

Kantian Psychology

Kantiaans Psychologisme
(met een samenvatting in het Nederlands)

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Peter Sperber

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Promotor: Prof.dr. P.G. Ziche

Copromotor: Dr. D.K.W. van Miert

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To my parents, for everything

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Introduction

1. *Kantian Psychologism*

Scholarly works, I have been advised, are best begun with an anecdote of a personal nature. Fortunately, this is easy enough in the present case, for the issues of Kantianism and psychologism have been intertwined for me from the beginning of my Kant-studies, now almost exactly ten years ago. As I worked my way through the *Prolegomena* and the *Critique of Pure Reason* as an undergraduate student I found the material difficult, to be sure, but I nevertheless felt that I was acquiring a decent understanding of at least the core ideas and arguments of Kant's theoretical philosophy. Space and time, Kant seemed to me to say, along with causality, substantiality and a number of other concepts, are not objective features of reality that we discover by means of perception, but rather forms that our sensibility and our understanding project on the material provided by our senses. Since our faculties of cognition transform our experience in the very process of trying to apprehend it, there is an unbridgeable gap between the world as we experience it and the world as it really is independent of our experience. In other words, though I would not have phrased it this way at the time, I believed that all of Kant's central doctrines ultimately relied on psychological claims about the human cognitive apparatus.

Being a typical undergraduate student, I was naturally very eager (as I am now somewhat embarrassed to admit) for an opportunity to demonstrate my newfound knowledge. This opportunity came in the form of a discussion with one of the professors at my *alma mater*. To my great surprise (and no small disappointment), however, my conversation partner was far from impressed by what I had taken to be my solid understanding of such difficult material. What I had fallen prey to, he kindly explained to me, was a common, but mistaken, psychologistic interpretation of Kant's critical philosophy. Kant, he continued, had in fact made a point precisely of *eliminating* all psychology from philosophy. His theory should therefore be interpreted as a purely epistemological account of the nature, extent, and possibility of knowledge, and not at all as a theory about the workings of the human cognitive system.

This, as one may understand, greatly confused me at the time. Could I really have been this wrong about even the most general ideas of a philosopher expressed in a book that I had studied with serious attention? It seemed so, for I quickly discovered that this was not the unorthodox opinion of a single professor, but that it was presented in much of the secondary literature on Kant as a simple uncontroversial statement of fact. Kant's philosophy, it seemed, had hidden depths that I had so far entirely failed to grasp. Clearly, I concluded, a more thorough study of Kant's philosophy was called for. This study paid off, for I soon managed to convince myself that any psychological reading of Kant was indeed wholly in error and thus joined the ranks of the enlightened Kantians who had overcome the fallacy of psychologism.

This happy state lasted for some time, and further study of Kant only consolidated it. I discovered, of course, that the consensus on the anti-psychological character of Kant's philosophy was not quite as complete as it had first seemed to me, and that there were some philosophers who indeed insisted on a psychological reading of Kant, but I shrugged this off as just one of those many fringe positions that modern scholarship has to offer. This only changed when, during the preparation for my doctoral research, I first encountered Jakob Friedrich Fries. Reading through the early programmatic works of this devoted Kantian, I encountered exotic claims such as that critical philosophy was best interpreted as empirical psychology, and that all transcendental knowledge is in fact empirical-psychological knowledge. Clearly, here I had found a man who, despite his admiration for the philosopher from Königsberg, had understood nothing whatsoever of Kant's philosophical achievements! And yet, as I became more interested in the reception of Kant during the first decades after the publication of the first *Critique*, I learned that Fries was far from an isolated case. On the contrary, I discovered that in the decades around 1800 there had been an entire tradition of thinkers who had emphasized the psychological nature and significance of Kant's philosophy; a tradition that seemed to have been ignored almost entirely by modern historical scholarship, despite apparently having been prominent in its own time. This, it seemed to me, was a strange state of affairs; even assuming that there was little of philosophical value to be found in this tradition (as I was disposed to do at first), its existence nevertheless raised a question of significant historical interest: how can we explain the existence of

this Kantian Psychologism around the turn of the nineteenth century? This became the guiding question of my doctoral research, and it is the core question of the present dissertation.

2. *Kant and Psychology*

Those who are more familiar with the history of scholarship on Kant's work than I was during the early years of my study will know that much ink has been spilled over the question what the role of psychology in Kant's philosophy is or ought to be. Indeed, the question is a thorny one, primarily because of Kant's own seeming ambivalence on the matter. On the one hand, as Peter Strawson notes in *The Bounds of Sense*: "[t]he idiom of the [Critique of Pure Reason] is throughout a psychological idiom" (Strawson 2006, 19). As a matter of fact, Kant's constant reference to various mental faculties, as well as to their functions and interactions seems to have been influenced strongly by the contemporary German tradition of *Vermögenspsychologie*: "Imagination, the psychological deduction, the distinction between understanding and reason are all elements which Kant owes to the psychology of his day" (De Vleeschauwer 1962, 85; cf. Bell 2005, 150–1, 154). As De Vleeschauwer convincingly argues, Johannes Tetens's *Philosophische Versuche über die menschliche Natur und ihre Entwicklung* (1777) had a particularly strong influence on Kant, but the psychological writings of other authors well-known to Kant, such as Moses Mendelssohn, Johann Sulzer, and Alexander Baumgarten have also been discussed as possible influences (Meyer 1870, 58–64; and Hatfield 1992, 210). Indeed, such authors would have found it difficult not to read many of Kant's doctrines as contributions to the psychological discussions in which they themselves had been involved and, as we will see in what follows, many of Kant's early readers did precisely that. Furthermore, even for modern readers is it hard to shake off the impression that some of Kant's central claims about space and time as the forms of intuition, or about the synthesis of the imagination are rather straightforward claims about human cognitive psychology.¹ It were

¹ Compare (Hatfield 1992, 212): "The central arguments of the *Critique* exhibit [...] at least four seemingly psychological features: (1) the division of the mind into cognitive faculties (inner and outer sense, imagination, understanding, judgment, and reason); (2) the positing of apparently innate mental structures, such as the forms of intuition or the categories; (3) the appeal to mental activities such as synthesis in explaining the conditions on the possibility of experience [...]; and

considerations such as these that led Norman Kemp Smith to assert, in his influential *Commentary*, that “[n]o interpretation which ignores or underestimates [the] psychological or subjective aspect of [Kant’s] teaching can be admitted as adequate” (Kemp Smith 1918, 51).

On the other hand, it is undeniably true that Kant rejected, in the strongest possible terms, the idea that his critical philosophy is a work of psychology. In the *Critique of Pure Reason* he strictly distinguished transcendental philosophy from psychology (B152)² and asserted that all psychology ought to be expelled from pure philosophy (A54/B78, A801/B829, A848/B876).³ In a famous passage in the *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Naturwissenschaft* he went even further: not only did he there deny psychology a role in pure philosophy, but he even rejected the possibility that psychology will ever be able to become a real science in its own right (AA 4: 471). To say that Kant did not have much much love to spare for psychology, that “stranger” in philosophy (A849/B877), would be putting it mildly.

This tension between the apparent psychological dimensions of many of Kant’s doctrines, on the one hand, and his explicit anti-psychological statements, on the other, is omnipresent in Kant’s critical philosophy. As a result, one of the central challenges for Kant-scholars has for a long time been to try and resolve this tension. This can be done in one of two ways: either by putting emphasis on Kant’s anti-psychological assertions and trying to show how the apparently psychological doctrines in Kant’s philosophy, or at least the ones that are deemed essential to this philosophy, can be reformulated in non-psychological terms; or by limiting the scope of his anti-psychological stance in such a way that it does not range over the psychology present in his own philosophy.

Modern Kant-scholarship has exhibited an undeniable preference for the first of these strategies. Despite Strawson’s recognition that there was indeed a strongly psychological side to the first *Critique*, *The Bounds of Sense* became the

(4) the apparent appeal to introspection in establishing the existence of the synthesizing activity of apperception, and in making other distinctions, such as that between empirical and pure cognition.”

² All references to the first *Critique* (A/B) are to the pagination of the first and second edition. All other references to Kant’s works (AA) are to the pagination of the *Akademie-Ausgabe* (Kant 1900ff.).

³ See also Axvi-ii for a passage that is oft-quoted in this context, but that in my opinion is too ambiguous to provide much evidence on the point in question (see chapter 1, §3).

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most influential exemplar of this strategy. Even though Strawson's own goal in his treatment of Kant was philosophical rather than historical, his attempt to make sense of Kant's philosophy without reference to any psychological doctrines had an enormous influence on the Kant-scholarship in the decades that followed (Kitcher 1990, 3–5). This influence can for a large part be explained by the context in which Strawson's book appeared: the psychologism-debates, initiated by the critiques of Frege and Husserl, had made the philosophical public highly suspicious of any author who would claim that philosophy depended on psychology in any shape or form.⁴ As a result, the popularity of Kant's philosophy, with its apparently strong psychological content, had waned somewhat. Strawson's commentary, however, showed that it was possible to ignore the psychology in Kant, while still preserving much of philosophical interest. *The Bounds of Sense* can therefore largely be credited for the wave of renewed interest in Kant's (theoretical) philosophy in the Anglophone world during the second half of the twentieth century.⁵ Unsurprisingly, however, those scholars who were inspired by Strawson's book, largely followed him in ignoring the psychological dimensions of Kant's work, or, stronger yet, tried to show that those seemingly undeniably psychological aspects of this work could be given a non-psychologistic reading after all. As a consequence, one is hard-pressed to find much mention of psychology in this body of literature. As Gary Hatfield noted in 1990, if psychological interpretations of Kant's doctrines are mentioned at all in such literature, "it is only as a warning against one way of getting Kant wrong" (Hatfield 1990, 110). Given the dominance of this tradition in Kant-scholarship, it is hardly surprising that the view that Kant's first *Critique* is a work of pure epistemology can count on such broad support amongst philosophers.

Since 1990, however, this broad consensus has started to show some tear, as a number of dissonant voices have come to the fore. Even many of these dissenters, however, have been very modest in their claims. Hatfield, for example, wrote that "[n]otwithstanding the attitude of dismissal that has been taken toward psychologistic readings of Kant in more recent times, such readings are not without interest" (Hatfield 1990, 110). And elsewhere, he notes

⁴ See (Kusch 1995) for a detailed account of these debates and their effects.

⁵ In contrast, anti-psychological interpretations of Kant had been common in German philosophy since the Neo-Kantian period (see the conclusion, §2).

that though Kant's philosophy "was not psychological in its fundamental aim nor in its mode of argument" it nevertheless "has implications for psychology" (Hatfield 1992, 216) With similar caution, Andrew Brook, in his book entitled *Kant and the Mind*, claimed that while Kant viewed his psychology "as incomplete and inessential to his main project [...] the discoveries he made about the mind not only were a contribution in their time, but continue to be important now" (Brook 1994, 1). A few scholars, however, have been less modest in their ambitions. Most radical of these is Wayne Waxman, who, in two recent books, has defended the claim that Kant's transcendental philosophy is "not only [...] psychologistic, but [is] so predominantly" (Waxman 2005, 11, cf. 2014). In Waxman's view, expressed in these two books, the transcendental philosophy developed by Kant is best interpreted as a further development of the philosophical project of the British empiricists to turn philosophy into a science of the human mind.

The most influential psychological interpretation of Kant's philosophy, however, has doubtlessly been Patricia Kitcher's *Kant's Transcendental Psychology* (1990, cf. 1995, and 2011). In this book, Kitcher not only argued that ignoring the psychology in Kant necessarily results in historically inadequate interpretations, but also that there is much in this psychology that is worth preserving even today.⁶ In her view, the tension between the apparent psychology in Kant's work and his anti-psychological assertions only arises because we mistakenly interpret Kant as sharing our conception of 'psychology.' Once we recognise that Kant is only rallying against a psychology that is entirely based on finding law-like regularities in introspection, the tension disappears, and it is no longer a problem to maintain that Kant's critical philosophy incorporates elements that are psychological in the modern sense of the word (Kitcher 1990, 12).⁷ It is questionable whether this is a sufficient solution. Whereas Kitcher convincingly show that the anti-psychological camp fails at completely explaining away the multitude of seemingly psychological elements in Kant's philosophy, proponents of a more psychological reading have their own

⁶ Unsurprisingly, while Kitcher's book has been recognized as a serious and important contribution to Kant-scholarship, it has also been criticized for its supposedly overly psychological reading of Kant (e.g., Falduto 2014, 45–51; Nuzzo 2008, 47–8, esp. note 3 and 4; and Allison 1996, 53).

⁷ On the different meaning of 'psychology' in our time and in Kant's, see §6 below.

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problems to face; problems that go deeper than the mere conception of what the word 'psychology' meant for Kant. Most importantly, it is not easy to see how the presence of psychology, in the modern sense of the word, in Kant's critical philosophy can be made consistent with his claims for the purity, necessity and apodictic certainty of this system. This was one of the reasons why Kant excluded what he called 'psychology' from his philosophy (B152) and it is not immediately clear why this same consideration would not hold for a more modern conception. Kitcher, who is aware of this problem, tries to alleviate it by on the one hand arguing that the psychology that Kant uses is only minimally empirical, and on the other by giving a very deflationary interpretation of Kant's assertion that the claims of critical philosophy have to be necessary and apodictically certain (Kitcher 1990, 23–6). I will not argue the point here, but to me this weakened interpretation of the status of Kant's results in particular seems to me as much in conflict with Kant's express intentions as the claim that no psychology whatsoever is to be found in Kant's philosophy is in conflict with the actual content of his theory.

This debate between Kant-scholars over the question how best to understand or resolve the tension between the psychological and the anti-psychological in Kant's philosophy is far from over. In this dissertation I will not engage with it directly, but the research presented here nevertheless has the potential to form an indirect contribution to the debate. In particular, what I hope the present dissertation will make clear is that the very distinction between the epistemological and the psychological on which much of this debate rests was not yet established in Kant's own time. While it is true that there are some first gestures towards such a distinction present in Kant's own work, it first came to be thematised in the early reception of his philosophy, before coming to full fruition in neo-Kantianism. Since a discussion of this point benefits from a substantial understanding of Kantian Psychologism and its interaction with German Idealism, I will postpone this discussion until the conclusion.

More generally, a study of the tradition of Kantian Psychologism can be of value to contemporary debates about the nature of Kant's transcendental philosophy precisely because the attitude of the representatives of this tradition towards Kant is so very different from that of modern Kant-scholars. For modern Kant-commentators, the tension in Kant's work between the psychological and

the anti-psychological represents first and foremost a problem of *interpretation*. The broadly shared assumption, therefore, is that this problem will disappear if only we can come to a correct understanding of Kant's writings. Around 1800, on the contrary, this problem was not treated as an exegetical problem, but rather as a *philosophical* problem inherent in Kant's system that called for a revision of (or at the very least an addition to) this system. My thesis throughout this work is that the early psychological tradition in the reception of Kant grew out of a recognition of this tension between the psychological dimensions of Kant's work on the one hand, and his explicit anti-psychological claims on the other, and developed through a constant engagement with the philosophical problems that find their origin here. It is only on the basis of a solid understanding of this genesis that we can explain the appearance of what I have termed Kantian Psychologism during the decades following the publication of Kant's critical philosophy.

3. *Why Study Kantian Psychologism?*

This question is indeed an urgent one. What I do in the current work, after all, is to try and revive interest in an almost completely forgotten line in the reception of Kant's philosophy. Why do so, other than for reasons of pure antiquarianism? It is always tempting to answer questions such as these by referring to the intrinsic historical or philosophical interest of the subject matter. Since it is often difficult to make a principled distinction between interests that really are of intrinsic value and interests that just happen to be the author's, however, I will gladly leave the decision on this point to my readers, and say something about extrinsic value instead.

The present investigation is, first and foremost, of a historical nature. This historical value, as I see it, is at least twofold. First, I believe, as I already suggested above, that our understanding of Kant's philosophy could benefit significantly from a study of the early psychological reception of this philosophy. Secondly, and just as importantly, such a study will also substantially contribute to our knowledge of the philosophical discourse around 1800. I will shortly discuss these points in turn, before ending this section with an (admittedly speculative) suggestion about how the research presented in what follows,

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despite its primarily historical aim, might also be of some relevance for contemporary philosophy.

In defence of reception history

Though few Kant-scholars will admit it, there seems to be an almost universally shared assumption in modern Kant-scholarship that our understanding of Kant's philosophy is far superior to that of his early readers. At least, this assumption is implicit in the actual practice of most Kant-scholars. When such scholars try to solve a difficult interpretative question, after all, they typically study the primary sources, and of course they consult the modern secondary literature on the topic, but rarely would it occur to them to see how such questions were dealt with in the early reception of Kant. On such points, scholars seem to agree, we have little to learn from Kant's eighteenth- and nineteenth-century readers.

Now, we can certainly offer some justification for this assumed superiority: Kant-scholarship today is undeniably more extensive and professionalized than it was two hundred years ago, and we have access to a lot of material that was not published during Kant's own lifetime. Furthermore, one could argue that historical distance promotes the kind of neutral perspective that is a requirement for objective scholarship. These are valid points, but we should be aware that historical distance comes with a disadvantage as well. Philosophical works, with only few exceptions, are written to be understood: understood, that is, by one's contemporaries rather than by historians two hundred years into the future. Books are written with the interests, knowledge, and presuppositions of one's audience in mind; interests, knowledge and presuppositions that the modern commentator often lacks. For this reason, the modern reader always risks projecting her own context and prejudices onto an historical text and ending up with a distorted and anachronistic interpretation.

One way, and indeed the best way, to prevent such distortion is to study the early reception of a text or a body of work. Little would be achieved, however, if the biases that distorted our view in the first place also tempt us to only study those parts of the early reception of Kant that are most akin to our own interpretation.⁸ If we want to learn from the early reception of Kant's

⁸ Not to mention that even these parts are often "corrected" on those points that cannot be integrated into our contemporary understanding of (Kant's) philosophy. See (Beiser 2007) for discussion.

philosophy, we ought to strive for as complete an understanding as possible of this reception. It is fair to say that so far this has not yet been accomplished: our understanding of this early reception has been especially distorted by an almost exclusive focus on the German Idealists throughout most of the twentieth century. While significant steps have been taken in the last few decades to fill in some blanks, such as that of the early romantic reception,⁹ our picture is still very incomplete. This is especially true with regard to the psychologistic reception of Kant, which, though a number of its authors were well-known in their own time, has been almost completely ignored in modern historical scholarship. This is unfortunate, because this reception gives us a novel perspective on Kant's philosophy within its original context. This perspective has many benefits, of which I will here just name two general points: the first benefit, which I already mentioned in the previous section, is that it can help us to understand that a strict distinction between psychology and epistemology may not be of much use in understanding Kant's project; secondly, it is only from the perspective of the psychological tradition that we can appreciate just how closely intertwined Kant's philosophy and its reception were with debates surrounding the emergence of psychology as an independent discipline. On top of this, the authors of the psychological tradition also shed new light on many of Kant's particular doctrines. A discussion of these points, however, shall have to wait until the relevant chapters.

Classical German philosophy in context

The second reason why this study of Kantian Psychologism is of historical value is that it will help us form a better understanding of the state of German philosophy around 1800. In the previous paragraph I already mentioned the almost exclusive focus on German Idealism by twentieth-century historians of this era. The fact that for a long time 'German Idealism' was even used as a name for this entire period in German intellectual history illustrates just how pervasive this conception was: reading through much of the twentieth century scholarship on this period, one cannot help but form the impression that for a number of decades, the only real philosophical debate that took place in the

⁹ On this early romantic reception there is still no better source than Manfred Frank's *Unendliche Annäherung* (1997).

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German-speaking world was between Fichte, Schelling and Hegel. This impression, as has been more and more acknowledged by scholars over the past twenty years, would of course be hopelessly naive. Though there are many substantial disagreements between the German Idealists, all three of them arguably represented more or less the same general philosophical programme; a programme that united a number of important and highly controversial ideas concerning the nature, goals and methods of philosophy. This general agreement was what enabled the cooperation between Fichte and Schelling and between Schelling and Hegel at various times, and it was also what earned them the common label of 'German Idealism' in the first place. For anyone familiar with the normal state of philosophical discourse, it must seem highly unlikely that there was a time in which all philosophical minds in the German lands¹⁰ were on board with a single highly ambitious and controversial programme. Such scepticism would be entirely warranted. While German Idealism was undeniably the most influential philosophical tradition around 1800 (both in this period, and in the later reception of this period), they were nonetheless competing with a number of other traditions, most of which sprung from different lines of reception of Kant's philosophy (often combined with other influences). The psychological tradition was amongst the best-known and influential of these traditions.¹¹ The authors that represented this tradition were, as we will see in far more detail in this dissertation, united not only by their allegiance to Kant's philosophy and by their shared interest in its psychological dimensions, but also by their mistrust of all philosophers who claimed to have knowledge of the Absolute, and by their desire to reconnect philosophy to the empirical sciences of their own time (see below, §4). The philosophical allegiances of the psychologistic Kantians were therefore in many respects almost diametrically opposed to those of the German Idealists; a fact which resulted in many polemics and other forms of conflict between protagonists of the two traditions. Philosophical traditions do not develop in a vacuum: thinkers engage with

¹⁰ As most readers will undoubtedly know, Germany did not yet exist as a political entity during the period in question. Throughout the present dissertation I use the term 'German lands' to indicate the collection of German-speaking territories with the exception of Switzerland and Austria.

¹¹ In order not to clutter up the discussion of individual philosophers and debates I have postponed a discussion of the influence of this tradition and its protagonists to the conclusion of the dissertation, §2.

possible competitors and try to convince readers of the superiority of the tradition that they represent in relation to these other traditions. In this sense, philosophical works are always contributions to a conversation, and trying to understand one tradition in isolation is like trying to follow a phone-conversation without being able to hear the voice on the other side of the line. As such, to not understand the polemical contexts in which a work is written is to risk seriously misunderstanding that work. This study of German Psychologism therefore aims to contribute to a better understanding of German Philosophy around 1800 by revealing an important part of the philosophical world at that time and place. In this sense, it will provide a significant contribution to the study of German Idealism, precisely by not focussing on this tradition.

Psychology and philosophy: rethinking the relation

The research presented in this dissertation, I said, is first and foremost of a historical nature, and I want it to be evaluated as such. Nevertheless, I do wish to make one suggestion (and no more than that) about how what follows might be of interest to philosophers who are not primarily historically interested. Twentieth-century philosophy was deeply influenced by two related developments that occurred at the beginning of that century: the psychologism debates (and the subsequent rejection of psychologism as a fallacy, see below) on the one hand, and the emancipation of psychology as an autonomous science on the other. As a result of these developments, philosophers in this century generally felt confident in denying the relevance of psychological research for their own questions, and have subsequently ignored the developments in this field. In recent decades, however, it seems to me that philosophers have started taking psychology more seriously again as a source for answering philosophical questions. This renewed interest in psychology is apparent in the renewed attempts to read Kant psychologically, which started to become popular, as I noted above, in the 1990s. But a similar revival seems to be happening in various areas of systematic philosophy. To name just a few examples: Quine's early call to naturalize epistemology by turning it into a branch of empirical psychology (Quine 1969) has been an important topic of discussion for some decades now (Rysiew 2016); Dale Jacquette, in the introduction to his edited volume entitled *Philosophy, Psychology, and Psychologism*, maintained that the argument

against psychologism was not definite and that "there remain good arguments for refined versions of psychologism that can withstand the best assaults of antipsychologism" (Jacquette 2003, 17); Tyler Burge's *Origins of Objectivity* (2010) argued at length for the relevance of results from cognitive psychology for the philosophy of perception; and Tim Crane's *Aspects of Psychologism* defended a "psychologism" that "rejects the idea that philosophy of mind is a purely conceptual investigation, whose findings are relatively independent of empirical psychology and introspective phenomenology" (Crane 2014, x). If such a revival is indeed taking place, then we are only at the beginning of a renewed discussion about the possible value of psychological research for contemporary philosophy. Such a discussion, however, would necessarily also return to questions and themes that were discussed heavily in the tradition of Kantian Psychologism, such as how empirical psychological research can contribute to philosophical questions without reducing philosophy to a branch of empirical psychology. *If* there is a contemporary relevance for Kantian Psychologism, then, it is to be located here.¹²

4. *Kantian Psychologism as a Tradition*

So far I have used the word 'tradition' to refer to Kantian Psychologism, and I will continue to do so for the rest of this dissertation.¹³ 'Tradition' is one of those helpfully vague terms that make it possible for historians to create a semblance of order in the chaos that is our intellectual history by grouping together individual thinkers. Since a history that treats all philosophers as isolated individuals is not much of a history at all, such terms are clearly indispensable. Their essential vagueness, however, makes any attempt to provide necessary and sufficient conditions for their application into a quixotic endeavour. Nevertheless, it is usually possible and helpful to provide some considerations

¹² Admittedly, this is a big if. Ideally, my impression that there is a revival of interest in psychology in modern philosophy would be substantiated by a far more extensive overview of the literature. Similarly, the suggestion that the present dissertation might be of use for discussions about the proper relation between psychology and philosophy can only be defended by means of a concrete engagement with contemporary discussions. I can neither provide the overview nor the defence at present. The above is therefore intended as a mere suggestion; the reader may use it as she wishes.

¹³ Throughout the dissertation I will use 'Kantian Psychologism' and 'the psychological tradition' as synonyms. The latter is simply shorthand for 'the psychological tradition in the reception of Kant's philosophy.'

that justify the grouping together of a number of philosophers in a particular case. I will give some such considerations here.

The very name 'Kantian Psychology' already suggests the two most important characteristics of this tradition. Firstly, all of the representatives of the tradition are Kantians. While this much is obvious, the question "what makes a thinker a Kantian?" is a non-trivial one, precisely since this was one of the most fought-over issues in the time period that is examined in the present dissertation. A non-anachronistic account of this period ought not to make use of a criterion for being a Kantian that begs the question against any of the sides in this debate. The only sufficiently neutral and inclusive criterion for Kantianism is therefore to simply take the authors at their own word; i.e., one is a Kantian if one says one is a Kantian. The task for the historian of philosophy is then merely to understand why these philosophers consider themselves to be Kantians, despite possible disagreements with Kant's philosophy. I come back to this question of Kantianism in each of the chapters that follow.

Secondly, the Kantianism of these thinkers is qualified by what I call 'psychologism.' I am aware that my use of this term has the potential to mislead readers. 'Psychologism' has, since the early twentieth century, most commonly been used to refer to a supposed fallacy, namely the fallacy of using psychological premises and arguments to defend non-psychological conclusions in disciplines such as logic, epistemology and ethics. It may therefore be thought, based on my title alone, that this dissertation aims to examine and censure this fallacy in the works of Kant and his followers. Readers who have read the foregoing will understand that I aim to do no such thing.¹⁴ Instead, my use of the term 'psychologism' is intended to capture two features of the tradition that I investigate. First, representatives of this tradition interpreted Kant's critical philosophy as being dependent on psychology in some non-trivial sense. Secondly, unlike some other prominent Kantians around 1800 (see below, §7),

¹⁴ The main reason why I nevertheless use this term is pragmatic in nature: there is simply no non-evaluative noun in the English language that can be used to describe the position that philosophy, or some sub-discipline of philosophy, ought to find (one of) its starting point(s) in psychological investigations. Rather than invent an ugly new word, or repeat the full description *ad nauseam*, I rely on the reader to interpret this word in its intended sense throughout this work. Admittedly, my use of the term is also intended to be provocative insofar as it will hopefully stimulate the reader to seriously consider philosophical authors who have long been rejected (insofar as they have been considered at all) without further examination on account of their supposed fallacious psychologism.

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they believed that this dependence was a good thing. Consequently, rather than criticize Kant for his dependence on philosophy, they tried to emphasize and strengthen the psychological basis for Kant's philosophy in their own philosophical work.

Kantianism and psychologism (in the sense outline above), then, are the two central features of the psychological tradition. Aside from these, however, this tradition also exhibits several trends that are significant, despite not being followed by every single one of its representatives. This is a common phenomenon: connected to the characteristic doctrines of a philosophical tradition there are always a number of peripheral interests, beliefs, attitudes, etc. that are not directly necessitated by the doctrines in question, but that are nevertheless congenial to them. This point is best clarified by some concrete illustrations.

First of all, one finds in the psychological tradition a broadly shared understanding of Kant's place in the history of philosophy, which is different from our modern understanding. Most modern commentators tend to picture Kant as breaking with the past, and as ushering in the modern period in philosophy as opposed to the early modern period.¹⁵ This popular conception of the place of Kant's work in the history of philosophy is intimately related to the aforementioned dominant anti-psychological reading of Kant. Whereas it is impossible to deny that most early modern thinkers believed that philosophy can make progress by investigating the factual workings of human cognition, Kant supposedly considered such investigations to be inessential; philosophy ought to focus instead on the normative, epistemological question of how our cognition can be justified, and this answer in no way depends on how this cognition came about.¹⁶ It will not be a surprise that the representatives of the psychological tradition do not share this evaluation of the value of Kant's philosophy. For most of them, Kant's philosophy does not represent a fundamental break with the early modern enquiries concerning human understanding first propagated by Locke; rather, they see it as a continuation of

¹⁵ An important exception is Waxman, who, in his own words, aims "to expound the transcendental philosophy of Immanuel Kant as a continuation of British Empiricism by nonempiricist means" (Waxman 2005, 3)

¹⁶ This interpretation of Kant's position in the history of philosophy goes back to at least the early years of neo-Kantianism (Windelband 1884, 247).

this line, and indeed as its culmination. When they see Kant reject Locke's "physiology of the human understanding" (Aix), they interpret this not as a complete rejection of this project, but rather as a rejection of the particular executions of it by Locke and his successors.¹⁷ As a result, at the same time when the early modern thinkers, and the early modern British thinkers in particular, are criticized by the Idealist successors of Kant for their "dogmatism" and their "superficial empiricism" (e.g., Hegel, GW 2: 335–8), they remain powerful influences within the psychological tradition.

