against the particular role that Herder's concept (or word) 'reflexion' plays in his account. Despite Herder's insistence that reason or reflexion is not to be viewed as an isolated entity or principle, he nevertheless proceeds to build his anthropology out of a single principle of human consciousness. Reflexion is the distinguishing principle and characteristic mark of humanity as opposed to animals; and moreover it is the source of the phenomenon in question: language.

Herder spoke of a basic and significant 'synonymy': 'In more than one language, word and reason, concept and word, language and cause have the same name and this synonymy contains its entire genetic origin.' (HP 286.) That deriving meaning, *a fortiori* a metaphysic, from etymology is a questionable approach is not Hamann's primary point here; rather, it is the underlying idea that the concept of reflexion (i.e. reason) contains the germ of the whole, that reason contains within it the genesis and further development of language. With the appeal to the ambiguity of the Greek word λογος, this 'synonymy' creates the confusion of 'reason' with 'language'; parallel and somewhat contradictory to Herder's earlier confusion of 'language' with expression of emotion, which Aristotle designated 'voice' as opposed to 'logos'. (There may also be an implied reference to the Stoic idea that even passions and impulses are to be included as workings – albeit malfunctions – of 'logos'.)

The third complaint connects Herder more explicitly with the 'Platonist' Stoics in its use of the Stoic terms, λογος ενδιαθετος and λογος προφορικος; inner capacity for reason and its outer expression. That is indeed a dualism implicit in Herder; for whom reflexion is our distinguishing characteristic on the inside, as is language from the outside. Underlying this dualism of inner and outer is a dualism of thought and language; and it could be said

that what underlies both is a dualism or opposition of reason and sensuousness, against which Hamann has already argued (cf. 39:7ff.).

These three points of similarity between Platonic and Herderian thought which Hamann addresses here are not the most fundamental grievances contained in the accusation of 'Platonism'. What is ultimately at issue is the epistemological or anthropological presupposition that grounds them. In a word it is the implicit idealism of Herder 's system (which perhaps is due to his Leibnizean training); one that despite its stated intention necessitates an understanding of reason operating on its own; one that almost implies a Platonic doctrine of knowledge as recognition in its account of the bringing forth and 'inventing' of what is already innate. That these themes are in Hamann's mind is born out by the paragraph which follows the cursory justification of his accusation, with its references to Philo's *Qui rerum divinarum heres*. In the first, Hamann apparently interprets γονιμον as modifying φωνη, (hence understanding the cited words as 'generating voice' or perhaps 'the power of producing voice/language/speech'; Büchsel translates it as *'vox pronuntiativa'*, *'Sprachvermögen'*,[82]) rather than as a separate noun ('reproductive faculty and voice'.) Hamann deliberately confuses 'voice' with 'language' (cf. 37:1-2) in handling the text of the 'Platonic' Philo, against as it were Hamann's own better (Aristotelian) judgement. The point of the apparently innocent observation of 47:16, however, is this: Philo considers the production of language to be part of the irrational soul (αλογον ψυχη, *Qui rerum* 232), along with the other five senses — as does his fellow Platonist, Herder; for as we have seen, language has become an 'instinct' (the 'outer instinct', as reason is the 'inner' one [cf. 46:33-4 *et passim*]). The Platonist Philo and Herder are thus considered to be in agreement.

That γονιμον can also mean 'ripe for birth' makes a smooth thematic connection to the next clause. Herder had spoken of the creation of language as an inner *Dringnis*, as the pressing of the embryo towards birth at the moment of its maturity. Hamann supplements the birth imagery – and thus, corrects it – with another citation from Philo (note 18); the one who opens the 'womb' of the mind, of speech, and the senses is himself the 'seminal, skilful divine Word' (και σπερματικος και τεχνικος και Θειος εστι λογος.) One might note the bodily emphases of this passage, or at

[82] HHE 4, 253, ns. 9, 10.

least Hamann's use of it; but surely the primary purpose of supplying this testimony from Philo, using the womb and birth-giving imagery as a thematic bridge, is to assert once again that any such marvellous creative power is *a gift of God*; not merely once, passively, in creation, for the imagery of God opening the womb is a more direct, personally involved act. Further, God is the semen, we are the womb — an extraordinarily intimate image to use, both a highly relational one and one indicating an interdependence or mutuality between God and humanity in the creations of the mind, language and senses. That Hamann wants Philo's 'divine logos' to be understood more in the terms of John 1 than Stoic philosophy is clear; again, for Hamann it stresses personal involvement and not the remoteness of Stoic concepts of God and Logos. Paradoxically, then, Philo indeed seems to agree again with Herder in speaking of language as an embryo ripe for birth — thus again tarnishing Herder by association, as a fellow Platonist/idealist. However, we are beginning to see that Philo's understanding is preferable in fact to Herder's, from Hamann's point of view; for the inclusion of the divine Logos in the scheme is confirmation that the human and the divine can work in partnership, rather than being forced into a kind of rivalry.

The third reference to Philo reinforces this double point of simultaneous guilt-by-association and one-up-manship between Philo and Herder. The same thinker that seems thus far to agree with Herder also said, however, that 'It was no small audacity to show me shadows for bodies, words [ρηματα] for deeds [πραγματα]'. The tone in Hamann's citation of this – approving or reproving – is not made explicit. I think however it makes clearer the dualism of Philo's thought — and thus leaves open the possibility that Herder is approaching dualism himself. The speaker in Philo's parable is the mind; it has migrated from the body, the senses, and from speech, with a certain dissatisfaction; the sentence cited comes at the end of its explanation as to why it has departed from speech. A thing-word dualism is thus proposed, where words are mere 'shadows' compared to the *somata* and *pragmata* themselves. And yet, its reaction is to dedicate and attribute all three – the body, the senses, and speech – to God, who creates them. The listener's reaction in the parable is to say, 'Go further — abandon and depart from yourself.' This departure is said to entail not the laying up of treasure for oneself, but the dedicating of all these activities (thinking, perceiving, speaking) to God, who is the source of them

all.[83] Thus, even the apparent idealist, dualist, Platonist Philo recognizes the true source of all human faculties. Herder therefore in comparison has the sin of idealism without the salvation of dedicating these faculties to God, which Philo at least is careful to do.

In the following paragraphs Hamann again indulges in the game at which he excels, that is, turning Herder's scornful criticisms of Süßmilch against Herder himself, *mutatis mutandi*. Herder 'can not here completely interpret the whole essay, [flawed as it is]'; Hamann 'could, if it was worth the effort...'. As Herder asserts of Süßmilch's hypothesis, Hamann asserts of Herder's 'legislation': 'the origin of a self-developing human language and a self-developing human soul is thoroughly misunderstood, distorted and hazy throughout.' (47:21-48:3. Cf. HP 328, 357)

Nor will Hamann deal thoroughly with 'the **poetic fragments on the archaeology of the history of language**' — not, I think, a reference to Herder 's treatment of Genesis, but the whole of the second part, which details how language was developed and continued. Nevertheless, Hamann cannot refrain from a final comment on Herder's remark on the Hebrews' 'oriental simplicity' on calling the recognition of a situation 'giving it a name'; and his insistence that the first words must not have been nouns, with all the conceptualization and abstraction that implies, but rather verbs (48:5ff.). Of course, by 'word' Hamann does understand a completely different 'thing': the divine Logos of the Fourth Gospel.[84] For Hamann the first word was neither noun nor verb but the Word, the Logos, through whom all was created. This could almost be seen as a kind of theological pun, and it is hardly surprising that he cannot resist quoting Herder's exclamation – 'and further let us not play with words!' – even if doing so, he is not merely playing on 'words' but playing on the word, 'word'; a sort of meta-pun, so to speak.

The allusions to John 1 continue as the 'doubts' come to an end; Hamann closes the circle by re-introducing a theme from the beginning of the essay: the 'critical and archontical office of a political animal'. As our dear Plato [Herder] has proven it – not to the 'firmest philosophical truth', as Herder claimed at the conclusion of his essay, but 'to the firmest prophetic word that shines in the darkness' – the human being must indeed be above

[83] Philo's paragraphs 72-74.

[84] May we also be permitted to recall the 'thing' – the '*euphemismo*' – of ZH 2, Nr. 350?

animals not in degree but in kind, in order to be worthy of its critical and archontical office (48:15-21).

In an earlier version of the essay, Hamann provided epexegetical comments on '*Kritik*' and '*Politik*'; he later removed the paragraph and used it in *Monologue of an Author*. Originally the passage ran:

> Criticism is a partly natural partly acquired faculty to recognize and appropriate (or to hate and despise) the true and the false, good and evil, the beautiful and the ugly by intuitive knowledge and revelation or by approbation and tradition in relation to our sphere; Politics on the other hand is the partly inherited partly acquired power to increase by signs and wonders (or minimize), make glorious or reduce the true and the false, good and evil, the beautiful and the ugly in relation to our critical taste.[85]

Hamann here has revived the duality of the origin of human ability, in 'revelation' and 'tradition'; both our own ability and the teaching of others enable us to judge and assess our world. There is, however, an irony in his definition of 'Politics': that is the pun of an 'inherited' power and the fact that it is governed not so much by royal wisdom as 'taste'.

In the version Hamann sought to publish, however, he gives the impression of coming to the conclusion of his essay – and mentions Herder by name for the very first time: 'In criticism and politics consists therefore the whole canon of human perfection, which my friend **Herder–**' and here the essay breaks off.

c. Eulogy

Suddenly we have a dramatic change in style, not to mention content, in 48:24-49:5, with its sudden eulogy of Herder. The praise of Herder is no less sarcastic than the criticism has been however; not only because of the absurd hyperbole (itself, perhaps, a teasing imitation of Herder's style) nor even from the citation from Genesis, with its insinuation that to triumph gloriously Herder stooped to conquer. If the 'ideas and doubts' were a philosophical attack on Herder, this final section, following as it does on a resurrection of the political ideas, constitutes a 'political' attack on Herder's success.

In the letter that constituted the two friends' reconciliation, Herder claimed that the philosophical ('Leibniz-aesthetic')[86] mask

[85] N III, 427; cf. 72:9-17.
[86] ZH 3, 11:13.

he wore in the *Preisschrift* was the only one in which he could appear before the Academy, which mask had as little influence on his present thinking as the picture he nails to the wall[87], and further, he insisted 'that I wrote all this free of all political connections, the Father of All Things is my witness'.[88] Whether Hamann used Herder's explicit recantation as the basis of his sudden defence of Herder or whether the device of Herder's forced philosophical accomodation to the age occurred to Hamann independently is therefore impossible to say, but in the end is inessential to the understanding of the content of the section. Hamann decides ostensibly to take Herder at his word, and attacks the spirit of the age that seduced him; but in doing so he formulates an almost unspoken attack on Herder, this time not accusing him of philosophical heresy (and infidelity to his master and friend) so much as political collaboration, or at the very least, seducible weakness. If you collaborate with an unjust regime, it is not a sufficient defence to claim to be apolitical, as Herder attempts to do. Herder may have been in the fortunate position of catering to the King's Court and Academy, winning both glory and money; other lesser mortals are living in considerable hardship, and Hamann paints a tragi-comic picture of his own difficult situation in the following section (49:6-50:8) – perhaps, subtly, depicting himself in 'solidarity' with the common folk, as opposed to the elite intelligentsia whom Herder had wooed with his *Preisschrift*.

This section includes the wild and vivid Hamannian flourishes to which we have become accustomed; attacks on the King, on personal characteristics of his (his love of music and flute-playing), on his Court, on his latest projects (in this case, building a canal, which was a considerable financial burden on his subjects), on fashionable philosophers; intertwined with multiple layers of allusions (the theme of persecutory burning forming a unifying thematic thread); the usual love of biblical references (in this case, principally to the story of the Three Young Men, as well as the 'decree of the watcher' in Daniel); and, as before, the moving portrait of what would be called The Suffering Poor Just One, had he the good fortune to appear in a psalm.

Having portrayed the dire situation in which the rest of the king's subjects exist, Hamann turns now to his 'justification' of his friend (50:9ff.). In a grand and Pauline style (cf. Phil. 3:12-14, as

[87] ZH 3, 11:22f.
[88] ZH 3, 11:17f.

well as 1 Cor. 9:24-26, 2 Tim. 2:3, 5) he extols Herder's victory, and passionately defends his working within the necessary limits (Herder's writing 'according to the rules' cannot be without a certain irony.) Certain themes from previous parts of this essay reappear, such as the operation of our reason according to 'revelations and traditions' (50:15f.). As our reason, according to the explanation of 39:14ff., can only work with the revelations and traditions of its time, is it Herder's fault that those available were so deficient? The theme of critical and archontical functions returns as well; and we find, without surprise, that the age is weak in this respect. (50:28f.)

No, in comparison to the deficiencies of this age and its writers, Semler, Spalding, Algarotti, Herder's pythanological paralogisms (51:18) are 'gold and precious stones' (51:19). Herder was forced to write as 'a satyr for an evil and adulterous generation'; and why not? A satyr is both an animal and not an animal, just as is Herder's language-creating human. Moreover, satyrs have a reputation for lechery; perhaps to write as a satyr for an adulterous generation means to cater to, flatter and encourage a group in their worst traits; to be their spokesman, articulate what is worst in them.

With the Magus' wail (52:5f.) the portrait has reached its moving climax; the Magus adds his favourite paternal brush strokes to his self-portrait, and shows us the depth of his love for Herder: he will make over to Herder what is dearest to him, his 'jewel and crown'; which in his 1772 letter of reconciliation he describes as his two children 'who, as the apostle Paul calls his Philippians, are my joy and my crown, and who I want to bequeath to you – *dignissimo*!'[89]

In the final, most affectionate paragraph of the essay we have the twist of the knife. Judas Iscariot no doubt refers to the philosophical betrayal by Herder of his friend and Master; the final sentence conceals true bitterness, and the germ of Hamann's 'political' attack on Herder. 'He may give you bread and wine' is provided with a footnote, to the Lamentations of Jeremiah, 2:12: 'The children of the city cry to their mothers, "Where is bread and wine?" as they faint like wounded men in the streets of the city, as their life is poured out on their mothers' bosom.' Once again we are reminded of the poverty of the common people, their inability to feed their children. The identity of 'He' I believe is suggested by

[89] ZH 3, 18:7f.

the allusion to Algarotti and his monument[90]: the 'He' who gives bread and wine and marble monuments is therefore the King who, through the Berlin Academy of which he was President, had crowned the young Pythian Victor — and put bread in his mouth. Herder may compromise on his (or Hamann's) principles and benefit from the king's favour – something very few of his impoverished countrymen were in a position to do – Hamann, however, who submitted no essay for the Berlin Academy's approval, will remain in impoverished solidarity with his fellow Prussians. The fact that He will give Hamann no monument in stone is true for many reasons: true because Hamann sought no academic glory by taking up a prestigious academic post, and was not likely to come to the attention of the King; true also because even if he had, the King would have found every reason to dislike and distrust Hamann; and true, finally, for even if the King had seen fit to honour Hamann – as he honoured Herder – Hamann, unlike his friend, would have spurned the offer, on principle (or so we are encouraged to imagine.) For Hamann, collusion with this unjust regime, even on an academic level, would be immoral.

In *PID*, then, the 'doubts' voiced by Aristobolus and the 'ideas' proposed by the Knight of the Rose-Cross are drawn together and expounded (albeit only to a Hamannian degree). The way in which language should be viewed, what it implies about humanity and the latter's capacity for knowing, thinking, and for loving God and one another now require further examination.

9. Analysis of the *Herderschriften*

a. On Human Nature

Much of the *Herderschriften* takes the form of a crusade against an inappropriate anthropology; for in the question of the origin of language, as has already been indicated, it is precisely the question of the capabilities of human nature or of the human being which is the point at issue. The question of the birth of language has repeatedly led Hamann to paint alternative pictures of the human creature: the animalian *Urmensch* of the materialists; the 'first human pair'; the Platonic Androgyne — not to mention the range of portraits in which these anthropologies are 'tested' on a certain concrete individual (a Sophist of Sodom-Samaria, Herodes

[90] The words *NON OMNIS* are from the motto on his tomb.

Atticus, a God of the Earth with his freely-working powers....) Hamann's own philosophical 'instincts' (or was it reflexion?) led him to ground his linguistic thinking in anthropological soil; this analysis of his ideas then shall begin with his anthropology, as the context for the philosophy of language.

i. The Critical and Archontical Office of a Political Animal

The characterization of humanity that Hamann offers, in contrast both to Herder and to the *Aufklärer*, is 'the critical and magisterial office of a political animal' (N III, 37:24-26). Similarly contrasting is the manner or locus in which this distinctive character of humanity is found: neither in biology, nor in some supposed essence or inner faculty (such as reason). Instead, the distinction comes from the 'form of life' that humanity has. Hamann thereby avoids the reductionism that someone of his empirical tendencies might have fallen into in the eighteenth century but does not do so by lapsing into any of a variety of modes, attitudes or techniques of intellectualism. On the stage of metaphysics or in scholastic terms, he turns aside any kind of essentialism but not by employing nominalism; his strategy is neither to confirm nor to deny the proposition, but to change the methodology altogether. He therefore does not dispute which quality or property is essential, for none is, his dissent is not couched so much as a specific rejection of essences as in a shift in the field of interest: how human beings actually live. In this, he inescapably recalls both Aristotle and Wittgenstein.

Hamann's 'Aristotelianism', however, is one of flavour or spirit rather than substantial agreement. Exegesis of Aristotle's designation of the citizen plays no part in the discussion, nor does Hamann's development of the ideas resemble Aristotle's in any important sense.

'Criticism', to begin with, on the whole lacks the juridical overtones of Aristotle's term. It is primarily an epistemological business[91], but only if one understands that epistemology has ultimately (or primarily) an ethical end; in the epexegetical comment Hamann suppressed[92], it is explained as the ability to recognize – *and appropriate* – good and evil, (true and false, etc.). This faculty is described as 'partly natural, partly acquired'; this is slightly ironic, with a glance over the shoulder at the Genesis

[91] Note cited earlier.
[92] N III, 427; cited above, page 216.

account of the Fall and what motivated it – an account which has played such a prominent role in these essays. Ironic or not, the fact that it is 'partly natural, partly acquired' is in this passage and in the discussion of N III, 39 fitted into the dual schema of revelations and traditions, the two-fold source or pattern of operation of knowledge.[93] This ability to think critically and to judge arises both from our own intuitive powers, part of our God-given disposition, and also from the approbation given by those who teach us. This form of critical and ethical knowledge therefore arises, as all knowledge does, according to 39:7-19, by 'revelations and traditions'. The appearance of the word 'revelation' in the suppressed passage, arising as it does comparatively detached from the context of the rest of the essay, might suggest the theological sense of the word revelation: divine revelation. If this is partly the case, it should also however be understood along the lines of its setting in N III, 39, in particular, line 27ff.: the enjoyment of nature through experiences and the 'lesson of sensuous revelations'. If there is a divine component, it is mediated through nature. In my view however, the traditional theological idea is not the primary sense of the word in this passage, and it should be interpreted along the lines of 39:15; and as coupled with 'intuitive knowledge', as the passage in question also has it. We should be wary, however, of seeing ourselves confronted with a stark choice of interpretation between human and divine revelation. Even the waters of knowledge 'from below' are God-given, as *AN* indicated, and as with the origin of language, our 'intuitive knowledge' is both human and divine, in the sense expounded at the opening of the *KRC* (27:2ff.). In the '*communicatio* of divine and human *idiomatum*' (27:12f.) which is 'a fundamental law and the principle key of *all our knowledge* and the entire visible economy' (27:13f. emphasis mine), the intuitive knowledge which we are fully justified as seeing as human is ultimately divine in origin, inasmuch as the whole of human nature is God-created.

The duality of 'partly natural, partly acquired' also recalls the paradoxical insight of *KRC*: that we must be instructed in what is natural to us; whether that be eating and drinking, bipedal walking, or language itself. The naturalness of the faculty is necessary but insufficient for its full use; while the truth of the

[93] It is interesting to compare Hamann's twofold schema of knowledge here with Bacon's or indeed, with Wolff's.

indispensability of human instruction in no way abolishes the intrinsic quality of the faculty.

We have no such useful exegesis of the term, 'archontic' or 'magisterial' in Hamann's essay as we do for 'criticism'; the sister definition offered in the suppressed passage is of 'politics'. 39:17-19 tempts us to see 'critical' paired with the vocation 'to reveal' and 'archontic' paired with 'to transmit'; the aspect of leadership implied in the term 'αρχης' would seem to encourage the idea of the role of passing on knowledge and wisdom to others, as would the idea of 'origin' contained in αρχων. One could then describe the relation of the terms like this: by revelation and tradition, we acquire the faculty of 'criticism'; one half of our vocation as human beings, the other being the 'archontic' office of thereafter becoming contributors to tradition, in transmitting our knowledge and wisdom to others. The main objection to this understanding is that it is a little too neat.

Two further possible spheres of reference for *obrigkeitlich* and *archontisch* suggest themselves. Among the references to kingship in *PID* are not only bitter ones in relation to the contemporary monarch, but also a reference to the 'kingship' of each individual: we are not only the field and the children of the field, but also the 'king of the field' (40:19). This idea has been foreshadowed in 38:16f., in which we learn that each of us is our own legislator – and at the same time, the first-born and neighbour of our subjects. Our governing and administrating begins with our own selves; this means both freedom, for it is we who govern ourselves, and no outside force; but also responsibility, for there is no one else to govern us on this level of existence.

So our 'archontic' office refers first to the epistemological and ethical responsibility we have of governing ourselves. A second sphere of our governing influence may also be possible; and is found in the relationship of humanity to the rest of creation. One thinks of *AN* (N II, 206:22-31) and the myth of *KRC*; the passage of N III 31:32 speaks of the first human pair's 'political calling, to populate the earth and rule by the word of their mouths'; and one recalls the vocation given to Adam and Eve in Genesis: the leadership or stewardship over Creation. This concept of leadership may be the proper context for interpreting the slightly problematic assertion of 32:1ff.: that inequality was part of an 'original institution'. Yet, in contrast to the unhappy politics of Hamann's monarch, the proper 'archontic vocation' of humanity is shown in the pre-lapsarian state in which 'no creature, against its

will, was subjected to the vanity and slavery of the transient system' (32:15f.). If this understanding is correct, then humanity's contrast to the animal kingdom and the rest of nature is not to be found in intrinsic qualities and faculties or the lack of them (as in the comparative 'lack of instincts' in Herder 's account) but in this vocation of leadership; in a 'way of life'.

In this case, the 'archontic' aspect of the vocation is not sharply distinguished from the 'politics' — it may in fact be coterminous with the 'political calling' of 31:33; and this would preserve the balance of the parallelisms in the suppressed passage printed as N III, 427. The vocation of a political animal is both social and political, in its modern sense. The passage of N III, 427 tells us that 'Politics... is the partly inherited partly acquired power to increase... (or minimize), glorify or reduce the true and the false, good and evil, the beautiful and the ugly in relation to our critical taste'. When compared in its parallel structure to the definition of 'criticism', it is clear that an ironic or even cynical tone has crept into the explanation of 'politics'; criticism is properly carried out in relation to our sphere, but politics 'on the other hand' is carried out 'in relation to our critical taste'. This phrase ('critical taste') brings out the potential ethical ambivalence of our political vocation: this task can be undertaken on the basis of contemporary philosophical fashions, or on the basis of honest critical appraisal of good and evil. If 'criticism' relates to epistemology, or better, to theoria, 'politics' is the putting of theoria into praxis. It shares with 'criticism' its ethical force.

This ethical responsibility of criticism and politics moves in two directions; the first is with reference to one another. There is a further duty inherent in this vocation, however: that of acknowledging its source. This is done explicitly after Hamann's first proclamation of this vocation: it 'presupposes no inner worthiness nor merit of our nature; rather is, like the latter itself, an unmediated gift of grace of the great All-giver.' (37:28-38:3.) Similarly, when the idea is explicated in the metaphor of the field, the image is summed up: 'These three in us are therefore one, namely Θεου γεωργιον' (40:21-22). The alternative reaction to this vocation is hinted at in the very conclusion of the 'Doubts' section: 'As our dear Plato has... proven it..., the human being must then perhaps be a creature above animals not in degree but in kind, in order to be worthy of its true destiny, to hold the **critical** and **archontical** office of a **political** animal' (48:15-20). Unlike the Little Catechism of Luther, and unlike 37:28-38:3, this disposition

for Herder-'Plato' is our claim to greatness and superiority — which has *earned* us this honour, by our own worth and merits. The Knight of the Rose-Cross, however, sees not merely the existence of such a vocation as the result of an original divine institution, but further in his myth describes its development as the result of divine nurture: 'the voice of a God who walked in the garden in the cool of the evening was the rational audible milk for these young children of creation, for the growth of their political calling, to populate the earth and rule by the word of their mouths' (31:30ff.).

ii. The Maximum and Minimum of a Critical, Archontical, Political Animal

It is against this ethical backdrop of a responsibility not only to ourselves and others but to God that we should interpret Hamann's discussion of freedom in *PID*. In the discussion of 38 to 39, two strands are interwoven: freedom as a part of our nature, and what that means; and the political, ethical, and social implications of human freedom.

We have seen that the intrinsic quality that Hamann finds uniquely human is not reflexion nor reason, but freedom. It is the 'maximum and minimum' of our nature (38:10f.); both the initial drive of our powers but also their goal (38:11-13) and the list of activities of 38:22f. (consciousness, attentiveness, abstraction, moral conscience) are all claimed as energies of our freedom. It is thus the condition of possibility for being human and for all the distinctively human mental and spiritual acts. It is the 'minimum' without which we can neither think nor be good. At the same time, freedom is the state to which we aspire, the condition which we strive for, even while presupposing it.

Freedom, indeed, is necessary for the development of our critical and archontic office: this may be its 'maximum'. It is freedom which makes possible 'imitation', 'on which upbringing and invention rest' (38:18-21). We know, in the implicit reference to Herder, that 'upbringing' and 'invention' in effect signify the learning of language. The conclusion of the 'Ideas' section (41:4-12) makes this claim clearer. The learning of language, indeed all learning, requires the free co-operation of the apprentice; learning by imitation no less than by explicit instruction. At the same time, it means that the relative freedom from instincts which human beings enjoy is not the freedom to invent by reason alone, as

Herder would have it, but is rather the freedom to engage in a relationship with a teacher in order to learn by imitation.

Secondly, from what has been said on the nature of our office it is clear that human relationships are necessary for the indispensable communication of revelations and traditions. The 'imitation', which is the student's-eye-view of this communication of traditions, is as we have seen utterly dependent on 'the perfect law of freedom' (38:18-21); and the freely-co-operating apprentice who learns by imitation is not merely the student of language but also of the revelations and traditions that are necessary 'in relation to our sphere'.

Thirdly, freedom is necessary to develop the moral conscience that is such a feature of our critical and archontical vocation. One must remember first that as well as the associations of language-learning, 'imitation' had for Hamann and Herder an association with learning good and evil; Herder's re-interpretation of Gen. 3 had Adam and Eve as 'the imitative animal of Aristotle' imitating the snake, to learn the recognition of good and evil. The passage of 38:18-21 then informs us that the knowledge of good and evil, as a kind of learning by imitation, rests itself on the 'perfect law of freedom'. Moreover, the opening of the discussion of freedom, 38:8ff., announces that freedom is the very condition of possibility of being good or evil (38:8ff.). This applies not only to the freedom to act either virtuously or viciously, which is necessary for the ascription of either merit or guilt; it is necessary even for the prior *recognition* of good and evil (38:10). This ability to recognize good and evil was of course the kernel of the definition of 'criticism'. Thus, from 38:8-10 we see that freedom is indispensable both for 'criticism', as the ability to recognize good and evil, and for 'politics', which increases or minimizes good and evil.

Finally, we find that freedom is necessary as well for the development and deployment of our archontical office. The passages 38:14-17 and 38:25ff. speak of our responsibility as our own legislators, and our possession of the 'republican privilege of contributing to one's destiny'. This too is a property of freedom, and is 'indispensable to human nature' (38:25, 27).

It is interesting to compare Hamann's political thinking on freedom with Kant's in the latter's famous essay, *What is Enlightenment?* In addition to the famous demand that we release ourselves from our 'self-imposed minority'[94] and 'dare to know!',

[94] Kant, *Was ist Aufklärung?* 35, translation mine.

Kant argues for freedom of thought: 'For this enlightenment, however, nothing is required but freedom, and indeed the most harmless among all the things to which that that term can properly be applied. It is the freedom to make public use of one's reason at every point.'[95] Hamann's reaction to this essay[96] was, relationally, to wonder who the unnamed other was in this situation – the one who was giving the order. The irony of the command: 'You should think for yourself!' was not lost on him. Kant's understanding of this maturity was, furthermore, circumscribed in a distinction of what Hamann could not approve:

> Everywhere there is restriction on freedom. But what sort of restriction is an obstacle to enlightenment, and what sort is not an obstacle but a promoter of it? I answer: The public's use of one's reason must always be free, and it alone can bring about enlightenment among men. The private use of reason, on the other hand, may often be very narrowly restricted without particularly hindering the progress of enlightenment.... Here argument is certainly not allowed – one must obey.[97]

Thus the soldier must obey orders without question; only as a scholar of military matters may he allow his reason this freedom of criticism. This division in being Hamann cannot accept; and it contrasts markedly with his own understanding of our political 'vocation'.

Further, the verdict on the present political situation could hardly differ more greatly. Kant writes of their monarch: 'Only one prince in the world says: "Argue as much as you will and about what you will, but obey!"' (This is said with approbation.)

> ...This is the age of enlightenment, or the century of Frederick. A prince who does not find it unworthy of himself to say that he holds it to be his duty to prescribe nothing to men in religious matters but to give them complete freedom while renouncing the haughty name of *tolerance,* is himself enlightened and deserves to be esteemed by the grateful world and posterity as the first, at least from the side of government, who divested the human race of its tutelage and left each man free to make use of his reason in matters of conscience. Of

[95] Kant, *Was ist Aufklärung?*, 36, translation by Lewis White Beck, 463. On the contrast between Hamann and Kant on this issue, see Bayer, *Selbstverschuldete Vormundschaft. Hamanns Kontroverse mit Kant um wahre Aufklärung* in Bayer, *Umstrittene Freiheit. Theologish-philosophische Kontroverse*, Tübingen 1981, 66-96; also *ZW*, 138-150.

[96] In a letter to Christian Jacob Kraus, ZH 5, 289-292, 18.12.1784 and to Lavater, ZH 5, 294, 20.12.1784.

[97] Kant, *Was ist Aufklärung?*, 37 (463).

> this [enlightened rule] we have a shining example wherein no monarch is superior to him whom we honour.[98]

Hamann's estimation of the true value of Frederick's 'tolerance' and 'enlightenment' has been graphically demonstrated in *KRC*.

To some extent, Hamann's understanding of freedom, particularly *political* freedom, does imply that it is so to speak a 'freedom *from*'; this was one of two basic understandings of Herder's account. Hamann can in part agree with Herder that humanity enjoys a *relative* freedom from instincts; insofar as instincts do not *determine* the human person (38:14) and limit their sphere in the way that is so for animals (38:28ff.). Several points however prevent a harmony of understanding with Herder. First, both statements to this effect (38:14f. and 25ff.) are given these political (or at least, 'archontical') overtones. Freedom thus means 'not only undetermined powers but also the republican privilege...' (38:25f.). Freedom from instincts means not the unrestricted use of untrammelled reason, but rather that one is *one's own* legislator. In Hamann's hands, therefore, both the socio-political overtones and the ethical responsibilities that were lacking in Herder's account are given particular prominence.

The second divergence from Herder in this respect is this: if one of Herder's definitions of 'freedom' was 'freedom from instincts', the other was 'reason' — 'understanding, reason, reflexion', 'the single positive power of thinking, which... is called reason'. For Hamann, however, freedom means not only that one is not determined by instincts, but no less free from *sensus communis* (38:14). One might almost say for Hamann that 'freedom from' means equally freedom from control by instincts *and freedom from 'control' by reason*. More fundamentally, however, is the fact that unlike Herder, Hamann is not tempted to equate freedom with any one faculty, such as reflexion or the ability to think. Freedom is no faculty, but the ground of our faculties (38:10ff., 22ff.) as well as their final purpose.

Paradoxically, this permits an agreement with Herder that freedom means that 'the perspective of the person extends to the universal and as it were loses itself in the infinite' (39:2-3). If this has an ironic tone, it is that 'freedom' *qua* reason does indeed seek – improperly – to universalize itself, and does in practice get lost in

[98] *Ibid.*, 40-41, 466.

attempting to deal with the infinite.[99] However, if freedom is the fundamental drive of our desires, and the development of our moral judgement and conscience, it quite legitimately seeks out a relationship with the Infinite.

This complex interrelationship of ethics, of 'criticism' and 'archontical' leadership, and the self-governance of 38:16f. and 25f. may throw some light on the paradox of the 'perfect law of freedom'. One could picture it something like this: with each person as their own law-giver, contributing to their destiny, each would be free from external force and oppression, from the 'vanity and slavery of the transient system, under which [it] presently yawns, sighs, and [is] silenced' (32:17f.). The 'perfect law' is the proper functioning of 'criticism' and 'politics', which leaves each the freedom to engage with one another, to learn, to reveal and transmit.

In fact, the notion contains much more than this, or at least, more theological significance. The citation from James evokes a network of themes from *KRC*, *AN*, and from the preceding verses of the biblical citation itself. Jas. 1:21b-25 runs:

> ...Accept the Word that has been planted in you, that can make your souls happy [blessed]. But be doers of the Word and not merely hearers, whereby you would deceive yourselves. For one who is a hearer of the Word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his bodily form in a mirror. Then after he has looked at himself, he goes away and forgets what he looks like. But who looks steadily at the perfect law of freedom, and keeps to it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer, he will be blessed in his doing. [My translation of Luther's translation.]

As we have seen, Hamann makes use of the image of one who looks in a mirror and thereafter forgets his own image in *AN*, faithfully following Luther's translation (N II, 209:26ff.). This idea should be coupled with one of the most salient themes in the essay: our being in the image of God. Now we can see how the passage of N II, 206:22-207:9 foreshadows the myth of *KRC*. Running throughout this passage and the corresponding passage in *KRC* (N III, 31:27ff. and 32) is the idea of the Word: as naming; as communicating an 'intimate union'; and thereby as instituting a 'law'; just as the Word is the 'perfect law of freedom' in the passage from James. In the passage from *KRC*, the word is the 'milk' that nourishes our political calling; and it is the communication of the union of the human and the divine. In the *AN* passage, the naming of the

[99] Cp. the passage in *AN*: N II, 208:25-209:11.

animals – Adam's 'analogy... to the Creator', for he too was creating by the word of his mouth – is what bestows 'on all creatures their meaning and stamp'. Naming and being addressed gives us our nature and our system of relationships. When worship is directed to its proper goal, when all these relations are properly ordered, we all of us experience the 'freedom in which the animals honoured Adam', the freedom to be recognized for what we are and to exist in harmony with our nature (which for us humans is our likeness to God); otherwise, we all sigh under servitude or over vanity. This is the perfect law of freedom, this law of the Word. This intimate connection of the notion of 'the perfect law of freedom' with that of human participation in divine energies possibly gives a further, daring component to the idea of 'imitation', which is said to be founded on this perfect law of freedom (38:18ff.). Is it only other animals and human beings that we may dare to imitate?

iii. The Highest and Deepest Knowledge of our Nature

In response to the assertion of the *Preisschrift*, that 'gaps and lacks could not form the basis of our human nature', Hamann wrote to Herder that, on the contrary, they constituted our highest and deepest knowledge of human nature.[100] Throughout the essays Hamann fights the battle of anthropologies, and on two fronts; for the estimation of humanity given by his opponents is simultaneously too low and too high. The human being of the materialist, the creature that arises from a sump or a slime (27:32) is too low; the creature wielding an infallible reason is too grandiose a creature. Even the more balanced and integrated human being imagined by friend Herder is both too great and too small a thing; for while Hamann's human being is in no way capable of the independent, self-sufficient creation of language, he is a far higher thing than Herder's language-creating man; for he participates in divinity. Human nature is a thing of gaps and lacks — yet 'every numbered hair on our heads is... divine' (27:2f.).

One of the first and most urgent anthropological points made in these essays, therefore, is the single point on which the Knight of the Rose-Cross deigned to dwell (31:22ff.): the anthropology which makes 'those battle-unworthy Patriarchs', the primitive human beings as portrayed by the *Aufklärer*, into 'thrice-blessed inventors of an art' as refined and exalted as language. Like a conjurer whose empty bag produces a genie (31:10ff.), these philosophers

[100] ZH 3, 34:33-35.

conjure up from the gaps and lacks of human nature a reasoning faculty which can create language — even though the use of reason itself is impossible without language: 'Invention and reason indeed presuppose a language', as Aristobolus reminds us, 'and can be thought of without the latter as little as mathematics can without numbers.' (21:24-26.) Thus, these philosophers 'speak like alchemists, of treasures of fruitfulness' (31:7f.); a magical, fruitful fertility that creates gold from base metal.

Why might Hamann want to insist upon this 'lack' that is the human condition? What is wrong with human self-sufficiency, so that Hamann can hold up Herder's human for mockery as a 'Platonic Androgyne'? There are two reasons for this. First and foremost, one may suppose, it is the proud assertion of independence from God that constitutes the chief sins of Adam and Eve and of the builders of the Tower of Babel; self-sufficiency *vis-á-vis* God is a reprehensible attitude and moreover an incorrect notion. Secondly, however, these 'gaps and lacks', negative though they may seem to a Herder, are ultimately a positive and even rewarding fact of human existence: 'Even supposing therefore that a human being comes into the world like a wineskin: then precisely this lack makes him all the more capable of the enjoyment of nature through experiences and of community with his race through **traditions**.' (39:25-28.) This need and lack in our nature is precisely what makes us able to form relationships with one another, to communicate traditions, and makes us open to that revelation in nature which is the dominant theme of *AN* and of the Knight's myth. It is our dependence which makes possible as well as necessary the entire economy of 'criticism', 'archontism' and 'politics', and the 'revelations and traditions' which constitute our knowledge.

The 'higher knowledge' of our 'gaps and lacks' and the role it plays in human relationships makes possible a meaningful understanding of one of the central anthropological paradoxes begun by Aristobolus and carried through the succeeding two essays. This is the paradox that we require instruction in what is natural to us; Aristobolus in one paragraph noting that those who have grown up without human language inevitably lack language (21:10-18) and in the next asserting that such quintessentially human activities as inventing and reasoning require language (21:19ff.). It was a central argument in the Knight's essay that bipedal walking, eating and drinking, and finally language itself must all be taught (28:16-29:26, then 30:35-31:26), despite all these being natural.

Finally, among other passages, it is summed up in *PID*, particularly at the end of the 'Ideas', which deals with our learning; in particular, cf. 41:7-12:

> Consequently the origin of language is as natural and human as the origin of all our activities, facilities and skills. But despite the fact that every apprentice co-operates with his instruction to learn according to his inclinations, abilities, and opportunities; learning is nevertheless in a real sense as little invention as mere re-cognition.

It is this appreciation of the need of instruction in what is natural to us (and ultimately, the perception of our gaps and lacks and what that means for human relations) that allows Hamann to overcome the false dichotomy involved in the posing of the Academy's question. If language is divine in origin, it is not intrinsically human and natural; yet to argue that it is a human invention, in addition to being theologically improper, is contradictory and circular, given an adequate and subtle understanding of the mutual dependence of language and reasoning. Hamann is able to maintain both the insights he wants to assert: the naturalness of language and the need of reasoning and thinking for language. His anthropology permits this by using his conviction of our lacks and dependence to point us to two vectors of relatedness: to God, and to other human beings. These holes in our nature point us to God, whose original creation and institution gave us both our disposition for language and our relationship-creating lacks; and the mystery of it even for Voltaire might be 'a proof of the existence of God' (note 8, 39:21). Similarly, it points us toward our need for other human beings, whom we require for our instruction, and the transmission of traditions of knowledge and wisdom. Hamann's understanding of our 'freedom from instincts', therefore, has a very different content and purpose from Herder's. For Hamann, the fact that what is 'natural' is not instinctual, in the sense that the drive or skill is not perfected of itself without tuition, means that even to fulfil our natural destiny requires the loving intervention and support of others.

Neither freedom nor 'gaps and lacks', however, can be understood as the single essential feature of humanity. Hamann is adamant on the foolishness of such an attempt, as the two paragraphs of 40:3-15 tell us. To attain an adequate concept of our unity, what is required is not a single power that defines or constitutes us, but a recognition of our diversity; truth must not be given a bill of divorce. Along these lines, one might recall the

various metaphors, allegories and schemata of the *Herderschriften* which seem to give us a plurality of tasks and roles. Most colourful perhaps is the 'parable' of the field, 40:16-25; 'these three in us are one', and our being which is the image of God is indeed the image of a Trinity. In fact, we are four things in this parable: not only field, son and king, but also seed (line 17); the fact that Hamann nevertheless numbers this as three may well indicate he intends this as a reference to the divine Trinity. The fact that the seed is not trivial and easily dispensed with in a count is shown by line 19, which introduces the all-important ethical component, the 'critical' and 'political' choice of choosing either good seed or enemy weed. Other of the metaphors and schemata, such as the bifocal political calling we possess, the epistemological stomach metaphor and stamen/ menstruation, also illustrate this diversity. It must be stressed, nevertheless, that this is a diversity in unity: 'the mystery of marriage' between these different aspects 'is great' (40:10ff.). Our understanding of our own unity, perhaps, is limited to that indicated in 39:20-24. The 'spiritual' economy of our nature can only be known analogically and anagogically from our 'animal' nature; the emphasis, moreover, is not only on our epistemological limits but also on the unity of the two 'economies', and the completion the former brings to the latter.

iv. Human Leaven

'Human nature remains from the beginning to the end of the day as much like the Kingdom of God as leaven, with whose scantiness every woman could raise three measures of flour' (32:28-31). Here in a biblical image is the positive element in our lacks: the 'scantiness' of our human nature is the scantiness of leaven, which despite its meagreness is powerful enough to raise a much greater amount of flour. It is interesting to compare this to the empty bag whose vacuum gives forth a genie (31:10ff.), the delusory 'treasures of fruitfulness'. Wherein lies the difference between the two conceptions? The power of the leaven is that it reveals God in the mirror of human being; that human nature is like 'the Kingdom of God.'

Why or in what respect is human nature like the Kingdom of God? Several answers suggest themselves from the analysis thus far. One is the aspect of 'becoming'. The account given of freedom resembles some of the parabolic descriptions of the Kingdom of God: it is necessarily present from the very beginning but develops; that which is the ground but also the goal of all our drives and

striving. It is no coincidence that this mirrors Hamann's picture of the origin and development of language.

Principally, however, the most important reason why Hamann can compare human nature to the Kingdom of God is the fact that for Hamann, human nature reveals God, being made in his own image. This is revealed in a number of passages, most strikingly and poetically in *KRC*, developed from AN; finding formulation first as the principle of the *communicatio idiomatum* of 27:7, 9f. and reaching its full flowering in the climax of the myth. Here, language or 'word' is the tangible pledge of this communication of divine and human *idiomata*; 'the sign, symbol and pledge of a new, mysterious, inexpressible but all the more intimate union, participation and community of divine energies and ideas.' Everything, every phenomenon of nature is a word; every word is this pledge of divine and human interrelatedness; ultimately, we are told 'God was the word' (32:26). Because God is the word, and this word lives in our mouth and heart, God lives in our mouth and heart; this assertion of God's immanence is what grounds the claim that follows, that human nature is like the Kingdom of God. One's kingdom is where one dwells.

b. On Human Knowledge

i. Reason and the Senses

Hamann's central epistemological insights, which reach their final flowering in *MPR* appear here in germinal form. The various points can however best be summed up in the claim that knowing is relational or even holistic. In view of the Enlightenment debate, this in practical terms means primarily the attempt to unify the two rivals of reason and the senses, or better, to create a new schema in which they are not opposed but interdependent and reciprocally related. This particular point is elaborated in the two central epistemological parables in *PID*, that of the stomach and blood vessels (39:7-19) and the field (40:16-25).

Thomas Aquinas' empiricist principle, 'Nothing is in the intellect without first being in the senses', is the starting point but not the end of Hamann's treatment of the subject. In the gastric imagery, the dependence of the vessels on the stomach is reciprocated by the need of the latter for the former as well. The stomach is no less dependent on the vessels, 'without whose circulation and influx the stomach itself could not administer its office' (39:9f.). The relationship in Thomas' dictum has gained in

reciprocity and richness. Translated back into the epistemological subjects which the stomach and vessels represent, the senses are no less in need of understanding to direct the performance of their function than the understanding is in need of the senses for information. Thus, even to carry out their basic duties of perception and the reception of sense data, the senses require the services of the understanding; even perception then is no passive, uninterpreted recording activity that can take place unassisted. [101]

Hamann truly is no 'mere empiricist'. We find this mutual dependence of the understanding and the senses confirmed in the parable of the field. 'For what is a field without seed'? (40:20f.) As with a passive field with nothing to germinate in it, senses conceived as purely passive are unfruitful. There must be seed sown in it for a field to do its work and show what it is good for: it is only when a 'seed' is 'planted' and field and seed thus come into relation that not only knowledge but even fruitful sense-perception can take place. Yet at the same time, reason or 'seed' alone is insufficient for knowledge, as the same parable would have it; and this is of course above all the case where all possibility of experience is absent, as Aristobolus tells us:

> For what medium can suffice to help us to attain a concept of the origin of a phenomenon, when such an origin is in no way analogous to anything in the ordinary course of nature? And how will it be possible to set out on the right track of such an investigation? (20:20-24)

Thus 'the system of the materialists and idealists' (40:18f.) are both erroneous, first of all in their attempt to 'separate what nature has joined together' (40:4f.) and thereafter to 'explain the soul from a single positive power or Entelechy.' (40:8f.) Hamann's insistence on human wholeness therefore extends to the proper use of reason, for which the senses and passions are necessary, as *AN* told us.[102]

Implied in the images of reciprocity in *PID* is some kind of circularity in the process of knowledge, just as there is a circularity in the reciprocal services which the stomach and blood vessels perform for each other. It might be tempting to adopt the language

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[101] It is perhaps significant that Hamann speaks of the 'understanding' rather than of 'reason'. This may be the case partly because of his distaste for the 'hypostasis of reason', but also because of the greater breadth of the notion of *Verstand* than *Vernunft*.

[102] Cf. above all N II, 208:11-15: 'If the passions are members of dishonour....'

and ideas of two hundred years' later and speak of a *Vorverständnis* or pre-understanding that is present in the act of knowing. Yet it is important to understand what this does or does not constitute. It would be a gross error to forget that in *PID* in particular Hamann is keen to argue against a Platonic doctrine of fore-knowledge: 'But despite the fact that every apprentice **co-operates** with his instruction to learn according to his inclinations, abilities, and opportunities; **learning** is nevertheless in a real sense as little **invention** as mere **re-cognition.**' (41:8-12.) As with the thesis of the human invention of language, what most offends Hamann in both the idea of invention and in recognition as theories of the origin of knowledge is the pre-supposition of self-sufficiency which they both contain; independence from experience of the world and independence from others. The circularity implicit in Hamann's account of knowing therefore entails, positively, some kind of prior commitment or direction to guide perception and its use; but nothing that could make 'the enjoyment of nature through experiences and of community with its race through traditions' (39:27ff.) redundant or dispensable.

ii. Revelations and Traditions

It is not merely the case, then, that reason needs the senses and experience in order to attain knowledge. Hamann goes beyond Aquinas' principle in another direction as well. *Reason itself* is derived or acquired through experience: 'Our reason at least arises from this twofold lesson of sensuous **revelations** and human **testimonies**' (39:28ff.). 'Reason' itself then is a relational phenomenon in several directions. Not only is it inevitably related to the rest of one's mental functions, such as perceiving, judging, etc.; it is also related to its environment and to other human beings.

No sooner has the first epistemological parable been elaborated, asserting the interdependence of the senses and the understanding (39:7-14), than this relation is taken up and placed in the context of a wider network of relations (39:14-19f.), and placed in the schema of revelations and traditions, and the critical and archontic office of a political animal. Similarly, the brush with Lockean epistemology is used to relate the 'empty' human being to nature and its fellows (39:25ff.).

This 'emptiness' in human nature is the connection between the two-pronged assertion in Hamann's letter to Herder:[103] 'Gaps and

[103] Letter cited earlier, page 189.

lacks' are our highest knowledge of our own nature, while 'ideas and doubts' are the '*summum bonum* of our reason.' This epistemological reserve is not simple scepticism, but has several motivations. The first is the anti-systematic polemic that is characteristic of Hamann's work and his crusade against the Enlightenment as a whole; our reason can attain to 'ideas and doubts', but not entire systems of knowledge rising like the Tower of Babel to heaven. The second is a restriction on the scope of reason, and what can be known in this fashion or by these means: 'ideas', 'doubts', but not the fundamental truths of human existence, which must be known in a more relational manner. There is also a positive component to this utterance, however, for the *summum bonum* of our reason is the activity which ties us into our human community; the process of taking revelations and traditions for our own property, transforming them in our own juices and thus nurturing our disposition, our critical and archontic office (39:16ff.).

Thus, the operation, methods and function of human knowledge are all directed towards the interrelation and integration of many factors. The attempt to cut off and ignore or deny these necessary relations will be characterized as the wrong-headed 'purifications of philosophy' in *MPR*.

iii. Criticism and Politics

Even therefore if one attempted to overcome the 'Either/Or' of the senses and reason by combining them in a 'Both/And', one would still be neglecting one of the crucial characteristics of the activity of knowing and understanding: its existence within the human nexus of revelations and traditions. We are informed of this in 39:14f., the transformation of the stomach parable into the 'stamen and menstruation' of 'revelations and traditions'. This sentence takes us further, however, than that; as does the sister parable of the field in 40:16-21:

> The person is... not only field and seed (according to the system of the materialists and idealists) but also the king of the field, good seed and enemy weed to construct on his field; for what is a field without seed and a ruler without land and revenue?

The final aspect of epistemology that cannot be neglected in Hamann's view is this ethical component of 'criticism and politics'. This 'vocation' is related to epistemology in two directions: firstly, in that the act of 'criticism' as analysed above is an epistemological

act; and secondly, in the notion that knowledge brings with it an ethical responsibility. 'Criticism', as discussed above, was a matter of recognition, that is, of judgement of good and evil 'by intuitive knowledge and revelation or by approbation and tradition in relation to our sphere' (N III, 427). That Hamann feels that philosophers must be held responsible for the social and political, that is, ethical, consequences of their thought is made clear by the treatment throughout these essays of those philosophers associated with the fashionable spirit of the age, and its monarch.

c. Human Language in Relation

i. Language's Relations within the Person

'Invention and reason indeed presuppose a language, and can be thought of without the latter as little as mathematics can without numbers.' (21:24-26.) As we will be told more expansively in *MPR*, language and reason cannot be thought of without one another.

Language is not made to take sides in the war of reason and the senses or passions, however. In *PID*, language is also briefly considered in relation to emotion and to the senses, invoking Aristotle and Philo in turn.

PID opens with a succinct examination of the position of language in the life of the passions. This is made necessary by Herder's confusion of 'animal' cries of pleasure and pain with language. Here, the emphasis is more on the distinctness of the two terms of the relation, rather than a stress on their mutual dependence, as with the question of language and reason. The primary polemical point in asserting a relationship of the two phenomena is not to assert their connectedness but to fight against a mistaken fusion or confusion of the two. Armed with Aristotle's distinction of 'voice' as the expression of emotion and 'language', Hamann can first distinguish and thereafter relate emotion (*qua* 'voice') and language. 'Voice' is the root and stem, the nourishing sap and spirit of language (37:9-10), but is not identical with it. Nevertheless, in a different polemical context, such as *AN*, we find Hamann insisting on the indispensability of the root, stem and sap for the life of the plant; and the distinction serves not to isolate emotion from language but to bring the two into what he feels is their proper relation.

With equal brevity Hamann makes use of Philo to touch on the question of language in relation to the senses. Philo actually numbers language among the senses, as the 'sixth sense', part of the ir-

rational soul. In the context of *PID*, 47:16ff., it is made to sound like a partial concession to Herder, a partial agreement that language is a natural human faculty, along with vision and hearing; Herder speaks of language as 'a sense of reason'. We have already noted how Philo is used notwithstanding to witness to the divine origin of language in the Creator of humanity. The other qualification made in this section is in 47:19f. and note 19. Words, according to this account, are 'shadows' in relation to the 'substances' of facts; an idea with which both Hamann and Herder would be dissatisfied. And yet, does not an account of language that numbers it as one of the senses, part of the 'irrational part of the soul' (note 17) (as opposed to a 'sense of reason'), entail some such evaluation? As the visual impression is inferior to the external phenomena, so must the word be inferior to the fact, if 'γονιμον φωνη' is merely a sense of the irrational or rational soul. Indeed, a fuller citation of the passage from Philo (72-74) makes clear what Hamann would no doubt call the 'Platonic' nature of Philo's anthropology – and the reason why Hamann would, strategically, call Philo to Herder's support. For we find that the mind can, and should, depart from the body, from the senses, and finally from language itself (which, ironically, it has learned to do 'from experience'). What this passage shows is that too *close* a relation of language to the senses – counting it as one of their number – aids a detachment of the mind from language, as well as from the body and the senses.

Language is, then, for Hamann in the middle of this relation of reason and the passions. *AN* was preoccupied with the topic of the relation of the senses and the passions, and their role in language and understanding; there, however, it was not a simple case of counting language as one of the senses, or considering it to be the mouthpiece of the emotions. Language for the kabbalistic muse is involved in a more complicated network of relations between reason, passions, senses and images and speech. The senses and passions are mediators of Nature, while language too functions as a kind of mediator; a means of sublating 'the natural use of the senses' and 'the unnatural use of abstractions' (207:11-12). Language itself however has need of the passions, which 'alone gives abstractions as well as hypotheses hands, feet, wings – spirit, life and tongue to images and signs' (208:20-22) for its sublation.

ii. Language and Relations with Others

It may seem obvious that language is an activity which involves a relationship with another, with whom one speaks. Nevertheless, although it played an important role in Herder's Second Part, it was as we have seen absent from the initial act of creating language. So despite its obviousness – so obvious that it is apparent even to the dull mind of Aristobolus – it must nevertheless be stated that language is inextricable from human relations: 'in the rare examples of those born deaf and still more extraordinary cases of such human adventurers who have grown up without contact with society, the lack of language has always been infallibly present.' (21:15-18.)

More specifically, language is a matter of human interpersonal relations because of the fact that we require instruction in order to possess and use language. (It is a function of Hamann's irony that the citation above was used ultimately to dismiss the idea of human instruction in language.) *KRC* was preoccupied with the examination of this paradox: that we must be instructed in that which is natural to us. This insight is used to assert two different claims: that language is essentially and naturally human; and that language is something that necessarily relates us to others. It is natural to eat, but the baby must be fed (29:6-9); apprentices must be taught, but they cooperate with their learning, according to their abilities (41:4-12).

iii. Language and Relations with God

'I believed, therefore I spoke' quotes the Knight of the Rose-Cross at the beginning of his last will and testament. This, taken out of its Pauline context, illustrates perfectly the relation Hamann sees between faith in God and language; the mutual and simultaneous witness each bears to the other.

The relation of language and God contains different aspects, each requiring examination. An issue that lies in the background is the question of language about God; the propriety of anthropomorphic language about God is a recurring theme in these essays and the contemporary letters between Hamann and Herder. Thus, we find in the *Preisschrift* that the higher hypothesis 'reduces God through the most lowly anthropomorphisms'. Hamann will take the opposite view, and takes every opportunity to use and flaunt the use of anthropomorphic imagery. Chronologically, this begins with his letter to Herder in which he encourages the idea of imagining a creative Spirit possessing not

merely eyes, hands, etc. but also genitals.[104] He makes the connection between the philosophical distaste for theological anthropomorphic language and the disgust and shame over the genitals: 'Through this, therefore, that a creative Spirit covers his feet, arises that which under the German name th-- attracts so many wrinkles to aesthetic noses, and by another name, more moralistic or metaphysical, to philosophical noses.' In my view, both the 'other name' which causes philosophical noses to wrinkle in distaste and the fact that a creative Spirit finds it necessary to 'cover his feet' refer to anthropomorphic language. The oriental clothing and the hiddenness of the 'feet' are expressed in another metaphor, from the same letter to Herder and on the same topic: 'I keep myself to the letter and the visible and the material as to the hand on a watch — but what is behind the number plate, that is the art of the craftsman, wheels and springs, that like the mosaic snake have need of an apocalypse [for their revelation]'.[105]

If Herder speaks in his essay of 'the lowliest, most imperfect anthropomorphisms', Hamann cites this in his review and rebuts it: 'the lowliest and unworthiest, but nevertheless privileged anthropomorphism' (N III, 18:28-29). In Hamann's theology, God humbles himself to reveal himself in human form – in language, as in the Incarnation. Both linguistically and historically (I mean christologically), God has lowered himself to accommodate us, and we have the privilege to speak about God in this way. Hamann flaunts this privilege in his own myth of the creation of language in *KRC*; he does so again, dependent at the same time on the private discussion of ZH 2, Nr. 350, in his cryptic references to the violation of the 'poetic private parts of a holy person' (N III, 45:34-35).

This unwillingness to make use of anthropomorphisms, coupled with a Hamannian distrust of metaphysical abstractions that might be an alternative, makes it highly difficult for Herder to speak of God at all. This is borne out in the queasiness of his careful use of 'in a sense, divine'; the acorn and the oak that grows from it are, 'in a sense', 'divine'. Talk about God has become roughly equated with talk about the magnificence of trees; both are reduced to a figurative sense of the word. 'The origin [of language] becomes divine therefore only in a *respectable* sense insofar as it is

[104] ZH 2, Nr. 350, 415:25-33. A later letter suggests that the genitals are our 'unique bond to the Creator'; ZH4, Nr. 573, 139:18-19, 12.12-14.12.1779, to Herder.

[105] ZH 2, Nr. 350, 416:22-2.

human' (cf. N III, 18:24-25, cf. HP 356; emphasis mine). The implication that any other sense of the word 'divine' is not 'respectable' seems to bear out Hamann's intuition on the similarity between sexual shame and embarrassment over unsophisticated language about God.

This inability to speak of God, in Hamann's view at least, would inevitably lead to an inability to know God. Hamann seems to sense this problem for Herder at an early stage, in the same letter that discusses anthropomorphism and responds to Herder's attempts at de-mythologizing the Genesis creation stories.[106] In addition to this caution: 'The beginning of your letter tastes more like a sweet wine than a mature one. So look out for your head'[107], we have his reaction to Herder's re-interpretation of Genesis 3, under the influence of Herder's reading of those 'from Origen to Beverland' who interpret the text as an allegory: 'You seem to me, dear Herder, to be consorting a little too sultanishly with your brothers and especially with old cousin Beverland; and this really makes me a little suspicious about your own conviction of the truth of your system.'[108] Herder's *Preisschrift* confirmed his suspicious; and by the time of his review, he can call Herder an 'Areopagite' — one who does not know God (cf. Acts 17:22ff.; N III, 19:16ff.).

If the question of the nature of language about God lay in the background of these essays, the issue that occupies centre stage is of course the question of a possible divine origin of language. The kind of positive answer that Hamann gives to this question finds its place in his relational scheme of things: in the account given in the myth of *KRC*, language finds its origin in God's conversation with humanity. Building on the picture in *AN* of all of nature being a communication from God, the linguistic element has become more explicit. All of nature has become 'word', a linguistic address to humanity; this immersion in language means also that language is immanent in them: 'With this word in mouth and heart the origin of language was as natural, as near and as easy as child's play' (32:26-28). In this sense, the origin of language is human and entirely natural to humanity; but this natural disposition to speak, however, is a response to a prior address and cannot be conceived independently from this ultimate relationship.

Indeed, 'Word' itself has become a relationship. Whether it is used to mean communication, revelation, or to signify the second

[106] ZH 2, Nr. 350.
[107] ZH 2, 415:15-17.
[108] ZH 2, Nr. 350, 416:18-22.

person of the Trinity, the Logos, it acquires a further depth of meaning by its identification with God himself. Thus, in the *KRC* myth, we are told that everything that was heard, seen and felt in the beginning was a word, 'a living word; for God was the word.' (32:24ff., 26.)

10. Conclusion: Relationality in the *Herderschriften*

What has emerged from an analysis of the ideas in *HS* is that in Hamann's hands, the various topics under examination – anthropology, epistemology, language – are all viewed in a relational perspective. Hamann's dissatisfaction with Herder's account can perhaps be summed up by Herder's failure to see the relational nature of all three of these areas; or put differently, his misperception of three areas of relatedness: to oneself, to others, and to God, all of which for Hamann are exemplified in an examination of language itself.

The stress on relationships rather than on single, isolated, 'essential' principles begins within the self. First, we find that any attempt to define the human being in terms of a single power is 'heresy' (cf. 40:3-9). Rather, for a comprehensive understanding of what human beings are, 'a comprehensive concept of the **fullness** in the **unity** of our **human being**', 'a recognition of diverse distinguishing earthly attributes is necessary.' (40:12ff.) As the many metaphors and parables illustrate, a proper understanding of the human being is to understand that the self itself is a 'marriage' (40:10).

Secondly, a presupposition or perception of this relatedness or holism makes possible an understanding of what might otherwise be hidden from us: the 'gaps and lacks' of which Herder complained, the 'abbreviated half' which humanity shares with animals. Hamann's relationality makes possible the insight that

> The analogy of the animal economy is the only ladder to the anagogical knowledge of the spiritual economy, which quite probably alone may resolve and complete the phenomena and *qualitates occultas* of that visible abbreviated half.[109]

The third point is that the understanding and the senses, reason and passion must be integrated in order for any of them to function properly and truthfully. Not merely then is this relational insight

[109] N III, 39:20-24.

necessary for a proper philosophical understanding of human beings, it is necessary for their own proper functioning, as the complex interrelation of different organs and activities is necessary for their physical functioning.

This essential disposition to relationship is built into the human being, so to speak; and the need for a relationship with others apart from oneself is in Hamann's account built into the foundations of our knowing and our language. Our epistemological need for relationships is articulated in Hamann's schema of 'revelations and traditions'. First, we have need of the traditions passed on by others for the very formation and development of our mental faculties (cf. 39:25ff.). Thereafter, their use is in Hamann's account directed towards others, as the very notion of 'traditions' makes clear. Moreover, as the notion of our 'critical and archontical office as a political animal' has revealed, the orientation and goal of our judgement and knowledge has a social and political focus. In their formation, employment and final purpose, therefore, our mental workings and knowledge are all structured towards relations with others. Even the very fact of our requirement of instruction in language, as we have seen, demands the recognition of our need for human relationships.

Finally, the fundamental relation that the human being is endowed with is the relation to the Creator. For Hamann, this is articulated along three veins.

First, the sheer fact of our being created places us in a relation to our Creator, as is the rest of Nature. This was one of the primary assertions of *AN*, and reaches its full flowering in the *KRC* myth.

But while 'everything' may taste and see 'for itself, with its own hands', humanity stands in a special relationship to God: the second way in which we are by nature related to God is the fact of our being made 'in God's image'. *ESM* will explore a particularly daring and novel consequence of this assertion; in *HS*, it is the fundamental anthropological condition and its embodiment in linguisticality which is at issue.

This likeness to God underlies the third vein in which Hamann chooses to discuss our relatedness to God. It is the notion found at the beginning of *KRC* and at end of the myth: the principle of the *communicatio idiomatum*. What can properly be attributed to one can be properly attributed to the other. This may be a linguistic rule, governing the proper use and attribution of, e.g., the origin of language; but for Hamann it extends beyond that to have a theo-

logical and anthropological force. It is a linguistic rule which itself expresses a truth: the 'new, mysterious, inexpressible but all the more intimate union, participation and community of divine energies and ideas' (32:22-24). This principle then is founded on the perception of another vector of relatedness to God; if our likeness to God in terms of being in his image is an initial gift bestowed on our human nature, this further gift of participation which the *communicatio idiomatum* expresses is a later gift of free grace; the former belongs to our origin, the latter is our direction and goal.

From this analysis, we can then provide three reasons why and how Hamann can answer the question of the origin of language with the claim that language is both human and divine in origin. The first is anthropological, the second theological, and the third mythological.

First, on the presupposition that language is something natural to humanity, it can then be attributed both to human nature itself and to the Creator of human nature. Both the tools and the use of language, as gifts of the creator, mean that 'certainly the origin of human language is divine.' (27:15-21.) At the same time, not only humanity but anything else we care to portray as speaking (angels, animals) must 'express themselves analogously to human nature, and in this respect the origin of language... can be and seem nothing but human.' (27:24-26.)

The second, theological reason is provided by the principle of *communicatio idiomatum*. Apart from any other considerations, this principle permits us to attribute our workings to God and vice versa: 'Consequently all is divine' and 'Everything divine, however, is also human' (27:7, 9). Therefore, *if we are operating from the basis of this principle and the anthropology and theology which it presupposes*, we may correctly attribute the origin of language either to God or humanity or both.

The third reason is 'mythological', for it speaks the language of 'privileged anthropomorphism'. The origin of language is both human and divine because it arose from the conversation of the Deity with humanity; and a conversation is the property not of one party only but of both. The 'word' embodied in nature was not enough to constitute language; it required the response of the humans with this word in their mouth and heart; and with their response language was born (32:26ff.). Language then is not pro-

perly attributed only to the initiator nor to the reponder, but arises from the relationship and conversation of both.[110]

The essays that make up the *Herderschriften*, therefore, develop the relational understanding that was begun in *SM* and furthered in *AN*. In addressing issues that were Hamann's central preoccupation – language, the nature of human knowledge, and above all humanity and God – they permit him to exercise his methodological instincts for holism and relationality, and significantly deepen not only his thinking but also his philosophical approach.

[110] Ruprecht traces the subsequent influence of Hamann's understanding of the origin of language on the German Romantics. Cf. Ruprecht in *ACTA I*, 309-324.

V. THE MYSTERIOUS WISDOM OF A SIBYL

1. Introduction

Hamann was woken at 5:00 in the morning on the 26th of August, 1774, by the unexpected arrival of his friend and publisher, Johann Friedrich Hartknoch, from Riga; Hartknoch was accompanied by his new bride, Albertine Toussaint.[1] Hamann had not known the young lady, but was enthusiastic about the union, and promised the pair a little essay in honour of their marriage.[2] This occupied him on and off until it was finally completed and sent at Christmas.[3] He intended to take Gen. 2, 'and he closed up the place with flesh', as the text for his homily.[4] Further texts which served as 'inspirations' in both negative and positive ways were Wilkes' notorious (i.e. obscene) *Essay on Woman*[5], and Hippel's essay on marriage.[6] The format and organization, he tells Hartknoch, is in imitation of Hippel's anonymous essay.[7] Hamann's reaction to Hippel's essay seems to be ambivalent; in the letters to Hartknoch referred to above, Hamann speaks in general approbation of the essay, yet appears to find it too rationalistic and anthropocentric for his own taste.

The relation of *ESM* to Hamann's own personal life has been of some interest to commentators, perhaps because of its intimate subject-matter, perhaps also because it is allegedly written from a woman's point of view. Schoonhoven is of the opinion that the essay is in some way dedicated to Hamann's first lost love, Catharina Berens. The opening couplet is seen as an address of Hamann's to Catharina, for example. He comes 'in spirit' to her, not in person; and the content of the essay makes it more than

[1] ZH 3, Nr. 411, 102.
[2] ZH 3, 102:3ff.
[3] Cf. ZH 3, 115, 125; also HHE 5, 127.
[4] ZH 3, Nr. 413, 108:20f., 23.9.1774.
[5] ZH 3, 108; also N III, 201:7-8.
[6] ZH 3, Nr. 416, 113:16f.; 5.10.1774; cf. also N III, 201:9-10.
[7] ZH 3, 126:3ff.; 128:13ff.; 140:4ff.

clear why she might be 'frightened': the explicitly sexual subject-matter and the frankness with which it is discussed.[8]

Similarly, the opening quotation from the sixth book of the Aeneid for Schoonhoven only makes sense in this context, in the 'novel of Hamann's life':

> The love for Katharina [sic] Berens was broken; another bough sprouted forth, and he ventured on the connection with Anna Regina Schumacher. The word of the sibyl is at the same time a justification of this decision in his life. This motto is again an example of the extent to which for Hamann the universal and the personal are connected and his knowledge is grounded in existential experiences.[9]

Finally, Schoonhoven reads 203:11-12 in this light. As Hamann's 'Aspasia' (substituting for 'Minerva') was Catharina, for Schoonhoven this line constitutes a kind of dedication of the essay to that lady.[10]

In my opinion, all three of these puzzling passages are best read in a different light. The internal exegetical questions concerning each are dealt with below; the underlying question of the importance of Catharina Berens however merits a little attention.

It is quite true that as late as the end of 1773, some thirteen years after the broken engagement and a year before the composition of this essay, we find Hamann in a letter to Moser referring briefly to

> my wicked Catin, who has not yet ceased to be the Aspasia, Maintenon and Sevigné of my soul. — Is she not the first and only girl in the world, who had heart enough to love a Magum and hopes to one of the richest inheritances? – Yes, she alone deserved to be the mother of my dear, dear, naughty children.[11]

Schoonhoven is clearly justified in assuming a continued interest in and even longing for Catharina on Hamann's part. And Schoonhoven is similarly correct in maintaining the importance of Hamann's experiences in the formulation of his thought and

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[8] HHE 5, 139-140.

[9] HHE 5, 141.

[10] HHE 5, 162; cf. also 139: 'His one-time fiancée, to whom he dedicates the piece at the end, he has in mind from the beginning.'

[11] ZH 3, Nr. 398, 69:12-17. Francoise de Maintenon and Marie de Sévigné presumably function as symbols of elegant, educated objects of admiration; cf. N VI, 237f., 352.

writing; perhaps in particular when writing on this very personal subject-matter.

Nevertheless, there seem to me to be several reasons why we must be cautious about assuming that it is his experience with Catharina that is the centre of this essay; and still more, that she is in any sense a dedicatee of the sibyl's essay on marriage. To begin with, formally speaking the piece was not dedicated to Catharina Berens but to Hartknoch and his Albertine. After months of letters to Hartknoch discussing the piece and the many ways Hamann found, in the letters and in the closing paragraphs of the essay itself, to relate it directly to its formal dedicatee, it seems counter-intuitive to suppose that these very final paragraphs meant virtually for Hartknoch's understanding alone would in fact serve to inform Hartknoch that the essay was really dedicated to Hamann's own 'Aspasia' (even informally). Likewise, even if Catharina were at the back of Hamann's mind in writing the essay, it seems at best an overstatement to interpret the all-important opening mottoes in such a way that they have no reference to nor meaning for the dedicatees, nor any reference to the thought of the essay itself, but are purely self-referential or autobiographical. Even the reference to 'Minerva-Aspasia' in Hamann's advertisement of the piece (N IV, 418; cf. translator's note υ) indicates that it is not the essay itself but the Sibyl's 'Medusa-image', if anything, that is dedicated to Aspasia.

Secondly, it seems plausible, indeed, that the essay was written from Hamann's own experience of sexual love and fulfilment; but sexual fulfilment was precisely the experience he did not enjoy with Catharina. In this sense, she might well be in his mind as a kind of negative type or contrast; or a poignant example of the possibilities for failure of such a relationship. But both his own experience of sexual love and, perhaps, his insight into a woman's perspective on sexual experience were derived from his relationship with Anna Regina Schumacher, his common-law wife. The chief interest in their relationship was sexual from the beginning; not omitting, one might imagine, the attendant comfort, affection and intimacy associated with the care-giving role in which she first appeared in his father's household. It would seem that Hamann tended to contrast these two women in his own reflection, and was perhaps disposed to see them as opposite types, the one, an (unrealized) ideal intellectual and spiritual soul-mate, the other a very satisfying bed-fellow, companion, and

'Hausmutter'. A letter to Moser in 1763 shows the beginning of this trend, as well as the latent ambivalence towards both women:

> ...for the last two years I have been consumed with the fury of an Achilles for a slave-girl, who is my father's maid and a Hamadryad, to whom I have dedicated the first fruits of my body – –
>
> Do not despise, *Gnädiger Herr!* your new friend. His conscience's bride is a thickset peasant girl, who has maintained her virtue without a transformation into a bay-tree; but her disposition is a *Cabus*; the pedestal of the pillar of a monument! Apart from the work on a common concubine (with whom I have learned to cry, with David: – If I lie in hell, you are there too) a Ulyssean quest awaits me, to earn my Kattunka, who is my muse with red, streaming eyes, who without flattery has traces of a Sevigné and Maintenon, and thinks like a princess, but alas! is a Michal, Saul's daughter, who loved and at the same time despised the Psalmist.[12]

A letter to Herder in 1776, however, gives a picture of Hamann's feelings about the 'Hamadryad' with whom he by then had three children, as well as a little insight into his own ambivalence about the state of marriage, which is reflected in the present essay:

> Despite the fact that in no other country is a marriage of conscience[13] as legal as in Prussia: still the same really seems more offensive to certain people than whoring and adultery, because sins *à la mode* are above the law and conscience. Despite the great contentment in which I live and which makes up the whole happiness of my life, I feel this aspect of bourgeois evil more keenly than any one of those wise people. Precisely this farmer's lass, whose full-blooded, blooming health, and just as sturdy, stubborn, stupid honesty and steadfastness made such an impression on me, that absence and the attempts of the highest despair and the coldest reflection could not extinguish – this maid, who took the place of a child to my old incompetent paralysed father, and who he loved as his own daughter, and with his dying hand prescribed a similar *Legatum* with our relations – as my wife, would perhaps be – I don't know what – Not from pride, for that I am grateful, but because I have the inner conviction, that this situation [i.e. marriage] could diminish her own happiness and *perhaps could become detrimental* to the happiness of her children.[14]

Whatever Hamann's remaining feelings for 'Catin', it is clear that both his experience of sexual love, as well as many of his – ambivalent – attitudes and reflections on marriage are derived

[12] ZH 3, Nr. 254a, XXI:21-34; 11.9.1763.
[13] Hamann's phrase for a common-law marriage.
[14] ZH 3, Nr. 470, 263:1-18.

primarily from his relationship with his 'Hamadryad' and *Hausmutter,* Anna Regina.

2. Exposition

Schoonhoven reports a failure to trace any origin to the rhyme which constitutes the essay's first motto; and is at a loss for any interpretation of it, apart from his understanding of it as an address to Catharina Berens. My own understanding is quite different. My hermeneutical clue is to be found in the doubled meaning of *Geist*: ghost and spirit. In my schema, it is the lover who speaks to his beloved; he comes like a ghost, furtively, in the dark, and with certain purposes in mind — all of which may well frighten her, as the sibyl's 'fairy-tale of her own case' shows (cf. 201:20, 23-25). At the same time, he comes to her not merely as a spectre, but as the Holy Ghost or Spirit; for one of the audacious claims of this essay will be that the human person precisely in its sexual activity is the image of the Creative Spirit.[15] Perhaps we should also recognize that this couplet sets the tone for the chthonic descent into the dark lower world, the pilgrimage Aeneas makes to Hades, Aeneas approaching Dido as a shade in the underworld, the ghosts which the sibyl warns Aeneas of in the concluding citation — all these are loosely woven together with the 'dark dreams' of the 'mysteries of Hymen' (201:3) and the mystical deep sleep of Gen. 2 in which human beings are created from other human beings' bodies, to form a dark backdrop which in an inexplicit way associates the darkness and self-abandonment of death with that of sexual experience, and the abandonment of the body in both with the creation of human life.

What is necessary for Aeneas to make this journey, so the sibyl tells him, is for him to reach out and pluck off the golden bough. As discussed, Schoonhoven understands this as pure self-reference: Catharina was torn away, Anna Regina grew in her stead. I find this unsatisfactory for a number of reasons, some of which have already been elucidated. For one thing, it implies a lack of individualization in Hamann's feelings for both women — one might do as well as another, they are both '*simili... virga metallo*'. Clearly Hamann did not perceive his Aspasia and his *Hausmutter* as being

[15] One recalls the confession of ZH 2, Nr. 350: 'My coarse imagination cannot conceive of a Creative Spirit without genitalia.'

so similar, and performing identical functions in his life; as his letters indicate, he is more likely to contrast and oppose them.

It seems more in keeping with both the tone of this essay and Hamann's own perception of his two loves to reject that interpretation and see this citation from Virgil along the lines I have begun to set out above. In this vein, the pre-requisite for the descent into the dark self-knowledge of one's 'lower realm', 'the hemisphere of my sex *in naturalibus*' (202:1-2) is the appropriation of a golden branch. In my opinion this must be seen in conjunction with the act of appropriation which the sibyl makes, 'amidst the incense of slumber', on seeing 'that rib' (202:29). Whether or not one takes the branch explicitly as a phallic image, as the rib of 202:29 clearly is, we can at least see it as the rib of Gen. 2. Both the bough of the tree and Adam's rib contain the notion of removal, or stripping, followed by a desirable replacement. It is removed, but 'a second fails not', and this, as soon as one sees it, one must take in one's hand. To make this descent into dark self-knowledge, one must fearlessly seize the precious object.