A second trend within Kantian Psychology is a widely shared conception of how philosophy relates to the empirical sciences. Most of the representatives of this tradition displayed a serious interest in the empirical sciences of their time, and they favour a tight relationship between philosophy and these sciences. The precise way in which they envision this relationship differs from author to author, but they all reject a model in which philosophy provides a foundation for the empirical sciences. One common sentiment is that given the rapid progression of the empirical sciences at this time, and the apparent lack of progress in philosophy, philosophers ought to try and learn from the empirical sciences, and to utilize their results and methods in philosophy, rather than pretend that philosophy can be a lawgiver for the sciences. Given the psychological idiom of Kant's work, as well as the fact that its aim and structure can easily be interpreted in psychological terms, it is hardly surprising that the representatives of Kantian Psychology had high hopes that a philosophy based on psychology would be able to emulate the successes of the natural sciences.

A third unifying feature of Kantian Psychology is the almost complete rejection of German Idealism. That the representatives of the psychological tradition would not have been favourably disposed towards the Idealist is obvious in light of their psychological reading of Kant, their empirical inclinations, and their emphasis on the autonomy of the empirical sciences. For the psychologistic Kantians, German Idealism was the embodiment of all that Kant had tried to expel from philosophy: scholasticism, rationalism, and obscurantism, all combined to produce a system of the most extravagant

¹⁷ With some justification, it should be said. Even though this passage has often been used to justify non-psychological readings of Kant project, Kant explicitly states that the reason why Locke's "physiology" failed to achieve its aim is because it falsely supposes that the genealogy of human cognition only contains empirical elements.

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metaphysics. In fact, Kantian Psychology from the 1790s onwards can to a large extent be understood as a counter-reaction against German Idealism: for many of its representatives it was an attempt to save Kant's philosophy from the perversions (as they saw it) of its Idealist reception. It was to this end that they emphasized Kant's focus on experience, the limitations he posited for human knowledge, and his rejection of all insight into a supposed "Absolute."¹⁸ The psychological interpretation of Kant's philosophy was also used to shield it against strong metaphysical or even mystical interpretations. Throughout the history of Kantian Psychology we therefore see a constant polemic engagement of its representatives with the German Idealists; polemics that were never friendly in tone, and that at times even became strongly hostile.¹⁹

We will have the chance to look at these trends in detail in the chapters that follow. It should be noted, however, that the shared features of Kantian Psychology that I have listed all concern, to a greater or lesser extent, matters of philosophical doctrine. I have said nothing, in other words, about institutional or private links between the individuals that constitute this tradition. That is not to say that there are no such links to be found: Heusinger (chapter three) and Fries (chapter four), for example, were both students at the university of Jena, where Schmid (chapters one and three) was a professor at the time; the same Schmid edited and published a journal on psychology which published five of Fries's papers in a single issue; Bouterwek (chapter three) and Fries were connected through their regular correspondence with Jacobi; Beneke (chapter five) was introduced to Fries's work by one of the latter's followers, Wilhelm de Wette, who was a professor of theology at the university of Berlin during Beneke's time as a student; and Beneke received a conditional offer to replace Fries at the university of Jena after that university was forced, for political reasons, to bar Fries from teaching. Nonetheless, such connections remained incidental. As a consequence Kantian Psychology remained a tradition in a

¹⁸ It is also in this context that the affiliation of a fair number of the psychologistic Kantians (such as Bouterwek, Fries, and Beneke) with the philosophy of Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi can be understood.

¹⁹ This can be in part explained by the fact that not only the ideal was at stake; representatives of the two traditions were often fighting over material interests, such as academic jobs or (paying) students. Fries, for example, competed with Hegel, first, for a professorship at the university of Heidelberg (which Fries won), and later at the newly established university of Berlin (which he lost); and Schmid was reported to have lost all of his students to Fichte as a consequence of their hostile polemic (Breazeale 1988, 312 n.13).

predominantly intellectual sense, which never developed into an organised movement.

5. *Three Generations of Kantian Psychology*

Traditions, it should by now be clear, are not homogeneous entities. Instead, they are characterised by what Wittgenstein famously called as "family resemblances": the philosophical authors and works that constitute a tradition are often better characterised in terms of a number of overlapping similarities than in terms of essential criteria for membership of the group. This point is further complicated by the fact that traditions, per definition, stretch out over time, and are therefore subject to change. This is an important factor to consider when investigating Kantian Psychology, especially since this tradition is also subject to developments within the broader tradition of Kantianism. In the present dissertation I distinguish three generations in the early reception of Kant, each of which also corresponds to developments in the sub-tradition of Kantian Psychology. A full discussion of these generations will naturally have to be postponed until the relevant chapters, but in order to facilitate an overview of the work as a whole, I will shortly characterise them here.

The first generation, which I discuss in chapter one, can roughly be dated from the moment of the publication of Kant's first *Critique* until the early 1790s. This generation is best characterised by a dominant culture of *orthodoxy*. The primary aim of the Kantians of this generation was to promote the critical philosophy to a public that was entirely unfamiliar with it, rather than to subject it to critical examination. The consequence of this culture of orthodoxy for the psychological reception of Kant is that the tension between the psychological and the anti-psychological in the critical philosophy is not thematised explicitly. Nevertheless, even in this time there are already a number of authors that put particular emphasis on themes that would remain tropes of Kantian Psychology: Kant's account of the mental faculties, the relevance of the doctrine of the forms of intuition for problems in the psychology of perception, and the theory of synthesis.

The bulk of this dissertation (chapters two, three, and four) deals with the generation of Kantians that was most influential during the last decade of the

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eighteenth-, and the first decade of the nineteenth century. During this period, Kant's philosophy was no longer fighting for its place in the philosophical landscape, but in fact had come to dominate this landscape, at least in the German lands. This made it possible for Kantians to turn their attention towards a critical examination of the critical philosophy itself, and to consider the possibility of developing this philosophy further in a systematic fashion. It was during these years that the uncomfortable position of psychology in Kant's work was made explicit, and that it became the topic of fierce discussion (chapter two). Whereas this led some Kantians (most importantly Fichte) to make the first attempts at developing a thoroughly non-psychological version of Kantianism, others (the psychologistic Kantians) rather took this as a cue that Kant's philosophy could only flourish if its psychology was strengthened, and if the relation of this psychology to the rest of the critical philosophy was more explicitly determined. After several early attempts at doing so (chapter three), Jakob Friedrich Fries's psychological reconstruction of Kant's critical philosophy represents the most thorough and accomplished version of this project (chapter four).

In chapter five, finally, I examine the philosophy of the most important late representative of Kantian Psychologism: Friedrich Eduard Beneke. Beneke was a member of a third generation of Kantianism; a generation that was more inclined to see Kant as a crucial historical figure than as a direct discussion partner. Members of this generation tended not to engage with Kant's philosophical theory in its concrete detail, but rather abstract from it what they considered to be its core idea; the rest of Kant's theory was interpreted as being inessential to the true importance of Kant's philosophy, and therefore discarded. Given the lack of consensus on what this core idea was supposed to be, however, one can find within this generation a great variety of different "Kantianisms," each which take up and radicalize one element of the original critical philosophy. Beneke, as we shall see, was no different in this regard; his philosophy represented by far the most radical version of Kantian Psychologism. Here, philosophy was not merely made dependent upon psychology; rather, philosophy was reduced in its entirety to his system of empirical psychology.

I end this section with a methodological remark on my use of the term 'generation.' Critics may well object that this term is no less vague than

'tradition,' and that no objective criteria can be given for placing the boundaries of each generation where I do, instead of at an arbitrary different point in time. Something is certainly to be said for this critique; orthodox Kantianism did not suddenly die out at the beginning of the 1790s, nor was there an absence of radicals during the second generation, or of more moderate Kantians in the 1820s. It would be foolish not to admit that any generalisation about supposed generations admits of plenty of exceptions. Furthermore, we should even admit that any categorization of philosophers in generations is necessarily relative to one's research interests, and that a different research question could have led us to draw the boundaries of the generations in an altogether different fashion. Yet, all this being true, it does not mean that we should refrain from assigning an explanatory role to the notion of 'generations' altogether. Whereas generations are usually thought of as being comprised of individuals, it is more helpful to think of them in terms of the context within which individuals necessarily act. Thus, while one may perhaps urge that Fichte in the 1790s already adopted the attitude that I ascribe to the third generation, it should nonetheless be recognised that he thereby actively distanced himself from his intellectual context; his immediate discussion-partners were for the most part still thinkers who took Kant's philosophy seriously in its entirety, and who criticized Fichte severely for his claims to be representing the "true spirit" of Kantianism as opposed to its letter. Beneke, on the other hand, no longer had to make much of an effort to justify his one-sided attitude towards Kant, because Kantianism in his time was by and large dominated by such approaches. My talk of 'generations,' then, is not meant to commit me to an indefensible thesis about the objective reality of generation categories, but it is rather part of an attempt to take seriously the fact that the work of philosophers does not develop in complete independence from their social context. It is an unfortunate fact that historians of philosophy, unlike historians of science, still by and large ignore such social factors (Kusch 1995, 16–27). Whether my consideration of such factors is both helpful and convincing is a question that can only be answered by a critical examination of the chapters that follow.²⁰

²⁰ Despite my attention to social factors, the research presented in the chapters that follow is still relatively traditional, in the sense that I focus primarily on publish primary sources, and avoid the exclusively historical-sociological approach that is popular amongst some historians of science. While I do not reject the latter approach, I must admit that I still see much of value in the more traditional one, for the simple reason that a history of philosophy that takes little to no

6. *Psychology*

Since the topic of psychology takes centre stage in my dissertation, it is of obvious importance to determine what exactly will be meant by this term. Surprisingly, the (extensive) secondary literature on the role of psychology in Kantian philosophy is of little help in this regard. Authors who write on this topic for the most part simply seem to presuppose that their readers will understand what they mean when they are talking about "psychology" or "the psychological." This will not do for a number of reasons. The most important methodological difficulty is that the meaning of the term 'psychology' has been highly unstable over the past two hundred years. Several modern commentators who have taken an interest in Kant's psychology have made clear that Kant's own use of the term is not directly intuitive for modern readers (Kitcher 1990, 11–2; and Sturm 2001, 174–8), and the same is true for the conception of his contemporaries.

Given these different conceptions of psychology, whose notion are we to use? On the one hand, historians of philosophy in some sense always have to translate ideas and arguments from the period they study into a vocabulary with which their readers are more familiar, and this would be an argument in favour of using a more modern conception of psychology. On the other hand, however, projecting back on history a notion of psychology that people within the historical tradition in question did not possess can only seem a form of gross anachronism that will inevitably result in a misleading account of the tradition in question. Yet, the suggestion to use a historical notion of psychology is not without problems either, for the simple reason that there is no such thing as *the* notion of psychology used around 1800. Psychology, it is generally accepted, did not become an autonomous scientific discipline until late in the nineteenth century. During the period that we examine, psychology was certainly widely discussed, but these discussions in large part revolved around the question what form a potentially autonomous science of psychology ought to take. As a consequence, the very meaning of the term psychology was still at stake in these debates, and its use differed greatly from author to author, or even from one

interest in actual philosophical ideas and arguments seems to me an altogether bizarre endeavour.

work of an author to another work of that same author.²¹ Most importantly, it could be used to apply to three very different practices, each of which had its defenders: the rational psychology of the Wolffians, which tried to deduce knowledge about the human mind on the basis of an abstract conception of the soul; the physiological psychology promoted primarily by physicians such as Ernst Platner, who hoped to understand the human mind by means of an investigation of the human body; and the practice of an introspective, so-called empirical psychology, which also found its origins in Wolff's psychology, but which had emancipated itself to some extent from the latter's theoretical framework.²²

In order to do complete justice to the historical context, then, it may seem that we ought to refrain completely from using a general notion of 'psychology' and instead spell out for each individual author how he himself uses this notion. This would not be practical, however, and, more importantly, it would not be informative, for it would make it near impossible to make any general claims about the psychological tradition; in fact, it would make it impossible to speak of a psychological tradition at all.

Though a healthy dose of fear for anachronism contributes to good historical research, it ought never to lead us to an absurd variety of particularism. For this reason, I have opted for a mixed strategy: for my general notion of 'psychology' I will make use of an a-historical stipulative definition, which I will supplement with historical qualifications concerning the conception of psychology of individual authors in the relevant chapters.

The stipulative definition is the following: *psychology is the science of the factual, contingent nature of the mind.*²³ Correspondingly, psychological claims

²¹ As a matter of fact, there were even still disagreements about the *word* with which this potential new discipline ought to be designated. German authors around 1800 used not only the term '*Psychologie*,' but also '*Seelenlehre*,' and '*Anthropologie*.' The relationship between these words was also still highly in flux at the time: some authors exclusively used one of these words, whereas others used them as synonyms, or to designate different subdisciplines of the study of the mind. For the present dissertation these distinctions are too subtle to be of use: I translate all three of the terms as 'psychology.'

²² For a discussion of the *status quaestiones* (especially with regard to physiological and empirical psychology) at the point of Kant's publication of the first *Critique*, see (Sturm 2009, 55–125).

²³ Naturally, this definition is far from unambiguous itself, because there are serious philosophical questions to be asked about the exact meanings of 'factual,' 'contingent,' and 'mind.' It is not necessary, however, for this definition to be completely precise, as long as it is precise enough for our present purposes, which I believe it to be.

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are defined as claims about the factual, contingent nature of the mind. Psychological beliefs, concepts, theories, experiments, etc., are defined in similar fashion, which it would be tedious to spell out. Note that this definition of 'psychology' is both a-historical and minimal, in the sense that it is general enough to include both modern and historical conceptions of psychology. Nevertheless, it is substantial enough to allow us to ask interesting historical-philosophical questions. Most importantly, it serves our purposes insofar as the core claim of Kantian Psychologism that Kant's philosophy is *and ought to be* dependent on psychology, is still highly controversial (both around 1800 and amongst modern Kant-scholars) when psychology is interpreted in accordance with our stipulative definition. This ensures that our discussions will retain a direct connection to both the debates around 1800 and to modern discussions in Kant-scholarship.

7. *The Corpus*

Before I end this conclusion, let me make a few remarks about the decisions that were made in the selection and treatment of the texts that I discuss in this dissertation. With regard to the selection of these texts it should be noted that I make no claim to completeness, for two reasons. First, though one finds the occasional reference to a psychological tradition of Kantianism in the literature (e.g., Collins 1998, 632; George 2003, 37; Colapietro 2003, 161; Hatfield 1990, 110; and Kitcher 1990, 5–7), and though some work has been done on individual authors within this tradition (primarily by German scholars), no historical research had been done on Kantian Psychologism as a philosophical tradition when I started my research (this has since changed, see below). As a result, I had to establish the corpus in a rather piecemeal fashion, following individual references (which often lead nowhere) and conjectures about where relevant texts might possibly be found (which frequently turned out to be false). Given that a systematic search was not possible, it is not unlikely that I missed texts (or even authors) that would nonetheless have been relevant for my account.

Second, and perhaps more importantly, I have been highly selective in my decision regarding which authors and texts to include in the present account. For reasons that I set out in section four, no hard criterion can be given for who does or does not belong to this tradition. Because of this, and also in order not to

overburden the reader with too many unfamiliar names, I have erred on the side of caution, and have included only those authors and texts that are either absolutely central to the tradition itself, or that I judged to provide the best illustration of an essential development within this tradition. My hope is that this decision has resulted in a dissertation that goes into sufficient depth to be of interest, while remaining brief enough to not scare off the readers to whom it might be of such interest. It does however mean that I mostly ignore authors whose work, despite not being at the centre of this tradition, nevertheless developed themes or ideas that were important to this tradition. A more complete account, then, would certainly include a discussion of Herbart and Jacobi, both of whom were important sources of inspiration for the psychological tradition, but probably also names such as, Ludwig Heinrich von Jakob, Wilhelm Traugott Krug, Salomon Maimon, Christian Weiß, and several representatives of the first Friesian School.²⁴ Even for the authors that I do discuss at length, I have tried as much as possible to limit my discussion to the texts that are most important for understanding the developments within the tradition. Generally speaking, this part of the selection process was simple enough, since I originally encountered most of the authors that I discuss by means of references to particular works. In the case of Fries, furthermore, the decision to focus on his *magnum opus*, the *Neue Kritik der Vernunft* was an obvious one. The only author for whom a clear selection criterion did not suggest itself was Beneke. Here, my discussion makes use of a larger number of his works than I would have liked, but given the strong consistency of his doctrine over time, and the frequent repetition of his core arguments from work to work, I am confident that this will not cause unnecessary confusions on the part of the reader.

Since many of the texts that I discuss are not readily available in most university libraries, I have tried to make it as easy as possible for readers to consult the original source material. Whenever possible, I cite the first published edition of these works, almost all of which, unlike more recent editions, are available for free online on websites such as Google Books and Archive.org.²⁵ Since I may reasonably expect that all readers with a sufficient interest in the

²⁴ I shortly discuss the Friesian School in the conclusion, and I say a little more about my reasons for excluding Herbart from the present account below.

²⁵ In the case of Fries references to the first edition are followed with a reference to the corresponding passage in the *Sämtliche Schriften*

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history of German philosophy to read the present dissertation will be capable of reading the primary sources in their original language, and because there are virtually no translations available of the texts that I cite, quotations that can stand on their own are given in German. Shorter quotations, which are introduced in a running sentence, however, have been translated into English for obvious grammatical reasons.²⁶

With regard to my treatment of the secondary literature, it should be noted that I have tried as much as possible to avoid extended arguments with modern Kant-scholarship. Though I undoubtedly make a number of controversial claims about Kant's philosophy in the chapters that follow, I have, as a rule, only supported such claims with reference to the relevant passages in Kant. One reason for this is that it would be impossible to do justice to this enormously complex body of literature without completely shifting the focus of the present dissertation. More importantly, where I do make such claims about Kant, I do not make them for their own sake, but rather to help the reader understand why the authors that I discuss considered their own psychologically oriented work to be inspired by Kant, despite the fact that at times this work is completely at odds with modern interpretations of Kant's philosophy.

Similarly, I have refrained as much as possible from polemics against the few other scholars who have written about the authors that I discuss. Since these authors are mostly unfamiliar to the broader philosophical audience, I judged that for most readers a focused discussion on the primary sources themselves would be of more interest than highly specialised disagreements about how to best interpret these sources. Where my disagreement with the literature is more substantial, I have indicated the nature of the disagreement in a footnote, and have left it to the interested reader to make up her own mind.

Furthermore, because of the scarcity of literature on the psychological tradition, I can be brief where it comes to the place of the present dissertation in modern scholarship; aside from a number of works that discuss some of the individual authors of the psychological tradition (primarily Fries and Beneke), there is only one other work that examines the psychological tradition as a tradition: Frederick Beiser's *The Genesis of Neo-Kantianism*. This book, which

²⁶ Unless indicated otherwise, translations are my own, with the exception of translations of Kant's works, which are from the *Cambridge Editions of the Works of Immanuel Kant*.

was published almost two years after I began my own investigation of Kantian Psychology, devotes a full two hundred pages to what Beiser calls the "lost," "empirical-psychological" tradition of Kantianism around 1800 (Beiser 2014, 13–6). It may therefore be worthwhile to add a few comments on the differences between that book and the present dissertation.

First, and most importantly, the aim of Beiser's work is different from that of the present dissertation. Beiser's examination of Kantian Psychology looks forward: as the title already implies, he examines this tradition as one, and indeed as the first stage in the genesis of Neo-Kantianism, which achieved its greatest successes around 1900. The current investigation takes the opposite direction insofar as it treats the psychological tradition as the *explanandum*, instead of as the *explanans*: the aim is to understand how this tradition developed from Kant's critical philosophy. This difference is best illustrated by the fact that whereas Beiser's account of the psychological tradition starts with Fries, my account rather treats Fries's psychological Kantianism as the culmination of a tradition that goes back all the way to the original reception of Kant's philosophy in the 1780s.

Secondly, my account is more focussed than Beiser's. While the development of Neo-Kantianism is the guiding thread that ties together the chapters of Beiser's book, these chapters themselves are more general in nature. Beiser goes through the life and career of the authors he discusses in roughly chronological order. This strategy is certainly legitimate, but it is not the strategy that has been adopted here. While chapter four and five of this dissertation, and a significant number of sections in the other chapters are also devoted to individual philosophers, the focus of the discussion remains throughout on the development of Kantian Psychology as a tradition. This means that I do not discuss matters of biography or philosophical doctrines and ideas except insofar as these are directly relevant for the question of the proper role of psychology in (Kantian) philosophy. Furthermore, I limit my discussion entirely to what is nowadays called theoretical philosophy, thus excluding, amongst other topics, work on ethics, political philosophy, and aesthetics. The reason for this is not that the psychologism of the author's I discuss has no interesting implications for these fields, but, generally speaking, this is not where the most thorough

philosophical-methodological discussions in which we are here interested are to be found.

The third, and last important point of difference concerns the role of Johann Friedrich Herbart in the psychological tradition. Beiser names Herbart, along with Fries and Beneke, as one of the three main representatives of the psychological tradition, whereas I exclude him from my account. This requires some justification, for Beiser's decision to include Herbart in this tradition is certainly understandable: Herbart became famous and influential primarily because of his psychology; Beiser's argument that Herbart considered himself a Kantian is very persuasive (Beiser 2014, 89–93); and there is clear evidence that Herbart interpreted Kant's philosophy through the lens of psychology (Beiser 2014, 137–8). Furthermore, some historical facts also speak in favour of this inclusion: in a letter to Fries, Herbart expressed regret about some earlier polemics between them, and suggested that their projects are more similar than these critical exchanges would make it seem (Henke 1867, 238); a decade later, M.W. Drobisch, a friend and follower of Herbart even attempted to arrange a cooperation between Fries and Herbart (Henke 1867, 261–2); a similar cooperation was proposed by Beneke to Herbart in a letter from 1823 (Beiser 2014, 143), and in 1845 Beneke claimed that "Herbart's efforts [...] were more closely related to my own than those of any other German philosopher" (Beneke 1845a, 85). Herbart may therefore well seem a prime candidate to be included in my account of Kantian Psychologism, especially given his prominence in the German lands during the nineteenth century. Nonetheless, I exclude him for one simple reason: Herbart explicitly rejects the idea that philosophy's starting point can be found in psychology. Despite the fact that he, too, interprets Kant as developing a philosophy based on psychology, he evaluates this feature of Kant's philosophy negatively, and argues extensively that psychology (and philosophy) can only blossom if they are instead given a metaphysical foundation.²⁷ This runs

²⁷ "Die Philosophie muß [...] die in neuern Zeiten ihr fälschlich zum Verdienst angerechnete, psychologische Richtung [...] gänzlich wieder verlassen (Herbart 1813, 156). See also the rest of that chapter, and especially pp. 152–3: "Was nun vollends das Unternehmen anlangt, *erst* die Grenzen des menschlichen Erkenntnisvermögens auszumessen, und *dann* die Metaphysik zu kritisieren: so setzt dieses die ungeheure Täuschung voraus, als ob das Erkenntnisvermögen leichter zu erkennen sey, denn das, womit die Metaphysik sich beschäfftige. Es liegt aber vor Augen, dass alle Begriffe, *durch die* wir unser Erkenntnisvermögen denken, selbst metaphysische Begriffe sind" and p. 159: "Nachdem [...] die allgemeine Metaphysik ist befestigt worden: kann man fortschreiten zur Psychologie und Naturphilosophie."

exactly counter to the core idea of the representatives of Kantian Psychology, which is that a psychological starting point is necessary to avoid the traditional impasses of philosophy in general, and metaphysics in particular. It is therefore hardly surprising that Fries and Beneke criticize Herbart precisely on this point (Fries 1815, 423–4/SS 25: 54–5; Beneke 1845a, 87–94). Though Beiser recognizes that this makes his inclusion of Herbart in the psychological tradition less convincing, he attempts to relativize this point by claiming that Herbart nevertheless wants to provide a psychological foundation for *epistemology* (Beiser 2014, 137–41). I do not find this argument convincing,²⁸ but even assuming it to be valid, it would still at most earn Herbart a place on the periphery of this tradition, rather than in its centre. It is for these reasons that I exclude Herbart from the present account.²⁹

Though I disagree with Beiser on the inclusion of Herbart in the tradition, and though I note a number of other disagreements with his work in the chapters on Fries and Beneke, it should be understood that such disagreements ought to be interpreted first and foremost as evidence of how important Beiser's work has been as a reference point for the work presented in this dissertation. The points on which I agree with Beiser's analysis are far more numerous than the points of dissent, and I have learned far more from his work, and from Beiser's earlier studies of classical German philosophy, than I have had occasion to acknowledge in the main text. The standard for all future studies of Kantian

²⁸ The main problem with Beiser's argument is that it presupposes a fundamental distinction between epistemology and psychology that was not yet established when Herbart was writing (see the conclusion, §3). In any case, Herbart himself never explicitly made such a distinction, as is also suggested by some of Beiser's own comments. A good example of this is Beiser's claim that Herbart "*implicitly* subordinates epistemology to psychology, as if there could [be] no question of epistemology being a separate discipline on its own" (Beiser 2014, 137). Indeed, one is tempted to add, because for Herbart there was no such question. Furthermore, Beiser concludes that "though Herbart promised to put epistemology on a firm psychological basis, there is not much left of epistemology at all in his psychology" (14). Here I must admit that I do not quite understand how an "*implicit subordination*" of epistemology to psychology can be construed as a promise. Rather, it seems to me to be a lot more straightforward to simply interpret Herbart as doing exactly what he claims to be doing: psychology. That a number of the questions that Herbart discusses in this psychology would now be classified under epistemology is simply insufficient reason to interpret him as providing a psychological *foundation* for such questions.

²⁹ Beiser's inclusion of Herbart in the psychological tradition has also been criticized in one review of his book, albeit for different reasons (Edgar 2015). Edgar seems to imply, however, that when Herbart is dropped, and only Fries and Beneke remain, it becomes questionable whether we can any longer speak of a tradition at all. I hope that the present dissertation shall demonstrate that such worries are unfounded, and that this tradition was in fact significantly more extensive than just Fries and Beneke.

INTRODUCTION

Psychologism has been set by Beiser's *The Genesis of Neo-Kantianism*: it is up to the reader to decide whether the present work lives up to it.

Chapter 1

Psychology in Early Orthodox Kantianism

1. *Orthodoxy and Kantian Psychologism*

The first stage of the reception of Kant's critical philosophy, which lasted roughly from the publication of the first *Critique* until the early years of the 1790s, is best typified as one of orthodoxy. The role of orthodoxy in histories of reception has never received much attention from historians of philosophy. The reason for this is evident: historians of philosophy are usually philosophers by training, and as such they have a tendency to focus their attention on what they perceive to be the novel and exciting ideas within a certain period. Consequently, there has traditionally been little interest for philosophers who did not produce any such ideas, but who instead dutifully reproduced and defended the ideas of the innovative minds that they admired.

Natural as this may be, it is also unfortunate. The introduction of new philosophical ideas is undoubtedly a social phenomenon, and as such its success or failure (much as we would sometimes like to believe otherwise) depends on far more than merely the quality and novelty of these ideas. Without the relevant social factors in place, excellent and innovative ideas may fall to deaf ears, whereas superficial theories, traditional ideas dressed in a new terminology, or indefensible claims may be hailed (for some time at least) as intellectual revolutions. For this reason, the history of philosophy is impoverished if the historian fails to take these social factors into account. In this context, the study of orthodoxy is of significant value, for orthodoxy often has an important role to play in making novel philosophical systems successful. Moreover, while orthodox thinkers by definition produce little to no original thought, they do help determine which of the themes and ideas in a philosopher's work are emphasized or, on the contrary, ignored during the early reception of this work. By doing so, the orthodox followers of a philosopher can significantly influence the direction that the later reception of this philosopher will take.

This is certainly true for the psychological tradition. In the early orthodox reception of Kant's philosophy one finds that a number of Kant's doctrines are taken up and defended as valuable contributions to psychological discussions. Examples of such doctrines are Kant's theory of the cognitive faculties, the *a priori* forms of intuition, and the doctrine of synthesis. Despite the fact that the discussions of such themes in the orthodox reception contain little of true originality, they are nevertheless important, because they illustrated the potentially productive interrelations between psychology and Kant's critical philosophy, and because they highlighted a number of themes that would remain central throughout the entirety of Kantian Psychology. In this chapter I will consider three case studies that will illustrate the concerns for psychology that were present during this earliest phase of reception (sections three, four, and five). Given the lack of serious discussions of orthodox Kantianism in the literature, however, I will preface these case studies with a somewhat more extended discussion of the nature of Kantian orthodoxy in the next section.

2. *The Nature of Orthodox Kantianism*

One of the most important things to understand about orthodox Kantianism is that it was first and foremost a *movement*. What I mean by this is that it was no mere collection of individuals who happened to share a certain philosophical outlook (cf. the introduction, §4), but rather an organized group of philosophers, united by a common purpose. This group had its origins in the years after the publication of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Upon its first release this book did not make much of an impression.¹ This was far from surprising, since in many respects Kant's *magnum opus* was the very opposite of everything that Kant's contemporaries believed philosophy ought to be: the philosophical culture in the German lands at this time was to a significant extent dominated by the so-called *Popularphilosophen*, who, motivated by Enlightenment-values, emphasized the importance of popular intelligibility and possible practical (moral and religious) use over rigorous argumentation (Pietsch 2010, 29; and Beiser 1987, 165–72). In this context, Kant's first *Critique*, a large, technical, obscurely written work,

¹ The reviews of the book collected in (Landau 1991) provide an illustration of this almost absent reception during the first few years. As one can already glance from the index, it is only in 1785 that responses to Kant's new philosophy are really starting to increase in number.

presenting a highly complex philosophical system that set the highest possible standards with respect to rigour seemed entirely out of place.² As a result, the book originally sold badly, and was read even less (Pietsch 2010, 25–7). Though this frustrated Kant greatly, it soon became clear to him that he needed more than strong arguments to get people to take notice of his work, and to make the critical philosophy into a success; he badly needed publicity. To this end he recruited a number of sympathisers whose task it would be to promote Kant's *Critique*. The fact that by the end of the 1780s the critical philosophy had, contrary to all expectations, become the dominant philosophical force in the German lands can be attributed in large part to the effectiveness of this newly-established Kantian movement.

During this decade this movement included names such as Johann Friedrich Schultz, Christian Gottfried Schütz, Johann Erich Biester, Friedrich Gottlob Born, Johann Bering, Ludwig Heinrich Jakob, Carl Christian Erhard Schmid, and (though only shortly) Karl Leonhard Reinhold. As I already indicated above, these philosophers have so far received little attention from Kant-scholars (with the exception of Reinhold); if they are acknowledged at all, it is usually only to be dismissed in a few sentences. Thus:

Kant gathered around himself a certain number of sympathisers. In general these were men of little note whose mediocrity was to some extent balanced by their indefatigable zeal and vigorous activity. In a comparatively short time they were able to bring about Kant's triumph in spite of all opposition. (De Vleeschauwer 1962, 91)

While de Vleeschauwer is to be commended for at least recognizing the historical importance of the early orthodox Kantians, and while his judgment about the philosophical merits of these philosophers is mostly accurate, it is misleading to suggest that they managed to be successful *despite* their philosophical mediocrity. Rather, the mediocrity of its representatives was an important factor in the success of the movement. As the cases of Reinhold, Fichte, and to some extent Beck show, talented philosophers tend not to be satisfied with merely promoting another thinker's work: they strive towards critique and innovation. Kant knew all too well, however, that the Kantian movement would stand or fall

² In April 1781, in a letter to Kant's publisher Hartknoch, Kant's friend Hamann wrote that he did not expect that the *Critique* would become much of a success, because "only few readers will be able to handle the scholastic content [of the book]" (cited in Pietsch 2010, 25).

with its ability to speak with a single voice. A public that was not yet acquainted with even the most fundamental principles of the critical philosophy would at best not have been interested in internal disputes within Kantianism; at worst, such disputes would have given the appearance of weakness. As Kant wrote to his most trusted lieutenant, Schulze: "nothing could please our opponents more than to detect dissension over fundamental principles" (AA 10: 367). For the promotion of his new philosophy, Kant needed philosophers who would be willing to spread his doctrines without any fundamental form of criticism; the Kantian movement was orthodox by design.

The mechanics by means of which this orthodoxy was maintained are clearly visible in Kant's extensive correspondence, which shows a significant degree of top-down organisation within the movement. Many illustrations can be given of the fact that Kant exercised a strict control over the actions that were undertaken to further the cause of the critical philosophy. For example, the above quotation from Kant's letter to Schulze was not merely an off-hand comment, but was rather made to dissuade Schulze from including a point of criticism in a manuscript that was later to be published as *Erläuterungen über des Herrn Professor Kant Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (Schultz 1784). One of Kant's colleagues, his former student Christian Kraus complained that Kant had "forced him" to write his defence of Kant against Christoph Meiners, one of Kant's opponents in Göttingen. As he later wrote to Hamann, Kant had also read the manuscript in advance, and edited the parts that were not to his liking (Kühn 2001, 320–1). A third good example is contained in a letter to Kant by Christian Schütz, the editor of the *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung* (ALZ), and one of Kant's most loyal followers, in which he writes:

Es haben sich verschiedene Commentatoren angeboten, die [die Kritik der r. V.] popular machen wollen. Wenn dis unter Ihrer Oberaufsicht geschieht, so habe ich nichts dagegen. Sonst aber fürcht ich, daß man Ihr Buch, wie die Bibel, unzälichemal falsch exegesiren und paraphrasiren werde. (AA 10: 394, my emphasis)

Being a part of the Kantian movement clearly (and somewhat ironically) came at a price with respect to one's autonomy. On the other hand, loyalty to Kant often did not go unrewarded, for Kant was in a position to further the careers of his sympathisers, by helping them obtain academic positions, putting in a good word

for them with his publishers, or, as the previous example illustrates, by using his influence at the *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung*.³

The examination of the role of psychology in this highly orthodox Kantian movement necessarily brings with it certain problems. Because the orthodox Kantians usually remained so very close to the terminology, phrasing, and organisation of Kant's works in their own writing, the original tension between the psychological and the anti-psychological in the critical philosophy is not resolved (or even explicitly thematised), but is rather reproduced. Authors during this decade often take note of and copy Kant's critical remarks concerning the value of psychology for transcendental philosophy, but place them side by side with the very elements in Kant's philosophy that could give rise to psychological readings in the first place.

This problem is not easily solved: in order to uncover the psychological dimensions of this early reception of Kant one must do some detailed detective work, tracing those passages and works in which authors are most likely to tread somewhat further from the original texts than they would normally do, thereby revealing something of their own perspective. Of particular value in this regard are polemical works, which at times forced Kantians to respond to Kant's opponents in a more original fashion, as well as works in which Kant's philosophy is applied, and therefore extended. As we shall see in the three case studies that follow, such works at time tend to bring the Kantian doctrines much closer to contemporary psychological discussions than Kant himself had done.

3. *Carl Christian Erhard Schmid*

Carl Christian Erhard Schmid (1761–1812) is without a doubt one of the most promising figures for an examination of the role of psychology in early orthodox Kantianism. On the one hand he was undoubtedly one of the most prominent

³ Cf. (Kühn 2001, 316): "It was no accident that most of the major appointments to the faculty of philosophy at the University of Königsberg after Kant's promotion to full professor were such that he either did or could have endorsed them. It was no accident that his students Kraus and Pörschke were later his colleagues. It was not an accident that the court preacher Schulz, his staunchest defender, received a professorship in mathematics, and that the entire philosophical faculty thus acquired a more and more Kantian outlook. Kant took an active interest in this outcome. He pulled strings to get the results he desired, and he knew what he was doing."

Kantians during the orthodox reception of the 1780s.⁴ We do not know how Schmid became acquainted with Kant's philosophy,⁵ but when he acquired his first academic position in 1784 (as adjunct at the university of Jena), he almost immediately requested permission to start lecturing on Kant's first *Critique* (Landau 1991, 240).⁶ These lectures were, if not the first, than certainly among the first to be given on Kant's critical philosophy at a German university (Landau 1991, 434). In the years following this course, Schmid quickly became a key figure in the promotion of Kant's philosophy, primarily because of a number of highly successful publications. Most important of these was his commentary on Kant's first *Critique*, the *Critik der reinen Vernunft im Grundrisse zu Vorlesungen* (Schmid 1786),⁷ which came with a dictionary explaining Kant's technical vocabulary as an appendix.⁸ Both texts take up an important place in the canon of this early orthodox period. Already in year of publication, F.G. Born in Leipzig and J. Bering in Marburg started lecturing on Kant on the basis of Schmid's book (AA 10: 465–6, 470–1). The book was so successful that a second edition was needed barely a year after publication (Landau 1991, 644–5). The *Wörterbuch* went through as many as four editions over the course of twelve years.

The reception of this book also forms a good illustration of the workings and effectiveness of the early Kantian movement. On the nineteenth of May, mere days after the publication of the book, the ALZ published a very positive review, recommending it to all academic teachers, as well as to people who wanted to

⁴ This description may be considered to be somewhat at odds with Rosenkranz claim that Schmid (who he calls "the most significant Kantian" in Jena) was the "least *unconditional* student of Kant," who "had too much drive for research to be satisfied with mere copying" (Rosenkranz 1840, 307). It is certainly true, as we will have occasion to note in chapter three, that Schmid showed a capacity for critical and original thought in the decade that followed, but during the 1780s his main publications were all directed towards the explanation and defense of Kant's system. See below.

⁵ Schröpfer (1993, 73–4) claims that Schmid was "von Ulrich, Danovius und Schütz zur Beschäftigung mit der Philosophie Kants angeregt." While this is a reasonable hypothesis given that Schmid studied with these philosophers in Jena, I have not been able to find concrete evidence for this influence.

⁶ A more extended biography than I will be able to give here can be found in Hinske's introduction to (Schmid 1980).

⁷ The work appeared in May (Pietsch 2010, 72). In the same month Schmid writes a letter to Kant, sending him the book and expressing his desire to help in spreading the principles of Kant's philosophy (AA 10: 450).

⁸ This *Wörterbuch* was later extended and republished as an independent book. For the publication history of the work see the introduction to (Schmid 1980).

study Kant's philosophy by themselves (Landau 1991, 380–1).⁹ Doubtlessly, Schmid, who was after all a colleague of Schütz in Jena, had already given the editor of the ALZ access to the work before publication; thereby giving him the opportunity to promote the work immediately after it was published. It is likely, though difficult to prove given the anonymity of reviewers in the ALZ, that it was Schütz himself who was the author of the review.¹⁰

Schmid's interest in psychological themes is also very well-documented. It would not even be much of an overstatement to say that psychological topics were at the heart of his own research interests: not only did he publish a massive two-volume work on *Empirische Psychologie* (Schmid 1791)¹¹, but he was also the editor of two journals dedicated to psychological topics: the *Psychologisches Magazin*, which ran from 1796–1798, and the *Anthropologisches Journal* (1803–1804).¹² For these reasons Schmid is a prime candidate for our first case study.

When one reads through the *Empirische Psychologie*, however, one may first get the impression that Schmid's interest in psychology and his Kantianism have very little to do with each other. In the entire work, Kant's name is mentioned only a few times, and then primarily in the context of some of the more specific remarks Kant made concerning the nature and possibilities of psychology considered as a scientific discipline. In particular, he quotes Kant's judgment from the *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe* that empirical psychology could never be a science in the strict meaning of the word, because its subject does not allow for the application of mathematics in any meaningful sense (Schmid 1791, 113–4). Furthermore, Schmid in this work never engages explicitly with any of the central doctrines of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. This may lead one to believe that Schmid shared the modern conviction that psychology and (Kantian) philosophy should remain entirely distinct.

This conclusion would, however, be mistaken. Schmid's lack of engagement with Kant's critical doctrines in his psychology is certainly not the

⁹ That this review came exceptionally early is illustrated by the fact that reviews of Schmid's work in other journals start appearing from September onwards (Landau 1991, xlv).

¹⁰ We do know that Schütz regularly took it upon himself to review books by and about Kant (Schröpfer 2003, 210–1).

¹¹ All references to the *Empirische Psychologie* are to the first volume.

¹² 'Anthropology' at this time was used practically synonymously with 'psychology' by many authors (see the introduction, §6). For more information on Schmid's psychological journals see (Eckardt et al. 2001, 163–73).

result of a strict distinction on Schmid's behalf between the objects of psychology and those of critical philosophy. Quite the contrary, he does not hesitate to classify the *Critique of Pure Reason* as a work on "allgemeine[...] Seelenlehre," in an overview of the extant psychological literature. In this overview, Kant's *magnum opus* is placed together in a list with works such as Charles Bonnett's *Essay de Psychologie*, J.F. Abels *Einleitung in die Seelenlehre* and Condillacs *Essai sur l'Origine des Connoissances Humaines*, but also works by Locke, Leibniz and Hume (Schmid 1791, 142). This also gives an interesting indication of the philosophical tradition of which Schmid considered Kant to be a part; a tradition, furthermore, in which a clear distinction between psychology and philosophy is altogether lacking.

Rather than based on a distinction between objects, therefore, Schmid conceives of the distinction between empirical psychology and critique in terms of a difference of methods. The *Empirische Psychologie* does not engage with any of the core doctrines of the *Critique* for the simple reason that Schmid accepts Kant's dictum that nothing empirical may intrude in the realm of pure reason. This does not mean, however, that the two types of investigations have no relationship at all. In the one passage in the *Empirische Psychologie* in which Schmid directly addresses the issue he rather conceives of the critical philosophy (or perhaps of only a part of this philosophy) as providing the *a priori* counterpart to his own empirical investigations:

In so fern nun die rationale Seelenlehre als eine materiale Wissenschaft angesehen wird, die eigene Kenntnisse in sich begreifen, und selbst dem Inhalte nach von Erfahrung unabhängig seyn soll: in sofern gehört sie unter die zwar denkbaren aber nimmermehr ausführbaren Wissenschaften; eine Eigenschaft, die sie mit aller Metaphysik in dieser Bedeutung gemein hat. Giebt man ihr aber lediglich eine formale Bestimmung, und gebraucht man sie in keiner andern Absicht, als um die durch Erfahrung erworbene, oder doch zu erwerbende Kenntniss von der menschlichen Seele nach diesen Grundbedingungen alles Denkens zu gestalten und anzuordnen, und ihr eine achtwissenschaftliche Form zu verschaffen, so behalt sie immer ihren Werth [...]. (Schmid 1791, 23)

Schmid calls this renewed, formal, conception of a rational psychology "*reine[...] oder transcendentale[...] Seelenlehre*" (Schmid 1791, 24), in a clear reference to Kant's transcendental philosophy. This philosophy, according to Schmid, thus provides an *a priori* analysis of the most abstract structures of the human mind; an analysis that can serve to guide empirical research, and to structure its results

in accordance with a number of *a priori* categories. Whereas Kant's philosophy, for example, establishes which cognitive faculties we possess, and what the functions of these faculties are in bringing about cognition, empirical psychology will investigate the actual mental processes that make it possible for the faculties to fulfil these functions (various forms of synthesis, association, etc.). Importantly, this is not a view that was peculiar to Schmid, but it seems to have been broadly shared at this time in the reception of Kant. For example, Karl Ludwig Jakob, another prominent Kantian and correspondent of Kant, wrote in his *Grundriß der Erfahrungsseelenlehre*:

Die Lehre von dem Wahrnehmungsvermögen, in wie fern die nothwendige Gesetze derselben dargestellt werden müssen, ist transcendental, und macht die Grundlage der Kritik der reinen Vernunft aus. In der empirischen Psychologie soll nicht die Möglichkeit der Wahrnehmung erörtert, sondern die empirischen Bedingungen sollen nur dargethan werden, unter denen sie wirklich erfolgt (Jakob 1795, 193).

Nor was this a very strange idea. In spite of his critical attitude towards empirical psychology, Kant did suggest in the *Critique of Pure Reason* that the status (though perhaps not the potential) of empirical psychology is equal to that of physics, and that both need a pure metaphysical part (A846/B874). And he added, specifically on the topic of empirical psychology:

[W]o bleibt denn die *empirische Psychologie*, welche von jeher ihren Platz in der Metaphysik behauptet hat, und von welcher man in unseren Zeiten so große Dinge zu Aufklärung derselben erwartet hat [...]? Ich antworte: sie kommt dahin, wo die eigentliche (empirische) Naturlehre hingestellt werden muß, nämlich auf die Seite der angewandten Philosophie, zu welcher die reine Philosophie die Prinzipien *a priori* enthält, die also mit jener zwar verbunden, aber nicht vermischt werden muß. (A849/B877, my emphasis)¹³

Given the *a priori* character of the *Critique*, combined with its strong psychological vocabulary and its talk of mental faculties and processes, it was not unreasonable for Schmid and his contemporaries to believe that Kant's book

¹³ Kant is, admittedly, explicit in saying that the *Critique* is not itself this "metaphysics" of nature, which ought to contain a metaphysics of the mind, but it is nevertheless a "propaedeutic" to such a metaphysics (B878/A850). The sceptical discussion in the *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe* about the potential of psychology as a science of course complicates this picture, but even here Kant does not maintain that a metaphysics for psychology would be impossible, but only that it would necessarily provide only a very minimal basis for this empirical discipline (AA 4: 471).

contained this pure part, or that it at least contained relevant material for a future "metaphysics" of the mind.

Schmid's idea that the *Critique of Pure Reason* provides its readers with an *a priori* transcendental psychology comes through in its strongest form in one of his earlier, and much shorter, texts, which he added as an appendix to the second edition of the *Wörterbuch*. This appendix, entitled "Einige Bemerkungen über den Empirismus und Purismus in der Philosophie," serves primarily as a polemic against an early critic of Kant's philosophy, the "empiricist" (as Schmid refers to him) and member of the Berlin Academy of the Sciences, Christian Gottlieb Selle. This polemic was occasioned, as the full title of Schmid's text indicates,¹⁴ by the publication of Selle's *Grundsätze der reinen Philosophie* (also of 1788), in which Kant had been strongly reprimanded for his "purism," i.e. his (in Selle's view) questionable reliance on *a priori* reasoning. The precise nature of his arguments against Kant, and Schmid's replies to these arguments do not concern us here. The value of this long-forgotten polemical text consists rather in the fact that in order to prove the superiority of Kant's "purism" over Selle's "empiricism," it is necessary for Schmid to characterise what he believes to be the essence of Kant's project. This essence, Schmid argues, is actually the same for every serious philosophical system: it consists in its theory of the human powers of cognition:

Bey jeder Untersuchung über die Gründe, die Möglichkeit und Gränzen der metaphysischen Erkenntniß (welches man unter Grundsätzen der reinen Philosophie zu denken hat) kommt alles auf die Begriffe von der *Natur und Wirkungsart der menschlichen Erkenntnißvermögen* an. Vorausgesetzt daß ein philosophischer Schriftsteller grobe Inconsequenzen zu vermeiden wisse [...]: so kennt man den *Geist seiner Philosophie*, wenn man mit seinen

¹⁴ The full title is "Einige Bemerkungen über den Empirismus und Purismus in der Philosophie durch die Grundsätze der reinen Philosophie von Herrn Selle veranlaßt" in *Wörterbuch*. (Unhelpfully, even though it is added at the end of the book, the page numbering starts from 1 again in the original version. For this reason I cite from (Schmid 1980), which follows the page numbering of the fourth edition) Schmid presents this text as an impartial comparison of the merits of Kant's and Selle's philosophy rather than as a polemic, but this should be considered a mere rhetorical move. Impartiality in this discussion is hardly to be expected from the author of various writings promoting Kant's philosophy, and indeed in the text Schmid does little to hide his preference for Kant's theory on all the issues on which he compares Kant and Selle. On the other hand, it should be admitted that Schmid is relatively impartial when we compare his article with other Kantian responses to the same work: the review of Selle's book in the ALZ is (unsurprisingly) entirely negative. The reviewer finds in the book "so viel Unbestimmtheit, [...] so unzählige Widersprüche in den Begriffen, so viel Incohärenz in den Behauptungen, dass die Bemühung (und es ist keine geringe) sich durch den verworrenen Vortrag des Verfassers hindurchzuarbeiten, nicht belohnt wird" (Anonymous 1788, 615–6).

Gedanken über diesen Gegenstand sich bekannt gemacht hat. (Schmid 1980, 621–2)

Schmid's claim that Kant's philosophy provides an account of both the nature *and* the workings (*Wirkungsart*) of the cognitive faculties is not inconsequential. Despite Kant's own insistence that the *Critique of Pure Reason* is first and foremost a critique of the cognitive faculties (*Vernunftvermögen*, Axii), his stance towards what exactly the critical investigation of these faculties ought to reveal always remained somewhat ambiguous. Symptomatic of ambiguity is the oft-quoted passage in the first-edition preface to the *Critique*, on the status of the so-called "subjective deduction," which "deals with the pure understanding, concerning its possibility and the powers of cognition on which it itself rests" (Axvi). In what follows, Kant manages to say in a single line that this investigation is on the one hand of "great importance in respect of my chief end," and that it nevertheless does not "belong essentially to it." He then goes on to say that the difficulty with the explanation provided by the subjective deduction, and the reason as to why it ought not to be considered essential is that it is "something like a hypothesis," but immediately retracts this by stating that this is not really "how matters stand." A number of commentators have taken this passage as important evidence for a non-psychological reading, but in my view it Kant's phrasing is simply too ambivalent to ascribe such importance to it. Be that as it may, Schmid's formulation in the passage quoted above has the virtue that it eradicates all such ambiguity: his emphasis on the workings of the human cognitive faculties makes it absolutely clear that he considers the subjective, psychological deduction far from inessential.

Whereas many modern Kant-scholars have tried hard to de-emphasize the role of the faculties in Kant's critical philosophy,¹⁵ Schmid placed them at the very centre of Kant's project. This is also reflected in the rest of his polemic against Selle, which he structures according to what he believes to be the seven core questions that have to be answered by any successful philosophical system:

¹⁵ According to Strawson, Kant's talk of faculties is merely the result of a "misleading" and "strained" analogy, which "masks, rather than explains, the real character of his inquiry" (Strawson 2006, 15–6). Even Beiser, who in his *German Idealism* admits that there is an ineliminable transcendental psychology to be found in Kant's philosophy, maintains that "Kant's concept of a faculty has to be understood *as a metaphor* for a type of logical discourse (Beiser 2002, 173).

1. What is sensibility?
2. What is the understanding?
3. What is reason?
4. In which relations do these faculties of cognition stand to each other?
5. In which relations do they stand to the objects of cognition?
6. What is knowable?
7. To what kind and to what level of certainty can human cognition be brought? (Schmid 1980, 622)

Note that the first five questions that are supposedly answered by Kant's critical philosophy all concern the nature of the faculties and their relations to each other and their objects. Each of these five questions also receives a heavily psychological treatment in Schmid's text.¹⁶ Thus, the forms of space and time, for example, are unequivocally presented as "depending entirely on the nature of the subject, *namely the soul itself, not the organs* [...]" and not at all on the things as they are in themselves" (Schmid 1980, 626, my emphasis). With regard to the understanding and its pure categories, Schmid maintains against the empiricist that Kant has proven that "the understanding is active in its own right; it does not receive connections, but it connects" (Schmid 1980, 636). This doctrine is also supposed to explain the (certainly psychological) phenomenon that we *feel* free in judging (Schmid 1980, 640).

It is only on the basis of Kant's answer to these first questions, furthermore, that Schmid believed the former could answer the last two questions about our capacity for knowledge. If we take these last two questions to represent Kant's concern with the *quid juris?*, whereas the first five are concerned with the *quid facti?* of human cognition, we can therefore see that in Schmid's view these two sets of questions are intimately related, and that in fact the former is dependent on the latter. Moreover, as is clear from the passage quoted above, this order of investigation is so natural to Schmid that he considers it to be a necessity for all serious philosophy. The idea that psychology (and not just empirical psychology) should be, or even could be, entirely separated from pure philosophy is entirely alien to him, and as such he does not feel any need even to defend the view. As we shall see in chapters two and three, while psychological defences of Kant's philosophy remained prominent in the following decade, this feeling of self-evidence would change significantly.

¹⁶ On the relevant notion of 'psychology', compare the introduction, §6.

4. *Friedrich Gottlob Born*

We have already encountered the subject of our second case study, Friedrich Gottlob Born (1743–1807), in the context of our discussion of Schmid. There we saw that Born, in his role as a professor at the university of Leipzig, was already teaching Kant's critical philosophy as early as 1786, on the basis of Schmid's compendium. During this year, Born also became an important figure in the early Kantian movement, as well as its principal representative in Leipzig. The original occasion for these developments was a letter to Kant, written in May, in which Born introduced himself as an admirer, and in which he proposed to Kant that he could write a translation of Kant's critical works in Latin (AA 10: 443–4). Such a translation, Born argues in the same letter, would greatly help in making Kant's achievements known outside of the German lands, as only "rarely does a foreigner possess so much knowledge of the German language that he would be able to read and completely understand writings that contain such deep thoughts in their original form." Furthermore, he added, he would be the perfect person to execute this project, as most translators have (in addition to a "very average" knowledge of language) a complete lack of knowledge of philosophy. Unfortunately, Kant's answer to this letter has not been preserved, but we know from Born's next letter to Kant, in November of that year, that Kant not only replied positively to this proposal (AA 10: 470–1), but that he was in fact very enthusiastic at the prospect of acquiring an international audience. To this end, he brought Born into contact with his own publisher, Johann Friedrich Hartknoch, who was to handle the publication of these translations, and as later letters from Hartknoch to Kant (AA 11: 73–4, 90–1) indicate, Kant awaited their appearance impatiently. His patience would, however, be tested for quite a while, for the first volume of the *Opera ad philosophiam criticam* (Kant 1796), which contained the *Critique of Pure Reason*, did not appear until ten years later (though not with Hartknoch, who had already died in 1789).

Born, however, had not been idle in the meantime, and soon after his first contact with Kant, he became one of the most active participants in the early Kantian movement. As such he published a number of typical orthodox texts, in which he aimed to explain and defend the Kantian philosophy. Most importantly, he was the co-editor of the *Neues philosophisches Magazin*, which appeared from 1789–1791, and which, according to its subtitle, aimed to provide "clarifications

and applications of the Kantian system" (*Erläuterungen und Anwendungen des Kantischen Systems*). Its real purpose, however, was primarily polemical: even its very title is an attack on Johann August Eberhard's influential *Philosophisches Magazin*, suggesting that this journal, which took on a highly critical attitude towards Kant's philosophy, had become entirely out-dated. Eberhard's journal was also frequently attacked in the articles that appeared in the *Neues philosophisches Magazin*, a significant number of which were written by Born and his co-editor Johann Heinrich Abicht¹⁷ themselves (e.g., Born 1789).

More important for the purposes of an investigation into the early psychological reception of Kant's philosophy, however, is Born's *Versuch über die ersten Gründe der Sinnenlehre* (Born 1788). When Born started writing this text, he had planned for it to be yet another polemical piece in the defence of Kant, this time aimed against Adam Weishaupt's 1788 work *Zweifel über die Kantische Begriffe von Zeit und Raum* (AA 10: 534–5), but as was the case with Schultz's *Erläuterungen*, the plan for this project soon became more ambitious:

Ich hatte anfänglich blos Willens den Hofrath Weishaupt zu widerlegen. Ich änderte aber meinen Entschluß bald und nahm mir dafür vor die ganze Kritik der reinen Vernunft in 5 bis 6 Bändchen zu bearbeiten, um sie populärer darzustellen, und so den von allen Seiten her erschallenden allgemeinen Klagen über Dunkelheit und Unbegreiflichkeit dieses Systems, sowie den bisher zum Vorschein gebrachten Verdrehungen und Mißdeutungen durch eingeschaltete Prüfungen und Widerlegungen der dagegen erregten, meistens sehr läppischen Zweifel zu begegnen. (AA 10: 547)

Of these "five or six volumes," only two appeared, the aforementioned *Versuch über die ersten Gründe der Sinnenlehre*, and a *Versuch über die ursprünglichen Grundlagen des menschlichen Denkens* (Born 1791). Both works are helpful sources for an investigation of the role of psychology in the orthodox reception, as Born regularly connected his discussion of Kant's philosophy to traditional psychological problems. The 1791-*Versuch*, for example, contains discussions about whether we have any innate representations (§8, answer: no), and whether we can have representations of which we are not conscious (§5, answer: also no): questions that were standard topics for any handbook of psychology at the time. Most interesting for our purposes, however, is Born's treatment of Kant's *a priori* forms of intuition, because the supposed psychological nature of

¹⁷ On Abicht, see (Anemüller 1875).

this theory would in the following decades become a paradigmatic theme of Kantian Psychologism. Born's discussion of it is interesting insofar as he related it directly to a problem that was widely considered to be one of the most notorious psychological problems: the Molyneux problem. Not only this, but Born attempted to use Kant's theory of *a priori* forms to suggest an alternative solution to the ones that had formerly been proposed.

Simply stated, the Molyneux problem consists in the question whether a person who has been born without sight, and who therefore has had to learn to recognise various shapes by means of touch alone, would immediately be able to recognise these same shapes by sight should vision be granted at a later point in life. This question, which had originally been proposed by William Molyneux in a letter to John Locke, became famous when the latter philosopher made a reference to it in his *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (Locke 1975, §2.9.8). Throughout the entire eighteenth century, this question was heavily debated, and answers to it were proposed and defended, not only by Molyneux himself and by Locke, but also by such illustrious figures as Berkeley, Voltaire, Leibniz, and Condillac.¹⁸ The nature of the question, however, changed significantly during this time. When Molyneux had asked Locke his famous question, it had been proposed as a philosophical thought experiment. In 1728 however, the vision of a boy who had either been born blind, or who at least could not remember ever having seen, was successfully restored by means of a novel surgical operation performed by the English surgeon William Cheselden (Degenaar 1992, 59–63). It did not take people long to recognise the relevance of this achievement for successfully answering Molyneux's question. Suddenly, it seemed that this question could be answered empirically, and for this reason it came to be regularly discussed in works on empirical psychology.¹⁹

Importantly, it was in this empirical context that Born tried to give an answer to Molyneux's question on the basis of Kant's philosophy. The occasion for this answer was, once again, polemical, for in the early years of the reception of Kant's critical philosophy, Molyneux's problem had acquired the reputation of

¹⁸ For a good overview of the problem and its history, see (Degenaar and Lokhorst 2014). For a more extensive discussion see (Degenaar 1992), which is unfortunately only available in Dutch.

¹⁹ Interestingly, despite the early optimism that empirical experiments would be able to settle Molyneux's question once and for all, even modern psychologists have as of yet not been able to provide a decisive solution to the problem (Degenaar and Lokhorst 2014, §5).

a serious test case for this philosophy. Some of Kant's critics, most importantly two famous *Popularphilosophen*, Hermann Pistorius and Johann Feder (who was also one of the authors of the notorious Garve-Feder review of the *Critique*), had argued that Kant's theory was unable to account for the experimental results relevant to Molyneux' problem.²⁰ Since Kant had posited a single *a priori* intuition of space that served as the precondition for the perceptions of all of our outer senses, they argued, it should necessarily follow from this that subjects ought to be able to recognise forms that they were familiar with regardless of the sense modality with which they perceived it. In their view, however, empirical experiments on patients whose vision had been restored had shown decisively that subjects were in fact not capable of doing so. Rather, we possess a particular intuition of space for each sense modality, and these intuitions are only connected by virtue of association, that is: we only recognise the felt triangle and the seen triangle as the same shape because we regularly experience these two types of perception together. Kant's theory of the human mind, as they saw it, had therefore simply been proven false by empirical experiment.