In the opening address (199:1ff.) the sibyl asks that the bridal pair not be 'like the deaf adder that stops its ear so that it does not hear the voice of the charmers or of the cunning enchanter' (Ps. 58:4-5), but be willing to hear her words of wisdom. The use of the theme from the psalm and the general style set the tone for the 'marriage' of pagan and Judeo-Christian worlds; the sibyl is both speaking as a prophet of Yahweh and as a mysterious oracle.

In this vein, the paragraph of 199:5-10 finds the sibyl doing a curious thing: equating Cupid or Eros with Yahweh; portraying the 'projects, conquests and blind adventures' which the Greek gods undertook in the realm of love in a continuum with Yahweh's projects for humanity. In part, this is of a piece with the fact that Hamann has chosen (as in his portrayal of Socrates and his world) to stress the continuity between the ancient pagan world and its prophets with Judeo-Christian revelation. One would expect no less of a 'sibyl'. In my opinion, it serves another function as well: not merely is Hamann integrating the pagan into the Christian; but he is specifically integrating the two notions of love, or concepts of the 'god of love' – introducing the overtly erotic and sexual aspect governed by Eros into the concept of the Christian God of Love.

Schoonhoven, in discussing 199:11, notes the parallel between the creation of the world before the creation of humanity in Genesis and the 'world of trifles' which must exist in a lover's

courtship before they can get down to the execution of the divine idea, the creation of human beings by human beings.[16] I think this is correct; but would place greater stress on the interpretation of the 'divine idea' as referring quite explicitly to sexual intercourse as the mode of the creation of human beings by human beings. The 'first original attempt' to have sex to create children – the begetting of Cain – went sadly awry (199:14); but this was because the act of love and procreation in the post-lapsarian couple was precisely not 'advised' by the 'divine idea'. Thus both the connection with divine creation and human autonomy are introduced into the picture from the start.

This duality is the theological underpinning for the paragraph that follows (199:15-23). The theme from *AN* and *HS* returns: the *communicatio idiomatum* that is at the heart of human existence. As in those texts, Hamann extends this duality as far as possible in both directions: he is not afraid to call the human person a 'GOD of the earth' (199:15) and to stress this 'divinity' (199:17). At the same time, he notes both the distinction humanity enjoys compared to other creatures and our greater dependence and neediness (199:20-23).

The reversal or overturning of both attitudes and images is a hidden feature of this essay, and we find one such in the paragraph 199:24-29: our shame of sexuality and nakedness is itself shameful. Hamann has a good biblical precedent, however, for this notion: the very Genesis account which is part of the raw material for this essay. Adam's and Eve's shame of their nakedness was part of their post-lapsarian, not pre-lapsarian, consciousness. That is the first reason why this sexual shame is 'a secret blemish of our nature' (199:25-26). It is also 'a mute reproach of ... [our] Creator' (199:26-27) because it seems to question our Creator's judgement in making sexuality and sexual reproduction such a feature of our bodies and our existence. But ultimately, it is the grossest ingratitude because this very sexual creativity is the similarity of God spoken of in Genesis 1 (199:24f.; cf. also ZH 2, Nr. 350).

For this reason, one must hear the following paragraph as having a certain wry tone. People in the most 'natural' or 'primitive' state do not exhibit this shame; one cannot suppose it to be part of the original institution. Instead, it is 'an inherited custom', we are told with some irony; for all customs and habits

[16] HHE 5, 143.

serve to prop up bourgeois attitudes and 'conventional ways of thinking'. In short, the shame of our nakedness is the maintenance of post-lapsarian attitudes to ourselves (and to God) in human history, the preservation of the 'documented affair' of the Fall, and our fallen patterns of thought.

The Genesis tone continues in the next paragraph (199:33ff.) where we find marriage described as a 'covenant'. The idea of God's relationship with his people is placed in parallel with the relationship of husband and wife; this parallel of course will be developed later in the essay (cf. 200:26ff. *et passim*). It is useful to compare this to the passage from Hippel's essay on which it draws: 'Love is founded in nature, marriage in reason.' In comparison to this perspective, Hamann's conception is of course more theocentric, by implication. Hamann further erodes Hippel's neat binary opposition; first by eliminating the juxtaposition between 'love' and 'marriage', and by adding a further element associated with marriage: not simply 'reason', but 'fidelity' is its ground. Its foundation is indeed a rational decision, but also a personal, relational act. Why does this justify the decision not to marry, particularly in a corrupt society, as Hamann clearly felt Frederick the Great's Prussia was (199:35-200:1ff.)? The answer is I believe to be found by consulting both 200:6-25 and Hamann's letter to Herder, cited earlier.[17] It is clever to avoid marriage, and with it, making oneself subject to the 'misanthropic' marriage laws of Hamann's age. It is honest to refuse to become the foundation and cornerstone of an unjust society, even if that means that one suffers under 'bourgeois evils'. Those, at least, seem to be the socio-cultural grounds for 199:35-36; whether Hamann also intends to say it is best not to take on such an arduous *personal* state is unclear; but it seems likely that the opposition here is not between celibacy and marriage, but between a state-sanctioned monogamy and the kind of private monogamous 'marriage of conscience' which Hamann had with Anna Regina. It is not the external, legal act which constitutes and blesses the personal relationship. The law, which one supports and respects by marrying within it, is after all portrayed as an idol in 200:2 which one should not worship; and the 'sanction' – that sanction which the state offers a legal marriage, perhaps – is 'a glowing furnace' (200:3), in which the most guileless suffer the worst (200:4-5). Perhaps this last claim refers to Hamann's sentiments expressed in ZH 3, Nr. 470 263:3-5:

[17] ZH 3, Nr. 470, 263:1ff.

those with guile are able to indulge in 'whoring and adultery' in the present society, indeed, these are the 'sins *à la mode*'.

The emphasis in Hippel's essay fell heavily on the importance of marriage for society and the development of good citizens. To a certain extent this is presupposed in these passages, but Hamann gives this aspect of marriage certain socio-political consequences and implications. If it is true that marriage is 'the precious foundation and cornerstone of the whole of society' (200:6-7), that means in fact that a social community that is inimical and destructive to the human spirit would concentrate its attacks precisely on the fundamental relationships of men and women. Insofar as the misanthropic spirit is identified with the *Corpus juris Fridericiani*, this finds its practical outcome in the marriage laws of Frederick's Prussia, which promised greater tolerance — but as we saw in *HS*, a potentially false tolerance, for matters that became legal also became subjects for police repression.[18] This false tolerance is portrayed ironically as 'compassion on the side of the lawgiver', in a grim misuse of Matt. 19.7; which privileges human obstinacy and sins *à la mode*. Ironically, this license is interpreted as God's 'highest justice' – the 'judge of the world' being opposed here to 'the lawgiver' – for justice here is not the repression of self-abuse but its permission, as a form of 'punishment' (200:11-13).

The lines of 200:12-13 contain a skein of possible meanings. Understanding it from the perspective of 199:24-27, we might feel justified in understanding 'the violators of his majesty' to mean those who in some way abuse sexuality; for God's majesty has been identified with human sexuality. The question is, what sort of abuse does Hamann have in mind, and what is the 'paraphysical abuse of their own bodies' to which he refers? Broadly speaking, one could plausibly interpret the abuse either as promiscuity or prudishness; support for the latter superficially unlikely reading, comes from the condemnation of sexual shame in 199:24ff. (and from the later passage, 202:18ff.). 'Paraphysical abuse' is a germanization of the Greek. Had Hamann meant in German what the Greek means – unnatural practices – he might have translated it more idiomatically. It seems possible that he is creating a kind of pun, wherein '*para*' is to bear its sense of 'alongside' or 'by-passing'. The abuse of God's majesty then would be the attempt to avoid and 'by-pass' the physical and the sexual, and thus 'abuse' one's body.[19]

[18] Cf. Translator's note r.

[19] Cf. a similar passage in *AN*, N II, 208:11-19. This reading might have the further support of constituting a particular attack on Frederick; who, it was

The sexual ideal for human society would instead be that preached in the Sermon on the Mount – in a different kind of 'imperial law' or 'law of the Kingdom' [*Reichsgesetz*], which did not merely affect Prussia, but 'heaven and his new earth'. This ideal is a radical commitment to one's sexual partner, and not the rejection of a woman one has previously bound to oneself. Whether or not the secular law sanctions such an act, the law of Fulfiller of the Mosaic Law does not permit such treatment of others. The lines of 200:14-15 indicate that the maintenance of justice in sexual relations is no purely private affair, but one that would benefit the health of 'the human race and bourgeois society.'

We are told of a great mystery (200:26); but what is it? The union of Christ and his Church, or of woman with man? If for Paul it is the former, for Hamann (or the sibyl) it is the latter. Similarly, unlike Paul, it would seem that the relationship of God and humanity is used to illuminate the union of man and woman, and not the other way round. 'The man is related to God as the wife to the man': what is this relation? Schoonhoven makes it explicit in this fashion:

> [The sibyl] means as little as Paul that only the man and not the woman has a direct relationship with God, but rather she compares the position of the woman in the bond of marriage with the position of the man (Adam) in the bond of creation. The woman is the honour of the man, his covenant partner; the man (Adam) is created as the covenant partner of God; in this creature God portrays his honour. (Hamann certainly understood 'honour' as Paul did in terms of the Hebrew *kabod*.) And as the woman is the receiver in relation to the man, the man in relation to God should be a receiver; he can only become creative if it is given to him, which perhaps does not mean any passivity or slavish subjection.[20]

In an essay written by a man supposedly from the point of view of a woman, it would be prudent not to rely on stereotypes of gender and sexual behaviour, but rather to interpret the roles of woman and man in their relations from within the essay itself. Conveniently, we not only have a portrait of the social or emotional relations of the sibyl and her man, but indeed of their sexual relations as well. The kernel of this account, 202:29-32, does not portray the woman as 'the receiver', as does Schoonhoven, but one

known among his subjects, avoided women sexually altogether (an avoidance which was variously construed as homosexuality or an avoidance of sex itself, as we have seen.)

[20] HHE 5, 151.

who, on seeing her lover's phallus, cries out in 'enthusiastic possessive appropriation' (202:30). Fuller exegesis of the passage in question follows later; but two essential and relevant points may be anticipated: the woman rejects passivity and sanctimonious virginity, and recognizing the man's body as her own, appropriates it without shame. Secondly, the man is identified with God and Christ. Returning to our present passage, therefore, if the relations of man and woman are to be understood as a paradigm for divine-human relations, then the relations of humanity to God are not so much pious receptivity as an instant recognition of belonging, followed by an enthusiastic and unafraid appropriation: 'You are for me; enter into me.'

Schoonhoven is quite correct, however, in insisting that Hamann does not intend this schema to be taken to mean that only the man has a direct relation with God, the woman's being secondary and derivative. His use of the Pauline phrase should not be understood as 'serial', as it were, still less ordinal. The following phrase bears this out: 'where these **three** are **one**'. This phrase contains several interesting implications. The first is the intriguing if unconventional idea that the privileged moment of union with God is in the union of coitus. A sceptic who would dispute that the three being one should be taken in quite so literal a sense could be referred to the phrase immediately succeeding: when these three are one, the woman will conceive children. Further, the man will be the healer, or 'saviour' [*Heiland*] of the body.

The second possible implication, therefore, is that the stress he places on *three* being *one* is to signal to us a kind of trinitarian parallel. If God-man-woman make up a hologram of the Holy Trinity, though, then 201:1-2 would seem to indicate that the assignment of roles would be that the man is the Saviour, and the woman is the Creator. Union with God in sexual intercourse means that the woman participates in God's creativity; that much is not difficult to understand. It is less immediately clear how the man attains to his identification with Christ, as the body's saviour or healer. Various possibilities suggest themselves: according to the personal confession of the sibyl, the man as lover is the purveyor or revealer of self-knowledge. Alternatively, and following certain readings of 202:33-203:2, the man is the one who closes up – 'heals' – the hole in the woman's flesh; and in a physical, literal way but also a more profound way the lover heals and fulfils her. Both

these avenues of interpretation will be explored in the explication of the later passages.

Finally, it seems possible that this portrait of sexual union, following as it does the criticism of Prussian society, is meant to be seen in opposition to what precedes it. If this is the case, we are told that while there is a form of bourgeois marriage, sanctioned by the state and in return upholding it; there is also a form of marriage that may be outside the law but is sanctioned by God. It is 'clever and honest, "for the sake of the present distress"' in which your average Prussian lives, not to consider the former kind of marriage but to opt for the latter, as Hamann himself had done.

With 201:3-6, Hamann begins to invoke the text on which he is preaching, Gen. 2. The 'deep sleep in which the first woman came to the world' is a hologram for all sexual relations, and the creation of woman is (paradoxically) a model or 'archetype' [*Vorbild*] of *women's* creativity. Thus three *Leitmotive* of the essay are gathered together: the bodily union of man and woman; the creation of human beings by other human beings' sexual activity; and woman as Creator.

But before the sibyl begins her exposition of these themes she adds some hermeneutical cautions. First of all, she is not to be taken as simply writing pornography, to shock or titillate, as did Wilkes and Grécourt. Nor is she writing a comfortable bourgeois tract on marriage, as did Hippel. She is of course sexually experienced, and no 'vestal virgin'; but neither is she a 'Baubo', displaying her sex for the sake of coarse amusement. Lastly, she does not bear the coat-of-arms of the Pietist Herrenhuter, represented by their school at Barby. It is not clear what particular Pietist doctrine on marriage or sexuality Hamann has in mind. It could be the tendency to opt for 'spiritual marriages with Christ', that is a form of religious celibacy, or for 'spiritual marriages' that were sexless[21]; or Zinzendorf 's[22] propensity for interpreting the Song of Songs, for example, in strictly allegorical terms, and viewing earthly marriage, while instituted by God, as something of an interim matter.[23] Most likely, it is the general Pietist mystic tendency, beginning with Jakob Böhme, to interpret sexual union in allegorical and mystical terms, and to denigrate marriage and in particular sensuality in comparison.[24] It is an important caution,

[21] Cf. Beyreuther, 298f., 325f.
[22] Founder of the Herrenhuter.
[23] Cf. Beyreuther, 220, 221 et passim.
[24] Cf. Beyreuther, 292f.

perhaps, for the sibyl to make. The union of man, woman and God of which she has just spoken is not to be understood in 'mystical' or 'allegorical' terms. Sex is no metaphor here. The sexuality of mystical union with God is not one of sublimation but one that is physically and spiritually fulfilled. In an advertisement for the essay which Hamann placed himself, he cautions both against interpreting this essay as an obscenity or as a piece of Gnosticism.[25] Nadler himself does not take advantage of this second caution.[26]

One of the puzzles of this essay is the paragraph which forms a preface to the sibyl's fairy tale (201:13-18). It seems to lament the futility of women's fertility. The children which our wombs bear and our breasts nourish are damned to the dust from which they came. Demeter and her daughter are invoked, to illustrate both the bond of mother and daughter and the painful loss and separation which is inevitable. What one seeks for is treated like 'booty' by the god of the underworld — evoking both the loss of one's daughter to a husband and the loss of one's daughter to death. What place does this have in the essay and its message? Is it the 'pre-Christian' sibyl speaking of the futility of life and birth without the Saviour and the Resurrection of the dead? Schoonhoven interprets it thus:

> Where the Creator is not honoured, fertility cults, the worship of Mother Earth, insatiable lusts for fulfilment and joy in the erotic and the sexual arise. Humanity apart from God has only the earth and earthly life to still its thirst for life. But in his inmost heart dwells 'sadness and despair', because his life and everything earthly is destined for death.[27]

Hamann's biblical references, however (note 21) do not seem to be aiming solely at this point. Admittedly the reference to 2 Cor. contrasts the fruitfulness of godly suffering with the worldly suffering which leads to death. The citation from the second letter of Peter relates to 'fables' (201:18), informing us helpfully (or facetiously) that 'our preaching wasn't fables'. The two Gospel references however contain the theme of suffering becoming joy, or vice versa. A woman in childbirth suffers, but this sorrow becomes joy; while those who laugh now will mourn and weep later. Thus, we may diverge from Schoonhoven's interpretation. The passage evokes the human tragedy of mortality, the possibility of meaninglessness and futility, the inevitability of loss. However, the biblical

[25] N IV, 418.
[26] Cf. his Gnosticized interpretation of this essay, Nadler 224, 249, 250.
[27] HHE 5, 154-5.

citations suggest the possibility of an 'eschatology', so to speak. Taking our lead from Jn. 16.21 (as well as 2 Cor. 7.10), whatever women's suffering now, as the sibyl portrays it, it will later become joy; and thus the 'eschatology' in this passage is not what one would normally understand by that term, but is rather what we might call the 'eschatology' – the 'already and not yet' – of a pregnant woman's labour.

The sense of future hope is confirmed by the fact that the sibyl moves on to narrate her own tale, her experience of love and sexual fulfilment, which, like the Hartknochs' marital love, also must look forward to its final fulfilment (201:19; cf. 203:3-4). The sibyl's 'fairy tale' makes clear the importance of the theme of self-knowledge for a discussion of sexuality; and a form of self-knowledge which overturns the conceptions, stereotypes, and decorum of Hamann's age and society. Her knowledge of herself and her sex '*in naturalibus*' entails a rejection of the social and sexual 'aesthetics' of her age, if one may put it thus; 'pretty epithets' become coal; charmed and charming suitors become werewolves. This 'catastrophe' or reversal of her previous way of thinking about suitors and about herself and her sex becomes the basis for a profound mode of empathetic understanding of her male lover, which verges on identity. They seem to exchange qualities; her self-knowledge means the presence of masculine strengths in her heart, along with an efficacious 'passion' (202:16); while he becomes all that is soft and voluptuous, 'childlike and womanly'.

From this perspective, she rounds on the sanctimonious, moralistic and bourgeois prejudices of Hamann's contemporaries (202:16). Their modesty and chastity is superficial, cosmetic, not the natural flush of self-consciousness or excitement which is 'sent by heaven'; their genteel tastes are the dainties of a 'leviathan' — Hobbes' absolute dictator, who 'rules the circle of the waves, high above the air' (202:21).

In another sibylline reversal, we learn instead that true chastity, far from consisting in prudishness, cannot be attained 'without a sacrificial offering of innocence' (202:26-28). 'Heavenly virtue', paradoxically, consists not in virginity but in coitus; and without the latter, the 'entrance' to virtue remains 'impenetrable'. We are surely meant to hear an explicit sexual reference in this word.

The heart of the essay is 202:29-203:2. Here, finally and most explicitly, we have Hamann's 'exegesis' of Gen. 2. And yet, following 200:27f. (and 202:14f.?) we indeed must say that the

sibyl is in the role of the man/Adam, and her lover in the place of God. For it is not Adam that is in the deep sleep, but the woman; and again it is the female and not the male that recognizes and appropriates her partner with the cry, 'That is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh!' Further, it is (at least on my reading) the man – not God – who 'closes up the hole of the place with flesh', 'like a faithful creator in good work.'

Before an overall interpretation can be attempted, minor exegetical details require attention. The 'rib' of 202:29 I understand to be the lover's phallus. 'Erection' of 202:33 translates *Gemächte*, being an archaic term for the genitals.[28] It clearly refers again to the phallus, while its 'origin' is the vagina – the place from which a man first comes forth; indeed, the place from which the Son of Man, the body's healer, once came forth. Nadler seems to understand this paragraph almost as if it were a simple paraphrase of the Genesis account; he seems to see it as God closing up Adam's hole, while it seems clear to the present interpreter that it is the sibyl's 'hole of the place' which the man is closing up 'with flesh' — in a rather different sense to Gen. 2.21.[29]

From this it is clear that the passage portrays, not Gen. 2.21 precisely, but rather the act of sexual love that mirrors and continues the act of the creation of one human being from the bodies of others. It is not the story of the creation of Eve by God from Adam's body, but the creation of human beings from a man's and woman's bodies, the former in the position of God, and the latter in that of Adam (cf. 200:27f.).

Two interpretative questions remain. In what fashion is the man the body's healer, or saviour? One could answer this broadly by referring to 'sexual fulfilment'. The 'healing' self-knowledge which he offers her Hamann has already described on p. 202, cf. esp. 202:1f. and 202:12ff. She has been saved from the sanctimonious, body-denying bourgeois morality which was her first reaction to his advances (201:22ff.). She might otherwise have been condemned to 'dead and unfruitful prosperity'; but he has 'saved' her and her body from that fate; this salvation is a matter of knowledge, above all, self-knowledge.

Less epistemologically, there is of course a literal, or physical sense in which he 'heals' the hole, the 'wound' as it is often por-

[28] The 1990 Oxford-Duden dictionary offers 'privy parts' as an English equivalent.

[29] N VI, 235.

trayed, in her body. In a straightforwardly sexual fashion, he is her body's saviour.

Thirdly, the phrase arose initially in juxtaposition with an echo of 1 Tim. 2.15: the woman shall be saved by childbearing. If a woman is somehow 'saved' by bearing children, then, Hamann seems to conclude, it is only possible with a man's co-operation, and his sexual giving therefore becomes the medium, the necessary and almost-sufficient condition of her salvation. If childbearing is her salvation, then in having sex with her he becomes the body's saviour.

A final vector of explanation is more speculative, but I believe it finds support in the essay as a whole. As we have seen, in sexual activity a man is in the image of God; this and the previous passage hint at an identification of the male lover with Christ; and in that role or association he is the body's saviour. The biblical citations Hamann associates with this passage contain two *logia* of Jesus from John's Gospel; both referring to the Saviour's origin and destination (Jn 3.31, 8.14).

The second remaining exegetical question is more intractable. What is the oldest '*maculatur*' — indeed, what *is* a maculatur? There are at least three linguistic avenues to explore, and six possible resulting interpretations.

Makulatur in modern German means a spoilt printsheet. This is the starting-point for Schoonhoven's interpretation. Alternatively, the word can be seen (as Nadler sees it) as deriving from *macula*, a spot, stain, blemish, or alternatively the mesh or holes in a net; or the verb *maculare*. Finally, one might associate it with the German verb *makulieren*, a stamping-in or driving-in.

Nadler, while noting the conventional sense of *Makulatur* [*verdorbene Druckbogen*], prefers to derive this usage from the verb *maculare*.[30] It is attributed in a figurative usage to the blemish in Adam, having lost his rib. 'God closed this place with flesh, so that Adam could fulfil and pass on this "oldest maculatur". A play on original sin is unthinkable from the context.'[31] This understanding would be deficient for anyone who reads 202:29ff. as referring not to God's activity with Adam, but to the activities of two lovers.

Schoonhoven disputes this reading of *Maculatur* and remains with the concept of *verdorbener Druck*. 'The comparison is suggested by the previous "hole".'[32] 'The oldest *maculatur* of the human

[30] N VI, 235.
[31] N VI, 235.
[32] **HHE** 5, 160, note 11.

race' is the same as 'the hole of the place', that is, the female part.[33] 'That has nothing to do with "maculare", as Nadler thinks, but rather plays on the "incompleteness" of the female body, which is "fulfilled" by the man in sexual intercourse.'[34] It is difficult, however, to see the parity; that is, even if 'the hole of the place' suggests an incompleteness, it is not immediately clear how or why this incompleteness should indicate a mis-printed page. If the general drift of Schoonhoven's interpretation of the passage is satisfying, his explication of the term *Maculatur* and its use is not.

One rather concrete understanding might be to derive *Maculatur* from *makulieren*, as signifying a kind of thrusting, and along with a translation of *erfüllen* in its sense of instituting or carrying out, to read the passage simply as 'he carried out the oldest stamping-in of the human race'. This may well be part of the background sense of this passage, but it is somewhat lacking in theological substance to be the whole story.

Three further interpretations suggest themselves to me. One follows Nadler's line of inquiry but with a different sort of conclusion. The *Maculatur* is indeed Adam's (and not, as in Schoonhoven, the woman's) 'incompleteness', his 'missing rib', his lonely singleness. This longing for another is the oldest '*maculatur*' of the human race, our oldest blemish is our halfness, as both Plato's Aristophanes and Jakob Böhme understood; and it is fulfilled in sexual union.

The other two interpretations both understand *Maculatur* as the third person singular imperfect indicative passive of *maculo* and *maculare*; i.e. the thing which was blemished. The first interpretation, *pace* Nadler, *does* interpret this as a reference to original sin. The oldest blemish of the human race was the misguided attempt to be 'as a god', which 'blemished' our true 'divinity', our being in the image of God. This likeness, as we have seen, consists in our sexual creativity; and, contrary to popular imaginings, the act of sex would seem to *remove* our 'original sin' and restore us to our likeness to God. That is, it does so if carried out in the circumstances described in 200:28ff., if 'these three are one'; then union with God and the lover, enthusiastic appropriation of both (202:30) and empathetic identity with both (202:13) restores our likeness to God – our sexual creativity – and removes our oldest blemish.

[33] HHE 5, 159.
[34] HHE 5, 159.

For the final interpretation, we need to hear a slightly ironic tone in the use of the word *Maculatur* as a 'blemish'. What was described in this essay as 'the secret blemish of our nature' (199:25) but the shame that we have of sex, of 'that similarity to God'? On this reading, the *maculatur* or blemish is precisely our shame over sexuality, which is clearly removed in the shameless love described in 202:29ff. It may be clear that these last two interpretations are like two contrapuntal lines in the same musical piece, and harmonize rather than conflict.

A battery of biblical references, contained in Hamann's note 25, requires some attention. The first ones[35] all convey, in varying metaphors, the idea of returning to whence one came. The Johannine references are strongly christological, and as I have already suggested buttress the identification of the male lover to Christ. They also titillate the imagination with the identification of the woman; for the Johannine 'origin' is 'from above', and the man's origin is the woman. The citation of Eccles. 3.20 (we are from dust and will return to dust) turns our attention back to the puzzling passage of 201:13-18. The unanswered question, the possibility of futility implied in being 'born of and damned to dust', is given a new significance with the new meaning and network of associations given to the idea of returning to one's origins. The lament of 201:13-18 displayed the perception of our human fate – to return to our origins – but this was given a purely gloomy prognosis: now, however, we find that this fate, at least in some of its aspects or interpretations, can be blissful. I believe that this understanding (that is, that it is a tacit 'answer' to the despair of the earlier passage) is confirmed by the final citation, 1 Pet. 4.19. This passage enjoins those who suffer according to God's will[36] to entrust themselves to a 'faithful Creator' (cf. 202:35!). The 'healing' (201:2, 202:34), then, finally, incorporates the healing of the 'disguised sadness and despair' of 201:16.

These ideas, this scene is the climax and goal of the sibyl's essay; all that remains is a conclusion. This conclusion begins with a prophecy rather than a fulfilment, for the 'end of my fairy tale', the woman's salvation, is the bearing of a child which is still a little way off for Hartknoch and his bride. Nevertheless, the sibyl wants to convey her good wishes in a 'postscript' — the 'sign-post of her sex', as Hippel would have it.

[35] Jn. 3.31, Eccles. 1.7 and 3.20, Jn. 8.14

[36] Cf. 201:16, and the citations of note 21, esp. Jn. 16.21 and 2 Cor 7.10.

As is his wont, Hamann concludes his essay with a little self-mockery. *A priori*, one might suppose a Hamannian essay to be simply a matter of 'will-o'-the-wisps'. The curious phrases of 203:6-10 derive from a private conversation between Hamann and Hartknoch in the August in which the latter informed the former of his engagement. Hartknoch himself required an explanation of this passage; Hamann obliged him (but perhaps not us):

> It is your own fault that you did not pay enough attention to our conversation on the appearance of will-o'-the-wisps in the old ditch, on the Galimafrist..., ...nor to the faces I was making because you there at the window... were playing the noble, languishing, charmed lover.[37]

Of course, we have no insight into the content of this conversation, but Hamann clearly chose not to enlighten his wider public and to leave this obscure reference as a private communication. At any rate, we know that will-o'-the-wisps and the ditch and adjacent fields which formed the view from Hamann's window all relate to this incident; Hamann's 'faces' may relate to the Medusa-image (203:12). The 'Galimafrist' is the author of a 'Gallimaufry' (hash; hence hodgepodge collection) of poems on marriage. In that case, we can presume 203:9-11 as meaning something like, 'if you can read and digest my essay', making use of a little pun on 'Gallimaufry' as both something to read and something to eat.

The interpretation of 203:11f. is a matter of some debate. As stated already, Schoonhoven interprets it as a dedication to Catharina Berens. I suspect that something close to the opposite of this is intended, given the negative.[38] 'Dedicating oneself to the bosom of an Aspasia/Minerva' would mean in fact *not* to enjoy a fulfilled, sexual relationship, that is, to dedicate oneself in vain. 'Dedicating oneself to Aspasia' means thwarted sexual love. Paraphrased, then, this sentence might run: 'If you read and digest this essay, you will not dedicate yourself to an "Aspasia", i.e. have a thwarted, unrequited and unfulfilled sexual relationship with the woman you want to marry, as I had with Catharina Berens.'

Thus the bridal pair, if they learn well from the sibyl, will embrace sexual love rather than shun or thwart it. This may help us interpret the final citation from Virgil. The sibyl has warned her client of bodiless beings, with a hollow semblance of form. Of

[37] ZH 3, Nr. 434, 157:13-19. 'The noble, languishing, charmed lover' is clearly a teasing reference to N III, 202:7f.

[38] *Kein Sibyl, die...*; emphasis mine.

what has Hamann warned the Hartknoch pair? A thwarted sexual love, as with Aspasia? The dangers of prudery, of 'bodiless life' in a figurative sense? In my understanding, it is something along these lines. Both the Hamannian and the Virgilian sibyl are preparing their protégés for the descent into Hades — the 'hell of self-knowledge'. For Hartknoch, no less than Aeneas, it is crucial to recognize the danger but also the emptiness of '*sine corpore vitas*'.

3. Analysis

The springs and engines of the essay seem to be a principle of reversal, overturning, or 'cata-strophe' (202:12). The conventional aesthetics of the eighteenth century, a sort of social or sexual *stile galant*, are overturned in the sibyl's discovery of passion for her uncouth wooer: 'pretty epithets' become like coal, charmers are werewolves and spiritual monsters, while the love and passion of the rough and hairy type is 'sincerity' (201:28). The experience of this 'catastrophe' leads to another reversal: she comes to experience masculine strengths in her soul, while he lives and breathes feminine softness and voluptuousness. Gender descriptions are reversed along with aesthetic values. This 'about-turn' (if that can be accepted as an unusual translation of 'cata-strophe') of gender continues in the veiled description of the sexual experience in 202:29ff., with the characterization of the woman not as a passive receptor but as an active taker. Moreover, as we have seen, this constitutes a reversal of the position of the players in Gen. 2.21; it is no longer the man with the hole who acknowledges the rib, but the woman. This entails another overthrow: it is not the man's body who is the origin of the woman's, but the woman's which is the origin (and point of return) of the man's. These little catastrophes, one might say, are the condition of possibility for a reversal which is thematically central to this essay: what is shameful is not the body, sexuality, and sexual activity; *au contraire*, what is shameful is the shame itself, for this is a 'mute reproach' of our Creator (199:26f.). Instead, true virtue is impossible without a sacrificial offering of virginity (202:26).

All of these overturnings of conventional expectation in my opinion signal a more profound or fundamental overthrow. That is the question of the relation of humanity, and human sexuality in particular, to God; Hamann went so far as to write to Herder: 'It occurs to me now that the pudenda are the **unique bond** between

creation and Creator.'[39] Hamann's fundamental framework for considering this relationship is, as ever, the idea of the human being as *imago Dei*, and is stated at the beginning of the essay (199:5-10). Favourite images or principles, such as *communicatio idiomatum* or 'The Principle of the Union of Opposites', are present just beneath the surface but find expression in more colourful forms, in for example the exchange of masculine and feminine properties. Where however in *HS* the 'sharing' of human and divine was concretized and contextualized in language, now it is explored in the realm of sexuality.

The essay shows us two reasons why sexuality is a desirable context for this theological investigation. The first is that sexuality (like language) can itself be seen as a union of opposites or of two natures. The second is that in sexual intercourse, the human being becomes a creator; a primary image of God for Hamann.

The place of sexuality in divine-human relations therefore has a dual aspect. It is, as the essay makes quite clear, the respect in which we resemble God (199:15-27 *et passim*). Secondly, it also becomes the locus for union not only with another human being but with God (200:26ff.). Erection, for example, is not the post-lapsarian sign of self-willed rebellion against God and reason, as Augustine saw it, but instead the means of entry into a Trinity in which not merely two but three are one (202:33ff., 200:28). Coitus also makes the woman into the Creator and the man into the Saviour, as we have seen. (Perhaps, then, it is God himself who comes 'as a Spirit' [197:2-3], to make these three into one [200:28].)

This defies more conventional anthropologies or theologies of divine-human relations in a number of respects. First of all, it confidently and audaciously asserts an identification with God which is daring for any mainstream Christian denomination, but perhaps above all for the tradition of Luther which Hamann so greatly respected. Even theologies or anthropologies which spoke of the *imago Dei* were not likely to describe human beings as GODS of the earth (199:15).

In a further departure from Luther, the very idea of the likeness to God is moreover not portrayed as contingent on anything – neither on good behaviour nor on a conscious appropriation and acceptance of salvation. Likeness to God is seen in simply being human; it is displayed in nothing more than going about the most basic and fundamental human activities.

[39] ZH 4, Nr. 573, 139:18-19, 12.12-14.12.1779.

Insofar as there is an idea of original sin, it is given content in a 'catastrophic' way: alienation from God is seen not in desire but in sexual prudery, which is re-defined as a rejection of the *imago Dei*. One could say that while original sin is for Hamann what it is for almost every theologian – rebellion against God – for Hamann this rebellion is construed as the well-bred, indeed, 'mute' (almost polite!) reproach of God our Creator which sexual prudery actually represents; a 'paraphysical abuse' of the body which is blasphemous. Even the desire 'to be like God', the self-assertion and 'appropriation' expressed particularly in sexual 'taking' of another, is understood not as the sinful self-assertion which led to the Fall; no, it is indeed the 'entrance to heavenly virtue'.

Hamann however does not fail to see the original sinfulness of self-aggrandisement which can constitute a desire to 'be like God', as the essay *Konxompax* tells us:

> For this προλεψις[40] of being equal to God had blazed a trail for all philosophical knowledge and legislative justice. It was the goal of the first suicide, who, like a bad shot, hit the shadow instead of the body, because the body is a mere shadow-image of the thing itself. This αρπαγμος[41] was the πρωτον ψευδος[42] of the first attempt to displace our senses from simplicity in words, and to oversalt the peace of God on earth to the debauched taste of reason.[43]

The juxtaposition of this passage with the sibyl's essay, above all the passage of 199:24-27, functions as a kind of clarification of the notion that the attempt to be like God is a sinful one, a snatching (*harpagmos*; cf. Phil 2.6.) In the first place, one should distinguish 'likeness to God' and the enjoyment of it from 'being equal to God' and the snatching of it. It is the latter, and not the former, which constitutes a Fall for Hamann, and the use of the word *prolepsis* indicates that the 'timing' of 'being equal to God' is crucial. The passage also indicates that the fundamental 'sin' or 'lie' is to attempt to bypass the senses and the embodiment of language. Secondly, the 'locus' so to speak of the guilt we feel has been put in the wrong place, in Hamann's view; sex is seen as shameful and reason and rationality as laudable. But it is the desire to possess universal and infallible reason, autonomous and authoritative,

[40] *Prolepsis*: here, something done or taken in advance.
[41] *Harpagmos*: robbery.
[42] *Proton pseudos*: first lie.
[43] N III, 224:20-28.

detached from the senses and language, which in Hamann's view represents the *harpagmos* of divinity.

Instead, sexuality and genitality are points of contact with God. Another essay, *Skirts of Fig-leaves*, makes this point on the loose page now called the *'Stellenlose Blatt'*; the context is not merely sexual but indeed genital:

> The **secrets** of our nature, in which all taste and enjoyment of the beautiful, the true, and the good is grounded, are related like that tree of God in the middle of the garden to **knowledge** and **life**.[44]

The *harpagmos* of the Fall is not the desire to enjoy knowledge, life, or the secrets of our nature; the *harpagmos* is rather a desire to be God's equal, indeed, God's rival, and thus to attain an independence from the divine. For Hamann, knowledge, life, and sexuality, rightly understood, confirm and return us to a relationship with God rather than seduce us away from it. The distinction to be made, one might say, is between 'identification' (with God) that is the identifying impulse proper to a close relationship (cf. 202:12-14 as a model of this), and an 'identification' that represents the desire of rivalry, to *replace* the object with which one identifies oneself and thus to *deny* such a relationship.

There is another respect in which Hamann's account differs from other accounts of divine-human relations; in this respect, one might usefully compare Hamann to Kierkegaard, who was otherwise so influenced by Hamann. The crucial difference is this: Hamann's theology of divine-human relations is 'trinitarian'. It is not a union of man or a man with God; but a union with God attained above all in and through a union with another human person. Kierkegaard's 'self is a relation' that firstly and primarily 'relates itself to its own self'[45] and can come to relate itself to that which constituted it. Hamann's relational person on the other hand relates itself to *another* self and in so doing unites both of them with the one who created them both. The fundamental religious relationship for Hamann therefore is not that of the individual with his God, but of two in a relationship with their God. This is the 'great mystery' (200:26).

The point ought to be made perhaps that Hamann is not advocating sexual license or promiscuity; and this is the proper

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[44] N III, 213:7-10.

[45] Kierkegaard, *Sickness Unto Death*, 146.

context for such an assertion. For it is clear that there is such a thing as sexual sin for Hamann; but that it does not consist in the happy and loving enjoyment of sexual pleasure. It consists rather in the abuse or misuse of another, or in the violation of a relationship with another. There is no contradiction, for example, between Hamann's scepticism about marriage and his condemnation of divorce. A loving, monogamous but non-legal 'marriage of conscience' is not sinful; but betrayal or abandonment of a woman in either divorce or adultery *is* sinful in his eyes.[46]

The desired attitude instead for a man to hold towards his sexual partner, it would seem, is illustrated in the scene of 202:33ff. He 'unites with his origin', he 'enters in whence he once came forth'; he is a '*faithful* creator' (emphasis mine) engaging in 'good work'. This indicates an attitude of profound respect towards the woman's body, as the source of one's own existence and being; it is thus almost a religious attitude. At the same time, it almost seems to suggest that coitus also represents a man's acknowledgement of his own mother. Moreover, as the place to which he owes thanks both for his very existence and for his present beatitude, it is an acknowledgement of his own dependence, his lack of self-sufficiency and autonomy — and thus as an attitude is the *opposite* of the attitude of the Fall. Further, as he too becomes a 'creator', it unites three generations of human beings — three directions of relatedness, three relationships: the man as son, lover and father, which remind a him that he is not an island.

The man thus has to deny the *harpagmos* of trying to be a self-sufficient, autonomous Monotheos possessing aseity, precisely in order to enjoy his own God-likeness. In theory, perhaps the same might be true of the woman; this might be a human rather than a specifically male temptation to be resisted. What is actually presented in the essay as the woman's situation is however somewhat different. We might say that if the man must resist the temptation to be a god, the woman must resist the temptation to be an angel. The sibyl portrays her own sinful *Schadenfreude* with some contrition; a renunciation or 'sacrifice' is necessary on her part too. What is required from her is a 'sacrificial offering of innocence.' Indeed, the maintenance of virginity is another possible expression of a desire for self-sufficiency, indeed, a desire to be like God: not expressed in a jealousy of God's omnipotence and a desire for power, but rather a jealousy of God's

[46] 200:14-25; cf. also Hamann's condemnation of sexual 'sins à la mode' in ZH 3, 263:3-5.

incorporeality and impassibility. The blushes of such a maiden are not the healthy flush of excitement but are false and cosmetic (202:22-25).

Instead, the woman must brave all the terrors of self-knowledge — the ambivalent 'tongues of fire' (202:2) which are gifts of the Spirit but which burn and can threaten one with immolation. This she must do, offering up her innocence, in order to realize her Godlikeness; which is not to be found in bodilessness and the absence of passion, but in passionate creativity; in the willingness to be incarnate.

Ultimately, one might paraphrase or re-constitute Hamann's themes in the following way. The proper understanding of our likeness to God can only be found, or grounded, in a proper model or understanding of God. The *harpagmos* which is expressed in the idea of the Fall and of original sin is the desire to be like the God of 'classical philosophical theism': all-powerful, alone, possessing aseity, incorporeal, devoid of passions. True likeness to God, for Hamann, is to be found instead in a likeness to a different model of God, that of the Trinity: an ongoing relationship of mutual love. Godlikeness then for Hamann is relational and trinitarian; and it is found in creating, in saving, and in tongues of fire.

The *imago Dei* motif is central to Hamann's understanding of our relationship to the divine. If, as I am also arguing, the relatedness of humanity to God underlies Hamann's epistemology, anthropology and philosophy of language, this investigation of *what our likeness to God is 'like'* is crucial. On it also depend the assertions of *AN* and *HS*. The question of how an anthropology of the *imago Dei* should be elaborated is a restatement of the question of what a human being is, as well as the proper conception of our faculties and powers, the problem underlying the Berlin Academy's essay question. Hamann and Herder are united in the propriety of the verbal *communicatio idiomatum* (so to speak) involved in pronouncing our creative powers as, in some sense, 'divine'. Hamann's relational anthropology, however, as opposed to Herder's, suggests a creature whose likeness to God is seen in a creativity *which is not self-sufficient.* Whether creating language or children, we could say, it takes two, in a loving relation.

VI. *METACRITIQUE OF THE PURISM OF REASON:* THE KEY TO THE ABYSS

1. Introduction

> [Hartknoch] will presumably be Kant's publisher. I can't get the **Chevilla** out of my head. The man seems to have written with such good sense and yet promises so many miracles that no Judaeus Apella can make sense of it.[1]

Hamann's letters to Herder of 1780 and 1781 betray a growing excitement, curiosity and impatience as the writing of the *Critique of Pure Reason* was drawing to a close.[2] His letters to Hartknoch were somewhat more veiled and circumspect; apart, that is, from the energetic intrigue he conducted in order to obtain a copy of Kant's *Meisterwerk* in advance of publication. This, it is perhaps of interest to note, was intertwined with Hamann's project of translating Hume's *Dialogues*, which was never completed or published as Hamann's and Hartknoch's project was preempted by a rival translation.

> Now, to come to your last letter..., I rejoice to the bottom of my heart that you will be Kant's publisher. If it is at all possible for you to let me have half of the proofs for the time being through **Spener** at my cost **it would be infinitely important to me**, as to him [Kant] **if you remember to furnish me with the expected translation of the Humean Dialogues, as wet and hot off the press as possible**, with an eventual report as to who the [rival] translator might be. Mine is definitely shelved and finished is finished, for your sake as well as mine. Kant has asked me for it, and is reading it now for the second time.[3]
>
> Now everything has arrived but the proofs of Kant.... The author seems to have received the first proofs just a little while ago and apparently is very pleased with them. So I would wish that the matter could be so arranged that he could not be roused to perhaps a little jealousy. To avoid this, I'd **rather** receive the proofs

[1] ZH 4, Nr. 604, 230:35-231:1; 25.10.1780; to Herder.
[2] Cf. ZH 4, Nrs. 596, 598, 599, 604, 609, 614, etc.
[3] ZH 4, Nr. 609, 249:24-33; 16.12.1780.

> indirectly.... At the least I would wish you, if you write to Spener, to give him the nod so that I do not receive the proofs with Kant's parcel, but *quouis alio modo*. But remember not to delay sending the Humean translation, as soon as the same comes out, and I will gladly pay the postage for Kant.[4]

When the first sections arrived (so he writes to Hartknoch on Palm Sunday of 1781[5]), after fortifying himself with two doses of Glauber's Salts, he swallowed them all in one draught.[6]

The first response of his own authorship was a review, N III 275-280, dated 1.7.81. This, he wrote to Herder in August of 1781, he abandoned out of consideration of his friendship with Kant; but should his translations of Hume ever see the light of day, he will pull no punches.[7] July of 1782 finds him announcing to Herder, however, 'Everything about Hume and Kant is stagnating in my head; first I must see the *Prolegomena to Metaphysics, that is yet to be written*, if it is God's will, before I come out with my *Metacritique*.'[8] In between, he seems to have drafted two sketches, which have recently been rediscovered and analysed by Oswald Bayer, with help from Christian Knudsen and Johannes von Lüpke.[9] The second sketch ('B') more closely resembles the (relatively) 'finished' *MPR*; it corresponds to: 283:1-8, 283:9-17, 284:33-285:2, 284:7-22, 285:7-9. The first sketch, however, begins with nine lines which differ a little from passages in *MPR*:

> I'm getting on with pure reason as that philosopher did with its Ideal. The deeper he reflected, the more he clammed up. According to its discoveries, then, there is a land *this side* of experience, and *beyond* it nothing but mist. Yet a reason without experience seems as impossible as a reason without language. Tradition and language are the true elements of reason. Sounds and letters are the necessary condition of all relations, in which concepts can be intuited and compared. ['they have an empirical but no absolute reality, rather an transcendental ideality = o.' is crossed out.] All signs of language and writing have therefore in terms of their matter only empirical reality; in terms of their form and meaning however a trans-

[4] ZH 4, Nr. 614, 268:37-269:16; 25.2.1781.

[5] ZH 4, Nr. 616, 8.4.81.

[6] For an in-depth study of the evolution of Hamann's critique of Kant, see Oswald Bayer, *'Die Geschichten der Vernunft sind die Kritik ihrer Reinheit. Hamanns Weg zur Metakritik Kants'* in *ACTA* IV.

[7] ZH 4, Nr. 627, 317:8-11.

[8] ZH 4, 400:16-18.

[9] Three articles deal with these newly discovered texts. Some discussion and a copy of one of the sketches is in Bayer, *GV*; and each sketch is dealt with in turn by Bayer, in *MEE* and *MZE*.

> cendental ideality, and their universality as well as their necessity depend upon tradition, as their accidental delimitation is arbitrary.

The passage from *MPR* 284:26, trading on the anecdote of Simonides, originally headed the essay (pure reason's Ideal is God). The second sentence plays on a metaphor used by Kant[10]; 'this side of experience' means before experience.

In whichever form, Herder's encouragement seems to have been largely responsible for Hamann getting what there is of a metacritique on paper at all:

> Your cheering me up has again given me enough courage to think about my *Metacritique on the Purism of Reason*. Whether I actually get to the point of writing it, however, I doubt. To find and uncover the πρωτον ψευδος would be enough for me. But here precisely is where the knot lies.... But my poor head is like a shattered pot against Kant's – clay against iron.[11]
>
> Following up a nod in your last letter, I have struggled with a **Metacritique on the Purism of Reason** *Sunt lacrumae RERUM – o quantum est in REBUS inane.* It would not make much more than one folio. The whole idea has been a disaster for me, and I just wanted to make an end of the thing, to rid myself of thinking of it. My intention was to write it out for you and include it, and that's why I've taken so long to write.[12]

ZH 5, Nr. 766, a letter to Herder dated 15.9.1784, contains at last (at Herder's request) a transcription of the *Metacritique*. It ends, however, at the hyphens of 289:27; lines 27-29 in Nadler's edition of the work would seem to have arisen from Hamann's comments to Herder :

> Here is the **ridiculous mouse** which was so important to you, dear best countryman, godfather and friend, and perhaps is as little worth your reading as my writing out. The **next installment** was a μεταβασις εις αλλο γενος, for next to the *Critique* dear *Jerusalem* was lying in my head, and the one corrupted the other. So I have transplanted the best into little Golgotha. The **starting-point** consists in a review of the Humean translation.... I am waiting now for Schultz' Extracts [of the *Critique*], Heineke's Criticism[13] and the *Prologomena*..., before perhaps getting into motion again.[14]

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[10] Cf. A 235-6; Bayer *MEE* 444-6 for discussion.

[11] ZH 5, Nr. 725, 107:32-108:5; 8.12.83. πρωτον ψευδος – first lie, cf. N III, 289:14.

[12] ZH 5, Nr. 729, 120:27-33; 26.1.84.

[13] Cf. translator's note ζ.

[14] ZH 5, Nr. 766, 216:35-217:10.

Hamann's *Metacritique* has since Hegel been seen with *Golgotha und Scheblimini*[15] as 'twin peaks' of his authorship.[16] This implies that the questions and issues underlying Hamann's reaction to Kant are inseparable (for Hamann, at least) from the religious questions addressed in *GS*. One is the movement towards a 'natural religion', particularly as articulated by Johann August Starck, who published under a pseudonym (Starck was actually Hamann's confessor at one point; Hamann's opposition to Starck's writing was undertaken in ignorance of its true authorship). Hamann's intention was to use Hume against Starck[17]; the relevance of this study to a 'metacritique' of Kant need hardly be emphasized. If Hume's scepticism was a deconstruction of reason, one can see how this weapon could be turned against Starck's efforts to transcend the particularity of all religions in a united, universal reasonable religion[18]; an effort Bayer characterizes, in Hamannian fashion, as '*Vernunftdogmatismus*'.[19]

It is worth noting that Hamann's reactions to both Kant in *MPR* and Starck and Moses Mendelssohn's *Jerusalem* in *GS* are grounded in the same soil; which in Hamannian language could be summed up by the *communicatio idiomatum* and the Principle of the Union of Opposites. Bayer brings out this point by citing two letters to Herder, which he sees as the key to understanding the history which leads up to the double peak of *MPR* and *GS*:

> ... The transition from the divine to the human always seems to me to be marooned by a similar misuse. Both extremes must absolutely be united to explain the whole: ουσια του σωματος[20] and εξουσια του αξιωματος.[21] Through this union the book becomes holy, as the human person becomes a leader. A κοινωνια[22] without transubstantiation — neither body, nor shadow: but *spirit*.[23]

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[15] This essay has been translated by Stephen Dunning, cf. Bibliography.

[16] Cf. Bayer, *GV* 10.

[17] His projected translation of Hume's *Dialogues* was aimed at Starck, along with his intended supplement to the translation.

[18] Cf. the citation in translator's note cc. Moses Mendelssohn's *Jerusalem*, against which *GS* is principally directed, is a similar attempt.

[19] 'The ignorance uncovered by scepticism strikes at the reconciliation Starck attempts between Christianity and natural religion in its dogmatism of reason [*Vernunftdogmatismus*], which asserts a Universal beyond all particularity.' Bayer, *GV* 23-4.

[20] Being, substance or essence of the body.

[21] Authority of the axiom.

[22] Communion or community.

[23] ZH 4, 254:26-33, 19.12.1780. The second letter Bayer cites (Bayer, *GV* 16) deals with the Union of Opposites; it is cited in the next chapter, p. 353.

2. Exposition

The opening motto has been preserved and lifted, but transposed, from the conclusion of Hamann's review (N III, 280:15-16). The identity of the 'things', which contain both tears and inanity, is unclear; perhaps it is Kant's work itself, or perhaps it is an ironic reflection of Kant's 'gnostic hatred of Matter' (285:15).

On receiving the proofs of the first sections of the *Critique*, Hamann writes to Herder that he is considering re-reading Locke and Hume's Treatise, since these two seem to him to be Kant's sources and the best source of information for studying the *Critique*.[24] This idea is taken for granted nowadays, of course; though it would seem Hamann was the first to conceive it. He reports his progress on Hume to Herder, putting Locke on hold, as it were.[25] It is quite possible that he did not get around to Locke, for his research on Hume led him to Malebranche and Berkeley.[26] Hamann may well have been the first to observe, "This much is certain, that without **Berkeley** there would have been no **Hume**, and without the latter no **Kant**."[27] This conviction appears in the essay itself, less pithily, at 283:12ff.

This reading no doubt strengthened his intuitions on the motivations and also the shortcomings he perceived in the *Critique*; at any rate it armed him for his attack, and enabled Hamann to begin his *Metacritique* with a flourish of metaschematism (283:1-5). It is Kant's own 'ancestor' that Hamann invokes to lay the foundation for his accusation of 'purism' of reason. Hamann styles Berkeley as 'Eleatic', that is, presumably, following Parmenides' denial of the reality of time, motion, etc.; this has a certain irony, given both Kant's designation of Berkeley as '*schwärmerisch*' (the word Hamann uses at 283:5), but also given Kant's own stance on space and time. Nevertheless, whatever Berkeley's status as a mystic or otherwise, he himself firmly maintained that even abstract ideas themselves are nothing but particular. This insistence on the ultimate particularity of 'abstractions' is claimed as one of the most valuable discoveries of the time by Kant's own 'predecessor', Hume.

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[24] ZH 4, Nr. 617, 283:23ff; 285:31-33, 27.4.1781.
[25] ZH 4, Nr. 619, 293:5f.
[26] Cf. ZH 4, Nr. 627, 317:3-11.
[27] ZH 4, Nr. 646, 376:16f.

The fact that Hume considers this to be one of the most important philosophical insights is for Hamann an indicator of a coalition between 'modern' scepticism and idealism. 'Dogmatism and scepticism for me have the most perfect identity, like nature and reason'.[28] 'Universals as such do not exist' — in a certain sense this conviction might be held both by a sceptic and an idealist; the sceptic may wish to complete the sentence 'only particulars'. A proper idealist might, as Berkeley *seems* to do in the citation, ground the universal in the mental act of the thinker, the one for whom the 'extensive signification' is significant, the one who 'recalls upon occasion other individuals'.

For Berkeley, however, this ought not to be understood as a belief that abstract ideas have real existence – a purely mental one. Rather, this is for Berkeley a question of *language,* as can be glimpsed in Hume's paraphrase ('annexed to a certain term') and throughout Berkeley's Introduction to the *Principles.* Hamann elevates this point to the foreground, in a way that can seem surprisingly modern to the post-Wittgensteinian reader. With some irony, this astonishing discovery is said to be obvious in the sheer fact of the everyday use of language (283:14-17). We can begin to see that the idealist, the sceptic, and the Hamannian might all agree with the Berkeleyan citation; differences emerge when one asks for the honest soil in which the fantastic blooms of abstract ideas are truly grounded. For the Hamannian, it is neither the outer world of things nor the inner world of thought, but language, which embraces both.

Irmgard Piske's[29] account of the Berkeley-Hume-Kant-Hamann history understands Berkeley as viewing language as the ground of the self-deception of consciousness. She cites the end of the Introduction to the *Principles* (P 24): 'It were therefore to be wished that everyone would use his utmost endeavours, to obtain a clear view of the ideas he would consider, separating them from all that dress and encumbrance of words which so much contribute to blind the judgment and divide the attention.'[30] This she seems to understand as the kind of purification from language which

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[28] ZH 7, 169:34ff.

[29] *Offenbarung, Sprache, Vernunft. Zur Auseinandersetzung Hamanns mit Kant.* This impressive work was only available to me after my own work on *MPR* was complete. I have subsequently attempted to take account of it, however; but not as much as I might otherwise have liked to.

[30] Piske cites this passage (in German translation) through to the end of the paragraph (Piske, 138f., note 406).

Hamann targets in his *Metacritique*.[31] Berkeley's aim is said to be the overcoming of the connection of the universal/general with the particular, to reach the universal ideas themselves[32], while Hume radicalizes Berkeley's nominalism, combining it with new sceptical presuppositions, thus evaporating it of any remaining metaphysical content; the move from the empirically given to the transcendent is no longer possible. Hamann's relationship to Berkeley, then, in Piske's construction, would have to be a negative and critical one; Berkeley is one of the 'purifiers'. Hamann is said to address this development of modern philosophy in the introduction to his 'Metacritique':

> The concentration upon the methodological presuppositions of the action of consciousness itself has the consequence that language is gradually dissolved from its original metaphysical integration. While Berkeley, in the context of turning away from the reality of the universal characterizes language as deception, which veils general ideas..., Hume rejects all general ideas, so that the linguistic designation becomes a mere and accidental name, not only of the signified itself, but rather of a mere mode of experience. Universal and particular thereby are conclusively separated. With Kant then despite the turning away from the existence of the universal a mediation is created, in that the universal becomes a transcendental concept and thus is taken back into the subject itself. The concept of the universal contains a function in relation to the method, so that the linguistic designation is more an expression of the universal mode of experience of consciousness itself.[33]

My understanding of the relationship of Berkeley, Hume and Hamann, and therefore of the opening of *MPR*, is quite different, because (if I understand Piske aright) I believe her understanding of Berkeley to be mistaken.

Although the passage she cites might look like Berkeley is recommending a rejection of language, that one might instead reach the general ideas unencumbered — thus advocating a kind of alinguistic thought — a correct understanding of the rest of the Introduction, indeed, of the rest of Berkeley's programme, make this view impossible. Berkeley's point is that we are tricked into believing in the existence of general abstract ideas by the fact that we have generated words for them:

[31] Piske, 139.
[32] Piske, 140.
[33] Piske, 142.

> I come now to consider the source of this prevailing notion [that abstract general ideas have a real existence], and that seems to me to be language. And surely nothing of less extent than reason itself could have been the source of an opinion so universally received. ... Let us therefore examine the manner wherein words have contributed to the origin of that mistake. First then, 'tis thought that every name hath, or ought to have, one only precise and settled signification, which inclines men to think there are certain *abstract, determinate ideas*, which constitute the true and only immediate signification of each general name. And that it is by the mediation of these abstract ideas, that a general name comes to signify any particular thing. Whereas, in truth, there is no such thing as one precise and definite signification annexed to any general name, they all signifying indifferently a great number of particular ideas. All which doth evidently follow from what has been already said, and will clearly appear to anyone by a little reflexion.[34]

Thus, a triangle may be defined as 'a plane surface comprehended by three right lines', and it can mean such a figure and no other; yet this name designates not a single, general and abstract item but a host of particular triangles, large and small, rectilinear and equilateral, black, white, and red;

> and consequently there is no one settled idea which limits the signification of the word triangle. 'Tis one thing for to keep a name constantly to the same definition, and another to make it stand everywhere for the same idea: the one is necessary, the other useless and impracticable.[35]

Far from suggesting that words get in the way of a proper perception of abstract general ideas, and recommending that we therefore clear them out of the way, as Piske seems to understand, Berkeley rather denies the existence of such things as abstract objects or ideas altogether[36] — a position Piske describes as Hume's radicalization of Berkeley. In my view, Hume, in his citation of Berkeley, bases himself on his forerunner rather than extending his critique drastically and in a new direction.

What then of the passage Piske cites, which seems to take a dim view of the role of language? Clearly there is a critique here of the

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[34] Berkeley, *Principles of Human* Knowledge, Introduction, P (Paragraph) 18.

[35] *Ibid.*

[36] 'We have, I think, shewn the impossibility of *abstract ideas*. We have considered what has been said for them by their ablest patrons; and endeavoured to shew they are of no use for those ends, to which they are thought necessary.' (P 21.)

way language functions in philosophy; it is the origin of the mistaken belief in abstract ideas.

> It cannot be denied that words are of excellent use, in that by their means all that stock of knowledge which has been purchased by the joint labours of inquisitive men in all ages and nations, may be drawn into the view and made the possession of one single person. But at the same time it must be owned that most parts of knowledge have been strangely perplexed and darkened by the abuse of words, and general ways of speech wherein they are delivered.[37]

It is the *abuse* of language which gives rise to philosophical problems, not the mere *use*. Berkeley no more believed in the desirability of clearing language out of the way for the sake of clarity of thought than did the later Wittgenstein.[38] Careful attention to language would confer several advantages; keeping one 'clear of all controversies purely verbal'; it also

> seems to be a sure way to extricate myself out of that fine and subtle net of *abstract ideas*, which has so miserably perplexed and entangled the minds of men, and that with this peculiar circumstance, that by how much the finer and more curious was the wit of any man, by so much the deeper was he like to be ensnared, and faster held therein.[39]

And yet 'the attainment of all these advantages doth presuppose an entire deliverance from the deception of words, which I dare hardly promise myself'.

> For so long as men thought abstract ideas were annexed to their words, it doth not seem strange that they should use words for ideas: it being found an impracticable thing to lay aside the word, and retain the abstract idea in the mind, which in itself was perfectly inconceivable. This seems to me the principal cause, why those men who have so emphatically recommended to others, they laying aside all use of words in their meditations, and contemplating their bare ideas, have yet failed to perform it themselves. Of late many have been very sensible of the absurd opinions and insignificant disputes, which grow out of the abuse of words. And in order to remedy these evils they advise well, that we attend to the ideas signified, and draw off our attention from the words which signify them. But how good soever this advice may be, they

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[37] *Ibid.*

[38] 'Philosophy is a battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language.' *PI* 109.

[39] P 22.

> have given others, it is plain they could not have a due regard to it themselves, so long as they thought the only immediate use of words was to signify ideas, and that the immediate signification of every general name was a *determinate, abstract idea.*[40]

It does not seem that in the end Berkeley believed some kind of purified, alinguistic thought to be possible.[41] What is clear is that Berkeley's critique of language in philosophy is fundamentally a critique of a crude representationalism that takes the mere existence of a word to signify the independent, quasi-hypostasized existence of thing to which it refers. That is the 'deception' of language. Language on holiday, language idling out of gear[42] — or 'the confusion of language, by which they seduce and are seduced'[43] — is the problem, not language itself. Further, this is all the more true when applied to the use of abstract general terms, for in Berkeley's view there really are no abstract objects in existence to correspond to them. Language is at the centre of this particular misunderstanding of reason with itself as well.

In my view, Hamann is in complete agreement with 'the eleatic, mystical and visionary Bishop of Cloyne'[44] on this point, and with the 'modern sceptic' (Hume) who cites him.[45] Indeed, Hamann's support is made clear in the second paragraph: 'But concerning this **important discovery** itself: the same is laid bare and obvious, perhaps without extraordinary profundity, in the mere linguistic usage of the most meagre perception and the observation of *sensus*

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[40] P 23.

[41] See the discussion in Grayling, 42ff.

[42] Wittgenstein, *PI* 132: 'The confusions which occupy us arise when language is like an engine idling, not when it is doing work.'

[43] To use Hamann's metaphor rather than Wittgenstein's; N III, 31:13-14 (*KRC*).

[44] 283:5f.

[45] Another point of agreement between Hamann and Berkeley is to be found in Berkeley's Introduction, especially in P 20: 'Besides, the communicating of ideas marked by words is not the chief and only end of language, as is commonly supposed. There are other ends, as the raising of some passion, the exciting to, or deterring from an action, the putting the mind in some particular disposition; to which the former [i.e. the communicating of ideas] is in many cases barely subservient, and sometimes entirely omitted, when these can be obtained without it, as I think doth not infrequently happen in the familiar use of language. I entreat the reader to reflect with himself, and see if it doth not often happen either in hearing or reading a discourse, that the passions of fear, love, hatred, admiration, disdain, and the like arise, immediately in his mind upon the perception of certain words, without any ideas coming between.'

communis.' (283:14-17.) Berkeley and Hume are called in as supporting witnesses to Hamann's own accusations against abstractions and the deployment of them.

Thus, although it is correct to see that Hamann is here tracing a 'genealogy' for Kant's *Critique* – perhaps either as a subtle subversion of Kant's 'purification' of philosophy from tradition, or as a parody of Kant's own history[46] – in my view the genealogy is conceived as rather more problematic, or better, Hamann's deployment of Kant's 'forebears' more complex and ironic. Although Hume's dependence on Berkeley is clear, and Kant's dependence on Hume – and through Hume, on Berkeley as well – it is clear that Hamann is using Kant's predecessors *against* him. It is true, as Piske suggests[47], that the core of the problem is the account of the universal and the particular, the methodological separation of the senses and the mind; Hamann's implication in deploying Berkeley and Hume, however, is in my view a suggestion that Kant has not solved the problems they have raised for knowledge, perception, and the question of moving beyond the particular.

Hamann then moves to the central difficulty surrounding the notion of abstract ideas: the question of the possibility of 'knowledge of objects of experience **without** and **before** all experience, and thereafter, the possibility of a sensible intuition **before** all sensation of an object' (283:18ff.) — i.e. synthetic *a priori* knowledge. This is, of course, the very project of Kant's 1781 work, according to the preface to the first edition[48]; a project Kant claimed no other philosopher had yet undertaken.[49] The preface to the First Edition tells us that this critique of the knowledge we may have independently of all experience will decide 'as to the possibility or impossibility of metaphysics in general'[50]; Hamann is firm in deciding on the '**Im**-possibility' of the two-fold venture (knowledge of objects of experience before experience and synthetic *a priori* judgements) (283:23). This impossibility, and the distinction between analytic and synthetic judgements on which it rests, Hamann rightly sees as the foundation for 'a Transcendental Doctrine of Elements and Method' (or ironically the 'matter and form' thereof) (283:25f.). It is because reason has been taken off the

[46] On this latter point, cf. Bayer, *MZE*.
[47] Piske, 142-143.
[48] Cf. translator's note g.
[49] Cf. translator's note i.
[50] Kant, 9 (A xii).

leash in this fashion that while Kant can distinguish reason as an object, source or mode of knowledge, Hamann perceives that reason has become rather the *foundation* of all objects, sources and kinds of knowledge (283:27-30). The distinction of reason as object, source or mode of knowledge Hamann may characterize as 'idiosyncratic'; though it is clearly possible to study reason in these capacities. But the distinction which makes reason the foundation of these is 'universal' (or 'general', *allgemein*) and 'pure' – negative adjectives, clearly, in this context (283:28). For this (delusion of) universality and purity can only exist where reason has been granted a divorce from its shotgun marriage to experience. Thus, for example, in Hamann's view Reason – and not, for example, mere consciousness or sentience – has become the condition of possibility for experience of objects. It is the *sine qua non* for sources or modes of knowledge such as sense-perception. The order of priority has been reversed; and in fact reason itself is none of these three, object nor source nor mode, 'and consequently therefore has need of neither an empirical or aesthetic nor logical or discursive concept, but rather merely consists in subjective conditions' (283:31-284:2; cf. translator's note n). Kant has turned reason loose from the ties to particularity that govern both objects ('empirical' and 'aesthetic' concepts) and abstractions ('discursive' and 'general' concepts); that is, it is grounded neither in sense-impressions nor abstracted from judgements. Rather, reason is the 'subjective conditions' which are 'objectively valid' and which are 'the grounds of the possibility of knowing any object whatsoever in experience'.[51]

The 'sharper and purer distinction' now receives some clarification. (284:7ff.) Hamann's catalogue (284:7-32) of the 'purifications of philosophy'[52] contains no attributions; thus it is not immediately clear whether it is Kant alone who is being accused of these crimes or a long tradition of idealists and rationalists. Most seem to see the assignments as fairly specific and in historical order, with Kant only accused of the third.[53] I do not[54]; Kant is clearly guilty of all three purifications in Hamann's mind, but is not alone in this, and Hamann therefore – refusing himself to purify philosophy from tradition – sets Kant is the context of his forebears. The first

[51] Kant 147 (A 125), from the first edition of the Transcendental Deduction.

[52] Bayer sees this as a parody of Kant's 'history' of reason, cf. *CPR* A 761, 856, and A IX-XX (Bayer, *MZE*, 1).

[53] E.g. Salmony, 206f.

[54] Neither do Bayer, *MZE* 14, nor Piske, 174f.

'purification' seems to be a general crime committed by those seeking absolute certainty, accuracy, objectivity, etc.[55] An observation of Hamann's in a letter to Herder illustrates the real irony behind the attempt 'to make reason independent of all custom and tradition' [*Überlieferung*, *Tradition*]: 'So much is certain, that without **Berkeley** there would have been no **Hume**, and without the latter no **Kant**. Everything comes out of **tradition** [*Überlieferung*] in the end, as do all abstractions from sense-impressions.'[56] Such an attempt at 'purification' from tradition, in that case, would be both 'misconceived' and 'unsuccessful'.

The second purification is the one which has been the preoccupation till now: the attempt to purify reason and knowledge from experience. This ancient purification has now taken on a new twist: not content to follow in the footsteps of Plato or Descartes, Critical Philosophy (sc. Kant) suddenly promises (and requires) the 'Philosopher's Stone' (284:17), that wondrous means of turning the base metal of ordinary knowledge into the pure gold of *a priori* epistemological certainty. This lust for certainty, however, Hamann suddenly places in a new context, that is, a religious and political one.[57] Absolute certainty is no longer merely the beatific vision of the philosopher, but is revealed as that which is indispensable to absolute dictatorships. Hamann has thus taken the notion in a direction which Kant perhaps did not envisage, still less intend.[58] This discussion of politics is no digression from philosophy, however. For 'despotism' – which we may well imagine refers to the Prussian King — is qualified by 'to which religion with its sanctity and legislation with its majesty are swiftly subjected' (284:18f.); and we recall that Kant tells us that religion and legislation, despite their sanctity and majesty, must submit to Criticism.[59] It seems, then, that 'despotism' refers not only to the contemporary political regime but also to the despotism of Kant's Reason; and precisely sanctity and majesty are sacrificed on its altar. This, Hamann concedes in 284:19f., may be particularly attractive in the waning of the eighteenth century Enlightenment.

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[55] Salmony takes the first purification to refer to Descartes and the British empiricists (an interesting coupling) and the second to be Kant (Salmony, 206f.).

[56] ZH 4, Nr. 646, 376:16-19.

[57] Cf. also the review of the *Critique*, N III, 280:2-8.

[58] Not, at any rate, in 1781, nor in 1784 with his eulogy of Frederick the Great in *What is Enlightenment?* Kant's own troubles with despotism only arise a decade later.

[59] Cf. translator's note s.

For the 'mereness' or 'nakedness' of empiricism or materialism is unsatisfactory, 'blind' to that which is not perceptible by the senses. The 'mutuality' of empiricism (284:20) may mean the, as it were, 'agnostic' agreement both of a sceptical Hume and of a critical Kant, especially in his discussion of the history of speculative theology (e.g. the Supreme Being's 'objective reality cannot indeed be proved, but also cannot be disproved'[60]); Kant as an 'empiricist', that is, is as much an agnostic as Hume:

> In whatever manner the understanding may have arrived at a concept, the existence of its object is never, by any process of analysis, discoverable within it; for the knowledge of the *existence* of the object consists precisely in the fact that the object is posited in itself, *beyond the thought of it*. Through concepts alone, it is quite impossible to advance to the discovery of new objects and supernatural beings....[61]

This purification of philosophy is however not the ultimate failing of the purism of reason; for 'the third, most sublime, and as it were empirical purism' in fact 'concerns language' (284:23-24). Hamann thus returns to the intimations of his opening paragraphs, the discussion of Berkeley and Hume. The worst delusion of all is the attempt to purify reason, thought, and knowledge from language; for language is in fact 'the single, first and last instrument [*organon*] and criterion of reason'.[62] Not only is reason helpless and unable to operate without language (language is reason's *organon*), but reason without language is not even *reasonable*: i.e. coherent, able to make sense, articulate (language is reason's *criterion*). Why might purist philosophy wish to purge reason of language? Because, alas, it has nothing to vouch for it – no *a priori* subjective conditions – nothing, that is, but '**tradition** and **use**' (284:25-26); and as we have seen, precisely the first purification of philosophy consisted in the purging of the former, and the second purification, the elimination of experience, of course constitutes an elimination of language-use.[63]

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[60] Kant, 531 (669).

[61] Kant, 530 (667).

[62] 'An organon of pure reason would be the sum-total of those principles according to which all modes of pure *a priori* knowledge can be acquired and actually brought into being. The exhaustive application of such an organon would give rise to a system of pure reason.' (Kant, 58 [25]), cf. translator's note 1.)

[63] 'Language thus is placed in service of the transcendental Method, with whose help understanding and reason shall attain to *a priori* knowledge "free of all

Language for Hamann however is the very embodiment of tradition and experience, these two subversions of philosophical purity. As Hamann writes to Jacobi, 'I have given up these investigations [into reason] on account of their difficulty and hold myself now to the visible **element**, to the **organon** or **criterion** — I mean language. Without the **word**, no reason – no world. Here is the source of the **creation** and its **Providence**.'[64] To Herder, he writes: 'All chatter about reason is pure wind; **language**, its organon and criterion! as Young says. **Tradition**, the second element.'[65]

'I'm getting on with reason as that ancient [did] with God (the ideal of pure reason according to our Kant), the longer I study it, the less headway I make with this ideal of Godhead or Idol – '[66] This comment, based on the Simonides anecdote (translator's note v), is a useful background for understanding 284:26ff., revealing the pun or parallelism of 'idol' and 'ideal'. The letter to Jacobi reminds us that the 'Ideal of Reason', in Kant's terminology, refers to the Godhead.[67] The longer one attempts to reflect in this supposedly non-linguistic fashion, 'the more deeply and inwardly one is struck dumb and loses all breath to speak.' (284:27-29.) Thus silent and short of breath, crippled by the purity of their own reflection as it were, the mighty 'tyrants' of purified reason will in fact be found too light, as we are told in a parody which interweaves the story of the tyrant asking after the being of God, with the account from the book of Daniel, whose way has been paved by the introduction of the theme of idolatry.[68] As far as God,

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experience". It becomes a transcendental instrument independent of experience and history, which is supposed to ground the possibility of the application of the *a priori* or experience and its objects.' Piske, 177.

[64] ZH 5, Nr. 721, 95:19-22; 2.11.1783. For a study of the epistolary friendship between Hamann and Jacobi, see Renate Knoll, *Johann Georg Hamann und Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi*; also Marco M. Olivetti, *'Vernunft,Verstehen und Sprache im Verhältnis Hamanns zu Jacobi'* in *ACTA* I, 169-193; and Klaus Hammacher, *'Der persönliche Gott im Dialog? J. G. Hamanns Auseinandersetzung mit F. H. Jacobis Spinozabriefen'*, *ibid.*, 194-213.

[65] ZH 5, Nr. 725, 108:6-7.

[66] ZH 5, Nr. 721, 94:36-95:2, to Jacobi (cf. Kant 531 [669]; 559 [713f.]). This also appears twice in Sketch A.

[67] Cf. also *'To be or not to be? That is the question.* – Being is perhaps the be all and end all of every thing. But the το Ον of ancient metaphysics has been transformed alas! into an Ideal of Pure Reason, whose Being and not-being cannot be made out by it' (ZH 5, Nr. 784, 271:25-28; to Jacobi).

[68] Perhaps this use of the book of Daniel contains a reference to the Dedications of *SM*. In *SM* Hamann used coins and their standard and weight as an

the Ideal of Pure Reason, is concerned, the progress of pure reason is problematic. Hamann's position on this question is an ambivalent one. Bayer makes an important distinction between two 'moments' in Hamann's critique of Kant: an area of agreement and one of disagreement.[69] On the question of the 'discipline' of reason and the critique of speculative theology, Hamann is in agreement with Kant's use of Humean scepticism over against the dogmatism of reason. (What Hamann disagrees with is what he describes as Kant's 'mysticism' [his 'formalism devoid of matter'] and his 'Platonism', both of which will receive attention below.) As far as the 'Discipline of pure reason in respect of its polemical employment'[70] is concerned, which concerns itself for example with the question of whether pure reason can prove the existence of God, what Hamann sees in common between the 'English [*sic*] and the Prussian Hume' is the overthrow of the propounders of 'natural religion' — an overthrow Hamann applauds.[71] 'Pure' reason is indeed in need of 'discipline', and for Hamann as for Kant (as well as for Hume, the 'Scottish Kant' as it were) it is as illegitimate to seek to disprove as to prove God's existence.[72]

Bayer's reading of the state of affairs is that Kant's fear of scepticism leads all over again to dogmatism; and Kant, against his intention, does not end but furthers the history of the alternation and interplay of dogmatism and scepticism.[73] Kant's *via negativa* (my term here, though Bayer uses it elsewhere), God as pure concept, a *Grenzbegriff*, leads to a total muteness (*Verstummen*), a mystical silence, a relation to God that is a whisker away from a relationlessness (*Verhältnislosigkeit*). The other side of the coin of this is idolatry; God's being is found in pure reason's self-reference. 'A reason idolatrous in its pure self-relation limits itself to itself.

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image for ideas and their validity and truth. Kant, Hamann said then, wanted to create such a standard of criticism for thoughts and ideas; Hamann was certainly proved right.

[69] Bayer, *GV* 27-29.

[70] Kant, *CPR* Section 2 of Chapter 1 of the Transcendental Doctrine of Method.

[71] '...with both of whom [i.e. the 'English' and Prussian Humes] I am completely in agreement with respect to the critique, but even more so deviate from their mystical or sceptical syntheses.' (ZH 4, 330:31-33.)

[72] Bayer observes that Hamann sees Kant's discipline of reason in parallel to what Paul has to say about the Law (Gal. 3.24). (N III, 279:19f.) (Cf. Bayer, *GV* 25.)

[73] Bayer, *GV* 33-34.