On a modern, anti-psychological reading of Kant's philosophy, of course, this argument must seem entirely beside the point: Kant, according to such readings could, and should, simply have countered that he was only interested in the formal conditions of knowledge, and not at all in the way these conditions are factually realised in actual human subjects. If true, it is hard to see how empirical experiments done on blind subjects could possibly either confirm or refute Kant's theory of space.²¹ Sadly, since Kant never addressed the problem one way or another in the context of his critical philosophy, we can only speculate as to what reply he himself would have given.²² Born, however, did respond directly to the question, and the answer of this orthodox Kantian was certainly not that the problem was entirely irrelevant to the Kantian philosophy, nor did he believe that it presents a strong argument against Kant. Quite the contrary, he

²⁰ On Feder and Pistorius as critics of Kant, see (Pietsch 2010, 25–31, 90–100). English translations of the relevant texts by Feder (Feder 1787, 57–61) and Pistorius (Pistorius 1786, 101–3) can be found in (Sassen 2000).

²¹ Birgitte Sassen discusses this influential line of argumentation in her (Sassen 2004, 477–9). It is also accepted by Degenaar, in her book on Molyneux's problem, when she writes that "Kant's theory only concerned space as a necessary representation *a priori*; this was unconnected to the question of whether the intuition of *empirical* space is innate or acquired" (Degenaar 1992, 129, my translation).

²² Though he did so in his lectures, see (Sassen 2004, 472).

speculated that the only reason why Kant had not addressed Molyneux's problem himself, was because it is so obvious from the perspective of the critical philosophy what the solution to this problem ought to be. As such, it did not really merit any comment from Kant:

Es ist mir also sehr befremdend, wie Herr Feder sich wundern kann, daß Herr Kant dieses Problem nirgends erörtert habe. Es lag dem Königsbergischen Philosophen ganz außer dem Wege, und ist zu leicht, als daß es einer Erörterung bedürfte (Born 1788, 88–9).

What Kant's critics did not appreciate, according to Born, is that Kant's theory does indeed allow for a distinction between the single *a priori* and multiple empirical representations of space (Born 1788, 91). Whenever we do in fact represent space, he happily admits, this representation is always determined by a single sense modality, which, for non-blind humans, is usually sight. For this reason, the tactile representation of space of the blind person is very different indeed from the visual representation of the same, but they are nevertheless only empirical modifications of the same formal structure:

Ich habe [...] gezeigt, daß der Raum eine in der Seele vor aller Erfahrung ursprünglich liegende, jedoch unbestimmte [...] und durch Hinzukunft der äußern Gegenstände auszubildende, an sich nur angelegte und vorgezeichnete Vorstellung sey. Ist sie nun dieses, ist sie bloß angelegte, noch nicht ausgeführte, noch unbestimmte Vorstellung; so wird folgen, daß ihre Ausbildung nach der verschiedenen Beschaffenheit der sinnlichen Subjecte, auch eine eben so verschiedene Bestimmung und Modification erleiden müsse (Born 1788, 87–88).

Brigitte Sassen, who discusses Born's solution in her paper on Kant and Molyneux complains, with some justification, that this answer is not satisfying, because it still leaves the relation between the empirical and *a priori* representations entirely obscure (Sassen 2004, 476–7). Perhaps an analogy, not given by Born, may be of help here: much as one cannot represent space except by means of a particular sense modality, one can clearly not play a musical piece except on a particular musical instrument. This does not mean, however, that if we play this piece on another instrument, it is no longer the same piece. In fact, we are often able to recognise it as such. Surely, this is not always easy, especially if we are used to hearing this piece played on an instrument that is very well-known to us, and then suddenly encounter a version played on an instrument that is entirely unfamiliar. Nonetheless, given enough time, we

should be able to recognise the same formal structure of the piece in this case too.

If this analogy is convincing, we can understand why Born found the eighteenth-century experiments on the blind irrelevant to the issue at stake. Clearly, he argues, we should not at all be surprised if empirical researchers discover that subjects whose sight has been restored are not able to visually identify various shapes, for the visual modification of the pure intuition of space is very different from the tactile representation:

Denn da der Blindgebohrne die Gegenstände des Gesichts nur durch das bloße einseitige Gefühl, ohne vom Auge unterstützt zu werden, wahrnehmen kann; so muß seine Raumvorstellung ganz andere Determinationen und Modificationen erhalten als die des Sehenden; das heißt, seine Vorstellung von dem empirischen und relativen Raume ist ganz anders beschaffen, als die Vorstellung, welche andere Menschen davon haben. (Born 1788, 88)²³

Naturally, subjects who have never experienced vision would first have to get used to this entirely new way of experiencing the world. The question should therefore not be whether they can *immediately* recognise simple shapes, but rather whether they can come to recognise these shapes eventually without being able to build an associative connection between the visual and the tactile representation of, for example, a square. In other words, the question is whether formerly blind subjects would be able to learn to visually identify a cube if they would not be allowed to touch this cube at the same time as seeing it.²⁴ Though difficult in practice, it ought to be clear that this question can be tested empirically. Whether the results of such an experiment would be in accordance with Born's defence of Kant remained an open question, for no such experiments

²³ An argument along the same lines is given by Born when he considers the question whether the deaf-mute have a different representation of time than subjects with functional hearing. It is not entirely clear, however, why this would be a problem in the first place, as our representation of time seems to be much less closely connected to particular senses than our representation of space. Perhaps Born is replying to a criticism advanced by a contemporary, but if this is so he unfortunately does not provide an explicit reference.

²⁴ Note that in Molyneux original question, too, there is no consideration of the time that may pass between the curing of the blind subject and the recognition of visual shapes: "Suppose a Man born blind, and now adult, and taught by his touch to distinguish between a Cube, and a Sphere of the same metal, and nighly of the same bigness, so as to tell, when he felt one and t'other, which is the Cube, which the sphere. Suppose then the Cube and Sphere placed on a Table, and the Blind Man to be made to see. Quaere, Whether by his sight, *before he touch'ed them*, he could now distinguish, and tell, which is the Globe, which the Cube" (quoted in Locke 1975, §2.9.8, my emphasis)

were performed. What is important for our purposes, however, is to see how very different Born's approach was from that of the irrelevance-strategy adopted by some modern Kant-scholars. Unlike such Kant-scholars, Born clearly believed that results from empirical psychology could be relevant for the truth or falsity of Kant's theory, if only the right experiments would be performed. As we shall see in the chapters that follow, this would remain a typical attitude amongst representatives of Kantian Psychologism.

5. *Samuel Heinicke*

Samuel Heinicke (1727–1790) is nowadays, if at all, primarily remembered for his pedagogical achievements. While employed as a teacher in Eppendorf, a town close to Leipzig, in the 1760s and 70s, Heinicke became interested in the possibilities of teaching deaf children. Whereas these children were commonly regarded as unfit for learning by most of his contemporaries, Heinicke developed a pedagogical method to this end, which he considered to be so successful that by 1778 he gave up his regular teaching job and founded a school for the deaf in Leipzig. The works that he published on teaching deaf children, being among the first of this kind, remained influential until well into the nineteenth century.²⁵

Heinicke's interests were, however, not limited to pedagogy alone, but throughout his life he also closely followed the developments in the philosophical literature. Unlike most of his contemporaries, he seems to have read the *Critique of Pure Reason* shortly after its appearance, and became immediately convinced of its importance (Stötzner 1870).²⁶ During the last years of his life he dedicated a significant amount of energy to its promotion, which resulted in a number of publications that display many of the tendencies of the orthodox publication strategies that I discussed above. Heinicke, like Schmid, was the author of a Kantian dictionary (Heinicke 1788); he founded a journal of which the explicit purpose was the promotion of Kant's philosophy; and he published various other works with a strongly popular and applied character

²⁵ For more information on Heinicke's life and pedagogical work, see (Stötzner 1870).

²⁶ Heinicke probably first read the *Critique* either at the end of 1783 or the beginning of 1784. In May 1784 he published a note in the *Gothaischen gelehrten Zeitungen* in which he lauded the work as the "most distinguished and most useful product of the human spirit, and the most important discovery that up to this day been made for the common good. (Landau 1991, 77). Heinicke's book *Wichtige Entdeckungen und Beiträge zur Seelenlehre und zur menschlichen Sprache* (Heinicke 1784), however, does not yet contain any mention of Kant.

relating to Kant's philosophy.²⁷ Furthermore, like the other authors that I discuss in this chapter, Heinicke was far removed from being a critical recipient of Kant's work. Disagreements with Kant are not to be found in his publications, and oftentimes the fact that Kant has made a claim seems to serve as a sufficient argument for Heinicke to posit it as being true, as we will see below. Nonetheless, Heinicke was an atypical representative of orthodox Kantianism in the sense that he was not a part of the actual orthodox *movement*. He had no direct ties to Kant himself, nor to any of the people that Kant stood in close contact with. This does not mean that Heinicke is of no interest in a study of the orthodox Kantian movement, however, since this movement's principles of exclusion are as interesting as its principles of inclusion. That such exclusion could at times be intentional is proven by a letter from Schütz to Kant, in which Schütz warns the latter that it is probably best not to get involved with Heinicke, despite his enthusiasm for the critical philosophy:

Übrigens ist fatal, daß Sie zwischen zwey Schwärmer in die Mitte kommen. Der eine ist Hr. Obereit, der gegen Sie schreibt, der andre Hr. Heinicke in Leipzig, der zwar ein großer Verehrer Ihrer Kritik ist, sie aber auf seinen Buchstabirkram ganz link und vekehrt anwendet. (AA 10: 408–9)

The work that Schütz had in mind when he writes this to Kant is Heinicke's *Metaphysik für Schulmeister und Plusmacher*. This work, which was published in 1785, is one of the strangest concoctions of the orthodox reception of Kant, but it also provides one of the most fascinating illustrations of the early psychological approaches to Kant's work. The main purpose of the work, mentioned by Schütz in the letter quoted above, was to provide a definitive argument against the practice of *Buchstabiren*. By this, Heinicke meant a method of teaching children how to read that was very popular at the time. When beginning to read, children would be made to spell out written words letter by letter, before reading the word as a whole. This practice, Heinicke argued in his *Metaphysik*, is not only utterly ineffective as a teaching method, but also harmful to the pupils who are

²⁷ It is fair to say, with regard to Heinicke's dictionary, that Schmid's was the superior effort. Aside from being more extensive, Adickes correctly notes that much of Heinicke's book was plagiarized from Schmid (cited in Schmid 1980, x). A bibliography of Heinicke's publications can be found in (Stötzner 1870, 96ff). The planned journal, called *Der Kritiker*, apparently went through three issues, which I have unfortunately not been able to locate. It is unlikely, given its current unavailability, that this journal was much of a success.

subjected to it (Heinicke 1785, 45–6).²⁸ Instead, students should be taught to learn to read whole words from the very beginning (Heinicke 1785, 61).²⁹ The argument to this conclusion takes up a full 126 pages of the book and has a more than peculiar character, for not only does Heinicke wish to provide sufficient empirical or pragmatic grounds to convince his reader of the harmfulness of this practice; he also sets out to prove the point *a priori* from philosophical principles (hence the *Metaphysik* in the title). It should come as no surprise, given Heinicke's philosophical preferences, that the principles in question were Kant's. As the reviewer of the work for the ALZ emphasized, this eclectic method results in a rather bizarre reading experience:

Das Buch ist für Schulmeister bestimmt. Was sollen aber die guten Leute denken, wenn sie alle Augenblicke bey der Frage, obs besser sey vor dem Lesen zu buchstabiren oder nicht, halbe Seiten aus [...] Kants Kritik der reinen Vernunft zu Lesen bekommen? (Anonymous 1785)³⁰

The reviewer was not exaggerating: throughout his argument Heinicke transitions seemingly without effort (but also without much explanation) from highly abstract quotations and paraphrases from the *Critique* to highly concrete matters of pedagogical method.³¹ To make matters even stranger, Heinicke added to the book two appendixes that have little to do with *Buchstabiren*, but the point of which mostly seems to be to ridicule the stupidity, laziness, and selfishness of the teachers of his time: the connection to the main part of the book remains obscure.³² One may therefore well sympathise with the aforementioned writer of the ALZ-review when he expresses his fear that "Hr. H

²⁸ If Heinicke is right the harms done by this practice were very serious indeed: not only loss of time and effort, but even loss of the ability to think attentively in general and of a healthy sensibility, which completely ruins the youthful mind and opens the door for stupidity with all its accompanying moral and religious vices.

²⁹ Heinicke most likely had in mind the learning of written words with the help of accompanying pictures; the type of book that is still very common today.

³⁰ Like all reviews in the ALZ, the author of this review remained anonymous, but in light of the aforementioned letter to Kant it is likely the reviewer was, again, Schütz himself.

³¹ See for example (Heinicke 1785, 6–8, 18). Interestingly, such blatant appeals to authority, which were hardly unique to Heinicke at the time, may themselves have had an important role to play in the success of Kant's philosophy. I suspect that readers who would be sceptical of an author's claims when presented to them in the context of that author's own arguments may well be more susceptible to those same claims when they are presented as claims by an authority in a different context. This, however, is itself admittedly a psychological hypothesis that ought to be tested empirically.

³² The two appendixes are, according to Heinicke at least, a collection of letters written by a teacher and "collected by his widow" and a transcription of a number of dialogues between a 'traveller' and several teachers in the villages he passes through in his travels.

habe an mehrern Orten auch weder Hrn. *Kant*, noch sich selbst verstanden."
More recently, Pietsch has judged:

Heinicke [...] kann als frühestes kuriozes Beispiel für eine Linie der Kantrezeption angesehen werden über die sich später vor allem Friedrich Nicolai lustig machen sollte: die bedenkenlose Anwendung transzendentalphilosophischer Begriffe auf alltägliche praktische Zusammenhänge, die rhetorische Überinstrumentierung banaler Argumente durch apodiktische Formeln à la Kant. (Pietsch 2010, 61)

Contrary to Pietsch, however, I do not believe that the book is wholly without merit (despite its obvious flaws), and it is of interest for our purposes for at least two reasons: first of all, because it illustrates again how many readers of Kant in this early reception saw absolutely no problem in applying Kant's philosophy to concrete problems in psychology. The only reason why Kant's philosophy could be seen to have such relevance is that readers considered it to be making substantial claims about the nature of the human mind and the way it functions: in this particular case, Heinicke clearly believed that Kant's doctrines were significant for understanding how the human mind learns new information and skills.

Secondly, despite the lack of clarity in many of Heinicke's arguments, and despite of the fact that he perhaps misunderstands some of Kant's doctrines,³³ the core idea behind the argumentation in his *Metaphysik für Schulmeister* is both in principle reasonable and recognizably Kantian. When one unburdens the main part of the book of all the unnecessary excursions, the (sometimes outrageous) moral tone and the biting sarcasm, what remains is an argument against the model of the human mind that was underlying the *Buchstabir*-practice. This model, which was very prominent in the eighteenth century and which counted influential figures such as John Locke and David Hume as its representatives, was inspired by atomistic models in the natural sciences, and may for that reason be called 'psychological atomism.' The main idea around which this model revolved is that the entirety of human cognition is built on (and from) a (large) number of minimally complex representations.³⁴ The ideal, then, was that all cognition

³³ See for example (Heinicke 1785, 58): "Reine Verstandesbegriffe *a priori* haben ihre Ursprung in den allgemeinen Naturgesetzen, und Erfahrung ist von ihnen abgeleitet: denn die Naturgesetze liegen über unsre Erfahrung hinaus, und reine Mathematik sowol als reine Naturwissenschaft, gehn nirgends auf etwas mehr als bloße Erscheinungen."

³⁴ Most commonly, these were referred to as "simple" ideas or impressions, for example (Locke 1975, §2.7.10; and Hume 2009, §1.1.1).

might ultimately be understood on the basis of a number of simple processes that explain the various ways in which such representations can be connected (or, in the more technical terminology of that era, "associated") to form more complex mental units, such as concepts, judgments, images, etc.³⁵ It is not difficult to appreciate why this model was so attractive; the analogy from the natural sciences granted it legitimacy, and its simplicity and generality made it in principle applicable to a wide range of different questions about the (human) mind.³⁶ Its application to the problem of teaching children how to read, in any case, is quite straightforward: if human cognition works by producing ever-more complex compounds from mental atoms, it is not unreasonable to think that reading essentially consists in first identifying individual letters (the written atoms) and afterwards connecting these to form words, sentences, and, ultimately, texts.

Though this may initially seem very plausible, Heinicke argues with some force that this understanding of the process of reading is false. The problem, as he makes clear with an example, is that complex written units, such as words, simply cannot be reduced to a collection of letters:

Die Buchstaben in dem Worte Xerk haben mancherlei Gestalten, und ihre verschiedenen Töne lauten: iks, e, er, ka, woraus der Wortton Xerk erzwungen wird. Jedermann kann dabei wahrnehmen und erfahren: daß die Buchstabentöne mit dem Worttone Xerk keinen verhältnißmäßigen Inhalt und Werth zu und unter einander haben, und daß folglich der Wortton Xerk sich auch nicht daraus resolviren läßt [...] *Wer kann behaupten: daß eine vorhergehende Theilung des Worts zu einer Anerkenntniß und Benennung nöthig sey, oder daß man sonst auf keine andre Weise Wörter kennen und lesen lernen könnte?* (Heinicke 1785, 61–2, my emphasis)

The child that learns to read has nothing other to go on than its knowledge of spoken language. A letter, for it, is therefore originally nothing other than its spoken tone, which would be considered the mental atom of spoken language. When letters form a word, however, these tones are transformed by becoming

³⁵ On such processes of association, see for example (Locke 1975, §2.12.1–2; and Hume 2009, §1.1.3)

³⁶ For a representative example of the application of this model, see Hume's argument for the thesis that our representation of space is discrete, rather than continuous (Hume 2009, §1.2–1.3), especially §1.2.3: "That compound expression, which represents extension, consists of several lesser impressions, that are indivisible to the eye or feeling, and may be call'd impressions of atoms or corpuscles [...]." Note that Hume intends this to be a psychological thesis about our *representation* of space and its genesis from sensible impressions, and not an account of the nature of physical space.

part of this word, so that we can only understand how to pronounce the letter if we already know what the entire word is. As a result, Heinicke concludes, no spelling that just gives the series of the sounds related to the individual letters will ever help the child to understand which word is being spelled, and therefore *Buchstabiren* is an entirely useless practice. Given that children do in fact learn to read, we must necessarily suppose that the human mind functions holistically, rather than atomistically, that is; it must possess an ability to recognize complex entities without having to first conjoin its constituent elements. It is at this point of the argument that the relevance of Kant's philosophy for Heinicke finally becomes clear:

Gedruckte und geschriebene Wörter sind auch Gegenstände: und auf eben die Art wie jeder andre Gegenstand werden sie uns in der Anschauung gegeben; die Erfahrung oder Kenntniß aber, die wir von den Wortformen haben, ist von ihren Formen selbst, die vor aller Erfahrung in einem Subjekt vorhergehn abgeleitet. Man glaube also ja nicht daß die Formen von der Erfahrung abgeleitet sind! Nein, die Erfahrung ist von ihnen abgeleitet: denn alle Formen gehören unter die Naturgesetze, und durch diese erlangen wir erst unsre Erfahrung: Erfahrung aber ist ein Verstandesprodukt. Diese wichtige Wahrheit, welche der Hr. Professor Kant entdeckt hat offenbart sich bei keinen Menschen deutlicher, als bei den Buchstabirern. (Heinicke 1785, 60)³⁷

What Heinicke sees in Kant's philosophy, in other words, is a new model of the mind that can be fruitfully applied to a variety of practical problems, of which the *Buchstabir*-discussion is only one, despite its importance. On this model, experience does not consist of a collection of simple ideas, but these simple ideas are rather abstracted from the synthetic unity of experience in which they first become accessible to the human mind. That this idea was important to Heinicke is clear from the fact that he would later repeat it in an article in Karl Philip Moritz's famous psychological journal, the *Magazin for Erfahrungsseelenkunde*:

Eigentlich ist die Erfahrung ein Verstandesfabrikat, [...] und es gehören dazu mancherlei Ingredienzien, Funktionen und Mittel, ehe sie nach und nach synthetisch gemodelt, gedacht, und endlich brauchbar werden kann. (Heinicke 1791, 31)

³⁷ Modern cognitive science seems to be on the side of Heinicke here. While atomistic models (such as the feature recognition model) still play an important role in understanding our ability to read, it is now generally accepted that such models must be supplemented by various top-down processes that structure our perception of written language, and that our recognition of written signs of lesser complexity, such as letters and words often depends on our recognition of the more complex compounds of which they are elements. See for example (Ashcraft 2006, 92–105).

Heinicke's philosophical work did not have much influence. Schütz, as we saw, did not take him seriously, and it is likely that most philosophers at the time had a similar attitude towards his publications, something for which Heinicke had primarily himself to blame. Nonetheless, his emphasis on Kant's theory of synthesis and his rejection of what I have called psychological atomism are of significant importance for our purposes. As we shall see in the chapters that follow, both these points would become important themes in later Kantian Psychologism.

6. The Significance of the Orthodox Reception for Kantian Psychologism

As we have seen, the work of Schmid, Born, and Heinicke during the early orthodox period was far removed from the austere anti-psychological approaches to Kant that became popular in the twentieth century. Each of these authors made a direct connection between Kant's philosophy and the psychological practice of that time; be it because they believed that Kant's philosophy could serve as an *a priori* foundation for empirical psychology as a whole, or because they believed that this philosophy could be directly applied to prominent problems of psychology. Nor should these three authors be considered exceptions. In this light it is interesting to point out that, during the 1780s, it were primarily the young Kantian professors at universities who taught courses on psychology and who inspired debates about the discipline of psychology and its possibilities (Eckardt et al. 2001, 96). It is therefore safe to say that psychological themes have played an important part in the reception of Kant's philosophy from the moment the critical works were first published. Furthermore, many of the themes that were discussed in these early years, such as Kant's theory of the cognitive faculties, the question how Kant's *a priori* forms of intuition relate to the factual production of human perception, and the doctrine of the synthetic nature of the human mind would remain among the most central topics of the psychological tradition. This is important, because it helps to explain how later proponents of Kantian Psychologism could present themselves, in opposition to the German Idealists, as the more faithful Kantians,

despite their principled psychological reconstructions of Kant's critical philosophy.

Despite the continuity of a number of central themes, there are also important differences between these early psychological discussions and later Kantian Psychologism. The most important of these differences is the fact that in the early orthodox reception, the treatment of psychological themes is both implicit and fragmented; they are found in incidental discussions of particular topics, in off-hand methodological remarks, or in polemical characterisations of Kant's philosophy. Nowhere in these works does one encounter a sustained discussion about the psychological dimensions of Kant's philosophy, or of the proper relationship between the critical philosophy and psychological questions, let alone that such questions are seen as serious problems. One reason for this absence was undoubtedly the fact that psychology was still widely considered to be a part of philosophy (see the introduction §6). A second reason is again to be found in the nature of the early Kantian movement; given its predominant focus on the promotion and defence of the critical philosophy, and given the strong culture of orthodoxy within this group, it is clear that there was little space available here for a critical reflective attitude towards the tension between Kant's explicit anti-psychological remarks and his apparent implicit dependence on psychological terminology, assumptions, and doctrines. Nor was such reflection made necessary by external pressure: Kant's critics at this time were simply insufficiently acquainted with all the complexities of this philosophy to be able to subject it to a principled methodological critique. As a result, early criticism of Kant's philosophy remained mostly limited to controversies about some of Kant's individual doctrines, such as the nature of space and time as forms of intuition, rather than the nature of Kant's project as a whole.

Predictably, however, this lack of discussion about the status of psychology in Kant's philosophy did not last long. "Predictably," I say, because the tension in Kant's attitude towards psychology, and the problems that came with it, were simply too apparent to remain implicit. One of the most obvious and important of these problems was how the seemingly psychological nature of Kant's philosophy could possibly be consistent with its supposed purity. If this philosophy was to be completely *a priori*, and if it depended in some way on psychology, this psychology would itself have to be completely *a priori*. Yet, it is

difficult to see how there could possibly be an *a priori* psychology, given Kant's insistence that we can only have *a priori* knowledge about formal features of experience, and none about matters of fact (Sperber 2015, 117–20). Psychology, however, per definition makes factual claims about the (human) mind and its workings. Furthermore, Kant's devastating critique of rational psychology ought to at least make followers of Kant pause and reflect before postulating *a priori* knowledge about the human mind. The earliest of Kant's followers may have had the luxury of being able to sidestep all of such concerns, but as we shall see, this would no longer be the case in the decades that followed. In the next chapter we shall see how during the 1790s this problem came to be raised explicitly as a central question that all Kantians had to engage with one way or another, and how this resulted in the birth of Kantian Psychologism.

Chapter 2

The Psychological Made Explicit

1. *The End of the Orthodox Period*

The three case studies examined in the previous chapter showed that most of the themes that would take central stage in later psychological interpretations of Kant were already prominently present during the 1780s. Yet, it is important to recognise that such early discussions of psychological themes in Kant's philosophy were not part of a self-consciously psychological approach to the critical philosophy as a whole. Instead, the psychological dimension of this philosophy remained implicit and fragmented in the many Kantian texts that appeared during these years. What was completely absent from such early debates were serious examinations of the nature, role, and legitimacy of the psychological dimensions of Kant's work.¹

One reason for this absence was that the strict division between the psychological and the philosophical, which has come to be so important in modern philosophy, was not present at the end of the eighteenth century. Psychology at this time, as we saw in the introduction, was, despite some hesitant first steps towards emancipation, still generally considered a part of philosophy, and its particular methods and object of study had not yet been clearly demarcated. This meant that the explication and thematisation of the role of psychology in Kant's philosophy was initially not an obvious problem that required solving for Kant's contemporaries, especially given that basically all of Kant's famous early-modern predecessors made similar use of strong psychological assumptions.

Secondly, as I argued in the previous chapter, the orthodox nature of the early reception of Kant's critical philosophy also made this thematisation of the role of psychology unlikely. Kantians in the 1780s were concerned with

¹ Cf. (Kitcher 1990, 5): "From the beginning, readers recognized the psychological side of the *Critique*. And, from the beginning, they were puzzled over the status of its psychological claims." It seems to me that this claim can only be defended if one disregards the entire first decade of the reception of the critical philosophy, as Kitcher in fact does.

popularizing and defending Kant's doctrines; they were not in the business of commencing critical discussions within the Kantian movement itself. One may therefore surmise that even if one of his followers had tried to raise the issue, he would initially have done so with little success, for there would have been no audience capable of appreciating such considerations at this time.

During the early 1790s, however, the period of Kantian orthodoxy was coming to an end. That is not to say that orthodox Kantianism disappeared as a phenomenon altogether. If anything, as a result of Kant's success, the number of orthodox Kantians (and subsequently, the number of orthodox Kantian writings) only increased further during this decade.² The importance of this orthodox reception, however, was starting to diminish, as the original goal of its participants had been achieved. By the end of the 1780s, Kantianism was not only taken seriously as a philosophical position, but it had in fact become the dominant position in the German lands, having left its competitors, such as the *Popularphilosophen* and the Wolffians, far behind (Beiser 1987, 193–4; and De Vleeschauwer 1962, 138–9). This new position of power had serious consequences for the development of the Kantian movement.

First, the type of resistance against the critical philosophy began to change. Due to its novelty, opponents in the 1780s were, generally speaking, only superficially acquainted with Kant's new philosophy. As a result, their critique tended to be external in nature and to be focussed on particular doctrines advanced by Kant, such as the nature of space and time and the unknowability of things as they are in themselves; what these critics lacked was a thorough understanding of the rationale behind (or even the real meaning of) these doctrines. In a letter to Jacobi at the end of the decade, Georg Forster made the accurate observation that "the man [Kant] has in actual fact not yet found any adversaries that would be a match for him" (cited in Pietsch 2010, 182). Inevitably, however, Kant's growing fame meant that critics in the following decade were much better acquainted with the critical philosophy, and were therefore also in a position to produce powerful internal critiques against Kant's philosophy that did not simply beg the question. Indeed, this was precisely what critics such as Aenesidemus-Schulze, Maimon, Herder, and, indeed, Jacobi

² An (incomplete, but still useful) overview of the Kantian school can be found in (Rosenkranz 1840, 285–319).

himself eventually did. This new type of criticism did not admit so easily of an orthodox answer, but required innovative thought.³

Second, the success of the Kantian philosophy also ended the unity and discipline that had been so characteristic of the early orthodox reception of Kant. The fact that the movement was growing necessarily made it more difficult to organize and control in the way that Kant had been able to do, to a large extent, during the 1780s. More importantly, early orthodox Kantians had been united by a common goal. Now that Kant's philosophy had been established and did not seem to be in immediate danger of being overthrown, however, other considerations began to play a role. For one thing, Kant's success created the space (as well as an audience) for more critical investigations within the Kantian movement itself. Secondly, it created a material motivation for making use of these new possibilities. Whereas, in order to stand out in the philosophical landscape of the 1780s, it had been enough merely to be a Kantian, this was no longer the case in the decade that followed, for during these years ambitious Kantians flooded the intellectual market. In order to make a name for oneself in philosophy in the 1790s and (not unimportantly at a time when most academics' livelihoods depended upon course fees) to attract many paying students to one's classes, one had to come up with something new. In other words, the more innovative minds within the Kantian movement were incentivized to start moving beyond Kant, which, unsurprisingly, is exactly what they did.

My aim in this chapter will be to show how, in the course of this new, critical examination of Kant's philosophy, the role of the psychological came to be made explicit and subsequently problematized. Arguably the single most important author in this context was Karl Leonhard Reinhold (1757–1823). As we shall see in what follows, it was his *Elementarphilosophie* that became the focal point for the first debates about the role of psychology in Kant's philosophy. In the following section I will discuss how it came to be this focal point. In particular, in the first part of the section I begin by showing that Reinhold self-consciously interpreted both Kant's philosophy and his own as part of a single psychological project, and how he positioned this project as a competitor to two popular contemporary approaches to psychology. In the second part of this

³ For extended discussion, see the chapters on Herder, Jacobi, Schulze and Maimon in (Beiser 1987) and (Frank 1997). I discuss Schulze's *Aenesidemus* at some length below.

section I examine some of the problems in Reinhold's foundationalist execution of this project that ultimately gave rise to Schulze's devastating critique of Reinhold's philosophy. As I will show in the third section, it has not been sufficiently appreciated how this critique, too, engages first and foremost with Reinhold's psychology. This critique is highly important for our purposes, as it made it clear to Schulze's contemporaries that a choice had to be made between a consistently psychological, or a consistently anti-psychological further development of Kant's philosophy. In the fourth section I end with a short discussion of the adoption of this anti-psychologistic program by the German Idealists, before moving on to the development of the psychological line in the three chapters that follow.