Therefore Hamann calls Kant's conception of God as the Ideal of pure reason an "idol".[74]

With the paragraph of 284:33ff. we find an interesting misquotation. 'Receptivity for *impressions* and spontaneity of concepts' are the phrases Kant used[75]; Hamann gives us 'receptivity of language'. These were the two sources of knowledge for Kant, through the former of which an object is given to us, while through the latter it is thought, as he is so fond of telling us. It is not merely the senses, however, which are dumb and passive, 'receptive' for impressions, but also language; language is the passive medium (*Transportmittel*, means of transport, Piske calls it[76]) into which our thoughts – formed previously without its assistance, apparently – are put. Language in all its concreteness and lack of abstraction is thus identified with the senses in the divide between the senses and reason. This conception of language, and the potent, almost independent spontaneity of concepts are for Hamann not the twofold source of knowledge, but the twofold source of ambiguity (284:34); from which pure reason generates its 'dogmatism, scepticism and critique' (284:35). These three substantives on the face of it invoke Berkeley, Hume, and Kant himself respectively; Kant refers to Hume's position as scepticism in the second edition[77] and to Berkeley's as 'dogmatic idealism'.[78] All, however, constitute ('metaschematically') a reference to Kant and his project.[79] Sketch B of *MPR* has a version of this notion immediately following on the introductory discussion of Berkeley and Hume. 'All varieties of dogmatism, scepticism and critique seem in general to rest however on the receptivity of language and the spontaneity of our concepts.' (B 11-12.) Placed immediately after the invocation of Kant's predecessors, it thus brings out the way in which Hamann implicitly makes use of Berkeley's critique of language and philosophy. While Berkeley at least says the interactive role language has in the formation of concepts means it (or really, *we*) can generate mistaken notions of abstract entities, the roles are reversed in this formula of the receptivity of language and the spontaneity of concepts. While Berkeley assigns a prior and active role to language, even if he sees it as a dangerous one

[74] Bayer, *GV* 34.
[75] Cf. translator's note y.
[76] Piske, 180.
[77] Kant, 128.
[78] Kant, 244 (A 226).
[79] Cf. translator's note z.

(one might say that Berkeley is Hamann's Euthyphron here), Kant has in effect emasculated language of its ambivalent generative power and agency.

The disfiguring and defective ambiguity of 'metaphysics', as we can see from the observations and parodies contained in 285:3-13, is the desire to be above experience. The implication that metaphysics is 'above' (*meta*) the physical is not erased by explaining away the origin of the term in Aristotle's title of the book following 'after' his 'Physics' as 'Metaphysics' (the 'incidental "synthesis" [!] of a Greek prefix', 285:5f.). Hamann grants that the use of spatial words – such as the 'above' of 'meta-', the 'topos' implied in the transcendental 'topic' (cf. also Aristotle's *Topic*), 'behind', 'above', 'before' and 'after' in 'hysteron-proteron' and *'a priori'* or *'posteriori'* – might not fairly be taken as having a truly spatial reference, and thus they can be taken as rather loose metaphors. Nevertheless, the implications of the name 'Metaphysics', which set it far apart and above other more earthly disciplines and areas of discourse, cannot be escaped. One may discern a certain disingenuousness in the acknowledgement that *'a priori'* and *'a posteriori'* have nothing to do with hysteron-proteron; because, punningly and truly, for Hamann that is precisely what Kant's use of the *a priori/a posteriori* distinction is. Kant enumerates hysteron proteron, *'perversa ratio'* – Hamann would have enjoyed the punning implications of this term – as the second error arising from the misapprehension of the principle of systematic unity[80], in which 'the reality of a principle of purposive unity [in nature] is not only presupposed but hypostasized'; a neat statement of what, in Hamann's view, Kant has done with 'reason'. Hamann might metaschematically apply to himself[81] both these errors – 'lazy reason' (*ignava ratio*, 561f. [689], cf. Kant's note), which, succinctly put, is the lazy appeal directly to God's supreme wisdom rather than the careful investigation of the natural world on its own terms, and *perversa ratio*, in which the purpose and unity of nature is hypostasized and the concept of a supreme intelligence is conceived anthropomorphically. This passage (285:7-10) however also seems to point up a possible distinction between *behind* and *above* the physical. This distinction could be fleshed out in this way: while a demand for a knowledge that is *above* the physical is illegitimate, Hamann himself is happy to suggest a dimension of reality that stands as it were *behind* the physical; which is

[80] Kant, 563 (720).
[81] Cf. Bayer, *MZE* 18-20.

perhaps mediated or revealed *through* the physical. One thinks, for example, of Hamann's reference to what is behind the number plate of the watch, which has need of an apocalypse.

Hamann's jest of 285:14-15 also contains a true word or two, or better, an example of metaschematism. 'Mysticism' became a favourite description of his for the *Critique*. A letter to Reichardt[82] asks his opinion on the '**Critique** of Pure Reason, which could just as fittingly be called the **Mystique**' [*Kritik*, *Mystik*.] A letter to Herder informs his friend of a recent meeting with Kant:

> He was very intimate with me, despite the fact that last time I made him a bit bemused by approving of his *Critique* but rejecting the mysticism contained in it. He had no idea how he got to be a mystic. I was very pleased that L. had had an identical conversation with Kant – a new demonstration to me that all philosophers are *Schwärmer*, and vice versa, without realizing it. Am in my third reading of the Kantian Work, and perhaps will have to go through it a fourth time.[83]

An earlier letter to Herder reveals one concrete reason why Hamann calls Kant a mystic – his desire to go beyond space and time – as well as his love of abstraction, the universal and absolute, the detachment from the concrete and particular:

> I am curious to hear your opinion of Kant's **masterpiece**. As one who sat through his lectures, you will be able to get through it much more quickly. He really has earned the title of a **Prussian Hume**. His entire transcendental theology seems to me to derive from an **Ideal of Entity**. **Without realizing it**, he *schwärmt* more drastically than Plato in the Intellectual world on space and time. Here truly language and technology are the *Deipara* of pure scholastic reason, and a new swing from Locke's *tabula rasa* all the way over to *formas* and *matrices innatas*. Both are wrong, and both right: but wherein? and how far? is also here *Rhodus et saltus*.
>
> Hume is always my man, because at least he honours the **principle of belief** and takes it up in his system. Our countryman is constantly chewing over his stormings on **causality** without acknowledging it. That doesn't strike me as honest. His dialogues conclude with the **Judaic** and **Platonic** hope for **a prophet that shall yet come**: and Kant is [nothing?] more than a Kabbalist, who makes... an aion into a divinity, to establish and ground mathematical certainty, which Hume, with the exclusion of geometry, limits more to arithmetic.[84]

[82] ZH 4, 330:14f., Nr. 631, 25.8.1781.
[83] ZH 4, Nr. 637, 355:32-356:1; 9.12.1781.
[84] ZH 4, Nr. 619, 293:34-293:14, 10.5.1781.

Perhaps Hamann's suspicion that an 'idealism of entity' underlies the *Critique* is responsible for the allegations of 285:16-17. The real object of pure reason is 'the synthesis of the predicate with the subject': Kant's drive to ground and affirm synthetic *a priori* knowledge.[85] The mediation between the analytic-*a priori* world and the synthetic-*a posteriori* world has nothing in its favour but 'a prejudice for mathematics', which is thought to enjoy the advantages of both worlds by possessing certainty yet applying to the world of experience and revealing new ('synthetic') knowledge. Hamann is sceptical about the possibility of synthetic *a priori* knowledge, however.[86] The apodeictic certainty of mathematics, as Hamann tells us, derives from the use of signs and characters which are 'kyriological' – according to the Wachterian scheme enunciated in *AN*[87], in which this was the most basic level in the evolution of writing: the use of a sign to depict the thing itself.

Moreover, this 'kyriological characterization' is 'of the simplest, most sensible intuition'. This observation has two points lying behind it. First of all, mathematics concerns itself with the most basic observations of sense perceptions: the number of objects in the world. As such, the point seems to be, mathematics is ultimately 'most sensible'. To this end, we also find Hamann stressing that it is through the *sensibility* of symbolic formulae and equations that misunderstanding is excluded (285:24-25).[88] But secondly, the implication is that certainty about such simple and basic facts of life is not on the same level as the kind of certainty we really seek in matters concerning our own existence.

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[85] For a thorough discussion of Hamann's reaction to this project, cf. Piske, 161-169.

[86] 'Hamann rejects the grounding of the objectivity of knowledge in the acceptance of the form of *a priori*-synthetic judgments, since without the medium of experience of objectivity of all knowledge from experience, these judgments must ground themselves in pure thinking itself. The as it were 'apodeictic certainty' of mathematical judgments rests precisely on the fact that universality and necessity should be ascribed only to *a priori* signs.' (Piske, 162f.)

[87] Cf. N II, 199:6 and note 9, and the relevant translator's note to that passage.

[88] Piske gives us this reading of the passage: 'The "kyriological" form of a synthetic judgment therefore only characterizes the relation of the represented object to the the activity of the subjective power for representation. Through this kind of 'sensuousness' [*Sinnlichkeit*], so polemicizes Hamann, "all misunderstanding" i.e. the unconditionedness or immediacy of sensual affect, is "excluded of itself", since the latter is imputed to the *a priori* characterization of the intuition by pure form.' (Piske, 163; cf. also the following note.)

Does not this anxiety over certainty, such that synthetic *a priori* knowledge becomes desirable and indeed necessary if we are to avoid total idealism, scepticism or solipsism, in fact betray a presupposition that certainty can only come from identity and is threatened or undermined by difference? If the model – taken, Hamann alleges, from mathematics – of epistemological certainty is A = A, that is, the identity of subject and object ('the synthesis of the predicate with the subject'), paradoxically the desire to create human knowledge of the world after this model ultimately makes for an idealism or solipsism of its own, as the known object must increasingly be identified with and assimilated into the mind of the knower. As Piske says,

> The foundation of synthetic-*a priori* judgements is the 'kyriological characterization of the simplest, most sensible intuition', i.e. the *pure intuition a priori*. The connection of subject and predicate, that belongs to pure thinking, only says something about how the object appears to the subject, but not however how it is in itself.[89]

Metaphysics compares poorly to geometry, we find in 285:25ff. Geometry recognizes that even its most ideal concepts cannot be detached from the spatial, the empirical, the world of experience and objects, particularly when it comes to the language or communication of them. Metaphysics, however, abuses our empirical language and knowledge by attempting to evacuate them of their vital, particular and concrete content; attempting to convert them into the 'lukewarm hieroglyphs'[90] (285:30) of 'mysticism'. Objects in the world are reduced to shadows of themselves which we observe ('a magic shadow-play' 285:34). Indeed, in Hamann's view this is carried out to such a degree that the reality of external objects is obliterated, so that nothing is left but 'Something = x' — Kant's characterization of all that we can know of objects and things-in-themselves.[91] All that remains of the external world is really just the leavings — the droppings even — of reason; reason has observed, absorbed and digested the objects

[89] Piske, 163. We may understand the 'kyriological characterization' phrase slightly differently in its initial reference; she seems to see it as modifying synthetic *a priori* judgements (though she may be making her own attribution), while in Hamann's prose I take it to characterize 'mathematics'; obviously however the two amount to the same thing in the end.

[90] Perhaps understood in comparison to 'kyriological', i.e. resting again on Wachter's stages of evolution. The hieroglyphic is one stage further removed from the depiction of the thing itself than is the kyriological.

[91] Cf. translator's note ζ.

of the world, drunk them up, and nothing remains of them-in-themselves but the empty wineskins and the refuse that reason leaves behind.

The paragraph concludes with a masterly flourish. If what such a philosophy prizes is universality, total reliability and absolute certainty, why is not the unerring instinct of the insect the paradigm of perfect knowledge? Why do such philosophers of the Enlightenment prize human reason over the workings of brute animals? Does that esteem not contain the insight that precisely freedom – freedom which admits the possibility of error, of change, and of a development that precludes universality, necessity, and final certainty – is the criterion we choose and value as distinctly human?

The next section (286:11ff.) turns more explicitly to the consideration of the role of language. Essentially the remainder of the essay is preoccupied with this topic, apart from a discussion of the division of sensibility and understanding (286:29-287:13); this issue too, however, in the author's view is only illuminated by an examination of language.

Likewise, 286:1-13 shows that for Hamann the question of the possibility of knowledge without experience is ultimately reduced to the question of the possibility of knowledge without language; this requires no 'deduction', because for Hamann it is self-evident, presupposed. Kant may have rejected the question of the possibility of thought in favour of the question of the possibility of knowledge apart from experience[92]; for Hamann this begs the question. The question of the possibility of knowledge without experience demands consideration of what makes thought possible, and consequently of the relationship of thought to language. Language has 'genealogical priority' (286:4) over the formulae of logic and reason; language is 'prior' to *'a priori'* knowledge and propositions. This is so because the capacity for thought is grounded in the capacity for language, as was shown empirically in the experience of Samuel Heinicke.[93] Furthermore, it is this very point, according to Hamann, where reason 'misunderstands' itself (286:9-10). Kant may have felt that in consideration of the possibility of pure reason, 'after locating the point at which, through misunderstanding, reason comes into conflict with itself, I have solved them to its complete satisfaction'[94]; Hamann sublates

[92] Cf. translator's note η.
[93] Cf. translator's note θ.
[94] Cf. translator's note ε.

this claim with the observation that in fact *pure* reason is having a misunderstanding with itself; and this point is followed by ironic observations of pure reason's 'language' in the sense of the literary style of its investigation, which hardly precludes misunderstanding (286:10-13).

'Sounds and letters are therefore pure forms *a priori*...' (286:14). Hegel found the 'therefore' extraordinary; it indicates according to Bayer that Hamann is now expounding the thesis which precedes this: that the entire ability to think rests on language.[95] The passage of 286:14ff. is the beginning of Hamann's attempt to construct a 'union of opposites' from Kant's dualisms. Thus, the empirical, particular phenomena of sounds and letters are construed as 'pure forms *a priori*, in which there is nothing which belongs to sensation or to the concept of an object' (286:14-16). The most concrete and physical aspects of language are thus given the attributes of the most abstract and non-experiential entity: 'pure', 'form', ' *a priori*'. At the same time, they are 'the true, *aesthetic* elements of all human knowledge and reason' (286:16-17, emphasis mine); they are the foundation of knowledge and reason, and yet are physical, aesthetic. Sounds and letters stand in for time and space[96]; Hamann proceeds to ground these two disputed concepts of space and time in this same paradoxical fashion: that is, to give these pure forms a concrete and physical basis and reference; indeed, an 'aesthetic' reference, in both senses of the word: sensual and artistic.[97] Music is the ground of time, and painting and drawing the ground of space. They are the *corporeal* prototypes [*Urbilder*] of time and space, in a deliberate evocation of Plato's theory of Forms. But an examination of music, for example (which Hamann does not undertake[98]) reveals that it itself is a kind of *communicatio idiomatum*; its form is not 'pure', but is material, inseparable from the materials of its construction: its form is its matter and its matter, its form. The ideas of space and time thus have their (human) origin not in the mind but in the body – the heart, the nose, sight and hearing. It is, so to speak, their human *bodily* reality[99] in addition to their artistic function[100]

[95] See Bayer's essay on this passage, *RZ*; on Hegel, note 28.

[96] Cf. Bayer, *RZ*.

[97] 'Hamann sees here... the common origin of the forms of sensible intuition and of the aesthetic forms of art.' (Piske, 186.)

[98] Cf. Piske, 186-189 for an elaboration of this issue.

[99] Bayer indeed refers to it as a 'physiological fundamental anthropology', *RZ* 30.

which makes them 'universal and necessary in the whole sphere of understanding' (286:25). It is interesting and significant that Hamann counteracts the 'Eleatic' streak of Kant's account not by asserting the external and independent reality of space and time, but rather by grounding them in human *bodily* experience instead of in our tendencies of *thought*. Space and time are not pure forms given *a priori*[101], nor innate ideas, as Hamann wilfully misdescribes Kant's view, but the 'matrices of all intuitive knowledge' (286:27-28); matrices however which arise from our experience[102] — our senses (286:17ff.), our bodily experience of the world:

> ...Time and space (in this order!) are like hearing and seeing connected; one should see the audible word. The sense of hearing as the sense of time and the sense of sight working together with the sense of touch... as the sense of space, can as little be isolated from one another as painting, the oldest writing, from music, the oldest language. Sound and letter, sense of time and of space unite in the synaesthesia which stamps 'the whole sphere of understanding'. 'Speak, that I might see you! – – [103]

This discussion of the senses leads Hamann to a consideration of Kant's division between sensibility and understanding (286:29ff.). This division is a 'divorce' of what nature has joined together, and leads to the downfall of both parties. Hamann has two objections to

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[100] 'The sensible forms of intuition consequently arise from the combination of creative spontaneity and the immediate confrontation [*Betroffenheit*] and receptivity of the subject.' (Piske, 187.)

[101] Cf. Piske: 'The forms of intuition are consequently neither given, presuppositionless, *a priori*, nor do they possess their own *a priori* validity; rather they arise only in the reciprocal relation of sensibility and understanding, in the introduction of the sensible into the constitution of form and in the discovery of the conferral of form within sensibility itself.' (Piske, 189.)

[102] 'In that Hamann parallels the pure "*forma*" with the impure "*matrix*", he accepts into the birth-metaphor the sense of the purely *a priori* and apodeictic, which was added to it in the rationalistic vein of modern thinking since Descartes, but contests at the same time the sensualist acceptance of presuppositionlessness, as expressed in Locke's metaphor of "*tabula rasa*". It is Hamann's metacritical act to emphasize the linguistic ground of the metaphor of "*ideas innatas*", validating as it were its sensual residue, also to emphasize the independence of the supposedly purely intelligible from tradition, experience and language, and more radically than Kant asserts the inseparable connection of sensibility and understanding, and with it sees the aesthetic and logical as indissolubly intertwined.' (Bayer, *GV* note 193.)

[103] Bayer, *RZ* 33. The references are to *AN*, painting/music as the oldest writing/language, N II, 197:16f. (as well as N III, 286:17f., 20f.); 198:28.

the metaphor he cites in 286:29-30. The first is the unwarranted division between the senses and reason. The second, less immediately apparent objection is the (all too typical, 'favourite', 287:2) inversion which Kant's use of the metaphor of stem and root contains. The senses and understanding are not perceived as the *sources* of knowledge – the root of the stem – but as, themselves, the stem or product of something else which is prior (knowledge, perhaps, or reason; though Kant declares it to be 'unknown to us', cf. translator's note ι). Would it not be better to see – as even Kant seems to – the senses and reason as the root of knowledge, which is itself however a single stem, without division into *'a priori'* or *'a posteriori'*, or 'pure' vs. 'empirical' etc. It would therefore be a mistake to see Hamann as disputing a role for 'reason' or for the understanding in knowledge; nor, even, is he denying the possibility of a conceptual distinction between sense-perception and the 'invisible' (286:39) workings of the understanding. The fallacy in Hamann's view is the distinction between two classes of knowledge, one to be gained by sense-experience and one to be gained 'purely' by the use of reason, for neither can operate without the other, as the stomach metaphor of *PID* showed us.[104] It is possible therefore to argue that the violent divorce of the senses and reason arises not so much from the conceptual distinction between them (which Hamann is, albeit reluctantly, prepared to concede), but from the claims made about the knowledge that each is supposed to yield.

Perhaps we can find support in 287:4 that the Principle of the Union of Opposites is not far from Hamann's mind, for here he speaks of 'alchemy': the 'Tree of Knowledge' of the senses and understanding[105] is an 'alchemical' one. If so, then the key to understanding the relation of the senses and reason, 'the explanation and amplification of their mutual territories and their limits' (287:6-7), is not to be found in their distinction, their division, their 'divorce', but in their union and relations – their 'marriage', so to speak. It is revealing that the restoration of this relation, this marriage, will result in the birth or rebirth of 'a pure, natural language' (287:13).

Until, however, we receive enlightenment from an angel of light ('Lucifer', 287:14)[106] – or an 'apocalyptic angel with a key to the

[104] N III, 39:7-19.

[105] Cf. Gen. 2.17.

[106] Piske understands this as a reference to the monarch, and the 'enlightenment' he espoused (Piske, 198 note 623).

abyss' of the relationship between thought and language – and without plucking off the Golden Bough and killing off one's predecessor (cf. 287:15f. and translator's note μ), we do have a little clue as to a possible solution to our difficulties. This is ironically styled as 'the wicked viper in our bosom' (287:16), the ordinary language found wanting and deficient from Descartes through Leibniz to Kant. Ordinary language itself gives us the best example of the relation of senses and reason, variously depicted as 'hypostatic union' or '*communicatio idiomatum*', or, as theological and Kantian jargon are worked together in an increasingly absurd fashion, 'the synthetic mystery of the two corresponding and self-contradictory forms *a priori* and *a posteriori*', 'the transubstantiation of subjective conditions and subsumptions into objective predicates and attributes' and so on. 'Hypostatic union' and '*communicatio idiomatum*' are familiar Hamannian images and should be clear in this new context. The constructions of 287:20ff. however are elegantly tailored for their task. The metacritic longs for a 'synthetic mystery' which unites the 'corresponding and self-contradictory' forms of *a priori* and *a posteriori*; not in the form of Kant's *desiderata*, knowledge which is 'synthetic' and *a priori*, nor in the unwitting self-sublation of the *Critique*, in which the *a posteriori* itself is ultimately grounded in the *a priori*, thereby effectively nullifying the intended opposition between them. No, the metacritic wants a 'union of opposites' between these two; a relational unity of 'transubstantiation' which draws subjective 'reason' and 'judgement'[107] into an inseparable union with 'objective' predicates and attributes. This is done by a 'copula of a command'.

Here, in a fragment of a phrase, I believe we have a critique of the ontology (or lack of it) that lies behind Kant's rejection of the Ontological Argument. For the copula of the word, 'to be', Kant rejected as having any (as it were) ontological or existential significance, serving only to link the subject and the predicate.[108] As is well known, it contributes 'not a penny'[109] to the content of a

[107] 'Subjective conditions and subsumptions', which one could decode as Reason and Judgement – cf. 284:2, and translator's note σ respectively.

[108] '"*Being*" is obviously not a real predicate; that is, it is not a concept of something which could be added to the concept of a thing. It is merely the positing of a thing, or of certain determinations, as existing in themselves. Logically, it is merely the copula of a judgment.' (Kant, 504 [A 598, B 626].)

[109] 'A hundred real thalers do not contain the least coin more than a hundred possible thalers.' (Kant, 505 [A599, B 627].)

thing or concept.[110] But what of a 'copula *of a command*'? When was the verb 'to be' something rather more than, so to speak, the insignificant velcro between a thing and its attributes? This little phrase in my view evokes the creation myth of Gen. 1. Here 'being' (the copula) is voiced as a 'command' — *'Let there be!'* — which creates the things that are, calls them into being with this address, and ultimately, therefore, shows us that being is a divine gift, better still, already implies a relationship. 'To be' is thereafter also a 'command' when the act of 'transubstantiation' is effected in language; the new meaning of the thing as well as the first existence of things is called into being by an address which is 'the copula of a command'. *Pace* Kant, something *is* 'added to a thing' by the Hamannian copula; the thing's existence, firstly, and secondly a relationship; thirdly, a meaning which transcends a thing's physical substance. On this first, most contentious point (that existence is 'added'), Hamann might well agree with Kant that existence is not a *thing*, whether added or not; but rather than granting Kant his argument about this disputed copula, one should rather pull the rug from under him. The mistake is not so much to call existence a predicate, but to conceive existence in such substantive terms to begin with. Again, this betrays a fundamentally representationalist stance on language, which Hamann would prefer to sweep away in favour of a relational one. 'To be' is not an object; to assert that would indeed be to commit the error against which Berkeley warned us, the error of deceiving ourselves into hypostasizing notions into entities or substances. 'To be', however, is also something more than a logical or grammatical function. It is to exist in a relationship, and have a meaning that goes beyond (*'trans'*) one's substance.[111]

Thus, the metacritic wants to see the original relational unity between oneself and one's attributes or meaning restored by the call into being. All these transformations (287:18-24) the metacritic looks to 'ordinary language' to achieve, in place of the *Critique*, 'to attenuate the boredom' – this phrase perhaps needs no explanation or justification! – and 'to fill up the empty space in the

[110] '...We do not make the least addition to a thing when we further declare that this thing *is*.' (Kant, 505 [A 600, B 628].)

[111] 'Copula' also leads Piske to think of the 'is being a predicate' question, though she does not give anything resembling my analysis here. She does, however, observe, 'Hamann's question after the original unity of sensibility and understanding stems from the traditional concept of being. With Kant in place of this original ontological unity there is a purely functional unity, i.e. the original synthetic unity of apperception.' (Piske, 200, note 629.)

periodic galimatias'. In explanation of the 'empty space', Piske writes: 'According to Hamann, Kant's "empty" forms, free from sensible elements, only become forms which can have meaning through the ordering function of the complex sentence [*Satzgefüges*] (periodic galimatias) which realizes itself in speaking, and [become forms also only] through the union of word and sense.'[112] In other words, it is colourful, concrete, *a posteriori* ordinary language, in its use, which is required to fill the 'emptiness' of pure reason's *Critique* and its 'gibberish' — to confer meaning on words.

The author longs for the drama and eloquence of Demosthenes, or his 'mimic', who lacks 'the panegyric ringing bell of the tongue of an angel' (287:26-28). Perhaps this mimic of Demosthenes is Kant, who possesses the former's loquacity but not his style and elegance ('panegyric...' etc.). Perhaps the mimic who shall yet come is the 'prophet that shall yet come' whom Hume is said to await at the end of his *Dialogues*.[113] Perhaps, however, the mimic is Hamann or his apocalyptic angel; for the former laments to Herder, while writing this essay, 'If only I was as eloquent as Demosthenes, I would have to do no more than repeat a single word three times.'[114] At any rate, had Hamann the requisite loquacity and eloquence, he would paint in detail the picture he merely sketches in 287:29ff. Here he returns to the technique he began in 286:14ff., his particular way of uniting the Kantian opposites by swapping their attributes (a kind of Hamannian *communicatio idiomatum*). As angels ascended and descended Jacob's ladder, here lowly sense-impressions ascend to the giddy heights of pure understanding, while abstractions and concepts descend to the depths of sense-experience. (One thinks of Wolff and his 'higher' and 'lower' faculties.) The unhappy philosophical career of these two entities of sense-perception and concepts – both, incidentally, being 'hosts of *reason*' (287:33-34, emphasis mine) – is portrayed in characteristically colourful terms in 287:33ff. The presence of female characters and sexual imagery presumably arises from the earlier images of marriage to portray the relation of the physical and the rational. This relationship has been, variously, a history of love-affairs and rapes in the various forms in which the issue has

[112] Piske, 198 note 625.

[113] As Hamann noted to Herder, ZH 4, Nr. 619.

[114] ZH 5, Nr. 753, 177:16f., 6.8.1784. This single word is *Logos*; Hamann perhaps alludes to Demosthenes' '*Actio actio actio*', oft cited between Hamann and Herder.

arisen, 'down to' – one imagines – the present day, where the comparison is between an old Baubo playing with herself[115] and a spotless but unfruitful virgin. In Bayer's line of thinking, both seem to refer to 'pure reason'; whose activity is only allowed to be with itself (which on this understanding Hamann crudely characterizes as the masturbation of Baubo), which is thoroughly unfruitful (the barren virgin).[116] Piske calls our attention to the subsection of Section 2, Chapter 1 of the Transcendental Doctrine of Method: 'The Impossibility of a Sceptical Satisfaction [*Befriedigung*] of the Pure Reason that is in Conflict with itself [*sich selbst*]'.[117] *Selbstbefriedigung* is the German word for masturbation. In this section of the *Critique*, we find the following, in a discussion of Hume:

> Hume was perhaps aware, although he never followed the matter out, that in judgements of a certain kind we pass beyond our concept of the object. I have entitled this kind of judgement *synthetic*. There is no difficulty as to how, by means of experience, I can pass beyond the concept which I previously have.... But we suppose ourselves to be able to pass *a priori* beyond our concept, and so to extend our knowledge. This we attempt to do either through the pure understanding... or through pure reason.... Our sceptical philosopher did not distinguish between these two kinds of judgements, as he yet ought to have done, but straightway proceeded to treat this self-increment of concepts, and, as we may say, this spontaneous generation on the part of our understanding and of our reason, without impregnation by experience, as being impossible.[118]

The new (in this new critique) virgin would thus seem to be 'pure understanding' and/or 'pure reason' — entrusted with the task of parthenogenesis, in Kant's view, but not of knowing God (the divine Something = x, one might say). Baubo then may indeed be pure reason behaving impurely, as Bayer and Piske seem to understand. Alternatively, we might understand the juxtaposition of these two women as an illustration of the Kantian scheme of the opposed understanding and senses. Sensibility, abused, debased, ridiculous, reduced to playing with its own form, could be old Baubo in her *Formenspiel*. 'The Shulammite and the Muse' (287:36) — the one more associated with the lusts and enjoyments of the body or senses and the other with the those of the mind or

[115] Cf. translator's note ψ.

[116] Bayer, *GV* 36; Kant's decree that pure reason can only be concerned with itself is found at A 680.

[117] Piske, 206f. note 652.

[118] Kant, 609f. (A 764-5.)

spirit, but both beloved, treasured, and not so much opposed as juxtaposed — have been reduced in Kant's account to Baubo and a barren virgin. The sexual traits of both women are exaggerated to opposite extremes; this means that each must be stripped of any characteristic that may resemble the other, in order to make the opposition clearer, and finally, the result is that they have nothing in common but their sex. As with the Kantian senses and the Kantian understanding, they share no characteristics and can have no intercourse, and all they have in common is their 'root', 'common, but to us unknown'.[119]

The Hamannian *communicatio idiomatum* continues on page 288; and now the medium used to unite the opposites, as has been foretold in 287:16ff., is language, words. Both the opposed designations or categories expressed as:

aesthetic		logical
sensible		understanding
intuition	and	concept
empirical		pure
a posteriori		*a priori*
arbitrary		necessary

are applied to words. Words unite the physicality of utterance, sound, perceptibility with the intellectuality of meaning, understanding, and concepts; and thus are labelled 'pure and empirical *intuitions*' as well as 'pure and empirical *concepts*' (288:5-6). The point where these 'opposites', or, as Hamann puts it in his earlier review[120], 'natural correlates' are united is the phenomenon of meaning; which unites the sheer noise of a word with a thought or concept. This scrambling of Kant's schema undermines likewise the distinction between 'aesthetic appearances' and 'critical appearances' (288:11ff.); the unorganized manifold of sense-perception and the object as represented in us, something which is the object of possible experience but not of knowledge. These distinctions when applied to words and language (as a kind of 'test case') make a nonsense of the phenomenon of meaning, which can only take place in the everyday world (288:15f.). If words as yet 'undetermined' by the energetic activity of the Kantian mind are aesthetic appearances, their corollary – critical appearances, words that are the objects of *possible* experience but not of knowledge – are non-words; things of no meaning. This is so not only for the reasons that Berkeley would assert (as we have seen) but also

[119] Cf. translator's note θ.
[120] N III, 278:6.

because meaning, according to Hamann, only arises through experience and use — but *also* through the activity of the intellect. So Hamann is not simply taking the opposite stance to Kant, but subverting his system of binary oppositions. In a further contravention of the Kantian scheme (288:16-23), this phenomenon of meaning unites, in the single phenomenon of the 'word-sign', what is *'a priori'* but 'arbitrary' with what is *'a posteriori'* but 'necessary': that is, the meaning of a particular word (*'a priori'*), which is not necessarily determined by the sound but is connected 'contingently' ('arbitrary'), to the mediating sound that a word is (*'a posteriori'*, a matter of experience, but a 'necessary' one). This union is 'indispensable'; for it is 'by means of' the physicality of 'the intuition itself' that the intellectual 'concept itself is communicated to the understanding'.

Hamann then poses a puzzle, deliberately trivial, to drive the Kantian schema to the point of absurdity (288:23-289:10). Of this passage Beiser writes:

> Although Kant does not assume that it is possible to construct 'the matter of knowledge' (that is, the content of given intuitions), he does think that it is possible to construct its 'form' (the number, types, and systematic order of the categories of understanding and ideas of reason). But even this modest claim Hamann finds unacceptable. He construes it to mean that it is possible to find 'the form of a word' (the order of its letters and syllables) from its 'mere concept'.[121]

Beiser is perhaps a bit gullible if he thinks Hamann sincerely 'construes' Kant's position in this fashion; 'misconstrues' or 'wilfully misinterprets' might be a more appropriate verb. The background, perhaps, to this deliberate reduction to absurdity of Kant's position is found in a letter to Jacobi: the ground of paralogisms and antinomies is found in language. 'That's how it comes about, that **words** are taken for **concepts**, and **concepts** for **things themselves**.'[122] It is Kant's own error of mistaking words, concepts and things which Hamann mimics and exploits. The unitary phenomenon of the word, split into its various components of sensibility in sounds and letters, of form, and of meaning, is taken as a paradigm or model to test the Kantian scheme of knowledge.

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[121] Beiser, 42.

[122] ZH 5, Nr. 782, 264:36-37. This also sums up neatly my understanding of Berkeley's critique, and Hamann's approving relation to it.

Can one derive the meaning of a word from its sensible, i.e. physical attributes? Of course not, says common sense, but here the *Critique* is equivocal. Can one discover the reverse, that is, the sensible attributes of a word from its meaning? Can one create the appearance of a phenomenon from its concept? Absolutely not, as far as the *Critique* is concerned, in agreement with common sense. And yet, because forms such as space and time and quantity exist within the structures of the mind, it *should* be possible from the *concept* of the word 'reason' to derive something of its *form* — for example, as Hamann puts it in a ridiculous and parodistic fashion, to know something of its syllables ('one of the two syllables stands *a priori* and the other *a posteriori*' 289:5-6) or letters. This is possible, Hamann perceives, because Kant has unwittingly laid the foundation stone for the Leibnizean project: to create a 'universal' 'philosophical' language – that is, language detached from a time, place, people or culture; that is, an '*a priori*' language, before and without all experience, derived solely from the structures of the mind: a language of and for 'pure reason'.

The paragraph of 289:11-24 of this unfinished work forms a kind of summing-up or conclusion. In two steps, Hamann puts in a nutshell the sins of 'critical idealism':

> Now this last possibility, of creating the form of an empirical intuition with neither an object nor a sign of the same from the pure and empty properties of our outer and inner mind, is precisely the Δος μοι που στω and πρωτον ψευδος, the entire cornerstone of critical idealism and its towers and lodges of pure reason. (289:11-16)

The foundational crime of pure reason is the desire to have a standpoint outside the world. This is what the idea of 'creating the form of an empirical intuition' from one's own mind constitutes. It is, however, 'the first *lie*'. The primary victim of this falsifying delusion is language:

> What transcendental philosophy matagrabolizes, I have indicated for the sake of the weak reader: the sacrament of language, the letters of its elements, the spirit of its institution.... (289:20-23)

In the phrase 'the sacrament of language' (which recalls the earlier metaphor of 'transubstantiation', 287:20) we have the final image for the relational union of 'opposites' (or correlates) which language is; something which unites the physical, corporeal reality with the transphysical dimension of meaning — neither of which

can be dispensed with or reduced to the other. Hamann's phrases call our attention to the fact that the notion of 'sacrament' traditionally already includes the word as one of its two moments: the element ('the letters of its elements') and the word of institution ('the spirit of its institution').

> Hamann takes up this tradition of the Lutheran understanding of sacrament... as an explication of his reversal of the Kantian transcendental philosophy in a reflection on reason as language in a way that sees the distinction and assigning of 'element' and 'words of institution' as interpreted in the Pauline distinction... of 'letter' and 'spirit' (2 Cor 3.6); 'letters of its elements' and 'spirit of its institution...' are epexegetical genitive connections.[123]

This provides a final, theological image for the union of natural correlates found in language: letter and spirit.

As Hamann himself says, he has indicated the central flaw of 'transcendental philosophy' but has not analysed it comprehensively; it is for the reader 'to roll the balled fist into a flat hand.' (289:23-24.) With the image of the clenched fist, as Bayer writes, Hamann has a striking image for his understanding of reason as language, as it occurs in hearing and speaking, reading and writing; an analysis of a given '*mot propre*' (as opposed to a *proton pseudos*) and a synthesis as a 'metaschematizing', in application above all to oneself.[124] This invitation to the reader to complete the *Metacritique* is a fittingly relational way to end an unfinished piece. Bayer comments:

> If reason is impossible without language, then indeed it is never without a listener and speaker, never without an author and reader; it exists only as a process of transmission and translation. Therefore the reader is not secondary to Hamann's *Metacritique* of Kant's *Critique* – as if he has only to finish off what has been thought out before. The reader is involved from the beginning, yes, is precisely its purpose. Hamann's Metacritique... [is written] precisely 'for the sake of the... reader.'[125]

Bayer has called the final sentence of *MPR* Hamann's 'Metacritique *in nuce*'; in which the whole of his opposition to Kant is summarized.[126] He observes several textual parallels to this passage: the first is to the end of *KRC*:

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[123] Bayer, *MIN* 312-13.
[124] Bayer, *MIN* 311.
[125] Bayer, *MIN* 309.
[126] See his essay on this passage, *MIN*.

> I would **matagrabolize** longer and broader and deeper... [but] today... I content myself with having found and named, through a pilgrimage in **black sackcloth** and ashes, the element of language – – the A and the O – – the word.[127]

In *MPR*, this claim to brevity – the clenched fist – is understood to be in contrast to Kant's 'corpulent book'.[128]

Bayer also observes a striking resemblance between the final sentence of *MPR* and 1 Cor. 4.6 (in Luther's translation)[129]:

1 Cor.	*MPR*
1. Solches	Was die Tr'philosophie matagrabolisiert
2. habe ich gedeutet*	habe ich gedeutet
3. auf mich und Apollos	auf das Sacrament der Sprache...
4. um euretwillen	um der schwachen Leser willen
5. daß ihr lernet	und überlaße es einem jeden zu entfalten
6. an uns	die geballte Faust...

**metaschematisa* [μετασχηματισα]

This parallel he finds so close as to justify using the word 'quotation' in reference to Hamann's final sentence.

Hamann adds a theological postscript in 289:25-29. The schema of binary oppositions is translated into an opposition between Judaism and the pagan world; wherein one is said to possess the physical, the appearances, the word, the world of the senses; and the other, reason. This idea is not developed; for these reflections Hamann cannibalized and put instead into the published work, *Golgotha und Scheblimini*. Comments from the letter to Herder[130] were contained at the bottom of a hand-written manuscript of a copy of this essay, by Hamann's son Johann Michael. This copy formed the basis of Nadler's edition; and misleadingly appear as thoughts belonging to this essay itself.

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[127] N III, 32:32-33:2.
[128] Hamann's description, ZH 4, 296:24ff. Cf. Bayer, *MIN* 306-7.
[129] Bayer, *MIN* 308.
[130] ZH 5, Nr. 766.

3. Analysis

Hamann's 'metacritique' of pure reason crystallizes a complex of issues which, as he would no doubt readily agree, he was as little willing to separate as he was to systematize them. At the heart of it is the relationship between language and reason or cognition; its chief corollaries are the relationship between knowledge and experience, and ultimately the kind of philosophy which is possible or desirable, which he himself tended to portray as ultimately grounded on the principle of the union of opposites, rather than on the principle of contradiction.

Insofar as Hamann's *Metacritique* is a work concerning itself with the history of philosophy, it has three 'moments': the history of philosophy before Kant; Kant's critical philosophy; and Hamann's own 'metacritical' philosophy. The first two could be subsumed under the heading 'Metacriticism'. The substance of the last section, Hamann's own 'metacritical' philosophy, can mainly be found in N III, 286, 287, and 288:1-22, and in Hamann's letters to Herder and Jacobi in the fifth volume of his letters.

a. Metacriticism

Hamann's first fundamental grievance is the one he describes as the second 'purification of philosophy'; the attempt to construct a theory of knowledge without or before experience; a process which he saw perfected, but not begun, in Kant's search for synthetic *a priori* knowledge. It is a problem, in Hamann's view, as ancient as the term, '*Meta*physics'; a science disfigured by the nefarious intentions embodied in its very name (285:3ff.). This question of whether knowledge (and philosophy) are possible without or before experience is in part a simple, practical problem, as Hamann's question might indicate: how is it possible to think without experience? (286:1ff.) It is also, however, a fundamental methodological question.

The simple answer of critical idealism to the question of how it is possible to know without experience is: by means of reason. We might almost therefore see Hamann's famous or infamous distaste for the latter as being secondary, rather than primary; it is not so much the enemy himself but the weapon in the enemy's hand. Put another way, the end result of the threefold purification of philosophy is quite simply pure reason itself; a knowledge or

philosophy purified of experience, tradition, and language. It is no longer the 'object, source or mode of knowledge' but is itself the foundation of knowledge; thus usurping the role of experience which in Hamann's view is indisputably prior to the reflection we bring to bear upon it.

The legitimacy or justification for Hamann's allegation of a 'purification of philosophy from language' ultimately hinges perhaps on one of three arguments. The first would be that language is inseparable from experience and tradition (its only credentials are tradition and use) and thus, to be successful, the first two purifications require the third.[131] The second is that the existence of *a priori* knowledge requires the possibility of thinking without language (thus conceived); this is *de re*, if not *de dicto*, for there is no overt discussion in the *Critique* of the possibility or not of thinking without language. The third argument runs: for reason to be as universal and as historically *un*conditioned as this strand of the Enlightenment maintains, it must be free of any language which is the product and embodiment of its time and place.

Alternatively, of course, one could argue that while being purified of experience and tradition, and existing as universal and autonomous, reason does nevertheless always involve language; language however in this case is not a matter of experience and tradition and sociality, but lies within the structures of the mind, indeed, shares its structure, its syntax or grammar, with the structures of judgement. This possibility – which Hamann clearly feels is illusory – forms the sarcastic, clinching argument of his treatment of Kant, as we have seen:

> But should it not be possible to derive the **form** of [the word reason's] empirical intuition... from the concept, to intuit by virtue of which form, that one of the two syllables stands **a priori** and the other **a posteriori**, or that the six letters are ordered in a certain relation? Here the **Homer** of pure reason snores as loud a Yes! as Jack and Jill before the altar, presumably, because he has dreamt in his mind that the long-sought **universal character of a philosophical language** has already been discovered. (289:2-10)

The final phrase indicates the fundamental and inescapable place language has in thought, reasoning, or philosophy, for Hamann.

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131 'The third "purification" of philosophy finally results necessarily from the bracketing out of the problem of history or from the opposition of tradition, experience and reason. The "purity" of transcendental *a priori* concepts must therefore exclude what is given, in advance, by language as well....' (Piske, 174-5.)

The possibility of discovering the true structure or form of a phenomenon from self-reflection, apperception, the analysis of our own thought, implies – or possibly requires, if one holds that thought is impossible without language – the possibility of doing the same for or with language. *A priori* thought, arising from the structuration of the mind, requires either an *a priori* language arising from the structure of the mind, or else no language at all.[132] Hamann thus has Kant over a barrel, as far as the metacritic is concerned: Kant's system requires either the possibility of thought without language, or else the existence of an innate 'universal' philosophical language within our own minds, whose grammar or syntax is perhaps identical to the structure or categories of judgement, and which lacks the historicality, the particularity, the contingency, and the colour of real languages. The choice between a Manichean rejection of the earthiness of language or a supernal delight in pure structure can thus be colourfully depicted: 'Indeed, one should deduce from so many **analytic** judgements a **Gnostic** hatred of Matter or also a **mystical** love of Form' (285:14-15).

An objection against Hamann's treatment of Kant could be raised here. One often finds students beginning the study of Kant's first *Critique* making the naive objection, 'How can I know something without experience if I have to have lived, and learned language, and perhaps learned mathematics to know that 2 + 2 = 4?' Beginners often thus confuse the *logical* meaning of '*a priori*' with a temporal or existential one. The common way of preventing this misunderstanding is by defining *a priori* knowledge as that which can be known without experience, 'except in so far as experience is necessary for understanding its terms.'[133] It might well be objected, then, that Hamann makes the mistake of our naive student and confuses a logical distinction with a temporal or experiential one; for after all, Kant was not interested in the question of what a new-born baby could know.

Does, however, the representative qualification provided by Flew's Dictionary not beg the question? The Hamannian metacritic might well want to ask: if the affirmation of the possibility of

[132] Piske reaches the same conclusion: 'The purification of thought from tradition and experience finds its necessary corollary in an idealistic understanding of language, which takes no account of the historical evolution, change and development of linguistic concepts. Rather language is viewed merely according to its form, as an expression of the categories of thought; only in this way are transcendental predicates or as Kant himself says, "purified concepts" possible.' (Piske, 176.)

[133] Flew, *A Dictionary of Philosophy*, 15.

knowledge in advance of experience is only intelligible or plausible if we except or bracket out certain aspects of experience; first, how 'pure' is this *a priority* (and might it not die the death of '1,000 qualifications'?), and secondly, of what real use is it? On the first point, if precisely language is required ('for understanding its terms'), we are returned to the choice of 'a Gnostic hatred of matter' or 'a mystical love of form.' That is, if it must be admitted that language is indispensable to *a priori* knowledge, then either language must in some way be *'a priori'* itself[134], or else the purity of *a priori* knowledge must be sadly adulterated by experience and socialization. If *a priori* knowledge arises purely from the meaning of a term, and the meaning of that term is learned and given by experience, is not ultimately, if indirectly, this *'a priori'* knowledge too then given by experience?

On the second point, if exceptions are made for certain kinds of experience, we must ask what experience is excluded for the purposes of distinguishing *a priori* knowledge or propositions from those that are *a posteriori*, whether this exclusion is permissible, and what useful purpose it serves. For Kantian purposes, the distinction serves to separate the kind of knowledge yielded by experimentation or the natural sciences from that of logical propositions. There is no reason why the metacritic should object to this distinction being made. The point at issue, however, is precisely what can be claimed for knowledge which the Kantian calls *a priori*, which the metacritic might prefer to describe as 'logical' or even 'methodological'. For the metacritic of pure reason, unlike the 'critic' thereof, logic must be seen as gloriously '*im*pure' – for it is impossible, and indeed ultimately undesirable, to purify logic from experience, tradition, and language.

Like ordinary language, for Hamann, our notional naive students thus have wisdom on their side. The experience excepted by a workable definition of *'a priori'* is precisely the experience in question, and precisely the experience which subverts the authority, autonomy, and universality of the Enlightenment theory of reason. Logics are conditioned by their time and place: they make sense in a certain region in a certain period of time, with certain preoccupations and concerns; they require for their

[134] Again, Piske makes a parallel point: 'to protect the transcendental separation of the pure form of understanding from all sensible elements, the empirical-material aspect of language must be neglected in favour of a formal, universal structure of language, which is identical to the universal and non-experiential form of reason.' (Piske, 181.)

functioning not merely the existence of language but also its flexibility and adaptability in creating individual grammars or jargon; they require experience in their learning, and practice in the technique of their deployment; and they are dependent on a living tradition in which they are valued and passed on. For the metacritic, one may speak of '*a priori*' or 'logical' matters to characterize them as those arising in an ordered fashion from one's own framework. One thereby distinguishes them from (*prior*!) experience as the raw material for reflection and from the information arising from experimental activity, but one also thereby acknowledges the logic's foundations in language and culture, rather than its transcendental independence from both. For the purist of reason, this denial of its 'universal and necessary reliability' makes logic worse than useless; but then, if universality and necessary reliability are the highest aims of human reason, 'human reason itself must then be inferior to the infallible and unerring instinct of the insect.' (285:40.)

Universality and necessary reliability may seem like fine ideals to have, until one takes cognizance of the embarrassing superiority insects have over us in this respect. One begins to wonder why we did not choose the ground of the superiority of our species a little more carefully. How then can we account for this desire for certainty and purity? What were the conditions of possibility for the purifications of reason?

One was certainly the process of 'Prosopopoeia', to employ Hamann's simile[135], that afflicted philosophy in general and perhaps metaphysics in particular. In a desire for clarity, the philosopher distinguishes differing aspects in the phenomenon under scrutiny and exaggerates their difference. These aspects are ennobled into faculties, and by a kind of act of 'Prosopopoeia' are hypostasized into entities; as if in a kind of literal understanding and imitation of Plato's Ideas or Forms. Thus 'reasoning' is distinguished from 'feeling', and turned from a verb or gerund into a noun – 'reason' – which is then named as a constituent of our mind. From here it is only a short step to a kind of personification or Prosopopoeia, as medieval morality mystery plays could make a dramatic character out of being chaste or being lustful.

When applied to humanity, these hypostasized distinctions of Prosopopoeia create divisions in our being, such as those between 'the mind' and 'the body' or 'the senses' and 'the understanding'; 'a

[135] ZH 5, Nr. 784, 272:6f. One must distinguish its new use here from its deployment in *AN*.

violent, unwarranted, obstinate divorce of what nature has joined together!' (286:32f.) This in turn leads to the compartmentalization of knowledge, as the objectivated result of our various departments or faculties – those lower and those higher, as Wolff has it; two-stemmed, in the system of Kant. But as these *distinctions* are artificial, *'willkürlich'*, arbitrary, even tyrannical, so too are any attempts at *recreating a unity*, e.g. a synthetic unity of apperception: 'Analysis is nothing more than a cutting of one's cloth to suit fashion, as synthesis is the artificial seam of a leather-worker.' (289:18-20.)

'For what is celebrated **Reason** with its universality, infallibility, unsurpassability, certainty and evidence? An *Ens rationis*, an idol, to whom the screeching superstition of irrationality ascribes **divine attributes**.'[136] It is this hypostasizing treatment of 'lived experience' which is at the ground of Hamann's campaign against 'Reason'; it is not some supposed irrationalism, a rejection of reasoning or being reasonable. Rather, it is the 'Prosopopoeia' of a concrete activity which Hamann rejects. 'People talk about Reason as if it were a real being, and the good Lord as if the same were nothing but a concept' Hamann complained to Jacobi.[137]

This frustration is all the more aggravated when this prosopopoeic process is further purified, so that the activity has not merely become an entity, but has been resolutely stripped of all the concrete and historical, existential features of the original activity, in short, been cut off from its ultimate roots in reality and experience. Thus, 'reasoning' – as an activity one might do best in the morning and more slowly and fallibly after a heavy lunch – becomes a *thing*, which can bear attributes, and moreover, attributes which are unconditioned by time, place, and blood sugar. Although allegedly a human faculty, it is no longer affected by the ordinary conditions and limitations of all human activity.

Hamann is fully justified in seeing language as the *'Mittelpunkt'* of this colossal 'misunderstanding'. For this variety of fundamentally substantival thinking, language must consist essentially of terms. Language becomes an aggregate of rigid designators; and it is the rigidity of their designation that would make possible the desired purity and clarity of a 'universal philosophical language'. Such a language can only yield a philosophy that trades in concepts and the investigation of their proper ordering and

[136] *Konxompax*; N III, 225:3-6.
[137] ZH 7, 26:34-35.

relations; the connection between this view of language and this style of philosophizing is made clear in a letter to Jacobi:

> With me it is not so much the question: what is reason? but far more: what is language? and this I suppose to be the ground of all paralogisms and antinomies of which the former is accused. Hence it happens that one takes **words** for **concepts**, and **concepts** for the **things themselves**. In words and concepts no evidence is possible, which is ascribed purely to things and states of affairs.[138]

Don't ask for the meaning of the concept of reason; ask for the use of the theory of language, Hamann might have said had he written two centuries later; for it is the theory of language in operation which answers the question of what reason is. The use of language in 'Prosopopoeia' (or, in Hamann's view, misuse; cf. for example 285:28ff.) makes possible a process of abstracting from lived experience and reality to create concepts – which are then hypostasized, thereby returning to them a false concreteness; thus multiplying the distortions of reality in accumulating layers of abstractions and subsequent reifications of the selfsame abstractions.

If, however, language does not essentially consist in the naming of objects but is seen fundamentally as an address, moreover an address which is often through the medium of further symbols or beings, as in the myth of *KRC*, and secondarily as a poetic relationship to the world [*AN*]; then another stance towards language and philosophy becomes possible. Language is only an inescapable falsification of reality and experience if one feels compelled to take its claims literally, as it were, to conceive it as an attempt at an exact mirroring of the world (as in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*). If, however, the relationship of language to the world is conceived rather in terms of metaphorizing or symbolizing, then other possibilities not only for the theory of language but also for its praxis in philosophy become apparent.

b. Metacritical Philosophy

To metaphorize is the work of genius, Aristotle tells us in *De Poetica*; it is to see the similar in the dissimilar. Language understood as metaphorizing unites the opposites of similarity and dissimilarity; it embraces opposition. As Hamann's positive contribution to metacriticism makes clear[139], language makes

[138] ZH 5, Nr. 782, 264:34-265:1.
[139] Cf. 286:14-28; 287:4-25; 288:1-22.

possible a union of opposites because language itself is a union of opposites. The 'rigidity' of designation becomes for Hamann the flexibility of identity and difference contained within the paradigm of a metaphor or symbol. The relationship of language to the rest of reality is like our relationships to one another (and, Hamann would say, of humanity to God): a flexible system that permits identification and dissociation; resemblance, imitation, mimicry and misrepresentation.

The relationship of philosophy to reality (or of knowledge to reality or of philosophical language to reality) is conceived in a similar way; so that the antitheses of realism and idealism are at first united in a 'union of opposites', but ultimately transcended altogether:

> Philosophy is of idealism and realism: as our **nature** is composed of body and soul. *Qui bene distinguit, optime definire potest* — ... Only **scholastic reason** divides itself into idealism and realism. Correct and authentic reason knows nothing of this imagined difference, which is not grounded in the **nature of things**, and contradicts their **unity**, which lies at the foundation of all our concepts, or at least, **should** do so.[140]

This entails a rejection of Kant's division between the world of judgement and the world of things. For both idealism and realism presuppose a division between the mind and 'reality' – rather than conceiving of the mind as part of an unproblematic continuum of reality – and they differ, one might say, simply in how they describe this difficult relationship. For Hamann, however, thinking and speaking are part of the same lived world, the same reality, nature, creation, or indeed 'world' inhabited by the 'things'. The 'ground' of the difference between thought and things is found in 'scholastic reason', Hamann tells Jacobi; and is not a feature of nature or reality itself. Rather, it is the fundamental unity of all things which ought to underlie our thinking and concepts.

Hamann thus avoids idealism not with pre-critical naiveté, but because the mind is *part of the things of the world*. This also avoids realism; for both realism and idealism presuppose the division between mind/language and the world (which Hamann compares to the division of body and soul). There can indeed be this *distinction*, for pragmatic philosophical purposes – *Qui bene distinguit* – but there is no division 'in the *nature of things*', and such a division is in danger of 'contradicting their unity'. The

[140] ZH 7, 165:7-17.

connection of thought and things is as intimate as that of body and soul, a distinction only made for certain purposes (philosophy) and not a 'natural' division (like gender, for example). Thus, Hamann can look like a realist in the same way that he often is taken to be an empiricist: because he rejects idealism, as he rejects rationalism. Realism has too many undesirable corollaries and consequences for the Hamannian, however. It presupposes, or at least suggests, a view of language which is fundamentally representational. Language becomes merely a means of transport for ideas and secondly a labelling system for objects. The conjunction of these two services leads to the danger which Berkeley described: the fact that words are thought to name things leads to the mistaken but natural assumption that general words work similarly and name universal, abstract 'things'. Hamann's rejection of realism thus is allied to his nominalism. The twofold task of language according to realism (transporting and labelling) leads to an excess of concretization, which makes abstract objects into supposedly existing things; it leads on the other hand for the idealist to a purification of language in order to force it into congruence with the purity of thought, thus stripping language of its proper concreteness and living reality. In a representationalist account, for the 'clients' of language – things and ideas – realness is either overprescribed or denied.

But even if it were not clear from Hamann's explicit utterances that he does not want to ally himself with realism either, it would be clear from the character and structure of his thought. As with mind-body dualism or the problem of an unextended mind knowing extended objects, the difficulty only arises after an opposition has been constructed; and if one rejects the opposition, one need not take a stance on the two opposed choices of its resolution. The relationship of language to reality is only a 'problem' to be 'solved' by realism if one thinks that language is not already *part* of reality itself; 'realism' and 'idealism' both are only solutions to an imagined philosophical 'problem' if reality is 'other' to language.

Philosophy for Hamann then becomes a matter of language; simply language *in* the world as well as *about* the world; a language for which philosophy needs a 'grammar':

> Metaphysics has its scholastic and courtly language; both are suspicious to me, and I am neither in the position to understand them nor to serve them myself. So I almost suppose that our entire philosophy consists more of language than reason, and the misund-

> erstandings of countless words, the Prosopopoeia of the most arbitrary abstractions, the antitheses της ψευδονομου γνωσεως, yes even the most common figures of speech of the *sensus communis* have brought forth a whole world of questions that can with as little justification be thrown aside as they can be answered. We are still always lacking a **grammar** of reason, as well as its scriptures and its common [*gemeinschaftlichen*] elements, that are all muddled up, as the strings on a psaltery sound all at once and yet harmonize.[141]

In Hamann's metacriticism, three themes can be identified which can with justification be described as 'Wittgensteinian'.[142] The first is the conviction, expressed most particularly in the citation above, that language is the clue[143] and the cure to the problems of philosophy; the second is his robust faith in the role that ordinary language has to play in this cure; and finally, his stress on language use.

We find the interest in ordinary language appearing two or possibly three times in *MPR*. In the first reference, 283:14ff., it is said to reveal the 'great discovery' of Berkeley's that abstract ideas are nothing but particular ideas attached to a certain term (283:1-4). In the second, 287:16-18ff., we are told that 'the wicked viper in our bosom of the language of the people gives us the best metaphor

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[141] ZH 5, Nr. 784, 272:3-13; to Jacobi. *Tes pseudonomou gnoseos* means 'of lying knowledge'.

[142] For a study of Hamann and Wittgenstein, see Helmut Hein, '*Hamann und Wittgenstein. Aufklärungskritik als Reflexion über Sprache*' in *ACTA* II. The 'Wittgensteinian themes' which I discuss here however do not constitute the main investigation of his essay, which focuses more on their critique of the Enlightenment. There are important differences between them: 'Hamann's critique of language, in the tradition of Francis Bacon whom he revered, is directed essentially to the discovery and solution of all idols, ...particularly those brought into play by the Enlightenment, the "earthly gods" in his phrase. In no way did he mistrust philosophical reflection and speaking in general. Wittgenstein's "radicalism" on the other hand is comparatively conventional. He himself in part falls into an old dream of the Enlightenment: an experience of the world without the strains of concepts, without discoveries: "...we may not advance any kind of theory. There must not be anything hypothetical in our considerations. We must do away with all *explanation*, and description alone must take its place." [*PI* 109.]' (Hein, 31.)

[143] Compare, to the citation above (ZH5, Nr. 784) the following: 'The problems arising through a misinterpretation of our forms of language have the character of *depth*. They are deep disquietudes; their roots are as deep in us as the forms of our language and their significance is as great as the importance of our language.' (*PI* 111.) 'A *picture* held us captive. And we could not get outside it, for it lay in our language and language seemed to repeat it to us inexorably.' (*PI* 115.)

for the hypostatic union of the natures of the senses and of the understanding' (etc.) (There is a possible third reference in 287:12f.: the pure natural language that will be reborn with our imminent enlightenment.)

In short, the two misdemeanours of Prosopopoeia, the initial hypostasizing act and the subsequent divisions and compartmentalization, are either prevented or cured by attention to ordinary language. The language of the *sensus communis*, as he often styles it, does not trade in rigid designators for abstract concepts; a black-market trade which is the condition of possibility for the prosopopoeist's addiction.

Instead, the use of language by common and ordinary people reveals its metaphorical, therefore flexible, nature. Two passages in *MPR* institute the primacy of use for language's identity and vocation: 284:26 names use as one of language's two 'credentials'. 288:14-16 claims that words 'only become determined objects for the understanding through their employment and the meaning of their use.' This means, first, that meaning only arises from use, and the underlying significance of this is that reason and the understanding can only function *after* the social, that is, the *traditional* and *experiential* – therefore 'impure' and 'adulterating' – situation of using language. The phenomenon of ordinary language and its use are therefore indispensable elements in the critique of Prosopopoeia and the purism of reason.

> What is sought in oriental cisterns lies in the *sensu communi* of the use of language, and this key transforms our best and wildest philosophers into senseless mystics; and the simplest Galileans and fishermen into the most profound researchers and heralds of a wisdom that is not earthly, human and diabolic, but rather a secret, concealed, wisdom of God, which God instituted before the world, for our glory – I Cor. II....[144]

There is another way of describing these 'Wittgensteinian' themes. That is, parallel to the protest against the 'purification' of philosophy by detaching it from its relationship to tradition, experience, and language, we can see that there is also a protest against the purification of *language* by similarly detaching it from its essential network of relations, as we have seen. This impression is confirmed by the reading of Hamann's letters in the years immediately after this encounter with the *Critique*, when he had not entirely given up the idea of completing his *Metacritique*. Here we

[144] ZH 5, Nr. 721, 95:23-29, 2.11.1783; to Jacobi.

find that Hamann has renamed his essay 'Metacritique of the Purism of Reason and Language'[145], and even, later, 'Metacritique of the Purism of Language and Reason in psilological and psilosophical (*Billet-Doux* or) Loveletters'.[146] In this latter title we can see not only that there is a 'purism of language' but that it in fact has taken precedence over the purism of reason – even to the detriment of the parodistic pun of the original title.

The 'threefold purification' of language consists first in the stripping away of ambiguity and the insistence on clarity and monosemy; this is necessary for its adequacy in naming and mirroring things and concepts. The second purification, a corollary of the first, is the detachment of language from the senses and the body and its identification with the structures of the mind, whereby the separation of its 'form' from its 'concept' and its 'matter' becomes possible (288:23-289:10). Finally language is detached from the concrete, in the prosopopoeic linguistic embodiment of abstractions, the aspiration towards universality, a move Berkeley foresaw, if less clearly than Hamann does:

> A universal word is an empty wine-skin, which is constantly changing and which when overstretched bursts and can hold absolutely no more air; and is it worth squabbling over flavourless salt, and a **bellows** which contains nothing?[147]

If the necessary 'adulterations' of philosophy are experience, tradition, and language; and those of reason are the senses, experience, and language; then the desirable impurity of language is exhibited in the ambiguity of ordinary language and its use. As early as 1762, in his essay *Vermischte Anmerkungen*, part of the *Crusades of a Philologian*, Hamann had the first glimmerings of this conviction: 'The purity of a language deprives it of its richness; a correctness that is too rigid, of its strength and virility.'[148] Language, like both philosophy and 'reason', must be allowed its relations with tradition, with experience, with the senses, and with 'reason' or cognition. This is the Hamannian cure; and it is a cure

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[145] ZH 6, 65:22-23.

[146] ZH 6, Nr. 884, 108:3-6. 'Psilos', ψιλος, is bare or mere; 'psilosophical' then is a meagre or shallow philosophy, 'psilological' the merely logical. Hamann describes the word as a 'new-fangled word for pure reason' (ZH 5, 349:33-35, 3.2.1785; to Herder.)

[147] ZH 7, 172:33-36.

[148] N II, 136:3-4.

not merely for an improper conception of language but also for the ills of philosophy.

The implication is that language, if it is seen as related in both directions, can mediate between the Kantian opposites by being both 'aesthetic' and 'logical' (288:1 and following). The relationship of language to the senses was once the subject matter for the extended rhapsody of *AN*. Fighting a different battle, it is here the relationship of language and reason which preoccupies Hamann.

As we have seen, in *MPR* and in letters Hamann makes use of the image of language as reason's instrument [organon] and criterion: 'I have completely given up these investigations [into 'pure reason'] on account of their difficulty and now hold myself to the visible element, to the organon or criterion – I mean language.'[149] On the first level, it means of course that we have need of language in order to reason at all. This description of reason as 'invisible' and language as its visibility also means, when the critique or metacritique of pure reason is the task at hand, in other words where the reasoning mind is not only the knower and student but is also the object of knowledge and study, that we have need of language doubly in our investigation – both to investigate, and to gain access to the 'object' of our investigation. Thus both to reflect, and *a fortiori* to reflect reflexively, that is, on itself, 'reason' can not exist let alone function without language. This makes clear the absolute dependence of reason upon language; or better, the dependence of our activity of reasoning upon language. But if at times Hamann indicates that language is thus the 'active' principle in knowing, the tool which empowers reason – one might almost say the 'potency' of reason – more often his images indicate that language has a precedence over reason, and perhaps a creative role vis-à-vis reason as well. 'With me, it is a matter neither of physics nor theology – but of **language**, the **mother** of reason and revelation, their Alpha and Omega.'[150]

Language and reason are not two terms – still less entities – which must be related, but two moments of the same activity: human knowing, human activity in the world. The implications of this emphasis have developed but are consistent with Hamann's first philosophical instincts in *SM*. We find them indicated in a letter to Jacobi: language which is 'Aesopian and Socratic' – i.e. both colourful, analogical, metaphorical, and fabular like Aesop's *and* ironic, efficacious, and of the market-place like that of Socrates – is the

[149] ZH 5, Nr. 721, 95:19f., 2.11.1783; to Jacobi.
[150] ZH 6, Nr. 884, 108:20-22.

'organon of a more genuine, living, relational reason'.[151] Language, when deliciously impure, concrete and childish like a fable, rich in ambiguity, aesthetic and logical, is the instrument of a style of thinking which is alive and lively, real and authentic.

Reason and language therefore enjoy a relation that itself mirrors the metaphor: one of both similarity and dissimilarity; of simultaneous identity and difference. Both are united: 'Reason is language — λογος' [Logos]; this 'identity' however is the identity of metaphor: it is and it isn't.

In *MPR* itself the need for this flexible mode of understanding relationships – The Principle of the Union of Opposites – is expressed metaphorically. Hamann speaks of the 'alchemical Tree of Diana' (287:4f.); of '*communicatio idiomatum*' and 'hypostatic union' (287:18-19), in a variety of attempts to transcend the Kantian divisions. Nevertheless in a letter to Jacobi he puts his finger on the fundamental division of human living which underlies them, and questions the act of division in the first place:

> The understanding and experience are fundamentally the same thing: as the understanding and application are. From where do we get this distinction into opposites? Does the entire mystery of our reason, its antitheses and analogies, rest on nothing but a poetic license to separate what Nature has joined and to couple what she wanted to distinguish, to mutilate and then mend again?[152]

'The understanding and experience are fundamentally the same thing'[153]: thus in place of the philosophy of pure reason we might have a kind of philosophical reflection that is content to begin from and continue within the limits of our experience of reality: at times fragmentary, certainly paradoxical or contradictory; it takes its method and its 'metaphysic' from principles that reflect a priority of being over thought:

> Not *Cogito; ergo sum*, but vice versa, and more Hebraic: *est; ergo cogito*, and with the inversion of such a simple principle perhaps the whole system might receive another language and direction.[154]

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[151] ZH 7, 168:33-34.

[152] ZH 6, Nr. 1011, 534:14-20, to Jacobi.

[153] Simon, in his paper comparing Hamann's philosophy of language with current thinking on the subject, raises some interesting observations, including comparisons with Quine. He observes that Quine's unhappiness with the distinction between *a priori* and *a posteriori* mirrors Hamann's; indeed, that this point is the 'kernel' of Hamann's critique of Kant. (Simon, *ACTA* II, 17.)

[154] ZH 5, Nr. 840, 448:26-28.

VII. METACRITICUS BONAE SPEI

A writer who is in a hurry to be understood today or tomorrow runs the danger of being misunderstood the day after tomorrow.

1. Two Critics of the Metacritic

Two of the most famous and influential of Hamann's early interpreters have been Goethe and Hegel. Biedermann's records of Goethe's conversations claim that these two great thinkers, on the occasion of their only meeting, conversed mainly about Hamann[1]; a distinction which Hamannians note and recount with a certain satisfaction.

a. Goethe

Goethe became acquainted with Hamann's writings through Herder; according to *Dichtung und Wahrheit* this was in 1770[2] – and thus, could only have been on the basis of *SM* and *CP*.[3] Goethe continued to collect Hamann's writings in the 1770s and 1780s and to discuss him in his correspondence[4]; Lavater writes in 1774 that Goethe maintains that Hamann is the author who has influenced him most greatly[5] and in Goethe's writings concerning the Italian journey (recorded as 'Naples, 1787') Hamann has matured in his eyes, so to speak, from a Socratic faun to an *'Ältvater'* and 'Codex' for the German people, a sentiment expressed in Goethe's comparison of Vico to Hamann.[6]

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[1] Biedermann, III, 477.
[2] HHE I, 18.
[3] Goethe's review of Wieland's *Goldener Spiegel* styles Hamann as 'the Socratic Faun in Königsberg' – 'Socratic Faun', suggests Gründer (HHE I, 18), is a hybrid of the title of *SM* and the vignette of *CP*.
[4] HHE I, 18.
[5] Biedermann, I, 43; HHE I, 20.
[6] HHE, 19.

By far the most famous of Goethe's utterances on Hamann, however, has been the 'principle' of the twelfth book of *Dichtung und Wahrheit*:

> The principle to which every remark of Hamann's can be reduced, is this: 'Everything which the human being undertakes, whether produced by word or deed or something else, must arise from its total united powers; anything that is isolated is reprehensible.' A magnificent maxim! but difficult to follow. It might perhaps be true of life and art; but in every transmission in words that is not simply poetic, there is a great difficulty: for the word must become detached, it must isolate itself, to say or to mean something. The human being in which it speaks must for the moment be one-sided...[7]

Goethe thus proposes Hamann's urge to holism as his central insight. I would give only a qualified endorsement to Goethe's principle, for several reasons. As I have argued, Hamann's holism, while crucial, is not the foundational insight of his work but is rather the function of his relationality. The wholeness of the human person is not the insight which inspired every other, the principle embodied in his every utterance; it is rather the natural result of other, more fundamental presuppositions, while itself, as Goethe rightly sees, constituting the presupposition on a later level for further insights. Secondly, Hamann himself would find this principle rather too humanistic as an expression of his main insight. His own self-understanding was one permeated by his religiosity; however expressed, even his more anthropological statements could not leave a relationship with God out of account, as Goethe's statement seems to. Viewed from the perspective of the history of ideas, however, Goethe's principle is an enlightening one, even if it in the end reveals more about Hamann's legacy than Hamann's thinking analysed in terms of its own intrinsic features. Goethe's principle betrays his conviction that Hamann stands at the head of a new development in German thinking; the (albeit unwilling) instigator of the *Sturm und Drang* movement, the prophet both of Goethe's own classicism and of romanticism; it indicates something of both the attraction and the influence Hamann was to have in the following century.

> One senses here a profound, fundamental man, who, well acquainted with the revealed world and literature, nevertheless accepted something mysterious, unfathomable, and expressed

[7] Goethe, XVI, 549.

> himself on the subject in his own way. He was considered, perhaps, an abstruse *Schwärmer* by those who dominated the literature of the day, but a rising youth might well be attracted to him.[8]

In addition to the principle itself, however, Goethe also raises a 'difficulty'. It is interesting that Goethe can concede so easily that this principle is fine enough in life. That experiential, almost pastoral dimension is precisely where Hamann himself, no stranger to inner conflict, to ambivalence and two-mindedness, might have located such a difficulty; 'a magnificent maxim, but difficult to follow.' One could also examine critically the reservation Goethe has with its application: its alleged inapplicability to the use of language, its apparent contradiction in the phenomenon of a word meaning something in particular. For here, Goethe claims, isolation and detachment is all.

This may misunderstand Hamann's holism and misapply it; but it also is more fundamentally at odds with it. Hamann's holism is not to be confused with universality or totality. A united human being is not a complete and perfect being, a universal being without gaps and lacks, but one who eschews false divisions and dichotomies. A 'holistic' view of language when applied to the meaning of words does not, analogically, mean that each word would have to possess universal meaning, all meaning, or else cease to be 'holistic'. That is Goethe's misunderstanding and misapplication of Hamannian holism (and, arguably, an understanding which is thoroughly characteristic of the *Tendenz* of nineteenth-century German romanticism.) There is a further level of disagreement, however, between Goethe's view of meaning and Hamann's that is not a simple matter of misunderstanding. This difference may in fact highlight the desirability of viewing Hamann's thought as fundamentally 'relational' rather than as fundamentally 'holistic'.

In Hamann's treatment of words and their meaning, the 'holism' or the relatedness extends in two directions. One is internal to language, the other a matter of the human speaker – two dimensions implicit in the citation from Goethe. As far as words, meaning and language are concerned, Hamann in no way denies that a word must be able to mean something and not something else in order to be useful. The holism, or better, relationality of his thinking on the subject is to be found not in some supposed totality of meaning but in the insistence that a word's meaning is

[8] Goethe, XVI, 547.

inseparable from its context; that while it bears a certain individuality of meaning, in fact it cannot be considered in isolation or detached from the words around it. Secondly, Hamann similarly does not suggest that the refusal to divide oneself into opposed faculties entails that one cannot focus on a single point, be single-minded in speaking. But this precisely for Hamann is unity, and not a 'one-sidedness' that contradicts his relational view. At the same time, and perhaps in contradiction to Goethe's tacit presupposition, this unifying of powers still only ever leads to a being of 'gaps and lacks'. Thus, if holism seems to suggest totality or universality, arguably a more accurate impression of Hamann's view is given in a word that emphasizes not the supposed end result – wholeness, something in fact which Hamann did not extol – but the process or method itself, the relations of the phenomenon in question.

b. Hegel

Both Goethe[9] and Hegel[10] expressed a desire to bring out Hamann's Collected Works; though in the end this was partially accomplished by neither but by Friedrich Roth, in a rather incomplete and somewhat inaccurate version in 1821-1824.[11] Hegel's work on Hamann was occasioned as a review of this undertaking, and was published in 1828, a year after the tea-party with Goethe.

Hegel's reflections on Hamann in relation to his time and in relation to Goethe's and Hegel's own at first seems almost the reverse of Goethe's: 'That Hamann in the comparison of his time to ours stands above his contemporaries as a seer, can hardly be contradicted. But our time... understands him even less than did his own.'[12] Nevertheless, like Goethe, Hegel will see Hamann as a forerunner in a certain conception of the history of philosophy or of ideas. His critique situates Hamann in Hegel's own history of German thinking, or rather, the German history of the thinking *Geist*. In Hegel's schema, which opposes the 'dry' rationalism of the Berlin *Aufklärer* with their 'principles of bald utility', (Nicolai, Mendelssohn, Teller, Spalding, Zöllner *et al.*) and the *'Genie, Geist und Vernunfttiefe'* of Königsberg, Weimar and Jena (Kant, Hippel, Hamann, Herder, Wieland, Goethe, later Schiller, Fichte,

[9] Goethe, XVI, 548-9.
[10] Among others; Hegel, 203f.
[11] HHE I, 15.
[12] From Hegel's letters; cited HHE 1, 22.

Schelling *et al.*)[13]; Hamann is 'not only original [*originell*], but rather more an Original [*ein Original*], in that he persisted in a concentration of his deep particularity, which has shown itself incapable of all form of universality, as well as of the expansion of thinking reason'.[14] This incapability is shown in the subjectivity or particularity of his thought and of his style:

> ...He cannot work out his inner meaning to the expansion of knowledge, still less to poetry, and is only capable of humorous, sparkling, desultory expression; but this humour lacks richness and variety of emotion and is without any impulse towards or attempts at form; he remains quite limitedly subjective.[15]
>
> The French have a saying: *Le stile c'est l'homme meme*; Hamann's writings do not have a particular style but rather are style through and through. In everything that came from Hamann's pen, his personality is so importunate and overwhelming that the reader's attention is absolutely everywhere being drawn to it rather than to what is supposed to be the content. In the products which pass themselves off as writings and should deal with a subject-matter, the incomprehensible oddness of the author is so striking and is a riddle, indeed a tiresome one, and one realizes that its solution is the individuality of the author; but this explains nothing in itself.[16]
>
> Hamann's religious expression took the form of an abstract interiority, whose stiff-necked simplicity did not recognize objective requirements, obligations, and theoretical as well as practical principles as absolutely essential, nor had the slightest interest in the same.[17]
>
> Hamann's own intellectual [*geistige*] depths kept themselves to a perfectly concentrated intensity and in no way succeeded in expansion, whether of phantasy or of thought.[18]
>
> The cleverness of the form lends the dense contents a brilliance; but instead of an exposition [*Ausführung*] the form only produces a prolongation [*Ausdehnung*] that is composed of subjective particularities, self-satisfied ideas and obscure fripperies, along with many rantings and ravings and grotesque, even farcical ingredients, that he himself perhaps is having fun with but which can please or interest neither his friends, nor still less the public.[19]

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[13] Hegel, 207.
[14] Hegel, 209.
[15] Hegel, 208.
[16] Hegel, 209.
[17] Hegel, 231.
[18] Hegel, 239f.
[19] Hegel, 243.