2. Psychological foundations? Reinhold's Theory of Representation

Bringing psychology to the fore

The boundaries between the orthodox defenders of Kant's philosophy and the new critical Kantians, of course, cannot always be distinctly drawn. Some of the more noteworthy critical Kantians of the 1790s had formerly played a part in the early orthodox reception. One example of such a transformation, and one that is crucial for an understanding of the role of psychology in early Kantianism, is provided by Karl Leonhard Reinhold's career.⁴ During the late 1780s, Reinhold had been one of the most influential defenders of Kant's philosophy. His *Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie* (first published in instalments in *Der Teutsche Merkur* (1786) and republished in book-form in 1790) in particular had made a significant contribution to the Kantian cause, by showing how Kant's apparently abstract philosophy was nevertheless of the highest importance for resolving the religious and moral controversies of the time. The popularity of this work also earned him a professorship in Jena (Ameriks 2000, 82), where he continued to successfully propagate Kant's philosophy to a large number of students. Towards the beginning of the 1790s, however, Reinhold no longer considered it sufficient to merely defend and popularize the critical philosophy as expounded in Kant's

⁴ We will encounter some other significant examples in chapter three.

works, but instead began to feel that further, and this time original investigations were necessary. Kant's philosophy, he famously insisted, lacked the necessary foundations.

Before discussing Reinhold's revision of Kant's philosophy, though, let us first ask to what extent his approach to Kant is a psychological one. Certainly, in one sense the claim that Reinhold represents a psychological Kantianism is neither novel nor controversial. In the literature, however, this claim has primarily taken the form of an accusation: Reinhold's interpretation of Kant is often presented as a stereotypical case of the bad, psychologistic interpretation of Kant's philosophy that I discussed in the introduction.⁵ What has been almost entirely absent is a serious engagement with Reinhold's psychology.⁶ This is unfortunate, because we have ample evidence that Reinhold's interest for psychology animated a large part of his philosophical endeavours, and his engagement with Kant in particular. This became most clear in his inaugural lecture at the university of Jena. In this lecture he claimed that the fundamental concern for philosophy is and ought to be the *human* subject, and that German philosophy was at the brink of a golden age, because it had finally returned to this topic, after having long expended its powers on fruitless metaphysics (Reinhold 1788, 172). Unsurprisingly, Reinhold considered the publication of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* to be the most important event in these developments, but the specific wording of Reinhold's praise deserves emphasis: "Teutschland ward auf diese Weise das Geburtsland der sogenannten Aesthetik, der empirischen Psychologie, und endlich der Kritik der Vernunft, (*oder der wissenschaftlichen und höhern Psychologie*) [...]" (1788, 173, my emphasis).

In this lecture, Reinhold was not only the first to make explicit that he believed Kant's philosophy to be essentially a system of psychology, but also to affirm that this was the correct direction for philosophy. In this sense, then, Reinhold may be considered the first real representative of Kantian Psychologism. For this reason it is doubtful whether one can produce a faithful

⁵ See for example (Ameriks 2000, 106). Even Patricia Kitcher uses Reinhold as a prime example of how *not* to engage with Kant's psychology (Kitcher 1990, 6). Scholars with more sympathy for Reinhold than Ameriks and Kitcher have occasionally tried, in my view erroneously, to deny that Reinhold's interests are psychological in nature (e.g., Baum 1974, 105)

⁶ A single, and very recent exception is Faustino Fabianelli's *Karl Leonhard Reinhold's Transcendental Psychology* (Fabianelli 2016).

image of Reinhold's so-called *Elementarphilosophie* if one does not seriously engage with his concern for psychology.

This concern also shows through brightly in Reinhold's first systematic presentation of his revision of Kant's philosophy, the *Versuch einer neuen Theorie des menschlichen Vorstellungsvermögens* (1789). Surprisingly, even though this has functioned as one of the central texts for Reinhold-scholarship, no commentator to my knowledge has drawn attention to the fact that in the introduction to this work, Reinhold fairly explicitly posits his own investigations as an alternative to Wolffian rational psychology, on the one hand, and physiological psychology on the other. Both of these approaches to psychology enjoyed a significant popularity at the time when Reinhold was writing: the project of Wolff's rational psychology had been to develop an *a priori* account of the human soul, and then to use this account as a foundation for deriving further knowledge about aspects of the human mind, such as our capacity of cognition. Physiological psychology, which at the time had its most famous proponent in Ernst Platner, had, in many respects, pursued the opposite programme: to come to an understanding of our mental functions through an investigation of the human body, and the brain in particular.⁷ Despite their many differences, however, Reinhold believed that both these approaches suffered from the same devastating weakness: they necessarily relied on unsupported metaphysical assumptions concerning the bearer of mental capacities. Thus, whereas the Wolffians believed in an immaterial, indivisible soul, physiological psychology relied on the assumption that there was an essential connection between the structure of human physiology and the human psyche. Given how controversial these starting points were, Reinhold believed that we should abstain from such assumptions altogether, and instead reverse the order of investigation: our starting point ought to be not the bearer of mental functions, whoever or whatever this may be, but rather these mental functions themselves. Only from there (if at all) can we learn something about the metaphysical subject of cognition:

⁷ For an excellent discussion of these psychological research programs and of the debates amongst their representatives, see chapter two of (Sturm 2009). Note that Wolffian rationalism was frequently combined with a type of introspective empirical psychology for which Wolff's work was also an important source.

Man that gerade das Gegentheil von dem, was man hätte thun sollen, indem man die Natur der Sinnlichkeit und des Verstandes von der Organisation und der Seele ableitete, da man vielmehr die beyden letztern, in wieferne sie erkennbar, Gegenstände des Erkenntnißvermögens seyn sollen, mit einem Worte ihre *Erkennbarkeit* von dem Vermögen der Sinnlichkeit und des Verstandes hätte ableiten müssen. (Reinhold 1789, 181)⁸

I will have more to say about Reinhold's execution of this project in the next paragraph. Here, let us merely note that the fact that Reinhold is actively engaging with alternative ways of doing psychology already marks a significant advance over his orthodox predecessors. This advance is the result of his explicit acknowledgement of the psychological nature of Kant's philosophy, which made it possible for the first time to engage with the methodology behind the seemingly psychological concepts and claims that one finds everywhere in Kant's critical philosophy. This type of engagement, as we saw, was entirely absent in the early orthodox reception. Admittedly, as we shall also have a chance to see below, Reinhold's own engagement with such methodological questions tends to remain superficial, obscure, and often somewhat naive. In particular, it is noteworthy that he does not even raise the question how his characterisation of Kant's philosophy as a *psychology* relates to Kant's highly critical attitude towards psychology in his critical period. Nevertheless, as we shall see in what follows, his philosophy provided a starting point for debates concerning the relation of Kant's philosophy to psychology that would reach a far higher level of sophistication in later authors such as Fries and Beneke.

Reinhold's psychological foundationalism

When we want to examine Reinhold's execution of this psychological project somewhat more concretely, it is impossible to ignore another fundamental dimension of his philosophical project: its foundationalism. Unlike Reinhold's psychology, this foundationalism has received a lot of attention from scholars. These scholars, however, have more often than not been interested in this foundationalism primarily as a predecessor to that of the later German Idealists (especially Fichte), on which Reinhold's foundationalist project had a strong influence (see for example Breazeale 1982; and Ameriks 2000). As a

⁸ The "in wieferne sie erkennbar sein sollen" should be taken seriously. Following Kant's critique of rational psychology, Reinhold's own position is that the nature of the human soul is ultimately unknowable.

consequence, Reinhold's foundationalism has usually been interpreted in strong epistemic terms, as a quest for absolute certainty (Ameriks 2000, 86–7; and Breazeale 1982, 793). Undeniably, this was one important motivation for Reinhold, but this emphasis has unfortunately obscured another, potentially more interesting side to Reinhold's project, which is a search for semantic, rather than what we would nowadays call epistemic foundations.

For our interests, it is important to note that Reinhold's concern for semantics was strongly intertwined with his psychological approach to Kant's philosophy. In another early text, "Ueber die bisherigen Schicksale der kantische Philosophie," which later served as the preface to the *Versuch*, Reinhold explains that one of his main reasons for trying to provide Kant's philosophy with a foundation was the fact that though Kant had hoped to bring about an everlasting peace in philosophy, Kant's work had in reality occasioned a large number of disagreements about this philosophy that seemed to be just as fruitless and never-ending as the old metaphysical debates:

Je mehr er [Reinhold himself] die Schriften der beyden Partheyen [supporters and opponents of Kant] miteinander verglich, desto gewisser wurde er überzeugt, daß ihr Streit, so wie er bis itzt geführt wurde, eben so wenig jemals geendiget werden könnte, als der Streit zwischen den bisherigen dogmatischen Systemen selbst, und dass derselbe immer verwickelter, und für die Zuschauer unverständlicher und unausstehlicher werden müsse. (Reinhold 1789, 60–1)

The reason why these debates could not be decided, Reinhold notes, is because its participants, unbeknownst to themselves, interpreted Kant's philosophy in radically different ways, each in accordance with the metaphysical principles that they happened to favour:

Es wurde ihm endlich aus unzähligen Beyspielen einleuchtend, daß beyde Partheyen auch mit denjenigen Sätzen über welche sie selbst unter sich einig zu seyn glaubten, sehr verschiedene, oft auch entgegengesetzte, Bedeutungen verbanden, und daß sowohl diese ihnen selbst verborgene Verschiedenheit der Vorstellungsart, als die erklärten Streitpunkte ihrer Fehde sich auf eben dasselbe alte und allgemeine Missverständnisse des Erkenntnisvermögens zurückführen lassen [...] das zwar durch die Kritik der r. V. zuerst und völlig aufgedeckt wurde; allein so wie es in derselben entwickelt worden ist [...] sowohl den Gegnern das Verstehen, als den Vertheidigern das Erklären desselben äusserst erschweren mußte. (Reinhold 1789, 61–2)⁹

⁹ cf. (Reinhold 1790, 341–2)

According to Reinhold, it was precisely Kant's "higher psychology," his theory of the faculties of cognitions that was widely misunderstood by his readers. Early orthodox Kantians had attempted, as we have seen, to resolve this problem by publishing popularizing works and commentaries, and Reinhold had contributed to this cause with his *Briefe*, but towards the beginning of the 1790s he had become convinced that this would be insufficient. The problem, he believed, lay not solely with Kant's readers, but with the fact that Kant had failed to sufficiently determine the meaning of his most important psychological terms, such as 'reason,' 'idea,' 'sensibility,' 'intuition,' 'the understanding,' 'concept,' and, most crucial of all, '(the faculty of) representation' (Reinhold 1789, 154–192). Furthermore, the necessary determination of the meaning of these terms could not be achieved by means of definition; not only would there be no guarantee that the terms these definitions contained would be any less ambiguous than the terms to be defined, but such definitions would also be vulnerable to the charge of arbitrariness (Reinhold 1790, 349–51). The problem of ambiguity could therefore only be avoided, so Reinhold believed, by providing a semantic foundation: a single, highest concept, the meaning of which was to be immediately, and unambiguously, determined by itself, and which can serve to determine the meaning of all of our other terms:

Da die Vorstellung dasjenige ist, worauf sich alles, was Objekt des Bewußtseins ist und sein kann, beziehen muß, so ist sie aus allem, was im Bewußtsein vorkommen kann, das Bekannteste, aber auch das Unerklärbarste. Sie geht allem Bewußtsein vorher, das nur durch sie möglich ist, und ist, da sie bei jeder Erklärung *vorausgesetzt* werden muß, einer Erklärung ebensowenig bedürftig als fähig. (Reinhold 1789, 223–4)

Representation (*Vorstellung*), Reinhold believed, is the fundamental condition of all consciousness, and as such it is also the precondition of all meaning for us as humans. On the basis of this, Reinhold concludes, in a move that is somewhat hard to follow, that it is also the highest concept, of which all other concepts are species (223–4). As such, it cannot be defined, but we can only clarify [*erörtern*] what is contained in our immediate grasp of what it means to represent something. This clarification is then expressed as a proposition (*Satz*), which serves as the highest principle (*Grundsatz*) for all philosophy. Presumably then, the harmful ambiguity in the fundamental concepts of Kant's philosophy can be avoided because all further propositions and concepts are linked to this one self-

determining principle. In this way an ideal-language is constructed that avoids the obscurities and ambiguities of natural languages.¹⁰ It was in this manner that Reinhold's concerns for psychology, semantic stability, and absolute certainty became intertwined in a complex project.

Unfortunately for Reinhold, the intertwining of these three concerns was to a high degree artificial, mainly because each of these concerns brought different methodological standards to bear on the project. Many commentators have, in my view correctly, pointed out that Reinhold's methodology often remains very mysterious and ambiguous (Beiser 1987, 244–7; and Ameriks 2000, 121–2), despite the many pages that he dedicates to methodological issues in the *Versuch*, as well as in several other works of the early 1790s. If my interpretation is correct, this mystery and ambiguity can be explained by the fact that his three aims constantly pull him in different directions. This is especially visible in perhaps the two key methodological questions that Reinhold has to answer, namely what the status of his foundation is, and how he progresses from this foundation to the results for which it forms a foundation.

First of all, Reinhold is far from clear as to the methodological status of the foundational concept 'representation,' as well of the foundational principle, the so-called *Satz des Bewusstseyns* (SdB) which exhaustively expresses this concept. If we look at this foundation from the perspective of (Kantian) psychology, it should be noted that in Kant's philosophy representations are always given to us in inner sense,¹¹ so on this view it stands to reason that we learn this concept by means of some form of introspection. Reinhold himself also speaks explicitly of "perceiving" the properties (*Merkmale*) of representation in consciousness (Reinhold 1790, 152). Nevertheless, on other occasions Reinhold strongly protests against the interpretation that his system is based on observations of inner sense, which is understandable from the perspective of his quest for

¹⁰ This aspect of Reinhold's project has, as said, been insufficiently noted in the literature (an exception is Baum 1974, 106–7). Not unimportantly, this also means that Reinhold's supposed "linguistic turn" in his later work was not much of a turn at all, but rather a continuation of much earlier concerns. A claim such as that the diagnosis that misuse and misunderstanding of language are responsible for the conflicts between the various philosophical schools does not appear in Reinhold's work until 1812 (see Valenza 2003, 283) strikes me as simply false in light of (Reinhold 1790, 341–3).

¹¹ Representations are, for Kant, "innere Bestimmungen unseres Gemüts" (A197/B242), whereas inner sense is the sense "vermittelst dessen das Gemüt sich selbst, oder seinen inneren Zustand anschauet" (A22/B37).

absolute certainty. A concept obtained through abstraction from inner sense, and consequently the principle that expresses this concept, Reinhold argues, would necessarily be inductive and empirical, and could therefore never guarantee the certainty that philosophy strives for (1791, 22–26). In order to satisfy this demand, he introduces a notion of "pure reflection," which assures us of the validity of the fundamental principle (Reinhold 1790, 143–4, 356), but this notion remains highly obscure: on the one hand he says it is a reflection purely on the "meaning of the words" contained in this principle (356), which fits well with his semantic concerns, but which makes the relation to actual human cognition unclear (80–1). In other passages, however, Reinhold again tries to restore this link to human cognition by maintaining that the relevant reflection is not on the meaning of words, but rather on the fact of consciousness that the fundamental principle expresses (143–4, 149) Reinhold, in other words, is trying to make his foundation do three different things at once, and as a result he is constantly forced to reinterpret this foundation based on which of his concerns is at that moment most pressing to him.

The very same problem undermined Reinhold's attempts to obtain results on the basis of this foundation. This ambivalence with regard to the final aims of his method is even reflected in the lack of a consistent methodological terminology. In the 1789 *Versuch* alone, in the space of a mere twenty pages, he speaks seemingly interchangeably of the necessity to "deduce" (*ableiten*) the entire system of philosophy on the basis of this foundation (1789, 221), to "develop" (*entwickeln*) it from the same (204), and to "bring it forth" (*schöpfen*) from this basis (222). Clearly, these terms have very different connotations, and Reinhold makes use of this (be it consciously or unconsciously) to obscure the ambivalence in his project. Whenever he is talking about the absolute certainty of his system, for example, he tends to make use of the term '*ableiten*,' with its strong logical connotations.¹² The use of this notion would make it seem as if the entirety of his philosophical system is already contained in its first principle, just

¹² "Gleichwie [...] ein zum Inhalt einer Wissenschaft gehöriger Satz nur dadurch den philosophischen wissenschaftlichen Rang erhält, dass er entweder selbst als Grund oder als Folge nothwendig und allgemein, dass er entweder selbst Grundsatz, oder ein unter dem Grundsatz stehender, und durch denselben bestimmter Folgesatz ist: so erhält der ganze Inhalt oder der Inbegriff aller solcher Sätze nur dadurch den Rang einer philosophische Wissenschaft, dass alle diese Sätze unter sich genau zusammen hängen, die Folgesätze einander bey- und ihren Grundsätzen untergeordnet, die niederen Grundsätze von höheren Gemeinschaftlichen abgeleitet, und diese unter einen Einzigem obersten begriffen werden" (Reinhold 1790, 118–9, my emphasis).

as the conclusion of a syllogism is contained in its premises. That is to say, the first principle would have to contain maximum content. If the first principle is to serve as the foundation for a technical language that does not suffer from obscurities and ambiguities, however, Reinhold seems to need the exact opposite: a starting point that has minimal content, so that he can build, step by step, towards more complex notions. Thus, when Reinhold is talking about the determination of concepts on the basis of the concept of representation, he instead prefers the far more methodologically neutral term '*entwickeln*' (which literally means 'unwrap'), and sometimes even explicitly rejects the strong deductivist ideal, which he there describes as the "ridiculous imagination [...] that an entire science could be contained in its first principle, like [Homer's] *Illiad* in a nutshell" (116).¹³ Reinhold's notion of '*schöpfen*,' too, clearly suggests that something is being created or added in the process of Reinhold's argumentative steps, which would also not fit the deductivist model. Here though, we may wonder what precisely is being added, and where it comes from. In order to get from the most abstract mental notion, 'representation,' to more complex mental phenomena, introspection again seems a likely candidate, but just like before, this will not do if Reinhold wishes to preserve the apodictic nature of his project.

Given these enormous tensions within his project, it has to be said that Reinhold was remarkably successful in giving it at least the appearance of a coherent whole. Nevertheless, it was only a matter of time before these problems would be brought to the surface. This was the significant merit of Gottlob Ernst Schulze's influential work of 1792, the *Aenesidemus*. This book, as we shall see, also played a crucial role in the development of Kantian Psychology. Reinhold, I have said, was the first to explicate what he believed to be the psychological nature of Kantian philosophy. In the course of his devastating sceptical attack on

¹³ For his preference in these contexts for '*entwickeln*' over '*ableiten*' see for example (Reinhold 1790, 433, my emphasis): "Mir ist nie in den Sinn gekommen [...] die Eigenthümlichkeiten des sinnlichen Verf. [sic, should probably be "Vorstellung"] des Begriffes und der Idee aus der Vorstellung überhaupt *abzuleiten*, das ganze dritte Buch [of the *Versuch*] zeigt auch dass ich dieses nicht gethan habe. Allein dasselbe sollte doch auch bemerken lassen, dass ich um diese Eigenthümlichkeiten zu *entwickeln* [...] des Begriffes der V[orstellung] nicht entbehren konnte." It should be noted that if Reinhold is right in claiming that the anonymous reviewer of his work to whom he was here responding misunderstood his intentions, Reinhold himself gave plenty of occasion for such misunderstanding: see previous note.

Reinhold's philosophy, Schulze, on the other hand, was the first to raise this psychological nature as a *problem* for Kantian philosophy.

3. Reinhold's Philosophy as Empirical

Psychology: the Aenesidemus

Reinhold, as we have seen, explicitly designated Kantian philosophy as a system of higher psychology, and his own philosophical work around 1790 can be seen as a continuation of Kantian philosophy in this spirit. In a (positive) review of Schmid's aforementioned multi-volumed *Empirische Psychologie*, he was also happy to admit that the new Kantian philosophy would usher in a complete reformation of empirical psychology as well (Reinhold 1792, 1). But due to his demand, following Kant, that critical philosophy be entirely *a priori*, he always denied that his own philosophy was itself a system of empirical psychology (Reinhold 1790, 344), or that it depended on such psychology in some way.¹⁴

Now, Schulze was very much aware of this denial by Reinhold (Schulze 1792, 52–3, 77–8), but he cared very little for Reinhold's explicit intentions. Instead, the core strategy behind many of the arguments in the *Aenesidemus* is that Reinhold misunderstood the true nature of his own project. Reinhold's own explicit claims to the contrary notwithstanding, Schulze argued, the *Elementarphilosophie* was entirely dependent on abstractions from the data provided by inner sense. Though Schulze himself does not use the term "psychological" to describe Reinhold's project, his readers would have identified this type of project with what was then known as "empirical psychology." Furthermore, as we will see below, he also tried to show that once this empirical-psychological nature of Reinhold's philosophy is recognised, this philosophy becomes easy to refute, because one can oppose to it a significant number of observations of inner sense that contradict Reinhold's theories. For an illustration of this strategy, it will suffice to examine some of Schulze's critical arguments on the two methodological problems in Reinhold that we already encountered above: the status of the foundation of his system, and the progression from this foundation to concepts and propositions.

¹⁴ In particular, as we saw in the last section, Reinhold denied that his philosophy relied on introspection for obtaining its results.

Schulze's discussion of Reinhold's first principle, the SdB, takes up a significant portion of the book (Schulze 1792, 54–90). In its core elements this first principle had already been present in the *Versuch* (Reinhold 1789, 200), but it gained its definitive formulation in the *Beyträge*:

Im Bewußtseyn wird die Vorstellung durch das Subjekt vom Subjekt und Objekt unterschieden und auf beyde bezogen. (Reinhold 1790, 167)

As we saw above, in Reinhold's own view, this principle had to satisfy three very strong demands: as the principle that supposedly forms the condition of all human consciousness, it also had to be the fundamental principle of psychology; as a foundation that supposedly guarantees the apodictic truth of his system it ought to be absolutely self-evident and beyond doubt; and as a semantic foundation the meaning of the words that it contained ought to be fully determined by the principle itself (cf. Beiser 1987, 244–5).

To say that Reinhold set himself a high bar would be an understatement. Unfortunately, Schulze argues, Reinhold's first principle falls short on every single one of these conditions. To start with the last condition, Schulze argues persuasively that the meaning of the terms employed in the SdB is far from fully determined by this principle itself, and that it is therefore vulnerable to the kinds of ambiguity that Reinhold had been so keen to avoid. This is especially true for the notions of '*beziehen*' and '*unterscheiden*,' which serve to determine the relation in which various entities included in the principle (the representation, subject, and object) stand to each other. Taking as an example the notion of distinguishing:

Im Satze des Bewußtseyns ist [...] ganz und gar nicht angegeben, auf welche bestimmte Art und Weise die Vorstellung vom Objekt und Subjekt unterschieden sey, und in wie ferne jene Merkmale besitze, die den beyde letzteren nicht beygelegt werden dürfen; ob der Unterschied der zwischen denselben im Bewußtseyn vorkommt, als ein totaler oder partialer Unterschied zu denken sey; ob die Vorstellung von dem Objekte und Subjekte wie der Grund vom Gegründetem, wie das Ganze von seinen Theilen, wie die Substanz von ihren Eigenschaften, wie die Materie von der Form, oder auf was sonst noch für eine bestimmte Art zu unterscheiden sey. Da das Unterscheiden der Vorstellung vom Objekt und Subjekt im Bewußtseyn eine völlig bestimmte Thatsache ist, so kann von allen möglichen Arten des Unterschiedes nur eine einzige bestimmte unter den Bestandtheilen des Bewußtseyns (der Vorstellung, dem Objekt und Subjekt) wirklich vorhanden seyn. Im Satze des Bewußtseyns ist aber diese besondere Art des Unterschiedes nicht aufgestellt und angegeben worden. (Schulze 1792, 66)

To make matters even more problematic, Schulze notes, it is also far from clear whether the meaning of "distinguishing" is the same in the phrase "the representation is distinguished from the subject" as it is in the phrase "the representation is distinguished from the object."

Reinhold's principle, therefore, fails his own semantic criterion, and this has an important consequence for Reinhold's system as a whole. If certain terms in this principle are ambiguous, then, due to the supposed independence of the SdB from other propositions, their meaning has instead to be determined in reference to some non-discursive source. However, as we already saw above, it is difficult to see what other source this could be than simple introspection, and this is precisely the conclusion that Schulze draws: if, he argues, Reinhold is not to rely on some type of mystical cognitive power (*einer geheimen wundervollen Kraft*), then he has no other option than to admit that the SdB depends on our acquaintance with representations through inner sense (Schulze 1792, 71). As a consequence, the SdB ought to be interpreted as an empirical hypothesis based on an abstraction from particular observations of inner sense:

Der Satz des Bewußtseyns ist [...] ein abstrakter Satz, und zeigt dasjenige an, was gewisse [...] Äußerungen des Bewußtseyns mit einander gemein haben (Schulze 1792, 76).

Once this is admitted, it is also clear that the second condition for Reinhold's fundamental principle cannot be satisfied, for, as we mentioned, apodictic certainty is simply not to be had with empirical hypotheses. Finally, Schulze ruthlessly continues, the first demand listed above, that the SdB explicates the fundamental principle of psychology, is also not met. The reason for this is that once we recognize that it is merely a hypothesis obtained by induction, it becomes all too easy to look for perceptions that can serve as counter-examples. When we do so, Schulze argues, we will soon find that in fact Reinhold's induction is based on too narrow a selection of observations, and that there are actually many forms of consciousness that are not adequately characterised by the SdB. I will quote just one of Schulze's examples:

In der Anschauung eines außer mir wirklich vorhanden seyn sollenden Gegenstandes bemerke ich zwar mein Ich, welches anschauet, und eine Vorstellung, welche den Inhalt der Anschauung ausmacht: Allein es fehlt bey dieser Anschauung und während derselben die Gewahrnehmung eines von meinem Ich und von der in ihm vorhandenen Vorstellung verschiedenen Objectes, und ohngeachtet ich vielleicht aus Gründen der Spekulation annehme und überzeugt bin, daß derjenigen Vorstellung, die ich Anschauung nenne, ein von ihr verschiedener und objektiv wirkliche Gegenstand entspreche, so wird doch während der Handlung des Anschauens, und so lange dieselben dauert, die Vorstellung von dem Objecte, auf welches sie sich beziehen soll, durchaus nicht unterschieden. (Schulze 1792, 72–3)

Reinhold's supposedly fundamental principle, in other words, may at best be a principle of psychology, but since it only applies to a subset of mental phenomena, it cannot be the fundamental principle of psychology in its entirety.

Convinced, at this point, that he has sufficiently undermined the status of Reinhold's first principle, Schulze moved on to the second serious methodological problem: the derivation of new concepts and propositions from the first principle. I can be short on this point, for Schulze's strategy here is in large part identical to that used in his discussion of the SdB. Schulze's objection to basically every argumentative step that Reinhold makes is that, as stated, they are simply not logically valid deductions, and that the only reason they can appear so is because Reinhold constantly smuggles in presuppositions that have not been derived from the SdB themselves. If we want to understand what it is that Reinhold is doing, we must therefore ask where these presuppositions are coming from. Take for example the following two claims made by Reinhold, which are supposedly derived from the SdB:

Dasjenige, was sich in der bloßen Vorstellung, und wodurch sich die bloße Vorstellung aufs Objekt bezieht, heißt der *Stoff* der Vorstellung. [...] Dasjenige, was sich in der Vorstellung und wodurch sich die Vorstellung auf das Subjekt bezieht, heißt die *Form* der Vorstellung. (Reinhold 1790, 182–3)

According to Reinhold, the notions of matter (*Stoff*) and form are completely determined by their function respectively as that what connects the representation to the object, and as that what connects the representation to the subject. But this, Schulze argues, will not do. For the very fact that a different word is introduced for each of them already implies that the matter and form of a representation are different. This distinction, furthermore, cannot be derived from the difference between the notions of a subject and the object, because the

introduction of matter and form are supposed to provide a foundation for this difference in the first place. If these conclusions are therefore supposed to have been derived logically from the SdB they could just as easily be reversed:

[W]enn überhaupt bloß durch Raisonement über *ein gewisses Merkmal* an unsern Vorstellungen erwiesen werden kann, daß die Materie der Vorstellungen aus dem Objekte entstanden sey, die Form aber von dem Subjekte herrühre, und wenn hierzu weiter gar keine Kenntniß des Objekts und Subjekts an sich erforderlich ist, [so wollte ich mich auch anheischig machen] darzuthun, daß die Materie gewisser Vorstellungen nur allein aus dem Subjekte, die Form derselben aber nur allein aus dem Objekte herrühren können. (Schulze 1792, 221–2, cf. 202–3)

The only way in which Reinhold can avoid this arbitrariness is by smuggling in prior notions of the form and content of a representation that have, again, in the first place been obtained through inner sense.¹⁵ If Reinhold had made this introspective step explicit, however, Schulze adds, he would, again, have seen that his abstraction from inner sense is not as universal as he makes it out to be, and that a form and representation cannot so easily be distinguished in every form of consciousness:

Die Behauptung der Elementar-Philosophie, daß jede Vorstellung, die sich auf ein Objekt und Subjekt bezieht und von beyden unterschieden ist, aus zweyen wesentlich verschiedenen Bestandtheilen [i.e., form and matter] bestehen müsse, gründet sich also auf eine unvollständige Erörterung der Thatsachen, die im Bewußtseyn vorkommen [...]. (Schulze 1792, 219)

At this point, Schulze has already more than sufficiently established his desired conclusion that Reinhold's philosophy is in its entirety based on observations of inner sense. And although Schulze does not draw this conclusion explicitly, as I already noted above, this fact has a very important consequence that many of his readers will surely have appreciated. There was, after all, a term current in eighteenth-century debates for a science based on the observations of inner sense, and this term was 'empirical psychology.' More importantly even, it was in this sense that Kant had used the term when he made his pronouncements that empirical psychology was a stranger in philosophy in general, and that it ought to play no role in transcendental philosophy at all

¹⁵ The claim that the matter of a representation derives from its object whereas the subject supplies the form is of course also one of the fundamental claims of Kant's critical philosophy. Since Reinhold was in the business of supplying a foundation for this philosophy, however, he may not, as he himself also emphasized, presuppose any of Kant's results (cf. Frank 1997, 256).

(A347/B406, A801/B829, A848–9/B867–7). Now, however, this empirical psychology was rediscovered at the foundations of the critical philosophy, as expounded by its most famous supporter. The consequences of this revelation were to be lasting: it marked both the beginning of the German Idealist programme and the origin of the first self-consciously psychologistic developments of Kant's philosophy.

4. *Anti-Psychological Kantianism: Origins of German Idealism*

Schulze had put Kantian philosophy on a crossroad, for he had in effect left the Kantians of the late 1790s with a fundamental choice: either to fully endorse the psychological character of Kant's philosophy, with all the consequences that would come with it, or to start anew, and to show that a non-psychological foundation for Kant's philosophy could be found. In the chapters that follow I will investigate the first route in detail. Before closing the current chapter, however, I will have to say just a little bit about the opposing project, which was represented most powerfully by the German Idealists. Historically, the project to develop a pure, non-psychological, Kantian philosophy preceded the psychologistic project by a few years, and the latter developed largely as a counter-reaction to the supposed extravagancies of the philosophical systems that resulted from this project. The development of a "pure," i.e., non-psychological Kantianism therefore provides the background against which Kantian Psychologism is best understood.

Fichte's reply to Aenesidemus

The most important proponent of the anti-psychological line of reception during the 1790s was Johann Gottlieb Fichte. The impact that the *Aenesidemus* had on Fichte's philosophical development has been well-documented, and is expressed most clearly in an oft-quoted letter written by Fichte in 1793:

[Der Aenesidemus] hat mich eine geraume Zeit verwirrt, *Reinhold* bei mir gestürzt, *Kant* mir verdächtig gemacht und mein ganzes System von Grund aus umgestürzt. Unter freiem Himmel wohnen geht nicht! Es half also Nichts; es mußte wieder aufgebaut werden. (GA III.2: 28)

Because of this confessions, as well as similar ones in other writings, Fichte's *Aenesidemus*-review in the *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung* has often been seen as the first expression of the philosophical endeavour that would earn him a place in the philosophical canon; his famous *Wissenschafts-Lehre*. Daniel Breazeale has, in my view correctly, stressed that this review already contains early forms of Fichte's critique of the thing in itself, his emphasis on acts as opposed to facts, and his introduction of the pure I as the starting point of philosophy (Breazeale 1981, 554–5). Yet, Fichte's rejection of a psychological Kantianism, which, as we shall see, also forms an important strand of this review, has received less attention. This is easily explained: most modern commentators have considered a psychological interpretation of Kant to be so obviously wrongheaded that a rejection of such an interpretation can hardly amount to a significant moment in the reception of Kant's philosophy. As should by now be clear, however, it was very significant indeed, for only after the apparent dependency of Kant's philosophy on psychology had been made sufficiently explicit by Reinhold and Schulze could an attempt at expelling the psychological dimensions from Kant's critical philosophy become a concrete option.

When we look at Fichte's review of the *Aenesidemus* with the foregoing discussions in mind, it becomes immediately clear that Fichte recognized the nature of Schulze's attack on Reinhold and, indirectly, on Kant. Furthermore, he freely admitted that this attack was legitimate: Schulze was essentially correct in his claim that Reinhold's results depended on abstraction from empirical self-observation, and that it therefore relied on empirical psychology. Let me quote the relevant passage in full:

Man kann den Begriff der Vorstellung überhaupt vollständig bestimmen, ohne die der Anschauung, des Begriffs, der Idee bestimmt zu haben; aber man kann die letztern gar nicht vollständig bestimmen, ohne den ersten bestimmt zu haben. Soll aber dadurch gesagt werden, dass dieser Satz nicht nur nicht auf diese bestimmte, sonder überhaupt auf keine Abstraction sich gründe; so lässt sich, in so fern er als erster Grundsatz an der Spitze aller Philosophie steht, das Gegentheil erweisen. Ist nemlich alles, was im Gemüthe zu entdecken ist, ein Vorstellen, alles Vorstellen aber unläugbar eine empirische Bestimmung des Gemüths: so wird das Vorstellen selbst, mit allen reinen Bedingungen, nur durch Vorstellung desselben, mithin empirisch, dem Bewustseyn gegeben; und alle Reflexion über des Bewustseyn hat empirische Vorstellungen zum Objekte. Nun ist das Object jeder empirischen Vorstellung bestimmt gegeben (im Raume, in der Zeit, u.s.f.) Von diesen empirischen Bestimmungen des gegebenen Objects aber wird in der Vorstellung des Vorstellens überhaupt, welche der Satz des

Bewusstseyns ausdrückt, nothwendig abstrahirt. *Der Satz des Bewusstseyns, an die Spitze der gesammten Philosophie gestellt, gründet sich demnach auf empirische Selbstbeobachtung, und sagt allerdings eine Abstraction aus.* (Fichte 1794c, my emphasis)

Notice, however, that Fichte's formulation is hypothetical, and that it implicitly poses the very dilemma that we just encountered: IF Reinhold was right in positing the SdB as the highest principle of Kant's philosophy, then this philosophy indeed depends on empirical psychology. IF, conversely, one does not accept that Kant's philosophy depends on empirical psychology, then Reinhold's SdB cannot be the highest principle of philosophy. In the passage that follows, Fichte immediately makes clear that he considers the former option to be unacceptable:

Freylich fühlt jeder, der diesen Satz wohl versteht, einen innern Widerstand, demselben bloss empirische Gültigkeit beyzumessen. Das Gegentheil desselben läst sich auch nicht einmal denken. Aber eben das deutet darauf hin, dass es sich noch auf etwas anderes gründen müsse, als auf eine blosser Thatsache. Rec. wenigstens glaubt sich überzeugt zu haben dass er ein Lehrsatz sey, der auf einen andern Grundsatz sich gründet; aus diesem aber *a priori*, und unabhängig von aller Erfahrung, sich streng erweisen lässt. (Fichte 1794c, 372–3)

It is at this point that Fichte introduces his famous idea of starting philosophy with a *deed* (*Thathandlung*) instead of a fact.¹⁶ One can hardly overestimate the importance of the fact that this thesis is introduced, first and foremost, because Fichte sees no other way to avoid accepting a psychological foundation for Kant's philosophy (cf. Pippin 2000).

The attempt to rebuild Kant's philosophy on a non-psychological foundation had significant consequences, and Fichte recognized this. Not only did it require the development of a new method for doing critical philosophy, but such a method would also transform Kant's system. Insofar as Kant's philosophy

¹⁶ Fichte rejection of the idea that philosophy must start with the expression of a fact is dependent upon Kant's doctrine that all (theoretical) knowledge of facts is empirical. Importantly, however, Fichte does obscure the strict boundaries that Kant had posited between the factual and the formal, for reasons that are too complex to go into here.

Furthermore, Fichte's idea of a philosophy that is not based on fact, but on what is necessarily thought is not as original as he himself makes it out to be in the *Aenesidemus*-review. In fact, Schulze had already considered, in the *Aenesidemus*, the possibility of a non-factual interpretation of Reinhold's philosophy, which does not start from what is the case, but from what we necessarily think to be the case (Schulze 1792, 194–8). If this interpretation were correct, however, Schulze claims, then Kantian philosophy would not at all be distinct from scepticism, which equally denies the legitimacy of moving from what we think or represent to what is really the case.

had been (presented as) a philosophy based on psychological doctrines, Fichte correctly assesses, it had been a doctrine about *human* cognition:

Da Kant die reinen Formen der Anschauung, Raum und Zeit, nicht eben so, wie die Kategorien, auf einen einzigen Grundsatz zurückgeführt hat, noch sie, seinem die Wissenschaft bloss vorbereitenden Plane nach, darauf zurückführen konnte; so blieb, da bey ihm diese Anschauungsformen blosser Formen des *menschlichen* Vorstellungsvermögens scheinen konnten, nach ihm allerdings der Gedanke von einer Beschaffenheit der dinge für ein andres V[orstellungs]V[ermogen], als das menschliche denkbar [...]. (Fichte 1794c, 385–6)¹⁷

This implies, however, that the way in which the human faculty of cognition (or more generally, representation) is structured is contingent, in the sense that it could have been structured otherwise. Since all matters of contingency are purely factual, such a doctrine could only have a psychological foundation. If Kant's philosophy was to be reconstructed as pure philosophy, Fichte would have to prove that his claims about cognition were not merely valid for human cognition, but for all cognition in general.

Continuation of the struggle against psychology

This transition from a philosophy of human cognition to a philosophy of cognition in general is of the highest importance, for it is only at this point in the reception of Kant's philosophy that the question of the conditions of cognition is completely disconnected (at least methodologically) from the way in which this cognition is realized in the psychology of factual subjects of cognition. Because of this transition Fichte's *Aenesidemus*-review can be identified as one of the key moments in the birth of epistemology, considered as a discipline entirely independent of psychology (see the conclusion, §3). This idea, to my knowledge, cannot be found in pre-Kantian philosophy, and though Kant arguably did, as we have seen (chapter 1, §3), express a similar idea in the preface to the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, it was there with an ambivalence that was no longer present in Fichte's work.

Nevertheless, this importance can also be overstated, for while Fichte's anti-psychological intention is clearly expressed in the review, it proved difficult

¹⁷ It is interesting to see that Fichte believes that Kant's doctrine of the categories, as opposed to the forms of intuition, had already received a non-psychological foundation, something that Schelling and especially Hegel would later dispute.

to execute this intention in an entirely consistent manner. Given Fichte's context, this is hardly surprising. The Enlightenment tradition in philosophy, with its focus on the *human* subject of cognition, had been so dominant during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that its core ideas could not be so easily abandoned. Despite Fichte's insistence that the foundations of critical philosophy should be non-psychological, one still finds significant traces of this tradition in his philosophical writings of the 1790s. This was due at least in part to the fact that even the very terminology that he had inherited was deeply psychological in nature. Even after the *Aenesidemus*-review, Fichte continued to rely heavily on the notions of traditional faculty psychology that he had found in Kant, as is illustrated by the central place that he gives to the imagination in his *Jena Wissenschafts-Lehre* (see Fichte 1794b, 178/GA I.2: 359). In addition, Fichte's introduction of his famous 'absolute I' shows a similar awkward dependence on the very tradition that he had rejected. On the one hand, this notion is introduced to make clear that Fichte is not talking about the 'empirical I,' or the individual subject of cognition, which is studied by empirical psychology. On the other hand, the very fact that Fichte designates them both by the same term 'I' implies a relationship, the nature of which never becomes quite clear in any of his writings during his Jena-period.¹⁸

For these reasons, Fichte's contemporaries could hardly be blamed for their predominantly subjectivist reading of his philosophy.¹⁹ Yet, given the decidedly anti-psychological direction that Fichte had taken, these subjective elements could not be left to stand. The argument for this is quite straightforward: Kant had located the conditions for experience in the contributions that our cognitive faculties made to the production of this experience. Fichte, however, had decisively blocked this route: he maintained, as

¹⁸ This is especially apparent in the *Grundlage*, where, in the theoretical part, Fichte introduces the absolute 'I' as the apparent creator of all experience, whereas, in the practical part, he seems to claim that it should only be conceived of as a regulative ideal (Fichte's so-called *ethical idealism*). The connection between these two parts, however, remains a point of contention amongst Fichte-scholars (cf. Beiser 2002, 217).

In what follows I completely ignore the practical dimension of Fichte's writings. This is a simplification, to be sure, but one that is defensible. I am, after all, not interested here in Fichte's philosophy for its own sake, but for the historical role it played in the genesis of a psychologistic Kantianism. Within this tradition, and within later German Idealism for that matter, Fichte's ethical idealism (which was arguably more philosophically fruitful than the theoretical idealism for which he came to be known) played only a very marginal role.

¹⁹ On this reading, see for example (Kühn 2012, 260–3).

we have seen, that these conditions were not merely valid for a particular life form, but for everything that could possibly be called experience. In doing so, he had totally disconnected the question regarding the conditions of the possibility of experience from the question regarding the factual production of this experience in actual subjects. The consequence of this was that the connection of the conditions of experience to subjectivity, to a supposed 'I' of experience (be it empirical or transcendental), became arbitrary; that is, they could equally well be considered to be necessary conditions for the *object*, rather than the subject, of experience.²⁰ Indeed, from the vantage point that all the German idealists would come to share, the question ought to be moot in any case; for reasons that we cannot go into here, they held that experience was more fundamental than either subjectivity or objectivity. As such, the conditions for this experience precede this very distinction, and to assign them to either side of the distinction ought to be utterly meaningless. This is one possible way in which Schelling's insistence against Fichte that an (objective) *Naturphilosophie* could serve just as well as a starting point for philosophy as Fichte's (subjective) *Wissenschaftslehre* could be interpreted: one ought to be able to find the very same conditions of experience regardless of whether one starts with subjectivity or with objectivity.²¹

Insofar as Schelling's subjective reading of Fichte was accurate, this was a valid point.²² For many Kantians, however, and especially for Kantians of the first hour, these developments must have been completely unintelligible. While many Kantians had already been uneasy with the direction in which Fichte had taken the critical philosophy with his *Wissenschaftslehre*, it had at least still been recognizably Kantian, at least in appearance, primarily *because* of its subjective presentation. The idea that Schelling's philosophy of the Absolute, with its almost mystical metaphysical connotations, could possibly lay claim to

²⁰ As we saw in the discussion of the *Aenesidemus*, this argument was already anticipated by Schulze. It is, furthermore, an unavoidable consequence for any consistent non-psychological Kantian position. It is therefore not surprising to see that the most influential proponent of such a non-psychological Kantianism in the twentieth century, Peter Strawson, also takes Kant to task for connecting the conditions of experience to subjectivity. [reference] This one important similarity between Strawson and the German idealists should of course not obscure our view on the enormous differences that divide them.

²¹ For a discussion of these issues see (Beiser 2002, 465–505).

²² Whether or not Schelling's reading of Fichte is accurate is a question that I will leave to Fichte-scholars. It is, however, remarkable that Fichte abandons much of his subjective terminology not long after his break with Schelling. See for example his 1804 lectures in GA IV.2.

representing the true spirit of Kant's philosophy must have been too hard to swallow for many. It is therefore unsurprising that the competing, psychological, line of Kant-reception, which had already begun to develop in the wake of Reinhold's philosophy, started to gain in popularity towards the ends of the 1790s.

Chapter 3

Kantian Psychology: The First Attempts

1. *Answering Aenesidemus: Psychological Propaedeutics*

The *Aenesidemus*-critique of the empirical-psychological dimensions of Reinhold's *Elementarphilosophie* could, as we saw in the last chapter, be construed in terms of two very different challenges. Fichte's version of this challenge focussed upon the necessity to banish all psychology, and its empirical part in particular, from Kant's critical philosophy. Another possibility, however, was to insist that the dependence of Kant's philosophy on psychology was not in itself problematic, but rather that Reinhold's foundationalist approach to this psychology had been flawed. The challenge, then, would not be to eradicate psychology, but rather to provide a more adequate psychological account of human cognition that could support the critical philosophy without being vulnerable to the arguments employed by Schulze. If such a psychological basis for Kant's philosophy could prove successful, it would also present a powerful argument against Fichte and Schelling, for one would then be able to show that all their speculations were not only unnecessary to ground a properly scientific philosophy, but that they also far overstepped the boundaries of all human cognition.

This second line of argument, in short, was the guiding idea behind many of the psychological endeavours in the second half of the 1790s and in the early 1800s. The authors who embarked on this project shared a deep commitment to Kant's philosophy, an understanding of the challenge that the failure of Reinhold's philosophy to give a convincing answer to Schulze's criticism had created for critical philosophy, and a strong dislike of what they believed to be the outrageous metaphysical systems of the German Idealists. In particular, what they wanted to emphasize was Kant's insistence on the *limitations* of our

capacity for knowledge.¹ For this purpose a psychological approach was very well suited, because it enabled its defender to make claims about what we can and cannot know that did not themselves depend (at least in theory) on questionable metaphysical claims.

In this chapter I will examine three early attempts to develop and defend this psychological approach. During the late 1790s, Johann Heinrich Gottlieb Heusinger, Carl Christian Erhard Schmid (whom we already encountered in chapter one) and Friedrich Bouterwek, all argued that Kant's philosophy was in need of a psychological "propaedeutic."² Such a propaedeutic, they believed, was necessary to make the argumentation for Kant's philosophy fully explicit, thereby guaranteeing both the validity of Kant's argument, and making it easier for new students to understand this philosophy.

In light of these aims, the choice of the term 'propaedeutic' was certainly not accidental. On the one hand it was already common practice for German universities at the time to offer psychology as an introductory course to commencing students, under the label of a 'propaedeutic' (Eckardt et al. 2001, 73). The idea that a psychological propaedeutic was a necessary prelude to a philosophical system would therefore not have seemed unnatural to readers. On the other hand, it reflected a self-conscious relation to Reinhold's work: what they adopted from Reinhold's philosophy was the idea that the psychological vocabulary in Kant's philosophy had to be properly explained and justified if this philosophy was ever to gain universal acceptance. What they did not accept was the idea, which could also be taken from Reinhold, that this psychology could serve as a foundation from which all the rest of philosophy was to be deduced, in the strict logical sense of the word. The psychologistic Kantians, generally speaking, had strong anti-foundationalist convictions. For this reason they preferred the term '*Propädeutik*' over '*Fundament*'; the term that had been favoured by Reinhold and which had subsequently been adopted by Fichte. The

¹ This focus on Kant's doctrine of the limitations of human cognition would remain one of the dominant themes of Kantian Psychologism. We will encounter it again, albeit in different forms, in Fries and Beneke. The fact that this doctrine was considered to be so central to Kant's philosophy by our protagonists also in a great part explains the sympathetic attitude, which was widely shared within this tradition, towards the philosophy of Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi: a philosophy that in many other senses is entirely antithetic to Kant's work.

² Schmid, unlike Heusinger and Bouterwek, did not make use of this term, but the similarities between his proposal for defending a Kantian philosophy and the propaedeutics of Heusinger and Bouterwek are, as we shall see, strong.

significant benefit of this linguistic preference was that it allowed for a far more open conception of the relationship between psychology and critical philosophy than had been possible in Reinhold's foundationalist project. This benefit, however, was at the same time also its downside. Precisely because the term 'propaedeutic' did not determine the concrete relationship between psychology and critical philosophy, but only the order in which they should be studied, serious reflection on this relationship was badly needed at this time. Yet, as we shall see, early authors who developed such a propaedeutic more often than not left this relationship undetermined, and as a consequence the legitimacy and relevance of such a propaedeutic remained an open question.

Nevertheless, the three early attempts by Heusinger, Schmid, and Bouterwek to provide a psychological propaedeutic for Kant's philosophy are important for our investigation for at least two reasons. First, because they provide the necessary evidence for our claim that during the booming years of German Idealism a psychological tradition of Kantianism arose that presented itself as (one of the) main competitor(s) to the Idealist reception of Kant. These case studies will also show convincingly that psychology had gained a very prominent position in discussions surrounding Kantianism at the end of the 1790s. Secondly, they are of importance precisely insofar as these early attempts were flawed in some important respects. Such flaws are informative, because they give us a good indication of the challenges that were to be faced by the protagonists of a psychological Kantianism at the beginning of the nineteenth century. As such, these early attempts provided an important prelude to the more thorough attempts that were to come.

2. *The Encyclopedia of J.H.G. Heusinger*

Johann Heinrich Gottlieb Heusinger (1766–1837) was in many respects right at the centre of the developments that I discussed in the last chapter. A loyal Kantian throughout his intellectual career, Heusinger also came into direct contact with Reinhold, Schulze's *Aenesidemus*, and the opposition to the development of German Idealism. It is within this context that Heusinger's claim that Kant's philosophy is necessarily preceded by a psychological propaedeutic ought to be understood. Indeed, Heusinger's case perfectly illustrates the position in which many Kantians who were not sympathetic towards the

inventions of Fichte (and later Schelling) found themselves towards the end of the century.

Heusinger already became acquainted with Reinhold at an early stage of his career, for he started his studies at the university of Jena in 1787, the very year in which Reinhold took up a professorship at that same university. Heusinger's studies were almost entirely devoted to philosophy (Prantl 1880), so we can say with near certainty, given Reinhold's status during his years at Jena as the most important representative of Kantianism, that Heusinger must have followed at least a number of Reinhold's courses. Since these were also the years in which Reinhold developed his *Elementarphilosophie*, and lectured on it extensively, one can reasonably presuppose that Heusinger must have been intimately acquainted with this philosophy. Given Reinhold's celebrity-status at the time (something that is bound to make an impression on a young man just starting his university education) one may even surmise that Heusinger was likely a follower of Reinhold's for at least some time.³

Interestingly, Heusinger's first published text on Kantian philosophy, an article entitled "Ist Hume's Skepticismus durch die Kritik der reinen Vernunft widerlegt?" (Heusinger 1796a) shows little to no sign of this Reinholdian influence: Reinhold's name is not even mentioned in the text. By itself this is not that remarkable, but it becomes important when one considers the subtitle of Heusinger's article, which reads: "*gegen Aenesidemus*." Reinhold, as we know, had been the main target of Schulze's sceptical arguments in this work. In his polemic against Schulze, however, Heusinger does not even attempt to defend his former teacher at all.⁴ Instead, he limits himself to showing that the critical philosophy, *as originally formulated by Kant*, had not been refuted by Schulze. While we cannot be sure of the reason why Heusinger rejected Reinhold's version of the critical philosophy in favour of the more orthodox variant to which he would remain loyal for the rest of his career, it is quite possible that the *Aenesidemus* played an important role in this decision, as it did for many of his contemporaries.⁵ In any case, regardless of his very critical attitude towards the

³ (Ruberg 2002, 97) claims as much, but unfortunately does not provide a textual reference.

⁴ As, for example, Fichte had still done to some degree in his review of the *Aenesidemus*.

⁵ It is possible that Reinhold's correspondence from this time period would be able to shed some further light on this question, either because he corresponded directly with Heusinger, or because of indirect references. Unfortunately, however, only the letters up to 1793 have been published so far.

Aenesidemus, his complete silence with regards to Schulze's specific arguments against Reinhold, which we examined in the previous chapter, comes very close to an endorsement of these arguments.

The last point is admittedly somewhat speculative in nature, but it gains in substance when one finds, several years later, that Heusinger employs an argumentative strategy very much like Schulze's in a polemic against Fichte. The work in question, Heusinger's *Ueber das idealistisch-atheistische System des Herrn Profefßor Fichte in Jena* (1799), represented one of the more substantial contributions to the infamous *Atheismusstreit* of 1798–1799. In this work, Heusinger naturally considered the question whether Fichte was guilty of atheism (and answers it with a qualified "yes"), but he also produced some more philosophical objections against Fichte's philosophy. In these objections, psychology again played a very central role. This fact has not remained unnoticed by Fichte-scholars such as Daniel Breazeale who on this basis remarks that Heusinger "interpret[ed] the *Wissenschaftslehre* in a straightforwardly 'psychological' manner" (Breazeale 2008, 7). While this statement is not necessarily untrue, one should not take this to mean, as Breazeale seems to do, that Heusinger levelled a charge of psychologism against Fichte, or that Heusinger believed that Fichte *intended* the *WL* to be psychological in nature. His charge, instead, is that while Fichte wanted to banish all psychology from philosophy, he was nevertheless dependent on implicit empirical-psychological premises. While Heusinger did not find the use of psychological premises objectionable as such, he furthermore urged that at least some of the psychological assumptions that Fichte relied on were simply *false*. The most important example presented by Heusinger is Fichte's doctrine that in all consciousness we are also immediately conscious of ourselves as subjects of this consciousness:

Hier gibt Hr. Fichte etwas vor, was sich offenbar anders verhält: wie jeder wissen wird, *der auf seinen Vorstellungszustand Aufmerksamkeit gewandt hat*. Das Selbstbewußtseyn [...] tritt während daß ich einen Gegenstand vorstelle, in der Regel, gar nicht ein. Dies ist so wenig der Fall, daß man sich vorsätzlich viele Mühe geben muß, wenn er einmal eintreten soll. Denn gewöhnlich ist man sich, in dem Augenblicke des Vorstellens, nur des Gegenstandes bewußt. (Heusinger 1799, 17, my emphasis)⁶

⁶ The similarity with Schulze's critique of Reinhold is striking (cf. chapter 2, §3).

In other words, Heusinger concludes:

Daß der Hr. Fichte annimmt, dieser Zustand sey *bei allem Vorstellen* vorhanden, das ist — obgleich die Stütze seines Idealismus, dennoch — eine *psychologische Unwahrheit*. (Heusinger 1799, 18)⁷

Against this background, Heusinger's decision to preface his own positive presentation of the critical philosophy with an empirical-psychological propaedeutic is understandable. While he had by all appearances rejected Reinhold's *Elementarphilosophie* in its entirety at this point, his former teacher had at least impressed upon him the necessity of securing the seemingly psychological apparatus at the very heart of Kant's enterprise. This task was only made more pressing in the context of Heusinger's reception of Schulze and Fichte. A successful psychological propaedeutic would in theory be able to fulfil precisely this function.

The work in which Heusinger sets himself this task is his *Versuch einer Encyklopädie der Philosophie* of 1796.⁸ This endeavour should not be taken to be more innovative or radical than it in fact was. As I have already indicated, Heusinger had, by the mid-90s at the latest, turned to a very orthodox form of Kantianism, and the *Encyklopädie* shows all the signs of this orthodoxy. Like so many of the orthodox Kantian works from the 1780s, its purpose was first and foremost to popularize Kantian philosophy. The intended audience of the book, in other words, was not the academic community of professional philosophers, but rather young men who are about to start their academic studies (which, for Heusinger, clearly means, first and foremost, the study of Kant's philosophy). This audience is directly addressed in the *Encyklopädie*, which takes the form of

⁷ Fichte responded to Heusinger on two occasions, in an unpublished note entitled "Gegen Heusinger" (GA II,5, 193, probably also written 1799), and in the published "Aus einem PrivatSchreiben." In the former, he judges: "Sie [Heusinger's book] gehöre unter die wichtigsten [polemical works against Fichte] — Sodann nur K[ant] wiederholt; u[nd] verdreht." In the latter, he responds more explicitly to the accusation that his system rests on faulty psychological assumptions: "[D]ieser Heusinger bildet sich [...] nichts geringeres in, als daß er dem ganzen Systeme der WissenschaftsLehre mit Einem Streiche ein Ende machen könne, indem er versichert, jenes Ich, worauf diesem System baue, in seinem Bewusstseyn gar nicht vorzufinden; es sey dasselbre eine psychologische Täuschung. Psychologie eben lehrt — von Thatsachen des Bewusstseyns eben, — von dem, was man nur so forfindet, wenn man sich findet, redet die Wissenschaftslehre!" (Fichte 1800, 386n./GA I.6: 387). It is doubtful whether this reply would have convinced anyone who had sympathised with Heusinger; while Fichte complains about being misunderstood, this remark does little to show in what sense Heusinger's critique is supposed to have missed the mark.

⁸ The full title of the work is *Versuch einer Encyklopädie der Philosophie, verbunden mit einer praktischen Anleitung zu dem Studium der kritischen Philosophie vorzüglich auf Universitäten*.

a collection of letters to a (presumably fictional) young student, in which Kant's critical philosophy is introduced and explained.⁹

Given this popularizing intent, it would be highly surprising if one were to find in this book a serious attempt to further develop the most famous philosophical theory of the time, and indeed one does not: when Heusinger presents his psychological propaedeutic, in letters five to nine, he seems to be under the impression that he is not doing anything new at all, but rather that he is just making very explicit what had already been contained in Kant's theory. As a result, one is again faced with one of the typical difficulties of studying orthodox texts, namely that very little explicit critical reflection takes place on the choices of the author, such as, in this case, the insertion of a psychological propaedeutic. To the great frustration of the reader, Heusinger at one point in the preface even directly refers to this lack of critical reflection:

Am meisten dürfte meine Bearbeitungsart der empirischen Psychologie einer Rechtfertigung bedürfen, da sie ziemlich von der gewöhnlichen abweicht. Ich verspare aber diese bis zu einer andern Gelegenheit, denn ich finde diesmal nicht Raum genug dazu. (Heusinger 1796b, xxxviii)¹⁰

Nonetheless, we can still extract a number of important points from the text which reveal, on the one hand, that Heusinger did indeed self-consciously adopt the task, left by Reinhold, of clarifying Kant's psychological apparatus, and, on the other hand, some of the methodological problems that would turn out to be typical for the psychologistic Kantian tradition.

Heusinger's characterisation of the task of his psychological propaedeutic, which reveals the role he envisions for it within Kantian philosophy, is expressed most clearly in the passage immediately following the one quoted above:

Die Psychologie muß, meines Erachtens, die Verhältnisse der verschiedenen Gemüthsvermögen, als Gesetze der geistigen Natur des Menschen aufstellen; das wäre ihr Ziel. (Heusinger 1796b, xxxviii)

Psychology, in Heusinger's view, thus list the various mental faculties, and determine their interrelationships. This is very typical; while faculty-psychology

⁹ All references to the *Encyklopädie* are to the first volume.

¹⁰ Heusinger is surely right that this treatment of psychology requires justification, for, as we shall see, it is confronted with a number of serious difficulties. Unfortunately, however, I have not been able to find this promised justification in any of Heusinger's texts, most likely because Heusinger never actually wrote it.

would come under heavy attack in the course of the nineteenth century, it was still widely assumed at the end of the eighteenth century (at least in the German tradition) that the study of the mental faculties was the best way to come to an understanding of the human mind.¹¹ It is also easy to understand why Heusinger considered this type of faculty psychology to be so essential for understanding Kant's endeavour in his critical works. The *Critique of Pure Reason* is, after all, precisely organised in terms of the three traditional cognitive faculties: sensibility, understanding and reason. Before beginning one's studies of Kant's philosophy, Heusinger thinks, one should therefore at least understand which mental faculties there are, and what they do (xxxvii-xxxix).