Hamann's comment to Jacobi that dogmatism and scepticism, realism and idealism are ultimately identified is similarly taken by Hegel as again indicating 'that Hamann was entirely incapable and unreceptive to all interest in thinking and in thoughts, and therefore for the necessity of such distinctions'.[20]

At the same time, on the two occasions in which Hegel sees Hamann responding to contemporary philosophy – these are in response to Kant's *Critique* and to Mendelssohn's *Jerusalem* – 'it is wonderful to see here how in Hamann the concrete idea ferments and turns against the divisions of reflexion, how he holds opposed to this the true requirement.'[21] He opposes the divisions of understanding, rightly, but this idea cannot come to full fruition.[22] In *MPR*, we see (amongst the 'magnificent baroque expectorations'[23]) that:

> ... the idea of coincidence, which constitutes the content of philosophy... Hamann's *Geist* set forth in a quite firm manner; ...but he only made 'a balled fist' and left anything further to the reader, 'to unfold it into a flat hand', which alone is of use to science. Hamann on his side did not make the effort, which, if one could put it thus, God, perhaps in a higher sense, made, of unfolding the balled kernel of truth, which He is (ancient philosophers said of God, that he is a round sphere), in reality into a system of nature, into a system of the State, of justice and of morality, into a system of world history, to an open hand, whose fingers are outstretched....[24]

At least Hamann is not one of the *'schöne Seelen'*, like other members of his circle (Jacobi, Bucholtz, the Princess Gallitzin...); who cannot content themselves with what is objective in thought, faith, or feeling, but strive after the personal, the inner, the emotional and the imaginative, 'so that the result is the *Indéfinissable*, an incomprehensibility and unsatisfied longing'.[25] Instead, while Hamann's intimate friendship with this circle is examined, so too is what separates him from them[26] along with Hamann's not uncritical friendship and correspondence with Jacobi[27].

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[20] Hegel, 268-9.
[21] Hegel, 246.
[22] Hegel, 247.
[23] Hegel, 251.
[24] Hegel, 252-3.
[25] Hegel, 266.
[26] Hegel, 265ff.
[27] Hegel, 268ff. *et passim*.

Thus, as with Goethe, Hamann is given a certain qualified stamp of approval; Gründer observes that Hegel is doing what Goethe did: seeing Hamann as the ancestor of a philosophical process which the commentator himself was to complete.[28] Hegel's approbation is rather more reserved than Goethe's, however. Insofar as Hamann did not simply dissolve himself in *Gefühlsphilosophie*, 'the concrete idea' was present in him and slowly 'fermented'. But the particularity, and the conciseness, the 'concentrated intensity' of his thought and expression are held to be not merely 'not to Hegel's taste', but an actual barrier to its full development, or perhaps an indication of the limit to his thought; a sign of how far away he was from the true realization of philosophy.

c. An Assessment

Insofar as Hegel's critique of Hamann reveals Hegel's own requirements for philosophy and philosophers, it is perhaps unnecessary or impossible to 'unfold' Hegel's remarks completely here, and therefore to attempt a thorough defence of Hamann against Hegel's criticisms. If one does not share Hegel's programme and presuppositions, it is not only difficult to defend Hamann against the accusation that he thinks particularly and not universally, but easy to see no tragic flaw in this. It does not suffice simply to observe, however, that Hamann cannot justly be criticized for not being Hegel, as one might otherwise be tempted to do; nor even to claim, undoubtedly with great justification, that Hamann had no interest in doing what Hegel demands; for such a lack of interest itself might be reprehensible, as Hegel himself maintains. Moreover, Hegel's two objections, so obviously articulated as they are from within his own framework and aims, nevertheless reappear many times in assessments of Hamann, albeit in different guises and with different underlying interests and motivations: Hamann is 'subjective' or too intensely personal; and Hamann is unsystematic.

The allegation that Hamann does not recognize the 'requirement of objectivity' can reverberate on various levels. Taken in the most familiar and colloquial sense, Hamann's writing contains much that is in some sense 'personal'. Above all, this is true of those writings (such as *Biblical Reflections* or *Thoughts on the course of my Life* in N I) which, while being in the form of journal and were

[28] HHE I, 25.

never intended for publication, have been widely read. While it is quite true that much of this writing is intensely personal and autobiographical, it seems a curious misapprehension of genre to complain that a private journal which was never intended for publication and was only published posthumously is too personal and subjective. The works intended for publication, such as the ones that have been considered in this book, in my opinion do not possess that same intensely private quality. It is difficult for that reason to avoid the impression that some readers have found Hamann difficult to understand, and thus portray their experience of his inaccessibility as a 'subjectivity' on his part.

Secondly, from a certain understanding of subjectivity at least, it is false to say that some writers are objective and somehow transcend their own subjectivity (or gender, race, class) while others do not. It is simply the case that these 'objective' writers (Kant, for example) stylistically conceal their subjectivity rather than escape it altogether.

Of course, the castigation of Hamann's disinterest in objectivity, so far treated as a matter partly of style and partly of substance, can have a further significance as well. It can refer not only to his own style and writing, but also to the ideological stance on subjectivity/objectivity which he inhabits, and Hegel's dissatisfaction perhaps is partly located here. It is not merely that Hamann 'does not recognize the requirement of objectivity' in his own literary activity, but also that as a philosopher, an epistemologist, he is not a subscriber to 'objectivism', that is:

> the idea of a basic dichotomy between the subjective and objective; the conception of knowledge as being a correct representation of what is objective; the conviction that human reason can completely free itself of bias, prejudice, and tradition; the ideal of a universal method by which we can first secure firm foundations of knowledge and then build the edifice of a universal science; the belief that by the power of self-reflection we can transcend our historical context and horizon and know things as they really are in themselves....[29]

If what fundamentally is meant by the claim that Hamann does not recognize the requirement of objectivity is that he does not subscribe to this view, then I think it is quite correct to say so. I would argue, however, that this is so not because he is unaware of the value placed on 'objectivity' by others, but because – in a way

[29] Bernstein, 36; in its context this is a list of what Gadamer subjects to critique.

that foreshadows Gadamer, Habermas, and those who are influenced by them – his position constitutes a critique of the cult of objectivity. Nevertheless, as Hegel rightly perceived, something marks off Hamann from his immediate successors and certain contemporaries (the *'schöne Seelen'*), those who (in Hegel's characterization) gave themselves up entirely to feeling, subjectivity, interiority. I characterize this difference as that between subjectivism and relationality. For as I have argued, Hamann's resistance to dominant Enlightenment trends did not manifest itself as an espousal of the opposite viewpoint, as (for example) his even-handed rejection of rationalism and positivism shows; the same applies to his lack of recognition of the requirement of objectivity. Subjectivism – any approach which is founded on the subject – lacks the fruitful tension and interaction of a relationship. Hamann's rejection of objectivity is not a license to bias and prejudice; it is (with Gadamer, and Habermas) a recognition of the positive aspect of one's subjectivity and preunderstandings, of course, but – as a relational view – one in which one's subjectivity is only part of the ongoing development of understanding contained in the dynamic relationship.[30] Subjectivity is an essential presupposition but not the central point of the methodology. Thus Hamann's relationality approaches the standpoint called for by advocates of 'postmodernity' in philosophy and hermeneutics.[31]

I have already defended Hamann, in passing, against Hegel's second criticism (that Hamann is unsystematic), but it merits more attention.[32] It is both a complaint about style, but also about programme. It is not merely a complaint that he wrote essays rather than multi-volumed *Meisterwerke*. Hegel's more substantial charge is essentially that even within his essays, or in his essays taken as a whole, he did not expand and develop his insights; he presented the reader with a balled fist and refused to unroll it himself for their benefit. This is true on two levels: first, that he did not 'unfold' what he himself meant in a given essay; but made his points in a concentrated and pithy fashion, condensed and concise. But further, given the fertility of his ideas and the promise

[30] Cf. Gadamer's highly relational account of hermeneutics in *Wahrheit und Methode*.

[31] Cf. Palmer and Bernstein.

[32] Hein observes that both Hamann and Wittgenstein can look like 'irrationalists' because they are unsystematic; and because both reject dichotomies. (Hein, 22.)

and potential they hold out, even his friends and his admirers (*especially* his friends and admirers) might wish that he had taken his insights further, organized and presented them better, made them work harder and achieve more, and given us something like a Hamannian philosophy of language, a Hamannian epistemology, a Hamannian anthropology, a Hamannian theology of divine-human relations, a Hamannian theology of divine condescension, and so on – in short, that Hamann himself ought to have done what others have since done on his behalf.

A defence of Hamann against this charge can be made on two grounds: the first being the 'relationality' of his thinking and style, which demands the active involvement of the reader and not the reader's merely passive digestion of Hamann's writing. The second makes use of Rorty's recognition of a category of philosophers whose very *raison d'être* is not to be systematic; or rather, that a fragmentary, aphoristic or unsystematic character is intrinsic to the business of being a metacritic.[33] In short, a defence of Hamann on this point could be undertaken under the flag of the two ideas of 'relationality' and 'metacriticism'.

I would state, first of all, that it is vital to the health of theology and philosophy that not all thinkers are of the same type. A plurality of views and approaches might rather give us a richer tradition and wider possibilities for our own reflection and that of succeeding generations. If this principle is accepted, then, if we concede that Hamann is neither a Kant nor a Hegel, this need not be a reasonable cause for complaint. What is necessary, then, is to examine whether the kind of thinker Hamann was is a desirable kind of thinker for the history of theology and philosophy to have in its repertoire.

A defence of Hamann's lack of system on grounds of 'relationality' claims that the nature of Hamann's writing encourages a relational response or hermeneutic from the reader; and makes two further points. The first is that this hermeneutic itself constitutes a positive contribution to the disciplines of theology and philosophy; even if the fuller implications and explication of a relational hermeneutic only unfolded in our century with Gadamer. Secondly, it encourages what Rorty has named as a principle task for the 'edifying philosopher': 'to make the reader question his own motives for philosophizing rather than to supply him with a new philosophical program.'[34] Something of the

[33] See the discussion in Chapter One.
[34] Rorty, 5-6.

relationship between a relational hermeneutic and the potential for being changed or transformed by the text one seeks to understand is articulated, again in our own century, by Fuchs and Ebeling in their biblical hermeneutics of New Testament parables.

Moving now to the consideration of how the idea of 'metacriticism' justifies Hamann's approach, what emerges from Rorty's account is that metacriticism, or edifying philosophy, is an important task in its own right. If one permits a plurality in doing theology or philosophy, then the task of metacritics no less than critics of reality is vital to the health of the discipline. (It is perhaps important here to remember that 'metacriticism' is not simply the criticism of other critics or practitioners, but the critique of the act of criticism itself.) If one accepts that the examination of 'metacritical' issues in a 'metacritical' way is a task of intrinsic value, Hamann's manner of thinking and writing is both explained and justified.

What is clear as well, however, is that it would be a naive or one-sided view (and not at all relational) to suppose that metacriticism itself is a purely reactionary and purely negative task. The metacritic, like Hamann's 'philosophical hero' in *SM*, criticizes or fights back on behalf of something – a commitment to an insight or to 'reality', or a lust to conquer lies and vice, or out of 'solidarity' (as Rorty has it). The deconstruction of criticism is undertaken in the name of something, and moreover is done by means of something, that is, with tools of the metacritic's own foundational insights. Not only the deconstruction itself, therefore, but also the insights, principles or even slogans which are the deconstruction's engines and tools, and finally even the fundamental commitment itself constitute a positive contribution to the discipline. The complaint against Hamann seems to be that the engines of deconstruction were not re-designed to go on to re-construct; as if to be valid and worthwhile all deconstruction must be followed by the re-construction of a building of essentially similar purpose, differing only in the principles of its design. If this is so, then there is no clinching defence for Hamann and he must remain obstinate or 'incapable'; but in my view, anyone who does believe that this must be so has failed to be 'edified' by Hamann.

For the refusal to create his own systematic structure of knowledge or of theology or philosophy is also an 'ideological' act, if views on epistemology (or, the 'ethics' of epistemology) can be held to be ideologies. This refusal for Hamann is grounded in an insistence that human knowledge is and remains partial. This

particular insight developed, as we have also seen, into a perception that knowledge is not merely partial but may also be contradictory (an insight which teased him first with his fascination for the principle of the union of opposites, seduced him thoroughly during his encounter with Kant's *Critique*, and satisfied him in ever-deeper ways in the years thereafter). The possibility that human knowledge may be partial is however swept away with the very idea of a system; while the admission of contradictory 'truths' erodes its foundations and structure: Hamann's insights and the urge towards systematization are inimical to one another; they are not 'opposites' eager for a fruitful union, but conflict in such a way that would make for self-betrayal. One could, therefore, sum up this point by saying with Hegel that indeed it was not in Hamann's nature, or style, to be systematic – but only if 'nature' and 'style' here signify some of the most profound dimensions of a thinker.

However, even those of a metacritical disposition or those possessing an ideological commitment which opposes systematization might readily concede, finally, that there can be certain *'desiderata'* associated with systematic thinking: consistency, coherence, possessing a characteristic approach or committed programme. But it is clear from an examination of Hamann's thought that he does in fact possess these virtues. The particularities of his style did not mean that he vacillated in his views, approach, or insights; he was not a disorganized thinker, nor, despite his love of the principle of the union of opposites, did he contradict himself.

The only cause for complaint in Hamann's lack of systematization which holds up, in my view, is the complaint of his own admirers: that he might have written more, expounded himself in more detail, or at least unclenched the balled fist, even if he had reasons for wanting the reader to be the one to completely unroll it. The 'pithiness' or concentration of his insights which so aggravated Hegel I do not find to be a philosophical flaw at all; my only grievance here is that he did not, so to speak, take himself further. One might want to add that the 'occasional' nature of his writing encouraged this kind of response. He needed to be provoked; this perhaps is only to be expected from a 'relational' thinker. It raises difficulties for us today insofar as many of these occasions or provoking texts are considered insignificant or are even largely inaccessible; but then, it is hardly fair to criticize a thinker for failing to rise above his place in history, still less to fault him on reacting to the thinkers of his time. What it means,

however, is that since his thought or rather his writing is so rarely 'for its own sake', the constraints of pieces written in reaction does encourage the fragmentary tendency of his thought, that is, that his insights on a given subject tended to be scattered throughout his work rather than collected usefully in a single piece or volume.

2. Hamann's Relational Metacriticism

a. Language

Faced with an unsatisfactory philosophy of reason and a similarly unsatisfactory alliance between language and abstract thought, Hamann's first propaedeutical reaction was to stress what he felt was overlooked: the relationship of language to emotion, the passions, the senses. Only towards the end of his life did he venture into the lion's den to tackle for himself the precise question of the proper understanding of the relationship of language to rational thought.

One of the achievements of *AN* was to develop a germ from *SM*: the primacy which emotion, expression, and symbol possess over abstraction, analysis and logic in matters of language. Neither logic nor even representation possesses the rights of the first-born. Logic is not innate either in the mind or in the structure of language, but is learned, and is posterior to the first tasks and functions of language. This means that language fundamentally is not a system of universal signs, but has a pictorial and metaphorical character. 'The senses and the passions speak and understand nothing but images' (N II, 197:22f.); symbolism, imagery, metaphor have priority as the first recourse of our self-expression, which only later acquires formal precision and abstraction. 'Speaking is translation' from 'images into signs' (N II, 199:4f.); language, like the metaphor or the symbol, is a relational entity which mediates between the signified and those who perceive significance; from the world of angels into human tongues (N II, 199:4-5). To think either that language consists essentially or indeed only as a passive system of signs with which to communicate our thoughts or that language is a smothering curtain between us and the rest of reality is to deal a death-blow to true language – so that we must awaken the 'extinct language of nature' 'from the dead' (N II, 211:5f.). In the living language of nature, there is no language-world dichotomy. 'Outsidelessness' misses the point: language reveals, not conceals.

As Hamann's thinking developed, and the polemical situation changed, he refined his thinking on the relationship of language to the emotions or passions, as was shown in *HS*. Even Aristobolus in *EAQ* supposed an 'agreement of the tools of the emotions with the springs of human discourse', 'since our way of thinking is based on sensual impressions and the feelings connected with them'. (N II, 123:22-25). But the direction that Herder's essay took towards too unambiguous an identification of emotion and language necessitated greater precision in Hamann's account. The beginning of *PID* makes the careful distinction between 'voice' and 'language' towards that end. As Hamann's student, Herder had taken the lessons of *AN* to heart, and asserted that cries of emotion *are* language; but Herder missed the essential tension inherent in Hamann's principle of relationality. Language for Herder becomes identified with emotional expression and he lost the mediating relationship which language has for Hamann; the identification becomes the simple one of equation and not the ambivalent identification of metaphor. Against Herder, therefore, Hamann must distinguish language from instinct; for the simple, non-metaphorical identification of language with the senses, or instinct, or the emotions does not permit an adequate and flexible understanding of the richness of language.

HS indicated that language was the central point in the relation of reason and the passions. Now, after *MPR*, we see that this mediating role has been brought to the fore, frequently articulated as we have seen in the mould of Kantian oppositions. If Hamann's previous metaphor was 'translation', now in *MPR* it becomes 'the union of opposites', in which language is the mediating point of union. This mediating ability of language, clearly, is dependent on its relatedness to the senses, on its having one foot in the sensible realm and one in the intellectual.

As for the relationship of language to reason, Aristobolus first adumbrated Hamann's thinking on this issue; reason, which the invention of language would seem to require, indeed presupposes language; reason cannot operate without it (N III, 21:24-25). Throughout *HS*, in particular in *KRC* and *PID*, it became clear that the question of the human origin of language demands an examination of the question of the relationship of language and reason. Is reasoning, which is clearly necessary for the invention of language when the latter is viewed as a rational system for the communication of thought, not itself dependent on language? Similarly, in Hamann's view, the central question of Kant's first

Critique, the very possibility of *a priori* knowledge and of pure reason, depends on the nature of language. Either there must be an *a priori* language to service this *a priori* thought, or else not merely *a priori* but also non-linguistic thought must be possible. Thus the issue of the nature of language and its relation to thought are the foundation both of the *Critique* and its *Metacritique*: 'Reason for me is an Ideal, whose existence I presuppose but cannot prove with the ghost or the phenomenon of language and its words. With this talisman my countryman constructed the palace of his *Critique*, and with this alone can the magical building be deconstructed.'[35] It is noteworthy that not just a consideration of language is needed, in Hamann's view, but precisely the consideration of the relationship of language and reason, the 'Language-principle of reason' as the same letter to Jacobi describes it[36], for 'Companionship is the true principle of reason and language.'[37].

Hamann himself was not confident that he had solved the mystery of the relationship of language and cognition:

> If only I was as eloquent as Demosthenes, I would have to do no more than repeat a single word three times. Reason is language – Logos; I gnaw on this marrowbone and will gnaw myself to death over it. It is still always dark over these depths for me: I am still always awaiting an apocalyptic angel with a key to this abyss.[38]

The conviction that reason is rooted in language is also expressed earlier, in 1779: 'Without language, we would have no reason; without reason no religion, and without these three essential components of our nature, neither spirit nor the bond of society.' [39] It is however the exact articulation of this relation that seems to trouble Hamann.

At times this relationship is conceived in terms of the visible and invisible aspects of the same phenomenon:

> But you know already that I think of reason just as St. Paul does of the entire Law and its scholastic justification – think it capable of nothing more than the knowledge of error, but take it by no means for a way to truth and life. The last aim of the investigator is, according to your own understanding, what cannot be explained,

[35] ZH 7, Nr. 1060, 172:25-30, 27.4.1787.
[36] *Ibid.*, 169:23.
[37] *Ibid.*, 174:13f.
[38] ZH 5, Nr. 753, 177:16-21; 6.8.1784.
[39] *Zwey Scherflein zur neusten Deutschen Litteratur*, N III, 231:10-12.

> cannot be forced into clear concepts – and consequently does not belong to the jurisdiction of reason.
>
> I have completely given up these investigations on account of their difficulty and now hold myself to the visible **element**, to the **organon** or **criterion** – I mean language. Without **word**, no reason – no world. Here is the source of **creation** and **providence**.[40]

This concept of visible and invisible aspects of the same activity also formed the basis for his model of the relation between the senses and the understanding in *MPR* (N III, 286:35ff.). Hamann uses the same distinction in a later letter to Jacobi: 'Reason is invisible without language; but perhaps it is the **only expression** of the soul and the heart for the revelation and communication of what is most intimate.'[41] Hamann also, however, made use of the theme of the visible and the invisible more than a decade earlier, in the letter to Herder so important to the *HS*: 'I keep myself to the letter and the visible and the material as to the hand of a watch – but what is behind the number plate has need of an apocalypse.'[42] In this letter, it was the known rather than the knower which was divided into the visible and invisible; yet when the knower itself becomes the object of knowledge or investigation, the difference collapses.

This schema of in/visibility has several important corollaries. One consequence concerns the feasibility of the investigation of 'reason', of the invisible. Hamann's letters cited above indicate perhaps how dubious he feels is any research into reason at all. No mere analysis, but rather an 'apocalypse' would seem to be necessary for such an undertaking. Why not remain with reflection on the visible, the instrument of reason, and its criterion?

At the very least, the 'invisibility' of reason means that an investigation of the same without approaching it through its 'visible' element, language, is misguided and impossible. This invisibility should not be understood as an invisibility *vis-à-vis* others – a version of the 'Other Minds' problem – but is an invisibility even to ourselves. We must speak to be seen, even in a mirror.

With *MPR*, Hamann's consideration of the relationality of language moved beyond the first-level question of the relations of language in the sphere of life. It then became the metacritical question of what relationship language has with philosophy or

[40] ZH 5, Nr. 721, 95:13-22, 2.11.1783, to Jacobi.
[41] ZH 7, 168:30-32.
[42] ZH 2, 350, 416:22-25.

what role it has to play in philosophy. We saw that language was the central point of the question of philosophy's activity – analysis and Prosopopoeia. Hamann exposed the fundamental, if unconscious, attitude which prosopopoeic philosophy has towards language: a view of language that is substantivizing, an aggregate of terms. This view of language makes Prosopopoeia possible; this same attitude towards language makes possible the evaporation of language, by permitting the fantasy of thought without language, or else the existence of a 'universal philosophical' language. Language thus is forced to participate in the purification of philosophy, before being itself expunged in philosophy's final stage of refinement. It is for this reason that language can constitute the cure for philosophy. It itself, for Hamann, embodies a relation: it itself is a 'union of opposites', of the aesthetic and the logical, the bodily and the intellectual. Thus it can restore the indispensable dynamism of the relation to a death-dealing monolithic philosophical system.

> Now, Pollux of my heart, do you understand my ***Language-principle*** of **reason** and that I, with Luther, make the whole of philosophy into a Grammar, to a textbook of our knowledge, to an algebra and construction of equations and abstract signs, which mean **nothing** *per se*, and everything possible and real *per analogiam*.[43]

The metaphorical nature of language makes possible a more intimate, more interactive relationship to the rest of reality. Words are not merely assigned to things and perform their functions as cold replacements for objects and states of affairs. The metaphorizing of language is a more intimate relationship; language 'embodies' reality, makes it present, contains it and is contained by it.

It is possible that Hamann saw a particular attitude underlying the kind of philosophy he disliked: a fundamental wish or desire for self-sufficiency. Entities possessing aseity are the fantasy of the philosophical self, who himself desires to possess such a detached hypostasis and aseity. Thinking without language signifies absolute independence for the thinker; not merely is there no need to communicate, no interdependence in the present, but better still, there is no need to acknowledge one's previous dependence on other beings in learning language, one's own childish helplessness

[43] ZH 7, 169:22-27.

and powerlessness. Thus the 'Gnostic hatred of matter' that desires non-linguistic thought also desires non-social philosophy.

Alternatively, if it is not so much the Gnostic hatred of matter in operation but rather the 'mystical love of form', the desire for an innate, purely philosophical language, then what is desired is in effect the intercommunication of self-sufficient monads whose language is already innate and need not be taught. Moreover, the clarity and perfection of such a universal language rules out the anxiety and risk of ambiguity and misunderstanding. This is, ultimately, a language only for the communication of pure and clear ideas – and not the untidy ambivalence of emotion.

That a proper conception of language presupposes precisely some dependence or relationship to others, however, was one of the main messages of *HS*. As we have seen in the discussion of *KRC* and *PID*, even in exercising faculties that are natural to us we have need of the instruction and influence of others. This, I have suggested, was one of Hamann's fundamental grievances with Herder's account of the origin of language. Despite the time and energy expended in the second part of the *Preisschrift* on explicating the social function and nature of language, no sociality was needed to create the first word; and far from being first and foremost a matter of communication to others, language was the first private filing system.

The dependence implied by Hamann's view of language is also the marker of our relationship to the divine. It is the dependence of the creature on the Creator. This 'absolute dependence', as Schleiermacher was later to call it, is demonstrated linguistically for Hamann: the themes of the myth of *KRC* and of the rhapsody of *AN*, for example, show us surrounded by the address of God through nature (cf. N II, 198:29, N III, 32:21ff. *et passim*).

The same relational principle is also shown in Hamann's answer to the question of the origin of language. Language only arises, on God's side, in order to address his children, and human language only comes to exist as a response to *God's* address. Language then arises on both sides not in order to serve as the receptacle for one's thoughts, nor even (though this is more relational) as the medium for the communication for one's thoughts – but to facilitate an intimate relationship.

b. Interpretation

SM introduced us to relational hermeneutics. Not merely were we told that the clever interpreter places things in new relations in

order to understand them (N II, 71:25-28); it was also the claim of *SM* that passion and commitment, and not scholarly detachment, were the best grounds for understanding. *AN* developed this idea with greater vehemence. Not merely friendly warmth, but initiation into orgies were necessary before the hermeneut could safely begin the interpretative act. This passion enlivens words and hypotheses; it governs investigations and philosophical projects as well.

SM, and to a lesser extent *AN*, sketched a critique of objectivism; but the alternative suggested was not its 'opposite', subjectivism. The stance and disposition of the interpreter is integral, helpful, indeed, indispensable and must be acknowledged; but limitless subjectivity arouses Hamann's scorn. Those who 'flood the text' with glosses and marginalia, 'dreaming up one's own inspiration and interpretation', Hamann likens to the blind leading the blind (N II, 208:3ff.); those, on the other hand, whose subjectivity leads not to overwriting but to suppression and elision of the text Hamann compares to self-castrating eunuchs (N II, 207:10-20).

The constraints which Hamann places on the interpreter's subjectivity are not those usually advocated[44]: an avoidance of prejudice and pre-conceptions; an amnesia for one's own history, tradition and culture; an obedience to exegetical rules. These are for Hamann 'monastic rules' which prescribe an excess of abstinence. The first restraint on subjective distortion is the interpreter's own common sense; the last is the reaction of the text (or 'text') itself: 'what does this young person mean to make of me?' The interpreter's freedom is inextricable from the interpreter's respect and responsibility.

The responsible hermeneut is conscious of standing within something larger than oneself: a tradition. The wise interpreter is a kabbalist, and a rhapsodist: enjoying the freedom to create anew, as Hamann created his characteristic cento from pre-existing texts, in a way that preserved their original character and sense, while creating a new meaningful artefact. Hamann's use of this genre itself makes the point: the hermeneutical demand that only one meaning may exist for a text arises from an impoverished notion of meaning and creativity; one that misunderstands the nature of composition and the nature of interpretation alike.

Hamann's rejection of both exegetical materialism and idealism, insisting on the integrity of the letter *and* the spirit, preserves the

[44] At least, prior to Heidegger and Gadamer, and still by Betti and Hirsch.

place of author, text and reader alike. This picture of hermeneutics as resting in a three-way relationship goes beyond a conception of understanding as merely deciphering or decoding the author's meaning, to recognize the contribution that the interpreter makes. Where is meaning to be found?

> God, nature and reason have as intimate a relation to one another as light, the eye, and all that the former reveals to the latter, or like the centre, radius and periphery of any given circle, or like author, book and reader. But where does the riddle of a book lie? In its language or its content? In the plan of its author or in the mind of the interpreter? — [45]

In the relationship of all three, perhaps.

This relationalism of interpretation leads to a notion which, in comparison to Enlightenment understandings of interpretation, sounds strikingly modern; that is, the idea that the depth and meaning of a text goes beyond the author's own contribution, and are the responsibility of the interpreter: 'Few authors understand themselves, and a proper reader must not only *understand* his author but also be able to *see beyond him*.'[46] And yet this recognition that the author's opinions and intentions do not exhaust the possibilities of the text does not, as has happened in some strands of present-day criticism and exegesis, annihilate the place of the author. At the very least, the 'beyond' of the text includes a territory which, if unknown to the author, is not unconnected: that is, the author's own unconscious workings and meanings. It is not accidental that Hamann observes not that few authors understand their own *text* but that few authors understand *themselves*. This suggests a picture of creation in which more of the author is expressed in a text and entrusted to the interpreter than the author's conscious intentions and opinions. This in turn suggests a picture of interpretation – of 'understanding one's hero like Simon the Tanner' – in which greater sensitivity, insight, and fidelity is demanded of the interpreter than would otherwise be the case. Above all, the interpreter must have the courage to be a kabbalist; that is, to say more than the text does, not to express oneself but to say what the author left unsaid. The fruits of such faithful creativity may be impossible to 'justify' or 'verify' to the demands of the objectivist.

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[45] ZH 5, Nr. 784, 272:14-18. Christmas, 1784.
[46] ZH 6, 22:10-12, 22.7.1785, to Jacobi.

Fundamentally, for Hamann hermeneutics consists in perceiving the underlying relationship beneath the phenomenon in question; at the least, of course, the relationship between the author and the interpreter which requires such fidelity. Given Hamann's stance on the relationship of nature and humanity to God, however, this hermeneutic at once introduces a theological dimension: ultimately, this means that for Hamann proper hermeneutics rests on one thing: perceiving God revealed within the phenomenon. This was shown in *SM*, where history is best understood as 'mythology' (i.e. stories about gods acting on the earth) (N II, 65:9-13), and the desire to dissect a body or an event down to its first elements 'is to want to trap God's invisible being' (N II, 64:13-15). *AN* elaborated the same theme, now applied to Nature and Scripture, which are the sensuous revelation of God's majesty (N II, 198:1-2). Even the hermeneutic of ourselves is a revelation of God; a recognition of whose image solves all the most complicated knots and riddles of our nature (N II, 206:32-207:2; 198:3-5). The language and ideas of *HS*, with its theology of the *communicatio idiomatum* and the intimacy of the sibyl's theology point in the same direction: human nature's likeness to God is hermeneutically not only for the benefit of our understanding of ourselves, but also for our knowledge of God.

> ...Nature is the **revelation** not of itself, but of a higher Object, not its own vanity, but His majesty, which is not visible without enlightened and equipped eyes, nor can be made visible except through new conditions, tools and institutions, abstractions and constructions, which like the ancient Elements must be given, and not created from thin air.[47]

c. Knowledge

The importance of relationships was also made clear in Hamann's account of knowledge. From *SM* to *ESM*, Hamann indicated the importance that self-knowledge had for him, whether it was what marked out Socrates as 'the wisest of all', or whether it was the particular gift bestowed by the lover.

> Thus as all our powers of knowledge have **self-knowledge** as their object, so too all our inclinations and desires have **self-love**. The first is our wisdom, the latter our virtue. As long as it is not

[47] ZH 7, Nr. 1060, 173:8-17, to Jacobi, 27.4-3.5.1787.

> possible to know oneself, it remains impossible to love oneself. Therefore only the truth can set us free....[48]

What is clear even from the earliest writings is the extent to which for Hamann self-knowledge is dependent on a relationship with others. *Fragments* [*Brocken*] contains this passage in the context of its reflection on the difficulties of self-knowledge:

> In order to make easier the knowledge of our self, my own self is visible as in a mirror in every neighbour. As the image of my face is reflected in water, so my self is reflected in every neighbour. That this self may be as dear to me as my own, Providence has sought to unite as many advantages and amenities in human society as possible.
>
> God and my neighbour are therefore a part of my self-knowledge, my self-love.[49]

SM also connected self-knowledge with 'being known' (N II, 74:20-28); the intimate relationship necessary for self-knowledge was made even more explicit in *ESM* (cf. N III, 201:27-202:4). The sibyl could only begin to know herself as she was thrown into the unsettling business of being loved and loving in return. Even the most personal kind of knowledge, one might have said the most 'private' – self-knowledge – is for Hamann entirely dependent on human relationships. The 'mistake of looking at oneself', as in a mirror, is 'indispensable to self-knowledge'[50]; yet 'Self knowledge begins with the neighbour, the mirror, and just the same with true self-love; that goes from the mirror to the matter.'[51] To know oneself, in other words, is to know oneself as in a relationship.

It is not merely self-knowledge that requires another, however, but any form of knowledge at all. *SM* explored the pedagogy both of Socrates, the ideal philosophy teacher, and of 'Apollo' – God – in leading his 'children' to an understanding of the truth, and introduced the images of midwifery and the art of a sculptor to depict this important relationship. *AN* introduced the importance of knowing oneself to be in a relationship with a prior tradition. The *HS*, in their portrayal of knowledge, also set knowledge firmly in the context of the web of human relationships. Knowledge was a matter of revelations and traditions – both of which were seen to

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[48] *Fragments* [*Brocken*] N I, 300:17-22.

[49] N I, 302:16-23.

[50] ZH 2, 68:16.

[51] ZH 6, 281:16-17. As one reader of this text commented: 'So – Hamann anticipates not only Freud and Jung, but Lacan!'

consist of a communication of knowledge to the knower and from the knower. The sociality not only of language but also of knowledge means that learning and knowing can no more be separated from human relationships than can speaking.

The importance of 'tradition', in this sense, was prominent in *MPR*, with its attack on the purism that tried to strip any human community or continuity from knowledge and philosophy in its threefold purification of philosophy. It was underlined again in the letters surrounding the composition of *MPR*, where tradition was seen as essential to properly 'impure' philosophy. Given the importance this takes on in Hamann's later letters[52], it is tempting to speculate that had Hamann rewritten and finished the essay as intended, this aspect might well have received greater prominence in the revised version. At any rate, it is perhaps safe to suggest that one reason Hamann disliked the idea of *a priori* knowledge is that it is also *a-social* knowledge – it arises (allegedly) independently of any human contact. For Hamann, the opposite is true: we never know without sociality; and the idea that language is needed for knowledge is partly due to this.

Knowledge first and last must be viewed from the perspective of our neighbour in a different respect as well. In *SM*, for example, Socrates' knowledge – or professed lack of it – was perfectly calculated as the 'cure' to the Athenians' 'satyriasis' of sophistry and 'curiosity' (N II, 76:21-25, 28-29); thus, one individual's knowledge or lack of it is seen in a social context, as having importance for the life and fate of others. In *HS*, Hamann (with the aid of Aristotle) ranged beyond his task of deconstructing Herder and reflected on the vocation of a 'critical, archontical and political animal.' Here, as in *SM*, knowledge was shown to be less a matter of epistemological mechanics than ethics; the task of 'criticism' is the activity of discerning good and evil, while politics is the business of promoting the one and minimizing the effects of the other. This is the principle vocation of our epistemic nature.

The question of ethics in knowledge was not merely raised with regard to other people, but also as it were in relation to reality, as we have seen: *SM* and the associated letters gave us the contrasted metaphors of knowledge as promiscuity, knowledge as assault or rape, and knowledge as a loving and committed liaison. In a more theological vein, our self-knowledge and the understanding of our proper relations with God and creation have ethical implications

[52] Cf. e.g. ZH 6, Nr. 884, 108:5ff.

for our treatment of the environment and its creatures, as *AN* and *KRC* indicated.

Hamann's dislike of any sense of knowledge as the domination of its object may be related to his insistence on the role of the senses in knowing. The senses are traditionally seen as (as it were) gently receptive – not organs which aggressively grasp their object, but those which receive impressions. This concern for the role of the senses (and the body generally) in knowledge runs like an *idée fixe* throughout his writing, from the bombast of *AN* (e.g. N II, 207:10-14) to the sexualized knowledge of *ESM* or the *'Stellenlose Blatt'* (N III, 213) to the less colourful concern of *MPR* to defend the role of the senses in knowing. Indeed, even passion is given an epistemological role. In a later letter, however, Hamann recognizes the ambivalence that this involves:

> That is the nature of passion, that it cannot hang on the thing itself, but only on its image – and is it not the nature of reason to hang on concepts – won't both then suffer the fate of the withered branch? They make reason the river and passion the banks. Door or wall! *as you like it*. If it shall be the river: then it is the only one of its kind, the miraculous one of the wise Egyptians.[53]

Yet Hamann successfully maintains a tension in placing great esteem upon the empirical, the physical, while rejecting any form of positivism, reductionism or materialism. The senses, when conceived as purely passive receivers of perceptions, are unfruitful: 'what is a field without seed?' However when the senses are guided and directed by the 'passions', – subjectivity, 'human interests', as one likes – perception bears fruit: knowledge and understanding. In a strange way, this suddenly evokes Kant's project in his first *Critique*; a picture of the guiding role which human subjective conditions have over sense-perception. But Hamann's recognition of the role that subjectivity plays in perception and therefore knowledge is not achieved by distinguishing and dividing faculties one from another, but rather by insisting on their integration and interrelation. Secondly, it is not subjective conditions of judgement – 'reason' in any form – nor is it any one faculty or function which performs this service, but one's tradition, one's desires, indeed, the whole of one's concrete being. Most importantly of all, subjective conditions of judgement do not have priority, temporally or in the order of being, over reality and 'the given'. Desire comes first: God's desire that we might desire, as expressed in the cry of the as

[53] ZH 5, Nr. 721, 94:35ff.

yet uncreated creature: speak, that I might see you! Thereafter follows the 'given' – the sensible world; which is both a response and a freely initiated gift. Only then does the given become the 'taken' (N III, 283:29-284:6), what is perceived and 'thought' — as a response to the gift.

Sense-perception is active, then, and knowledge in Hamann's account implies a 'pre-having' of some kind. As Socrates and Meno mused, we must know before we can learn. The resolution to this epistemological circle is not found, however, in a fore-knowledge (Platonic or otherwise); the key to the riddle is not found in *knowledge* or in the structures or contents of the mind at all, but in the non-linear movement of *desire*: the beginning of understanding is a not a fore-knowing but a fore-wanting. As Hamann depicts us desiring creation before we are created, so too the solution to Meno's riddle is found in an initiative and agency of desire. We recognize what we want to know and learn, not because we knew it before, but because we *wanted* it.

In such a context, a division of senses and judgement or experience vs. *a priority* (or, in a theological version, 'experience' vs. 'revelation') is unintelligible; one might as well in an account of the working of the hand divide the index finger from the thumb. Indeed, one can perceive this distinction when one has hit one digit but not the other with a hammer; but it is the *hand* which holds the tool.

> Experience and revelation are one, and indispensable crutches or wings of our reason, if it is not to remain lame and crawling. The senses and history are the foundation and ground – the one may so deceive and the other be ever so simple: I give them precedence over all castles in the air. Δος μοι που στω — there are no more purified and abstracted and empty words – which I shun, like deep still water and smooth ice.[54]

Jacobi had taken *Dos moi pou sto*, Archimedes' lust for a standpoint outside the world, as his motto.[55] Hamann opposes to it 'Eureka!' — the cry not of one who wishes to depart from the world, but of one who has to his joy discovered it. Fallible our sense-perception may be, concrete and worldly history may be; but these (*contra* Descartes) are the only foundation for knowledge.

Hamann was certainly sufficiently perceptive, however, to realize that the question of the role of the senses is ultimately

[54] ZH 5, Nr. 782, 265:34-266:2, to Jacobi.
[55] On this, see Knoll, *HJ* 33-36.

connected to the question of certainty, and more fundamentally, is socially, psychologically or relationally connected with the desire to prove and convince another. The testimony of the senses, lacking necessity, convinces neither the rationalist nor the sceptic; Hamann recognizes that the senses have an overwhelming power to convince only oneself. This is not the privatization of knowledge; it does not signify for Hamann the impossibility of showing anyone else the beetle in one's box. Rather, it constitutes the humility of non-dominative knowing; a knowing which no more dominates another than it does the object of knowledge. One's senses and representations do not permit arrogant certainty, but rather a humble faith in what is there to be known.

Hamann's great debt to Hume is seen here: in a recognition of the indispensability of faith for knowledge. In Hamann's epistemology, the hard division between 'knowledge' and 'faith' becomes eroded; the false impression of Hamann as a 'fideist' is a misperception of this phenomenon.

> It is pure idealism to separate **believing** and **feeling** from **thinking**. **Companionship** is the true principle of reason and language, by which our sensations and representations are modified. This and that philosophy always separates things which by no means can be divided. Things without relationships, relations without things. There are no absolute creatures, as little as there is absolute certainty.... If we **believe** our sensations, our representations, then perhaps all divisions cease. We cannot dispense with these witnesses for ourselves, but can refute no one with their agreement.[56]

A recognition of the role which belief plays in knowing subverts the demand for absolute certainty. If it is true that sense-representations can be doubted, and therefore can never clinch an argument with a sceptic, it is no less true that we cannot do without their testimony for our own dealings and actions. One only *needs* to doubt them if one requires indubitable certainty; and does one ever? If, however, we operate consciously from a foundation of belief, which underlies all knowledge and deduction, the need for anthropological and epistemological divisions evaporates.

Both knowledge and faith rest on a foundation of trust; neither rest on a foundation of indubitability. Both are interactional and stand open to correction by the knowledge-partner (as a relational metacritic might call 'the object of knowledge'). Both therefore are perpetually provisional, always piecemeal and frequently contain

[56] ZH 7, 174:12-18, 22-24.

apparent contradictions: '**Our knowledge is piecemeal** — no dogmatist is in a position to feel this great truth, if he is to play his role and play it well; and through a vicious circle of pure reason skepsis itself becomes dogma.'[57]

Both belief and knowledge are also relational, knowledge no less than faith; knowledge has been personalized.

> **Being, belief and reason** are pure relations, which cannot be dealt with absolutely, and are not things but pure scholastic concepts, **signs** for understanding, not for worshipping, aids to awaken our attention, not to fetter it, as Nature is the **revelation** not of itself, but of a higher Object....[58]

This point formed the kernel of a debate between Hamann and Jacobi. Jacobi theorized a distinction between 'certain' and 'uncertain knowledge'. Hamann was unimpressed.

> Every philosophy consists of certain and uncertain knowledge, of idealism and realism, of sensuousness and deductions. Why should only the uncertain be called belief? What then are — *rational grounds?* Is knowledge without rational grounds possible, just as little as *sensus sine intellectu* ...[59]

Jacobi also posited a 'simple knowledge through feeling' [*Empfindung*]; which reason 'restricts'. Hamann countered:

> Complex beings are not capable of simple emotion, still less simple knowledge. Feeling can as little be separated from reason in human nature as can reason from sensuousness. ... Emotion must be delimited by rational grounds. Knowledge from belief is fundamentally identical to: *Nil in intellectu* –[60]

Knowledge, then, as we have seen in the analysis of *MPR* is not divided into categories such as higher vs. lower, *a priori* vs. *a posteriori*, analytic vs. synthetic, certain vs. speculative, logical vs. empirical, pure vs. practical. These divisions stem from and presuppose concomitant divisions in the human being, into higher and

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[57] ZH 5, Nr. 833; a fuller citation of this passage is given later, p. 351.

[58] ZH 7, Nr. 1060, 165:7-11, 27.4-3.5.1787. Jacobi was intoxicated with the notion of Being-in-itself; Hamann found this prosopopoeic and described it as a 'superstition'. '– Affirmation of **Being in itself** – the most abstract relation, that does not serve the intuition and understanding of the **things**, let alone **particular things**...' 166:19-20. He might have had the same reaction to Ferdinand Ebner, not to mention Heidegger.

[59] *Ibid.*, 165:33-37. 'Sensuousness' translates *Sinnlichkeit* (Kant's 'sensibility').

[60] *Ibid.*, 165:37-166:3, 10-11.

lower faculties, etc. But while knowledge does not subsist in a myriad of categories, neither is it monolithic, that is, all of the same kind; nor is it fused, so that the distinctions are collapsed. Rather, it is conceived according to the Principle of the Union of Opposites. Belief and reason are not opposed, but united.

> **Belief needs reason** just as much as the latter needs the former. Philosophy is of idealism and realism: as our **nature** is composed of body and soul. *Qui bene distinguit, optime definire potest* — ... Only **scholastic reason** divides itself into idealism and realism. Correct and authentic reason knows nothing of this imagined difference, which is not grounded in the **nature of things**, and contradicts their **unity**, which lies at the foundation of all our concepts, or at least, **should** do so.[61]

The very division into idealism and realism is misguided[62]; both share a picture of the knowing and speaking human standing outside the world, as it were, and the difference between their opposed stances is merely 'imagined'. Where, on the other hand, there is a fundamental unity perceived between the speaker, the speaking and the spoken about, even so-called 'realism' is too detached from reality. Only one who can make these distinctions wisely can define body and soul, knowledge and world.

Knowledge for Hamann is on the one hand 'narrower' than allowed by Descartes, or any other classical rationalist. His attention is often less on 'what can we know?' – the classic question of Enlightenment epistemology – than 'what don't we know; and what implications does that have for who we are?' Ignorance, for Hamann, does not however lead to a snide pessimism about human knowledge, a bitter anthropology of human inadequacy. If we have 'gaps and lacks', if we are not self-sufficient and independent, this only serves to indicate that we are made for relationships with each other.

Nevertheless this relational account entails that the subject-matter for knowledge is broad: there is no sense in which the 'transcendent' lies beyond our knowledge – not even the knowledge of the senses – as *AN* tells us. Knowledge ultimately is of something which is ultimately non-material: an Other. And yet, the only way *to* this Other is the physical realm: my senses, your body and bodily speech. This is true no less for the immaterial God than

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[61] ZH 7, Nr. 1060, 165:7-17.

[62] Blanke notes that Hamann wanted his epistemology to be known as 'Verbalism', which was neither idealism nor realism. (Blanke, *H-S* 95.)

it is for the material world and human friendships. History, nature, and finally humanity, are all 'mythology'; a genre which mediates knowledge of God through the senses and passions and the images they trade in, as well as the analysing faculty of the understanding.

If our philosophical depiction of knowing and speaking must be in terms of lived experience and in terms of the relation of their different dimensions, this relational, experiential way of describing must also apply to the depiction of our place in the world; our relationship with nature. Further, the relationship with nature points us onwards to another, more primal relation; that with the author of nature. Our attempts at knowing and grasping reality thus are firmly placed in the context of a fundamental personal relation which encompasses this activity. The highest knowledge is 'being-known'.

d. Humanity

The concept of knowledge that Hamann sets forth then necessitates a certain picture of humanity: the ground of possibility of Hamann's 'holistic' epistemology is the diversity yet integration of the human being. For Hamann, the truest picture of humanity is of diversity in unity; senses and understanding, gentility and *Rachsucht*. It is certainly true that Hamann fought for the importance of the passions over against the hegemony of Reason in the Enlightenment, but this best-known concern of Hamann's is simply one part of the story; it should be clear by now that Hamann was no mere irrationalist. It was the unity of unhypostasized diversity that he sought; and the 'bill of divorce' handed to united aspects of reality that he deplored (cf. N III, 40:3f.).

Similarly, the relational and social account of language which Hamann espouses has its anthropological implications. The relational, linguistic self is fundamentally related to others as part of its own ontology. As we have seen, even our own self-knowledge is no solitary matter but is the gift of another. The 'gaps and lacks' which, Hamann maintained against Herder, form our human nature, themselves point towards the need for others: 'precisely this lack makes him all the more capable of the enjoyment of nature through experiences and of community with his race through traditions.' (N III, 39:25-28.)

We have also seen that the account of freedom in *HS* was viewed in the context of social relations, unlike the simple freedom

from instincts imagined by Herder. For Hamann, freedom is the ground of our moral and ethical behaviour towards each other (N III, 38:8-10). The freedom of our thinking nature is one that is directed towards our treatment of one another; and it can never escape these ethical implications.

The ultimate relationship, however, for Hamann, was that of the human being to God; which found expression in two images: that we are God's text, and that we are created in the likeness of God. On the basis of this idea, Hamann can speak of a *communicatio* of human and divine *idiomata*, not merely when speaking of Christ but indeed when speaking of us. All is human, all is also divine. There is no unbridgable chasm between us and God but the easiest, most perfect intimacy. Hamann does not in any way lessen God's majesty or abolish his transcendence, but the stress on God's transcendence is less important to him than asserting not merely our dependent relation on God but also God's relatedness to us; Hamann's God is an affable one who delights in his human children and plays with them (N III, 32:14-15).

This is the ground not merely of our intimacy and confidence but also ultimately of our freedom. The 'perfect law of freedom', and intimacy with God, make possible our 'participation in divine energies'. In the myth of the origin of language, this participation was implicitly grounded, made possible, perhaps even constituted by language — 'the sign, symbol and pledge of a new, mysterious, inexpressible but all the more intimate union, participation and community of divine energies and ideas.' (N III, 32:21-24.) The sibyl's narrative suggested another means or metaphor of participation in divine energies: sexual encounter and still more, the creation of human beings. Our disposition to create, maintain and multiply our race means that we are 'Gods of the earth', whose divinity is incorporated into the entire visible economy; it is a 'similarity to God' (N III, 199:15-27). This issue of participation is taken one step further: the *communicatio idiomatum* makes possible a kind of identification with God and with Christ. Man, woman and God are identified with the Trinity; and man in entering the woman is the Creator and Saviour while the woman possesses God-like creativity.

In the end, however, it would not be truly Hamannian if only the senses and the passions related us to God. In the time after the penning of *MPR*, we find that Hamann in his consideration of 'reason' has come to the firm conviction that this too indicates for us our likeness to God: as has already been cited, God, nature and

reason have as intimate a relation to one another as light, the eye, and all that the former reveals to the latter, or like the centre, radius and periphery of a circle, or like author, book and reader.[63]

This question of knowing God (or indeed, 'reading' him) formed a point of dispute between Hamann and Jacobi. Jacobi wrote:

> From now on, we will *philosophize* not with and from our usual body; rather, if humanity can have a *certain* knowledge of God, there must lie a faculty in the soul to *organize* it in that direction.[64]

Hamann countered:

> You refute yourself, when you say: from now on we will philosophize [not] with and from our body — [then] still less with and from our metaphysical and abstract scholastic knowledge, in which a vicious circle is unavoidable. If humanity can have a certain knowledge of God: why do we need a faculty in the soul, *to organize the self in that direction??*[65]

Jacobi's own interest in dialogue and relationship had led him to postulate the existence of a special faculty in the self which orientates us to God. Hamann saw that this in fact undermines his own relational thinking. If knowing God requires a special faculty alongside others in the human psyche, God becomes an object of knowledge separate from others and requiring its own mode of apprehension; just as vision requires the eye while hearing requires the ear. For Hamann, God is rather more like the light which reveals everything to the eye, or a circle whose centre is everywhere and circumference nowhere.

Furthermore, along with the concept of 'organization', Jacobi has unwittingly imported another trait from Herder as revealed in his *Preisschrift*: the construction of a picture of the human being which makes communication from God redundant. God does not reveal or communicate to us but becomes a passive object of knowledge, through a faculty we possess. 'Certain knowledge' arises not out of an intimate relationship, but from our organization.

That this in fact arises from a pessimism about the capabilities of the human being in a state of nature (as opposed to grace) is revealed by Jacobi's response to Hamann's criticism:

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[63] ZH 5, Nr. 784, 272:14-16. Christmas, 1784.

[64] ZH 5, Nr. 774, 242:22-25, 18.10.1784, to Hamann. See also Knoll on this subject, *HJ* 26-27, 80.

[65] ZH 5, 782, 265:18-23, 14.11.1784, to Jacobi.

> **Do, become, be** is how it is everywhere in Scripture. And: the natural human being receives nothing from the Spirit of God, it is foolishness to him and he cannot understand it.
>
> Must there not then lie in the self a power, even in the natural person – whose direction makes him capable of *receiving* the Spirit, of whom we know not, from where he comes nor whither he goes, but who is the *truth* itself.
>
> How then do I refute myself by saying: if humanity can have a *certain* knowledge of God? there must be a faculty in his soul to organize him in that direction![66]

Hamann's previous letter had already contained the Hamannian answer to this pessimism, for after the passage cited earlier it continues:

> Whose is the image and inscription, in which gold and copper coins are like the lord of the land? Stay with the answer of your lips and heart: He created the human being in His own image, in the image of God He created them – We are His race – the *differentia specifica* merely lies in the fact that we are still in the making, and our life is still concealed with Christ in God.[67]

Knowledge of God indeed comes through self-knowledge, but not in the manner Jacobi supposed. Our knowledge of God, our relationship with God, finds its meaning and explanation in God's creation of humanity in his own image; we are like coins, which bear the likeness of the one they honour, and the one to whom they should be rendered. Even in a state of nature the human being requires nothing *further* added to its being to know and love God; that indeed would be 'a mute reproach to the Creator.' What God has made clean, we must not call unclean, Hamann once told Mendelssohn; as he now tells Jacobi what God has made in his image needs no further embellishment.

e. Unity and Difference

If, as Hamann writes to Jacobi, '*Petitio principii* is the antidote to the inauthentic misuse of things, and their misunderstanding'[68], Hamann needs a principle to ground his metacritical philosophy and to provide a framework to contain the tension of the relationship of so many differing dimensions. It should come as no surprise, therefore, that Hamann's own model for conceiving the interrelation of these dimensions of human life increasingly was

[66] ZH 5, Nr. 797, 320:5-14, 11.1.1785, to Hamann.
[67] ZH 5, Nr. 782, 265:24-30.
[68] ZH 7, 173:6-7.

the Principle of the Union of Opposites. He writes approvingly of this principle to both Jacobi and Herder in the period after his encounter with Kant's new epistemology, telling Herder that in his eyes this principle is 'worth more than all the Kantian *Critique*'[69]; and writing to Jacobi, he opposes it to the principles of contradiction and of sufficient reason.[70] Both the world of things and the world of reflection, in Hamann's view, contain a multiplicity of contrasting and even contradictory elements:

> Yes, daily at home I have the experience that one must always contradict oneself from two viewpoints, [which] never can agree, and that it is impossible to change these viewpoints into the other without doing the greatest violence to them. **Our knowledge is piecemeal** — no dogmatist is in a position to feel this great truth, if he is to play his role and play it well; and through a vicious circle of pure reason skepsis itself becomes dogma —[71]

Far from being a pre-condition for truth, the absence of contradiction is in the end a pre-condition for dogmatism. Knowledge must not proceed on the basis of unanimity and the absence of contradiction, but must proceed dialectically, as it were, through contradictions: not to achieve a comprehensive and homogenous Hegelian synthesis, but only to continue to fill in the patchwork of our knowledge — while never eliminating the element of contradiction.

What is important to observe, however, is the nature of this opposition of elements. It is a 'friendly' opposition, so to speak; Hamann stresses that his perception of contradictions in the world is 'without Manichaeism'.[72] Flesh is not the enemy of spirit, nor the senses the undoing of reason. These are contrasting elements of the same unified – unified but not synthesized – reality. In his perception of reality, as with his perception of human knowing and the articulation of the activity of knowing, Hamann thus is trying to steer a particular course between Scylla and Charybdis: between the dogmatic, even tyrannical extermination of opposition and contradiction; and the elimination of contradiction through a false synthesis or fusion achieved by an apparent acceptance of antithetical realities.

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[69] ZH 4, Nr. 676, 462:7-8.

[70] ZH 5, Nr. 800, 327:12ff.

[71] ZH 5, Nr. 833, 432:29-36; 8.5.1785, to Herder. This is in the context of a discussion of Kant.

[72] '...without Manichaeism, I have found all kinds of contradictions in the elements of the material and intellectual world.' ZH 5, Nr. 800, 327:16-17.

> Nothing seems easier than the leap from one extreme to the other, and nothing so difficult as the union to a centre. ... This Coincidence [Union of Opposites] always seems to me to be the one sufficient reason of all contradictions – and the true process of their resolution and mediation, that makes an end to all feuds of healthy reason and pure unreason.[73]

Thus the paradox of a 'union of opposites' is the paradigm he requires: it insists on the unity of experience, but on the condition that the opposites are allowed to continue to exist as differing dimensions of the phenomenon in question, without having to reduce one to the other or forcing them into a false agreement.

Ultimately, however, there is a good reason why Hamann did not simply construct a philosophy based on the principle of the union of opposites as an alternative to one based on the principle of contradiction. The deployment of the principle of the union of opposites in a sense is for Hamann the interim solution before the philosophical *parousia*. It is the principle to apply when one perceives oppositions and contradictions. It is, so to speak, a form of therapy to rehabilitate oneself from the disease of 'Prosopopoeia'.

Ideally, however, reality need not be organized into opposing entities. Ideally, philosophers would not hypostasize what are *aspects* or *dimensions* of realities and activities and then oppose them. The task of interpreting reality would not consist in this creation of a structure filled with tensions and antagonisms:

> Dogmatism and scepticism for me have the most perfect unity, like nature and reason, and as I have already said to you, *faire et confondre* is just as homogenous or relational work. Analysis and synthesis must occur under quite similar laws. Analysis not destroying, but dissecting [*zergliedern*]. Synthesis not blending, but placing together [*zusammensetzen*]. Both according to the characteristics and laws of nature and its generation, whose imitation and composition art must take for its model.[74]

The truly Hamannian philosophy or theology would not then be busily constructed of united oppositions. Its activity in interpreting the world would permit analysis that did not destroy and hypostasize, and a juxtaposition of phenomena which did not conflate or confuse. Above all, it would be sensitive to the interplay of identity and difference – embodied, for example, in the notion of

[73] ZH 4, 287:5-17, 29.4.1781.
[74] ZH 7, 169:34-170:3.

language as metaphor – which underlies our way of perceiving and relating, and which takes on false concretion as mere 'opposition'.

3. Final Conclusion

The condition of possibility of relational thinking could be said to be the rejection of substantival thinking and the Prosopopoeia which in the end became the explicit focus of Hamann's critique. The attack on substantival and essential thinking makes possible the evaporation (or at least, recasting) of numerous philosophical and theological problems. For Hamann, it would be fair to say that the rejection of substances and essences makes for the deconstruction of the alienating differentness of humanity from the rest of the world. This difference creates problems for knowledge: it creates first of all a division between the knower and the known object, creating the antithetical options of objectivism and subjectivism; moreover, to bridge the division between unextended thinking things and unthinking extended things, the split must be relocated within the human person into a mind-body dualism, or between senses and reason, or, more subtly, into divisions and oppositions within the structures of judgement. The difference between humanity and reality also creates problem for language and reference and leads to an alternative between realism and idealism or other forms of antirealism. Theology has found its own way of bridging the radical abyss that separates the two important natures, human and divine; Hamann's interest in divine condescension and his admiration for Luther may in part be due to his inclination for such a pattern of thinking, the Principle of the Union of Opposites, which heals such divisions. His own, more frequent explication of divine-human relations, however, in the two ideas of being created in God's image and of the *communicatio idiomatum* seem to indicate that his more fundamental instinct in theological and philosophical thinking is not so much to bridge a radical discontinuity as to refuse to construct one in the first place.

Hamann's own presupposition is therefore the continuity of creation, and moreover the relatedness of the creature to the Creator. Philosophical problems which arise from the difficulty of relating opposed natures, essences, substances, or phenomena simply need not arise in the same way. There is no alienation to overcome between subject and object or mind or body; mind, as something different to the rest of the world, does not have a

dissecting role, but rather, we in relation to nature may interpret the latter as we interpret one another; there is no difficulty in giving an account of language's means of attaching itself to the world; no anxiety over the ability of this 'intellectual, linguistic code' to mirror accurately a 'non-mental, non-linguistic' reality; no rivalry between senses and reason; no fundamental enmity between us and God.

The core of the insight, method, or presupposition of Hamann's relationality is the theological conviction of 'being created'. We are therefore neither the result of random, impersonal factors, nor a series of particular exemplars of a universal essence. Our existence, our being, is due to and remains constituted by a relationship; a relationship above all to the divine but which plays itself out in numerous other relationships with ourselves, amongst ourselves and between ourselves and the rest of creation.

> ...All things, even the *Ens entium*, are there for enjoyment, and not for speculation. Through the tree of knowledge we are deprived of the tree of life — and should not the latter be dearer than the former?[75]

[75] ZH 5, Nr. 782, 265:2-5, 14.11.1784.

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TRANSLATIONS

Socratic Memorabilia

For the leisure of the public
put together
by a lover of leisure.

With a double dedication
to NOBODY and to TWO.

O the vanity of mankind! O what uselessness there is in things!
Who will read this?– – Are you talking to me? – –
Nobody, by Hercules! – – Nobody? – –
Either TWO or NOBODY – – – [a]

Persius.

Amsterdam, 1759

TO THE PUBLIC, OR NOBODY, THE NOTORIOUS

NOBODY, where is he? —
Eurip. *Cyclops.*

You[a] bear a name, and require no proof of **Your** existence, **You** find faith, and perform no signs in order to earn it, **You** receive honour, and have neither a concept nor a feeling of the same. **We know that there are no idols in the world.**[b] **You** are not a human being; but **You** must be a human image which superstition[c] has idolized. **You** do not lack for eyes and ears, but they do not see, do not hear[d]; and the artificial eye **You** create, the artificial ear **You** plant[e], is, like **Your** own, blind and deaf. **You** must know everything, and learn nothing[1]; **You** must judge everything, and understand nothing, always learning, and can never come to a knowledge of the truth[2]; **You** are musing[f] or otherwise engaged, are far afield, or perhaps asleep, when **Your** priests call loudly and **You** are supposed to answer them and their mockers with fire. Daily offerings are brought to **You**, which others consume on **Your** account, that your hearty meals might make **Your** existence probable. Fastidious though **You** are, **You** nevertheless welcome anyone, so long as they do not appear before **You** empty-handed.[g] Like the philosopher, I throw myself at the hearing feet of a tyrant.[h] My gift consists in nothing but cakes, from which a god like **You** once burst. So give them to a pair of **Your** worshippers, whom I wish to purge from the service of **Your vanity**[i] with these pills.

Because **You** bear on **Your** face the features of human ignorance and curiosity[j]; I will confess to **You** who the **Two** are, on whose account I want to pass this pious fraud[k] through **Your** hands. The first[l] works on the philosopher's stone, like a hu-

[1] *Prov. 9.13.
[2] *2 Tim. 3.7.

manitarian, which he views as a medium to promote industry, the bourgeois virtues, and the common good. I have written for him in the mystical language of a Sophist; because wisdom will always remain the best kept secret of economics[m], even if alchemy achieves its purpose of making everyone rich, which through the Marquis of Mirabeau's fruitful maxims[n] must soon! populate France. According to the present plan of the world the art of making gold remains, justifiably, the highest project and highest good of our politicians.

The other[o] would like to be as universal a philosopher and as good a Warden of the Mint as Newton was. No aspect of criticism is more certain than that which has been invented for gold and silver. Therefore no confusion in the currency of Germany can be as great as that which has crept into all the usual[p] text-books. We lack precise exchange rates to determine for us how weighty[q] an idea must be for it to count as a truth, and so on.[3]

Because these little cakes must not be chewed, but swallowed, like those the Cosimic family in Florence have on their coat-of-arms[r], they are therefore not made for their flavour. As for their effects; Vespasian first learned by a similar feeling of the same to recognize the good fortune of **Your Name**, and is said to have cried out, on a stool that was not his throne: *UTI PUTO, DEUS FIO!*[s]

[3] *O Zeus, you have granted to humanity a sure means for detecting false currency; but why does the human body bear no mark by which we can recognize the bad? Euripides Medea.

TO THE TWO

– – Indeed, it is little, but it is all
that I have – –

Sophocles in *Electra*.

The public in Greece read the *Memorabilia* of Aristotle on the natural history of animals, and Alexander understood it.[a] Where a common reader might see nothing but **mould**, the affection of friendship, my gentlemen, for you perhaps will discover to you a little microscopic forest in these pages.

I have written about Socrates in a Socratic manner. **Analogy**[4b] was the soul of his deductions, and he gave them **irony** for their body. Ignorance[c] and confidence be as characteristic of me as they may; nevertheless here they must be viewed as aesthetic imitations.

In the works of **Xenophon** a superstitious[d] devotion dominates, and in **Plato** a visionary[d] one; a vein of similar feeling therefore runs through all the parts of this mimetic work. It would have been easiest for me to approximate more closely the candour of the **heathens** in this respect; I have had to accustom myself, however, to drawing that veil over my religion, which a patriotic **St. John**[e] wove for his unbelief and a Platonic **Shaftesbury**[e] for his misbelief.

Socrates, gentlemen, was no common critic. In the writings of Heraclitus, he distinguished between that which he did not understand and that which he understood in it; and made a very parsimonious and modest presumption from the comprehensible to the incomprehensible.[f] On this occasion Socrates spoke of **readers** who could **swim**.[5] A confluence of ideas and feelings in that living **elegy** of a philosopher[g] made his statements into an archipelago, perhaps, for whose communication **bridges** and ferries of method were lacking.

As you are both my friends; your partisan praise and your partisan criticism are equally welcome. I am, etc.

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[4] **Analogy, man's surest guide below.* **Young**. *Night* 6. [*Night thoughts.*]

[5] **And yet, although so skilled [docilis] in other respects, he did not know how to swim.* Suetonius of Caligula.

Socratic Memorabilia

INTRODUCTION

The history of philosophy has fared rather like the statue of the French Minister of State.[a] A great artist[6] turned his chisel to it; a monarch[7], the **name** of an entire century[b], donated the expenses for the monument and admired the creation of his subject; the Scythian[8], however, who traveled for his craft, and like Noah or the schemer Julian's Galilean[c] became a **carpenter** to be the god of his people – this Scythian committed an act of folly the recollection of which alone could immortalize him. He ran to the marble, magnanimously offered the dumb[9] stone half of his extensive empire, if it would teach him to govern the other half. Should our history become mythology, this embrace of a lifeless teacher, who without self-interest worked miracles, will evolve into a fairy-tale which bears certain similarities to the relics of Pygmalion's life. After an unimaginable length of time, in the language of our imagination a **creator of his people** will have to be understood as poetically as a **sculptor of his wife.**

In the temple of learning there is truly an idol, which bears under its image the inscription **philosophical history**; and which has not lacked for high priests and Levites. **Stanley** and **Brucker**[d] have furnished us with Colossi, which are as extraordinary and imperfect as that picture of beauty which a Greek put together from the charms of all the beauties who by intention or chance had made an impression on him.[e] Masterpieces which might be greatly admired and **sought** by **learned** connoisseurs on the other hand will be ridiculed by the wise in private as adventitious growths and chimeras, or even mimicked at leisure in theatrical portrayals.

Because **Stanley** is a Briton and **Brucker** a Swabian, they have both whiled away the public's time, for their own glory; although the public also deserves to be praised for its

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6 Girardon.

7 Louis XIV.

8 Peter the Great.

9 Hab. 3.19. [In modern editions, 2.19.]

courtesy in overlooking the varying errors of these national writers.

Deslandes[f], an author of **encyclical**[10g] mind, has produced a Chinese mantelpiece figurine for the cabinet of gallic taste. The Creator of **beautiful nature**[h] seems to have damned the greatest heads of France, like Jupiter once did the Cyclops, to the forging of rays and flashes, which he had need of for sterile sheet-lightning and aetheric fireworks.

From the judgments which I have passed on all these fine and honourable essays on a critical system of philosophical history, it can be concluded as more than probable that I have read none of them; but rather merely mimic the tendency and tone of the learned masses, and with imitation seek to flatter the same, to the best of whom I write. In the meantime, I believe, more seriously, that our philosophy would necessarily have to have another form if one studied the fate of this name or word: **Philosophy**, according to the shading of times, heads, races and peoples, not as the learned or a philosopher oneself, but rather as an idle[11] observer of their olympic games, or could study *as a painter who steps back.*[12 i]

A **Phrygian** like Aesop, who must, according to the laws of his **climate**[j], as one says nowadays, take time to grow wise[k], and a natural simpleton like La Fontaine, who can accomodate and transform himself into animals' way of thinking more easily than humans', in place of painted philosophers or their delicately mutilated portraits would show us quite different creatures, with their ways and sayings, the legends of their teachings and deeds reproduced in colours truer to life.

But perhaps the philosophical chronicles and portrait galleries are less to blame than the poor use which their lovers have made of them. A little vision and superstition here would not merely merit indulgence, but rather something of this leaven is necessary to start off the soul's fermentation towards a philosophical heroism. A thirsting ambition for truth and virtue, and a fury to conquer all lies and vice, which precisely are **not** recognized as such, nor wish to be; in this consists the heroic spirit of a philosopher.

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10 *Cf. Clouds. P. 94

11 A person without occupation in Greek is called Argus.

12 *Eurip. *Hecuba*.

When Caesar pours forth tears at the statue of the Macedonian youth[l], and the latter at the tomb of Achilles thinks with envy of the herald of his fame which the blind minnesinger was[m]: thus Erasmus in jest bends the knee before St. Socrates[n], and the hellenistic muse of our von Bar must raise up the comic shadow of a **Thomas Diafoirus**, in order to preach the subterranean truth to us: that there were divine people among the heathens, that we should not despise the cloud of these witnesses[o], that heaven anointed them for its messengers and interpreters, and consecrated them for precisely the vocation among their race which the prophets had among the Jews.[13]

As Nature is given to us to open our eyes, so history is for our ears. To dissect a body or an event down to its first elements is to want to trap God's invisible being, his eternal power and divinity.[p] Whoever does not believe Moses and the Prophets[q] will always therefore be a poet, against his knowledge and his will, like **Buffon**[r] on the history of creation and **Montesquieu**[s] on the history of the Roman Empire.

If no young sparrow falls to the earth without our God[t]; then no monument of ancient times is lost to us that we should lament. Should not his providence extend to writings, since He Himself became a writer, and the Spirit of God calculated so exactly the value of the first forbidden books, which a pious zeal of our religion offered to the fire?[u] We admire it in Pompey as a clever and noble plot to clear the writings of his enemy Sertorius out of the way[v]; why not then our Lord, that he let the writings of a Celsus perish? I mean, therefore, and not without reason, that God has given as much attention to all the books that matter to us as Caesar had for the inscribed scroll with which he jumped into the sea[w], or Paul for his parchments in Troas.[14]

Did the artist who threw a lentil through the eye of a needle not have enough in a bushelful of lentils for the practice of his acquired skill? This question might well be asked of all the

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[13] **Would perhaps St. Thomas the Scholastic have been chosen to be the **apostle** to the nation of the peripatetics, who have not yet been subjected [to faith] and not yet tamed? Presumptuous and unruly nation, that rarely submits to authority, which always founds itself on reason, that always asks why this is. – – It seems to me that this last **mission** was not useless. Socrate Chretien* by Balzac *Discours* V.

[14] 2 Tim. 4.13.

scholars who are no cleverer at using the works of the ancients than he was at using lentils. If we had more than time has seen fit to give us, we ourselves would be obliged to throw our cargo overboard, send up our libraries in flames, or do as the Dutch do with their spices.[15x]

It surprises me that none has ventured to do for history what **Bacon** has done for physics. **Bollingbroke** advised his student to study ancient history in general as pagan theology and as a poetic dictionary.[y] But perhaps the whole of history is more mythology than this philosopher thought, and, like nature, a sealed book[z], a concealed witness, a riddle that cannot be solved, without plowing with another heifer than our reason.

My intention is not to be **a historiograph** of Socrates; I merely write his memoirs like those of **Duclos**[α] on the history of the eighteenth century, published for the leisure of the fine public.

Perhaps an essay as clever as **Blackwell's**[β] on Homer could be provided on the life of Socrates. Should not the father of philosophy have been even more deserving of this honour than the father of poetry? What **Cooper**[γ] has published is nothing but a school exercise, as distasteful as a eulogy or a polemic.

Socrates often visited the workshop of a tanner[16] who was his friend, and who like the host of the apostle Peter in Joppa was called Simon.[δ] The craftsman was the first to have the idea of writing down the conversations with Socrates. The latter perhaps recognized himself better in these than in Plato's, upon reading which he might well have been perplexed, and asked, **'What does this young person mean to make of me?'** — If only I understand my hero as well as **Simon the tanner**!

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15 *Vid. Melanges interssans et curieux. Tom. X.

16 Vid. *Clouds* p. 95. [Hamann notes here that he has misrepresented Simon's profession. 'The Athenian Simon was not a tanner, but actually a **leather-worker**' (95:18-19). Cf. translator's note y.]

FIRST SECTION

It was not for nothing that Socrates had a sculptor[17] for a father and a midwife for a mother. His teaching has always been compared to midwifery.[18] One has been content merely to repeat this idea, without letting it germinate as the seed of a fruitful truth. This expression is not merely tropic, but rather a skein of splendid ideas, which every teacher needs as a guide in the education of the understanding. As the human being was made in the image of God, **the body** seems to be **a figure or image of the soul.**[19a] As our skeleton is concealed[b], because we are made in secret, because we are built below in the earth, how much more are our concepts made in secret, and can be seen as the extremities of our understanding. That I call them the extremities of understanding does not prevent us from seeing each and every idea as a special and entire birth itself. Socrates therefore was modest enough to compare his **scholastic learning** with the art of an old woman, which merely comes to the aid of the work of the mother and her ripe fruit, and assists both.

The power of indolence and the seemingly opposed power of pride[c], which from so many appearances and observations one must accept has arisen in our will, bring ignorance, and the mistakes and prejudices which spring from it, along with all their sister passions. In this respect, Socrates imitated his father, a sculptor, who, **in hewing away and removing what should not be in the wood, precisely that way fosters the form of the image.**[20] Therefore the greatest men of his time had sufficient reason[d] to cry that he would fell all the oaks of their woods, spoil all their logs, and could only make shavings of their wood.

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[17] *Socrates would not let Sophroniscus perish. Seneca *de Benef.* Lib. III.

[18] **So yield to me as a midwife's son and a midwife myself.* Socrates to Theatetus in Plato.

[19] See the following note.

[20] *Words of our Church Father, Martin Luther [*Sieben Bußpsalmen*, 1525], by whose name an upright and fine-thinking visionary has lately reminded us that we have not learned as much as we might and could from this great man, not only in the German language but in general. Klopstock in the *Nordischen Aufseher* [I, 223 (1758).].

Socrates presumably was a sculptor, because his father was one. One may deduce that he did not remain mediocre in this art, for his three statues of the Graces were erected in Athens. At one time, it was customary to clothe these goddesses; Socrates followed this old-fashioned practice and his Graces contradict the custom of the contemporary system of the gods and the fine arts based on them. How Socrates came to this revival, whether it was a contribution of his Genius, or a vain desire to distinguish his work from others, or the simplicity of a natural modesty which must have seemed extraordinary to a pious Athenian[e]; I do not know. It is only too probable, however, that these newly-dressed Graces would have been as little uncontested as the newly-dressed Graces of our present day poetry.

Here is the place to punish the myopia of some patriots who are far too imaginative about the human race and its emergence, who imagine the merit of the sculptor in Socrates to be so great that they do not recognize the wise man, who deify the sculptor in order to be better able to mock the carpenter's son. If they do seriously believe in Socrates; then his sayings are testimonies against them.[f] These new Athenians are descendants[g] of his accusers and poisoners, more refined calumniators and crueller murderers than their fathers.

From the art in which Socrates was raised, his eyes were so accustomed and practiced to beauty and its relationships, that his taste for well-built youths should not alienate us. If one knows the times of the heathens[21] in which he lived, it is a foolish effort to try to whitewash him of the vice[h], our Christianity should regard Socrates as the polite world does Toussaint's[i] little **novels of his passions**, as beauty-spots of his **morals**. Socrates seems to have been an upright man, whose acts were determined from the bottom of his heart, and not by the impressions which others have of them. He did not deny that his hidden inclinations agreed with the **discoveries of the physiognomer**[j]; he admitted that the latter's **spectacles** had seen accurately. A person who is convinced that he knows nothing cannot without giving himself the lie have knowledge of his good heart. That he hated the vice of which he was accused,

[21] Rom. 1. [1.27.]

we know from his zeal against it, and in his history are tokens of his innocence[k], which almost acquit him. One cannot feel a lively friendship without sensuality, and a metaphysical love perhaps sins more coarsely against the nerves than does an animal love against flesh and blood. Socrates therefore, without doubt, had to suffer and struggle for his pleasure in a harmony of inner and outer beauty. In addition, beauty, bodily and intellectual strength, along with a wealth of children and goods in the young ages of the world were seen as symbols of divine properties and footprints of divine presence. Nowadays we think too abstractly and in too masculine a fashion to judge human nature according to such incidentals. Even religion itself teaches us of a God who makes no distinctions of person[l]; despite the misunderstanding of the Law, which held the Jews bound to the same prejudices in this matter as the pagans. Their healthy reason, which Jews and Greeks lack as little as our Christians and Muslims[m], was scandalized that the **fairest of human children**[n] was promised to them as a redeemer, but a man of sorrows[o], full of wounds and stripes, should be the hero of their expectations. The pagans were accustomed to such contradictions from the **clever fables**[p] of their poets; until their sophists, like ours, damned them as they would a parricide, which one commits against the basic principles of human knowledge.