Unfortunately for Heusinger, two major problems loomed over this project. One of these was a methodological problem that became the decisive reason for the rejection of faculty psychology in course of the nineteenth century, namely: how can one justify the claims that one wants to make about our supposed mental faculties? Clearly, as Heusinger admitted, our cognitive faculties are not like regular objects confronted in experience, so that we could study them by means of observation; they only manifest themselves insofar as they bring about cognitive performances.¹² Our only option is therefore to take an indirect route, through the representations that are assumed to be the products of these faculties:

Hierzu [knowledge of the interaction of our faculties, and the mental laws that regulate this interaction] aber würde erfordert, daß die Psychologen vorher bestimmte Begriffe von jedem dieser Vermögen hätten, und diese scheinen mich nicht eher möglich zu seyn, als bis man die Producte jedes Vermögens genau kennt. Diese Kenntniß der Producte der Vermögen ist die einzige Bedingung zur Erkenntniß der Vermögen selbst; es muß also schlechterdings alles, was nur immer im Gemüthe wahrzunehmen ist, in Aufmerksamkeit gezogen, und wegen seines Geburtsbriefes befragt werden. (xxxviii)

As it stands, however, this will not do, for what remains unclear is what would actually entitle us to come to conclusions about supposed mental faculties on the basis of an observation of their products. The *virtus dormitiva*-objection may have received its most famous formulation a century later in Nietzsche's work,

¹¹ See also the section on Bouterwek below.

¹² "Ein Gemüthskraft ist kein anschauliches Ding, sondern ein unbekanntes Etwas, welches wir als den Grund ansehen, daß etwas vorhandenes möglich ist." (67)

but it had already become a trope around 1800.¹³ As long as this problem is not resolved, the conclusions of faculty psychology must necessarily appear arbitrary, as is indeed confirmed by the fact that one can easily find a host of very different divisions of the faculties and their functions in the large number of books on psychology published at this time (Eckardt et al. 2001, 74). Heusinger was clearly aware of this question, but his answer to it misses the mark on all counts:

Da sich in der menschlichen Natur ein Gesetz befindet, welches berechtigt, dem Grunde so viel beyzulegen, als in demjenigen anzutreffen ist, was als eine Folge dieses Grundes angesehen wird, so kann man eine unsichtbare Kraft dadurch kennen lernen, daß man untersucht was in ihrem Produkte liegt. (66)

The problem with this argument should be obvious: even granting the principle proposed by Heusinger, it is still not clear how much good this would do. If one merely posits in the cause what one observes in the effect, one only duplicates reality, but does not really explain it. The question is then why we would posit cognitive faculties in the first place, rather than resting content with the representations themselves. Such a procedure would also be of no help whatsoever in serving as a ground for the critical philosophy. It is therefore not surprising that Heusinger constantly violates this methodological stricture in what follows, and instead seeks refuge in a confusing mix of physiological argument, introspection, and metaphysical reasoning. Letter five, especially, provides a good example of this mix, for it begins with a discussion of the function of nerves in external observation, continues with the remark that "self-observation" reveals to us that we have an inner sense, and then proceeds without hesitation by positing that we can only be aware of the soul itself because it is an active force, and not a mere passive receiver of impressions.

Even if we disregard this first problem, which in a large part is only a reflection of the immature state of psychology at the time when Heusinger wrote his book, there is still a second, more philosophical problem to consider of which Heusinger ought to have been aware, but which he failed to address. This problem concerns the very relation between this psychological propaedeutic and

¹³ The objection initially became famous through Molière's *Le Malade Imaginaire* (Molière 1673, 141). Nietzsche writes: "Wie sind synthetische Urteile *a priori* möglich? fragte sich Kant, – und was antwortete er eigentlich? *Vermöge eines Vermögens*" (WKG, VI.2, 18).

the critical philosophy. Kant had rejected the idea that empirical psychology could contribute to critical philosophy in large part because he did not believe a valid transition from the empirical to the *a priori* to be possible: empirical premises simply could not have the required universality and necessity. Heusinger, who considered himself to be a loyal Kantian, nevertheless runs completely contrary to this when he writes a psychological propaedeutic that is explicitly empirical in character. While the developments in the 1790s provided some legitimation for such a step, this did not mean that the transition from the empirical to the *a priori* had become any less problematic, and it certainly required extensive justification. Unfortunately, however, the search for this type of justification in the *Encyklopädie* turns out to be in vain, for Heusinger simply remains silent on the issue: after finishing his propaedeutic at the end of letter nine, he proceeds without further explanation to the *Critique of Pure Reason* proper, leaving the relation between propaedeutic and critique an open question.

3. C.C.E. Schmid's Facts of Consciousness

Schmid's Reinhold-review

In chapter one, we got to know Carl Christian Schmid as one of the most important authors within the early orthodox Kantian movement. Unlike many of the other orthodox protagonists, however, Schmid continued to be a significant figure in Kantian philosophy when, during the 1790s, the philosophical audience started to demand innovation and originality, rather than more dictionaries, commentaries and introductions. This continued influence was not so much due to his own further positive contributions to Kantian philosophy,¹⁴ but rather to his role as an outspoken and perceptive critic of the German Idealists. Within this role, Schmid is of particular interest because, having been a professor at the university of Jena for almost his entire career, he was a direct colleague of all the Idealists at one time or another and was therefore in a much better position to get acquainted with their philosophical systems than those critics who had to rely on published works alone. Furthermore, it was in these polemics, rather than in the rather dry handbooks of various philosophical sub-disciplines (his

¹⁴ While Schmid published a large number of works on a variety of topics during these years, his early orthodox works remained his most successful publications.

preferred genre of publication during these years) that Schmid identified psychology as the proper starting point for Kantian philosophy.

Schmid's first important text in this regard is his 1792-review of Reinhold's *Ueber das Fundament des philosophischen Wissens* in the *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung*.¹⁵ Since 1792 was also the year in which Schulze's *Aenesidemus* appeared it is unlikely that the review had been influenced by this work, and it is therefore interesting to note that Schmid's line of critique nevertheless corresponds for a large part with that employed in the *Aenesidemus*. Like Schulze, Schmid focused primarily on the status of Reinhold's *Satz des Bewusstseyns*, and on its relation to the propositions for which it was supposed to provide a foundation. In this context, Schmid makes a helpful distinction that serves as the frame for most of his review. While he is willing to grant Reinhold that what philosophy in their time has the most need of is a first principle, he posits that a proposition can serve as principle for philosophy in three very different senses:

Es giebt [...] 1) *logische* oder *formale Grundsätze*, welche aber in Absicht auf Erweiterung nur einen negativen Gebrauch haben können, wie der Satz des Widerspruches, 2) *materiale Grundsätze*, die den Grund der objectiven Wahrheit eines andern Satzes in sich enthalten, und als erste Prämissen einer Schlussreihe vorkommen, endlich auch 3) *normale Grundsätze*, die das Verhältniss eines Satzes zu andern Sätzen in einer Wissenschaft bestimmen, und den Plan zum einem [...] System vorzeichnen. (Schmid 1792, 52)

It is clear, Schmid claims, that Reinhold does not intend his principle to be a mere logical principle that may not be contradicted by any valid proposition. Whether we are to interpret it as a "material principle" or as a "normal principle," however, is less clear and in fact, as Schmid shows with the help of some quotations, Reinhold seems to move back and forth between the two in various texts on philosophical method (55–56). Furthermore, insofar as he does pretend to deduce anything from his first principle, he constantly has to smuggle in additional, and controversial, premises (57).¹⁶

We have already considered the ground for this ambivalence and lack of clarity in our discussion of the *Aenesidemus* in the last chapter, so I will not repeat them here. Unlike Schulze, however, Schmid was not content with merely

¹⁵ The review, like all reviews in the ALZ, was published anonymously, but Schmid's authorship was evidently no secret, for Reinhold himself referred to the identity of his reviewer in a letter to Baggesen, in which he also expresses his appreciation for some of the arguments in the review (see Frank 1997, 349).

¹⁶ Again, a reproach that was also made by Schulze in the same year.

criticizing Reinhold, but he also made some remarks as to which positive conclusions we might draw for our own philosophizing on the basis of this critique. As one might expect, given the nature of a review, these remarks are not very detailed, but they are nevertheless suggestive. Whereas Reinhold remained unclear on the status of the first principle, Schmid makes it very clear that while he agrees with Reinhold that philosophy requires a first principle, this ought to be no more than what, in the quotation above, he referred to as a "normal principle." Such a normal principle would be the most general proposition within a philosophical system, and it would serve to determine the boundaries of the domain of philosophy, as well as indicate the most general structure of this domain, such as its division in various philosophical sub-disciplines. As such, all valid propositions within a philosophical system would fall under this first principle. They could not be *deduced* from this principle, however, because it is logically impossible to deduce the more particular from the more general (53). Or, applied to Reinhold's particular case: a proposition about consciousness in general could never enable one to deduce more particular forms of consciousness such as thought and perception (56). Against Reinhold, Schmid therefore proposed that the material foundation of a philosophical system should not consist of one, but indeed of a large number of basic propositions.

What then are these basic propositions? Schmid's answer is very revealing:

Da alle Erkenntniss auf *Thatsachen*, alle Philosophie auf *Thatsachen des menschlichen Gemüthes*, und einem Philosophie, so fern sie die Basis der angewandten seyn soll, auf *nothwendigen und allgemeinen Thatsachen* des menschlichen Gemüthes oder dem Bewusstseyn beruhen muss: so ist offenbar das letztere das *Realfundament* alles philosophischen Wissens, und selbst alle übrigen *Facta*, die sich auf Gegenstände ausser dem Bewusstseyn beziehen, haben dennoch ihre Aufnahme in die Wissenschaft lediglich den innern *Factis* im Bewusstseyn, womit sie verbunden sind, und ihre wissenschaftliche Anordnung eben solchen *Thatsachen* zu verdanken, die auf alle übrigen zufälligen Veränderungen des Gemüths einen bestimmenden Einfluss haben. (51)

In other words, Reinhold was right, according to Schmid to believe that all philosophy must begin with factual knowledge about the human mind or, in short, with psychology. He was wrong, however, to believe that the relevant psychological knowledge could be limited to a single general principle. Such an idea inevitably results in the representation of one aspect of the human mind as the fundamental and comprehensive truth about this mind. It is precisely, this

kind of psychological one-sidedness, Schmid argues, that has been the cause of all the disagreement and party-formation in the history of philosophy (53). It had been Kant's merit to recognise the most important psychological insights represented by the various philosophical schools. This enabled him to ground his philosophy in a far more adequate and multi-faceted psychology:

Kant's unsterbliches Verdienst um die Philosophie ist wohl eben darinn vornehmlich zu setzen, dass er die Principien der verschiedenen Theile der Philosophie und der verschiedenen Partheyen in der philosophischen Welt, als eben so viele wesentlich reine und ursprüngliche Thatsachen des menschlichen Geistes [aufgestellt hat]. (54)

While Kant's attempt may not yet have been perfect, Schmid believes that the project had been correct, and that in this regard Reinhold's philosophy was a step backwards. While Schmid does not use the term, it is therefore clear that for him, no less than for Heusinger, all philosophy is built on the basis of a psychological propaedeutic.

The Fichte–Schmid controversy

Perceptive readers will surely have noticed the remarkable contrast provided by Schmid's review on the one hand, and Fichte's Aenesidemus-review on the other. In many respects, Fichte's ideal image of Kantian philosophy is diametrically opposed to Schmid's: whereas Schmid favoured a philosophy built not only on facts (as opposed to Fichte's acts), but on facts of consciousness, and wanted to limit philosophy's scope to a theory of specifically *human* cognition, this was precisely that kind of endeavour that Fichte had so forcefully rejected in his discussion of Schulze's book.

When Fichte accepted a position at the university of Jena in 1793, and thereby became Schmid's direct colleague, these philosophical differences quickly escalated into a hostile polemic, which received a lot of attention at the time.¹⁷ This public interest in what may appear a mere academic dispute can be in part explained by the extremely aggressive tone of the debate, which found its climax in Fichte's notorious '*Annihilationsakt*': his declaration, made in a text that compared Schmid's philosophy with his own, that he would from that moment

¹⁷ This conflict lasted from 1793–1796 and was fought out primarily through the publication of a number of shorter texts and declarations. Accounts can be found in (Kühn 2012, 311–21; and Ziche and van Zantwijk 2000).

onward regard Schmid as non-existent (Fichte 1796, 319/GA, I.3: 266). Aside from the scandal, however, there was also a significant philosophical interest, for both of the fighting parties made it very clear that they considered nothing less than the future of the Kantian philosophy to be at stake in this conflict.¹⁸ As they presented it, the choice between a Fichtean type of radical idealism and the psychological Kantianism that Schmid favoured was one that every Kantian would have to make.

Unfortunately, the significance of this polemic was not matched by an equal depth and quality of argumentation. The fact that the polemic was at least as much a personal as it was a philosophical conflict resulted in a debate that lacked a clear focus and in which the participants did not seriously engage with the other party's arguments in any depth. Instead, the meaning of this exchange was similar to that of a typical modern political debate, in which the participating parties do not so much try to convince their opponent, but rather to make it clear to the larger public what the points of disagreement are.

Since the controversy lacked a clear focus, every thematic discussion of the debate between Schmid and Fichte is necessarily selective. Yet, when one is forced to make such a selection, the conflict between these authors over the legitimacy of psychological premises in philosophy is an excellent candidate.¹⁹ In the controversy, this conflict manifests itself most prominently in a disagreement over the status of Schmid's facts of consciousness, which we encountered in the last subsection. For Schmid, we saw, these facts formed the starting point for

¹⁸ Arguably it was precisely the question concerning the true meaning of Kant's revolution in philosophy that sparked the conflict in the first place. In a review of Leonard Creuzer's *Skeptischen Betrachtungen über die Freyheit des Willens*, which was published in the ALZ in 1793, Fichte had attacked both Creuzer and Schmid (who had written the introduction to the book) for their supposed misunderstanding of Kantianism (Fichte 1793/GA I.2: 7ff.). Schmid, at the time still one of the most respected authorities on Kant's philosophy responded somewhat condescendingly that "der Rec. sich mit dem *Buchstaben* der Kantischen Schriften noch nicht genugsam bekannt gemacht habe, um über ihren Geist abzusprechen" (Schmid 1794, 112). Fichte, always quick to be angered, replied: "Ob ich so dringend nöthing habe, mich mit dem Buchstaben der *Kantischen* Schriften noch bekannter zu machen um über ihren Geist urtheilen zu können; oder ob ich schon jetzt das Recht haben dürfte, unnützes Geschwatz unnützes Geschwatz zu nennen, oder einen Schriftsteller der gegen *Kant* in dem Tone redet [...] in seine Grenzen zurückzuweisen: – Für diese Beurtheilung hoffe ich in Kurzem allen competenten Richtern sehr hinreichende Data vorzulegen [...]" (Fichte 1794a, 231/GA I.2: 76). These quotations illustrate perfectly how important it was to authors at this time to be seen as representing the true Kantianism. They also give the reader an adequate idea of the tone of the entire polemic, and of the rapid rate at which it escalated.

¹⁹ I am not the first to notice the central role that disagreements over psychology played in this controversy, see (Ziche and van Zantwijk 2000).

philosophy, which could not be transcended. But this, Schmid argues, is precisely what Fichte tried to do: the 'I' about which Fichte philosophized is very different from our subjectivity as we immediately find it in consciousness. Such philosophizing, Schmid maintains, is therefore wholly arbitrary. If the premises on the basis of which one reasons are not given immediately in consciousness, where does one obtain them?

Denn alsdenn würde es durachaus an einem Obersatze fehlen, vermittelt dessen man aus dem im Bewußtseyn Gegebenen, als dem Bedingten, auf seine bestimmte und zwar höchste Bedingung, als etwas Nichtgegebenes, schließen könnte. Ein solcher Obersatz ist schlechterdings unmöglich, folglich auch ein Grundsatz für ein solche Philosophie, folglich aber auch eine solche reine Philosophie selbst, welche [...] also leer und grundloss, ein müßiges Hirngespinnst sein würde. (Schmid 1795, 101)²⁰

The consequence of such philosophizing, which holds itself to be fully autonomous and that transcends everything that is given to us in consciousness, is the narcissistic belief that we are not reliant, for our cognition, on a reality that reveals itself to us, but rather that we are ourselves the creators of this reality:

[Man wagte] den neuen und kühnen Versuch, den Anfangs- und den Endpunkt alles Philosophirens zu vereinigen, in dem man dem Begriffe von einem erkennenden Subjecte welches im Selbstbewußtseyn vorkommt; ein idealisches Absolutum unterschob, und aus der Fülle dieser erdichteten unendlichkeit jedesmal gerade das und gerade so viel hervorzog, als man nöthig zu haben glaubte, um alles, was im Bewußtsein vorkommt, daraus herzuleiten. So ward die Philosophie eine unendliche Dichtung und der Philosoph erhob sich zur Würde eines Selbstschöpfers einer Welt, eines Inbegriffs aller Dinge aus sich selbst und für sich selbst. (Schmid 1795, 106)

Instead, Schmid maintains, one should opt for a modest philosophy that recognizes and respects the limitations of the human mind.

Since we are not here concerned with Fichte's philosophy for its own sake, it is not necessary to evaluate the validity of Schmid's critique: it is only of importance insofar as it tells us something about Schmid's own understanding of what philosophy can and cannot be. Fichte's criticism of Schmid, on the other hand, needs to be discussed in somewhat more detail, for despite of its somewhat superficial nature, it does reveal a serious weakness in Schmid's conception of philosophy. While Schmid takes Fichte to task for transcending the

²⁰ Schmid does not explicitly name Fichte, but the added footnote, with its reference to a philosophy that starts from the actions of the subject leaves little doubt who he had in mind. Fichte, in any case, interpreted it as such (Fichte 1796, 294–5/GA I.3: 252)

facts of consciousness, Fichte counterattacks by questioning the status of these supposed facts as premises for philosophy. If Schmid is right, Fichte notes, we must posit that there are at least some facts of consciousness that we can know *a priori* (Fichte 1796, 270, 271/GA I.3: 237, 238). For example, Schmid claims:

Einige [Gegenstände] sind schlechthin nothwendig zu unserm Selbstbewußtsein gehörig [...]. Diese sind das Vermögen der Erkenntniß oder der *Verstand*, und das Vermögen zu handeln oder der *Wille*. Dieser beiden Vermögen sind wir uns *a priori* bewußt [...]. (Schmid 1795, 118)

In other words, Schmid had to allow for an *a priori* psychology that formed the counterpart to his empirical psychology: the science that studies the facts of consciousness empirically.²¹ One can readily understand why Schmid posited such *a priori* knowledge of mental facts: it helped him to avoid precisely the kinds of problems regarding the transition from the empirical to the *a priori* that we encountered in the context of Heusinger's proposal: if our psychology is itself *a priori*, one does not have to concern oneself with the question how it could possibly play a role in the justification of Kant's critical philosophy.²² Yet, as Fichte points out, the positing of *a priori* knowledge of certain facts of consciousness creates its own problems. It is not so much that he objects to the pretence of having *a priori* knowledge of facts in principle (though he would have had good Kantian reasons to do so), but rather to the fact that Schmid cannot theoretically account for the existence of our knowledge of such facts, because such an explanation would necessarily transcend these facts themselves:

Jeder Grund liegt außerhalb des Begründeten; sonnach könnte der Beweis, daß man über Thatsachen hinaus mit der Philosophie nicht gehen dürfe, nur so geführt werden, daß er selbst über sie hinausgienge, mithin selbst, nach Hrn. Schmid's eigener Behauptung, leer, grundlos, und ein müßiges Hirngespinnst wäre. Mithin hat Hr. Schmid hier etwas gesagt, das er beweisen weder kann noch will. Wenn nun etwa [...], was ein anderer philosophischer Schriftsteller, und unter diesen auch ich, auch *sagte*, gerade soviel gelten müßte als was Hr. Schmid *sagt*; was könnte ich hier nicht alles

²¹ As I noted in chapter one, §3, Schmid's reliance on the possibility of an *a priori* psychology, and his interpretation of Kant's work as a contribution to precisely such a psychology were already apparent in his 1791 book on empirical psychology. At this point I disagree with Ziche and Van Zantwijk, who consider Schmid's psychological Kantianism to be a result of his supposed empiricism (Ziche and van Zantwijk 2000, 565, 578). As should be clear at this point, no such empiricism is to be found in Schmid.

²² It is noteworthy that the interpretation of Kant's philosophy defend by Schmid. in which Kant is dependent on immediate *a priori* knowledge of certain facts of consciousness has recently made somewhat of a comeback in Kant-scholarship, see (Marshall 2014, especially 565).

sagen, über die Philosophen, die bei vorgeblichen Thatsachen des Bewußtseins stehen bleiben, ohne, wie sich dadurch deutlich zeigt, jemals nachgedacht zu haben, was Thatsache nur sein könne; die hierüber sich gar nicht einlassen, sondern sagen; kurz, so ist es, und wer mich noch weiter fragt, ist ein Dummkopf, und ein moralisches Ungeheuer dazu [...]. (Fichte 1796, 303–4/GA I.3: 257)²³

Fichte's argument is strong on this point, and it creates great difficulties for Schmid. In the context of Kant's philosophy it seems simply dogmatic to posit *a priori* knowledge of facts without a subsequent explanation of how such knowledge is possible. Kant's arguments against the rational psychologist's claim to reveal such facts had been powerful, and it is unclear why they would not apply equally to Schmid's position. Against these doubts, Schmid's only possible strategy was simply to reaffirm that we have such knowledge, and that this cannot be doubted. However, as Fichte pointed out, if we accept such a defence, every other philosopher would similarly be entitled to positing *a priori* knowledge of their own preferred facts of consciousness, which would make it utterly impossible to decide on rational grounds between various philosophical systems.²⁴ In other words, the arbitrariness-objection that Schmid had levelled against Fichte could also be made against his own position on equally good grounds. In effect, Schmid's decision to favour *a priori* over empirical psychology for the purposes of his propaedeutic had perhaps made it easier to see how such a propaedeutic could play a justificatory role in critical philosophy, but it had made the psychological propaedeutic, on which philosophy was supposed to find a solid ground, itself unstable.

²³ Fichte comes back on this point in his first introduction to the *Wissenschaftslehre*, where he writes (with implicit reference to Schmid): [D]ie Philosophie [hat] den Grund aller Erfahrung anzugeben; ihr Object liegt sonach nothwendig außer aller Erfahrung. Dieser Satz gilt für alle Philosophie, und hat auch, bis auf die Epoche der Kantianer, und ihrer Thatsachen des Bewußtseyns, und also der innern Erfahrung, wirklich allgemein gegolten" (Fichte 1797, 10/GA I.4: 187).

²⁴ In any case, Fichte has no sympathy for the particular facts of consciousness that Schmid proposes as resulting from *a priori* experience: "Da ich [...] das, was Hr. Schmid als Object seines wissenschaftlichen Verfahrens aufstellt, theils überhaupt nicht für Erfahrung gelten lasse, sondern für Abstractionen, theils für unreine und ungeläuterte Erfahrung halte, so ist mir des Hrn. Schmid's Sache auch nicht einmal Wissenschaft, sondern es ist mir nichts, ein Ding ohne Namen." (Fichte 1796, 317–8/GA I.3: 264–5)

4. Friedrich Bouterwek's Faculty Psychology

The last attempt to supplement Kant's philosophy with a psychological propaedeutic that I wish to discuss, was made by Friedrich Bouterwek (1766–1828), in his *Anfangsgründe der speculativen Philosophie* (1800). Bouterwek, who is nowadays primarily remembered for his contribution to the famous *Göttinger Geschichte der Künste und Wissenschaften*,²⁵ entered the scene of Kantian philosophy in 1792. In this year, he wrote a letter to Kant, in which he expressed his admiration for the critical philosophy, as well as his intention to contribute to the success of that philosophy through both his lectures and by other means at his disposal (AA 11: 368). This must have been a very welcome surprise to Kant, and his response is correspondingly enthusiastic (AA 11: 431). The reason for this enthusiasm was not so much the fact that a young philosophical mind pledged allegiance to his cause (for during the early 1790s there was certainly no shortage of those), but rather that this particular young mind was based in Göttingen, which had been the centre of the "Lockean" opposition to the critical philosophy since its very appearance (Beiser 1987, 165–93); a fact also referred to by Bouterwek in his letter:

Ich bin der Erste, der es wagt, auf dieser Georg-Augusts-Universität, wo so ein Unternehmen in mehr als einer Rücksicht gewagt heissen kan, Kritik der reinen Vernunft nach Ihrem System öffentlich vorzutragen. (AA XI, 368)

To have an ally who was actively promoting the critical philosophy in his lectures in this most hostile of environments would understandably have seemed of great value to Kant.

During the first few years after their exchange of letters, Bouterwek did indeed manifest himself as a reliable supporter of the Kantian cause. Aside from his lectures on the topic at the university of Göttingen, this support resulted in yet another popular work designed to explain Kant's philosophy to the broad intellectual audience, the *Aphorismen: den Freunden der Vernunftkritik nach Kantischer Lehre vorgelegt* (Bouterwek 1793). During the late 1790s, however, Bouterwek started moving away from pure Kantianism, in large part due to the

²⁵ The *Geschichte der Künste und Wissenschaften seit der Wiederherstellung derselben bis an das Ende des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts, von einer Gesellschaft gelehrter Männer ausgearbeitet* (1796–1820), as its full title reads, was an enormous encyclopaedic project, eventually comprising fifty-six volumes, which was based in Göttingen. From 1801–1819, Bouterwek contributed twelve volumes on *Geschichte der Poesie und Beredsamkeit seit dem Ende des dreizehnten Jahrhunderts*.

growing influence of Jacobi on his own thought. This influence is most visible in his *Immanuel Kant: Ein Denkmal* (1805), a work occasioned by the death of Kant. In this funerary monument, Bouterwek adopted Jacobi's critique that Kant's philosophy, if taken by the letter, is formalistic and devoid of reality (Bouterwek 1805, 62–3, 66–7). This is not to say, however, that he no longer considered himself to be a Kantian at all. On the contrary, Bouterwek maintains in this work, if one looks beyond the mere letter of Kant's philosophy and appreciates its *spirit*, one can understand why Kant brought about a revolution in German philosophy (Bouterwek 1805, 9–10, 11). It was this spirit as well that guided Kant's thought in the right direction, despite of the empty formality of many of his arguments:

Die Resultate, bei denen Kant stehen blieb, kündigen sich mit einer ganz eigenen Kraft als die reinsten Aussprüche des kultivirten Menschenverstandes an, wenn man sie von den spekulativen Subtilitäten, von denen sie im Systeme umgeben sind, ganz entkleidet. (Bouterwek 1805, 63)

Where, then, can this true spirit of Kant's philosophy be found? Certainly not, Bouterwek maintained, in the place where Fichte and his followers thought they had found it. Like Heusinger and Schmid before him, Bouterwek was fiercely critical of German Idealism and considered it a perversion of Kant's philosophical contributions:

Der *Geist* der Schwärmerei, die sich jetzt transcendentaler Idealismus nennt, ist so durchaus *anti-kantisch*, daß Kant selbst eine solche Wendung, der durch ihn bewirkten Revolution in der Geisterwelt nicht einmal ahnden konnte. Nach konsequenter Fortsetzung des Kantischen Systems mag sich die neue Anschauungslehre aus dem Kantianismus deduciren lassen. Aber dem *Geiste* der Kantischen Philosophie ist diese Fortsetzung so fremd, wie der *Quietismus* und die *Geisterseherei*. (Bouterwek 1805, 84–5)²⁶

Instead, in sketching the true spirit of the Kantian philosophy, Bouterwek posited himself firmly as part of the psychological reception of Kant:

Was die neue Richtung, die der Kantianismus dem spekulirenden Verstande in Deutschland gegeben hat, überall auszeichnet, ist ein neues Streben nach einer neuen *Analyse der ursprünglichen Funktionen der menschlichen*

²⁶ Cf. the rest of this passage and pp. 22–3. Notice how the dynamic of the polemic between Schmid and Fichte is completely reversed in this quotation, with Fichte (according to Bouterwek) representing the letter of Kant's philosophy, and Bouterwek himself the spirit. Doubtlessly, this was the first and only time that Fichte was ever accused of sticking too closely to the words of Kant's philosophy.

Geistesthätigkeit, und wenn von irgend einem Studium als ein glückliches Ende des Streits der Philosophen wenigstens in gewissen Köpfen erwartet werden darf, so muß man es von diesem erwarten. (80)

Durch den Kantianismus ist der menschliche Geist von neuem aufmerksam auf sein Innerstes gemacht. [...] Die Selbstbeobachtung hat einen neuen Charakter angenommen seitdem man, nach Kant's Beispiele, dem *Nothwendigen* und *Unveränderlichen* im Bewußtseyn systematisch nachzuforschen und die höchsten *Gesetze* des Bewußtseyns als die ersten Wahrheiten der Philosophie zu erklären angefangen hat. (82–83)

The only part where Kant went wrong on this point, according to Bouterwek, is that he believed that his psychological investigations revealed something about a supposed "pure" reason, rather than about the merely human mind (108–9). This mistake was especially harmful, however, insofar as it provided a motivation for all the extravagant metaphysical speculations of the German Idealists.