We find an example of such contradictions in the Delphic oracle, in that it recognized as the wisest the man who himself confessed that he knew nothing. Did Socrates give the oracle the lie, or the oracle him? The best intellects of our time maintain that on this occasion the priestess was a prophetess, and inwardly are pleased over their resemblance to their father Socrates, who thought it quite proper to play the idiot or to believe in gods. If anyway there are grounds for suspicion that Apollo is oriented to humanity, because it is too stupid to orient itself to him; then he acts like a God for whom it is easier to philippize or socratize than it is for us to be Apollo.[q]

The transmission of a divine saying however says as little as a comet for a philosopher of present-day taste.[r] In his opinion, in the book which the most foolish people produced for us, and in the leavings of the Greeks and Romans, as soon as it comes to oracles, phenomena, dreams and such like meteors, we

excise these fairy tales[22] of our children and nurses (for all past centuries are children and nurses compared to our own in the art of **experiencing** and **thinking**[23]), or admire them like the flourishes of our alpine poet.[s] Suppose that this was all conceded as magnanimously as one could unashamedly ask: then **Bayle, one of their prophets**[t], at whose feet these Cretans[24u] are used to yawning[25], with so much decorum, because their **Gamaliel**[26] yawns, will answer these doubters; that, if all these occurences are in the same grade of falsehood as the influence of the stars, if everything is equally fabricated and invented, nevertheless in their time and place, delusion, imagination and faith really have worked and could work greater wonders than they used to ascribe, or will ascribe, to the comets, oracular sayings and dreams themselves. On this understanding, however, the sceptics are more correct than our empiricists, because it seems more human and more suitable for a God to govern his intentions through our own fancies and chimerae than through such remote and costly **machinery** as the firmament[27] and the spiritual world[28] seem to our foolish eyes.

[22] *Pliny lib. 28 c. 2 already drew the conclusion: *that the powers of **miraculous signs** are in our power and execute what we attribute to them – –**Augury** teaches us at the least that neither inauspicious nor auspicious signs have any connection to that which observation leaves unregarded; and in practice one cannot **value this divine indulgence** enough.*

[23] That is, to write ***Essays*** and ***Pensees*** of ***Loisirs***.

[24] **Philosophy is oldest and greatest among the Greeks in Crete and in Lacedaemon, and there are more sophists there than anywhere else on earth; but they disown it and pretend to be stupid, so that it will not be obvious that their superiority over the Greeks is due to wisdom.* Socrates in Plato's *Protagoras*.

[25] *Critias in Plato's *Charmides*. As Critias heard that and saw that I did not yet see the matter clearly, he seemed to me like those who see someone opposite them yawning and are placed in the same position, so that on his side from my not knowing what to do he was gripped by the same hesitation.

[26] Bayle is zealous for religious tolerance like this Pharisee, Acts 5.

[27] *Matt. 2.2.

[28] *Lk. 2.9, 13.

SECOND SECTION

A man who had money to lose, and presumably also knew how to lose money, whom history names as **Crito**, is said to have born the costs of transforming our sculptor into a sophist. Whoever trusts the etymological mien of his name[a] will ascribe this project to a far-sighted judgment, a credulous student of daily experience however will ascribe it to a blind predilection for Socrates.

The ranks of schoolmasters and -mistresses which Socrates was given, and which Crito without doubt had to pay, is considerable enough; and yet Socrates remained **ignorant**.[29] The frank avowal to that effect was to a certain extent an affront, which the candid protégé and candidate seems to have been forgiven, because it reflected worst on him himself. The **lot** of ignorance and its nakedness make as irreconcilable enemies as superiority of merit and the exhibition of it. If Socrates was really ignorant, he must also have been ignorant of the shame, which haunts rational people, of seeming ignorant.

One who knows nothing and one who has nothing are twins of one fate. The clever and suspicious mark out and torment the first as an **imposter**; as the creditor and robber the latter, while the uncouth pride[b] of the rich polyhistorian[c] despises both. That is why the philosophical goddess of luck remains a confirmed friend of the stupid[d], and through her providence the ideas of the poor escape the moths longer than smooth dresses and rustling nightgowns, the hypotheses and formulas of the horoscopes and schemes of the astrologers and politicians.

Socrates seems to have spoken as much about his ignorance[30] as a hypochondriac of his imagined illness. As one must oneself know this affliction in order to understand a hypochondriac and make sense of him; perhaps one must have sympathy for ignorance in order to have a conception of the Socratic variety.

Know thyself![31] said the door of that famous temple to all who went in to make offerings to the god of wisdom and to

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[29] **At the very least, O Meno, you and I are a sorry sort of men, and your Gorgias and my Prodicus did not train us well.* Socrates in Plato's *Meno*.

[30] *Alcibiades in Plato's *Symposium*. [216d.]

[31] *Critias in Plato's *Charmides*. [164d-165b.]

ask his advice about their little affairs. Everyone read, marveled and knew this saying **by heart**. It was worn, like the stone in which it was engraved, on the brow, without understanding the meaning of it. Doubtless the god laughed behind his gilt beard, as the most ticklish task of Socrates' time was presented to him: who was the wisest among all living people? **Sophocles** and **Euripides** would not have become such great models for the stage without the art of dissecting the human heart. **Socrates** however surpassed them both in wisdom, because he had progressed further in self-knowledge than they, and knew that he knew nothing. Apollo answered everyone even before the threshhold as to who was wise and how one could become so; now the question remained: who knows Oneself? and what might one compare oneself to in this test? **Go, Charephon**[32]**, learn from your friend.** No mortal can maintain the attentiveness and abstinence of a schoolteacher more decently than Apollo, as he led his worshippers to the understanding of his mystery. All these nods and fragments of the oldest history and tradition confirm the observation that Paul and Barnabus maintained to the Lycaonians, that God did not leave himself without **witnesses**, and gave them too **rains** from heaven and **fruitful seasons**.[33] How truthfully does our church sing:

Blessed are we in our **gracious** Lord![e]

A careful interpreter must imitate the scientists. As the latter place a body in all kinds of arbitrary connections with other bodies and invent artificial experiences to determine its properties; so the former does with his text. I have coupled the Socratic saying with the Delphic inscription; now I will make some other attempts to make the energy of the same more sensible.

Words, like numbers, have their value from the place in which they stand and their concepts are in their definitions and relations, like coins, changeable according to time and place.

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[32] **Chairephon the bat.* Aristoph. *The birds. Socrates and Charephon from Melios, who knows the tracks of fleas.* Ibid. [From *Clouds*, actually.]

[33] Acts 14. [v. 17.]

When the snake advises Eve, **You will be like God**[f] and Yahweh prophesies, **See! Adam has become like one of us!**[g]; when Solomon cries out, **All is vanity!**[h] and an old dandy whistles it after him; one sees that the same truths can be expressed in quite an opposite spirit.

Moreover that sentence, even if it wells up from a single mouth and heart, bears an infinite number of associated ideas, given to it by those who receive it, in precisely the way that rays of light become this or that colour, according to the surface from which it refracts to our eye. If Socrates gave an account of himself to Crito with his '**I know nothing!**', and with precisely these words turned away the learned and curious Athenians[i], made it easier for his beautiful youths to renounce their vanity, and sought to win their trust through his equality with them; the paraphrases one would have to make of his motto according to these three perspectives would seem as unlike one another as sometimes do three brothers who are sons of a single father.

Let us suppose that we invite someone we do not know to a card game. If he answered us, **I don't play**; we would have to interpret this either as meaning he did not know how to play the game, or had an aversion to it, which might be for economic, moral, or other reasons. But suppose that an honest man, of whom it was known that he possessed the greatest skill in the game, and was as well-versed in the rules as in the art of cheating, but could never undertake and enjoy a game except as an innocent pastime, was in the company of refined deceivers, who passed as good players but to whom he was more than equal, pressed him to make up a party with them. If he said: **I don't play**, then we, like him, would have to look these people he addressed in the face, and could fill out his words like this: '**I don't play**, that is, with such as you are, who break the rules of the game and rob it of luck. If you are offering a game; then our mutual agreement is to recognize the obstinacy of chance as the master, but if you call the cunning of your quick finger '**chance**', then I must accept it as such, if I want, or take the risk of insulting you, or choose the shame of doing as you do. Had you proposed that I test myself against you to see which of us was the best swindler at cards, I would have answered differently, and perhaps would have wanted to play with you, to

show you that you have learned to **produce** cards as badly as you know how artfully to play the ones that you are given.' In these rough tones we can interpret Socrates' meaning, when he said to the sophists, the scholars of his time: I know nothing. Therefore, these words were a thorn in their eyes[j] and a scourge on their backs. All Socrates' **ideas**, that were nothing but the **expectorations** and **secretions** of his **ignorance**, seemed as fearful to them as the hair on the head of the Medusa, the navel of the Aegis.

The ignorance of Socrates was **feeling**.[k] But between feeling and a doctrine there is an even greater difference than that between a living animal and an anatomical skeleton of the same. The ancient and modern sceptics may swaddle themselves in the lion-skin of Socratic ignorance as much as they like; but they betray themselves by their **voices** and **ears**.[l] If they know nothing, why does the world need a learned demonstration of it? Their hypocrisy is ludicrous and shameless. But whoever requires so much acumen and eloquence to convince himself of his ignorance, must conceal in his heart a powerful resistance to the truth of it.

Our own being and the existence of all things outside us must be believed[34] and can be made out in no other way. What is more certain than the human end, and of what truth is there a more universal and confirmed knowledge? No one however is clever enough to believe it but the one who, as Moses gives us to understand, God himself teaches to remember that he must die.[m] What one believes has therefore no need of proof; and a proposition can be irrefutably proven without being believed.

There are proofs[35] of truths which are as worthless as the use to which these truths can be put[36]; indeed, one can believe the proof of a proposition without applauding the proposition itself. The reasonings of a **Hume** may be convincing and their refutations clear postulates[n] and doubts; but faith both wins

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[34] **For it is necessary for the student to believe. Aristotle on the refutation of* 35-6 *the sophists* lib. 1 cap. 2.

[35] **We propose two kinds of persuasion, one which produces belief without knowing (persuasion aiming towards belief) and the other of knowledge (instructive persuasion).* Socrates in Plato's *Gorgias*.

[36] *A philosopher was so convincing on the immortality of the soul that his listeners joyfully became suicides, as Lactantius tells us. *Augustine de Civit. Dei* I.22. Cic. *Tusc. Quaest.* I. 39.°

and loses greatly by this most skilful pettifogger and most honourable attorney. Faith is no work of reason, and cannot therefore be subject to any attack of the same; because **faith** arises as little from reason as **tasting** and **seeing.**[p]

The connection and agreement of concepts is precisely the same in a demonstration as the relation and symmetry of numbers and lines, sounds and colours are in a musical composition and painting. The philosopher is as subject to the law of imitation as the poet. For the latter the muse and her hieroglyphic shadowplay is as true as reason and systems of doctrines are for the former. Fate places the greatest philosophers and poets in circumstances where they both feel; and the one[q] renounces his reason, and reveals to us that he does not believe in a best of all possible worlds, no matter how well he can prove it, and the other[r] finds himself robbed of his muse and his guardian angel with the death of his **Meta.** Imagination, even if it were a **horse of the sun** and had wings of the dawn[37s], therefore cannot be the creator of faith.[38]

I know no more venerable seal and at the same time no better key to Socrates' testimony to his own ignorance than the oracular saying of the great **teacher of the heathen**:

> Ει δε τις δοκει ειδεναι τι ουδεπω ουδεν εγνωκε καθως δει γνωναι · Ει δε τις αγαπα τον ΘΕΟΝ ουτος εγνωται υπ αυτον.
> **If anyone thinks he knows something, he knows nothing as he should know it. But if someone loves God, he will be known by him.**[39] —

— as Socrates was known by Apollo to be a **wise man.** But as the seed of all our natural wisdom must decay[t], must pass away in ignorance, and as from **death,** from this **nothingness**[u] **life** and **being**[v] sprout forth newly-created in a higher knowledge[40]; this far the **nose** of a sophist does not reach. No mole-hill must

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[37] **Faith has in common with twilight, that both require an admixture of darkness, and with increasing light, faith becomes knowledge and twilight daylight. There are certain mysteries in which Faith can lead the way for the intellect more happily than the intellect can prepare the way for faith.* Boyle, *Cogitationes.*

[38] *Socrates in the *Phaedrus.* [246a-248e; 253d-254e.]

[39] *I Cor 8.

[40] [40] **From his own nothingness he creates wisdom. Poesies diverses. Epitre V. à d'Argens.*

it be, but a **tower of Lebanon that gazes towards Damascus.**[41]

[w]What replaces in **Homer** the ignorance of the rules of art that Aristotle thought up after him, and in **Shakespeare** the ignorance or transgression of those critical laws? **Genius** is the unanimous answer. Perhaps Socrates really was ignorant; he had a genie on whose knowledge he could rely, whom he loved and feared as his god[x], whose **peace**[y] mattered more to him than all the reason of the Egyptians and Greeks[z], whose voice he believed[α], and whose **wind**, (as the experienced apothecary Hill[42β] has demonstrated to us) can make fruitful the empty understanding of a Socrates as well as the womb of a pure virgin.

Whether this **daemon** of Socrates' was nothing but a ruling passion[γ], by which name it is called in our ethics, or whether an invention of his political cunning; whether it was an angel or a cobold or an outstanding idea of his imagination, or a surreptitiously and arbitrarily acquired concept of a mathematical ignorance; whether this daemon was not perhaps a thermometer or more similar to the machines which the Bradleys and Leuwenhoeks have to thank for their revelations; whether one can most comfortably compare it to the prophesying feeling of a sensitive blind man or the talent for predicting revolutions in the cloudy heavens from corns on the feet and scars and badly-healed wounds: so much has been written about this by so many sophists with so much conclusiveness that it is astonishing that Socrates, for all his highly-praised self-knowledge, could have been so ignorant about this too, that he could have been at a loss to answer a Simias on the subject. In our day no reader of taste lacks friends of genius, which will spare me the trouble of being more extensive on the genius of Socrates.

All the peculiarities of his manner of teaching and thinking flow from this Socratic ignorance as easy consequences. What is more natural, than that he always found it necessary to question in order to become wiser; that he acted credulously,

[41] Sgs 7. *Acts 9.3. Nowhere in the world can display such an amazing combination of marble and filth, of greatness and lowliness than Damascus; says **Maundrell** in his description of his travel from Aleppo to Jerusalem.

[42] **Lucina sine concubitu.*

took everyone's opinion to be true, and preferred the test of mockery and **humour** to an earnest investigation; that he made his deductions from what is sensuous and by analogy; expressed ideas because he did not understand dialectic[43]; was indifferent to that which is called truth, and also knew no passions, particularly those which the noblest of the Athenians knew best; that he like all amateurs[δ] often spoke as confidently and decisively as if he, among all the screech-owls of his fatherland, were the only one who sat on Minerva's helmet — The Socrateses of our time, the canonical teachers of the public and patron saints of the falsely revered arts and honours have not been blessed to equal their model in all his sweet faults. Because they infinitely deviate from the evidence of his ignorance, one must marvel at all their ingenious readings and glosses of their antisocratic daemons on our master's teachings and virtues as beauties of **free** translations; and it is as misguided to trust them as to follow them.

Now I lack the mysteries of palingenesis, that our historians have in their power, to draw forth from the ashes of every given person and commonwealth a spiritual form, which one calls a character or historical portrait. Such a portrait of the century and the republic in which Socrates lived would show us how artfully his ignorance was calculated for the circumstances of his people and his time, and for his life's work.[44] I can do no more than the arm of a signpost, and am too wooden to accompany my readers in the course of their reflections.

The Athenians were curious.[ε] One who is ignorant is the best doctor for this satyriasis. They were, like all curious people,

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[43] *Thrasymachus in Plato's book on politics. – – Because he [Socrates] wanted to contribute nothing to persuasion, rather preferred to win his result from what his partner in conversation granted him, which the same had to agree to on the grounds of what had been conceded already. Cicero *de Inv. Rhet.* Lib. I. – He saw himself as so poor that he believed *instead he had to learn. Valer. Max.* Lib. VIII. Cap. 7.

[44] Parrhasius completed, so it seems, a **Hogarthian** painting which is said to have portrayed the Athenian **public**, and of which the following engraving or silhouette is preserved in Pliny: *His picture of the people of Athens also shows ingenuity in treating the subject, since he portrayed them as **fickle, choleric, unjust** and **variable**, but also **placable** and **merciful** and **compassionate, boastful, lofty** and **humble, fierce** and **timid** – and all these at the same time. Natural History*, XXXV. 10.

inclined to **communicate**; they must therefore have enjoyed being questioned. They possessed however more the gift to invent and declaim than to retain and judge; therefore Socrates always had the opportunity to attend to their memory and their judgment, and to warn them of frivolity and vanity. In short, Socrates lured his fellow citizens from the labyrinths of their learned sophists to a **truth which lay concealed**, to a **secret wisdom**ζ and from the idols' altars of their pious and politically shrewd priests to the service of an unknown God.η Plato told the Athenians to their faces that Socrates was given to them by the gods to convince them of their foolishness and to encourage them to emulate his virtue.[45] Whoever will not tolerate Socrates among the prophets must be asked: **Who is the father of the prophets**?θ and whether our God has not named himself as and shown himself to be a **God of the heathen**?ι

[45] *Cf. Plato's *Euthydemus, Alcibiades II, Philebus, Protagoras, Critias*, and *Clitophon*.

THIRD SECTION

It is said Socrates took part in three campaigns. In the first his **Alcibiades** was indebted to him for the preservation of his life and weapons, and passed on to him the medal of bravery that was awarded him. In the second he retreated like a Parthian, fell on his pursuers while in retreat, dealt out more fear than struck him[46] and bore his friend **Xenophon,** who had fallen from his horse, on his shoulders out of the danger of the battlefield. He faced the great defeat of the third campaign as well as he did the plague that twice infested Athens in his time.

Reverence for the word in his heart, to whose sound he was always attentive, excused him from participating in political meetings. When he thought that he had lived long enough, he offered himself for a post on the town council, on which he sat as a member[47], elder[48] and official[49], and where he made himself **ridiculous**[50] with his clumsiness in gathering the votes and in other customs, and was suspected as a subversive for the obstinacy with which he had to oppose the unjust proceedings of a certain matter.[a]

Socrates was no author, and herein he acted in harmony with himself.[51] As the hero of the Leuctrian[52] battle had no need for children[b], Socrates had as little need of writings for his remembrance. His philosophy was adapted for every place and every case. The marketplace, the battlefield, a dinner-party, a prison were his schools; and the first, the best quodlibet of human life and environment served him to sow the seeds of truth.[c] As little as he was charged with pedantry in his way of life, and as well as he knew the art of entertaining the best societies of raw young people, at the same time it is told of him that he would stand motionless for days and nights on end, and resembled his statue more than himself. His books, therefore, would perhaps

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46 **Laches* in Plato.

47 *Prytan.*

48 *Proedrus.*

49 *Epistates.* The *Prytans* had to call the gathering together, the *Proedri* carried out the procedure, and the *Epistates* gathered the votes and spoke for their majority. *Real. in Allgem. Grundriss der Staatskunst* p. 262.

50 *Socrates in Plato's *Gorgias.*

51 *Vid. *Phaedrus* and *Gorgias.*

52 *Vid. *Clouds* p. 95.

have looked like these soliloquies and monologues of his. He praised a stroll[53] as a soup to his evening meal; but he did not seek the truth like a peripatetic[d], in running about here and there.

[e]That Socrates did not possess the gift of writing may also be suspected from the attempts at lyrical poetry that he made in prison on the instruction of a dream. On this occasion he discovered a barrenness in himself, which he overcame with the fables of Aesop. Nevertheless, he succeeded with a hymn to **Apollo** and **Diana**.

Perhaps he also lacked the peace, quiet and serenity at home which a philosopher has need of for writing, if he wants thereby to teach and amuse himself and others. The prejudice against Xanthippe, which from the work of the first classical author[f] has become contagious and deeply rooted in our schools[54], could not be eradicated by the *Acta Philosophorum*[g], as might be desired for the sake of truth and propriety. In the meantime, we must almost imagine a shrew from her beatings which formed such a wise man as Socrates. Perhaps from her shortcomings and revulsion, Xanthippe could no more effectively suppress the **irritation**[h] of his ideas than with coarseness, insults and her chamber-pot. For a woman who has to keep house for a philosopher, and a man who has to administer the affairs of **impecunious** Grand Viziers, time is perhaps too precious to waste on contriving plays on words and flowery speech. With as little justification, a similar story of Socrates' own vehemence, with which he sometimes tore the hair from his head in the marketplace and seemed quite beside himself, has been rejected as a calumny. Were there not enough sophists and priests in Athens with whom Socrates had to speak in such an altered state? Was not the **teacher of humanity, meek and lowly of heart**[i], compelled to denounce the scholars and the pious among his people?[j]

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53 *Alcibiades in Plato's *Symposium*. [220c-d.]

54 Xanthippe was a bitchy wh—
and 10 x 10 = 100, no more.
Socrates is said to have been a bigamist; Xanthippe was the mother of Lamprocles, and Mytro (which Gesner disputes) was the mother of Sophroniscus and Menexenus.

In comparison to a **Xenophon** and a **Plato** perhaps Socrates' style would have looked like the chisel of a sculptor, and his manner of writing more plastic than **painterly**. The critics were not pleased with his allusions, and criticized the similes of his oral delivery now as too far-fetched, now as vulgar. Alcibiades[55] however compared his parables to certain holy images of the gods and goddesses, which at that time were often carried in a little housing on which nothing but a goat-footed satyr was seen.

Here is an example of this. Socrates compared himself[56] to a doctor, who in a community of nothing but children wanted to forbid cakes and sweets. If, he said, the chief baker wanted to accuse the doctor before a court that consisted of mere children; his fate would be decided. In Athens there were so many designs on participating in the peace of the gods, and becoming wise and happy as they, as there are today on positions and promotions. Every new liturgy was a gold-mine for the priests, which should increase the common good; every new sect of the sophists promised an encyclopedia of healthy reason and experience. These projects were the titbits that Socrates sought to spoil for his fellow-citizens.

Athens, which is said to have condemned Homer to pay a fine for **madness**, sentenced Socrates to death as a **miscreant**.[k]

His first crime was that he did not honour the gods and wanted to introduce new ones.[57] Plato nevertheless in his dialogues has him swearing by the gods more often than an enamoured dandy tells a lie by swearing upon his soul or a knight-errant by the furies of his ancestors. In the last moment of his life, as Socrates already felt the power of the healing spring in his limbs, he beseeched his Crito most urgently to pay for a **chicken** and sacrifice it to Aesculapius.[l] His second crime was to be a corruptor of youth, through his free and scandalous teaching.

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55 *Vid. *Hippias*, Callicles in Plato's *Gorgias* and the *Symposium*. Hierocles is to have said, *The words of Socrates are like dice, which lie everywhere where they fall. Suidas. This Alcibiades babbles truly.* Aristophanes *Wasps*.

56 *Cf. *Gorgias*. [464d; 521e-522a.]

57 **Chaos and the clouds and the tongue. The trinity.* Aristoph. *Clouds*. Plato *de republica* Lib. III. [386a-389b; 414b-415d.]

Socrates answered these accusations with a gravity and courage, with a pride and cool-headedness, that one would sooner have seen in his face a commander of his judges than an accused person.

It is said that Socrates lost a poisonous idea[58], and the conscientious Areopagites their patience. They soon after were united on the punishment that he deserved, however little they could agree on it previously.

A festival in Athens, during which it was not permissible to enact a death-penalty, inflicted upon Socrates the difficult preparation for death[59] of a thirty-day imprisonment.[m]

After his death he is yet said to have appeared to a Chian named **Kyrsas**, who set himself down not far from his grave and fell asleep beside it. The purpose of his journey was to see Socrates, who at that point was no longer living; after this conversation with the latter's ghost, he returned to his fatherland, which was known among the ancients for its magnificent wine.

Plato made the voluntary poverty of Socrates into a sign of his divine sending. A greater one is his community with the final fate of the **prophets** and the **just**.[60] A column by Lysippus was the monument that the Athenians erected to his innocence and the outrage of their own death sentence.[n]

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[58] He dictated his own punishment, in jest, to be fed at the cost of the state until death.

[59] *Socrates would have drunk the poisonous drink on the precisely the day that the Temple of Ephesus first burned down.

[60] Matt. 23.29.

FINAL ADDRESS

Whoever cannot live on **crumbs**[61a] and **alms**[b] nor from **robbery**[c], and renounce everything for the **sword**[62d] is not fit for the service of the truth; let him become forthwith! a rational, useful, well-behaved man of the world, or learn to bow and scrape and lick plates: and then he will be safe from hunger and thirst and from the gallows and the rack for his life long.

If it is true, that God Himself, as the **good testimony**[e] says that he made before Pilate; if it is true, I say, that God Himself **for this** became human and **for this** came into the world, **that he might witness to the truth** [f]: then it requires no omniscience to see in advance that he would not depart from the world as well as Socrates, but rather would die a more shameful and cruel death than the **parricide of the most Christian King,** Louis the **Beloved**, who is the great-grandson of Louis the **Great**.[g]

61 *Vid. the conclusion of *Hippias Major*. [304a/b.]

62 **A sword? a fine prize – – – –*
But Hyperbolos was so bad that with his lamps
he got a lot of money, but by God, no sword.
Aristoph. *Clouds*.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

Title Page

[a] According to a letter to Lindner, it was this quotation from Persius which inspired to double dedication to Nobody and to the Two (ZH 1, 404.9f.).

To the Public

[a] The central conceit of this section is the apocryphal story of Bel and the dragon; in particular, note the device of the high priests eating the sacrifices made to the idol to make it appear as if the god had eaten them himself, and the method by which Daniel destroyed the statue of the dragon-idol by throwing into its mouth lumps made of fat, pitch and hair and making it burst.

[b] I Cor. 8.4.

[c] A piece of metaschematism; the 'superstition' of which Hamann was accused is here attributed to the idolatry of the public.

[d] Ps. 115.4-8.

[e] Ps. 94.9. Jørgensen mentions Prov. 20.12.

[f] 1 Kgs. 18.27.

[g] Ex. 23.15.

[h] Aristippus the philosopher threw himself at the feet of Dionysius the Elder; answering those who mocked him for this with: 'It is not I who am to blame, but Dionysius who has ears in his feet.' Hamann probably picked this up from Francis Bacon, in whom he was immersing himself at the time of writing this (cf. ZH 1, 356:28; HHE 2, 66).

[i] Jørgensen mentions a versification of Rom. 8.19-21 by Gottfried Arnold, *O Durchbrecher aller Bande*, containing the phrase 'from the service of vanity'. (Jørgensen, 8.)

[j] 'Ignorance' and 'Curiosity' are important characteristics in what follows; they are features of the Athenians, the analogues of Hamann's public.

[k] Cf. *pia fraus*, Ovid, *Metamorphoses*. (Jørgensen, 8.)

[l] Berens; a capitalist with philosophical interests; hence the pun on 'philosopher's stone'.

[m] *Politick*; which chiefly bore the sense of economics, economic policies (cf. HHE 2, 68).

[n] Victor Rignetti, Marquis de Mirabeau, argued that the greater the population of a country, the richer it is (*L'ami des Hommes ou Traité de la Population* (1755). (Jørgensen, 8.)

[o] Kant.

[p] *so unter uns gäng und gebe.*

[q] *viellöthig an Korn und Schrot.*

[r] The Medici of Florence had pills on their coat of arms – a pun on their name.

[s] A conflation of two traditions about Vespasian's death, both from Bacon: first, the tradition of his last words, secondly that Vespasian died suffering from dysentery, and indeed on his chamber-pot after a particularly violent outbreak of the same. In short, we are evidently to understand that this

essay is to have an analogous (philosophically) purgative effect. Cf. also the last sentence of the first paragraph.

To the Two

[a] From Bacon's *De dignitate et augmentis scientiarum*, where Bacon reveals that Aristotle was taken to task by Alexander for revealing the secrets and mysteries of philosophy to the common folk – the irony being that only Alexander understood it.

[b] 'Analogy' (in the sense of 'typology') and irony are the clues to this essay.

[c] *Ungewißheit*; clearly not meant to suggest uncertainty in the context firstly because of its coupling with 'confidence' (*Zuversicht*) and more significantly because it foreshadows the theme of Socratic ignorance, which receives loving treatment in what follows. Notice is being given here that the philosophically 'ignorant' like Hamann are the true followers of Socrates; not the philosophical professionals, who are rather the descendants of the Sophists.

[d] 'Superstitious' and 'visionary' [*schwärmerisch*] were two adjectives applied pejoratively to Hamann by 'the two'; Hamann 'metaschematically' applies them to the two famous followers of Socrates.

[e] Not the apostle, but Henry St. John Bolingbroke, author of *The Idea of a Patriot King* and *Letters on the Study and Use of History*, in which he argued that only those Old Testament accounts that form the basis of a later Christian doctrine can be considered historical, since in that way their truth is demonstrated. 'As Hamann saw clearly, with this argument Bolingbroke attacks Christianity as the divine truth revealed in the history of the Old and New Testaments, a central tenet of Hamann's faith, but Bolingbroke carries out this attack under cover, under the veil of the historian bowing before the absolute truth of dogmas.' (Jørgensen, 12.) He and the 'English Platonist' Shaftesbury had to be veiled about their lack of religion; Hamann on the other hand will have to veil his piety.

[f] 'What I understood of it, I think very good, so I will believe that what I did not understand is no worse,' Socrates is said to have answered Euripides on Heraclitus. From Charpentier's life of Socrates, cited HHE 2, 78, note 11.

[g] Heraclitus was called 'the weeping philosopher'. (Jørgensen, 14.)

Introduction

[a] Richelieu

[b] A play on Voltaire's *Le Siècle de Louis XIV* (1751). (Jørgensen, 16.)

[c] Julian the Apostate's 'scheme' was the re-introduction of paganism in the form of Neo-Platonism. On his death-bed, he is said to have cried, 'Thou hast triumphed in the end, O Galilean!' (Jørgensen, 16.)

[d] Thomas Stanley, *History of Philosophy*, 1655-1662, 3 vols; translated into Latin by 'Joannes Clericus', 1690. Johann Jakob Brucker, *Historia critica Philosophiae*, 1742-1744, 5 vols. 'An uncritical work', Nadler says of the latter (N VI, 62).

[e] Cicero, *De inventione*, second book, first chapter (and other ancient sources) tells the story of Zeuxis, who was commissioned to create an image of perfect female beauty for the temple of Juno; he made a composite of all the most beautiful women of the city (HHE 2, 84, note 9).

f A. F. B. Deslandes, *Histoire Critique de la Philosophie*, 1730-1736, 3 vols. (HHE 2, 85).

g 'Encyclical' should really be 'encyclopedic', a reference to the French *Encyclopedia*, as the citation from *Clouds* makes clear (N II, 94:11-25.)

h Charles Batteux. The reference to 'beautiful nature' alludes to the classical French aesthetic of art as the 'imitation of beautiful nature' — a falsifying emasculation of reality, in Hamann's view. The 'great heads', Voltaire, Diderot, and d'Alembert (as the passage from *Clouds* indicates), are damned to create showy but ineffectual fireworks.

i Hamann wrote this phrase in Greek by hand: ως γραφευς τ' αποσταθεις.

j In Blanke's opinion, Hamann is thinking of the theory held by von Bodin, Shaftesbury, Montesquieu et. al. that political systems and laws are dependent on the climate (HHE 2, 91, note 22).

k Blanke calls our attention to the ancient saying, '*Phryges sero sapiunt*' (HHE 2, 91, note 24). (Jørgensen comments that the Phrygians 'were the Swabians of the ancients' [!] , p. 20.)

l Plutarch has an account of Caesar weeping over the poor comparison he makes with Alexander, the latter having achieved so much at such a young age, the former having accomplished little by the age of forty. Hamann's account differs slightly in detail from Plutarch's, which has Caesar weeping over his reading (HHE 2, 94, note 27).

m Alexander, in turn, envied Achilles his '*Minnesinger*', Homer, and wished he had a comparable poet to sing of his fame. (Blanke provides a reference in Bacon, which is likely to be Hamann's source [HHE 2, 94, note 28].)

n On reading of Socrates' death, Erasmus is said to have scarcely contained himself from crying out, 'St. Socrates, pray for us!' (HHE 2, 94, note 29.) Georg Ludwig von Bar (1701-1767) was considered the best German poet writing in French; his *Epitres diverses des sujets differens* was particularly admired; and is cited later in a footnote (N VI, 45). Blanke explains the 'hellenistic muse' with von Bar's enthusiasm for the Greeks (HHE 2, 95, note 30). Diafoirus is a comic character in Molière's *Malade imaginaire* (N VI, 94); von Bar addresses a poem to Diafoirus on the theme of God sending witnesses to the pagans, which mentions the Erasmus incident (Jørgensen reproduces it, p. 22).

o Heb. 12.1.

p Rom. 1.20.

q Lk. 16.29.

r Buffon, *Histoire naturelle générale et particulière.*

s Montesquieu, *Considérations sur les causes de la grandeur des Romains et de leur décadence.*

t Mt. 10.29.

u Acts 19.19. Herder's copy of this essay shows that this biblical reference was original to the work and was subsequently crossed out (N III, 386).

v Blanke refers to Plutarch, *Pompey* 20,4 and Sertorius 27,3.

w During the siege of Alexandria, Caesar leapt into the sea to escape, clutching important papers.

x To inflate the price when the Indonesian harvest is too good (cf. HHE 2, 100, note 44 for details of sources).

y Ironic? Bolingbroke, in *Letters on the Study and Use of History* (*vid. supra*, note e, under 'To The Two') describes the partly-mythologized ancient histories as unreliable, and no more credible than their epics and dramas

which deal with the same material, unlike modern history, which rests on materialist and rationalist assumptions. (Jørgensen, 26.)

z 'Sealed book' is from Is. 29.11; the image of the heifer from Jdgs. 14.18 (HHE 2, 102, note 49). Perhaps the 'concealed witness' suggests Eph. 3.9 and Col. 1.26?

α Charles Dineau Duclos (1705-1772), member of the French Academy, writer on French history and on grammar, novelist (N VI, 102).

β Thomas Blackwell, *Enquiry into the Life and Writings of Homer* (HHE 2, 103, note 51). Jørgensen notes that he made an attempt to understand Homer historically, in the context of his time and society (Jørgesen, 26).

γ John Gilbert Cooper, *Life of Socrates*, (1749); one of Hamann's main sources for this essay.

δ According to Hamann's sources, Diogenes Laertius and Charpentier, Simon of Athens was a cobbler; Hamann has clearly altered this detail to make the parallelism between Socrates and Christ clearer (HHE 2, 104, note 56). Simon is met with in Acts 10.6. In Hamann's footnote 16, a reference to his later essay *Clouds*, Hamann notes that he has misrepresented Simon's profession. 'The Athenian Simon was not a tanner, but actually a **leather-worker**' (95:18-19).

First Section

a Jørgensen provides the citation from Luther (p. 28); paraphrased, as the body is a figure or image of the soul, the bodily community is an image for the spiritual, Christian community. (*Von dem Papsttum zu Rom wider den hochberühmten Romanisten zu Leipzig*, 1520.)

b Ps. 139.15.

c This, perhaps, is a nudge at Berens: Berens' pride is not incompatible with a kind of 'indolence' – albeit one that differs from the 'laziness' of which Berens accuses Hamann.

d 'Sufficient Reason' clearly ironic; again demonstrating the parallel between Socrates' contemporaries and the professional philosophers of Hamann's day.

e Perhaps Acts 17.22, as Blanke suggests (HHE 2, 110, note 12).

f Cf. Jn. 5.46-47, also Jn. 8.39 for similar sentiments.

g In the first edition Hamann had the following footnote, later removed: *'Progeniem vitiosorem nennt sie Horaz Ode 6. Buch 3.'* The context of the phrase is, we are worse than our ancestors and will produce even worse descendants (N II, 386).

h As did Hamann's chief sources on Socrates; for quotations see HHE 2, 113, note 16, 114, note 18.

i Toussaint's *Histoire des Passions* and *Moeurs*.

j As related by Hamann's three sources, Charpentier, Cooper, Heumann. Blanke provides Charpentier's account; a physiognomer called Zopyrus read Socrates' face and claimed that he was lecherous; that is, his nature was lecherous but had been improved by philosophy (HHE 2, 114).

k One thinks of Alcibiades' testimony to Socrates' continence when (so Alcibiades fancies) sorely tested; *Symposium* [217a-219d].

l Rom. 2.11.

m Blanke reminds us that 'Muslims' denotes rationalistic, therefore anti-trinitarian Christians; he calls N III, 152:13, which speaks of 'Jews, theists and Muslims of Christianity' to his support (HHE 2, 116).

n Ps. 45.2.
o Isa. 53.3.
p 2 Pet. 1.16.
q Pythia, the oracle for Apollo, was accused by Demosthenes of 'philippizing', that is, showing a partiality for Philipp of Macedonia; and could be accused, by extension, of 'socratizing' in showing favour for Socrates.
r Pierre Bayle, *Lettre à M.L.A.D.C., qu'il est prouvé par lusieurs raisons tirées de l Philosophie et de la Théologie, que les Comètes ne sont point le présage d'aucun malheur* (HHE 2, 120).
s Albrecht Haller (1708-1777) '*Die Alpen*' (N VI, 164; HHE 2, 121, note 36).
t Cf. Mk. 6:15.
u Cf also Tit. 1.12; (HHE 2, 121, note 38); this seems more relevant to me than Blanke's suggestion of Mk. 6.15; all the same, perhaps Hamann's own association to this word (cf. his note 24) is more significant. Perhaps also a pun on 'Cretin' is implied also? Jørgensen writes that the most ancient philosophy was found in Crete, and that the greatest number of sophists were also found there. (Jørgensen, 38.)

Second Section

a κριτειν, *critein*, to judge.
b *Bauerstolz*. Blanke cites Adelung's dictionary: '*auf eine ungeschickte und ungesittete Art stolz*' (HHE 2, 125, note 6).
c In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, this term was used much as we use 'polymath', as a '"modest" self-designation' [*"beschiedene" Selbstbezeichnung Modewort*] (N VI, 304). Thus, a rich polyhistorian is 'one who knows *and* has much' and despises both the one who knows nothing and the one who has nothing.
d Blanke: 'Hamann is thinking perhaps of proverbs like "Luck is a blind cow and runs to the stupidest ox" [*Das Glück ist eine blinde Kuh und läuft dem dummsten Ochsen zu*]' (HHE 2, 127, note 8).
e From *Allein Gott in der Höh sei Ehr*, by Nikolaus Decius (Jørgensen, 44).
f Gen. 3.5.
g Gen. 3.22.
h Eccles. 1.2.
i Cf. Acts 17.21.
j Num. 33.55.
k *Empfindung*. The contemporary use of the word covered 'feeling', 'perception', 'sensation'. 'Sensibility' would be an attractive translation (cf. R.G. Smith, 181) though this popular eighteenth-century word finds its more exact German equivalent in *Empfindsamkeit*. 'Sensibility' also suggests a certain preciousness or Rococo refinement that Hamann surely does not intend for Socrates, still less for his ignorance. As discussed in my Exposition, I think Hamann's *Empfindung* is intended to represent Hume's 'feeling'.
l From Aesop's fable.
m Ps. 90.12.
n *Lehnsätze*; according to Adelung's dictionary, in logic a proposition borrowed from another academic discipline.
o Augustine refers to one Theombrotus, who took his life after reading Plato; while Cicero tells of a philosopher Hegesias, whose lectures on the

immortality of the soul resulted in so many suicides that he was forbidden to speak on the subject.

p Ps. 34.9.

q Voltaire, and the loss of his optimism after the Lisbon earthquake.

r Klopstock, inconsolable after the death of his wife.

s Cf. Ps. 139.9.

t Jn. 12.24.

u Blanke suggests an echo of I Cor. 1.28 (HHE 2, 148, note 61).

v Blanke suggests 2 Tim. 1.10 (HHE 2, 148, note 62). (This appears more plausible in German – '*unvergänglich Wesen*' – than in the RSV.)

w Jørgensen notes that Edward Young's *Conjectures on Critical Composition* (1759) praises Shakespeare's untutored genius, and compares him with Homer; and in the 17th *Literaturbrief* (16.12.1759) Lessing also praises Shakespeare's genius, which 'seems to come from nature alone'. Gottsched, on the other hand, complained that Shakespeare's ideas, poetic as they are, cannot make up for his 'ignorance and transgression' of theatrical laws (*Beiträge zur critischen Historie der deutschen Sprache, Poesie und Beredsamkeit*, 8th vol., 29th piece, p. 172 [1742]). (Jørgensen, 54.)

x Luther's Little Catechism tells us, 'We should fear, love and trust God above all things' (Jørgensen, 54.)

y Phil. 4.7.

z Jørgensen mentions Acts 7.22, 1 Cor. 1.22. (Jørgensen, 54.)

α Cf. Jn 10.3-5.

β John Hill, in revenge for being turned down for membership in the Royal Society, wrote a satire by the name of *Lucina sine concubitu*, which purported to set forth a way by which children could be conceived by the wind, and was a satire on Buffon's theories on the origin of the human race (N VI, 178).

γ The following are interpretations given for Socrates' 'daemon'; for sources and references, *vid.* HHE 2, 157f.

δ *Idioten*; according to Salmony, 175, 304, this word did not bear its present sense but meant amateur, layperson.

ε Cf. Acts 17.20-21.

ζ Blanke suggests Ps. 51.8 (he means, presumably, 51.6; HHE 2, 166, note 109). I think the reference is probably primarily to 1 Cor. 2.7, as Hamann's phrase is a literal echo of Luther's translation.

η Acts 17.23.

θ I Sam. 10, 11, 12.

ι Rom. 3.29.

Third Section

a The incident is reported by Charpentier; reproduced in HHE 2, 171 note 10: the people unjustly demanded the death of a military leader; Socrates opposed this and was labelled a subversive.

b Epaminondes' victories, the Leuctrian and Mantineian battles, he described as his 'daughters'; he therefore had no need of children to outlive him and make his name known. In Hamann's footnote 52 (added subsequently), he corrects an earlier mistake: writing 'Marathon' for 'Leuctrian'.

c Cf. Lk. 8.5-8, and Plato's *Phaedrus*, 276b-277a (Jørgensen, 64).

d Jørgensen observes that Berens and Kant had made their attempted reconversion of Hamann back to the Enlightenment on a walk. (Jørgensen, 64.)
e *Phaedo* 60d-61b.
f Xenophon; according to Blanke, the first classical author studied in school, and damning of Xanthippe's character (HHE 2, 175, note 26). Jørgensen refers to *Fibel des Klamer Heinrich Bienrod* (1750), the source of the naughty rhyme in note 54. (Jørgensen, 64.)
g Heumann, *Acta Philosophorum*, made an attempt to salvage Xanthippe's character (HHE 2, 176, note 27).
h *Reitzbarkeit*; see HHE 2, 176, note 29 on the use of this contemporary medical term.
i Mt. 11.29.
j Mt. 23-29.
k Diogenes Laertius II, 43. (Jørgensen, 68.)
l Plato's *Phaedo*, 118a. (Jørgensen, 68.)
m Plato's *Phaedo*, 58a-c. (Jørgensen, 70.)
n Diogenes Laertius II, 43. (Jørgensen, 72.)

Final Address

a Blanke refers to Mk. 7.28 (HHE 2, 188, note 2).
b Mt. 10.9.
c Blanke suggests Ps. 17.12 (HHE 2, 188, note 3).
d Lk. 22.36.
e 1 Tim 6.12. (HHE 2, 189, note 8.)
f Jn. 18.37.
g Hamann here refers to the assassination attempt by Robert Damiens on Louis XV (*'Louis le Bien-Aimé'*), *'Rex christianissimus'* as the French king's title is, who suffered a particularly gruesome death for his crime (HHE 2, 191, notes 11-13).

Aesthetica in Nuce[a]

A
Rhapsody
in
Kabbalistic
Prose[b]

Book of Judges 5.30[c]

Spoil of dyed stuffs embroidered,
two pieces of dyed work embroidered for my neck as spoil

Elihu in Job 32.19-22:

Behold, my heart is like wine that has no vent;
like new wineskins, it is ready to burst.
I must speak, that I may find relief;
I must open my lips and answer.
I will not show partiality to any person
or use flattery toward any man.
For I do not know how to flatter,
else would my Maker soon put an end to me.

HORACE

I loathe the ***profane*** *crowd and shun them.*
Guard your ***tongues!*** *Songs not heard before*
I, the Muses' ***priest,***
sing for ***maidens*** *and for* ***boys.***
Kings *are feared by their own flocks*
Butover the ***kings*** *is the reign of* ***Jove,***
Famed for his victory over the ***Giants,***
Ruling over all with the movement of his ***brow.***[d]

Not a lyre! –nor a brush! – a **winnowing-fan**[e] for my muse, to clear the **threshing-floor** of sacred literature! – Hail to the **archangel**[f] on the relics of the **language of Canaan**! – on **fair asses**[1] he triumphs in the **race**; but the wise layman of Greece borrows **Euthyphron's**[2g] proud stallions for the philological debate.

Poetry is the **mother-tongue** of the human race; as **gardening** is older than farming: **painting**, – than writing: **song** – than declamation: parables – than arguments[3]: bartering – than commerce.[h] A deeper sleep was our most ancient ancestors' rest; and their movement, an intoxicating dance. **Seven days** they sat in silence of reflection or wonder; – – and **opened** their **mouths**[i] – for **winged** oracles.

The **senses** and the **passions** speak and understand nothing but **images**. **Imagery** comprises the entire treasure of human **knowledge** and **happiness**. The first **explosion** of creation, and the first **impression** of its historian; the first **manifestation** and the first **enjoyment** of nature unite in the **word: 'Let there be light!'**[j] with this begins the perception of the **presence** of things.[4]

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1 Book of Judges, 5.10.

2 See Plato's *Cratylus*. Hermogenes: *Indeed, Socrates, you seem just like an enthusiast all of a sudden, uttering oracles. Socrates: And I am convinced, Hermogenes, that this came to me from Euthyphron son of Pantios; for I was with him and listening to him for a long time this morning. So he must not only have been inspired and filled my ears with the daemon of his wisdom, but also seized my soul; so I think this is our duty, we should make use of this wisdom today – but tomorrow if it seems good to you, we will drive it away and purify ourselves, if we find someone able to perform such a purification, some priest or a sophist – – – ask me, that you might see EUTHYPHRON'S HORSES.* [*Cratylus* 396d - 397a, 407d.]

3 *...as hieroglyphs are older than letters, so parables are older than arguments,* says Bacon, my Euthyphron.

4 *for anything that becomes visible is light.* Eph. 5.13.

[k]Finally **GOD** crowned the sensuous revelation of his majesty with the **masterpiece** of humanity. He made humanity in **divine form**; – – made it in the image of GOD. This **decree** of the Prime Mover solves the most complicated knots in human nature and its character. **Blind** pagans recognized the **invisibility** that the human being shares with **God**. The **covering** form of the body, the **countenance** of the head, and the extremities of the **arms** are the **visible habit** in which we walk; but are actually nothing but an **index** of the **secret self** within us;

*Each is a **miniature counterpart** of GOD.*[5]

The first **food** was from the **plant kingdom**[l]; the **milk** of the **ancients, wine**; the oldest poetry (like the fables of Jotham and Joash[6]) its learned **commentator**[m] called **botanical**[7]; and the first human **clothing** was a rhapsody of **figleaves**.

But GOD the LORD made tunics of pelts, and put them on – our ancestors, whom the knowledge of good and evil had taught **shame**. – If necessity is the mother of the invention of comforts and arts: one has cause to wonder with **Goguet**[n], how the **fashion** of clothing oneself, particularly in **fur skins**, can have arisen in the Orient. May I venture a conjecture, that I at least think **ingenious**?[o] – – I attribute the **origin** of this costume to the **universal constancy of animal characters**[p], **made known** to Adam through acquaintance with the ancient poet (whose name is **Abaddon** in the language of Canaan, but **Apollyon** in Greek)[q], – which roused the first man under his borrowed **pelt** to propagate an **intuitive** knowledge of **past** and **future** events for posterity[r] – – –

Speak, that I might see you![s] – – This desire was fulfilled in **creation**, which is an **address** to the **creature** through the **creature**; for one **day** tells another, and one **night** makes known to the other.[t] Its **call** ranges over every **climate** to the end of the world and in every **dialect** its voice is heard.[u] – – But blame be where it may, (**outside** or **in** us): in nature we have only **jumbles of verse**[v] and *disjecti membra poetae*[w] left for our use.

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5 Manilius *Astron.*, Lib. IV.

6 Book of Judges 9, 2 Chron. 25.18.

7 – – *for poetry is a plant, which as if sprung from luxuriant earth and reliable seed, has grown beyond other disciplines and is spreading.* Bacon *de Augm. Scient.* Lib. II. Cap. 13. See Councillor Johann David Michaelis' observations on Robert Lowth, *de sacra poesi Praelectionibus Academicis Oxonii habitis*. p. 100. (18).

It is for the **scholar** to gather these; for the **philosophers** to interpret them; to imitate them[8] – or, even bolder! – to bring them to their destiny is the part allotted to the **poet**.

Speaking is **translation** — from a **tongue of angels** into a **human tongue**, that is, **thoughts** in **words** – **things** in **names**[x] – **images** in **signs**; that can be **poetic** or kyriological[9γ], **historical**, or symbolic or hieroglyphic – – and **philosophical** or characteristic.[10] This kind of translation (i.e. **speech**) is more than any other like the **wrong** side of a tapestry.

*And shews the **stuff**, but not the **workman's** skill* [α]; or like a **solar eclipse**, which can be observed in a vessel full of water.[11]

Moses' torch[γ] illuminates even the **mental** world, which also has its **heaven** and **earth**. Hence Bacon compares the sciences to the waters **above** and **below** the arc of our atmosphere.[δ] The former are a **sea of glass**, as **crystal** mingled with **fire**[ε]; the latter **little clouds** from the **sea**, like a **man's hand**.[ζ]

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[8] *Learn to compose* a verse from divided words;
19-20 *You will become an imitator of the bard Lucilius.* Ausonius *Epist.* V.

[9] Elucidation can be sought in Wachter's *Naturae & Scripturae Concordia. Commentatio de literis ac numeris primaeuis aliisque rebus memorabilibus cum ortu literarum coniunctis.* Lips. & Hafn. 1752. in the first section.

[10] The following passage in **Petronius** should be understood as being in this genus of sign; which I must necessarily cite in context, supposing that one might take the same as a satire on the Philologian and his contemporaries: *Recently this flatulent and enormous loquacity has migrated from Asia to Athens, has afflicted our high-minded youth like a plague and at the same time corrupted the rules of eloquence which have stood still and become silent. Who has arisen to equal the reputation of Thucydides?* (Who is called the Pindar of historians) *or Hyperidis* (who revealed the bosom of Phrune, to convince the judges of his good case) *Poetry has lost its healthy colour; but everything, fed on the same diet, did not have the strength to reach the grey hairs of old age. The decadence of PAINTING set in once the AUDACITY of the EGYPTIANS found a SHORT CUT to this great art.* Compare this with the profound prophecy which **Socrates** put on the lips of the Egyptian king **Thamus**, on the discovery of **Thoth**, that made **Phaedrus** exclaim: *O Socrates, you so easily make up stories about Egypt or any other country you wish!*[ζ]

[11] The one metaphor from the Earl of **Roscommon's** *Essay on translated verse* and Howel's [sic] *Letters*; both have borrowed this simile, if I am not mistaken, from Saavedra [Cervantes]; the other from one of the most excellent weekly journals (*The Adventurer*): there, they are used *ad illustrationem* (for **adorning** the **garment**); here, *ad involucrum* (for **covering** the **naked body**), as Euthyphron's muse teaches us to distinguish.[β]

The creation of the *mise-en-scene* however relates to the creation of humanity as **epic** to **dramatic** poetry. The former happens through the **word**, the latter through **action**. Heart! Be like a still sea! — **Hear** the counsel: **'Let us make humans, an image that is like us, that have dominion!'** — **See** the deed: **And GOD the LORD made humans from a clod of earth** — compare **counsel** and **deed**; worship the mighty **Speaker**[12] with the psalmist; the **supposed** Gardener[13] with the woman who evangelized the **disciples**; and the free **potter**[14] with the apostle to **hellenistic philosophers** and **talmudic scholars!**[η]

The **hieroglyphic** Adam[θ] is the **history** of the entire **race** in a **symbolic** wheel: – – the **character** of Eve, the original of **beautiful** nature and **systematic economy**, that is not written with **methodical piety** on the page of the forehead[ι]; but rather is formed **below** in the **earth**, and lies concealed in the **entrails**, – in the **kidneys** of the **matter** itself.

Virtuosi[κ] of the present **aeon**, on which **GOD** the **LORD** lets fall a deep sleep![λ] You noble elite! make use of this **sleep** to build from the **rib** of this **Endymion** the **latest edition** of the human soul[μ], which the bard of **midnight** songs saw in his **morning dream**[15], – – but not from close up. The **next** aeon will wake like a giant from the stupor, to embrace your muse and to exult to her this testimony: **This is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh!**

Should this rhapsody come to the attention of a passing Levite of modern literature[ν]: I know in advance that he will bless himself, as did St. Peter[16] before **the great linen sheet bound at four corners, in which one look revealed to him four-footed animals of the earth and wild animals and reptiles and birds of the heavens** – – – 'O no; **demoniac** – **Samaritan**!' – – (thus will he berate the philologian in his heart) – 'for readers of orthodox tastes there can be no **common** expressions or unclean **vessels**[ξ] – *impossibilissimum est, **communia proprie** dicere*[ο] – Lo! therefore it happened, that an

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12 Ps. 33.9.
13 Jn. 20, 15-17.
14 Rom. 9.21.
15 Cf. D.* Young's writing to the author of *Grandison, Conjectures on Original Composition*. [*That is, Dr. E. Young.]
16 Acts 10. 11.

author whose taste is **eight days old**, but circumcised$^{\pi}$, soils his swaddling clothes with pure **white encrusted gentian**$^{\rho}$ – in honour of human necessities! – The fabled ugliness of the old **Phrygian** is in fact far less dazzling than the aesthetic beauty of **Aesop** the **younger.**$^{\sigma}$ Now Horace's **typological** ode to **Aristius**[17]$^{\varsigma}$ has been fulfilled, that one singing of **sweet-smiling Lalage, who kisses even more sweetly than she laughs**, has made **dandies** out of Sabine, Apuline and Mauritanian monsters. – One can certainly be a **man** without being an author. But whoever expects good friends to judge the **writer** apart from the **man** is more inclined to poetic than philosophic abstractions.$^{\tau}$ So do not venture into the **metaphysics**$^{\upsilon}$ of the **fine arts** without being initiated into the **orgies**[18]$^{\phi}$ and **Eleusinian mysteries.** But the senses are **Ceres**$^{\chi}$, and **Bacchus** the passions; — ancient foster-parents of **beautiful** nature.

> *Come,* ***Bacchus!*** *sweet grapes dangling from your horns*
> *&* ***Ceres*** *crowned with ears of wheat!*[19]

Should this rhapsody indeed have the honour of being judged by a **master** in **Israel**$^{\psi}$, let us go to meet him in holy **Prosopopoeia**[20]$^{\omega}$, which is as welcome in the kingdom of the dead$^{\spadesuit}$ as in the kingdom of the living (– – *si NUX modo ponor in illis*)$^{\blacktriangledown}$:

Honoured, learned
Rabbi!

'The postillion of the Holy Roman Empire, who bears the motto '*Relata refero*'[a] on the shield of his coat of arms, has made me lust after the second half of the **homily**[b] *de sacra poesi.* I burn for it – and wait in vain to the present day, as the mother of the Hazoritic captain[c] looked out of the window for the chariot of her son, and howled through the lattice – – [d]Do not think ill of me, therefore, if I speak with you in **gestures** like the ghost in **Hamlet**, until I have a more convenient time to

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17 Lib. I. Od. 22.

18 *The orgies tolerate neither Pentheus nor Orpheus. Baco de Augm. Scient.* Lib. II. Cap. XIII.

19 Tibull. Libr. II. Eleg. I.

20 *The art of personification works a field much less limited and more fertile than ancient mythology.* Fontenelle *sur la Poesie en general.* Tom. VIII.

explain myself in *sermones fideles*[21e]. Will you indeed believe without proof that the *Orbis pictus* of the famous visionary, schoolmaster and philologian **Amos Comenius**[22f] and **Muzelius'** *Exercitia* are books far too learned for **children** that are still practicing mere spell–ing – – and truly, truly, we must become **children**, if we want to receive the **spirit** of **truth**, which the world cannot grasp, for it does not **see** it and (if it should see it) does not know it.[h] Forgive the **foolishness** of my style of writing, which rhymes as little with the **mathematical** original sin[i] of your earliest as with the ingenious rebirth of your

[21] Jn. 3.11. – The following passage may help to avert the **coarsest** ignorance that might think to descry the present **imitation** of **kabbalistic** style as good or bad: *in the free way of* ***interpreting*** *Scripture, there occur two* ***excesses****. The one presupposes such perfection in* ***Scripture****, that all philosophy likewise should be derived from its sources; as if all other philosophy were something* ***profane*** *and* ***heathen****. This* ***distemper*** *has principally grown up in the school of* ***Paracelsus*** *and some others; but the beginnings thereof came from the* ***Rabbis*** *and* ***KABBALISTS****. But these men do not gain their object; and instead of giving honour to the* ***Scriptures*** *as they suppose, they rather* ***embase*** *and pollute them.– and as to seek* ***theology*** *in* ***philosophy*** *is to seek the* ***living among the dead,*** *so to seek* ***philosophy*** *in* ***theology*** *is to seek the* ***dead among the living****. The other method of interpretation which I set down as an* ***excess,*** *appears* ***at first glance*** *sober and modest, yet in reality it both dishonours the* ***Scriptures*** *themselves, and is very injurious to the* ***Church****. This is, (in a word), when the* ***divinely-inspired Scriptures*** *are explained in the same way as human writings. But we ought to remember that there are two things which are known to GOD the author of the Scriptures, but unknown to man; namely, the* ***secrets*** *of the* ***heart****, and the* ***successions of time****. — And therefore as the dictates of Scripture are written to the hearts of men, and comprehend the* ***vicissitudes*** *of* ***all ages****; with an eternal and certain foreknowledge of all heresies, contradictions, and differing and changing estates of the Church, as well in general as of the individual elect, they are not to be interpreted only* ***according*** *to the latitude and obvious sense of the place; or with respect to the occasion whereon the words were uttered; or in precise context with the words before and after; or in contemplation of the principal scope of the passage; but we must consider them to have in themselves not only totally or* ***collectively,*** *but* ***distributively*** *also in clauses and words, infinite springs and streams of doctrines, to water* ***every*** *part of the Church and the souls of the faithful. For it has been well observed that the* ***answers*** *of our* ***Saviour*** *to many of the questions which were propounded to Him do not appear to the point, but* ***as it were impertinent*** *thereto. The reason whereof is twofold;* ***the one,*** *that knowing the thoughts of his questioners not as we men do* ***by their words,*** *but immediately and of* ***himself,*** *he answered their* ***thoughts*** *and not their words;* ***the other,*** *that He did not speak* ***only*** *to the persons then present, but to us also now living, and to men* ***of every age and place*** *to whom the* ***Gospel*** *was to be preached. And this also holds good in other passages of Scripture.* Baco *de Augm.* Lib. IX. [IV, 116-18.]

[22] Cf. Kortholt's collection of Leibnitz's [sic] letters, Vol. 3. Ep. 29.g

latest writings, if I borrow an example from a **spelling-book** which no doubt may be older than the Bible. Do the **elements** of the ABC's lose their natural meaning, if they remind us, in the infinite combination of arbitrary signs, of the **Ideas**[j], which if not in heaven, are in the **mind**? – – Should one raise the whole **meritorious justice** of a scribe on the **corpse** of the **letter**; what does the **spirit** say to that? Shall it not be a **servant** of the **dead** or perhaps indeed a mere **spear-bearer**[k] of the **death-dealing letter**?[l] By no means! – – According to your extensive insight into physical things[m], you know better than you can remember, that the **wind** blows where it will[n] –Though one may hear its sighing; still one judges from the vacillating **weather-cock** from whence it comes, and still more, **whither** it goes – – '

Ah shameful crime! destroy the precious writing?
Sooner weaken the mighty power of the law.
***Liber** and sweet **Ceres** come to our aid!* – –[23o]

The opinions of the philosophers are **readings** of **nature** and the precepts of the theologians, **readings** of **Scripture**. The

[23] Cf. Caesar's *Octauii Augusti* poetic **edict**, according to which Virgil's last will *abolenda Aeneide* is said to be nullified – – One can readily grant Dr. George Benson[p] what he put together rather than worked out, with little **reflection**, **discernment**, or **smoothness**, on the **unity** of **meaning**. If he had been willing to impart to us a few **mortal** sentences on the unity of interpretation; his thoroughness would have seemed more sensible to us — — One cannot leaf through the four volumes of this paraphrastic exposition without a rather **ambiguous** smile, or without noticing the frequent passages where Dr. Benson, with a papist **beam** in his own eye, rails against the **motes** of the Roman Church – and mimics our theological councillors, who loudly applaud any **rash, blind idea** which honours the creature more than the Creator — — First, one must ask Dr. Benson: whether **unity** cannot co-exist with **multiplicity**? A lover of **Homer** runs the same danger of losing the **unity** of **meaning** with a French paraphrast like **la Motte**, or a profound dogmatist like **Samuel Clarke** — — the literal or **grammatical**, the carnal or **dialectical**, the Capernaitic or **historical** meanings are **mystical** to the highest degree, and depend on such **momentary, ethereal, arbitrary,** secondary conditions and circumstances that one cannot obtain the key of their knowledge[q] without **ascending to heaven**[r]; and must shrink from no **journey across the sea** or in the **regions** of such **spirits**[s] who, since **yesterday** or the **day before**, for a hundred or a thousand years, have **believed, uttered, suffered** – **mysteries**! – of which the **Universal World History** has given us hardly as much information as the space on the narrowest **tombstone**, or as Echo, the nymph with the **laconic** memory, can hold at once. – – Such a one must perhaps have the **key to heaven** and **hell**[t], if he wishes to entrust to us

author is the best interpreter of his words; He may speak through **creatures** – through **events** – or through **blood and fire and smoke**[24], which comprise the **language** of **holiness**.

The **book** of **creation** has **instances** of universal concepts which GOD desired to reveal to the **creature** through the **creature**; the **books** of the **covenant** contain **instances** of the secret articles which GOD wanted to reveal to people through people. The **unity** of the Prime Mover is mirrored even in the **dialect** of his works; in all, One **note** of immeasurable height and depth! A **proof** of the most glorious majesty and purest self-emptying![z] A **miracle** of such infinite **silence**, that makes **GOD** as nothing, that one must in **conscience** deny his existence or be a **beast**[25]; but at the same time of such **infinite power**, that fulfills all in all[α], that one cannot **flee** from his **ardent solicitude**!

If the **devotion** that consists in philosophical **spirit** and poetic **truth**[β] is a matter of taste, and **versification** a matter of **politics**[26]; can one cite a more reliable witness than the immortal Voltaire, who virtually declares religion to be the cornerstone[γ] of epic poetry, and bewails nothing more than that his religion[27] is the contrary of mythology? –

Bacon imagined mythology as a winged youth of **Aeolus**, with the **sun** behind him, **clouds** for footstools, and who plays a **Greek pipe** as a pastime.[28]

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the **projects** that **imaginative** authors, in a **critical** place, forge for the **conversion** of their infidel brothers. – – Because Moses attributed **life** to the **blood**[u], all **baptized** Rabbis are terrified of the **spirit** and **life** of the Prophets, so that the **meaning of words** is sacrificed as an only child εν παραβολη[v], and the **streams**[w] of oriental wisdom are turned to **blood**. — — The application of these stifled thoughts is unsuitable for pampered stomachs. – ***Abstractions*** *correspond to dark beginnings;* ***concrete things*** *to maturity;* according to Bengel's *Gnomon*[x] – (*clearly a thumb, not an* ***index***).[y]

[24] Acts 2.19.

[25] Ps. 73.21, 22.

[26] The only **politics** in a poem ought to be the creation of **good verse**, says M. de Voltaire, in his **confession of faith** on epic poetry.

[27] Whatever M. de Voltaire might understand by religion, ***scholars*** *quarrel & the case is so far sub* ***judice*** [Horace]; therefore the Philologian need worry about it as little as the reader. We may seek it in the **liberties** of the Gallic Church, or in the flowers of sulphur[δ] of purified Naturalism: but neither explanation will do any damage to the unity of meaning.

[28] *Mythological fables seem to be a kind of* ***delicate breath,*** *from the* ***traditions of more ancient nations,*** *which blow in Greek* ***pipes.*** *De Augm. Scient.* Lib. II, Cap. XIII [Bacon.]

Voltaire, however, the high-priest in the **temple** of **taste**[ε], reasons as conclusively as **Caiaphas**[29], and thinks more fruitfully than **Herod**.[30] Namely, if our **theology** is not worth as much as mythology: then it is absolutely impossible to equal the poetry of the pagans – let alone **surpass** it[ζ]; as would be most fitting to our **duty** and our **vanity**. But if our **poetry** is worthless: then our **history** will look even more emaciated than **Pharaoh's cows**[η]; but **fairy tales** and **court gazettes** will compensate for the deficiency of our historians. It is not worth the effort to think of **philosophy** at all; all the more horoscopes! – more than spider's webs in a ruined castle. Every idler who understands **dog-Latin** and **Swiss-German** with equal difficulty, but whose name is stamped with the **whole number M.** or half of the **academic beast**[θ] **proves** lies, that the benches and the **blockheads** sitting on them must cry Outrage! if only the former had ears and if the latter, ironically called **listeners**, were accustomed to using them. – – –

> "Where is Euthyphron's whip, timid nag?
> that my cart does not get stuck – – – "[ι]

Mythology here! Mythology there![31] Poetry is an imitation of beautiful nature – and **Nieuwentyt's**, **Newton's**, and **Buffon's** revelations will be able to replace a tasteless doctrine of fables?[κ] – – Perhaps they **should** do it, and **would** indeed do it, if only they could – Why then does it not happen? – Because it is **impossible**, say your poets.

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[29] *Whether a man has* ***judgment*** *or* ***not****, he profits equally by your work: he must only REMEMBER*, says a writer, on whose **lips** is **prophecy**, to Voltaire's face – – *And the rhapsodist should not forget this.* Socrates in Plato's *Ion*.

[30] Photius (in the *Amphilochiis Quaest.* CXX, which Johann Christoph Wolf has added to his **cornucopia** of philological and critical **fancies**) sees a prophecy in the words of Herod to the wise men of the East: **'so that I too might come and worship him'**, compares it to **Caiaphas'** pronouncement in Jn. 11.49-52 and makes the observation: *One could perhaps find other such cases, where a display of evil intentions and blood-stained violence acquires a prophetic end.* Photius sees Herod as a *Janus bifrons*, who represents the **pagans** by virtue of his **race**, and the **Jews** by his **office**. – A great many malicious and useless ideas (of which master and servant boast alike) would appear in quite a different light if we cared to reflect a while: whether they **speak from themselves**, or must be understood as **prophesying**?

[31] Fontenelle *sur la Poesie en general. When one employs fabulous images in a novel manner, they will surely make a grand effect.*

Nature works through the senses and the passions. Whoever mutilates her tools, how might they **perceive**? Are even maimed **limbs** forced to **move**? – –

Your **lying, murderous** philosophy has cleared Nature out of the way, and why do you demand that we ourselves should **imitate** the same? – So that you can redouble your pleasure, and murder the **students** of **nature** as well –

Yes, you fine critics! you keep asking what truth is, and reach for the door, because you cannot wait for an answer to the question – Your hands are always **washed**, be it that you want to eat your **bread**, or you have just passed a **death-sentence**[λ]; – Do you not also ask: **how** you have cleared nature out of the way? – Bacon accuses you of flaying it with your **abstractions.**[μ] Should **Bacon** be witnessing to the truth; well then! so **stone** him[ν] – and leap with mud-pies or snowballs after his shadow –

If one **single** truth rules like the **sun**; that is **day**. If you see in place of this **single** truth as many as the sands on the shores of the sea – here a **small light**[32] that surpasses a whole **host of suns** in splendour[33]; that is a **night** beloved of **poets** and **thieves**. – – The poet[34] at the beginning of days is **the same** as the thief[35] at the end of days – –[ξ]

All **colours** of the **fairest** world pale; as soon as its **light**, the **first-born** of creation[ο], is quenched. If the **belly** is your God[π]; then even the **hairs** of your head are under its **guardianship.**[ρ] Every creature will alternately become your **sacrificial offering** and your **idol**. – Subjected **against** its **will** – but still in **hope** – it **sighs** under its **servitude** or **over vanity**; it does its best to escape your **tyranny**, and in your most ardent embraces, it longs for that **freedom** in which the animals honoured Adam, when **GOD** brought them to him to see what he would call them, for whatever he named them they would be called.[σ]

This **analogy** of the human being to the Creator imparts to

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[32] – – & borrowed – –
– light –
Catull. *Carm.* Sec. ad Dian.

[33] – – *the star of Julius*
shines above others
like the ***moon*** *above minor flames.*
Horace Lib. I. Od. XII.

[34] 2 Cor. 4.6.

[35] Rev. 16.15.

all creatures their **value** and their **stamp**ς on which **fidelity and faith** in all of **nature** depend. The more vivid this idea of the **image of the invisible God**[36] is in our minds; the more able we are to **see** and **taste**, to **contemplate** and **feel with our hands**τ, His **friendliness** in His creatures. Every impression of nature on the human being is not only a **reminder**, but also a **pledge** of the fundamental truth: **who** the **LORD** is. Every counter-effect of the human being in creatures is a **letter** and **seal** of our share in the **divine nature**[37], and that we are **His family**.[38]

Oh, for a muse like the fire of a goldsmith, and like the fuller's soap![39] — — **She** will dare to purify the **natural use of the senses** from the **unnatural use of abstractions**[40], whereby our **concepts** of **things** are as **mutilated** as the **name** of the Creator is **suppressed** and **slandered**. I speak with you, **Greeks**! because you think yourselves wiser than the **chamberlains**υ with the **gnostic** key; — try to read the **Iliad**, if you have first sifted out with **abstractions** the vowels α and ω, and give me your opinion of the poet's **meaning**φ and **euphony**.

I sing -f the wr-th -f -chilles, s-n of Peleusχ

Behold! the great and small **Masore**ψ of philosophy have overflowed the **text** of **nature** like the Flood.ω Did not all its **beauties** and **riches** turn to **water**? – But you work far greater miracles than did the gods to **amuse themselves**[41], with oaks[42]

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[36] — — *image of the invisible God*. Col. 1.15.

[37] — — *partakers of divine nature*. 2 Pet. 1.4. *conformed to the image of his Son*. Rom. 8.29.

[38] Acts 17.27 etc.

[39] Malachi 3.2.

[40] **Bacon** *de interpretatione Naturae & regno Hominis*. Aphorism. CXXIV. *'But I say that those foolish and* ***apish*** *images of worlds which the fancies of men have created in philosophical systems must be utterly scattered to the winds. Be it known then how vast a difference there is between the* ***Idols*** *of the human mind and the* ***Ideas*** *of the divine. The former are nothing more than* ***arbitrary abstractions****; the latter are the* ***creator's own stamp*** *upon* ***creation****, impressed and defined in matter by* ***true*** *and* ***exquisite lines****.* ***Truth*** *therefore and utility are here the very same* ***things****: and the* ***works*** *of nature themselves are of greater value as* ***pledges of truth*** *than as contributing to the* ***comforts of life****'* (that is, for the sake of the **belly**). Elsewhere he repeats this reminder, that one might use all the works of nature not only as ***beneficia vitae***, but also as ***veritatis pignora***.

[41] — *for the gods also are playful*. Socrates in *Cratylus*.

and **pillars of salt**[aa], with **petrified** and **alchemical** transformations and fables, to persuade the human race — you make nature **blind**, so that she might be your **guide**! or better you have put out your own eyes with **Epicurianism**[bb], so that you may be taken for **prophets** who dream up their own **inspiration** and **interpretation**. — You want to **rule** over nature, and bind your own hands and feet with **Stoicism**[cc], to be able to **pipe**[dd] all the more movingly on the **diamond fetters of fate** in your miscellaneous poems.

If the passions are **members** of **dishonour**, do they then cease to be **weapons** of **manhood**?[ee] Do you understand the **letters of reason** more wisely than that allegorical chamberlain of the Alexandrian church[ff] did the letters of Scripture, who made himself a **eunuch** for the **Kingdom of Heaven's** sake? The **prince** of this **aeon**[gg] makes the greatest **evil-doers** against themselves into his favourites; his court-jesters are the worst enemies of beautiful nature, who may have **Corybantes**[hh] and **Galli**[ii] as the belly's priests[jj], but **strong** spirits for **true devotees**.

A philosopher like **Saul**[43] sets **monastic rules** – Passion alone gives **abstractions** as well as **hypotheses** hands, feet, wings; – spirit, life and tongue to **images** and **signs** – – where are faster **inferences**? Where is the **rolling thunder** of **eloquence** begotten, and its companion – **monosyllabic lightning**[44]–

Why should I paraphrase **One** Word[kk] in **endless** words for you, Readers, ignorant of your **estate**, **honour** and **title**, since you can observe for yourselves the manifestations of the **passions** everywhere in human **society**; as everything, no matter how remote, strikes the mind's affect in a particular way; as every

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[42] Socrates to Phaedrus: *'Well, Phaedrus, the priests in the sanctuary of Zeus at Dodona declared that the earliest oracles came from an oak tree, and the men of their time, who lacked your modern sophistication, were simple-minded enough to be quite satisfied with messages from an oak or a rock if only they were true. But truth is not enough for you; you think it matters who the speaker is and where he comes from.'*

[43] 1 Sam. 14.24

[44] ***Brief*** *as the* ***lightning*** *in the collied night*
That (in a ***spleen****) unfolds heav'n and earth*
And ere man has power to say: ***Behold!***
The ***jaws*** *of darkness do devour it up.*
Shakespeare in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream.*

single sensation extends over the compass of all external objects[45]; as we can appropriate **universal** cases by a personal application, and blow up every **parochial** situation into a public **spectacle** of heaven and earth. Every individual truth grows into the **foundation** of a plan, more miraculously than that **ox-hide** became the area of a city[ll]; and a **plan** more ample than the hemisphere contains the tip of a point-of-view.[mm] – In brief, the **perfection** of projects, the **strength** of their exposition; the **conception** and **birth** of new ideas and new expressions; the **work** and **rest** of the wise, their **consolation** and **disgust** in it, lie in the fruitful **womb** of the passions buried before our **senses**.

'The philologian's **public**, his **world** of readers, seems to be like that **auditorium** which was filled by a solitary **Plato**.[46nn] – Antimachus carried on confidently, as it is written:

"The leech will not leave the skin until it is sated." '

Just as if our **learning** were a mere **remembering**[oo], we are always referred back to the monuments of **antiquity**, to edify our minds with **memory**. But why remain with the **broken cistern**[pp] of the **Greeks**, and abandon the **living well** of the ancient world? We ourselves perhaps do not rightly know what we admire in the Greeks and Romans to the point of idolatry. Therefore we have the **cursed contradiction**[47qq] in our symbolic text-books, which to this day are delicately bound in **sheep's vellum**[rr], but inside – yes inside, they are full of **dead bones**, full of **hypo-critical** vice.[48ss]

Like a man who views his bodily form in the mirror, but after he has seen it, has forgotten an hour later what his form is[tt]; thus are we with the ancients — A painter sits for his self-portrait in a quite different way. — **Narcissus**, (the flowering bulb of ***beaux esprits***) loved his **image** more than his **life**.[49]

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[45] *The usual effect of our ignorance is to portray everything as similar to ourselves and to spread our portrait over the whole of nature*, says Fontenelle in the *Histoire du Theatre Franç. A grand passion is a kind of Soul, immortal in its nature and almost independent of the Organs.* Fontenelle in *Elege de Ms. de Verney.*

[46] ***Plato ALONE** is worth all the rest.* Cicero in *Brut.*

[47] Ps. 59.13.

[48] See the entire 11th issue of the *Briefe, die neueste Litteratur betreffend*, a bit **here**, a bit **there**, but especially p. 131.

[49] Ovid, Metamorph. Lib. III.
— he drank, he was enchanted by the beautiful reflection that he saw.

Salvation comes from the Jews[uu] – I have not yet seen them; but I expect sounder conceptions in their **philosophical writings** – to your shame – **Christians**! – But you feel the **barb** of the **good name you have been given**[50] as little as the **honour** that **GOD** made for himself from the **despised name** of '**Son of Man**' – – – –

Nature and **Scripture** are therefore the **materials** of the **beautiful, creative, imitative** Spirit – – Bacon compares **matter**

He fell in love with a bodiless hope, mistaking a mere ***shadow*** *for a real* ***body****. Spellbound by his own self, he remained there motionless, with fixed gaze, like a* ***statue carved*** *from* ***Parian marble****. As he lay on the bank, he gazed at the twin stars that were his eyes, at his flowing locks, worthy of* ***Bacchus*** *or* ***Apollo****, his smooth cheeks, his ivory neck, his lovely face where a rosy flush stained the snowy whiteness of his complexion,* ***admiring all the features for which he was himself admired.*** —

Stretched on the shady grass, he gazed at the shape that was ***a lying shape*** *with eyes that could never have their fill, and by his own eyes he was undone. Finally he raised himself a little. Holding out his arms to the surrounding woods: 'O you woods,' he cried, 'has anyone ever felt a love more cruel? You surely know, for many lovers have found you* ***an opportune hiding place*** *. — I am in love, and see my loved one,* ***but that form which I see and love, I cannot reach****: so far am I deluded by my love! My distress is all the greater because it is not a mighty ocean that separates us, nor yet highways or mountains, or city walls with close-barred gates.* ***Only a little water keeps us apart****. — You would think he could be reached – it is such a* ***SMALL THING*** *that hinders our love. Whoever you are, come out to me! — With a friendly* ***face*** *you offer me some* ***hope****. — I have marked your tears when I was weeping. You answer my* ***signs*** *with* ***nods****.— Alas! I myself am the boy I see. I know it: my reflection does not deceive me. — What I desire, I have. My very plenty makes me poor. How I wish I could separate myself from my body! A new prayer this, for a lover. —*

He SAID THIS, and returned to gazing ***senselessly*** *at that same face. His tears disturbed the water, so that the pool rippled, and the image grew dim. He saw it disappearing, and cried aloud: — 'Let me look upon you, if I cannot touch you. Let me, by looking, feed my ill-starred love.' — He laid down his weary head on the green grass, and death closed the eyes which* ***so admired their owner's beauty****. Even then, when he was received into the abode of the dead,* ***he kept looking at himself in the waters of the Styx.*** — *The wood nymphs mourned him too, and Echo sang her refrain to their lament. The pyre, the tossing torches, and the bier, were now being prepared, but* ***his body was nowhere to be found****. Instead of his corpse, they discovered* ***a flower*** *with a circle of white petals round a yellow centre.* Translation from Mary Innes but adapted.

[50] James 2.7.

to **Penelope**[vv]; – her impudent suitors are the **philosophers** and **scribes**. The story of the **beggar** that appeared at the court of Ithaca you know[ww]; for has **Homer** not **translated** it into Greek and **Pope** into English verse? – –

By what means however shall we raise the **extinct language** of nature from the dead? – – With **pilgrimages** to **happy Araby**[xx], with **crusades** to the **East**[yy], and with the the reconstruction of their **magic**, which we must take for our booty with **ancient women's cunnning**, for it is the **best**. – Cast down your eyes, lazy **gluttons**[zz]! and read what **Bacon**[51] poetizes on magic. – Because **silken** feet in **dancing-shoes** will not bear you on such a burdensome journey; then let the **right way** be shown to you through **hyperbole** — [52αα]

[a]Oh, that You would tear open the heavens and come down! before Whose coming the mountains flow away, as hot water seethes from violent fire, that Your **Name** be proclaimed among its enemies, who still use it, and that anointed **heathen** learn to tremble before the wonders that You work, beyond all expectation! Let new ***ignis fatuus***[b] arise in the East! Let their **wise men's** curiosity be roused by **new stars**, to bring us their **treasures** into the land – Myrrh! Frankincense! and their Gold! which is more to us than their **magic**! Let kings be **duped** by them[c], their **philosophical muse** snort in vain against **children** and **childish doctrines**[d]; but do not let **Rachel** weep in vain! – [e]

How shall we then devour **death in the pots**, and make the **garnish** tasty for the children of the prophets?[f] How shall we atone to the grieved **Spirit** of the **Scriptures**?[g] **'Do you think that I want to eat the flesh of oxen and drink the blood of goats?'**[h] Neither the dogmatic thoroughness of the pharisaical orthodox nor the poetic luxuriance of sadducean free-thinkers will renew the sending of the Spirit, which impelled the holy people of God (ευκαιρως ακαιρως)[i] to speak and write. – – [j]That

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[51] *But indeed the chief business of MAGIC was to note the* ***correspondences*** *between the* ***architectures*** *and* ***fabrics*** *of things* ***natural*** *and things* ***civil.*** *Neither are these only similitudes (as men of narrow observation may perhaps conceive them to be), but plainly* ***the same footsteps of nature*** *treading or* ***printing*** *upon different* ***matters*** *and* ***subjects.*** Bacon in the third book *de augmentis scientiarum*; where he also tries to explain magic by means of a *scientiam consensum rerum universalium* and to explain the appearance of the Magi at Bethlehem in this light.

[52] – *and I will show you a still more excellent way.* I Cor. 12.31.

beloved disciple of the **only-begotten, who is in the bosom of the father**, proclaimed to us: that the **spirit** of **prophecy** lives in the testimony of the **Unique** Name, through which alone we will be blessed, and can inherit the promise of this life and the next; — the **Name**, which no one knows but those who receive it, which is above all **Names**, that at the name of JESUS all **knees** shall bend, which are in heaven and on earth and under the earth; and all **tongues** confess, that JESUS CHRIST is LORD to the glory of God! – the **Creator**; praise to Him forever! Amen!

[k]The **witness of JESUS** then is the **spirit of prophecy**[53], and the first **sign** by which he revealed the **majesty** of his **servant's form** transforms the holy books of the covenant into **good**, **mature wine**, which fools the steward's judgment and strengthens the critics's weak stomach. *If you read the Books of the Prophets without understanding CHRIST*, says the **Punic** Church Father[54l], *what **insipidity** and **foolishness** will you find? But if* 16a*you understand CHRIST, you will not only understand what*

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[53] Rev. 19.10.

[54] Cf. the *Answer to the Question of the Influence of Opinions on Language and of Language on Opinions* [by Michaelis], which won the prize from the royal Academy of Sciences for the year 1759. Cf. 66. 67. One could also appropriately cite: *Ars Pun-ica, siue Flos Linguarum: The Art of Punning, or the Flower of Languages in seventy-nine Rules for the farther Improvement of Conversation and Help of Memory.* By the Labour and Industry of TUM PUN-SIBI. – Ambiguous speech is perhaps thought to be the wittiest; but not only always in jest; but also in serious matters – For the ingenious seem to have the gift of using words in a way in which they are not normally understood. Cicero *de Orat.* lib. 2. The second Edition 1719. 8. This learned work (of which I alas! only possess a defective copy) has for its author – Swift, the Glory of the Priesthood, — (The glory of the Priesthood and the shame!) Essay on Criticism — and begins with a logical, physical, and moral definition. In the logical sense **Punning** is essentially something of which it is said that it applies to something else or is in any manner applied to something else. According to the natural science (of the adventurous and depressive Cardanus[m]) in [sic] **Punning** is an Art of harmonious Jinggling [sic] upon **Words**, which passing in at the **Ears** and falling upon the **Diaphragma** excites a titillary Motion in those Parts, and this being convey'd by the **Animal Spirits** into the **Muscles** of the **Face** raises the **Cockles** of the Heart. According to the casuistic definition however it is a **Virtue**, that most effectually promotes the **End** of **good Fellowship** – – An example of this artful virtue, among others of the same kind, is the **answer** cited *vid. supra* to the **Punic** comparison between **Mahomet** the Prophet and Augustine the Church Father[n], who are similar according to an **amphibological**[o] lover of poetry of half enthusiastic and half scholastic imagination, who seems not to be

you read, but it will ***intoxicate*** *you.*[r] –'But to curb here the **evil-doing** and **haughty** spirits– **Adam** must be dead before he suffers this and drinks the **strong wine**. So see that you do not drink wine when you are still a **suckling**, every **doctrine** has its **measure, time** and **age**.'[55s]

[u]After **GOD** had **exhausted himself** through **nature** and **Scripture**, through **creatures** and **seers**, through **reasons** and **figures**, through **poets** and **prophets**, and run out of breath: then in the **evening** of the day he spoke to us through His **Son**, – **yesterday** and **today**! – until the promise of his **coming** – no longer in the form of the servant – shall also be fulfilled:

O King of Glory, LORD JESUS CHRIST!
You are GOD THE FATHER'S eternal SON;
You did not scorn the virgin's womb – -[56v]

[w]One would pass a **judgment of slander**, if one descried our ingenious sophists as stupid devils, who value the Lawgiver of the Jews as much as a **donkey's head**, and the sayings of their mastersingers as **dove-droppings**; but certainly they will on the day of the LORD – – a **Sunday**, blacker than **midnight**, in

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sufficiently learned to appreciate tolerably the use of **figurative language** let alone to be capable of investigating religious experiences. The good Bishop spoke Hebrew, as the *bourgeois gentilhomme* spoke prose without realizing it, and as one nowadays can betray the **barbarism** of his times and the **deceit** of his heart[p] with learned questions and their answers, without realizing it, at the cost of the profound truth: that all are **sinners** and lack the **glory**[q] that is imputed to them, the Arabic prophet of lies as well as the good African shepherd and the clever head (whom I ought to have mentioned first) whose idea it was to compare in such a **ridiculous parallelism** these **two acknowledgers of Providence**, as fitting to the punic doctrine of reason of our present-day kabbalists, for whom every **figleaf** yields a **Sufficient Reason**, and every **allusion** a **fulfillment**.

[55] Words of our **Luther** (whose taste is said to have been spoiled by his reading of **Augustine**) from his well-known **Sermon** on the **Letter to the Romans**, of which I can so little tire of reading as I can of his **Sermon** on the **Psalms**. I have cited this passage by means of a so-called **Accomodation**[t], because Luther in the cited passage speaks of the **abyss of divine Predestination**, and in his laudable fashion declares, 'that without **suffering**, the **cross** and the **pain of death** one can not treat of **Predestination** without **harm** and **secret wrath** against **GOD**.'

[56] The pious reader can complete the final cadences of this hymn. My **memory** has deserted me from sheer **obstinacy**; – *semper ad euentum – – & quae desperat relinquit.*

which **invincible fleets** are stubble – – The most caressing **zephyr**, a herald of the last **thunderstorm**, – as **poetically** – as the **LORD** of **Hosts** alone can **think** and **express** it, will drown out the most robust trumpeter; – – Abraham's **joy** will reach the highest peaks; – his **cup** run over – The last tears! invaluably more precious than all the pearls with which the last Queen of Egypt will flaunt her arrogance; – these final tears for **Sodom's** final conflagration and the last **martyr's** flight[57], GOD will wipe away from the eye of **Abraham**, the father of the faithful! with his own hand – –

[x]That day of the LORD, which gives Christians the courage to preach the LORD'S **death**, will reveal the stupidest village-idiots among all the **angels** for whom a fire of hell is prepared. The devils **believe** and **tremble**! — but your senses, **crazed** by the **cunning** of **reason**, do not tremble – You laugh, when Adam the **sinner** chokes on an **apple** and Anacreon the **wise man** on a **grapeseed**! – Do you laugh, when **geese panic** in the capital – and **ravens** feed the patriot, whose spirit was **Israel's artillery and cavalry**? — You secretly congratulate yourself on your blindness when GOD on the cross is numbered among the **evil-doers** – and when an **abomination** in **Geneva** or **Rome**[y], in the **opera** or the **mosque**[z], is **apotheosized** or **pumpkinized**.[α]

Paint two snakes! 'Boys, the place is sacred;
Piss somewhere else'; I'm off – – –
PERS.[β]

The **birth** of a **genius** will, as usual, be accompanied by the martyrdom of **innocent children**[γ] — I may be permitted to compare **rhyme** and **metre** to innocent children who seem to be in mortal danger of being exposed[δ] by our latest poetry.

If **rhyme** belongs to the genus of **Paronomasia**[58ε]; the origin of the same must be almost as old as the nature of language and our sense-representations. – – Whoever finds the **yoke** of **rhyme** too heavy is not therefore justified in persecuting a talent for

57 2 Pet. 2.8.

58 Cf. on Lowth's Praelect. XV. the 76th. Editor's note. Algarotti vol. III.

the same.[59] The **odd line**[ζ] would otherwise have given this reckless pen as much occasion for a lampoon as **Plato** may have had to immortalize the **hiccups** of **Aristophanes** in the **Symposium**[η], or **Scarron** his own in a **sonnet**.

The free **structure** which **Klopstock**, that great restorer of **lyric song**, permits himself, is presumably an **archaism**, which happily imitates the mysterious mechanics of the **sacred poetry** of the **Hebrews**, in which one perceives, according to the astute observation of the most profound critics of our time[60θ], nothing more than 'an **artful prose** broken into the **elements** of its **periods**, each of which can be viewed as a single verse of a particular metre; and the reflections or feelings of the oldest and holiest poets seem to have ordered themselves' (perhaps as randomly as Epicurus' atoms) 'into **symmetrical** lines, that are full of euphony, although they have no (prescribed or mandatory) syllabic metre.'

Homer's **monotonic** metre should strike us as at least as **paradoxical** as the freedom of the German **Pindar**.[61] My admiration or ignorance of the cause of such a **universal** metre in the Greek poets has been moderated by a journey through Courland and Lithuania. There are in particular regions certain districts where one hears the **Lettish** or **non-German** people singing as they work, but nothing but a cadence of a few

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[59] *Softly rhyme steals into the* ***heart****, when it is not* ***forced****,*
It ***supports*** *and* ***lures*** *the* ***harmony****, and glues the speech into the* ***memory****.*

Elegies and Letters. Strasburg, 1760. [Nicolai.]

[60] Cf. on Lowth's third lecture, the 4th note of the editor, p. 49 and the 51st in the 3rd issue of *Briefe, die neueste Literatur betreffend.*

[61] Would it not be **charming** if Herr Klopstock gave his **printer** or a *Margot the Chatterer*[ι], as the Philologian's muse is, the reasons why he has printed his poetic emotions, which for the rabble have *qualitates occultas* as their object, and are called **emotions** *par excellence* in the *galant* language, in **separate lines**. Despite the **gibberish** of my dialect, I would be very willing to acknowledge Herr Klopstock's **prose** style of writing as a model of **classical** perfection. From the brief examinations of it I ascribe to this author such a deep knowledge of his mother-tongue, and especially its **prosody**, that his **musical** metre would befit a **singer** who wants to be something beyond the ordinary as a **ceremonial garment** of **lyric poetry**. – I distinguish the original compositions of our **Asaph**[κ] from his transformations of ancient church hymns[λ], yes, even from his epic, whose **story** is well-known, and similar to **Milton's** in **outline** at least, if not in all details.

notes, which has a great similarity to a single metre. Should a poet arise among them; it would be quite natural that all his verses would trim their voices to this **established metre.**[μ] It would require too much time to place this little fact in its proper context (*to please the foolish, perhaps – who want to burn it with their curling irons*)[ν], to compare it to numerous phenomena, to trace the reasons for it, and to develop the fruitful conclusions –

Enough now of the snow- and hail-storms
Which the Father sent upon earth, his red right hand
Striking the sacred hills,
Terrifying the Capital

Terrifying the people, lest the age of horrors
Should return, when Pyrrha was amazed at strange sights
When Proteus drove his ocean herds uphill,
Visiting mountain-tops– –

Horace.[ξ]

GLOSS

As the first reader of this Rhapsody in kabbalistic Prose I see myself obliged by the **rights** of **primogeniture** to leave behind for my younger brothers who will come after me, yet another **example** of **merciful judgment**, as follows:

Everything in this aesthetic nut tastes of **vanity**! – of **vanity**![o] –The **Rhapsodist**[62] has read, observed, thought, sought and found pleasant words, faithfully adduced, like a merchant's ship has obtained and brought his provisions from afar. He has ordered together **sentence** after **sentence**, as one counts the **arrows**[63] on a **battlefield**; and marked out his **figures** as one measures out the **pegs** for a **tent**.[π] Instead of **pegs** and **arrows** he has, with the **petit-maîtres**[ρ] and **pedants** of his time, written * * * * * * * * and – – – – – – – – **obelisks** and **asterisks**.[64]

Let us now hear the **summation** of his latest aesthetic, which is the **oldest**:[ς]

Fear God and give Him glory, for the hour of His judgment has come, and worship Him who made heaven and earth and the sea and fountains of water![τ]

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62 — *the rhapsodists – interpreters of interpreters*. Socrates in Plato's *Ion*.

63 Procopius. *de bello persico*. I.18.

64 *Asterisks illuminate; obelisks murder and stab*: Jerome in the Preface to the Pentateuch. Cf. Laertius on Plato.[σ] A skillful use of these masoretic signs could well serve to rejuvenate the **Solomonic Scriptures**, as one of the latest commentators has elucidated two epistles of Paul with the method of §. §. and **tables**.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

For the sake of the symbols used to designate the notes, the notes are divided into sections; the first cycle (a - ♥) runs to the beginning of the Prosopopoeia, 195:1–201:21; the second (a - αα) to the beginning of Hamann's 'apocalyptic discourse', 201:22-211:13; the third (a - τ) from 211:14 to the end.

195:1 – 201:21

[a] The title is an allusion both to Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten's *Aesthetica* (1750-1758) and to Christoph Otto von Schönaich's *Die ganze Ästhetik in einer Nuß* (1754), 'a satirical work against Klopstock' (Nisbet, 281).

[b] In addition to its more obvious and immediate meanings, in my opinion this subtitle refers to the issue of hermeneutics and proper interpretation. For 'rhapsody' cf. Hamann's note 62 ('rhapsodists – interpreters of interpreters') and for 'Kabbala' cf. note 21, and N III, 23:10-16, where 'Kabbala' is used to refer broadly to language whose meaning is not literal but is to be found in discerning the right understanding or meaning. 'A Rhapsody in Kabbalistic Prose' therefore signposts the importance of subtle and intuitive (we might almost say 'devious') interpretation for a proper understanding of the work.

[c] This passage, from the Song of Deborah, was used by Lowth as an example of Prosopopoeia. Both this passage and Prosopopoeia play an important part in what follows. The passage and the one from Job which follows (Job 32.19-22) were cited by Hamann in Hebrew.

[d] Horace, III Odes 1, vs. 1-8. According to Jørgensen, the tradition of rhetoric offers more to understanding the beginning of *AN* than recourse to mysticism and confusion; he provides a taxonomyof the opening of *AN* according to rhetorical devices. (Jørgensen, *ZHS* 376.)

[e] Cf. Mt. 3.12; also Jer. 51.2.

[f] The archangel (Michael) is Johann David Michaelis (1717-1791), theologian and orientalist. His linguistic activity on 'the relics of the language of Canaan' is evidenced by his Hebrew grammar (1745-1778), his German translations of the Bible (1769-1792) and various writings on the Hebrew Scriptures. The two works of particular importance are his edition of Robert Lowth's work on sacred poetry, *De sacra poesi Hebräorum*, published in Göttingen in 1758; and Michaelis' own *Beurtheilung der Mittel, welche man anwendet, die ausgestorbene Hebräische Sprache zu verstehen* (Judgement of the methods which one uses to understand the extinct Hebrew language.) His prize-winning essay for the Berlin Academy on the reciprocal influences of thought and language (1759) is also the focus for other Hamannian essays and comments, in particular *Essay on an Academic Question* by 'Aristobolus' (N II, 121-126), published as one of the essays contained in the *Crusades of a Philologian*, as is *A Cloverleaf of Hellenistic Letters*, which also take on Michaelis.

[g] Perhaps Hamann wants us to notice that this reference to 'Euthyphron's stallion' is from a section of the Iliad in which a war is mounted against the gods? [Book V.] Nadler, in his *'Schlüssel'* [Vol. 6 in Hamann's *Werke*], provides another Platonic citation concerning horses, this time from

Euthyphron, concerning the service of the gods and using horsemanship as an analogy (cf. N VI, 125, under 'Euthyphron').

h Unger provides references for these notions; most to be found in Anton Yves Goguet (1716-1758), *De l'origine des loix, des arts et des sciences*, Paris, 1758. Goguet is cited on the next page, 198:18 (cf. also note n below.)

i Cf. Job 2.13-3.1.

j Gen. 1.3.

k In the paragraph that follows, note the allusions: 'made in divine form', 'image of God': Gen. 1.26-27; 'visible habit' (*schema*, σχημα): Phil. 2.7 ('in a human *schema*'); 'hidden self': Ps. 139.15.

l Gen. 1.29, 12.16.

m From *scholiastes*, commentator or one who writes glosses (N VI, 342). A reference to Michaelis, writing glosses on Lowth (as well as on the Bible). Michaelis noted the frequency of plant images and metaphors in biblical writing, and classed it as 'botanical': (*Est hoc peculiare poemati Hebraeo, multas metaphoras aerebus naturalibus depromere, maxime ab herbis arboribusque, ut posin botanicam dicere ausin.*) Hamann 'tops this up' (ironically, of course) with a reference to Bacon in his own footnote 7. Hamann's note 6 gives the reference to two 'botanical' metaphors used by Jotham and Joash respectively. Jotham's fable is discussed by both Lowth and Michaelis.

n In *L'Origine*, p. 114, Goguet observes that the custom of wearing clothes cannot be simply due to the need for warmth, for this custom is also found in countries with a hot climate.

o This constitutes an attack on Lessing. Lessing's style is also parodied here, and Lumpp observes that even the use of the word 'conjecture' alludes to Lessing, who says in the 52nd *Literaturbrief* that in dealing with the past, conjectures are passed off as truths. (Lumpp, 54, note 24a.) (Both Hamann and Lessing use the word *Vermuthung*, here translated as 'conjecture'.) Lumpp also cites Lessing's damning of the passions (that nothing obscures our knowledge more than the passions; therefore the writer of fables must avoid arousing them as much as possible). (Lumpp, 54.)

p In *On the Use of Animals in Fables* (1759) Lessing attributes this use to the 'universally known constancy of animal character'.

q Cf. Rev. 9.11; the angel of the bottomless pit.

r A (satirical) rationalist re-working of the Fall; the snake, 'angel of the bottomless pit', becomes an ancient poet. The consequence of the fall, however, is not that Adam 'becomes like God' but that he becomes aware of his animal nature. This animal nature rouses the parts that he now needs to cover, to propagate – 'an intuitive knowledge of past and future events' (the God-like quality Adam sought), 'to posterity' – original sin.

s This striking sentence has a pre-history, ultimately Platonic/Socratic. Socrates, asked to assess a young man, addresses him thus. Erasmus cites it in Latin.

t Ps. 19.2-5.

u 'Call' (*Losung*), 'climate' (*Klima*), 'dialect' (*Mundart*) were all new and popular modern expressions. (Lumpp, 55.)

v *Turbatverse*. According to Jørgensen (*SMAN*, 86), a list of jumbled Latin verse to be read aloud for the listeners to re-arrange back into its proper order.

w Cf. Horace, I Sat 4.62 – 'the members of dissected poets.'

ˣ Wiener provides a reference to Philo (cited N II, 409). This passage actually is used by Hamann in *PID*, cf. N III, 47:16-20, also notes 17-19, in this volume and the commentary in Vol. 1 on this passage.

ʸ The philologist Johann Georg Wachter (cf. Hamann's note 9) named three stages in the development of writing: kyriological (pictures of things); symbolic or hieroglyphic (which depicts the things but not realistically, so that only those educated can understand the meaning); and characteristic (characters which now do not reproduce the thing, but represent the word). (Cf. Jørgensen, *SMAN* 88.) Hamann dovetails this with his own schema of poetic, historical, and philosophical. This three-fold list he gets from Bacon, in my view (ES I, 494). It corresponds to the different actions of the mind (e.g. history = memory).

ᶻ *Phaedrus* 274-275. The 'profound prophecy... put on the lips of king Thamus' is the latter's reactions to the claims made by Thoth/Theuth on the invention of writing: that this invention is a recipe for memory and wisdom. Thamus disputes both claims (cf. the Exposition of this passage in Vol. 1).

ᵅ From the Earl of Roscommon, *Poems*.

ᵝ Nadler gives us the citation from Howell: 'Some bold translations not unlike to be, The wrong side of a Turky tapistry. (Or wine drawn off the Lees, Which fill'd in Flask, Lose somewhat of the strength they had in Cask.)' (N VI, 182f.) (Jørgensen gives the more precise reference: *Familiar Letters* (1705), p. 249,422; *SMAN* 90.) In Nadler's view, Hamann seems to have misunderstood Cervantes; Nadler gives the reference to Don Quixote, Part. I. Lib. I. cap. VI. 1,45f. The distinction of *ad illustrationem* and *ad involucrum* comes from Bacon (ES I, 520). The reference for *The Adventurer* is Nr. 49; 24 April 1753 (Jørgensen, *SMAN* 90).

ᵞ Lumpp sees 'Moses' torch' as the creation story in Genesis. (Lumpp, 59.) The division or description of the heavens and earth follow Gen. 1.6-10.

ᵟ Bacon, *Works*, I, 539; Bacon distinguished two types of knowledge, according to their source: empirical knowledge (from below) and that of revelation (from above).

ᵋ Rev. 4.6.

ᶻ 1 Kgs. 18.44.

ᵑ St. Paul.

ᶿ 'Hieroglyphic Adam' and 'character' of Eve refer back to the distinction made by Wachter; *vid. supra*, note y.

ᶥ A pun impossible to reproduce in translation: *'Stirnblatt'*, meaning a title page (cf. N VI, 367), but which I also take as a reference to the Shema, Dt. 6.4ff, esp. v. 8. The following verse echoes Ps. 139.

ᵏ The word 'virtuoso' Hamann most probably got from Moses Mendelssohn's frequent use of it, according to Lumpp (Lumpp, 60f.). Jørgensen notes that the word was also used by Shaftesbury in a broader sense than our own, to include moral aspects, for example, and was taken up in this sense by Wieland (Jørgensen, *SMAN* 92). I think the Mendelssohn line of inquiry is the most important, however; he wrote in the 168th *Literaturbrief*: 'In Nature there can be much that is unnatural in imitation [i.e. art, as the imitation of nature]. Before Nature can serve the virtuosi as a model, it must first be subjected to the rules of aesthetic probability.' (Cited in Unger, I, 255). See note ξ below for Hamann's reponse.

ᵡ A play on the creation of Eve from Adam, on whom the Lord God let fall a deep sleep (Gen. 2.21); combined here with the story of Endymion.

Endymion was a beautiful youth in an eternal sleep on Mt. Latmus; this slumber allowed Selene, the moon goddess, to visit him unawares at night. Jørgensen thinks the reference to Endymion is a reference to the popularity of moon poetry at the time (*SMAN* 92).

μ Edward Young, *Night Thoughts*; Hamann makes frequent references to this writer.

ν This refers to Moses Mendessohn in his position as collaborator with Nicolai on the *Briefe, die neueste Litteratur betreffend.* The motif of the 'passing Levite' is from the parable of the Good Samaritan, Lk. 10:29ff.

ξ For 'demoniac – Samaritan!' see the insults leveled against Jesus, Jn. 8.48. For 'unclean vessels' cf. Mark 7.4, 8. *Chimaeric Ideas*, another essay in *Crusades*, has this rebuttal of Mendelssohn: 'But where is the aesthetic Moses, who may dictate weak and paltry regulations to the citizens of a free state? (that say: Thou shalt not handle that, thou shalt not taste that, thou shalt not touch that. In Nature there is much that is impure and common for an imitator – and do not let yourself desire everything that is possible!)' (N II, 163:28-32.) Cf. note κ above for the offending passage in Mendelssohn. The ambiguity of 'handle', 'touch [on]' – both as verbs for writing of a subject matter, and as verbs for (implicitly) sexual exploration and experience is present in the German as well as the English. The echo of Biblical language and pericopes is obvious.

ο 'It is difficult to speak properly about common things' says Horace, II. *Epist.* 3, 128; Hamann has strengthed *'difficile'* to *'impossibilissimum'*, 'most impossible'.

π Gen. 17.10-14, especially 12.

ρ Adelung's dictionary, cited by Jørgensen, (*SMAN* 94), explains the scatological reference to 'gentian', slang for a dog's white excrement. Nadler, speaking of 'lovely alpine flowers' and the spirit that is distilled from the herb (N VI, 115), was clearly at a loss to explain the connection of *Gentiana* spp. with nappies.

σ The old Phrygian is Aesop, said to have been ugly; while the latest Aesop is Lessing, on account of his *Fables* (1759). ('I had made a host of attempts in the simple art of the old Phrygian', Lessing writes in the preface.)

ς Ode 22 of Book I describes the safety with which innocent man may walk the world. The poet, singing praises of Lalage (*'dulce ridentem'*, sweetly smiling), was not attacked by the wolf he encountered. Mauris, Apulia, Sabina are all referred to in the ode.

τ With reference to Wieland, Lessing had argued in *Briefe, die neueste Litteratur betreffend*, that the personality of the author is irrelevant to his work (7th *Literaturbrief*, 18.1.1759. Jørgensen cites the relevant passage, *SMAN* 96).

υ Baumgarten's book prior to *Aesthetica* was *Metaphysica.*

φ Bacon's parable (note 18) tells us that Pentheus represents curiosity, and Orpheus sensible advice.

χ Ceres, that is, insofar as she was identified with Demeter, was the goddess who was worshipped at Eleusis in the mysteries. Bacchus (qua Dionysus) of course was the god worshipped in the Bacchanalian orgies.

ψ Cf. Jn. 3.10: 'Are you a master in Israel, and yet you do not understand this?' The Master in Israel is Michaelis: scholarly, learned in Israel's literature and yet failing to see a key theological truth. 'Judge' may refer to the early 'Judges' of Israel (Deborah is after all a *Leitmotiv* in this essay); also,

however, this essay was indeed 'judged' (as Hamann expected?), in the sense of reviewed, by Michaelis (68th *Göttingschen Anzeigen*, 1762; Lumpp 65, note 1. Cf. N II, 253-256).

ω Prosopopoeia was highly praised by Lowth; he divided it into two kinds, 'living' and not – which in Lumpp's view gives rise to Hamann's comment about the 'Kingdom of the Dead/Living.' (Lumpp 66, note 2.)

♠ Cf. above note; also, that *'Totengespräche'*, dialogues put on the lips of the dead, were popular at the time – Boileau, Fontenelle, Frederick the Great and Wieland all wrote such dialogues, and indeed an entire journal was devoted to them (*Gespräche im Reiche der Toten* [Dialogues in the Kingdom of the Dead]. Jørgensen, *SMAN* 98).

♥ Pseudo-Ovid, *Nux Elegia* v. 19. [Hamann's emphasis.] '– – if I can be numbered amongst them as a NUT' (or perhaps, more simply: 'if I count as a nut.' Cf. the title: 'Aesthetics in a nutshell.'

201:22 – 211:13

a *Relata refero*, 'I report reports', was the motto of the newspaper *Ordentliche Wöchentliche Keyserliche Reichs-Postzeitung* (Jørgensen, *SMAN* 98); it carried an announcement of the second part of Michaelis' edition of Lowth.

b Michaelis in the preface to Lowth's work described the lectures of 'eloquent philosophers' as 'homilies'.

c A reference to the passage in Judges cited at the beginning of the essay, chapter 5. The mother of Sisera, general of the Hazorites, is depicted as waiting for the return of her son, peering through the lattice, asking why his chariot is so long in coming. He has in fact been killed not in battle but by a woman, Jael, the wife of Heber (cf. 4.17-22). But Sisera's mother's ladies assure her he is delayed by the taking of spoil, fine embroidered work to adorn his neck (cf. N II, 195; Judges, 5.30). As Sisera was the enemy of the people of Israel under Deborah and mounted an attack upon them (4.12ff.), this may indicate the valuational tone-colour of the apparent equation of Michaelis' work with Sisera; cf. esp. Judges 4.15: 'And the Lord routed Sisera and all his chariots and all his army....'

d Lumpp comments that many of the phrases that follow ('until I have a more convenient time', 'Will you believe without proof') were clichés from the epistolatory style of the time (Lumpp, 66).

e *Sermones fideles* is the title of a work by Bacon. See also above, note b .

f Jan Amos Comenius (Komensky) (1592-1671), Bishop, and commentator on Revelations ('visionary') was an influential educationalist. *Orbis sensualium pictus* was a book making use of illustrations for children. Friedrich Muzelius (1684-1753) wrote Latin grammars for children (N VI, 80, 260). Michaelis mentions these in his *Beurtheilung der Mittel*, arguing against a 'philological' thesis that sees the divinity and perfection of the Bible such that one needs no other aids to understand it: 'This would perhaps be a useful perfection, if the Bible were an *Orbis pictus* or Muzelii *Exercitia:* but if it is also necessary for revelation, then the N.T. is certainly very imperfect' (not least because of its poor Greek).

g Christian Kortholt was the editor of an edition of Lessing's letters (N VI, 214). This perhaps refers to a passage in which Kortholt agrees with Comenius that *'Janua linguarum* and a small encyclopedia should be one and the same.' (N II, 409; Jørgensen, *SMAN* 100.)

h Cf. Mt. 18.3; Jn. 16.13, as well as the whole Johannine Last Supper Discourse for the world's not-knowing.

i 'Mathematical original sin' refers according to Lumpp to the dry, apparently logically deduced style of Michaelis' earliest writings (Lumpp, 69, note 2) – their 'fatal flaw', if one may understand original sin thus, and most unlike Hamann's 'childish', 'foolish', even 'pictorial' style. Hoffmann understands it to be the refusal to go deeper into the intellectual challeges posed by hermeneutics (Hoffmann, 178-9.) The 'ingenious rebirth' of the 'latest' works refers to Michaelis' redaction on Lowth's work. The manner in which Hamann's style is influenced by Scripture – 'foolish' as it is, presumably in a Pauline sense (cf. e.g. 1 Cor chapters 1-3) – does not 'rhyme' or agree with Michaelis'.

j *Ideen*, i.e. Platonic Ideas or Forms.

k *Waffenträger*. Lumpp cites 1 Sam. 16.2: David was Saul's spear-bearer. (Saul = Frederick the Great, cf. 208:20.)

l Cf. 2 Cor. 3.6 and above all the first chapters of Romans. The style, as well as the themes, of Romans are important here.

m Michaelis dabbled in the physical sciences (Lumpp, 72, note 33).

n Cf. Jn. 3.8.

o On the destruction of the *Aeneid*. Liber is Bacchus.

p George Benson (1699-1762) was a Presbyterian theologian who wrote paraphrases of NT books with extensive notes. The reference here is to a work of his translated and brought out by Michaelis, a *Paraphrastic Explanation and Notes on some Books of the New Testament*. This contained an introductory 'Treatise on the Unity of Meaning of Holy Scripture, in which is shown, that no passage of the Holy Scripture can have more than one Meaning'. This treatise – almost entirely pieced together from citations ('pieced together rather than worked out', as Hamann says, 203 note 23) – rejected the notion that a passage could bear more than one meaning or way of being understood. Benson starts from the hermeneutics of Homer, and makes use of Houdart de la Motte, who (while lacking Greek) composed an Iliad in verse from the prose translation of one Anne Dacier. Dacier had maintained of a certain passage that it was ambiguous and could, as one says nowadays, resonate on different levels; la Motte's reaction to this was 'if this is true, then it is a grave flaw in Homer.' Samuel Clark wrote a Latin translation of Homer, in which he too maintained the 'unity of meaning'. (Cf. Jørgensen, *SMAN* 102-104.)

q Lk. 11.52.

r Dt. 30.11-13.

s Homer, Odyssey 11. (Jørgensen, *SMAN* 104.)

t 'Keys to heaven': Mt. 16.19; 'keys to hell': Rev. 1.18.

u Lev. 17.11.

v εν παραβολη means 'figuratively'. Cf. Hebr. 11.19 (Jørgensen, *SMAN* 104). Also recall the story of the sacrifice (or near-sacrifice) of Isaac, Gen. 22.1-19.

w Exodus 7.17-24, Rev. 16:1-4.

x Johann Albrecht Bengel (1687-1752); the quotation is from his commentary on Mt. 1.20 (Jørgensen, *SMAN* 106).

y From Cicero, *An Atticus* XIII 46 (Jørgensen, *SMAN* 106).

z Phil. 2.7.

α Eph. 1.19-23.

β Jn. 4.23.

γ Ps. 118.22. The reference is to Voltaire's *Essay on Epic Poetry*.

δ Jørgensen observes that flowers of sulphur is the most refined part of sulphur, and thus conjectures that in the present context it indicates excessive refinement. (Jørgensen, *SMAN* 108.) One might also think of the association of sulphur and sulphurous smells with Hell.

ε Voltaire's *Le Temple du Goût*, (1733). (Jørgensen, *SMAN* 108.)

ζ A reference to Young and to Charles Perrault's *Paralleles des Anciens et des Modernes* (1688-1697); Perrault and Boileau were in dispute over the superiority of the ancients or the moderns. (Cf. Unger, I, 264 for details.) According to Perrault, Pascal is superior to Plato and Boileau to Horace and Juvenal. (Cf. Jørgensen, *SMAN* 110.) Given the importance of Plato and Horace to Hamann, his reaction is not difficult to imagine.

η Gen. 41.1-7, especially 3.

θ M = Magister; half that Roman numeral, D, = Doctor. Cf. also Rev. 13.18 for the number of the beast.

ι Having borrowed Euthyphron's horses, the Philologian is in danger of getting the wheels of his chariot stuck, like Sisera in the passage from Judges which Hamann has been using. Fleeing from the Lord and from Deborah's and Barak's Israelite army, he was forced to alight from his chariot and flee on foot (cf. Judges, chs. 4, 5; 195, 201:27ff.).

κ A juxtaposition of the Enlightenment aesthetic of the imitation of nature, with the empiricists'/natural scientists' (Buffon, and Newton and Nieuwentyt respectively) systems of nature. Does the latter adequately substitute for mythology? the philologian asks. Lines 23-25 seem to indicate that the physical sciences would entirely displace mythology if they could; yet even according to the Enlightenment aesthetic – the injunction to imitate beautiful nature – this would be impossible.

λ Cf. Mt. 27.24; as well as the reference to ritual purity, which clearly is meant to suggest that the 'fine critics' are 'pharasaical'.

μ *Novum Organum*, Aphorism 51. Human understanding is inclined to abstractions, but it is better to analyse Nature in its relevant parts than to abstract. Hamann is playing upon a contemporary translation of 'abstraction': *abziehen* (deduce, or draw off), which can also mean to flay, i.e. 'draw off' the skin.

ν Cf. Jn. 8, where Jesus claims to be witnessing to the truth, and which ends with the attempt of the Jews to stone him.

ξ God is both the Poet who creates at the beginning of the day [Genesis] and the Judge who comes unexpectedly like a thief in the night at the end of all days. In addition to Hamann's reference (Rev. 16.15), cf. the still more appropriate passage: 1 Thess. 5.2. The reference to 2 Cor. 4.6, attached to 'Poet', makes clear that the darkness is the time for God's action; for he, the 'Poet' of Genesis, creates light in the darkness.

ο A christological *double entendre*. 'Light' is the first thing created according to Gen. 1.3; the Johannine 'light' (Jn. 1.5, 9) is also the first-born of Creation (Col. 1.15, a different phrase of which is cited in Hamann's note 36).

π Phil. 3.18f.

ρ Cf. Mt. 5.36 but especially 10.30.

σ Cf. 1 Cor 8; Rom. 8.19-23; Gen. 2.19.

ς Heb. 1.3; note that 'stamp' is also in Hamann's citation of Bacon, note 40.

τ Ps. 34.8; 1 Jn. 1.1.

υ 'Chamberlain' here in effect means one castrated, a eunuch; *Kammerer* is the word Luther used to translate ευνουχος in Acts 8.27ff. Ευνουχος can bear that meaning; eunuchs often were used in that capacity. Nevertheless, the domestic employment of the individual is clearly not the crucial point here.

φ *Verstand;* the same word used in translating Benson's 'unity of meaning'.

χ The beginning of the Iliad; cited in Greek; Hamann 'sifts out' the alphas and omegas. I have left out the a's and o's in translation.

ψ *Masore* were the additions to the Hebrew Bible made by eighth century Jewish scholars; not only the addition of pointing to indicate vowels (thus a thematic transition from the deletion of Greek vowels in line 20) but also notes, glosses, interpretations. There are 'great' and 'small' Masore (*masora magna, masora parva*).

ω Gen. 7.17-20, Noah's Flood.

aa Gen. 14.26.

bb Epicurean cosmology is intended here; Hume in his *Dialogues* has already set the precedent for considering Epicureanism as a viable alternative to the belief in the Divine Creator and Designer.

cc The Stoic desire to overcome the passions with reason is what Hamann has in mind, as the subsequent paragraph makes clear; that this removal of the 'members of dishonour' leads to a kind of 'impotence' is what lies behind the image of 'binding one's hands and feet'.

dd *fistulierien* (cf. *fistula*, flute). To sing in falsetto, i.e. as a castrato.

ee Cf. Rom. 6.13, where the German words I have translated 'members', 'weapons' appear in Luther's translation.

ff Origen and his act of self-castration. For an explanation of 'chamberlain', cf. note υ above.

gg The Prince of this aeon is Frederick the Great (cf. Jn. 12.31); the parallel between the suppression of the passions and self-mutilation makes possible this idea of rationalists as 'evil-doers against themselves.'

hh Priests of Cybele in her orgiastic rites.

ii The Galli were Cybele's *eunuch* priests. Nadler (VI, 141f.), Lumpp (84) and Joyce Crick in her English translation all understand Hamann's 'Galli-' in its various cognates as referring to the French, Gauls, with an eye to Frederick's *philosophes*. I think that interpretation of the ultimate intention of the reference is justified, but in my view it is a linguistic mistake (easily made!) which misses out something important, for the castration image contained in the idea of 'Galli' is indispensable for this paragraph. Presumably Crick disagrees with this estimation of the salience of the phallus or other male parts – and the lack of them – in this paragraph, as she translates '*Glieder der Unehre*' as 'limbs of dishonour'; which I think in English doesn't permit my understanding of the phrase – which hears in '*Glieder*' what the Germans call *der männliche Glied* (which part in English is not contained within the reference of 'limb', as opposed to 'member'). Further, if what is at issue is the acceptability or not of the passions, arms and legs are not the crucial point. As far as Gauls and Galli are concerned, however, no doubt Hamann wants to have it both ways – more possible in German, alas, than it is in English. I would point out, however, the difference between Hamann's '*Gallier*' and '*gallischen Jupiter*' (in a clearly castratory context, *PID*, N III, 45:33); and references which to my mind clearly refer to things French: '*gallikanische Kirche*' (*AN*, N II, 204:39), '*gallikanische Schminke*' (*ESM*, N III, 202:23). I suggest, therefore, that

Hamann on the whole used '*Galli*' and '*gallisch-*' when he wanted to refer to the Galli, and '*gallikanisch-*' when he wanted to refer to the French; and in my translations I render these as 'gallian' and 'Gallic' respectively.

jj For 'priests of the belly', i.e. priests serving an idol – cf. 206:23ff. and 1 Cor 8 etc; but above all, Hamann's own suggestion 'If the belly is your God', 206:23, also note 40. *Bauchpfaffe* was in fact a word in use for a cleric more concerned for his creaturely comforts than for the well-being of his flock (Jørgensen, *SMAN* 120).

kk I have capitalized 'Word' (it is of course capitalized in German) to allow for the possiblity that the One Word is the christological Logos (Hamann capitalizes 'One').

ll The reference is to Dido's way of taking advantage of Iarbas' limited generosity in offering her as much land for her new city of Carthage as she could cover with an ox-hide. (She cut the hide into strips.)

mm I am interpreting *Sehepunkt* along the lines indicated by Chladenius' hermeneutics, as 'point of view.'

nn This would seem to imply, perhaps rightly, that the philologian himself therefore is not unlike Antimachus, in connection with whom *The Oxford Companion to Classical Literature* speaks of 'learned obscurities'. The reference here is to the story of Antimachus reading one of his excessively long epics while his audience slowly dissipated — leaving only Plato by the end. The verse concerning the leech (*'Non missura cutem nisi plena cruoris hirudo'*) is from Horace, II. Epist. 3. v. 476.

oo A reference to Platonic epistemology, cf. the *Meno*.

pp Jer. 2.13.

qq The 'cursed contradiction' is that one tradition of the ancient world is extolled and another despised, in Hamann's opinion; the pagan and the biblical respectively; though also – cf. note ss – the ability to use the Bible selectively when it suited. The reference is to Ps. 59.12.

rr Mt. 7.15.

ss Hamann resents the charge laid by Nicolai in a review that a certain work was like a whitewashed tomb, using Mt. 23.27 — Hamann finds the criticism both hypocritical and 'under-critical' (hypo-critical).

tt Jas. 1.23.

uu Jn. 4.22.

vv In an allegory, Bacon writes that Pan (Nature) is the son of Penelope (Matter); and the Platonic Ideas/Aristotelian Forms are her suitors (this would seem to imply that they are not welcome). According to Bacon, the son of Matter is fathered by Mercury — (the Word of God, Logos). (Jørgensen, *SMAN* 126: 'This confirms Hamann's interpretation of Odysseus.') Unger cites this passage extensively (Unger, II, 663, note 125).

ww In short, the fate of Penelope's suitors; but also, (what Hamann's opponents do *not* know), there is a parallelism created here between the king appearing as a beggar at his own court and meeting with rejection; and the Son of God appearing 'in the form of a slave' (Phil. 2.7, which is so often referred to in this essay).

xx Michaelis had undertaken a journey to '*Arabia felix*' as the chaplain to a Danish expedition (1761-67) and published a book on it (1762). (Cf. Hamann's *Wise Men from the East*, N II, 137.)

yy Crusades of a Philologian?

zz Tit. 1.12. This phrase is from Luther's translation.

αα In the reference to 1 Cor. which Hamann provides in this footnote, the 'way' is described as 'hyperbole'. Hamann punningly takes this as an invitation to indulge in hyperbole, in the following paragraph.

211:14 – 217:19

a Isa. 64.1-2. Hamann uses the vocabulary of Luther's translation almost exactly, with the alteration of tenses and two important additions: that the enemies of the Name nevertheless call themselves by it, and that the heathen are 'anointed'.

b *Irrlichter* – clearly a reference to the miraculous star above Bethlehem.

c Herod, given the 'trick' played on him by the wise men; but perhaps also Frederick, 'duped' by his philosophical 'wise men', as well as the Danish king who financed Michaelis' expedition. Another parallelism is also set up here: between the slaughter of the children, and the slaughter of the 'childish doctrines' of Christianity.

d Acts 9.1; 'snort' translates *schnauben*, from Luther's translation.

e Mt. 2.18.

f A reference to the story of Elisha, and the pottage made for the sons of the prophets out of apparently poisonous plants, wild vines, gourds (which are severely purgative; cf. the pumpkins of 214:22). 'O man of God, there is death in the pot!' they exclaim (2 Kgs. 4.38-41). Elisha throws in some meal, and it miraculously becomes harmless.

g Isa. 63.10

h Ps. 50.13.

i At the right time/at the wrong time; or perhaps 'in good times and in bad'.

j 'Beloved disciple': Jn. 13.23-25; 'only begotten in the bosom of the Father': Jn. 1.18; 'spirit of prophecy': Rev. 19.10; 'only name' etc: Acts 4.12; 'promise': 1 Tim. 4.8; 'Name only known by those who receive it': Rev. 2.17; 'Name above all names' etc.: Phil. 2.9-11; 'the Creator...praise forever...Amen': Rom. 1.25.

k Rev. 19.10, Phil 2.7, Jn. 2.9-10, 1 Tim. 5.23.

l Michaelis in the cited essay wrote of Augustine: '...a man of heated imagination and poor education, and with it an African, or to identify him by language, a Carthaginian. It is true, in African cities they spoke Latin, not however as it was spoken in Rome, but rather with a certain African colour: Latin words were the body, in which a Punic style of thinking was expressed. Augustine understood Punic or Carthaginian as his mother tongue, in which he then would employ Hebrew idioms. The good Bishop spoke Hebrew, without realizing it.' (N VI, 250.)

m Hieronymus Cardan[us] (1501-1575) was 'a medic... had an absurd and contradictory temperament...also wrote about his own life, in which were written many unbelievable things' (Jöcher's *Gelehrten-Lexikon*, cited by Jørgensen, *SMAN* 132).

n Michaelis attributed to both Augustine and Mohammed a failure to understand figurative language, and a lack of awareness of the false doctrines that can be created if one so fails. The Oriental languages, he wrote, do not distinguish sufficiently between direct and indirect causes; a sentence such as 'I shall harden Pharoah's heart' (Ex. 7.3), along with other sentences which describe God as intervening in the course of nature, must be understood figuratively; but both Augustine and Mohammed, lacking

education and possessing feverish imaginations, took these utterances towards a doctrine of predestination. (Cf. Jørgensen, *SMAN* 134, Lumpp 97f.) These characteristics imputed to Augustine and Mohammed are turned back against Michaelis.

o Meaning ambiguous, possessing double meaning.

p Acts 8.22.

q Rom. 3.23.

r From Augustine's understanding of the parable of Cana, which he understands in a typological fashion similar to Hamann's deployment of it here: as an image of revelation (cf. Lumpp 95, where he cites Bultmann's similar understanding). (Jørgensen provides the Augustinian reference: 9th Sermon, on Jn. 2.1-11. *SMAN* 130.)

s Luther in this passage stresses the point that without the cross one cannot understand the doctrine of predestination aright. Unlike the 'evil-doing and haughty spirits', who begin their investigations into 'the abyss of divine Predestination' with Rom. 9, 10, 11, one must first read through Chs. 1-8, becoming convinced of one's own sin and God's grace. When one then comes to Ch. 8, and reads of the cross, one will learn rightly of Predestination in 9, 10, 11, and feel how consoling it is. Then come the cited lines.

t Accomodation: in the theology of the Enlightenment, the notion that eternal truths have to be transmitted in such a way that they are adapted to the temporal listeners; e.g., that Jesus spoke about angels and demons because he was speaking to primitive people who believed in them. Jørgensen understands the term in this light, which I think is the more fruitful for interpretation of this passage (Jørgensen, *SMAN* 134); Lumpp speaks of the background of the notion in theories of rhetoric (as application) (Lumpp, 96). Hamann's use of the term here seems to suggest that he does not use the passage from Luther in order to address the issue of predestination, but 'accomodates' it to another purpose.

u 'After God had spoken...' etc: Heb. 1.1; 'yesterday and today': Heb. 13.8; 'promise of his coming': 2 Pet. 3.4; 'servant's form': Phil. 2.7. Lumpp also suggests Mt. 23.24, 'I have sent prophets, sages, seers'... (Lumpp, 98.)

v The third stanza of Luther's translation of the *Te Deum* (cf. N II, 411). The 'final cadences' tell of the redemption of the human race, the destruction of death, Christ sitting at God's right hand and that he will be the judge of the living and the dead.

w 'Judgment of slander': Jude 1.9; 'donkey's head...dove's droppings': 2 Kgs. 6.25; 'Sunday' = 'the Day of the Lord'; as for its blackness, Lumpp suggests Rev. 6.12, Amos 5.18, Joel 3.4 (Lumpp, 99 note 3); for 'invincible fleets', Jørgensen thinks of the Armada (!) (Jørgensen, *SMAN* 136); 'stubble': Job 21.18; thunderstorm passages in the Bible are too numerous to mention, though one might sample Ex. 19.16 and 19.19, because it also has a trumpet-blast and the notion of 'drowning out'. 'Abraham's joy': Jn. 8.56; 'cup running over': Ps. 23.5; 'tears': Isa. 25.8, Rev.7.17, 21.4; Cleopatra dissolved pearls to drink to Mark Anthony, but this too contains a biblical allusion which Lumpp has found: Ps. 10.2 (it reflects Luther's translation) (Lumpp, *ibid.*); 'Sodom': Gen. 13, 14, 18, 19; but also NB. Rev. 11.8 (a city allegorically called Sodom [Berlin?]); the last martyr fleeing is a 'type' of Lot; in addition to his story in Gen. 14, cf. 2 Pet. 2.8 (a righteous man, vexed by what was going on around him); 'Abraham...father of the faithful': Rom. 4.11.

x 'Preach the Lord's death' 1 Cor. 1.23, 11.26; 'fire prepared for the devil and his angels': Mt. 25.41; 'devils believe and tremble': Jas. 2.19; Anacreon is said to have choked to death on a grapeseed. (A friend of Hamann's, Lauson, wrote a humorous poem on the subject, reprinted by Jørgensen, *SMAN* 138; cf. also Unger, II, 726 note 35.) The geese is a reference to the sacred watch-geese, so to speak, who since the time of Marcus Manlius Capitolinus replaced dogs as the early-warning system of Rome. For details of the original story and the subsequent apotheosis of the geese, cf. *The Oxford Companion to Classical Literature*, p. 345 under 'Manlius Capitolinus'. More importantly, cf. the (ostensible) end of the essay, N II 216:9ff.; 'ravens feeding' Elijah: 1 Kgs. 17.6; and perhaps the 'abomination' echoes Mk. 13.14.

y 'Geneva' and 'Rome' may indicate allusions to Calvinism and Catholicism respectively; or, philosophically rather than religiously, may refer to Rousseau and Algarotti. As far as Rome is concerned, one might even think of the geese (*vid. supra*, translator's note x, also *infra*, N II, 216:9ff.). Compare, in particular, '*Gräuel*' ('abomination') and '*graue*' of the citation from Horace, I Od. 2 v. 5, located in Rome, which concludes the essay.

z Rousseau did write about French opera, was a participant in the '*Querelles des Buffons*', the debate over the superiority of French or Italian opera; and indeed he wrote an opera. No association between Algarotti and the 'mosque' is forthcoming, apart from Hamann's use of Islam as a code for enlightened deists – who believe in a God but not in the Incarnation; thus believe like Muslims in One God and not a Trinity. (Cf. N III, 40:5ff.) Interpreting theologically, Jørgensen thinks 'opera' refers to the Roman Catholic liturgy and 'mosque' to the strictness of Calvin's churches (no images, etc.) (Jørgensen, *SMAN* 138). Lumpp too thinks in terms of Catholicism and Calvinism, but attributes the opera and mosque the other way round! The cathedral of St. Peter in Rome, with its dome, resembles a mosque, while those who have seen the Cathedral in Geneva will not be surprised by the use of the term 'opera' here, apparently. (Lumpp, 101, note 12.)

α *Kolokvintisiert*; Jørgensen thinks in terms of purgatives, cf. 2 Kgs. 4.39, referred to at 211:25f. (Jørgensen, *SMAN* 138.) I think in terms of Αποκολοκυντωσις, *apokolokuntosis*, or 'pumpkin-ification', a play on 'apotheosis', which Hamann also refers to in the review of Herder, N III, 18:27 (cf. translator's note r). It was the name of a satire by Seneca on Claudius, which involved not the deification but the turning into a pumpkin of the unfortunate character.

β *Pinge duos angues! pueri, sacer est locus; extra meiite; discedo – –*. Persius, *Sat.* I, 113f.

γ Mt. 2.16.

δ 'Exposed' in the sense of the infant being put out to die.

ε Paronomasia is a pun or play on words which sound alike. Cf. N II, 411; a reference to a footnote of Michaelis in the edition of Lowth's work on Hebrew poetry. Michaelis claims that rhyme is a genus of Paronomasia, and also writes: '*My father's essay on biblical paronomasia, published in Halle, 1931, is worth reading... If I followed purely my own inclination, I would confess that I dislike almost all appearances of paronomasia, when it has to do with the discourse of a higher style, above all poetry.*' (Note. 76, p. 290 in Michaelis' edition.) This also provides the reference to Algarotti: '*Rhyme was introduced into the world with the duel and the feudal law, like an agreeable*

contagion, says Salvini (Tom. II. Discours 2), which left leonine verses and has infected all the popular languages.' Oeuvres, vol. III. *Essay sur la Rime* p. 76.

ζ *Hagestolze*; literally, 'bachelor'. Perhaps, as Nadler suggests (N VI, 164) the 'uncoupled' unrhymed line.

η *Symposium* 185c-e.

θ The citation is from Lessing's critique of Klopstock. A fuller citation makes clear Hamann's use of this passage here and in note 61: 'It is a contemplation on *The Omnipotence of God*, or rather, the poet's expressed emotions on this great subject. They [sc. the emotions!] seem to have ordered themselves in symmetrical lines, that are full of euphony, although they have no certain syllabic metre. ...But what do you say to this kind of verse, if I may call it a kind of verse? For actually it is nothing more than an artful prose, broken into the **elements** of its **periods**, each of which can be viewed as a single verse of a particular metre.' (Cited in Jørgensen, *SMAN* 140-142.) Michaelis compares free verse to recitative (Lessing too thought it suited to music).

ι *Margot la Ravaudeuse*, the title of a novel which Hamann owned.

κ Asaph was a psalmist, cf. 1 Chron. 15.19, and e.g. Ps. 50 and 73-83.

λ Klopstock's *Geistliche Lieder*; the 'epic' is *The Messiah*.

μ This seems to hint at a parallel with the concept of a divine Accomodation. If a 'Poet' should arise among them, he would have to accomodate himself to the established custom of metre, etc. We have already seen who is the Poet; and how he accomodates himself to the people among whom He arises. The following sentence seems to support this reading.

ν Cicero, *Brutus*, 75, 262.

ξ I. Odes 2, 1-8.

ο Eccl. 1.2, 12.8-10.

π Isa. 54.2; the sayings of the wise are like pegs of a tent.

ρ *Kleinmeister*, Hamann's germanization of *petit-maître*, a dilettante or dabbler. Hamann often uses it, as here, in juxtaposition to its opposite, the pedant.

σ Diogenis Laertii, *De clarorum philosophorum vitis, dogmatibus et apophthegmatibus*, Lib. III. Plato 39. (N II, 412). The citation concerns the use of asterisks (to mark a unanimous opinion) and obelisks (to mark inauthentic bits) in a new edition of Plato.

ς Eccl. 12.13.

τ Rev. 14.7.

Two
REVIEWS
with a
SUPPLEMENT
concerning the
Origin of Language

– – *quota portio faecis Achaeae.*[a]
Iuven. III, 61.

[Here a vignette of two crossed clubs surrounded in a laurel wreath.][b]

With Dodsley and Company[c]

1772

Königsbergische
educated and political Newspaper

With most gracious freedom

104th Piece. Friday, 27th December 1771.
Riga.[d]
J. F. Hartknoch has published: Essay
of Explanation on the Origin of
Language, 1772. p. 256 in 8vo.[1]

Present essay consists of two parts, the first of which concerns language, and the other its invention. The first section of the first part contains nine sub-sections, along with an introduction, 1) Explanation of the word: Language, 2) on words, 3) on the purpose of language, 4) on universal [expressions], 5) **particular expressions**, 6) on the richness of a language, 7) on its elegance[e], (or better, its euphony[f]), 8) on its flexibility[g], (the author thinks this expression new and paradoxical) 9) on its clarity. The second section, on the parts of language, involves five main sub-sections, on Nouns, on Pronouns, Verbs, Modifiers and on Syntax. The first section of the second part includes an introduction, and the following four main sub-sections: 1) questions, 2) people can bring forth sounds, and have conceptions[h] without sounds, 3) people can connect sounds with conceptions, 4) Necessity of connecting the sounds with conceptions. The five parts of the last section deal with the **invention** of nouns, pronouns, verbs, modifiers, and syntax. The **conclusion** addresses the question, 'Where do universal expressions come from?' – The author explains language 'as a sum total[i], a collection' — — (why not also, as our friend on p. 57, a machine?) 'of sounds, through whose connection and succession on one another one can communicate one's thoughts to another.' 'A word', he says, 'is a noise, or sound, **to which the one who brings it forth**

[1] by HE. Tiedemann, Cand. Juris and Hofmeister in Liefland at that time.

attaches a certain conception, which he is also able to stimulate in the other, to whom **he** has brought this forth.' The author indeed considers this latter explanation 'something extensive and not capable of being committed to memory', but seems nevertheless to be rather pleased with its extensive and incapable thoroughness. The **origin of human language** and the **invention** of the *Partium Orationis* are so widely differentiated from one another as Reason, Logic, and *Barbara Celarent*.[j] – – To explain the first question would probably concern mostly the little section which the author has titled, with his **extraordinary** way with words, '**Necessity of connecting the sounds with the ideas**.' We leave it to those readers who are more than schoolboys, but not corrupted journalists, to experience for themselves how shallow and banal the author's philosophy may be. What yawning and squinting examples, without wit or discretion, and his educational *Suppelex?* – – *quam curta!*[k] Despite the fact that he actually is only in a position to consider language from the stand-point of **grammar**, he does not even seem to be equal to the latter in his own mother-tongue. **Herder's** *Preisschrift*, which we look forward to seeing, will give us more substance and pleasure for researches of this kind. The anonymous author of the present essay has perhaps merely **written**, to be **notorious**: as one must **speak** to be **seen**.[l]

Königsberg

Educated and Political Newspaper.

26th Piece. Monday, 30th March, 1772.

Berlin.

Herr Herder's Treatise on the
Origin of Language, which has
won the 1770 prize from the
Academy of Sciences.
Published at the command of the Academy.
Vocabula sunt notae rerum.[a]
Cic. 1772. P. 222. kl.8.

For his 'disobedience'[b], the author has been rewarded by gaining the prize of the Academy. The '**compensation**'[c] for this incongruity consists in the fact that Mr. **Herder**, instead of furnishing a hypothesis, seeks with his essay to supplant a **hypothesis** 'which, viewed from all sides, dishonours and obscures the human spirit and has long done so.'[d]

What is a divine origin of language? 'You cannot explain language from human nature, consequently it is divine.'[e] – – The nonsense in this conclusion is neither **veiled nor subtle**[f] – – Mr. **Herder** says, 'I can explain it from human nature, and explain it completely.' Who has said more? The first hides behind a cover and cries out, '**Here is God**!' The latter stands visibly on the stage, acts – – '**See! I am a human being**!'[g] We find indeed in Mr. **Herder's** style plenty of **Action**[h] in the theatrical sense; if however the uniqueness and the true direction of humanity should consist in '**reflexion**'[i]: we have found pages and passages in this *Preisschrift* where the reflexion must have affected the author to such an imperceptible degree[j] that the *ecce homo!* might sooner serve as an '**Marker**'[k] and '**Communication**'[l] of the unreflective or all-too-human critic. — — 'Because you could not explain language from human nature, therefore no one whatsoever can explain it and its origin is absolutely inexplicable.' 'For me' says Mr. **Herder**, 'no element of

language in its beginning and in every progression from the human soul is incomprehensible; indeed the entire human soul would be inexplicable to me if I did not posit language in it. The entire human race would no longer be a natural species if it did not construct language.'[m] — — Both parties perhaps say more than they intend to, and seem to explain or dialogue more with **spirit** than with their '**sense**'.[n]

[o]'A higher hypothesis has nothing for it,' continues Mr. **Herder**, 'not even the witness of the **oriental** scriptures[p]; for these obviously give language a human beginning through the naming of the animals.[2] The human invention has everything for it and absolutely nothing against it: **Essence of the human soul and element of Language! Analogy of the human race and Analogy of the continuation of language! The great example of all peoples, times and parts of the world.'**

[q]'The higher hypothesis, pious as it may seem, is thoroughly ungodly. At every step it trivializes God through the lowest, most imperfect **anthropomorphisms**. The human [hypothesis] shows God in the greatest light; his **work**, a human **soul creating and developing language** by itself; because it is his work, a human soul. As a creator, as an image of his being, it constructs itself this **sense of reason**. The origin becomes divine therefore only in a respectable sense, in so far as it is human.' Here! Here! (by the life of Pharaoh!) Here is **God's Finger**! This **Apotheosis,** Αποκολοκυντωσις[r] or even **Apophtheirosis**[s] smacks perhaps more of Galimatias[t] than the lowliest and unworthiest but nevertheless **privileged** anthropomorphism.

[u]'The **higher hypothesis** is useless and highly damaging. It destroys all the efficacy of the human soul, explains nothing, and makes everything, **psychology** and **sciences**, inexplicable[3]; for along with language human beings have received all seeds of knowledge from the hand of God! So nothing then is from the human soul! The beginning of every art, science and knowledge is always incomprehensible! The human origin allows for no

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[2] On the first of April Adam named the wild animals by a divine charisma. Georg. Syncellus in Jo. Al. Fabricii codice Pseudigrapho V.T. Vol. I. p. 13.

[3] *continens -- contentum.*

step forward without prospects and without the most fruitful explanations in all parts of Philosophy and in all categories and activities of language.' The author has furnished some in his essay; — — — and we doubt neither the possibility nor the ease of obtaining — — borrowing — — or drumming up from the earth of a **legion** more[v], like that **triumvirate**. He has devoted himself, on the strength of his own testimony[w], 'to gathering solid data from the human soul, from human organization, from the construction of ancient and primitive languages and from the whole economy of the human race and to prove his proposition as the **firmest philosophical truth** can be proven'; yes! more provable than all the proofs of the Turks of the divinity of the Koran could be; for who can be more fervently convinced of the might and power of a proof than the **artificer** of the same?[x] — — Meanwhile our **Areopagites** of the **archaeo–** and neological[y] persuasion will always find '**in the midst of gaps and lacks**'[z] the '**kernel of compensation**.'[α]

The entire essay consists of two parts. The first asks: is it within natural human capacities to invent language? The second urges the way in which the human person most easily **can** and **must** invent language, under four laws of its nature and species.

We hope that one of our fellow citizens, if he is not entirely lost in his fatherland, will blow a few sparks from his little kitchen hearth into a flame, in order to warm up his **doubts** and **oracles** on the content and direction of the academic question and its resolution. What **Dulcinea** is more worthy for a kabbalistic Philologian[β], than to avenge the Individuality, Authenticity, Majesty, Wisdom, Beauty, Fruitfulness, and Extravagance[γ] of the **higher hypothesis** – – from which all systems and languages of the ancient and modern Babels derive their **subterranean, animal** and **human** origin, their fire (κοσμος της αδικιας)[δ] and await their liberation or destruction.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

Those of *HS* that were published in Hamann's time exist now only in handwritten copies, from which Nadler has composed the present texts; *PID* was never published. For that reason, *all* of Hamann's notes are handwritten (and vary between exemplars) and it is impossible to be certain which were printed and which were written in later as afterthoughts. Therefore, in *HS* I have abandoned the use of an asterisk to denote those of Hamann's notes which were added later.

NB: The numbering of footnotes continues through both reviews. The first belongs to the Tiedemann review; notes 2 and 3 to the Herder review.

Review of Tiedemann.

a *Just a splash of Greek dregs.* Juvenal's satires, 3, 61.

b Büchsel suggests that the laurel wreath represents the victorious essay and its author, and the two crossed clubs the battle of the negative reviewer and Herder's avenger, Aristobolus (HHE 4, 129).

c The publisher is fictitious; it was published by Kanter, publisher of the *Königsberg Educated and Political Newspaper*. The publisher is the publisher of *Tristram Shandy*; in that work, Tristram puts up for 'publick sale' a flattering dedication; the purchaser is to send a cheque to Mr. Dodsley, for the benefit of the author (Volume I, Chapter IX.) This is perhaps the most blatant demonstration of Hamann's absorption of *Tristram Shandy* into his own work.

d 'Riga', perhaps because Hamann at first took the author of the essay to be the rector Schlegel in Riga; cf. ZH 3, 33:31f. (HHE 4, 130, note 3).

e *Zierlichkeit.*

f *Wohlklange.*

g *Biegsamkeit.*

h *Vorstellungen.*

i *Innbegriff* [*Inbegriff*].

j This nonsense-formula, Büchsel informs us, was used in lessons on logic to distinguish the differences in kinds of judgments (HHE 4, 132, note 5).

k *Suppelex – quam curta!* from a satire of Persius, 4th satire, vs. 52 (N III, 417). 'His goods – how meagre!' ['*Suppelex*' taken to be *supellex*.]

l A reference to the saying in *AN*: 'Speak, that I might see thee!' (N II, 198:28). Cf. the relevant notes there for the Socratic background to the sentence.

Review of Herder

a *Words are signs for things.* Cicero, *Topica* 8, 35. This was cited at the beginning of Herder's essay (HP 251).

b HP 357.

c '*Schadloshaltung*' HP 270.

d HP 357.

e HP 355.
f HP 355.
g HP 355.
h As Büchsel points out, 'Actio! Mimesis!' was always Hamann's demand from the writer (cf. N II, 116:17f.), which Herder acknowledged. (HHE 4, 136, note 9).
i This term [*Besonnenheit*] is first introduced at HP 273.
j Even in specifically sensuous situations, we are still human, according to Herder (HP 275-276) and our '*Besonnenheit*' or reflexion is still working, only to a less noticeable degree – '*minder merklichen Grade*'; as opposed to Hamann's '*einem so unmerklichen Grade*'.
k '*Merkmal*'. This term, so important in Herder's account, is first introduced at HP 277 and set in motion on this and the following page.
l '*Mitteilungswort*'. 'The first *Merkmal* that I make is a marker for me, and a communicating word [*Mitteilungswort*] for others.' HP 287.
m HP 355-356.
n The senses were a subject frequently dealt with in the *Preisschrift*, but cf. HP 296ff. In particular, language is described as the 'sense' of the soul (HP 286) and indeed of reason; and the senses as the representation [*Vorstellung*] of [*Besonnenheit*] (HP 297).
o HP 356.
p Meaning Genesis.
q HP 356.
r A play on '*Apokolokuntosis*', meaning 'Pumpkinification'; the title of a satire on Claudius by Seneca. 'Not turned into a god (apotheosis) but into a pumpkin' is the gist of the word. Used by Hamann, it perhaps suggests the illegitimate (indeed, ridiculous) divinization of the human being, implied by Herder's account.
s 'Perishing, destruction'. Cf. 19:35. A paronomasic contrast with 'apotheosis'.
t *Galimathias*. I suspect Hamann got this from Montaigne: '*galimatias*', which has come into English from the French. The Oxford English Dictionary defines it as 'confused language, meaningless talk, gibberish.' In short, talk of divine human beings is even more 'gibberish' than anthropomorphic images of God.
u HP 357. From N III, 18:34, Hamann's exclamation marks in line 34ff. replace Herder's sarcastic queries.
v Cf. Mk. 5.1-20 as well as HP 357; 'Legion' replaces Herder's '*Menge*' [mass].
w HP 357.
x HP 356.
y Neology was the Enlightenment movement to accomodate religious beliefs or theology to the demands of reason.
z HP 270.
α '*Keim zum Ersatze*', HP 270.
β The author of *AN*.
γ A parody of Herder's style; both in its hyperbolic enthusiasms and, one imagines, Herder's frequent lists of nouns.
δ 'World of unrighteousness', Jas. 3.6.

Supplement to the 37th piece

of the Königsberg

Educated and Political Newspaper

1772

Dispatch

of the Review
in the twenty-sixth volume.

La Farce enfin lui sert à tout masquer. Epitre au Sr. Noel.[a]

The question of the origin of language, as far as I comprehend it, proceeds like this: 'Whether the first, oldest, original language was imparted to human beings in precisely the same way as the transmission of language occurs nowadays?'

All prenumerants or subscribers of the Königsberg Educated and Political Newspaper will not be able to refrain from answering this question with a Yes or No. The balance of judgement, however, seems as usual to be on the side of the Yes-men; and their opponents are marooned on every side by such intimidating difficulties that the whole solution to the problem is almost thwarted.

For what medium can suffice to help us to attain a concept of the origin of a phenomenon, when such an origin is in no way analogous to anything in the ordinary course of nature? And how will it be possible to set out on the right track of such an investigation? Without the guiding thread of similarity an endless deception of the same will exhaust us in in a labyrinth whose exit remains undiscoverable. No pole or compass will be able to determine and rectify the course of our discoveries.

Should some reader or other be so bold as to take the decision of all these difficulties by the horns; nevertheless no rational writer will, for the sake of a wether in the wilderness, leave the other ninety-nine sheep in the lurch, which one may suppose have already sided with the cleverest and most certain party, nodding a clear Yes! to the above question with piously closed eyes.

Therefore after we have settled with all due brevity 'that the first, oldest, original language was imparted to human beings in no other way than as it now really and daily is practicable', we come now to the question: 'by what way nowadays does the imparting of language occur?'

According to all possible information that I have been able to collect on this point, there are here at most three different ways: the way of **instinct**, the way of **invention**, and the way of **instruction**.

As well as the most universal experience, the guarantee of the most singular exceptions declares itself with the most irresistible testimonies for the latter way, that it would consequently be a quite useless, wasteful task to maintain the first two. Ear and tongue relate themselves in fact so immediately to each other[b], that in the rare examples of those born deaf and the still more extraordinary cases of such human adventurers who have grown up without contact with society, the lack of language has always infallibly been present.

Consequently, the ingenious hypothesis which imputes the origin of language to human invention is basically a loose idea of certain **Newtonians on this side of the water**[c], who all, as **Pope** opined, belong to a cute race of monkeys, and who recently with the **principle of contradiction** seem almost to have disowned all **reflexion**. Invention and reason indeed presuppose a language, and can be thought of without the latter as little as **mathematics** can without **numbers** – – .[4]

Since I can with reason flatter myself that my proof has uncommonly clarified the profound and prizeworthy question for the readers, I may then perhaps expect them to follow me just a step further, and ask themselves, 'through which instruction was the first, oldest, original language imparted to the human race?'

Human instruction is omitted of itself; the **mystical** theory is ambiguous, unphilosophical, unaesthetic and has ninety-seven other lacks and defects, whose index alone and meagre explan-

[4] *Certainly the soul is prior to the letter, and the spoken prior to the written, and thought prior to writing, and a person as such prior to one who philosophizes or writes poetry.* Tertullianus *de Testimonio animae adversus gentes*. cap. V.

ations thereof would require me to rent all the current year's supplements from the publisher of this educated and political newspaper, which my conscience and my love of neighbour, but most of all my pocketbook and the critical season countermand. – – There remains, therefore, necessarily and fortunately, nothing but **animal** instruction left.

According to all systems printed up to the present day, animals maintain the **leadership** and **priestly** rights of the first-born.[5] Could the wisdom of the Egyptians, among whom **Jamnes** and **Jambres**[d] are ascribed the fame of wisdom over all our present day **Panglosses** and **Helvetiuses** and **Achitophels**[e], have lowered itself to worship of animals[f] without **sufficient reason**?[g] What are the masterpieces of our proud reason but an imitation[h] and development of their blind instincts? The borrowed fire[i] of all the beautiful, free and noble arts but a promethean **plunder**[i] of the original animal ***lumen naturale***?[j] Do we not have a cunning animal (and the elevated tastes of still more cunning people) to thank for the kernel of all knowledge of good and evil, yes, even the philosophical tree of the encyclopedia of scepticism, if the old **Prince of Dessau**[k] is as credible as **Moses**? – –

If I were a well-heeled[l] *Accademico deglio Oziosi* like *de la Porta*[m], it would be easy for me to compare the **physiognomy** of human **tongues** with the **voices** of **animals**, to chart the horoscope of living language, and thus through a **mirror** make the **shadow** of the first, oldest, original dialect apparent in a **riddle**.[n] The whole riddle, whose **key** I still keep to myself, is based on a **Persiflage**[6], the sound of the battle-cry in a **language of the gods**[o], of whose superiority and universal monarchy the old martyr

[5] *Epicurus believed that the animals are the* ***pinnacles of Nature***. Cic. *de finibus bonor. et malor.* Lib. II. 32. *By God, if it is so, then let us go to* ***school with the beasts***. *That is the last fruit which the sciences promise us, so far she guides her students cautiously. We will not lack for good regents, interpreters of the simplicity of nature.* Montaigne Liv. III. Ch. 12. See Plato in *Politico de Saturni alumnis.*

[6] See on the word Persiflage *the Revot Memoires d'un honnete homme and Mes Fantasies.* The latter says: *I have always believed that the little novels of Voltaire, his letters in verse, his separate pieces and his satirical poems would give the idea of the word persiflage, which has arisen of late, and then the sense is not as vague as it first appears. Persiflage is in my eyes the decomposition of the imposing object reduced to its proper value.*

Henricus Stephani[p] is said to have prophesied in a golden work, that I bewail never to have laid eyes on, let alone read. – – –

But in order to dispatch the author of the review contained in the 26th volume completely, I can take him for nothing but a stranger in Israel[q], who does not even know that his so-called Philologian, long transformed into an arch-Apuleian beast of burden[r] under his masters, carries sacks five hours in the morning and four in the evening.

Concerning the **kabbalistic** epithet, thus said Leibnitz in his **unanticipatory thoughts regarding the improvement of the German language**: 'There is **Kabbala** or **word-divination**[s] not only in the Hebraic language-mysteries, but also in every language; not, to be sure, to be found in literal speculative interpretations, but in the right understanding and use of words.' The merits of the immortal **Leibnitz**, denied a **monument**[t] (thanks be to Apollo, who deems me worthy the same grace!) however bear comparison to his Lapplandish successor[u]; as does the dear foreign Count Algarotti to **Ovid** and **Newton** in reverse proportion. Who might comprehend it, let them comprehend it; I for my part in my school-years laughed at the **Cartesian** *Epistel de methodo* as half **Sir Hudibras**.[v]

Our countryman of **tragic figure**[w], therefore, on the academic question of the origin of language, in place of a competition essay of seven main parts, corresponding to the reviewer's seven main words[x], would perhaps mutter from the dust of his lowliness: 'What do I know of your question? and what does it have to do with me? The rise, zenith and nadir of all **beautiful arts and sciences**, which alas! are known by their fruits, have no further influence on my present happiness, apart from those merciless sisters interrupting the deep sleep of my rest with allotriocosmic dreams, and shifting the sacred boundary-stone of my duties for pennies for the bare necessities of life, limiting my costume to a grey turned **jacket**[y] and restricting my diet to watered beer and cold cake, yes, what is most irritating, encroach even in precious and sweet moments

that I would babble away spoiling the stripling of my soul and cooing and smiling away over the cradle of my little maid. – – Despite the fact that according to the profession of faith of your anti-Solomonic schoolmasters the fear of the Lord is the end of wisdom[z], it remains my greatest gain to be **godly** and **content**![α] – – The peace in the heights surpasses all reason[β] – – and loving **Christ**[γ], the tongues of angels and humans. This great **architect** and **cornerstone** of a **system** that will outlive heaven and earth, and a **Patriotism** that overcomes the world, said: Let your speech be yes, yes, no, no; everything else is of the devil[δ] – – and herein consists the entire **spirit** of the **Law** and the **social contract**, have they names as they will.' – – – –

Despite all this I see nevertheless in advance that the **universal critic** and **particular almanac writer** of this partly educated partly political Dispatch of a reviewer will be as cannily ascribed to the Philologian himself, as **Xenophon**[ε] the **Cyropedist** ascribed his **edifying after-dinner speeches** to the wise **Socrates**, and **Miguel de Cervantes' Saavedra**[ζ] his **unwilting pages** to the Arabian historian, **Cid Hamet**.

Aristobolus.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

NB. The numbering of these notes in the Nadler edition follows on from the two reviews; thus the first note in this essay is numbered '4'

[a] From a poem by Frederick the Great, '*Epître au Sieur Noel, par L'Empereur de la Chine, à Pekin*', addressed to his cook. As Büchsel points out, Hamann is playing with the double entendre of 'Farce' (HHE 4, 145), which can also mean forcemeat, stuffing. One might also notice the play on 'mask' — not a forcement covered with sauce is served up here, but a farce in a mask.

[b] Cf. HP 299ff.

[c] Apart from some more memorable admirers of Newton (Kant, for example), Hamann may have in mind Algarotti, the butt of many jests in these *HS* essays. On Algarotti's monument (*vid. infra*, note t) was inscribed '*Newtoni discipulo*' (HHE 4, 148, note 9).

[d] Büchsel refers to 2 Tim. 3.8, where Jamnes and Jambres are mentioned as having defied Moses, as others defy the truth; she notes the context of 'always searching for knowledge, but can never come to the knowledge of the truth' (HHE 4, 151, note 18).

[e] The history of Achitophel is in 2 Sam. 15f. The political overtone of the king's scheming adviser is surely important.

[f] Büchsel provides an example of a rationalistic defence of the Egyptians' worship of animals that Hamann might have had in mind as a target for his satire: 'In this way useful animals were protected.' (HHE 4, 151 note 22). In Wachter's *Naturae et Scripturae Concordia*, which Hamann cites in N III 48:8f (*PID*) and *AN*.

[g] Libniz's beloved Principle of Sufficient Reason was a favourite target for Hamann.

[h] The concept of imitation plays an important role in Herder's essay – as Hamann clearly perceives, it is the condition of possibility for the invention of language – and therefore is also an important idea in *PID*, where it is handled with the help of Aristotle. *Vid.* especially N III, 38:18-21 (and note 6, which it contains, citing *De Poetica*); in which the human capacity for imitation is firmly grounded in freedom.

[i] Promethean themes, such as divine fire, whether borrowed or stolen, occur in Herder's essay and therefore Hamann's as well, 'metaschematically'. Cf. HP 287, provided in translator's note d in *KRC*.

[j] *Naturlichts*; from Locke's epistemology.

[k] Büchsel provides the saying alluded to: '*Der Franzose ist nicht Gott, nicht Menschen treu.*' ('The Frenchman is true to neither God nor man.') (HHE 4, 153 note 31).

[l] *gehaltig*.

[m] Giambattista de la Porta, d. 1615, was a scientist who wrote *De humana Physiognomia*, published in 1583, relying heavily on analogy (HHE 4, 154 note 34). The Italian designation means 'leisured academic'.

[n] 1 Cor. 13.12.

[o] The 'language of the gods' is French. Büchsel provides a reference to a letter to Herder concerning Frederick the Great as author and his

'*Göttersprache*' (ZH 4, 253:36f.; HHE 4, 156, note 43); and presumably 'the language of the gods' here too is meant to refer to the French-speaking court, (or more particularly, the Academy) for whom vernacular German was a language fit only for the horses' grooms; the political reference is borne out by the allusion to the 'universal monarchy' [of things French]. (HHE 4, 156, note 44.)

p Henri Estienne (1531-1598), a Hellenist (N VI, 122); he is cited in *PID*, N III 51:22f. He battled for the purity of the French language, and has been called a forerunner of Voltaire. Büchsel suggests his 'martyrdom' is due perhaps to the resemblance of his name to Stephen in Acts; or to the circumstances of his death: '*Il mourut à l'hóspital de Lyon après s'être ruiné dans l'intérêt de la science.*' (Larousse.) (HHE 4, 156, note 44.) Or, knowing Hamannn, most likely to both.

q Lk 24.18.

r As was Lucius, transformed into a donkey, in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*.

s *Zeichenkunst*.

t Unlike Algarotti, to whom Frederick the Great had erected a monument at great expense; an *idée fixe* throughout *HS*. It was in Pisa, and bore the inscription '*Ovidii aemulo, Newtoni discipulo*'. Büchsel also notes Herder's observation that 'the greatest man Germany had produced in recent times' had no monument in his own country (HHE 4, 158 note 11).

u Maupertuis, successor to Leibniz as the head of the Berlin Academy, and who led an expedition to Lappland in 1736; 'Lapplander' was Voltaire's (unloving) name for him.

v Butler's eponymous character. Büchsel cites, 'He'd run in debt by Disputation, and pay with Ratiocination, All this by Syllogisme, true, In Mood and Figure, he would do' (HHE 4, 145).

w This Quixotic character is of course Hamann himself, *qua* Kabbalistic Philologian.

x Cf. N III, 19:30-31: 'Individuality, Authenticity, Majesty, Wisdom, Beauty, Fruitfulness, and Extravagance'.

y The poor (or thrifty) would 'turn' their garments, when they became stained or excessively worn, re-sewing them inside-out to prolong their use. In *Tristram Shandy* a pair of breeches is turned, only for the owner to discover that they have been turned once already.

z Cf. Prov. 1.7.

α 1 Tim. 6.6

β Phil. 4.7.

γ Eph. 3.19.

δ Mt. 5.37; we may imagine this as referring back to 20.15, 34f.

ε Referring to the fictionalizing of the Cyropaedia. (Shandy writes his own 'Tristra-paedia.')

ζ Referring to Cervantes' conceit, in Don Quixote, that he found an ancient manuscript in Toledo, which he had translated from the Arabic. Shandy also refers to Cid Hamet, Vol. III, Chapter XI.

The
LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT
of the
Knight of the Rose-Cross
on the
divine and human
Origin of Language.

I believed, therefore I spoke.[a]
II Cor. 4:13

Speedily translated
from the original hieroglyphic manuscript
by
The Hierophant's Handyman.
'I too shall make a hierophant.'[b]
Arrian Epict. III. 21.

Tempore et loco praelibatis.[c]
Motto of Rabelais.

Socrates in Plato's *Philebus.*

A gift certainly of GODS to human beings, it seems to me, came down in some way through a Prometheus together with a most brilliant fire. In fact *the ancients, more eminent than us, closer to the GODS, handed down the tradition* — —[d]

Fauete linguis![e]

If one presupposes God as the origin of all actions in the great and the small, or in heaven and on earth; then every numbered hair on our heads is just as divine as Behemoth, that beginning of the way of God. The spirit of the Mosaic Law extends itself therefore even to the most repulsive secretions of the human corpse. Consequently all is divine, and the question of the origin of evil turns in the end on a play on words and scholastic chatter. Everything divine, however, is also human; because a human being can neither act nor suffer except by analogy to its nature, be it as simple or as complicated a machine as it will. This *communicatio* of divine and human *idiomatum*[f] is a fundamental law and the principle key of all our knowledge and the entire visible economy.

Because the tools of language are at the very least a gift of *alma mater* Nature (with whom our strong minds carry on an tasteless and malicious idolatry, as the rabble of heathendom and popery), and because, according to the highest philosophical probability, the Creator of these ingenious tools also wanted, and had to, implant the use of them: then certainly the origin of human language is divine.[1] But if a higher being, or an angel, as with Balaam's ass, wants to work through our tongues; then all such workings must, like the talking animals in Aesop's fables, express themselves analogously to human nature, and in this respect the origin of language and even more its continuation can be and seem nothing but human. Therefore Pythagoras has already called the human being *mensuram omnium rerum*.[2]

Our century is rich in great souls, who honour and dedicate themselves to the relics of the epicurean system in the *Oeuvre philosophiques de Mr. de la Mattrie*[g], in the *Système de la Nature* and *Evangile du Jour*; meanwhile the evolution of the human race from a sump or slime always strikes me as a

[1] *They are said to have* **discovered** *these necessities of life, not instituted them; what has been found was already there, and what was already there one does not ascribe to the finder but to the one who instituted it; because it was already there before it was discovered.* Tertullian in *Apologet. adu. gentes* Cap. XI. Id. *de testimonio animae aduersus gentes.* Cap. V. – *GOD who is the creator of the mind as well as the voice and language.* Lactant. Lib. VI. 21. – *That nowhere on the earth have there been people who have not spoken due to a lack of the ability will be seen by anyone with understanding. Id.* VI. 10.

[2] Plato in *Theaetetus* and *Cratylus*.

beautifully-painted brainless mask. No mere potter of plastic forms, but a father of fiery spirits and breathing powers shows himself in the whole work.

Another may venture to doubt the revelations of a Galilei, Kepler or Newton; for me at least the robust faith of a Voltaire or Hume in these theories has more than once made their evangelical certainty suspicious; it is difficult moreover to make sense of the fact that our present-day sages are so penetrating and reliable in heavenly discoveries and on the other hand are so hazy in their domestic affairs. But as soon as the mathematical observational mind will condescend from the ethereal spheres to the horizon of our little moral atmosphere; thereupon the hypothesis of a single human pair[h] and the delusion of Chinese and Egyptian horoscopes for the present form of our earth will appear with geometric clarity.[i]

A learned doctor[3] has lately shown in one of the Jubilee speeches held in the anatomical exhibition halls in Pavia that the vertical bipedal gait of the human being is an inherited and unnatural gait. If the Knight of the Rose-Cross wanted to profane the diamond quill of his ancestors as our leading visionaries of *Montbard*[j], of *Voré*[k], of *Ferney en Bourgogne*[4] [l] do their cackling goose-quills; then this monument would have become a pragmatic deduction, which all the Greek academies in the Holy Roman Empire would have read to corpses and ghosts; because I would prove in the revenge of their cannibals and gypsies, landlords and cut-purses, *Fouaciers*[5] and poisoners, that even eating and drinking are no innate human idea, but absolutely must be an inherited and unnatural custom. — [m]Everything, everything argues for this proof: the essence of the human stomach, which swallows skin and hair, stones and mineral veins, like pills, streams of sweat and blood, loads of sighs and curses, boiling water; — the element of hunger and thirst, whose greed (or better, Attraction[n]) makes all, all tasty and prosperous for the aristocratic palates of our Financiers and Inventors, Cretes and Arabs, even that fruitful manure which the Jew in the land of the Chaldeans on the

3 Moscati.
4 Buffon, Helvetius.
5 Rabelais.

waters of Chebar during his prophetic burden[60] on a sovereign project partly scorned and partly ate with sorrow; – the analogy between the cold cakes of a Lapplander[p] or *indiginae* and between the fire-spewing vault of an Apicius[q] or *coquin pendu et parvenu* – between Fritz in a purple-lined cradle and Fritz in *praesepio*[r], neither of which would have learned to eat with either a wooden or gilt spoon, if their nanny or mother had not smeared their pap into their little open mouths and faithfully awaited the great miracle of digestion. – Yes, do you not know at last, philosophers! that there is no physical connection between cause and effect, means and end, but a spiritual and ideal one, in other words, superstition, as the greatest earthly historian[7] of his fatherland and of the natural church has proclaimed! – The lucky attempt to hold together body and soul with acorns[s] was therefore an invention of your intelligent and clever ancestors, who named themselves aborigines or Autochthones, in a more grunting than bleating[t] natural pronunciation, and had the good fortune to come into the world in the great oak forests, where under the gilded regime of that precious era they certainly all would have starved, had they not swiftly resolved to adopt as their fodder the Cynic's diet of acorns, under the coincidental tutelage of their rivals and subjects – Out of gratitude for this wholesome acorn diet, give the pigs nourishing husks for these three years, so that our country's lost children can hold open table with them, while the gods and colonists of the land swill and share the gold among themselves. —

Those gay men[u] of the human race, the sophists of Sodom-Samaria, who edify themselves day and night with the monologues of Marcus Antonius Aftokrator[v] have indeed read in the 13th chapter of his 6th book that the *Cheville vivifique*[8], on which depends the whole maintenance and increase of the *âmes moutonnières*, their herds, consists in *parui intestini affrictione mucique excretione convulsia*[w]; but they harness the horse behind the phaeton – and the wisdom of Solomon itself[9] in the *Matinée Royales*[x] reeks,

6 Ezek. 4.

7 Hume.

8 Rabelais. ['Life-giving peg'.]

9 – – *whether one prays to God in my kingdom as one wishes or one f— as one wishes. Matinées Royales ou Entretiens sur l'Art de regner.* 1766.

like the nard balsam of Demetrius (see the great catechism of Reason[10] under the word: Lamia[y]), of a *glans regia*. —

Because the Knight of the Rose-Cross knows of no Arcadia or El Dorado, where one may bless God as one wishes, his swan-song blesses all ardent youths and aged men, not according to his own pious discretion, but from a litany in the high choir: 'You must be as the grass of the fields, which dries up before one gathers it, from which the reaper does not feel his hand, nor the binder his armful[z], and which passes by, saying: *ayez honte pour vos Ancêtres*!' —

The fantasised or fabricated Paradise of sotadian[α] tolerance, that Mahomet[β], *ex utroque Caesar*, as bold a pirate as a hypocrite, promises his proselytes and slaves, is nothing but a Dead Sea of Salt, as soon as it is: *mortua est illa pars, qua quondam Achilles eram*![γ] – – No thunder-chariot, no flame of air-striking sword can guard the way to the Tree of Life more splendidly than the plague of boils on the borders and bowels of the State, that next will transform itself into a hospital, where the terrible necessity of poverty teaches us to beg; for although Herodes Atticus[δ] pursues the divine foolishness of Christianity with the fire of his muse, the sword of his prose and indeed in an idiom whose syntax St. Diderot considers highly metaphysical[ε]: behold! all laws, commandments and orders bellow, louder and more countless than the waves and the sands of the foaming sea, not only against the God of grace, who really rules all who seem to rule; but also snort[ζ] against the evangelical spirit of the profiteer[11], who burdens the impoverished and slandered subjects with the nine Beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount and will fulfil Joel's prophecy once more (2:20-21): 'He shall rot and stink, for he has done great things. Fear not, O land, but be glad and be comforted; for the Lord can also do great things.' – 'Behold: his *Controleur-General*[η] comes to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children of the land, and the unbelieving to the wisdom of the just.' –

If, therefore, the human being, according to the universal witness and example of all peoples, times and places[θ], is not in a position to learn to walk on two legs by itself, without the

[10] Bayle. According to the foreword of the *Extrait*.

[11] *Become just moneychangers*. I. A. Fabric. de Dictis Christi in Codd. Apocr. N. T. p. 330.

socializing influence of its warders and guardians, that is, as it were, *iussus*[12]; nor to break daily bread without the sweat of its brow, but least of all to hit on the masterpiece of the creative brush: how could it occur to anyone to view language, *cet art leger, volage, demoniacle*, (to speak, with Montaigne[13], from **Plato**[14]) as a self-sufficient invention of human art and wisdom? – – Our philosophers speak like alchemists, of treasures of fruitfulness; although to judge by their fields and vineyards, should one swear that they can distinguish weeds from wheat, grapes from thorns, figs from thistles – – They imitate that conjurer who pretends his bag's vacuum is a great, beautiful, strong spirit, who, were it possible, would seduce the *Elus*[ι] itself. The confusion of language, by which they, however, seduce and are seduced, is perhaps an entirely natural magic of automatic Reason, for whom it costs little to transform oneself into a star of the first magnitude, especially for rogues of similar blindness.

Without getting myself into hand-to-hand combat with freaks, who deserve no refutation and cannot be saved by refutation, because the darkness lies in the eye of the *sensus communis* and the difficulty lies in the womb of the concept; I will merely touch on the single piece of nonsense with which one makes those battle-unworthy Patriarchs of Autochthones and Aborigines into thrice-blessed inventors of an art on whose construction *Beauzée* in his *Grammaire Generale*[κ] and Harris[λ] have written far too much and understood far too little – –

Now then, consider, pious brothers! if and as well as you can, the birth of the first human pair. – Their nakedness was without shame, their navel[15μ] a round goblet that never lacked for drink, and the voice of a God who walked in the garden in the cool of the evening was the pure, rational milk for these young children of creation, for the growth of their political calling to people the earth and rule by the word of their mouths[16] – –

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[12] Ovidus, *Metam.* I.

[13] Liv. III. Chap. IX.

[14] *For it is a light thing, winged, sacred.* Plato in *Ion.*

[15] Vid. Thom. Brown's *Pseudodoxiam Epidemicam.* Lib. V. Cap. 5. – – NB. the first humans had no navel.

[16] *Who first, as far as can be seen in the whole of the wisdom of Pythagoras, gave names to every thing?* Cic. *Tuscul. Quaest. I. 25.* – – *It is not necessary to be a passionate lover to invent writing, but 30 Leibnizes would not suffice to create the first language. De la Philosophie de la*

Even the inequality of persons[ν] and the social contract therefore are consequences of an original appointment; for according to the most ancient information[ξ], a very early event (which is so appropriate to the cradle of the human race that the veracity of their story treads down the snakeshead of scepticism and makes all heel-blows of mockery ridiculous) already gave an inducement for the subordination of woman to the will of man – –

Adam therefore was God's; and God himself introduced the first-born and oldest of our race as the supporter and heir of the world which was prepared by the word of His mouth. Angels, longing to see his heavenly countenance, were the first monarch's ministers and courtiers. To the chorus of the morning star all the children of God rejoiced. Everything tasted and saw for itself[ο], first hand, the friendliness of the artisan, who played on his earth and delighted in his human children – – As yet no creature, against its will, was subjected to the vanity and slavery of the transient system, under which it presently yawns, sighs, and is silenced, like the Delphic Tripod[π] and the anti-Machiavellian eloquence of Demosthenes with silver-angina[ρ]; or at best pants, rattles and finally chokes in the thirsting breast of a Tacitus[σ] – – Every phenomenon of nature was a word, – the sign, symbol and pledge of a new, mysterious, inexpressible but all the more intimate union, participation and community of divine energies and ideas. Everything the human being heard from the beginning, saw with its eyes, looked upon and touched with its hands[ς] was a living word; for God was the word. With this word in mouth and heart the origin of language was as natural, as near and as easy as child's play; for human nature remains from the beginning to the end of the day as much like the Kingdom of God as leaven, with whose scantiness every woman could raise three measures of flour [τ] – –

I would **matagrabolize**[17υ] longer and broader and deeper if I did not know that much preaching is as tiresome for the spirits of the listener, as the body of a spiritual speaker used to be; today therefore I content myself with having found and named,

36-8 Nature. Amst. 770. Tom. II. p. 298. – – Philonis Opp. Edit. Franc. 691. p. 17, 32, 34; p. 178, 148.[φ]

40 [17] *matagrabolizer*, ματαιογραφοβολιζειν. Rabelais.

through a pilgrimage in **black sackcloth**[18] and ashes, the element of language[χ] – – the A and the O – – the word.

In conclusion the Knight of the Rose-Cross invites all artful wags of the kingdom of Yvetot[ψ] , and petrified[ω] or enthusiastic gawpers *in coemeterio Pisorum*[19], who are not ashamed of being or becoming German[♠], to his ancestral seat, which does not lack for privileges and sinecures which are lucrative in consecrated ribbons, gloves, beeswax-candles and sealing-sticks; meanwhile He Himself poetizes day and night on a *Roman des Oeconomies et Servitudes*[20♥], and broods over the the latest masterpiece of Roman statecraft, Julian's plan of conquest of the border's Parthians.[♦]

To the gentlemen *Entrepreneurs à l'enseigne des trois Vertus couronnées d'Amaranthe*[20♣], to whom it may fall, in the case of my too-speedy *exilium* in a better fatherland, to oversee the manuscript of this fragment or the torso of my extravagant monument[aa] *in agro Pisano Aestiorum*[21bb] my dear Junker

Johann . Michel . Joseph . Nazir

will give satisfaction – – on whose head may the blessings of his father be heaped up over the blessing of my ancestors, as high as the pleasant hill of the ancient time – – which he with his eventual[22] sibling may soon climb!

Against all critics who are horrified by the French and Latin lard of my dialect, I wish that the present handyman of the Hierophant had been a polyglot, like Panurge[23cc] and Quintus Icilius, so that they could not read his translation; *car tel est notre bon plaisir*– –

Happy are they who wait two or three, indeed four years, until the opinion of this last will is unlocked, whose secret understanding is still sealed!

(L. S.)

The LORD knows who are HIS.

2 Tim 2:19.

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[18] *Art Royale du Chevalier de Rosecroix à Londres* 1770. 8. p. 18.[dd]

[19] Algarotti.

[20] V. *l'Edition originale des Memoires de Sully.*

[21] *Caii Herennii Sermo ad Pisones.* My blessed teacher Rappolt's poem on **green peas**.

[22] Written on Palm Sunday night 1772 a few hours before the birth of my eldest daughter, Lisette Reinette. [Elisabeth Regina.]

[23] Rabelais.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

[a] Cited in Latin.

[b] Cited in Greek. N III, 420: Episteti. *Enchiridion.* Item Arriani *commentariorum de Epicteti Disputationibus*, Lib. IV. *'Quid aliud, homo, nisi Cereris initia divulgas? Domicilium, inquis, est Elusine: Ecce et hic. Illic sacrorum antistes: Et ego faciam antistitem. Illic praeco: Et ego praeconem instituam.'*

[c] This 'motto of Rabelais', from *Gargantua and Pantagruel* book 1, chapter 42, was important for strategic purposes. As shown by internal dating – the reference to the birth of Hamann's first daughter, Elisabeth Regina – the essay was written in 1772; the putative date of 1770 permits the essay to be seen as the Knight's offering for the essay competition.

[d] Cited in Latin. It is clearly understood in opposition to, or as a corrective of, Herder's citation at the beginning of the third section of the first part: 'The incendiary point [*Brennpunkt*], where Prometheus ignited heavenly fire in the human soul, has been made out – *with the first marker [Merkmal] language was created*' (HP 287).

[e] 'Hold your tongues!' This citation from Horace, Od. III 1.2, was also used in a more extensive citation at the beginning of *AN*. It similarly conjures here the idea of a priest of the divine mysteries about to sing of something not sung before.

[f] The theological technical term of *communicatio idiomatum*, used to express a linguistic consequence of the relation of the divine and human natures in Christ, is appropriated to express the relation of divine and human generally.

[g] The materialist and atheist philosopher Julien Lamettrie (1709-1751).

[h] Adam and Eve; in other words, the Knight is juxtaposing the approach and subject-matter of his opponents' to his own account, in N III, 31.27ff.

[i] This recalls the *more geometrico* methodology mocked in the 'Dispatch'. Literally, Hamann writes 'geometric light' [*Licht*]; but as the idea seems to be the '*clarté* ' desired by the Berlin Academy [HHE 4, 179, note 8], 'clarity' seems a better translation.

[j] Buffon.

[k] Helvétius.

[l] Voltaire.

[m] An echo of Herder's style; that is, his tendency to claim that his argument has 'everything going for it'; Herder takes this line at the end of his first part (HP 318) and more succinctly in his concluding paragraphs: 'Human invention has everything *for* it and *absolutely nothing against it*: Essence of the human soul and element of language; analogy of the human race and analogy of the continuation of language – the great example of all peoples, times and parts of the world!' (HP 356. Cf. also N III, 18:12-16, where this is cited in the review.) We find echoes of 'essence' (28:29), 'element' (28:32), and 'analogy' (29:3) in favour of the Knight's 'argument'; these are marked out with hyphens to catch our attention, but of course given a very different content to Herder's piece.

n 'From the jargon of mechanistic and materialist thought' notes Büchsel (HHE 4, 181, note 14); in particular, a term used by Leibniz.

o In Ezekiel 4, the prophet is instructed to bake his food over a fire of human dung; in response to Ezekiel's protest, God ameliorates the prescription and orders the fire to be built of cow dung. Hamann further coarsens the idea by giving it a further Rabelaisian – indeed, Sadean – coprophagic twist.

p Again, Maupertuis (cf. translator's note t, *Dispatch*).

q Apicius was a Roman gourmet in the reign of Tiberius.

r It is not coincidental that 'Fritz' was Frederick the Great's nickname. Büchsel claims that the crib or *praesepio* is a symbol of poverty (HHE 4, 182 note 25); whether it is so formally or not, clearly a contrast is intended between the monarch and your average Fritz-in-the-street, suffering under the widespread economic hardship. It is, however, secondary to the surface (ironic) philosophical argument concerning the necessity of being taught to eat.

s From Rousseau's and Moscati's portraits of early humanity learning to eat acorns by observing and following the example of pigs. The pig theme returns at the end of the paragraph, making use of the parable of the Prodigal Son, again to make an underlying politico-economic point. (Herder also alludes to the unsatisfactory anthropology of Rousseau's '*Manntier*', cf. e.g. HP 333, 336f.)

t Herder's human inventor of language observed sheep, abstracted the property of 'bleating' from the manifold of sensory data emerging from the sheep, and mentally tagged it as 'the bleating one'. This was the origin of language (HP 277f. et passim). Hamann conflates this with Rousseau's pig-like character, grunting rather than bleating.

u 'Gay men' is my rendition for *warmen Brüder*; admittedly an anachronistic attempt to recreate a *double entendre*. There were rumours that Frederick the Great was homosexual.

v Büchsel writes 'the Russian manner of writing *Autokrator* makes possible the play on words' (HHE 4, 185, note 3). *After* is the German word for anus.

w Marcus Antonius suggested this way of looking at sex as one designed to make it less remarkable, attractive, or powerful a thought. 'Translated': these gay men have indeed *read* about coitus, but *they* 'harness the horse *behind* the carriage'....

x Hamann renders this in German as *Frühprediger*. It was an anonymous satirical writing attributed to the King, (Hamann's note provides the offending remark). Büchsel understands Hamann as believing the false attribution (partly on the strength of a reference in a letter) (HHE 4, 186, note 10); I think however it is quite possible that Hamann *chose* to believe the attribution.

y Bayle's dictionary was a self-proclaimed category of reason ('*Si l'homme est un animal raisonnable... les philosophes doient être plus hommes que les autres... considerés comme les précepteurs du genre humain; et leurs Ouvrages qui sont le Catéchisme de la Raison*'...). Hamann cannot resist pointing out that this great catechism of 'reason' contained under the entry 'Lamia' the following (reproduced in N III, 421): *De Lamia rursum Machon haec scribit, Demetrium aliquando inter pocula, varia genera*

unguentorum ostentantem Lamiae tibicinae, ut illa non ita jucunde olere dixit, non nihil commotum et tanquam vellicatum, quod improbans omnia petulatius illuderet, innuisse ut nardinum quoddam afferetur, et cum pudendum manu confricuisset, ac digitis contrectasset, dixisse, hoc Lamia olfacito, quantum a reliquis distet, cognosces; illam vero subridentum respondisse, atqui, o miser, omnium longe putidissimum hoc esse mihi videtur; regemque mox subjecisse, e regia tamen glande per Jovem est, o Lamia. [Summarized: Demetrius is showing Lamia the flute-player various unguents, and rubs his pudendum with one, said digit contracting; Lamia says 'But this one smells worse than all the rest'; at which Demetrius tells her that this one is for the *glans* of the King.] As Lamia was the flautist of the king Demetrius, I wonder if this refers also to Frederick's own flute-playing?

ζ Ps 129.1, 6-8.

α 'Sotadian' refers to the saucy writings of Sotades, whose metre itself ('sotadean') was associated with the coarse and erotic subject matter (*Oxford Companion to Classical Literature*, 533). Büchsel also draws our attention, on the subject of 'paradise', to this logion of Hamann's: 'But who can think of Mahomet's paradise, "without thinking of something about which one doesn't like to speak" (Lady M. Wortley-Montague)' (N IV, 296:27ff.; HHE 4, 187, second note 1).

β As 'Solomon' was in preceding paragraphs, 'Mahomet' here is a cipher for Frederick the Great – deceitfully promising his followers a false paradise of tolerance and permissiveness, a 'paradise' Hamann wants to unmask. One manuscript version has 'proselytes and courtiers [*Höflinge*]' instead of '...slaves' (N III, 421).

γ Cf. Petronius 129: *funerata est illa pars corporis, qua quondam Achilles eram.* NB the 'dead Sea of Salt' is where Sodom was (HHE 4, 188, note 4).

δ Frederick the Great again; the persecuting monarch [Herod], who writes in an elegant – foreign – prose [Attic].

ε Nadler's suggested reference for this allusion dates from 1782 – in short, a decade after this essay was written. It is difficult to ascertain therefore what Nadler intends. Büchsel cites instead an essay in Frederick's praise, *Sur Frédéric*, dating from 1760 (HHE 4, 189, note 13). 'Metaphysics' as such do not seem to enter into the matter for Diderot; rather, the intellectual content of the writing of the philosophers of Sans Souci.

ζ Cf. Acts 9.1. In Luther's translation, Saul 'snorts' against the Christians.

η The highest post in Frederick's financial administration; therefore, since the monarch in question here is God, clearly Christ is intended.

θ HP 356.

ι Nadler wonders whether this comes from Elohim (N VI, 111); Büchsel, without explanation, translates it as '*Die Erwählten*' (HHE 4, 192, note 11).

κ An extensive and thorough, if perhaps pedantic grammar: *Grammaire Générale ou Exposition raisonnée des éléments nécessaires de langage*, published in 1757 (N VI, 47).

λ Jacob Harris, (1708-1780), *Hermes or a philosophical Enquiry concerning Language and universal Grammar* (N VI, 166).

μ A reference to Sgs 7.3. In my opinion this probably has a sexual or erotic sense for Hamann.

ν A topic of some concern for Rousseau (see *Discours sur l'origine de l'inégalité parmi les hommes*) and for Herder in his study of the latter; cf. ZH. 2, 408f. as well as his *Preisschrift*.

ξ A reference to Herder's *Älteste Urkunde*.

ο Ps. 34.9.

π The oracle now silent; 'tripod' refers to the stool on which Pythia sat while she inhaled the fumes of the chasm.

ρ 'Anti-Machiavellian' no doubt alludes to Frederick's essay, *Antimacchiavel*. Demosthenes was bribed to refrain from making further troublesome political speeches; he blamed his silence on angina, (συναγχη), but a wag suggested that he was suffering from 'silver-angina', (αργυραγχη). (Hamann writes *Silberbräune*.)

σ This reference is unclear to me; perhaps it is a simple reference to the name.

ς A literal citation of Luther's translation of 1 Jn. 1.1.

τ Mt. 13.33.

υ See Hamann's note 17; a colloquial English translation might be 'waffle'.

φ Büchsel provides the reference: 'While the Greek philosophers maintained that wise men first gave names to things, Moses says far more correctly that the first Creator did it.' HHE 4, 195, note 9.

χ Herder refers to the 'Element of language', e.g. HP 318.

ψ Büchsel provides the lyrics of a song of Béranger (1813): '*Il était un roi d'Yvetot / Peu connu dans l'histoire / Se levant tard, se couchant tôt, / Dormant fort bien sans gloire, / et couronné par Jeanneton / D'un simple bonnet de coton, / Dit on...*' (HHE 4, 201, second note 1).

ω Büchsel makes a connection with Voltaire and perhaps Rabelais (HHE 4, 201, second note 2). I suspect the intention of the reference is nearer to hand, Hamann's note 19, 'Algarotti': now petrified in a monument.

♠ Unlike the imported French administration, who carried out their work entirely in French.

♥ A reference to the title of the memoirs of Sully, minister of Henry IV (1559-1641): *Memoires des sages et Royales Oeconomies d'Estat domestiques, politiques et militaires de Henry le Grand ... et des Servitudes utiles, obeissances convenables et administrations loyales de Maximilian de Bethune....* (HHE 4, 202 note 6.) I suspect Sully himself is not important here; the title is simply employed in yet another attack on the King, 'economics' and 'servitude' being two words which Hamann would strongly associate with him.

♦ Julian (the apostate) is Frederick again. Julian fell in the battle against the Parthians; this reference to war might refer to the king's Seven Years war, or to the plans for the partition of Poland.

♣ Cf. HHE 4, 203, note 1: a reference to the publishers of Sully.

aa Another gibe at Algarotti.

bb The 'sermon' in Hamann's note 21 is a poem by Hamann's teacher, *C. H. Rapidii de Pisis ad Pisones. Pisae Aestiorum* (Königsberg). The pun plays on Algarotti's monument in Pisa and on the 'pea-eaters' of Rappolt's poem.

[cc] Panurge is a character from Rabelais' *Gargantua and Pantagruel* who answers Pantagruel in a fragments of speech from different languages. 'Panurge' and 'Quintus Icilius' Büchsel explains as 'a compliment for Guichard, who was close to Frederick. Hamann was trying to approach the king through him' (HHE 4, 204 note 5). The king himself gave the polyglott Guichard the name 'Quintus Icilius' (N VI, 161).

[dd] In this Masonic text, *'un drap noir parsemé de Cendre'* is the prescribed costume for the initiate, whose quest is to seek *'la parole perdue'* (Knoll, *Q* 278).

Philological
Ideas and Doubts
about
an academic prize-winning essay

Ps. CXXX. 4.
It is like sharp arrows of the strong,
like fire in junipers.

– – *I swear,*
that I did not overstep the line
when I shot forth my swift tongue
like a bronze-tipped spear.
Pindar *Nem.* VII.

Along with many other passages from this **ode**,
each in its place.[a]

Sketched
by the
Magus in the North
in the month of wine 1772

Printed by: put here the publisher of the Allgm. Bibliothek.[b]

– – *Nor would I dare to wring from him the crown*
that sits on his head with so much glory
Horat. *Satyr.* I. X. 48. 49.

(Göttingen Notices on educated Matters published under the auspices of the Royal Society of Sciences LXXVIII 722.)

('His **style** should be no **model** for **others**, but as **his** style it is quite **becoming**.')

Aristotle sought, with his usual acumen, to differentiate **voice** and **language**. Following his explanations[1], the famous suffering hero's[c]

Α 'α α α and

— — — — παπα

παπα παπα παπα παπα παπα παπα like that **snuffle** of the sponger in Plutus[d] Υ'υ 'υ'υ 'υ'υ 'υ'υ

are in the truest understanding the sound of the **voice**, which however may be the root and stem, the nourishing sap and spirit of life of **language**, above all, its **onomatopoeia**.[e]

The concept of **degree** and **kind**[f] relates to very arbitrary similarities and the opposition of this relation has little influence on the knowledge of things themselves.

Every **mechanism**[g] presupposes an **organization**[2h], and every visible **life** both. These three wheels appear everywhere to such a strong, exceptional degree, that one can as little not recognize as maybe not distinguish their machinery in each other.

The human being does not only have **life** in common with **animals**; but also its **organization** as well as its **mechanism** is more or less similar, that is, by **degree**. The main difference of the human being must therefore be in the **form of life**.

With regard to gregariousness the wise Stagyrite considered humans **neutral**.[i] I presume from this that the true character of our nature consists in the **critical** and **magisterial**[3j] office of a political animal[4]; and that consequently the **human being** is related to **cattle** as the **leader** to the **subjects**.[k]

Yet this **office**, then, like all **honours**, presupposes no

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1 ***Voice*** *on the one hand is a* ***sign*** *of* ***pleasure*** *and* ***pain****, and therefore belongs to other animals, for their nature allows them to perceive pleasure and pain and to intimate these things to one another. But* ***language*** *makes clear the* ***expedient*** *and the* ***hurtful****. And in the same way, the* ***just*** *and the* ***unjust****. For above all other creatures, humanity alone has a sense of* ***good*** *and* ***evil****, of* ***just*** *and* ***unjust*** *and the like. de Republ. [Politica]* I.2. *Something which makes an impact must have a soul and imagination. For the* ***voice*** *is a sound which* ***means something****. de Anima* II.8.

2 *The parts of plants are* ***organs*** *too, though very simple ones. de Anima* II.1.

3 *A citizen as such is defined by nothing else so much as by the right to participate in* ***criticism*** *and* ***leadership****. Id. de Republ.* III. 1.

4 *The* ***social animals*** *are those which all have one common work. Id. de Histor. Animal.* I. 1. [NB that 'social' here translates 'πολιτικα'.]

inner worthiness nor **merit** of our nature; rather is, like the latter itself, an unmediated gift of grace of the great **All-giver**.

No hero and poet, be he a prototype of a **messiah** or a prophet of the **antichrist**, lacks periods in his life where he can with good cause confess with **David**, 'I am a **worm** and no man'.[l]

Without the freedom to be **evil** there is no **merit** and without the freedom to be **good** no ascription of any **guilt**, yes, no **recognition of good and evil** itself. **Freedom** is the **maximum** and **minimum** of all our natural powers and the fundamental drive as well as the final purpose of their entire direction, development and return.

Therefore neither **instinct**[m] nor ***sensus communis***[n] determine human beings; neither **natural right** nor **international law** the **ruler**. Each is his own **legislator**, but at the same time the **first-born** and **neighbour** of his **subjects**.

Without the **perfect law of freedom**[5] the human being would in no way be capable of that **imitation** on which all **up-bringing** and **invention**[o] alike rest; for the human being is by nature the greatest **mimic**[6] of all the animals.

Consciousness, attentiveness, abstraction and even **moral conscience** seem to be for the most part **energies** of our **freedom**.[p]

To freedom however belong not only **undetermined powers** but also the republican privilege to be able to **contribute** to one's destiny. These conditions were indispensable to human nature. Hence, the **sphere** of animals determines, it is said[q], the direction of all their powers and drives by instinct, precisely

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5 *But he who looks into the **perfect law, the law of freedom**, ...being a **doer** that acts, he shall be blessed in his **doing**.* James 1:25.

6 *Imitation is natural to humanity from childhood, one of its advantages over other animals, in that it is the most imitative, and first learns by imitation, and delights in imitating everything. The sign of this is the consequences of its works. Though the objects themselves may be painful to see, we delight in seeing the most realistic representations of them in art, such as wild animals and corpses. Another reason is that learning is a great pleasure not only to the philosopher but also to others, however small their capacity for it. So the reason for the delight in seeing the picture is that one is learning at the same time, reckoning e.g. that this one there is so-and-so.* Aristot. *de Poetica* 4.

as individually and intrinsically as, on the other hand, the **perspective** of the human being extends to the **universal** and as it were loses itself in the **infinite**.

Aristotle compared the **soul** to the **hand**; namely, because the one is the **tool** of all **tools**, but the other the **form** of all **intellectual** and **sensuous forms**.[7]

Presumably the **senses** relate to the **understanding** as the **stomach** to the vessels which secrete the finer and higher **juices** of the blood, without whose circulation and influx the stomach itself could not administer its office. Nothing therefore is in our **understanding** without having been previously in our **senses**: as there is nothing in our entire bodies that has not come through either our own stomach or our parents. The *stamen* and *menstruation*[r] of our **reason** are therefore in the truest sense **revelations** and **traditions** which we take for our own property, transform with our juices and powers and thereby are equal to our commission, the **critical** and **archontic**[s] office of a **political animal**, partly to **reveal** and partly to **transmit**.

The **analogy**[t] of the animal economy is the only **ladder**[u] to the **anagogical**[v] knowledge of the spiritual **economy**[8], which quite probably alone may resolve and complete the phenomena and *qualitates occultas*[w] of that visible abbreviated half.

So even supposing that a human being comes into the world like an **empty wineskin**: then precisely this lack makes him all the more able to enjoy nature through **experiences** and to enjoy community with his race through **traditions**. Our reason arises, at the very least, from this twofold lesson of sensuous **revelations**[x] and human **testimonies**, which are imparted accord-

[7] *The soul is like a hand. For the hand is an instrument of instruments, and so the mind is of forms, and sense is a form of sensible objects.* [*Anima*] 8.

[8] *Are not all the powers of the body and the understanding faculties and what is worse, faculties of which we are completely unaware, truly occult qualities, beginning with movement, of which no one has discovered the origin. I do not know if there might not be in that abyss a proof of the existence of the Supreme Being. There is a secret in all the first motivations of all beings – Now why this secret, without anyone having known it? there must be some being which knows about it. Questions sur l'encyclopedie.* Part. VI. Art. Faculté p. 13. 15. [Voltaire.]

ing to similar **laws**, as well as through similar **means**, namely markers.[9y]

The philosophers have always given truth a bill of divorce, by separating what nature has joined together and vice versa[z], and in this fashion, among other heretics of **psychology**, their **Arians, Mohammedans** and **Socinians**[α] have also emerged, all of which have tried to give an account of the soul from a **single positive power** or **Entelechy**.[10β]

Because the **mystery** of **marriage** between such opposed natures as the **outer** and **inner** person, or body and soul, is great[γ]; perhaps in order to attain a comprehensive concept of the **fullness** in the **unity** of our **human being** a **recognition** of several distinguishing earthly markers is necessary.[δ]

The human being therefore is not only a living **field** but also the **son** of the **field**, and not only **field** and **seed** (according to the system of the **materialists** and **idealists**) but also the **king**[11ε] of the **field**, to cultivate good seed and enemy weed on his field; for what is a **field** without **seed** and a **ruler** without **land** and **revenue**? These **three** in us therefore are **one**, namely Θεου γεωργιον[12a]: just as **three silhouettes** on the wall are the natural shadows of a **single body** that has a **doubled** light behind it – – –

After I have soared up unto the empyrean holiness of human

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9 See *Recherches sur l'entendement humain d'après les Principes de sens commun par Thomas Reid. Ouvrage traduit de l'anglois à Amsterdam.* 1768.

10 *For everything comes out of that which actually is.* Aristot. *de Anima* III. 7.

11 *Those then who are described as being out of control are so described because they are not under the control of the* **mind**, *to whose kingship the whole soul has been assigned by nature.* Cicero. *Tuscul. Quaest.* III. 5. *Necessarily, nature as a whole, in that it does not subsist solitarily nor simply, but with unions and connections, must have some emperorship like the mind in human beings and something similar to the mind in animals – I call emperorship what the Greeks call hegemony: in that nothing can procreate nor have power, without something that is pre-eminent. Id. de Nat. Deorum.* II. 11. Antoninus *Commentarius* V.19. *The leader and ruler of man's life is the mind.* Sallustius in *Jugurtha.*

12a Thus Paul calls the Church, II Cor. 3:9, which is as ambiguous a term as the name of the soul and of human nature are still today.

nature, or better, my peripatetic soap bubbles have loitered long enough before me; thus they burst finally halfway in the following dewdrops:ζ

'The human being **learns** to use and master all its limbs and senses, therefore also its ear and tongue, because it **can** learn, **must** learn and indeed truly **wants** to learn. Consequently the **origin** of **language** is as natural and human as the origin of all our activities, facilities and skills. But despite the fact that every apprentice **cooperates** with his instruction to learn according to his inclinations, abilities, and opportunities; **learning** is nevertheless in a real sense as little **invention** as mere **re-cognition**.' η

I have taken no detour with my **ideas**[a]; rather, we are coming at once to the point; namely, to the latest **Platonic**[b] argument for the origin of language.

It would be altogether ridiculous to conduct a counter-argument to a truth which is not only **firmly proven**[c] but also **crowned**[12b]. I therefore feel myself pleasantly obliged to fumigate the **fashionable spirit** of my century with doubts.

From the whole floating dream[d] of **doubts** which stole past my mind as I read the **academic prize-essay** seven months ago, I recollect myself in a moment of waking to dwell voluntarily on a single doubt, and to be able to give it clear and accurate attention. This single doubt consists simply in this: '**whether in fact the Platonic apologist of the human origin of language was ever serious about proving his subject or even only touching it?**'[13]

A whole ocean of markers[e], from which I will isolate only

[12b] – – *it is difficult to contend*
with the victor – – Hor. I, Serm. 9.

[13] – *Some delight in collecting*
Olympic dust** at full speed, **clearing
the turning post with fiery wheel. Hor. I.1. [Emphasis Hamann's.]
What wrestler in the village games and at the cross-ways would spurn being crowned at the Olympic games, who had hope, who had the sweet certainty of the palm without the dust? Horat. I. Ep. 1.

several and indeed the least, induced me to make this doubt and no other my topic, namely: that the entire Platonic argument is constructed out of a vicious circle, an endless spinning top, and neither hidden nor refined nonsense; is based on concealed powers and **arbitrary** names and club passwords or pet ideas, yes, finally, proceeds from a divine **Genesis**, which in fact is more supernatural, more sacred and more poetic than the oldest eastern Creation story of heaven and earth. If the learned author had really written in earnest, would he have set out so mischievously and irresponsibly on a difficult, shaky, hyperbolic pleonastic reprisal of criticism and misused polemic weapons **to wound himself, bruise himself**[f], or to have always effected the opposite of what he promises, woos and means to make his readers imagine? – – :

Platonic Argument for the Human Origin of Language.[g]

'The human race stands above the animals not in **degrees** of more or less, but in **kind** (p. 270-1) because it is certain **that the human being is inferior to animals in the strength and certainty of its instincts, yes, that indeed he does not have what we call in so many genera of animals innate capabilities and instincts** (p. 266) but, as opposed to every animal, language as well as mind[h] and imagination and drives are **innate** and **immediately natural**. (p. 269.) This lack of **instinct**, which obscurely motivates and restricts (p. 273) all powers toward one end is replaced in the human by **reflexion**[i], which in one of its genres consists in its own direction of all its powers (p. 273), and consists in its moderation to this primary end (p. 274), whereby the human being becomes a creature whose positive power expresses itself with **greater scope**, with **subtler organization,** more clearly (p. 273) and more freely working, (p. 273).

'The human being put in the condition of reflexion which is its own and using this reflexion freely for the first time has invented language. For what is reflexion? what is language? (p. 276)

'**Language** is the real distinguishing characteristic of our race

from the **outside**, as reason is from the **inside** (p. 285). Language is the **natural instrument**[j] of **understanding**, a **sense** of the **human soul**, as vision becomes the eye to the sensitive soul of the ancients, and the bee's instinct builds his cell (p. 286).

'**Reflexion** is peculiar to humanity and essential to the race: so also is language and its own invention of language. Invention of language is therefore as natural to it as being human. (p. 276.)'

An entire ocean of sensations rushed through all our senses – – to make the reader finally attentive to the academic **sore thumb** of **Apperception**.[k] – – In brief **'This first marker of thought becomes the word of the soul! With it human language is invented!'** Ευρηκα!

A **high-priest** well-known in his diocese[l] remembered, with the most inward affliction, I know not on which Church feast-day devoid of moral and reason, hearing a **village preacher** who set forth his topic in two parts, each of which contained an antithesis and each of which seemed to abolish the other, but basically, **apparently,** proved what it should; namely a rather **extraordinary**, **incomprehensible** and **supernatural arithmetic**. Having, with the most inward affliction, lost alas! five Taler every tiresome and industrious month of my precious life through a **desperate political arithmetic**[m], I cannot refrain from smiling over the similarity of the Platonic argument with the topic of that village preacher, presumably poor in spirit.[n]

The Platonic argument for the human origin of language consists of two parts, a **negative** and a **positive**. The first contains reasons why the person is not an animal, and the second contains reasons why the person nevertheless is an animal. Such an apocalyptic creature[o] as the neo-Platonic person, who is no animal yet is an animal, **can** and **must** be the inventor of language, because no animal **can** invent language, and no God **may**.[p]

If I had the slightest desire to make myself immortal with laps in the stadium and book-learning, as well as loquacity in **impertinent** notes on a meagre text, or with a philosophical commentary on two Latin words[q], and to become a writer for great minds and still greater fools; then the merely **negative part** of the Platonic argument would provide the most fruitful

material for a historical critical masterpiece – After many editions and many translations in our enlightened corner of the earth, perhaps it would occur to a Chinese emperor[r] of the next century to have my masterpiece in excerpts canonized into a *Hauspostill*[s], and to sell some warmed-up coals[t] of ideas and doubts in the High German mother tongue, which is as perfectly barbaric and full of arrogant poverty[u] as that of the most high-minded **Bayle**[v] and **Mr. Henry Ophelot de la Pause**[14], to his subjects for the **hare** in the **moon** which so excited the holy **Confucius.**[w] But because I am opposed from the heart to all **gibberish**[x] and fake **Chinese** quackeries of authorship[y], and because it does not serve my present interests at all to censure the **negative** part of the Platonic argument; I therefore freely concede 'that the human being is no animal and has no instincts whatsoever'; all the more so as the latest apologist for the human origin of language seems to presuppose in every animal an **instinct** as essential as **genius** is in every person who is an author, at least, whereby perhaps **instinct** becomes a condition *sine qua non* of every animal, to elevate and promote the human being out of the sphere of the animals with all the more **strength** and **certainty** to a higher order of creatures, different in **kind** and not in **degree** – – –

In the history of our present century, more than one example comes to mind of how little it takes for there to be a creature which stands, lies, sits or wanders here and there above – not in **degree** but in **kind** – those animals which one in common life calls **subjects**, which on account of its **freely-working positive powers**[z] is called a **tyrant** or **God of the Earth**[α] according to the diversity in the heavenly zones, tongues and ages, whose **character in the complete determination of all his higher powers** in **relation to his lower powers**[β], whose whole **psychology,** in recent times has been woefully devastated by certain wretched **gibbering**

[14] – – *this bristly language full of barbarous terms, which drags itself laboriously with all its detailed paraphernalia of articles and auxiliary verbs and which does not contrast its arrogant poverty with the magnificence of the language [idiome] of Cervantes, the sweetness of that of Tasso and the energy of that of Bolingbroke and Shaftesbury. Préface à l'Histoire des douze Césars* de Suetone ect. p. XII.

philosophers and their **germanic brethren**[γ] – – it is illuminating, I say, from the history of the present century, that nothing under the sun is easier to **be** and to **create** than such a creature, but that it may be very tedious to **maintain** and **mature** the same, especially if it is **half-baked** and **wet behind the ears.**[δ]

[ε]Despite all positive power, its orientation, the moderation of all powers to the primary end, despite the greater scope, the finer organization etc., and all the heavy expenses that are lavished on the **negative** part of the Platonic argument, all **majesty** of the **person** and its race, however, are unexpectedly exploded by the **positive** part on our way there. For what does the entire positive part of the Platonic argument say more positively and expressly, than that the person thinks and speaks by **instinct** – – that the **positive power** to **think** and to **speak** are **inborn** and **immediately natural** – – that it, like the **instinct** of animals, is carried along, dragged on or directed to the **point** of a marker — that with the first **word** the entire **language** was invented, despite the **law** of **eternal progression**; — that the **invention** of language is as essential to the human being as the web to the spider and the honeycomb to the bee — and that nothing more is needed than to **place** the human being in the **condition** of reflexion which is his **own**, in order yet to invent that which is already **natural** to him – – As a curse and the shame of our enlightened age there lives a deceased, mad **Spermologian**[ζ], on whose bald pate fiery coals of heaven have long been raining without the impenetrable shield of the tolerance reigning in Olympia[η] – – I do not mean the immortal **citizen** of the **Krapac mountains**, rather the childish ex-rector C. T. D.*** – – O abomination of desolation[θ] (such as perhaps belonged in pagan mythology but in no Church-history of the old and new **Israel**!) – to revive that piece of villainy of the **gallian** Jupiter on his father[ι] – and to violate the **poetic** private parts of a **holy person**, whom I could name ever so unashamedly, as even our cleverest and most modest orthodoxes doubt in his testimony – – so that therefore I will not be **slandered** as having robbed the Platonic Apologia of the human origin of language of its **poetic power**, I want to intone a fragment of the latest **Genesis** in the oriental dialect[κ] on the **Pindaric**

lyre for the glory and incense of the **Pythian** victor.

Courage, allons, prends ta harp benie[15]
Et moque toi de son Academie – – – λ

μ**He created him a Non-animal and Animal from a whole ocean of sensations, from the whole floating dream of images which stole past his senses, and as the Act of their recognition, as the marker of his reflexion, the weapon stretched before him. High above the animals not by degree but by kind of instinct stood the Platonic Androgyne as a Non-animal — without instincts.**

Go, subdue the birds of prey and sea-wonders; but be mute and dumb! spoke the Andriantoglyph to the Protoplast of language — for the moment that you recognize the fruit of your inner and outer instincts, your mouth shall be opened and you will be an animal full of instincts, on the outside and the inside, and your non-animal character will wither away like grass.

Still the Platonic Androgyne stood, born mute, in a sleep of concealed powers — behold! it happened in that moment, when he fell deeper and deeper in his element — in an entire ocean of sensations — in a whole floating dream of images, and when he was placed in a condition of reflexion and ecstasy, which however was his own. And behold! in precisely the same moment it happened, that the first noise of his outer instinct came forth from him, as a marker and communicating word of the inner instincts. Thus the first word came to be from the outer and inner instincts, and from the non-animal placed above the animals by a lack of instincts came a creature driven by instincts from the inside and outside, that is, a reflective and language-creating animal; Hail to the inventor of language!

[15] *St. George* in the *Pucelle d'Orleans*; Chant. XVI.

Let us cry to him the solomonic[16] *I have found!*[ν] With this divine organ of understanding the entire **Koran** of the **seven** arts[ξ] and the entire **Talmud** of the **four** faculties were invented and on this **rock**[ο] stands the fortress of **philosophical faith** of our age, before which all **gates** of **oriental poetry** must buckle.

I have called this **supernatural** argument for the human origin of language **Platonic** because it proceeds from the **neological** technical term of **reflexion**, as a 'single point and shining spark of a perfect system'[π] and in the end reverts to a Greek **Synonymy**[ρ], and because the **Platonists** went on and on *ad nauseam* about the Λογος ενδιατητος or ενθυμηματικος and λογος προφορικος, the **inner** and **outer** word, as did the Swedish spook-seer[σ] about *ab intra et extra*.

Philo numbers γονιμον φωνη as the sixth sense[17] and indeed also seems to speak of the **Genesis** of **language** almost as of the '*nisu* of the embryo at the moment of its maturity' (p. 321)[18ς]; he sees it however as a great audacity of 'bodies intimated by shadows, and matters through words.'[19]

[τ]I could, if it was worth the effort, interpret the whole of the argument riddled with arbitrarily selected postulations and false axioms on the nature of language from more than one side and allow the apologist to appear in a certain light, in which however he shall not appear here. I therefore will only extract this much from it: that in his **legislation,** the origin

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[16] *Voici ce que j'ai* ***trouvé*** *c'est que Dieu a crée l'homme juste; mais ils ont cherché beaucoup de discours.* Eccles. 7:30.

[17] *For the Creator made the irrational part of the soul sixfold, and formed six parts, sight, taste, hearing, smell, touch, and production of the voice. Qui rerum diuuinarum [sic] haeres* Opp. Edit. Francof. 691. p. 512. 513.

[18] *For he that opens the womb of each of these, of mind, for mental apprehensions, of speech, for the activities of the voice, of the senses, to receive what is presented to it by objects, of the body, for the movements and positions proper to it, is the invisible, seminal, skillful, the Divine word. Ibid.* p. 497. [NB Nadler has '*Reise*' (journey) in Hamann's text – a typographical error for '*Reife*' (maturity), which latter I have adopted in the translation.]

[19] *It was no small audacity to show me shadows for bodies, words for deeds. Ibid.* 491.

of a self-developing human language and a self-developing human soul is thoroughly misunderstood, distorted and hazy throughout.

Just as little do I touch on the **poetic fragments on the archaeology of the history of language.**[υ] If however human language was invented with the **first word**: then perhaps the archaeologist understands by word, according to a customary oriental simplicity, some completely different **thing**. For, in line with the **Wachterian** *Concordia Naturae*[φ] and 'since the ancient inventors wanted to say **everything at once**' (p. 315) the **first word** perhaps will have been neither a **noun** nor **verb**[χ], rather at least an entire **phrase**[20] – in inverse proportion in **strength** and **intensity** to our present day aphthonic specimen essay[ψ] of III pages – 'And further let us not play with words!'[ω]

As our dear **Plato** has, according to the wisdom which has been given him, proven it as the surest prophetic word that shines in the darkness[♠], the human being then must perhaps be a creature standing above animals not in degree but in kind, in order to be worthy of its true destiny, to hold the **critical** and **archontical** office of a **political** animal, if our readers still remember that.

In criticism and politics consists therefore the whole canon of human perfection, which my friend **Herder** —

My dearest reader! my name is the Magus in the North[21] – – and I make it my Last Supper and the last duty of my life to recognize in the crowned Pythian victor my friend **Herder**,

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[20] Like the **Chinese** writings of which Boulanger writes in his *essays sur la population d'amerique*. Amsterdam 767. Tom: IV. p. 278. – *Chinese characters are not merely letters, but words, terms or phrases – or like the oldest pillars of images* ων τεχνη εδοκει η συσολη και ιχνοτης. Demetrius Phalerus *de Elocutione* Ss XIV. In order to be able to conceptualize the **most ancient** language and to transmit it for yourself, that a **language** is as **possible** without **our entire grammar** as without **tongues** and the opening of the **mouth of** the latest body-speakers of Engastrimythen etc., I simply refer to my countryman Th. Sig. Bayeri Museum Sinicum, Petropoli. 730. ['Engastrimythen' (cf. Rabelais) is presumably Hamann's designation of Herder's 'inner words'.]

[21] – *there is no point of departure more beautiful than this one:* ***my dearest brothers, my name is Macaire.*** *Oeuvres du Comte Algarotti.*
Dulce ante omnia Musae.
Traduit de L'Italien. à Berlin 772. Vol. VII. p. 390.

against whom I have fought until now with blindfolded eyes; to embrace and bless him[a] as publicly as I do solemnly — — 'He has stooped down — who will oppose him? – – His eyes are redder than wine[b], and his teeth whiter than milk – – [22]

Reader! do not fear; I am no ghost that prowls in the **darkness** or destroys by **midday**[23] nor even the shadow, now enlightened by his **friend Herr Carl Renatus H--s-e**[c], of the defunct *in genio Seculi* magnificent and high living **Royal Prussian Privy Councillor and Regius Professor of Philosophy and Eloquence at the University of Halle, etc.** No; I am nothing but the **Magus in the North** and as the Magus of the North **will** and **must** I die – – just as **innocently** as I have **become** he – – to me the sun, moon, and stars are already dark with clouds after the rain and my teeth have as many hours of leisure as the **mill-maid** of the **Preacher Solomon.**[d] The holy **Inquisition** of the **political arithmetic** — more melancholy and ingenious than an **Auto da fe** — has condemned the last **minor** child[24] of those **wise men in the East** to a furnace of iron[25], where he shall **starve** and **freeze**, because the **wood of our costly hungry canals**[e] becomes more expensive from year to year, so that all my fellow citizens, although they are no magi, must freeze in order to make this iron furnace of Egyptian domination[f] warm, let alone glowing and seven times hotter[g] than lime-ovens usually are in the North. Why should I not go after my fathers with peace and joy to the sound of trombones, trumpets, harps, fiddles, psalteries, lutes and all kinds of stringed instruments[h], on which the *beaux esprits* of this age are virtuosi, and who with the cultivation of the '**mediating** sense in the sphere of sensation from without'[i] have made themselves a greater name than the God of the Jews with the trumpets of his priests, which can indeed collapse cities but can build none[k], as our present-day Amphions[l] can – – – all through the sheer power of **music** and their musical taste[m], that hears

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[22] Gen. 49:9-12.

[23] *un Demon du Midi.*

[24] *...unafraid as a child watched over by GODS.* Horat III. Od. 4.

[25] Daniel 3:19.

grass growing: But why do I speak so much? it is the decree of the watcher[n] once decided through the **political arithmetic**, that no **Magus** more should burn, but rather, freeze and starve, even supposing that there were 7000 of his brothers in the land[o], whose number however perhaps I can not specify without the higher revelation of the **political arithmetic**, of which I may not think without the inmost affliction of my bowels, as little as a certain court-preacher could think of the divine **arithmetic**.[26]

Must not my friend **Herder**[p], in order to keep within the Academic limits, chase after the goal before him, the jewel of the prize that had been announced, must he not run as for something uncertain, fight as one who strikes at the air? Yes, he has suffered as a **fine** fighter and is rightly crowned, because he has fought according to the **rules**.[27] As a **clever** householder of an **unjust** Mammon he has nothing else but the revelations and traditions of his age at the basis of his treatise and could only build his proof on sand, patchwork, wood, hay, stubble[q] – – but perhaps: everything according to the latest architectural style of his age – Is it his fault, that in our **economic, sentimental**[28] and **mercilessly righteous** age, contrary to a few customs and prejudices of the **concealed** and **revealed** Judaism, whose influence is as wholesome as it is secret, but which is not recognized by the blind world, because it does not see it — **Arabian Tournaments** are still tolerated, as the Count **Algarotti**[29] says? (may his bones rest as comfortably as they do expensively!)[r] Must he not supply a sonnet[30], if he would satisfy a **public that craves controversy and disputes about words**?[s] — Must he not accommodate the critical and archontical weakness of an age, whose **politics** are no mere

[26] *Über die Nutzbarkeit des Predigtamts und deren Beförderung.* Berlin 772. p. 134.

[27] νομιμως II Tim. 2:5.

[28] *Sentimental.* [the French word.]

[29] *It is to the **Arabs** that we owe the custom of **public disputations**, which one could call the **tournaments** and the **jousts** of philosophy. Oeuvres du Comte Algarotti. Dulces ante omnia Musae. Traduit de l'Italien.* Berlin 772. Vol. V. p. 464.

[30] *The Academies founded by the Princes collect as it were the **sonnets** of the sciences – – and never a **book**. Ibid.* 369.

solecism[31] – nor **Gallionism**[32] but rather the **mystery** of the **most holy contradiction**, which dominates the **climate** and is **most active** in **children**[t] — in an age before whose **critical** nose the Hallean **Johann Salomo Mathanasius**[u] may pour out the full load of his undigested book-learning, corrupted by acids and gall, indeed, where great men in at least three faculties and worthy members of the Teaching- and Defence- and Nutritional-profession nourish and strengthen themselves on the cr-p[v] of **historical faith**[33] and their **healthy reason**; — in a **moral** age, that listens with pricked ears to the algebra[34] of the **Realities**, to which the **Synagogue** has already given its *Imprimatur*; — in a **highly-Christian**[w] age, where an angel of the community[x] with a **cloven foot**[y] – (water as tepid[z] as his style be in your mouth, posterity! his **name**!) disavows the spiritual priesthood and may slander the **holiest** vocation with two-fold unforgiveable lies, in comparison to which all **anacreontic farces** are genuine **morals** and all **pythanological paralogisms**[α] on the origin of language are **gold** and **precious stones** – – In order to triumph gloriously, my friend **Herder** could write as nothing else but a **satyr** for an evil and adulterous generation[β], that is neither a Non-animal nor Non-person, but rather a **Monster** with an **iron arm, an ant's body** and the countenance of **Anubis**[35] – – for a generation that denies God and hurries to become rich, and thinks to conquer heaven and earth through

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[31] – *The solecism of desiring the end without employing the means which achieve it. Id.* Vol. VII. p. 385.

[32] – *Gallio refused to take any notice at all.* Acts 18:17. The city of Susa was perplexed; meanwhile the King and his schemer, who was presumably at ably at the same time a tenant of wit and good sense, sat and drank. Esth. 3:15. [NB that the king's 'schemer' was called Haman.]

[33] From C. T. D.*** Berlin 1772. At the cost of the publisher.

[34] *All the actions of life can be reduced to so many problems of* ***maximum*** *and* ***minimum****, Algarotti* has already prophesied. Vol. V. p. 291.

[35] [35] *I will make for myself, said the Florentine, an arm of iron, the belly of an ant, the soul of a dog. That is to say, to become rich, I will endure all the work that my body can bear: I will lower myself as much as I can: I will have as much of a conscience as a dog. The last point corresponds very well with that other proverb: to get rich tomorrow, one must turn one's back on God. Traité preparatif à l'apologie pour Herodote – par Henri Estienne. L'An 1566. au mois de Novembre.* p. 41.

miscellaneous works in poetry and prose![γ] – – The angel of death and the inheritance of their full granaries calls them by name[36] – – in a **tragicomic** age, where even a Magus in Europe is not ashamed to beat his head against the wall and to wail an **elegy** in the highest tones:[37] – – *Arithmetique politique rends moi mes 5 ecus!*

Do not weep, moved reader! over the **Magus in the North**, whom you see before you with a little half-year-old **Muse**[δ], or **Grace**, on his right arm and a little three-year-old **Apollo** on his left hand – you see that no **third** is left for me to desecrate, like the gibbering giant of Mr. **Marmontel** – – Supposing therefore that the Magus in the North should starve, which however I very much doubt, under the regime of a Frederick who, like **God**, is **gracious** to the **ungrateful** and who dwells in an **inaccessible light**[ε] and under the administration of a **Mycenas**[ζ], who is not ashamed to be a friend of German **Horaces** and **Virgils** and an **advocate** of a **tax-collector**[η] – – as much as I doubt the strength and certainty[θ] of all my ideas, which perhaps mean nothing more, nothing less than the appearance of the **northern lights**[38] – – Supposing therefore, that the Magus dies today or tomorrow; then know, readers! that he dies as a **Magus** who has loved **God**, his **King** and his **Fatherland** – – and is furious over their like fate – – *NON OMNIS*[ι] – – because he leaves behind a **little man** and a **little lady** for his friend **Herder** to raise.

To him, the **worthiest** of all my **friends**, who are all not only **great, true** and **affectionate** – but also **countless** – – (go, Judas Ισκαριωτης, hang yourself and burst!) – in the **North** and **Germany** – – (for what do **Burgundians, Champagnians, Gasconians** and **foreigners** have to do with me?) – To my

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36 Luke 12:20.

37 *Imploring, if you please.*
*– – this revered **French** word*
word of energy consecrated to pleasure
word – – – – –
'the Italians' swearing is like the action of an instrument' Don Apuleius Riforius, Benedictin.

38 *– torments my heart in vain*
excites, soothes, fills it with false terrors
like a MAGUS --- Horat. II. Ep. 1.

Herder, the **worthiest** of all my friends in the North and in Germany I bequeath my **joy** and my **crown**[39] yes! thus truly as **Magus, Father** and **Friend** I die! the **true** blood of my heart! He may give you **bread** and **wine**[40] — — but to me no **monument** in **stone**. *EXEGI*.[41K]

[39] Phil 4.1.
[40] Lament. Jer. 2.12.
[41] Hor.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

My notes for this essay are divided into three sections for the convenience of the reader. The first section contains the 'ideas' (N III 35-41:12), the second the 'doubts' (N III 41:13-48:23), the third Hamann's ironic eulogy of Herder (N III 48:24-53).

Ideas

[a] Büchsel suggests as a further relevant passage from this ode, 'Poetry lies, and its tales seduce us. ... But I am not coarse and happily give the victor the guilty prize ... But where a man receives something fine from a man we think it is not as great a happiness as this: when neighbour loves neighbour ...' (HHE 4, 208). Perhaps even more to the point are the following: 'Forgive me if... I uttered a loud scream, yet to please the victor, I am not too rude to retract it.' Hamann will do precisely this in the third section of the essay. 'But my heart will not admit that I have dragged the name of Neoptolemus through the dirt with offensive words. But to cover the same ground three or four times [as Hamann is doing] is poverty of thought.'

[b] This sentence was handwritten; it was Hamann's plan to have Nicolai publish *PID* – a plan which did not succeed. (Nicolai was an insider in the Berlin circle, and moreover, Herder reviewed for him; HHE 4, 209.)

[c] These cries of Sophocles' Philoctetes were used as an illustration by Herder in the opening of his *Preisschrift*, HP 253.

[d] The introduction of this character of Aristophanes' was Hamann's own addition; a characteristic lowering of tone.

[e] Herder had begun his essay with the claim that 'Even as an animal the human being had language' (HP 253), in giving expression to emotion, the cries and whimpers of Philoctetes were an example; much of the early section of the *Preisschrift* is devoted to the argument of this fundamental relationship between emotion and language, e.g. 'These sighs, these sounds are language. There is therefore a language of emotion [*Empfindung*], which is an immediate law of nature' (HP 254). Hamann uses Aristotle to make the important distinction between 'voice', as vocal self-expression, and 'language' as that which has meaning. Herder did go on to concede that perhaps these natural sounds are not the actual root of language, 'but the sap that that enliven the roots of language' (HP 256).

[f] The distinction between different in degree and different in kind is likewise a feature of Herder's argument, found in the second section of the first part; the human being differs from animals in kind, not degree (HP 270-271).

[g] Herder made frequent use of the phrase, '*empfindsame Maschiene*', as well as the mechanistic theories current in Enlightenment physiology, e.g. HP 268; as Büchsel remarks (HHE 4, 214, note 2). The context for Herder's use is the issue of emotion and language: 'If we wish to call these immediate sounds of emotion language, then I find the origin of language quite natural. It is not merely not superhuman, but rather clearly animalian: **the natural law of a sensitive machine.**' (HP 263). Herder does not give this as his own

account, however. Note also that Herder describes the animal and its 'sphere' as a 'living machine'. This is precisely a point of contrast with the human being. If Büchsel means to suggest that Herder unwittingly proposes a mechanistic view of humanity, which Hamann opposes, I suspect it is rather the other way around; Herder denies an aspect of 'mechanism' in humanity which he affirms in animals while Hamann in this passage wishes to suggests a greater continuity.

h Cf. e.g. HP 268 for Herder's use of this term in describing and distinguishing humans and animals.

i The reference here is to Aristotle's *Hist. animal.* I.1.; some animals live a societal life, others solitary; human beings however vacillate between the two.

j κρισεως and αρχης (cf. Hamann's note 3) Hamann renders – interprets – as *'richterlichen und obrigkeitlichen'*; later as *'kritisch und archontisch'*. Note however that Hamann rather universalizes this description as the character of humans generally, not Greek citizens. This first formulation (*richterlich, obrigkeitlich*) doubtless owes something to C. T. Damm (who makes an appearance in this essay, 45:25ff.); who in writing of the 'children of God' in Gen. 6.1f described them as those who possessed much courage and understanding but also *'richterliche und obrigkeitliche Würden'* (HHE 4, 215 note 3). I am translating κρισεως as 'criticism'; somewhat misleading perhaps as a rendition of Aristotle, but designed to harmonize with Hamann's evident interpretation, and to make his allusions clearer in what follows.

k This, clearly ironic if not bitter, is the first hint of the political protests to come.

l Ps. 22.7.

m Herder writes in the *Preisschrift*: 'It is the single positive power of thought, that combined with a certain organization of the body in human beings is called reason, as it is called capabilities [*Kunstfähigkeit*] in animals: it is called freedom in the former, and instinct in animals. The difference is not in degrees, or in a surplus [*Zugabe*] of powers, but rather in a quite different direction and development of all powers.' (HP 272.) The 'it' in question is the disposition of the human being — essentially, reason, call it what you will, so long as you do not think of it as an isolated faculty or power. 'It is the entire direction of all human powers; the entire economy of his sensuous and knowing, his knowing and willing nature.' (HP 272.) The alleged lack of instinct in human beings, part of the contrast between humans and animals in the first citation, plays an important role in Herder's argument.

n Universal healthy reason; Büchsel is of the opinion that while Herder does not use the term itself, his understanding of language and knowledge does not depart from the realm characterized by this concept (HHE 4, 218, note 3).

o Upbringing and invention are key moments in Herder's account of the origin of language; unlike Aristotle and the 'aristotelian' Hamann, he denies the importance of the human capacity for imitation: (*'Kein Principium der Nachahmung in der Seele'* [H 279]) though it does play a role in his account; particularly when he wishes to distinguish between 'imitation' and the mere 'aping' of unreflective animals. The distinguishing characteristic is reflexion, *'Besonnenheit'*. Upbringing as an aspect of the institution and continuation of language is also relativized; its importance is undoubted in the continuation of language (cf. the second natural law in the second part, HP 332ff., especially 334-5) but 'Parents never teach their children language

without the latter themselves inventing it' (HP 281). The respective roles and weights Hamann wants to give these aspects is indicated in the section of 'doubts', especially 39:7-19, 39:25-40:2, 40:16-25 and 41:4-12. His verdict on invention is given in the last passage (see also note η).

p Consciousness, attentiveness [*Aufmerksamkeit*] and abstraction are all states of mind contained in Herder's portrait of the invention of language. Cf. especially HP 276-7. Moral conscience is Hamann's own addition, linked with his introduction into the debate of political matters, 'freedom' not merely from instincts but also in a socio-political sphere, etc. Perhaps 'energies' is meant to evoke ideas of Aristotle.

q By Herder: HP 267ff.; while the breadth or extension of the human perspective is discussed in HP 268ff.

r '*Stamina*' and '*menstrua*'. Stamina, stamen in plants corresponding to semen in animals. *Menstruum* is an alchemical term for a dissolving fluid (used also in Jonson's *The Alchemist*!) J. H. Zedler's eighteenth-century *Großen Vollständigen Universallexikon* describes Menstruum as '*ein Auflöse- oder Scheide-Safft*' (cited HHE 4, 223, note 4). Hamann may well be exploiting the pun contained in the word '*scheiden*' – as a verb, to separate or to analyse, isolate (in the chemical sense); as a noun, it can mean the vagina. Büchsel reports, without comment or further enlightenment, that there are 'universal' and 'particular' menstrua. Presumably however this fuels the epistemological metaphor. One might object that 'menstruation' has too specific a physiological referent to be a suitable translation for 'Menstrua' as an alchemical technical term; I think nevertheless the 'menstrual', bodily overtones are indispensable to this passage.

s '*Kritische und archontische*'; no longer '*richterlich*' and '*obrigkeitlich*', but still referring to Aristotle's κρισεως and αρχης.

t Herder makes frequent use of analogies with the animal kingdom; and uses the word 'analogy' frequently in his proofs (cf. HP 318, 356).

u Büchsel provides a reference for the idea of 'ladder', which may or may not be relevant: Herder in his *Preisschrift* rejects the idea of reason being a discrete power like the fourth step of a ladder after the first three (HHE 4, 224, note 1).

v *Anagogisch*. According to Büchsel, drawing on the work of Gründer, it is in ancient teaching one of the four levels of interpretation of a writing. It indicates a 'salvation-historical-eschatological understanding' (HHE 4, 224, note 1).

w At the end of the first section of the first part of the *Preisschrift*, Herder argues that there must be some 'concealed power' in humanity to make up for its comparative weakness of instincts and drives. In the beginning of the second section, Herder rejected the idea that he intends some '*sprachschaffende Fähigkeit*' like some arbitrary *qualitas occulta* (HP 270); but our human nature cannot simply consist in these 'gaps and lacks', otherwise nature would be the 'harshest stepmother' to us. There must be something that compensates [*Schadloshaltung*] for our comparative lack of instincts and direction. Herder will find it in our reason, our capacity for thought (*vid. supra*, translator's note m, where the description of this element is cited.) In this paragraph therefore Hamann rejects not only Herder's stress on our discontinuity with animals, but also the confidence that what fills in the 'gaps and lacks' of our nature is something we can easily know; in this he invokes the support, ironically, of Voltaire (Hamann's note 8.) Büchsel

observes that Herder is attempting to be properly 'scientific' [*wissenschaftlich*] in rejecting the notion of occult qualities and falling in line with a more 'mechanistic' approach, along the lines of Kepler, Newton, Galileo (HHE 4, 225, note 3). But note also that Herder claims that for the higher hypothesis every word must be a *qualitas occulta* (HP 295). This fact surely lies in the background, particularly given the irony of Voltaire's suggestion of a proof for the existence of God lying therein.

x Cf. *AN*, N II, 198:1.

y *Merkmale*; a feature in Herder's process of the creating of language. The first property or attribute of a thing or phenomenon noticed and given a 'marker' [*Merkmal*] by the human being was the beginning of language. Hamann's note 9 refers to *An Enquiry into the Human Mind on the Principle of Common Sense*, Edinburgh 1765 – 'They are signs, by which we know and distinguish things without us.'

z Mt. 19.6.

α All are unitarian heretics; i.e. metaschematically those who reject a 'trinity' in humanity and want to isolate a single distinguishing factor in the self.

β This adoption of the Aristotelian term is part of Hamann's extended opposition of the 'Platonist' (Herder) and the Aristotelian, himself. The 'single positive power' is Herder's phrase (HP 272, *et passim*) and refers to reflexion.

γ Cf. Eph. 5.32. I cannot fully agree with Büchsel's understanding: that one should understand from the biblical reference that as the husband is the head of the wife, the 'inner' person is set above the 'outer'. This does not seem to accord with Hamann's picture of humanity; cf. among other passages in this essay 39:7ff., or the treatment of epistemology in *MPR*. Further, it seems to overlook a certain irony, facetiousness or even sarcasm in the way Hamann uses the idea that the 'inner' and 'outer' person are somewhat opposed and in need of a mysterious reconciliation and union.

δ I.e. as opposed to Herder's 'heretical' 'unitarian' approach. 'Recognition' of an 'attribute/marker' is of course part of the Herderian origin of language (cf. e.g. HP 277ff.).

ε The idea of the 'king', and the classical citations Hamann provides, may seem to support Büchsel's understanding of the 'inner' as being set above the 'outer' person (*vid. supra*, note γ). Several responses can be made; it seems possible to me firstly that, in this essay in which a number of attacks will be made on the King, Frederick the Great, Hamann wished to make clear what was intended by 'king' in this parable. Secondly, it seems clear that Hamann does wish to portray an element of responsibility, administration or even 'jurisdiction' in ourselves, cf. his note 11; but this insight is not identical to a division of 'inner' and 'outer' (a division I think is ironic, on Hamann's lips) and the creating of a hierarchy within one's being.

ζ This paragraph, 40:26-41:3, is a pastiche of Herder's style. 'Peripatetic' perhaps is meant to recall Aristotle.

η With a deft and subtle sentence, Hamann exposes Herder's account of the human 'invention' of language as the Platonic understanding of knowledge as recognition, warmed-up and served as new.

Doubts

[a] A play on a phrase of Herder's, after dealing with the question of the human capacity for reason (HP 276).

[b] The first open accusation of Herder as 'Platonic'.

[c] As Herder claimed to have done at the conclusion of both parts of his essay (HP 318, 356-7).

[d] Cf. in the *Preisschrift*, 'He [the human being] demonstrates reflexion when, from the whole floating dream of images that steal past his senses, he gathers in a moment of waking, deliberately dwells on one image, gives it bright calm attention, and distinguishes attributes that are this object and no other.' (HP 276f.) 'Clear and accurate' are also qualities of human as opposed to animal attentiveness (HP 267ff.).

[e] Cf., immediately preceding the above citation, 'The human being demonstrates reflexion, when the power of the soul works freely so that from the entire ocean of sensations [*Empfindungen*] that rush through the senses...' (HP 276). Herder's accusation against Süßmilch and the 'higher hypothesis' is circularity: 'Without language, the human being does not have reason, and without reason, language.' (HP 281.) Note finally also the introduction of the theme of Genesis; a topic of correspondence between Herder and Hamann, which Herder wants to understand 'orientally' [*'morgenländisch'*] and 'poetically' (HP 289). Moreover, Herder has written his own 'Genesis' which unwittingly poses nature and/or humanity as a rival to God. Cf. 45:40 and the satire in 46:5ff. The 'circularity' is what Herder attributes to Süßmilch (HP 280-1 *et passim*); hidden and refined nonsense comes from HP 355; the references to arbitrariness etc. derive from HP 271.

[f] Büchsel suggests a reference to Ex. 21.25.

[g] From this point to 43:8, Hamann is recounting features of Herder's argument, often in direct quotation, though sometimes in an accurate paraphrase. The page references are my updatings of Hamann's.

[h] *Sinne.*

[i] *Besonnenheit.*

[j] *Organon.*

[k] HP 276. 'Apperception' is the Leibnizian term; Hamann is accusing Herder of unwittingly being a Leibnizian as he is a Platonist. The citation at the end of this paragraph, 11-13, is a literal one; though in Herder the *eureka* precedes the cited lines (HP 271).

[l] J. J. Spalding (1714-1804), 'high-priest' in Berlin (*Oberkonsistorialrat*, actually); published (anonymously) *Über die Nutzbarkeit des Predigtamtes und deren Beförderung*. He describes the inept sermon on 'divine arithmetic', i.e. the Trinity, on page 134. (Cf. HHE 4, 237, note 1.)

[m] Hamann had his salary reduced by five Thaler in a political economy drive; *Arithmétique politique* is the name of one of Hamann's political satires, N II 275ff.

[n] *Geist*; i.e. 'poor in spirit', as in the Beatitudes, but also, punningly, intellectually impoverished.

[o] 'The beast... once was and is not.' Rev. 17.8.

[p] Cf. HP 285-6: '...why no animal can invent language, no God may... and the human being as human being can and must invent language.'

[q] Büchsel suggests *'homo sum'* or *'ecce homo'* (HHE 4, 239, note 3), or a play on Marcus Antonius, *De se ipso ad se ipsum* (HHE 4, 239, note 2).

r Frederick the Great; cf. the references to his poem to his cook, (20:8 and 55:3), in which he appears as 'the Emperor of Peking'. According to Büchsel, other such conceits of chinoiserie were frequent with Frederick (HHE 4, 239, note 4).

s *Hauspostill* is one of Luther's writings.

t Cf. Hamann's conclusion to his review of Herder: 'We hope that one of our fellow citizens, if he is not entirely lost in his fatherland, will blow a few sparks from his little kitchen hearth into a flame, in order to warm up his **doubts** and **oracles** on the content and direction of the academic question and its resolution.' (N III, 19:24-28).

u *Bettelstolz* –referring to the *orgueilleuse pauvreté* (arrogant poverty) of the citation in Hamann's note 14.

v Frederick republished Bayle's dictionary in 1765. Is 'high-minded' a sarcastic allusion to the fact that Bayle published material such as that contained under 'Lamia' (cf. translator's note y, *KRC*).

w The Chinese speak of a hare in the moon rather than a man; but what specifically this has to do with Confucius, and why he became excited, I am at a loss to explain. Büchsel is no better informed (HHE 4, 240, note 8).

x *Rothwelschen*.

y Despite this rejection, Hamann does take up fake Chinese authorship (parodistically) in *Selbstgespräch eines Autors*, (N III, 67ff.).

z 'Freely working positive powers' is from the *Preisschrift*, cf. HP 273, 276 *et passim*; these powers, which distinguish humans from animals, must be found in the capacity for reflexion.

α Frederick the Great; whom Hamann calls '*Etre Suprème de la Terre*' (N III, 57:8) or '*Gott der Erde*' (N III, 79:4) (HHE 4, 241, note 15).

β Cf. in the *Preisschrift* the proper conception of reason is 'the complete determination of his thinking power in relation to his senses and drives.' (HP 273.) In Hamann's parody, in addition to the obvious political reference, there are also overtones of Wolff's anthropological division of humanity into 'higher' and 'lower' faculties. Thus, Hamann exposes Herder's unwitting hierarchy of the self – the senses are the 'lower powers', as in Wolff.

γ Herder apologizes for spending so much time on the question of reason and the capacity for reason; it was necessary 'since this aspect of psychology in recent times has been devastated' due to the activities of French philosophers and their confusion over human and animal nature; and German philosophers organize these concepts with more regard for their systems and their viewpoints than for the things themselves (HP 276).

δ *Neugebacken und flückjung*.

ε Positive powers, orientation, moderation of powers etc. are all Herder's description of what distinguishes humanity from animals. Most can be found around HP 273. This passage to line 25 uses the vocabulary and phrases of Herder's *Preisschrift* to prove Hamann's anti-Herderian point. References are too abundant to provide in detail, for these ideas are salient throughout the essay; nevertheless, I give a few as specimens or central appearances of a term or idea. For 'instinct', cf. HP 266-270; 'positive power to think', cf. HP 271, 274; 'innate' and 'immediately natural', cf. HP 269; 'directed to a point' cf. HP 273; 'marker' cf. HP 272f; 'with the first word the entire language was invented' cf. HP 277, 278; 'law of eternal progression' cf. the first 'natural law' in the second section, HP 319ff; 'web... spider, honey-

comb... bee' cf HP 267, 271; 'which is his own', 'that which is natural' cf. HP 269, 270, especially 276.

ζ Cf. Acts 17.18. A bird who picks up seeds; therefore 'one who picks up scraps of knowledge, an idle babbler' (Liddell and Scott). Here it is used for Christian Tobias Damm (1699-1778) ('C. T. D***'), author of *Vom historischen Glauben* (HHE 4, 243, note 10). (Nadler at 45:30 prints 'L.T.D***', but this is surely an error.) Presumably the hot coals raining on his head are the coals heaped on the head of one's enemies when one does good to them, Rom. 12.20, Pr. 25.22; from which we can deduce that Damm must be an enemy of heaven. I do not know if Damm was bald, however; though Büchsel suggests it is a reference to Damm's (damning) treatment of the story of Elijah punishing children (by having them devoured by bears) for calling him 'baldhead' (HHE 4, 244, note 11).

η 'Tolerant' Olympia being Berlin, Frederick's court; on the 'tolerance', both sexual and religious (but not political!) of the monarch, *vid. KRC*. The image of the 'shield' comes in Damm's *Vom historischen Glauben* – 'the shield of superstition' (HHE 4, 244, note 12). The undying citizen is probably Elijah, who did not die but ascended; he and Elisha are harshly dealt with by Damm, according to Büchsel. Büchsel suggests that 'Karpac' is a distortion of Krith and Zarpath (Zarepath, where Elijah was fed by the widow). 'Childish' perhaps because this was Damm's characterization of believers and the miracle narratives in the Old Testament.

θ Cf. Mk. 13.14.

ι The castration of Uranos by his son. The Galli ('gallian') were the eunuch priests of Cybele. Cf. translator's note to *AN*, N II, 208:18, note ii.

κ Cf. above, note e [Doubts], on 'Genesis' and 'oriental'.

λ From Voltaire, also cited in 52:5. These lines are directed to St. Austin, in his singing contest with St. Denis, which a group of French saints (the Academy) has instituted. In this context, of course, the jibe about the 'Academy' is directed at Herder and his success with Hamann's enemies (HHE 4, 247, note 29).

μ An extended parody of Herderian and biblical ideas, language and terms; most of which should be familiar to the reader by now. A phrase of Damm's appears as well: as long as '*scriptum est*' remains an impenetrable shield of superstition, so that all rational objections are resisted without any further investigation, and the weapon stretches before everyone – so long will it be something abominable (HHE 4, 247, note 3a).

ν Hamann used the Hebrew word; Hebrew, as it were, for 'eureka!'. Cf. Herder's *Preisschrift*: 'Let us cry to him [i.e. the inventor of language] eureka!' (HP 277). Re: Hamann's note 16: since he clearly had strong reasons for quoting this in French I have left it untranslated; presumably, as Büchsel suggests, 'discours' relates to the Academy; HHE 4, 250. Luther's translation, in that case, would not satisfy: '*Allein schaue das: Ich habe gefunden, daß Gott den Menschen hat aufrichtig gemacht; aber sie suchen viele Künste.*'

ξ The *septem artes liberales*, according to Büchsel (HHE 4, 250, note 22). She also suggests, 'The metaphor [Koran] aims at the legalistic, pseudoreligious claims to validity of science.' (HHE 4, 250, note 21). I suspect, more directly, it refers to a passage in the *Preisschrift* (HP 356) where he compares the arguments of the 'higher hypothesis' with the circular claims of the Koran to divine or divinely-inspired authorship. Religious scepticism or humanism,

then, no less than religious belief is prey to dogmatism and absolutism; and is no more free of circularity in its foundations.

ο Cf. Mt. 16.18.

π Cf. HP 322: 'They [bees] are single points, shining sparks from the light of God's perfection'. It is interesting that 'system' has replaced 'God' in Hamann's reworking. Büchsel calls our attention to the Leibnizean overtones of his thinking – Herder himself called Leibniz 'Platonic' (HHE 4, 252, note 4).

ρ Herder writes, 'In more than one language, word and reason, concept and word, language and cause have the same name, and this synonymy contains its entire genetic origin. With the Orientals there was the most customary simplicity [*Idiotismus*] of calling the **recognition** [*Anerkennung*] of a matter its **naming**; for in the ground of the soul both activities are one.' (HP 286). Cf. the 'recognition' of 45:8, also 48:8 below. The 'Synonymy' that Hamann claims to find as Herder's 'single point' is, I think, the equation of language and reason, as the word *'logos'* in Greek permits.

σ Schwedenborg, whom Herder mentions at HP 311.

ς A paraphrase of Herder, though Herder had *'Dringnis'* and not *nisu* (HP 321). 'Maturity' translates *'Reife'* – *'Reise'* is printed in Nadler, but I have taken it as an error. Hamann's note 18 points out that while Herder and Philo use the same metaphor of birth for the generation of language (Herder's 'embryo', Philo's 'womb'), Philo nevertheless makes the point that the 'father' is the 'seminal' Word — God. This hints at a synonymy of Hamann's own – *logos* not as meaning both word and reason, but containing a christological reference as well as meaning 'word'. The context of the third citation from Philo, note 19, is almost more significant than the citation itself. It is the mind speaking, which has migrated from the body and the senses.

τ An extended parody of Herder, who writes 'I could not possibly...', 'to appear in a certain light', 'in which he shall not appear here'; and that in the higher hypothesis, the nature of a self-developing human language and a self-developing human soul is thoroughly misconceived (HP 328). 'Hazy' is taken from HP 357.

υ Cf. Herder's 'oriental information (which I consider here only as a poetic fragment towards an archaeology of the history of peoples)...' (HP 346, 347).

φ J. G. Wächter, *Naturae et Scripturae Concordia*, 1752. Büchsel cites, 'So the circle, which originally was a sign for the sun, was carried over into the characterization of God, the heavens, eternity...' (HHE 4, 255, note 20). She cites it without exegesis or explanation; it is presumably taken from N VI, 402, where this is cited with a quite different purpose: to support an (untenable, to my mind) thesis of Nadler's concerning the placement of the *'Stellenlose Blatt'* (N III, 206). I do not think it has any relevance here. Cf. also *AN*, N II, 199:6f., Hamann's note 9 and translator's note y.

χ Herder debates this issue, HP 290ff; cf. also HP 313 and 329.

ψ *'Chrie'* (cf. N VI, 76); Büchsel informs us that Aphtonius was the author of a textbook on rhetoric (HHE 4, 255, note 25).

ω As Herder exclaims, HP 276.

♠ Büchsel cites 2 Pet 1.19 (HHE 4, 256, note 1); but cf. also Jn 1.5.

Eulogy

a Herder writes to Hamann, 1st August 1772, that he hopes the old Ritter Rosenkreuz (Knight of the Rose-Cross) will once sing palinodes, embrace and bless rather than curse (ZH 3, 377; 15:3-4).

b From the blessing of Jacob on Judah, Gen 49.9 and 12; Büchsel suggests this may contain a reference to Herder's eye troubles (HHE 4, 257, note 9).

c Herder was engaged in a feud with C. A. Klotz, author of the satirical writing *Genius Saeculi* (cf. 49:9) and about whom Herr Carl Renatus Hausen wrote: *Leben und Charakter des Herrn Chr. A. Klotz, königlich preußischen geheimden Rathes und ordentlichen Professors der Weltweisheit und Beredsamkeit auf der Universität Halle etc.* (cf. 49:9-12). Klotz accused Herder of being Hamannian (HHE 4, 257-8).

d Eccles. 12.2f. (HHE 4, 258, note 6).

e Frederick's canal-building projects in East Prussia required heavy taxation, in a time when the population suffered not merely from the losses and damage of the Seven Years' War, but also from a near famine.

f The biblical theme is of the Israelites in Egypt. Büchsel cites in particular Dt 4.20, '...Yahweh has taken you, and brought you out from the furnace of iron, from Egypt...' (HHE 4, 259, note 11).

g The burning, fiery furnace of Dan 3.

h Dan 3; the musical procession commanded for the worship of the idol, mentioned in vv. 5, 7.

i *Schönen Geister.*

j In the third section of the first part of the *Preisschrift* is contained a discussion on the sense of hearing, which is described in six points as the 'mediator of the human senses' (HP 299-302). Point 1) is 'Hearing is the mediator of the human sense to the sphere of sensation from without.' (*'Das Gehör ist der mittlere der menschlichen Sinne, an* ***Sphäre der Empfindbarkeit von außen****'.*) (HP 299.) Hamann's phrase is *'****mittleren*** *Sinnes in der Sphäre der Empfindbarkeit von außen"'.*

k The fall of Jericho (Jos. 6) compared to Frederick's post-war reconstruction projects, which included not only the building of canals but also the rebuilding of cities.

l Amphion, son of Zeus and the ill-fated Antiope, who with his brother Zethus ruled Thebes and built its walls; the stones were drawn into place by the power of music, that is, Amphion's skill and playing the harp (*Oxford Companion to Classical Literature*, 40-41). Büchsel cites a use of this theme by Frederick in January of 1772 in an address to the Academy; this story of the building of the wall of Thebes is demythologized as meaning that the arts civilize savages and help to found society (HHE 4, 260, note 19).

m Frederick was and is still well-known as a lover of music and an amateur musician himself.

n Dan 4.13ff.

o 1 Kgs 19.18.

p Here begins a cento of biblical references, in particular Pauline phrases, such as I Cor 9.26, Phil 3.12 for the theme of running the race; and 2 Tim 2.5 for the rules of the contest.

q 1 Cor 3.12 (HHE 4, 261, note 6).

r Another reference to Algarotti's monument; cf. also N III 21:21 and its note c; 23:17 and its note t; 33:14ff.; and, in this essay, 53:4-5.

s Luther's translation of 1 Tim 6.4., *'die Seuche der Fragen und Wortkriege'* in my revised edition (1929) was originally, according to Büchsel, *'seuchtig in Fragen und Wortkriegen'* (HHE 4, 262, note 14). Hamann has *'ein an Fragen und Wortkriegen seuchtiges Publicum'*.

t Büchsel suggests that this refers to the children in the marketplace of Mt 11.16-19 (HHE 4, 263, note 21).

u Refers to a leading figure in Enlightenment theology, Johann Salomo Semler, professor of theology in Halle. 'Mathanasius' is taken from a piece by Hyazinthe Cordonnier which satirizes contemporary scientific pedantry (HHE 4, 264, note 23).

v *Str-nt* [*Strunt*].

w *allerchristlichen* – which Büchsel takes as a reference to the title of the French king, *'christianissimus'* (HHE 4, 265, note 30).

x Rev 2.1.

y *Gespaltenem Fuß* – which Büchsel rightly understands as a pun on the name 'Spalding'; cf. 43:14f and translator's note l [Doubts]; also 50:8, 'divine arithmetic'. He 'disavowed the spiritual priesthood' in the work already cited (note l) in denying a mediating role for the priesthood, claiming simply to be 'teachers of wisdom and virtue'. Full citation in HHE 4, 265, note 34.

z Rev 3.16.

α 'Construction perhaps à la Rabelais', writes Büchsel, (HHE 4, 265, note 37). πυθανομαι is to ask, inquire or to learn, understand. The signified is Herder's *Preisschrift* – part of this eulogy's ironic 'defence' of it and its author.

β Nadler (211) suggests satyr is a misprint of 'satire' – an unimpressive suggestion. Büchsel retains 'satyr', and, asking for the *tertium comparationis*, thinks of the Symposium: Alcibiades' comparison of Socrates to the figure of Silenus on the outside, which conceals a god on the inside (HHE 4, 266, note 39). Understanding the charge of acting as a satyr to an evil and adulterous generation (Mt 12.39) seems unproblematic to me; as a figure of unbridled and undisciplined lusts, a satyr for an adulterous generation is one who panders to a worst traits of the populace, who encourages them in their worst and favourite vices, and is ideally suited to do so. Moreover, a satyr (like Herder's 'androgyne') is both a non-animal and a non-person (cf. line 22).

γ Noting the dual reference of *'Werke'* – both 'literary works' and 'good works' – Büchsel suggests the most likely referent is Voltaire with his 54 volumes of poetry and prose, 'and his eminent talent for making money' (HHE 4, 266, note 44).

δ The references are to his two children.

ε Mt 5.44f and 1 Tim 6.16 (HHE 4, 267-8, notes 5 and 6).

ζ Büchsel suggests Guichard; cf. note cc to *KRC*.

η Hamann himself.

θ 'Strength and certainty' is another reference to the *Preisschrift*; these adjectives are used to describe the instincts (cf. e.g. HP 266).

ι 'These words from Horace, 3 Bk Od 30:6 Algarotti had put on his monument in Pisa.' Gildemeister, cited HHE 4, 268, note 10.

κ From Horace, 3 Bk Od. 30:1: *'Exegi monumentum...'* ('I have finished a monument.') The Magus has erected a monument like Algarotti's to Herder.

Essay of a Sibyl on Marriage

If I come as a spirit to you,
Do not be frightened of me.[a]

1775

– – When the first is torn away, another does not fail
Golden too, and the spray bears a leaf of the same metal
So search with your eyes aloft and when it is found
Grab[b] *it with your hand* – – – – –[c]

Do not, blissful bridal pair! stop up your ears, open for the magical arts of harmony[1], but hear the voice of a sibyl, who can prophesy splendidly. May my teaching be wondrous, like love, and mysterious, like marriage!

I see in your tender, intimate glances the little pensive god of love[d], that took counsel with himself over the masterpiece of his work, whom he leads out and involves in all projects, conquests, and blind adventures and which culminates in this: **Let us make human beings, an image, which is like us** [e] –

A world of trifles, which however are not such in the eyes of the lovers, always belongs to love from the beginning, before it comes to the execution of the **divine idea**[f], which seems to advise it as little as the first original attempt of this kind.[g]

The human being is preeminently a GOD of the earth, through its commission[h] to be creator, self-maintainer and ever-multiplier[i] of its race. Indeed this **divinity** is assimilated into the entire visible economy, and a development of the blessing pronounced at the beginning; yet none of our fellow-creatures is made for this purpose, for a deliberate and voluntary decision or a **covenant** and **social contract**:[j] just as none is more capable of and more in need of a greater **education** than the human.[k]

So where does it come from, our shame of that[2] similarity to GOD as of a theft or robbery? Is not this shame a secret blemish of our nature, and at the same time a mute reproach of its majestic, only-wise and highly-praised Creator? –

It is not an innate, universal instinct, as can be seen from the examples of **children**, **savages** and the cynical school;[l] rather, an inherited custom, and all customs and habits are meaningful signs and markers instituted for the preservation of documented events and the propagation of conventional beliefs.

Marriage is therefore a covenant constructed by the power of calm counsel, and grounded in reason[m] and fidelity. Therefore it is clever and honest 'for the sake of the present distress'[3] not even to think of such a **counsel** and **covenant**.[n]

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1 *Ps. 58.56. [sic; cf. 58.4-5]
2 *Phil. 2.6.
3 *1 Cor 7.26.

Least of all is it worth the effort in a state where the Codex[o] is a gilt **Colossus**[4], sixty ells high and six ells wide, and the **Sanction** of all laws a glowing **furnace**, seven times hotter for souls of old stubble and grain[p], in whom there is no guile.[5]

Because the state of marriage is the precious foundation and cornerstone of the whole of society[q], the misanthropic spirit of our age reveals itself the most powerfully in the laws of marriage.[6r] But should there be compassion on the side of the lawgiver[7], to suit the stubbornness of the human heart, to privilege open sin and vice: then it is the highest justice on the side of the judge of the world to hand over the **violators** of his **majesty** to a paraphysical abuse of their own bodies.[8s] —

There would perhaps! be nothing more beneficial for the human race and bourgeois society than to strive for that **ideal** of **holiness** for the state of marriage that the great Fulfiller of the Mosaic Law and the Prophets[t] restored, and preached on that mount of beatitude as an **imperial law** of heaven and his new earth: '**Whoever looks at a woman**[9] **and lusts after her, – and whoever separates from his wife – and whoever woos a divorced woman, are adulterers**' – Moses had specifically '**commanded us to stone such**[10]' and his law could not be dissolved, as are the schemes[u] of our present morals and their vain preachers, but must be fulfilled, as a sure prophetic word.[11] —

'**The mystery is great**![12] – God's image and honour, the man, and his honour, the woman' – that is: the man is related to GOD as the wife to the man, and where these **three** are **one**,

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4 *Dan. 3.1, 19.

5 *Jn 1.47.

6 **The age is fertile in evil – **Marriage***
*it first defiled, then the **people** and the **home**:*
And drawn from this source, ruin
*has flooded the **people** of the **fatherland**.*
Hor. III. Od. 6. [emphases Hamann's].

7 *Mt. 19.7. [sic; cf. Mt. 19.8.]

8 Rom 1.26. *Thess 1.26. [sic.]

9 Mt. 5.28, 32.

10 Jn. 8.5, 10.34, 35, Mt. 5.17.

11 2 Pet. 1.19.

12 Eph. 5.32. I Cor. 11.7.

the 'woman will be blessed with the conception of children[13], and the man will be the healer of the body.'

[14]All the **mysteries** of **Hymen**[v] therefore are dark dreams that are related to that **deep sleep** in which the first **woman** came into the world[w], as an eloquent archetype for the **mother of all the living**. – –

But my essay shall not imitate those which that North-Briton[15x] with the haunted number[16y] has written on my sex, and a learned, witty queer fish of his fatherland[17z] has written on my topic. I am also a vestal virgin as little as I want to be a cousin **Baubo**[18α], neither *á la Grecourt*[β] nor *á l'enseigne de* Barby.[γ] —

What is all the fruitfulness of the breast and the womb of your All-mother[19], with the enjoyment of her fruits and her souls born of and damned to dust! What is the hollow joy[20] of your tastes and the garish desire of your wits? – Disguised sadness and despair[21], and all your **endeavour** a booty of the black, rich[δ] god of Hell, as the clever fable of **Ceres** and her daughter tells.

Perhaps you would care to listen, blissful bridal pair! to a short, mythical fairy-tale of my own case, and how I am indebted to **one among thousands**[ε], **of dovelike simplicity and serpentine cunning**[ζ], **the mysterious wisdom**[η] of a sibyl — His first device was to make himself detestable in my eyes, and in this he succeeded so well that he and his entire sex soon were contemptible and disgusting to me. How I was punished for my ungrateful vanity and insolent schadenfreude, becoming precocious at the expense of my seducer, as the mirror of his sincerity threw back an answering gleam from my own heart,

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13 1 Tim. 2.15. Eph. 5.23.

14 *As the orgies, the mysteries of nature are not accomplished by day.* Clem. Alex. *Paedag.* II. p. 194. ['14' does not actually appear in the text.]

15 Wilke.

16 No. 45.

17 *On Marriage.*

18 Ovid *Metam.* – *Baubo practised her arts, and if in all seriousness, she did not allure, then she sought at least to cheer her up with entertaining deception – with divine modesty she banished her eyes, and feasted on an unheard of consolation.* Arnobius *adu. gentes* Lib. V. p. 174-5.

19 Horat. Lib. I. Ep. 2.

20 Eccles. 2.2.

21 Jn. 16.20-22. 2 Cor. 7.10. Lk. 6.25. 2 Pet. 1.16.

and I began to recognize in this the hemisphere of my sex *in naturalibus*. Through this tongue of fire of self-knowledge, all pretty epithets became as black as coal, and extinguished like **colours** by the sponge of night. — Convinced that a rational **animal**, by analogy with the rest of the animal kingdom, should by rights wear the **rough side** of its coat on the outside, I by this time held all noble, languishing, charmed lovers for werewolves, crawling antagonists and spiritual monsters, that carry milk and honey on the tip of their tongue, but poison and gall in the store-houses of their hearts.[22]

This catastrophe of my entire way of thinking became the **foundation** of a **sympathy** that was swiftly elevated to **identity** with its object. All the strengths of a masculine soul seemed to pass over into mine, and meanwhile through the **reciprocal action** of my **passion** his soul seemed to breathe nothing but childlike and womanly voluptuousness. —

Dead and unfruitful **prosperity**, sanctimonious Pharisees of our age! Your moralistic and bourgeois prejudices, and the high **taste** or trifles of its merits is nothing but **caviar** of the **leviathan**$^{\theta}$, who rules the circles of air[23] high upon the waves — and the blush of shame of your maidens, you *beaux esprits*! is gallic rouge, chalk and alkanet; and not noble, innate purple of healthy flesh and blood, sent and enlivened by heaven. —

Without a **sacrifical offering** of **innocence**, the **jewel** and **holiness** of **chastity** remains unknown, and the entrance to this heavenly virtue impenetrable —

Amidst the incense of slumber I saw that rib — and cried, full of enthusiastic, possessive appropriation:$^{\iota}$ **'That is bone of my bone**[24] **and flesh of my flesh.'**$^{\kappa}$ —

As an erection[25]$^{\lambda}$ unites with its origin, he entered in whence he once came forth, as the body's healer$^{\mu}$, and like a faithful creator in good work$^{\nu}$, he closed up the hole of the place with

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22 *Mt. 12.35.

23 *Eph. 2.2.

24 *Michaelis' translation.

25 *Jn 3.31. Eccles. 1.7, 3.20. Jn 8.14. 1 Pet 4.19. Michaelis and Luther.

flesh$^{\xi}$, to fulfill henceforward the oldest **Maculatur**^{o} of the human race. —

Yes, a year from today I promise you, yawning, dreaming bridal pair! the end of my fairy tale$^{\pi}$, without nevertheless varnishing the signpost of my sex with a **postscript**$^{26\rho}$ of good wishes. You will perhaps guess *a priori* that my whole essay is nothing but a **trial** of **will-o-the-wisps**, fished from the stagnant ditch of my adjacent fields.$^{\sigma}$

If a **show-trial** of **fished will-o-the-wisps**, which dance like **evening stars**, may be enjoyed and digested like a **Gallimaufry**$^{27\varsigma}$, then my muse would be no sibyl that dedicates her Medusa-image$^{\tau}$ to the bosom of a Minerva!$^{\upsilon}$

– – had his wise companion not warned him of insignificant, bodiless lives, fluttering under a hollow likeness of form$^{\phi}$

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[26] Vid. *On marriage*.

[27] A piece printed here on a related marriage of **Hintz**.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

Almost all of the author's footnotes in this essay were handwritten by Hamann in the margin afterwards. The manuscript sent to Hartknoch contains not a single one (cf. ZH 3, 136-139, 25.12.1774). By and large they are the biblical references for his allusions.

[a] *'Komm ich als ein Geist zu dir, so erschrick nur nicht vor mir.'* [NB: *Geist*, not *Spuck*!] Schoonhoven reports that he is unable to find a source for this motto, nor even a satisfying interpretation. He suggests the following: 'With this motto Hamann is speaking to Katharina Berens. The other possibility, that he is speaking to the "bridal pair" of the first sentence, seems excluded by the singular (*'zu dir'*). His one-time fiancée, to whom he dedicates the piece at the end, he has in mind from the beginning. He comes "as a ghost" to her, i.e. not in bodily form, but rather through a product [*Erzeugnis*] of his spirit. But why should she be frightened of it? The content of the essay makes that more than clear: it is an acknowledgement of human sexuality.' (HHE 5, 139). I am unconvinced by the idea that this piece is dedicated to Katharina Berens, and suggest several different understandings of this little rhyme. It is the Lover who speaks to the Beloved; he comes 'as a Spirit' to her, that is, in the image of God. The identification of the lover and Christ is made clear in the uses of 1 Cor. 11.7 (cf. 200:26ff.), as is the parallel between human sexuality and divine creativity, in part expressed in the assertion of humanity as being 'in the image of God'. *'Geist'* then is a pun, expressing both the [divine] Spirit, in whose likeness the lover approaches his beloved sexually; his approach, stealthy, in the dark, is also like a ghost. Why should she be frightened? *Vid.* 201:23ff. for an answer. Alternatively, it is also possible that the 'ghost' aspect relates to the oracles of the sibyl; in the Aeneid, which is cited at the beginning and end of this essay, Aeneas' fate is foretold him by the ghost of his wife Creusa. Thirdly, something of both these previous interpretations can be combined: it is Aeneas, and not the sibyl, who comes as a ghost in the underworld, bearing the Golden Bough. (Aeneas does meet Dido's shade while he is there.)

[b] *Carpo* can mean not only pluck, or grab, but also enjoy....

[c] The sixth book of the Aeneid provides opening and closing quotations for this essay. In this book the hero consults the sibyl of Cumae and makes a journey to Hades. On expressing a desire to see his father there, the sibyl tells him what he must do: he must first tear off the Golden Bough.

[d] Presumably Cupid, but also the Judeo-Christian God, as the rest of the paragraph indicates.

[e] Cf. Gen. 1.26

[f] The Divine Idea is human sexual love, which leads to procreation.

[g] Being the begetting of Cain; cf. Gen. 4.1.

[h] Cf. Gen. 1.28.

[i] *'Semper-Augustus'* was hand-written in the text afterwards, suggesting a pun on *augustus*, initially meaning 'increaser' (HHE 5, 144, note 7).

j Schoonhoven provides relevant passages from Hippel's essay on marriage. 'Marriage is a consensual contract [*consensueller Contract*].' (HHE 5, 144, note 9).

k From Hippel: 'The human being matures later than anything else on earth; its powers, its capabilities are so many and moreover these are so costly [*köstlich*] that its education cannot cease with its mother's milk.' Cited Schoonhoven. (HHE 5, 144, note 10.)

l Hamann presumably draws these examples from C.T. Damm's *Vom historischen Glauben*, cited in Wiener and Schoonhoven (HHE 5, 145, note 12). These three groups are unashamed of nudity.

m Hippel: 'Love is founded in nature, marriage in reason.' (HHE 5, 146, note 1.)

n This was of course Hamann's own position.

o '*Corpus juris Fridericiani*' (HHE 5, 147, note 3).

p The references to the persecutions in Daniel 3, familiar from the *Herderschriften* as part of Hamann's political critique, return with the same function. Cf. Dan. 3.1 for 200:2; 3.5-6, 19 for 200:3-4; also N III, 49:17-30.

q Hippel: 'We are born as human beings, and reborn as citizens.' (p. 58). 'In each person not only should the person grow, but the citizen [*Staats- und Weltbürger*] should be raised.... Thus the upbringing [of children] sanctifies marriage.' (p. 59). 'Marriage above all has to do with the upbringing [of children], and in this respect marriage is sacred to the state and the world.' (p. 60.) (HHE 5, 148, note 7.)

r Rudolf Unger observes that new laws concerning marriage were put in place a few weeks before the composition of this essay (30 July 1774); these principally concerned divorce, concubinage, etc. He adds that in states under the influence of the Enlightenment, offences which were formerly a matter of law became matters of conscience at best or at worst matters for police repression (Unger II, 615f.).

s Hamann's reference of 'Thes. 1.26' is clearly incorrect, as neither 1 Thess. nor 2 Thess. has 26 verses in the first chapter. There seems no particular reason to suppose the intended verse resembles the mistaken designation '1.26', as it could easily be a slip of the pen on either Hamann's or Nadler's part: 1.26 is the reference to the Letter of the Romans immediately preceding. Schoonhoven suggests 1 Thess 4.6: 'that no man transgress, and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we solemnly forewarned you.' (HHE 5, 149, note 13). This seems plausible enough to me, as it repeats the theme of the Romans reference: of God avenging sexual [self-?] abuse; and as it was handwritten afterwards next to the Romans reference, as if Hamann had come upon it later. If so, then note the context of the preceding verses (4.3-5): 'For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from unchastity; that each one of you know how to take a wife for himself in holiness and honour not in the passion of lust like heathen who do not know God.'
'Paraphysical abuse' comes from the Greek of the Romans reference:
Δια τουτο παρεδωκεν αυτους ο Θεος εις πατη ατιμιας, αι τε γαρ θηλειαι αυτων μετηλλαξαν την φυσικην χρησιν εις την παρα φυσιν

t Cf. Mt. 5.17.

[u] Schoonhoven calls our attention to I Cor. 7.31: the *schema* of this world is passing (HHE 5, 150, note 12).

[v] Hippel: 'In the creation of human beings there is a mystery of nature of the highest order, and with it there is certainly something divine. The marriage-bed is an Adytum, marriage partners are mystagogues.' (HHE 5, 153, note 5.)

[w] Cf. Gen. 2.21ff.

[x] John Wilke, editor of the *North-Briton* and author of the notorious *Essay on Woman* which the House of Commons ordered to be seized and burnt.

[y] *Essay on Woman* was issue number 45; 45 was also Hamann's age at the time of writing.

[z] Hippel.

[α] As Schoonhoven notes, Hamann's reference to 'Ovid Metam.' cannot refer to Baubo, but perhaps refers to Demeter and Ceres (HHE 5, 155, note 11).

[β] Grécourt, the French poet (1683-1743); author of obscene stories (N VI, 158).

[γ] At Barby on the Elbe the Herrnhuter had a school; their conception of marriage apparently involved sublimation of the sexual in communion with Christ (N VI, 45; cf. Beyreuther, *passim*).

[δ] The God of Hades, Pluto, is presumably 'rich' because of the meaning of his name: *Ploutos*.

[ε] Cf. Eccles. 7.28 (HHE 5, 156, note 1).

[ζ] Mt. 10.16.

[η] Schoonhoven suggests Ps. 51.8 (HHE 5, 157, note 2); I suggest 2 Cor. 2.7.

[θ] 'Leviathan' is perhaps meant to recall Hobbes and suggest a political interpretation of this passage with Frederick as the 'leviathan'.

[ι] The query mark after *Zueignung* in the Nadler edition is a misprint, which Hamann corrects in a letter to Hartknoch, ZH 3, 152. It remains nevertheless in Nadler, but I have eliminated it and replaced it with a colon as Hamann indicates.

[κ] Cf. Gen. 2.23.

[λ] *Gemächte*.

[μ] Cf. Eph. 5.23 and 200:26-201:2.

[ν] Cf. Gen. 2.21.

[ξ] Cf. Gen. 2.21.

[ο] See the Exposition in Volume I for a discussion of this word.

[π] The end of the fairy tale is presumably the birth of the bridal pair's children.

[ρ] Hippel: 'No woman can write a letter without a postscript.' (p. 141; HHE 5, 161, note 2).

[σ] A typical piece of Hamannian self-deprecation, with a number of characteristic personal references. ZH 3, 434, to Hartknoch, finds Hamann explaining these references. He reminds Hartknoch of an evening in August of 1773, during which they discussed will-o'-the-wisps appearing in the old ditch near Hamann's house, Hintz, the editor of *Galimafree*, and Hartknoch's engagement. Hamann's address at the time was '*am alten Graben* N. 758'; which at that time was not a street but literally ran alongside a ditch (or old 'moat'?) and an adjacent field. Cf. also HHE 5, 161-2.

ς *Galimafree*; Gallimaufry is 'a hash of odds and ends of food; a hodge-podge' and secondarily 'a ridiculous medley' [OED]. (Its origins are French, *galimafrée*.) Hinz, a publisher and friend of Hamann's edited a volume of poems on marriage under the title *Galimafree* (HHE 5, 162, note 4).

τ It was Minerva who transformed Medusa's hair into its serpentine condition, and placed Medusa's image on her shield.

υ Schoonhoven understands Minerva, a slip of the hand for 'Aspasia', to be Katharina Berens, and cites Hamann's explanation and correction to Hartknoch: 'It would occur to the least capable reader that Pericles bore his Aspasia in the mask of Minerva, and I thought Aspasia and wrote Minerva.' (ZH 3, 152; HHE 162-3). I discuss this interpretation in the exposition section of the thesis. Hamann, in his advertisement for this essay (reprinted in N IV, 418), speaks of the dedication of the sibyl's 'Medusa-image' to a 'Minerva-Aspasia', 'who hardly will be sought among the daughters of the land'.

ϕ The citation is from Virgil's Aeneid, book 6.

Metacritique

of the Purism of Reason[a]

Sunt lacrumae rerum - o quantum est in rebus inane![b]

[1784]

A great philosopher has maintained 'that general and abstract ideas are nothing but particular ones, annexed to a certain term, which gives them a more extensive signification, and makes them recall upon occasion other individuals'.[c] This assertion of the eleatic, mystical and visionary[d] Bishop of **Cloyne, George Berkeley, Hume**[1] considers to be one of the **greatest** and **most valuable discoveries** which has been made in the republic of letters in our time.[e]

It seems to me, first of all, that modern scepticism has the elder idealism to thank for infinitely more than this coincidental and single instance would indicate in passing, and that without **Berkeley** Hume would hardly have become the **great philosopher** that the Critique, with a similar kind of gratitude, considers him to be.[f] But concerning this **important discovery** itself: the same is laid bare and obvious, perhaps without extraordinary profundity, in the mere linguistic usage of the most meagre perception and the observation of *sensus communis*.

The possibility of human knowledge of objects of experience **without** and **before** all experience[g], and thereafter the possibility of a sensible intuition **before** all sensation of an object[h] belongs to the **concealed mysteries**[i], the investigation of which, let alone solution, is said to have as yet occurred to no philosopher. On this twofold **Im**-possibility[g] and the **tremendous distinction** between analytic and synthetic judgments[j] rests the matter and form of a Transcendental Doctrine of Elements and of Method[k]; for apart from the idiosyncratic distinction of reason as an **object** or **source of knowledge** or **mode** of knowledge[l], there is a still more general, sharper and purer distinction, by power of which reason is the foundation[m] of all objects, sources and kinds of knowledge; is itself none of the three, and consequently therefore has need of neither an empirical

[1] Cf. *a Treatise of Human Nature: Being an Attempt to reduce the experimental Method of reasoning into moral Subjects* Vol. 1. Of the Understanding. London 1739 p. 38. This, to my knowledge the **first** masterpiece of the famous **David Hume**, is to be translated into French, but not yet, as his last is into German. The translation of the astute **Berkeley's philosophical works** has also, unfortunately, got bogged down. The first part appeared already in 1781 in Leipzig and contained only the **Dialogue between Hylas and Philonous**, which was already in the *Eschenbach Collection of Idealists*, Rostock 1756.

or aesthetic nor logical or discursive concept, but rather merely consists in subjective conditions[n], under which **All, Something** and Nothing[o] can be taken as the object, source or kind of knowledge, and like an infinite Maximum or minimum can be **given** to, or in any case, **taken** by, immediate intuition.

The **first** purification of philosophy consisted basically in the partly misconceived, partly unsuccessful attempt to make reason independent of all custom[p], tradition, and belief in the latter. The second is still more transcendental and aims at nothing less than an independence of experience and its everyday induction — for, after reason sought who knows what? **beyond** experience for 2000 years, it suddenly not merely despairs of the progressive course of its ancestors, but also promises its impatient contemporaries, with so much **defiance,** and this in a short time[q], that universal and infallible **Philosopher's Stone**, so indispensable for Catholicism and despotism[r], to which **religion** with its **sanctity** and **legislation** with its **majesty** are swiftly subjected[s], especially in the wane of a critical age, where empiricism on both sides, struck with blindness, makes its own nakedness more suspicious and ridiculous day by day.

The **third**, most sublime and as it were **empirical** purism therefore concerns **language**, the single, first and last *organon* and criterion[t] of reason, without any other credentials[u] than **tradition** and **use**. But one gets on with this **idol** too almost as that ancient did with the **Ideal** of Reason.[v] The longer one reflects, the more deeply and inwardly one is struck dumb and loses all breath to speak. 'Woe to the tyrants, when **God** troubles himself about them! why then do they ask after Him? *Mene, mene, tekel* to the Sophists![w] their small-change[x] will be found too light and their changing-house will be broken!'

Receptivity of **language** and **spontaneity** of **concepts**![y] From this twofold source of ambiguity, pure reason creates all the elements of its dogmatism, scepticism, and critique[z], generates new phenomena and meteors of the changing horizon through an analysis as arbitrary as its synthesis of the thrice old leaven, creates signs and wonders with the Creator and with the destructive mercurial magic wand of its mouth, or the

cloven goose-quill between the three syllogistic writing-fingers of its herculean fist – –

This hereditary defect and leprosy of ambiguity is inherent even in the name **Metaphysics**, and cannot be improved, let alone explained, by being traced back to its birthplace[α], which lies in the incidental synthesis of a Greek **prefix**. But even granted that in the transcendental Topic[β] an empirical distinction between **behind** and **above** matters even less than a ***hysteron-proteron*** does to an *a priori* and *a posteriori*: the birth-mark of the name extends from the brow to the innards of the whole science and its terminology is as related to every other language of the arts, the fields, the mountains and schools, as is quicksilver to the other metals.

Indeed, one should deduce from so many **analytic** judgments a **gnostic** hatred of Matter or also a **mystical** love of Form; nevertheless the synthesis of the predicate with the subject, in which consists the actual object of pure reason, has for its mediating concept nothing but an old, cold prejudice for mathematics before and behind it[γ], whose apodeictic certainty rests primarily on an, as it were, kyriological[δ] characterization of the simplest, most sensible intuition and hereafter on the ease with which it can prove and represent its synthesis and the possibility of the same in obvious constructions or symbolic formulae and equations, through whose sensibility all **misunderstanding**[ε] is excluded of itself. But while geometry defines and fixes even the **ideality** of its concepts of points without parts, of lines and surfaces and even ideally divided dimensions through empirical signs and images; metaphysics misuses all the word-signs and figures of speech of our empirical knowledge as lukewarm hieroglyphs and types of ideal relations, and with this learned misdemeanour re-works the **straightforwardness** of language into such a senseless, ruttish, unsteady, imprecise Something = x[ζ], that nothing remains but a windy sighing, a magic shadow-play, most of all, as the wise **Helvetius** says, the talisman and rosary of a transcendental superstition in *entia rationis*, its empty wineskins and droppings. Finally, in the end it is clear that if mathematics can claim for itself the privilege of nobility on account of its universal and necessary reliability, then human reason itself must then be inferior to the infallible and unerring **instinct** of the insect.

Indeed, if a chief question[η] does remain: **how is the power to think possible?**–The power to think **right** and **left, before** and **without, with** and **above** experience? then it does not take a deduction to prove the genealogical priority of language over the **seven** holy functions of logical propositions and inferences and their heraldics. Not only the entire ability to think rests on language, according to the unknown prophecies and slandered miracles of the meritorious **Samuel Heinke**[θ]; but language is also the **crux of the misunderstanding of reason with itself**[ε], partly because of the frequent **coincidence** of the greatest and smallest concept, its emptiness and fulness in ideal propositions, partly because of the endless figures of speech before the conclusions, and much more of that kind.

Sounds and **letters** are therefore pure forms ***a priori***, in which there is met nothing which belongs to sensation or to the concept of an object and the true, aesthetic elements of all human knowledge and reason. The oldest language was music, and with the palpable rhythm of the pulse and the breath in the nose it was the bodily prototype of all **measures of time** and its intervals. The oldest writing was **painting** and **drawing**, and it concerned itself therefore from the very beginning with the **system** of **space**, its limitation and definition, in figures. Therefore the concepts of **space** and **time** have, through the exuberant, persistent influence of the two most noble senses, sight and hearing, become as universal and necessary in the whole sphere of understanding as light and air are for the eye, ear and voice, so that if space and time were not innate ideas, at least they seem to be matrices of all intuitive knowledge.

But if **sensibility** and **understanding** spring as two stems of human knowledge from **One** common root[ι], so that through the one objects are **given** and through the other **thought**; to what end such a violent, unwarranted, obstinate divorce of what nature has joined together![κ] Will not both stems wither and corrupt through such a dichotomy and division of their common root? Would not a single stem better serve as an image of our knowledge, with two roots, one **above** in the air and one **below** in the earth? The first is revealed to our sensibility; the latter on the other hand is invisible and must be thought by our **understanding**, which agrees better with the priority of the **thought**

and the posteriority of the **given** or taken, as well as agreeing with the favourite inversion of pure reason in its theories.

Yet perhaps there is an **alchemical**[λ] **Tree of Diana**[μ], not only for the knowledge of sensibility and of understanding, but also for the explanation and amplification of their mutual territories and their limits, which have been made so dark, confused and desolate[ν] by pure reason, baptized **per antiphrasin**, and its metaphysic, (that ancient mother of chaos and night of all the sciences of morality, religion and legislation!)[ξ] which gladdens the heart of the dominant Indifferentism, that only from the **dawn**[ο] of the promised, imminent re-creation and enlightenment must the dew of a pure, natural language be re-born.

However, without waiting for the visit of a new Lucifer arising from the heights, nor violating the fig-tree[π] of the **great goddess Diana!**, the wicked viper in our bosom of the common language of the people gives us the best metaphor for the hypostatic union of the natures of the senses and of understanding, the *communicatio idiomatum*[ρ] of their powers, the synthetic mystery of the two corresponding and self-contradictory forms ***a priori*** and ***a posteriori***, the transubstantiation of subjective conditions and subsumptions[σ] into objective predicates and attributes by the copula of a command or expletive to attenuate the boredom, and to fill up the empty space in the periodic galimatias *per Thesin et Arsin*.[ς] –

Oh for the **action**[τ] of a **Demosthenes** and his threefold energy of eloquence or the mimic that shall yet come, without the panegyric ringing bell of an angel's tongue! then I would open the reader's eye, that he might see – hosts of intuitions ascending to the firmament of pure understanding, and hosts of concepts descending into the deep abyss of the most palpable sensibility, on a ladder[υ] of which no sleeper has yet dreamt – and the dancing procession of these *Mahanaim*[φ] or two hosts of reason – the secret and vexatious Chronicle of their love-affair and rape – and the entire theogony of all forms of giants and heroes of the Shulammite[χ] and Muse, in the mythology of light and darkness – down to the play on forms of an old **Baubo**[ψ] **with herself** – *inaudita specie solaminis*[ω], as St. *Arnobius* says – and of a new **virgin without stain**, who however may not become a **mother of God**, for which **St. Anselm** takes her —

Words therefore have an **aesthetic** and **logical** capacity. As visible and audible objects they belong with their elements to **sensibility** and **intuition**, but according to the spirit of their **employment** and **meaning**, belong to **understanding** and **concepts**. Consequently words are as much pure and empirical **intuitions**, as they are pure and empirical **concepts**: **empirical**, because the sensation of sight or hearing works through them; **pure**, in so far as their meaning is determined by nothing that belongs to those sensations. Words as undetermined objects of empirical intuitions are according to the textbook of pure reason, aesthetic **appearances**; consequently according to the eternal lyre of antithetical parallelism, words as unconditioned objects of empirical concepts are critical **appearances**, ghosts, non- or anti-words, and only become determined objects for the understanding through their employment and meaning of use. This meaning and its determination arise as all know from the connection of an *a priori*, arbitrary and impartial, *a posteriori* but necessary and indispensable word-sign with the intuition of the object itself, and through this repeated connection the concept itself is communicated to the understanding, memorized and absorbed by means of the word-sign as by means of the intuition itself.

Now is it possible, asks **Idealism** from one side, to discover, from the mere intuition of a word, the concept of the same? Is it possible from the **matter** of the word Reason, its six letters or two syllables — is it possible, from the **form**, which determines the order of these letters and syllables, to produce something of the **concept** of the word **Reason**? Here the Critique answers with both sides of its scales equal. Indeed, there are in some languages a number of words out of which logogriphs, foreign **charades** and witty **rebuses** can be made by Analysis or Synthesis of letters or syllables in new forms. But then these are simply new intuitions and appearances of words, which agree as little with the concept of the given word as do the various intuitions themselves.

Further, is it possible, asks **Idealism** from the other side, to discover the empirical intuition of a word from the understanding? Is it possible to find from the **concept** of the word Reason the matter of its name, i.e. its six letters or two

syllables in German or in any other language? Here the scales of the Critique indicate a decisive **No!**♠ But should it not be possible to derive the **form** of its empirical intuition in the word from the concept, to intuit by virtue of which form, that one of the two syllables stands *a priori* and the other *a posteriori*, or that the six letters are ordered in a certain relation? Here the **Homer** of pure reason snores as loud a Yes! as Jack and Jill before the altar, presumably, because he has dreamt in his mind that the long-sought **universal character of a philosophical language** has already been discovered.

Now this last possibility, of creating the form of an empirical intuition with neither an object nor a sign of the same from the pure and empty properties of our outer and inner mind, is precisely the Δος μοι που στω♥ and πρωτον ψευδος♥, the entire cornerstone of critical idealism and its towers♦ and lodges of pure reason. The given or taken materials belong to the categorical and idealistic woods, peripatetic and academic storerooms. Analysis is nothing more than a cutting of one's cloth to suit fashion, as synthesis is the artificial seam of a guild's leather-worker. What transcendental philosophy mata-grabolizes♣, I have indicated for the sake of the weak reader[aa]: the sacrament of language, the letters of its elements, the spirit of its institution; and I leave it to each to roll the balled fist into a flat hand.[bb] – –

But perhaps a similar idealism is the entire partition wall[cc] between Judaism and the pagan world. The Jew has the word and the sign; the pagan, reason and its wisdom[dd] – – (the following was a μεταβασις εις αλλο γενος, the best of which is transplanted in little Golgotha)

TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

[a] Citations of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* are from Norman Kemp Smith's translation, though references to the German are usually mine. References to the *Critique* are given as follows: Kant's name, followed by the page number of the Kemp Smith translation, followed by the page number of the original edition in parentheses, to facilitate comparison to the original German. Despite the danger of anachronism, for the ease of the reader, these are to the second edition ('B') unless marked 'A', which refers to the first edition.

For the convenience of the reader, as far as possible my translation of Hamann's 'metacritique' is done to harmonize with Kemp Smith's translation of Kant. This is in part to facilitate the perception of allusions, but also to maintain consistency and clarity in the translation of certain Kantian terms. Thus, both Kemp Smith and I translate such terms in the following manner:

Anchauung = intuition	*Phenomena* = phenomena
Begriff = concept	*Vernunft* = reason
Empfindung = sensation	*Verstand* = understanding
Erscheinung = appearance	*Vorstellung* = representation
Form = form	*Wahrnehmung* = perception
Materie = matter	

[b] 'There are tears in things. Oh what vanity there is in things!' The first half of the motto is from Virgil, *Aeneid* I, 462; the second half from Persius, Sat. I.1. Cf. N III, 280:16, where this citation appears in inverted form in Hamann's unpublished review of the *Critique*. But cf. also N II, 57, the title page of *SM*, which was dedicated to Kant. This seems a deliberate recollection of Hamann's first encounter with Kant.

[c] A paraphrase of Berkeley by Hume. 'A great philosopher' is Hume's designation (Hume, 17).

[d] '*Schwärmerisch*'. Cf. '...The former of these two illustrious men [Berkeley and Hume] opened a wide door to *enthusiasm* [*Schwärmerei*]'. (Kant, 128 [128].)

[e] The citation from Hume continues, 'As I look upon this to be one of the greatest and most valuable discoveries that has been made of late years in the republic of letters' (Hume, 17).

[f] Kant's indebtedness to Hume in awakening him from his dogmatic slumbers perhaps requires no further repetition or explanation.

[g] Cf. this, from the Preface to the first edition: 'I do not mean by this a critique of books and systems, but of the faculty of reason in general, in respect of all knowledge after which it may strive *independently of all experience*. It will therefore decide as to the possibility or impossibility of metaphysics in general, and determine its sources, its extent, and its limits – all in accordance with principles.' (Kant, 9 [A xii].)

Cf. also the opening of the introduction in the first edition: 'I. THE IDEA OF TRANSCENDENTAL PHILOSOPHY. Experience is, beyond all doubt, the first product to which our understanding gives rise, in working up the raw material of sensible impressions. Experience is therefore our first instruction.... Nevertheless, it is by no means the sole

field to which our understanding is confined. Experience tells us, indeed, what is, but not that it must necessarily be so, and not otherwise. It therefore gives us no true universality; and reason, which is so insistent upon this kind of knowledge, is therefore more stimulated by it than satisfied. Such universal modes of knowledge, which at the same time possess the character of inner necessity, must in themselves, independently of experience, be clear and certain. They are therefore entitled knowledge *a priori*; whereas, on the other hand, that which is borrowed solely from experience is, as we say, known only *a posteriori*, or empirically.

'Now we find, what is especially noteworthy, that even into our experiences there enter modes of knowledge which must have their origin *a priori*, and which perhaps serve only to give coherence to our sense-representations. For if we eliminate from our experiences everything which belongs to the senses, there still remain certain original concepts and certain judgments derived from them, which must have arisen completely *a priori*, independently of experience, inasmuch as they enable us to say, or at least lead us to believe that we can say, in regard to the objects which appear to the senses, more than mere experience would teach – giving to assertions true universality and strict necessity, such as mere empirical knowledge cannot supply' (Kant, 41-42 [A 1-2]).

The Preface to the second edition, which postdates this 'metacritique' lays greater stress on the apparent impossibility of knowledge without experience, but relativizes this situation by stating that 'such knowledge has only to do with appearances'; (Kant, 24, B xx); or that although we cannot *know* these things in themselves, we can *think* them (Kant, 27 B xxvi). Cf. also the opening of the section of 'The Deduction of the Pure Concepts of Understanding', as in the first edition (Kant, 129-130, [A 96-97]) *et passim*.

h 'That objects of sensible intuition must conform to the formal conditions of sensibility which lie *a priori* in the mind is evident, because otherwise they would not be objects for us.' (Kant, 124 [123].) Primarily, however, Hamann may have in mind the whole of a 'transcendental aesthetic', a science of '*a priori* sensibility', in which sensibility is isolated from sensation so that nothing remains but pure intuition and forms of appearances. Cf. also the conclusion of the Introduction, (Kant, 62 [30]).

i Cf. the following, only in A, concerning synthetic *a priori* judgments: 'A certain mystery lies here concealed*; and only upon its solution can the advance into the limitless field of the knowledge yielded by pure understanding be made sure and trustworthy. What we must do is to discover, in all its proper universality, the ground of the possibility of *a priori* synthetic judgments, to obtain insight into the conditions which make each kind of such judgments possible, and to make out all this knowledge, which forms a genus by itself, not in any cursory outline, but in a system, with completeness and in a manner sufficient for any use, according to its original sources, divisions, extent, and limits.' '*If it had occurred to any of the ancients even to raise this question' (Kant, 51-52 [A 10]). Cf. N III, 21-22 (ET) 18-19 (German).

j Cf. the Introduction in particular, (Kant, 48ff [10ff.]).

k 'Transcendental Doctrine of Elements' and 'Transcendental Doctrine of Method' are the two parts of the *Critique*.

l '...Reason is the faculty which supplies the principles of *a priori* knowledge. Pure reason is, therefore, that which contains the principles whereby we know anything absolutely *a priori*. An organon of pure reason would be the sum-total of those principles according to which all modes of pure *a priori* knowledge can be acquired and actually brought into being. The exhaustive application of such an organon would give rise to a system of pure reason.' (Kant, 58 [25]). Reason, as that which supplies the principles of *a priori* knowledge, is thus the 'source' of knowledge. Cf. also the citations under translator's note y. Reason is also the 'object' of transcendental knowledge, which does not concern itself with objects as its content, but with the mode or structure of knowing: 'I entitle *transcendental* all knowledge which is occupied not so much with objects as with the mode of our knowledge of objects in so far as this mode of knowledge is to be possible *a priori*.' (Kant, 59 [25]). Reason is also one of two kinds or 'stems' of knowledge, the other being sensibility. (Cf. Kant, 61 [29] *et passim*.)

m Cf. Kant, 60 (27): 'Only in so far as we build upon this foundation do we have a reliable touchstone' – the foundation being pure reason, or possibly the critique thereof.

n Since reason is not itself an object, it does not have an 'empirical' or 'aesthetic' concept; that is, a sense-impression to which it corresponds; like time and space, it is not a discursive or 'general' concept (Kant, 69 [39], 75 [47]) abstracted from intuitions. Rather, it is found in 'subjective conditions', 'the subjective grounds of [synthetic] unity contained *a priori* in the original cognitive powers of our mind', which 'are the grounds of the possibility of knowing any object whatsoever in experience', and which are 'objectively valid' (from the first edition of the Transcendental Deduction, Kant 147, [A 125]). Cf. also, from the first edition: 'As regards *clearness*, the reader has a right to demand, in the first place, a *discursive* (logical) clearness, through *concepts*, and secondly, an *intuitive* (aesthetic) clearness, through *intuitions*....' (Kant, 12 [A xviif.]).

o Cf., perhaps, Kant, 295 (347-8); perhaps as a list of three it is a play on the categories? Perhaps it refers to the thing-in-itself?

p *Überlieferung*.

q 'Metaphysics, in the view we are adopting, is the only one of all the sciences which dare promise that through a small but concentrated effort it will attain, *and this in a short time*, such completion as will leave no task to our successors save that of adapting it in a *didactic* manner according to their own preferences, without their being able to add anything whatsoever to its content.' (Kant, 13-14 [A xx].) [First emphasis mine; second Kant's.]

r Hamann may be borrowing this idea to make his own political point; he may also be taking over Kant's characterization of Metaphysics' reign as 'despotic'; cf. the Preface to the first edition (Kant, 8, [A ix]).

s From the Preface to the first edition: 'Our age is, in especial degree, the age of criticism [*Kritik*], and to criticism everything must submit. Religion through its sanctity, and law-giving through its majesty, may seek to exempt themselves from it. But they then awaken just suspicion, and cannot claim the sincere respect which reason accords only that

which has been able to sustain the test of free and open examination.' (Kant, 9, note a [A xi].) Cf. also N III 277:1-7, where this citation opens Hamann's review.

t 'Organon and criteron' comes from Edward Young, of which neither Nadler (N VI, 278) nor Beiser (Beiser, 334, note 76) seem to be aware. Hamann also makes use of the phrase in letters to Jacobi and Herder, ZH 5, letters numbers 721 and 725 respectively. Cf. also the citation in translator's note l for Kant's use of 'an organon of pure reason'; also the later sentence 'Such a critique [of pure reason] is therefore a preparation, so far as may be possible, for an organon' (Kant, 59 [26]).

u I rather like this translation of Smith's of *Creditiv* (Smith, 215). Beiser has 'warrant' (Beiser, 41). 'Recommendations', 'testimonials' or even 'authorization' are also possible.

v God, according to Kant, is an Ideal of Pure Reason. — The sceptic Cotta said to the Epicurean Velleius, 'Should you ask me what God is or what kind of essence he possesses, then I might follow Simonides, who, when the tyrant Hieron directed the same question to him, requested a day's time to reflect on it. As the question was put to him the next day, he asked for two days, and as he thereafter doubled the number of days and Hieron asked why he did this, he gave him the answer: "The longer I reflect on it, the more obscure the problem seems to be." ' Cicero, *De natura deorum* I, 60; cited in Bayer, *GV* 68, note 164 and *MEE* 439. Hamann first cites this passage (to Kant) in his letter of December, 1759 (ZH 1, 452:36f.); it is put on the mouth of Philo in Hume's *Dialogue*. (Cf. Bayer, *MEE* notes 22, 23.)

w Cf. Dan. 5.25ff.

x *Scheidemünze*. *Mackensen Deutsches Wörterbuch* defines it as *Kleingeld* or, interestingly, *Bordellmarke*.

y 'Our knowledge springs from two fundamental sources of the mind; that first is the capacity of receiving representations (receptivity for impressions), the second is the power of knowing an object through these representations (spontaneity of concepts). Through the first an object is *given* to us, through the second the object is *thought* in relation to that representation (which is a mere determination of the mind).' (From the opening of the Transcendental Doctrine of Elements, the Transcendental Logic; Kant, 92 [75]). Cf also: 'If each representation were completely foreign to every other, standing apart in isolation, no such thing as knowledge would ever arise. For knowledge is a whole in which representations stand compared and connected. As sense contains a manifold in its intuition, I ascribe to it a synopsis. But to such a synopsis a synthesis must always correspond; receptivity can make knowledge possible only when combined with spontaneity. Now this spontaneity is the ground of a threefold synthesis which must necessarily be found in all knowledge; namely, the *apprehension* of representations as modifications of the mind in intuition, their *reproduction* or imagination, and their *recognition* in a concept. These point to three subjective sources of knowledge which make possible the understanding itself – and consequently all experience as its empirical product.' (From the first edition's version of the Transcendental Deduction; Kant, 130-1 [A 97-8]).

z 'The first step in matters of pure reason, marking its infancy, is *dogmatic*. The second step is *sceptical*; and indicates that experience has

rendered our judgment wiser and more circumspect. But a third step, such as can be taken only by fully matured judgment, based on assured principles of proved universality, is now necessary, namely, to subject to examination, not the facts of reason, but reason itself, in the whole extent of its power, and as regards its aptitude for pure *a priori* modes of knowledge. This is not the censorship but the *criticism* of reason, whereby not its present *bounds* [*Schränken*] but its determinate (and necessary) *limits* [*Grenzen*], not its ignorance on this or that point but its ignorance in regard to all possible questions of a certain kind, are demonstrated from principles, and not merely arrived at by way of conjecture. Scepticism is thus a resting-place for human reason, where it can reflect upon its dogmatic wanderings and make survey of the region in which it finds itself, so that for the future it may be able to choose its path with more certainty. But it is no dwelling-place for permanent settlement. Such can be obtained only through perfect certainty in our knowledge, alike of the objects themselves and of the limits within which all our knowledge of objects is enclosed.' (Kant, 607 [A 761].)

α 'For however the attempt be made to cast doubt upon the pretensions of the supposed Queen [Metaphysics] by tracing her lineage to vulgar origins in common experience, this genealogy has, as a matter of fact, been fictitiously invented, and she has still continued to uphold her claims.' (Preface to the first edition, Kant, 8 [A ix-x].)

β 'Let me call the place which we assign to a concept, either in sensibility or in pure understanding, its *transcendental location*. Thus the decision as to the place which belongs to every concept according to difference in the use to which it is put, and the directions for determining this place for all concepts according to rules, is a *transcendental topic*.' (Kant, 281 [324].)

γ With reference to this following passage, confer the following among other discussions of mathematics in the Critique: [re: 285:19] 'Mathematics gives us a shining example of how far, independently of experience, we can progress in *a priori* knowledge.' (From the Introduction, Kant, 46-7 [8]).

'Mathematics presents the most splendid example of the successful extension of pure reason, without the help of experience.... Thus pure reason hopes to be able to extend its domain as successfully and securely in its transcendental as in its mathematical employment, especially when it resorts to the same method as has been of such obvious utility in mathematics. It is therefore highly important for us to know whether the method of attaining apodeictic certainty which is called *mathematical* is identical with the method by which we endeavour to obtain the same certainty in philosophy....' (Kant, 576-7 (740-1)]. [re: 'misunderstanding', 285:24: cf. note ε below.] [re: 285:19 and 25f:] '...Geometrical propositions... can never be derived from the general concepts of line and triangle, but only from intuition, and this indeed *a priori*, with apodeictic certainty.' (Kant, 69 [39].) 'The mathematics of space (geometry) is based upon this successive synthesis of the productive imagination in the generation of figures. This is the basis of the axioms which formulate the conditions of sensible *a priori* intuition under which alone the schema of a pure concept of outer appearance can arise....' (Kant, 199 [204].) 'Empirical intuition is possible only by means of the pure intuition of

space and of time. What geometry asserts of pure intuition is therefore undeniably valid of empirical intuition.' (Kant, 200 [206].) [re: 'ideality', 285:26: cf. the discussions of the transcendental ideality of appearances in the Antinomy of Pure Reason and in the Transcendental Aesthetic, particularly as regards the ideality of space.]

On the 'prejudice for mathematics', note also a letter to Herder in which Hamann discusses the work of Schultz, who was preparing for publication extracts of the *Critique*: 'Kant's Critique is grist to my mill; because of his prejudice for mathematics and its kind of doctrine [*Lehrart*], whose evidence I understand from a completely different perspective. It seems to me that the same applies to mathematicians as to the Samaritans: *You know not what you worship*.' (ZH 5, 725 108:23-26).

δ For an explanation of this term see *AN*, N II, 199:6, Translator's Note y.

ε 'I have not evaded its questions by pleading the insufficiency of human reason. On the contrary, I have specified these questions exhaustively, according to principles; and after locating the point at which, through misunderstanding, reason comes into conflict with itself, I have solved them to its complete satisfaction.' (From the Preface to the first edition, Kant, 10 [A xiif].)

ζ 'At this point we must make clear to ourselves what we mean by the expression "an object of representations". We have stated above that appearances are themselves nothing but sensible representations, which, as such and in themselves, must not be taken as objects capable of existing outside our power of representation. What, then, is to be understood when we speak of an object corresponding to, and consequently also distinct from, our knowledge? It is easily seen that this object must be thought only as something in general = x, since outside our knowledge we have nothing which we could set over against this knowledge as corresponding to it.' (From the first edition of the Transcendental Deduction, Kant 134 [A 104].) Cf. also the lack of knowledge of the thing-in-itself, 'which may, therefore, be named the non-empirical, that is, transcendental object = x.' (From the first edition of the Transcendental Deduction, Kant, 137 [A 109].)

η 'For the chief question* is always simply this: – what and how much can the understanding and reason know apart from all experience? not: – how is the faculty of thought itself possible?' (From the Preface to the first edition, Kant, 12 [A xvii].) [*In both Hamann and Kant: '*Hauptfrage*'.]

θ Variously spelled as Heinke or Heincke, Samuel Heinicke (1735-1790) occupied himself in Hamburg with the teaching of the deaf and dumb (N VI, 170). His work led him to (and was subsequently founded upon) the insight and conviction that only through language are social formation, education and personal development possible (cf. *Neue Deutsche Biographie* 8, 304). Thus, 'not only the ability to think rests on language', but also socialization, emotional development, etc. The usual English translation met with – 'Not only *does* the entire ability to think rest on language, but language is also...' [emphasis mine] – seems to me therefore to be misleading; as it misses the point precisely that more than cognition is dependent on language.

ι '...there are two stems of human knowledge, namely, *sensibility* and *understanding*, which perhaps spring from a common, but to us

unknown, root. Through the former, objects are given to us; through the latter, they are thought.' (Introduction, Kant, 61-2 [29], and many other passages, such as that cited in note y above.)

κ Cf. Mt. 19.6.

λ An allusion perhaps to the alchemical principle of the union of opposites.

μ The most famous temple of Diana, goddess of the woodland, stood in a grove. The priesthood of this shrine was given to a runaway slave after he had broken off a branch from a sacred tree in the grove and killed his predecessor. Cf. also N III, 287:15f.

ν [The following citation follows on immediately from that cited above in note α]: 'Metaphysics has accordingly lapsed back into the ancient time-worn dogmatism, and so again suffers that depreciation from which it was to have been rescued. And now, after all methods, so it is believed, have been tried and found wanting, the prevailing mood is that of weariness and complete *indifferentism* – the mother, in all sciences, of chaos and night, but happily in this case the source, or at least the prelude, of their approaching reform and restoration. For it at least puts an end to that ill-applied industry which has rendered them thus dark, confused, and unserviceable.' (From the Preface to the first edition, Kant, 8 [A iv].) Hamann has substituted '*öd*', desolate, for Kant's '*unbrauchbar*'.

ξ Cf. the citation above. Note that Hamann has shifted the attribution of 'mother of chaos and night' from 'indifferentism' to 'metaphysics.' For 'religion and legislation', cf. the citation given in note s.

ο The end of the 'night' of metaphysics and indifferentism? Is it that promised in the citation above, note ν, the 'approaching reform and restoration'?

π Diana's tree [see note μ above] was not necessarily a fig-tree. I wonder whether, consciously or unconsciously, there is a conflation here: for Ulysses saved himself from disaster when trying to steer between Scylla and Charybdis by hanging on to the fig tree which overhung the passage between them. [Cf. 12.431-2: αυταπ εγω ποτι μακρον ερινεον υψος' αερθεις / τω προσφυς εχομεν ως νυκτερις.] Thus, by evoking the means of the hero's escape from Scylla and Charybdis, it forms yet another layer of images that rejects the division into opposites; combining with the 'alchemical' of 287:4. Members of the *Ficus* (fig) family, such as the banyan, have aerial roots; cf. 286:35-37.

ρ Here rendered in German (*gemeinschaftlichen Idiomenwechsel*).

σ Cf. the Transcendental Doctrine of Judgment. Judgment is 'the faculty of subsuming under rules; that is, of distinguishing whether something does or does not stand under a given rule' (Kant, 177 [171]).

ς Nadler has '*per Thesin et Antithesin*'; a misreading for '*arsin*'.

τ *Handlung*.

υ Cf. Jacob's ladder, Gen. 28.12.

φ Hosts – cf. the 'hosts' ascending and descending the ladder in Gen 28.12. Nadler provides further references: Gen. 32.1-2; Jn 1.51; Sgs 6.12. [sic.; 7.1-2].

χ The Beloved in the Song of Songs.

ψ Cf. N III, 201:11. Baubo is the old woman who attempted to cheer up Demeter by showing off her private parts. Perhaps '*Formenspiel*' ought

not be translated as 'metamorphoses', as Smith does; surely one meaning of the double entendre of 287:37f. is 'Baubo playing with her own form'.

ω 'An unheard of show* of consolation' [*or 'kind of', 'apparition']. Cf. Hamann's note 18, *ESM*.

♠ Cf. 'In the *mere concept* of a thing no mark of its existence is to be found.' (Kant, 243 [272]).

♥ 'Give me a place to stand and I can move the earth', Archimedes is famed for saying; in short, the 'Δος μοι που στω' (*dos moi pou* sto) is the Archimedean standpoint outside the world — which is simultaneously the 'πρωτον ψευδος' (*proton pseudos*), the first lie.

♦ The beginning of the 'Transcendental Doctrine of Method' contains an elaborate architectural metaphor: 'If we look upon the sum of all knowledge of pure speculative reason as an edifice for which we have at least the idea within ourselves, it can be said that in the Transcendental Doctrine of Elements we have made an estimate of the materials, and have determined for what sort of edifice and for what height and strength of building they suffice. We have found, indeed, that although we had contemplated building a tower which should reach to the heavens, the supply of materials suffices only for a dwelling-house, just sufficiently commodious for our business on the level of experience, and just sufficiently high to allow of our overlooking it. The bold undertaking that we had designed is thus bound to fail through lack of material – not to mention the babel of tongues, which inevitably gives rise to disputes among the workers in regard to the plan to be followed, and which must end by scattering them over all the world, leaving each to erect a separate building for himself, according to his own design. At present, however, we are concerned not so much with the materials as with the plan; and inasmuch as we have been warned not to venture at random upon a blind project which may be altogether beyond our capacities, and yet cannot well abstain from building a secure home for ourselves, we must plan our building in conformity with the material which is given to us, and which is also at the same time appropriate to our needs.' (Kant, 573 [A 707].) Hamann presumably finds the Tower of Babel allusion appropriate; and adds his own biblical-architectural motiv in the notion of the 'cornerstone'.

♣ As in *KRC*, N III, 32:32-33:2; from Rabelais, to write about nothing (to 'waffle'). Bayer makes the astute observation that *mataion* [ματαιον], empty, mirrors the 'inane' of the opening quotation. (Bayer, *MIN* 307.)

aa Bayer calls our attention to a passage in *Wolken*, N II, 96:18ff.: 'It is however a misunderstanding if one wanted to use for some superficial places in the *Memorabilia* the plummet of *philosophical understanding* (*sensus communis*). The nappies and cradle of Socratic wisdom are not for *strong spirits*; and these [pages] in which *milk* and *honey* flow, might please no one but weak readers....' (Bayer, *MIN* 311, note 38.) In other words, the weak reader is one who needs concrete language.

bb 'Zeno denied that you knew anything. How so? you will ask; even the ignorant understand a great deal. But you maintain, that no one, not even a wise man, knows anything. And Zeno liked to illustrate this with a gesture: namely he held out a flat hand and said: that is sense-perception. Then he pulled his fingers in a little and said: and that is the acceptance of the evidence of the senses [*adsensus*]. Then when he drew

in his fingers completely and made a fist, he said: that is comprehension. From this conception he then gave it the name καταληψις [*katalepsis*].... Only when he then took the second hand and enclosed the fist did he say: that is knowledge, and no one is capable of that but the wise man.' *Stoicum Veterum Fragmenta*, Vol. 1, ed. Hans von Arnim, Stuttgart, 1964, 19f. (Cited in Bayer, *MIN* 310.)

cc 'As there is only a single God, who is the Creator, Father and Ruler of the whole world, as all are alike the children of the one from whom they stem, have alike true right to God, and are made for the same end; then must also the dividing wall between Jews and heathen, all separations, all particularity be abolished, as soon as the true God alone has been made known. *Freymüthige Betrachtungen über das Christenthum* (published anonymously, actually by Johann August Starck; p. 59).

dd The following phrases were not placed here by Hamann himself as part of *MPR* in the version written to Herder [ZH 5, 766], but appear originally in the form of comments to Herder in that letter. Nadler adds them here on the authority of a handwritten copy of the essay by Hamann's son. It is possible that Hamann himself added these lines subsequently to the manuscript, but if so it was likely to be on the order of a personal note (as it probably was for Hamann's son). Out of context it could be quite misleading; it would seem to introduce a christological note, perhaps of the Incarnation (*metabasis*) and crucifixion (Golgotha). In ZH 5, 766, however, Hamann tells Herder that the best of his thoughts on this subject (289:25f) have passed into another essay ('*metabasis eis allo genos*" means 'a passing into another form'), that is, were transplanted into the essay he was writing at the same time, *Golgotha und Scheblimini*.