One can see that Bouterwek's appreciation of Kant resembles that of Heusinger and Schmid to a large degree, and it is no overstatement to claim that they are committed to the same philosophical project. Most importantly, all three interpreted Kant's philosophy first and foremost as a philosophy of the human mind, and therefore, somewhat plausibly, concluded that philosophy necessarily makes use of knowledge from the domain of psychology. While *Immanuel Kant: ein Denkmal* remains entirely programmatic, Bouterwek had already made an attempt at executing this program in the years before its publication. During the late years of the 1790s and the early years of the 1800s, Bouterwek published various texts on what he called *Apodiktik*: the idea of a philosophy that was entirely beyond doubt (Bouterwek 1799, 1800, 1802, and 1803). The most relevant of these works for our purposes is the *Anfangsgründe der Speculativen Philosophie* (1800), the work that deals with the starting point of this new philosophy, for it is here that Bouterwek presents what he calls a psychological propaedeutic.

Bouterwek's rationale for starting with such a psychological propaedeutic is noteworthy, for his considerations were different than those found in for example Schmid and Heusinger. As mentioned above, Bouterwek aimed to construct a philosophical system that could not be subject to doubt, and for this reason he necessarily had to counter the sceptic. As a consequence, Bouterwek emphasizes, one must start without any presuppositions (Bouterwek 1800, x–

xi). Or rather, as later becomes clear, one may only make use of premises that are already implied by the sceptical position itself. The only presupposition of scepticism, however, Bouterwek argues in Cartesian fashion, is thought itself. Consequently, philosophy must necessarily start with the question what thought is (17–18). In other words:

Der erste und letzte Gegenstand alles Philosophirens ist also der *Mensch*, gedacht als ein Wesen, das sich selbst denkt. Die Philosophie ist *Selbstkenntniß* in der höchsten Bedeutung des Worts. (18)

This argument is no doubt overly hasty. It is in this context, however, that Bouterwek emphasizes the necessity of starting one's philosophizing with a psychological investigation: "Nicht anders als psychologisch läßt sich beym Anfange des Philosophirens eine Eintheilung der Philosophie finden" (21). Given, after all, that philosophy is supposed to start without presuppositions, it has no way of answering its question about the nature of thought besides borrowing its initial starting point from another discipline, namely psychology.

That is not to say that Bouterwek was not aware that of some of the problems of finding a starting point in psychology. The main problem that Bouterwek mentions, and that we already encountered in our discussion of Heusinger, is the appearance of arbitrariness in many of the faculty-psychological discussions of his time:

Wir könnten es uns, dem Scheine nach, so bequem machen, wie es sich die Philosophen lange genug gemacht haben, wenn wir damit anfangen, eine Reihe von sogenannten *Seelenkräften* aufzuzählen, diese zu definiren, und dann nach unsern Definitionen zu argumentiren. Aber wir fragen billig zuerst: was uns denn zu dieser Aufzählung von Seelenkräften *berechtigt*? Wenn wir dann finden, daß das Verzeichniß der sogenannten Seelenkräfte in jeder Schule anders ausfällt [...] so werden wir mit Grunde misstrauisch gegen alle solche Verzeichnisse (19–20).

This threat of arbitrariness would be particularly problematic for an anti-sceptical endeavour like Bouterwek's, for it is hard to see how such a controversial starting point could contribute to a supposedly apodictic philosophical system. Despite these problems, however, Bouterwek maintained his faith in the psychological method: "Da indessen die philosophischen speculation immer diesen Gang genommen hat, muß er wohl der *natürlichste* seyn" (20). For this reason, instead of abandoning this method, he argues that the theoretical *status* of the psychological starting point ought to be

reconsidered. Because the truth of the basic psychological claims made at the start of philosophy are not certain, they should only be taken as *hypothetically* valid (21) until the whole system of philosophy has been completed and shown to be evident (28–29). At this point, the philosophical system as a whole self-reflectively justifies its starting point.²⁷ It is for this reason that psychology, for Bouterwek, has the status of a propaedeutic, rather than a foundation. This strategy also helps Bouterwek in making headway in his argument against the sceptic, for he is now entitled to make of presuppositions within this propaedeutic psychology that are not necessarily granted by his sceptical opponent (22).

Given the space that Bouterwek created for himself by allowing controversial assumptions in the psychological propaedeutic, however, one is surprised to find how little use he actually makes of it in the book, for the chapter entitled "Propädeutische Psychologie" takes up a mere eighteen pages. The reader who expects fireworks in these pages, given the explicit importance that Bouterwek attaches to it in the passages from the introduction discussed above is also sorely disappointed. Bouterwek here does nothing more than make a very basic division of the various faculties and functions of the mind: the notions of the soul and its powers, mental faculties, the relation of subject and object to mental representations, self-observation, consciousness, sensibility and affection, memory, imagination, the understanding, reason and speech are all introduced and mostly characterised in only a few lines. These distinctions are furthermore so general in nature and so traditional that they could equally well have appeared in any of the dozens of Wolffian handbooks on empirical and rational psychology that were popular in Germany during the eighteenth century.²⁸ Worse yet, the precise connection of Bouterwek's psychology to the

²⁷ Despite Bouterwek's antipathy versus the German Idealists, it seems plausible that he was at least partly inspired by Fichte on this point (see Fichte 1798, 34–40/GA I.2, 129–33).

²⁸ For a representative example of the superficial nature of these distinctions, consider his characterisation of memory: "Da wir uns nun [...] eines Vermögens bewußt sind, verschwundene Eindrücke wieder zum Bewußtseyn zu bringen, wenn es gleich nicht immer damit glückt, so bezeichnen wir erstens dieses Vermögens mit einem besondern Nahmen *Erinnerung*, und schließen von der Möglichkeit der Erinnerung noch auf ein anderes Vermögen, in dem die Vorstellungen gleichsam ruhen, während sie aus dem Bewußtseyn verschwunden sind. Wir nennen dieses räthselhafte Vermögen, das der Erinnerung zum Grunde liegt und seiner Natur nach nicht zum Bewußtseyn kommen kann, *Gedächtniß*" (41).

Admittedly, this superficiality is in line with the methodological restrictions that Bouterwek himself posited in the introduction. After having explained that his psychological presuppositions are only posited hypothetically, he nevertheless goes on to claim that the distinctions that he will

two other parts of the book, logic and transcendental philosophy, remains obscure. After completing the propaedeutic, no explicit reference is made to it in either of the other parts: some of the concepts introduced therein are occasionally used, but why psychology was a necessary starting point, as Bouterwek had claimed in the introduction, remains unclear.

All this made Bouterwek an easy target for the German Idealists, who were not likely to feel threatened by the alternative direction of philosophy proposed by the professor from Göttingen. Hegel in particular made short work of Bouterwek in a review of the *Anfangsgründe* published in the Erlanger Litteratur-Zeitung (Hegel 1801, /GW 4: 95–104). Unsurprisingly, given the anti-psychological tendencies of the German Idealists, Bouterwek's dependence on psychology was one of Hegel's main targets. To begin, Hegel ridicules Bouterwek's grounds for adopting a psychological approach: he evidently deemed the latter's argument that this psychological method is the most "natural" method because people have always adopted it to be so ridiculous that he felt that merely quoting it sufficed to discredit it (1444/GW 4: 97). Furthermore, he adds, the hypothetical status that Bouterwek gives his faculty psychology is nothing but a flimsy excuse to distract us from the fact that it is every bit as arbitrary as the psychologies against which he warns us:

[D]adurch daß alles nur provisorisch, und wie es beobachtet wird, aufgestellt werden soll, hat sich der Verf. von allen Forderungen einer Konstruktion dieser Mannichfaltigkeit der Vermögen befreit. (1444/GW 4: 98)

Third, Hegel also notes the apparent lack of function of the psychology in achieving Bouterwek's actual goal:

Warum hat doch der Verf. nicht sogleich mit jener späten Widerlegung des Skeptikers angefangen? so konnte das [...] problematische und provisorische Philosophiren [...] erspart werden (1441/GW 4: 95).²⁹

It seems, Hegel concludes:

derive from these presuppositions may only be considered valid insofar as they are 1) self-evident, 2) affirmed by common sense and 3) affirmed by *all* psychological schools (22). Why distinctions that fulfill such a strong criterion need to be derived from controversial premises in the first place is unfortunately not explained.

²⁹ Compare also (1446/GW 4: 100) for a similar remark.

daß der Verf. nachdem er das sich selbst Denken als Anfangspunkt der Philosophie von der Weise des Idealismus aufgenommen, nun *nicht wußte mit was er fortfachen sollte*, und also zum natürlichen weg der Psychologie und Logik eine Zuflucht nahm, Wege, die verschmäht werden mußten, wenn das Realprincip die absolute Identität ist (1448/GW 4: 102).

Even readers who shared Bouterwek's sympathy for a psychological Kantianism, and who had little appreciation for German Idealism in general and Hegel in particular, apparently found it difficult to find much of value in Bouterwek's attempt. As Jakob Friedrich Fries noted several years later: "Bouterwek schreibt gut, ist gründlich gelehrt, aber ein seichter Philosoph" (Cited in Henke 1867, 119).

5. *Beyond Propaedeutics*

In this chapter we have seen that the impetus towards a psychological reworking of Kant's critical philosophy, which had been present in Reinhold's work and in its reception by Schulze, had not remained unnoticed. Heusinger, Schmid and Bouterwek were three early representatives of the psychological reception of Kant's philosophy. Their work for the first time made explicit the core tenets of Kantian Psychologism: the claim that the critical philosophy depends on psychological premises, and the positive evaluation of this dependency.

We have also seen that this line of reception developed parallel and in opposition to the tradition of German Idealism. Heusinger, Schmid, and Bouterwek were all fiercely critical of the German Idealists and their research project, for a number of reasons. In their eyes, German Idealism trampled all over the core of Kant's philosophy, which they pretended to represent. In the place of Kant's emphasis on experience, and on the finite nature of the human mind, they had introduced arbitrary speculation and an obscure metaphysics of the infinite Absolute. At least one important motivation for Kantian psychologism was therefore the hope that a turn to psychology might return Kantian philosophy to its proper boundaries of human subjectivity.

On the other hand, Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel had their own reasons to be critical of their psychologistic counterparts. All three of these authors were strongly opposed to the idea of a philosophy that was dependent on psychology. Though part of this opposition was due to the fact that their very understanding

of philosophy already ruled out such an approach by definition,³⁰ they also voiced some concerns from a more neutral standpoint, which did indeed lay bare two serious flaws in the early psychological attempts.

The first flaw was that at this point in time it was far from clear that psychology could even support itself, let alone philosophy as well. Though Heusinger, Schmid, and Bouterwek all depended on some sort of faculty psychology, even they, as we have seen in the case of Heusinger and Bouterwek, had to admit that this approach suffered from serious methodological problems. In light of these problems, its results could only appear as arbitrary, and therefore as unfit as a starting point for philosophy. Whether psychology could become an independent discipline, or would forever remain an applied field of philosophy as the German Idealists believed it to be, was, at the turn of the nineteenth century, still very much an open question.

Secondly, and relatedly, Hegel put his finger on another weak spot when he noted that the relation of Bouterwek's psychological propaedeutic to his pure philosophy was far from clear. This was not only a problem for Bouterwek, but it was also a serious question for all similar attempts, regardless of whether the propaedeutic psychology was held to be empirical (Heusinger and Bouterwek) or *a priori* (Schmid) in nature. If empirical, as Hegel pointed out, it was unclear how such psychological knowledge could at all be relevant as a starting point for Kant's supposedly *a priori* philosophy. If *a priori*, however, such a starting point would seem, as Fichte pointed out to Schmid, to beg the question, for the function of the *Critique of Pure Reason* was precisely to evaluate the possibility of such knowledge. Schmid, however, had to take such knowledge as inexplicable and simply given.

One of the main reasons for the inability of our three authors to overcome these problems arguably was to be found in their philosophical background. Heusinger, Schmid and Bouterwek were all children of the 1760s. As such, all three of them had witnessed the rise of Kant's philosophy during their most impressionable years, and, as we have noted, all three of them had been

³⁰ In the first introduction to his *Versuch einer neuen Darstellung der Wissenschaftslehre*, Fichte was even explicit about the definitional nature of this exclusion (Fichte 1797, 10/GA I.4, 188). Another good example is the later objection against Beneke (chapter 5) that "a philosophy that [cannot] explain everything in relation to the absolute [is] no philosophy at all" (cited in Beiser 2014, 149).

committed orthodox Kantians for at least some time. This background is clearly reflected in their project to supply a psychological propaedeutic for Kant's philosophy. While the attempt to supply such a propaedeutic was certainly a novelty in the Kantian tradition, it could at the same time be considered as little more than an add-on. Despite of the fact that such a propaedeutic was supposed to strengthen Kant's system as a whole, it also left this system itself more or less intact. Given the strong anti-psychological elements that were undeniably also to be found in Kant's philosophy, however, it can hardly be a surprise that this would lead to problems regarding the connection between the propaedeutic and Kant's philosophy proper. If the psychological tradition was to have any chance at success, therefore, a thorough rethinking of Kant's philosophy as a whole (and not just its basis) was in order. Such an investigation was not likely to be undertaken by a (former) orthodox Kantian. Instead, this task was left to a younger, and far more innovative representative of Kantian Psychologism: Jakob Friedrich Fries.

Chapter 4

The Great Innovator: Jakob Friedrich Fries

1. Fries as a Kantian

First encounter with Kantianism

Jakob Friedrich Fries's (1773–1843)¹ first encounter with Kant's philosophy came in the early 1790s, when he was a student at the Moravian seminary in Niesky.² Kant was at the height of his fame during these years, and though his works had been officially banned by the school's censor, Fries eventually managed to secretly obtain several of Kant's works, including the *Prolegomena* and the three *Critiques*. Reading these works made an enormous impact on the young Fries. Kant's work, he would later write about his early experience, seemed to him "a new type of philosophizing" in which, "like in mathematics, definite and enlightening truths could be found" (quoted in Henke 1867, 26).³ Though Fries's love-affair with Kant's critical philosophy would be lifelong, he was never an orthodox Kantian. Rather, already in these early years, he used Kant as a guide "in the development of [his] own insight in philosophical truth." This guide drove him to his "own investigations, which also resulted in part in different results [than Kant's]" (27). It was in the course of these investigations, somewhere in the years 1792–1795, that he came to the conclusion that Kant's critical philosophy required a fundamental psychology:

[A]ls ich so weit mit Kant gegangen war, sah ich, daß den beiden Kritiken [of pure and practical reason] eine allgemeine psychologische Grundlehre fehle,

¹ This chapter is a substantially rewritten version of an article that is forthcoming in the *Journal of the History of Philosophy* (October 2017) under the title: "Solving the Regress Puzzle: Jakob Friedrich Fries's Psychological Reconstruction of Kant's Transcendental Philosophy."

² The best Fries-biography is still (Henke 1867), which is based primarily on the extensive autobiographical reflections that Fries wrote towards the end of his life.

³ Despite the seminary's resistance to Kant's philosophy, it provided, in Fries's own assessment, an excellent education in mathematics and the natural sciences. This education, in any case, laid the groundwork for the serious interest in these fields that he exhibited throughout his entire career.

durch welche die dunkeln Lehren der *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* von der objectiven synthetischen Einheit von Sein, transcendentaler Einbildungskraft, Verstand, Urtheilskraft und Vernunft, sowie der Lehren von Begehren und Wollen genauer ausgebildet würden. [...] [S]o bildete sich mir die Aufgabe an mich selbst, jene allgemeine psychologische Grundlage, welche ich vermißte, erst selbst zu suchen und darin die Kantischen Untersuchungen weiter fortzusetzen; ich gab ihr vorläufig den Namen Propädeutik der allgemeinen Psychologie, nachher philosophische Anthropologie. So oft und soviel ich konnte, wanderte ich einsam in unwegsamem Walde, um nicht gestört zu werden, und dachte diesen Sachen nach. (27)

Given that Fries wrote this account of his young years many decades later, it is likely that it is at least partly romanticized; a suspicion strengthened by the typical romantic image of the lonely thinker in the woods. Nevertheless, though the details may be unreliable, we know for a fact that Fries's conviction about the dependence of Kant's philosophy on psychology came early and was very soon after developed into a complete philosophical project. The first results of these reflections were published in 1798, when Fries was only twenty-five years old, in his very first publication, an article entitled "Ueber das Verhältniß der empirischen Psychologie zur Metaphysik."⁴ The message of this article (a message which I shall analyse at length in this chapter) was as simple as it was controversial: despite Kant's own protests to the contrary, transcendental philosophy is nothing more (nor less) than empirical psychology (Fries 1798).

Fries in Jena

Between Fries's leave from the seminary, in 1795, and the first publication of his 1798-article he had studied at two universities. In 1796, Fries studied for a year at the university of Leipzig. This period is primarily interesting because Fries here heard lectures by Platner, the author of the influential *Anthropologie für Aerzte und Weltweise* and proponent of a physiological approach to psychology. Unfortunately, though Fries reported that he enjoyed Platner as a lecturer, we know little about what he actually learned from him (Henke 1867, 41).

After his year in Leipzig, Fries continued his studies at the university of Jena for two more years, after which he served (with some interruptions) first as a *Privatdozent* and then as an extraordinary professor at that same university until 1805. The importance of this period for the direction of Fries's

⁴ We know that he was working on this article at least as early as 1796 (Henke 1867, 41).

philosophical career can hardly be overestimated. Though Reinhold had left that university three years earlier, Jena was still by far the most important stronghold of Kantian philosophy, with a faculty including (amongst others) Schütz, the editor of the *ALZ*, and C.C.E. Schmid. Not only that, but Fries here also stood in direct contact with all three of the German Idealists, as well as with many of their students and followers: Fichte was still the most famous professor at the university during Fries's studies; Schelling became his colleague when Fries started teaching there in 1800; and in 1801 Hegel joined the university as a *Privatdozent*.

When Fries first arrived at Jena, the conflict between Schmid and Fichte, which we examined in the previous chapter, was nearing its conclusion. Since both professors had their own sympathisers at the university, these harsh polemics undoubtedly had a significant impact on the social culture within this institution, especially after Fichte had "annihilated" Schmid as a philosopher at the end of his published comparison of their respective philosophical projects. Within this context, it was unavoidable for a young student such as Fries to take sides, and it is not difficult to imagine, given his own reception of Kant, with whom he sided:

Mit Fichte war ich zwar eigentlich in wenigen Stunden fertig, indem ich sein unmethodisches Raisonement, die Vermengung bald analytischer, bald synthetischer Betrachtungen, dazu die Verwirrung der Abstraction und die Willkürlichkeit leerer Sprachformeln bemerkte. Indessen hörte ich ihm ruhig zu und schrieb zu Hause die polemischen Bemerkungen, welche später den größten Theil meiner Streitschrift: Reinhold, Fichte und Schelling, ausmachten. Durch diese Opposition wurde ich auch [Carl Christian] Erhard Schmid etwas befreundet. (quoted in Henke 1867, 47–8)

Fries's attitude towards Schelling and Hegel was no different. Though he occasionally criticized the individual arguments made by these thinkers, most importantly in the "*Streitschrift*" mentioned in the above quotation, on the whole he believed their philosophical systems to be so vague and speculative that he found little grounds for a detailed engagement. Admittedly, this philosophical dislike was exacerbated by their social relationships, for though they were technically colleagues at the university of Jena, in practice they were competitors. This was especially true for Fries and Hegel, both of whom were struggling financially in their time as *Privatdozenten* at the university of Jena, and had to compete for their livelihoods for a limited number of paying students.

This competition continued throughout their careers, for on multiple occasions they had their eyes set on the same academic positions: in 1805, both thinkers hoped to be appointed as professor at the university of Heidelberg; a professorship that was eventually won by Fries, much to Hegel's dismay; in 1814, when Fries was professor of both philosophy and physics at that university, Hegel unsuccessfully (and somewhat backhandedly) lobbied for a separation of these two topics, so he could obtain the professorship in philosophy, and have Fries side-lined to physics (Henke 1867, 152); thirdly, both philosophers were in the running to succeed Fichte as professor of philosophy at the university of Berlin; this time, however, Hegel won (154). All this, combined with their diametrically opposed philosophical projects, resulted in a very hostile personal relationship.⁵

Schmid, on the contrary, clearly saw in Fries a talented ally in his conflict with Fichte (and later also Schelling), who, furthermore, shared his psychological approach to Kant's philosophy. It was probably for such tactical reasons that he helped Fries publish his first work: the aforementioned first article "Ueber das Verhältniß der empirischen Psychologie zur Metaphysik" appeared in the *Psychologisches Magazin*, a journal edited by Schmid. Not only that, but that same volume contains four other articles by Fries's hand, comprising a total of almost 250 pages.⁶ Schmid later also approvingly cited Fries's polemical *Reinhold, Fichte und Schelling* in his own polemic against Schelling (Henke 1867, 152).

Fries's alliance with Schmid did not remain unnoticed, and Caroline Schelling even referred to Fries in a letter to August Schlegel as a "Schmidianer" (quoted in John 2003, 61–2). Despite the affinity between Schmid and Fries, however, this label was certainly not accurate. Even during his early years as a

⁵ Apparently, this personal antagonism still hadn't cooled down in 1821, when Hegel published his *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts*. The famous preface of this book contains a lengthy, and rather outrageous polemic against Fries, in which the latter is not only described as the "leader of superficial philosophers" and his philosophy as the "essence of shallow thinking," but in which he even goes so far as to strongly imply that Fries and his philosophy were politically harmful. Even many of Hegel's sympathisers saw these polemics as being completely out of line, especially given the political circumstances (see the editors' introduction to Hegel 1991, viii). Political forces, at this time were strongly clamping down on academia, and Fries had in fact already lost his right to teach due to his political convictions in 1819 (see the conclusion, §2), and suggestions such as Hegel's carried the risk of further punitive action.

⁶ The topics of these articles are the proper methods and principles of a general psychology, rational psychology, the metaphysics of inner nature, and an overview of the empirical knowledge we have of the mind. Henke, too, claims that the publication of these articles should primarily be seen in the light of Schmid's conflict with Fichte (Henke 1867, 48).

student, Fries did not consider Schmid as a leader to be followed, and in fact wrote somewhat condescendingly about him in letters:

Schmid's Philosophie besteht fast in lauter Eintheilungen, seine Schriften sind daher fatal zu lesen, aber seine Grundsätze sind natürlich und der Mann ziemlich anspruchslos (quoted in Henke 1867, 48)

And though both shared the belief that Kant's philosophy ultimately rested on psychological knowledge, the concrete way in which they envisioned this dependence was very different. Schmid, as we have seen, interpreted Kant's philosophy as resting on a number of immediately certain facts of consciousness that could be known *a priori*. Though Schmid agreed with Reinhold that Kant did not always make these facts sufficiently explicit, he felt that this was primarily a matter of presentation that would have few consequences for the actually resulting philosophical system. On this point, Schmid remained a lifelong adherent to his early Kantian orthodoxy. Though Fries, in comparison, occasionally refers to his own psychology as a propaedeutic to philosophy during these early years, his attitude towards Kant's philosophy was far more revisionary than that of the proponents of the psychological propaedeutics that we examined in the previous chapter. As he makes very clear in his *Verhältnis-* article he does not intend to write a psychological propaedeutic to Kant's transcendental philosophy, but rather, this philosophy should itself be reconstructed as an empirical-psychological propaedeutic to metaphysics.

Fries's account of the proper relationship between (empirical) psychology and pure philosophy is also far more subtle and complex than that of any of the earlier representatives of Kantian Psychologism, and it came to provide the most powerful solution to the problem how a transition could be made from the empirical-psychological to the *a priori* philosophical disciplines. I will therefore dedicate the remainder of this chapter to a discussion of this account. Though Fries discussed the relation between psychology and pure philosophy regularly, and in a number of different works, his most extensive discussion of this problem can be found in his *magnum opus*, the three-volumed *Neue Kritik der Vernunft* (hereafter NKV)⁷, which, for this reason, will be the focal point of my analysis.

⁷ Republished in 1828–31, with a number of mostly minor changes and additions, as *Neue oder anthropologische Kritik der Vernunft*. For all citations to Fries's work, I provide both the page

In section two I begin this analysis by discussing why Fries, despite his familiarity with Kant's arguments against the intrusion of empirical psychology in transcendental philosophy, nevertheless considered a psychological reconstruction of this philosophy possible. Section three then examines this psychological reconstruction, focusing especially on the ways in which this project is still very much driven by Kantian considerations. I then continue by discussing the question how Fries thinks this transcendental psychology can serve to justify the *a priori* concepts and principles of metaphysics. Since in later decades Fries would be criticised almost exclusively on this point, a correct understanding of his answer to this question is of paramount importance. Finally, in section five I shall discuss what I consider to be Fries's two most important innovations in the context of the reception of Kant's philosophy.

2. Correcting the Kantian Prejudice

Fries, as we saw, already came to the conclusion at a very young age that Kant's philosophy, despite its significant virtues, was in need of an empirical-psychological reconstruction, despite Kant's own insistence that empirical psychology was entirely alien to his transcendental philosophy. For this reason, we should start our discussion by asking why Fries felt that Kant's warning against the intrusion of empirical psychology in transcendental philosophy could safely be ignored. The reason for this was certainly not that he had simply missed or ignored these objections, for Fries happily admits that Kant himself had interpreted his philosophy as entirely *a priori* and had rejected empirical-psychological presentations of his work. In this regard, however, Fries argues, Kant had simply been mistaken:

Kant [...] machte den großen Fehler, daß er die transcendente Erkenntniß für eine Art der Erkenntniß a priori und zwar der philosophischen hielt, und ihre empirische psychologische Natur verkannte. (NKV 1: xxxvi/SS 4:93)

In fact, Fries argues, when one analyses Kant's arguments against the use of empirical psychology in transcendental philosophy, one finds that these rest almost entirely on definitions. Most importantly, transcendental philosophy

numbering of the first edition and of the corresponding passage in Fries's *Sämtliche Schriften* (Fries 1967ff., cited as SS).

itself had been defined as the discipline that investigated "our mode of cognition of objects insofar as this is to be possible *a priori*" (A11-2/B25). On the basis of this definition, Kant then went on to claim that "absolutely no concept must enter into [transcendental philosophy] that contains anything empirical" (A14-5). And it is because of these considerations that Kant eventually concluded that we should keep "as close as possible to the transcendental and [set] aside entirely what might here be psychological, i.e., empirical" (A801/B829). Such argumentation however, Fries notes, can only be considered adequate when one does not notice the equivocation that slips into Kant's use of the term 'transcendental':

Einmal heißt nemlich jede kritische Erkenntniß im Gegensatz der schlechthin philosophischen (dogmatischen) Erkenntniß *a priori* transcendental; davon ist aber ganz unterschieden eine andere Wortbestimmung, wo transcendental dem empirischen und transcendenten so entgegengesetzt wird, daß das empirische alles zur Erfahrung gehörige, das transcendente das diese übersteigende, das transcendentale aber nur das von ihrer Beschränkung überhaupt unabhängige bezeichnet. (1798, 185/SS 2: 280)

If we look again at the three quotations from Kant's *Critique* provided above, in the first Kant defines "transcendental" in terms of a certain *topic* of enquiry, namely *a priori* cognition. The main function of this definition is, as Fries notes, to distinguish transcendental from metaphysical cognition; whereas metaphysical cognition is pure *a priori* cognition, transcendental philosophy gives us meta-cognition about this metaphysical cognition. Importantly, this definition does not determine whether such meta-cognition needs itself be *a priori* or not. In the second and third quotation, however, the adjective 'transcendental' no longer designates the *topic* of certain cognitions, but rather their own *a priori* status. In this way "transcendental" cognition comes to be opposed primarily to empirical, rather than metaphysical cognition.

Now, this slide, from cognition about *a priori* cognition to *a priori* cognition about cognition, Fries argues, may at a first glance appear of little consequence, but as a matter of fact it is a fallacy with serious consequences. The reason for this is that it is far from evident that a discipline that studies *a priori* cognition needs itself be *a priori*. We can see this if we keep in mind the distinction between the content of cognition and its status as a mental state. There is nothing inconsistent, Fries plausibly maintains, about accepting that the contents

of a certain cognition are *a priori* while still claiming that we can have empirical-psychological meta-cognition about this particular cognition considered as a mental state. Thus, to illustrate, we may well want to know how human subjects reason when doing mathematics. Though mathematical reasoning is, many presume, a form of *a priori* cognition, it would be far from obvious that we cannot study this reasoning as a mental performance empirically. (Indeed, it may well be argued that modern psychologists have done just that.) Without further argument, therefore, Fries notes, the claim that transcendental knowledge must necessarily be *a priori* is nothing more than a "Kantian" or "transcendental prejudice" (NKV 1: xxviii–xxxvii/SS 4: 85–94).

Though this "Kantian prejudice" is, as the name indicates, particular to Kant's philosophy, Fries believes that it is not the result of a mere oversight on Kant's behalf, but that instead it is the consequence of a second prejudice, which was widely shared by the philosophers of his day. Fries calls this second prejudice the "rationalist prejudice" (NKV 1: xxviii–xxxii/SS 4: 85–90). This rationalist prejudice takes the form of the (mistaken) idea that proof (interpreted as a straightforward derivation of a proposition from certain premises)⁸ is the highest form of justification, and that every scientific claim, including the claims of philosophy, should ideally be justified in this fashion. This prejudice, Fries argues, has two distinct roots. One of these roots is an erroneous focus on the proofs of Euclidean geometry as an ideal model for all cognition (NKV 1:xxviii/SS 4:85).⁹ A second factor is the tendency of philosophers to interpret the (otherwise valid) principle of sufficient principle far more strongly than is legitimate:

[Der] logische Satz vom Grunde wird nämlich meist so allgemein ausgesprochen, daß er ungefähr fordert: jede Erkenntniß muß ihren hinreichenden Grund haben: nun sagt man weiter: Beweisen heißt eine Erkenntniß aus ihren Gründen ableiten — folglich muß jede Erkenntniß bewiesen werden können. In diesem Schlusse sind aber beyde Prämissen falsch, und mit ihnen auch der Schlußsatz. (NKV 1: xxx/SS 4: 87–88)

⁸ Here and in the rest of the chapter, I use 'deriving' instead of the more common 'deducting' as translation for the German '*ableiten*' in order to avoid confusion. As will become clear below, Fries uses '*deducieren*' in a way that diverges from its modern usage, and that is in fact much closer to Kant's juridical use of the same term. 'Deduction' will only be used as a translation of Fries's technical term.

⁹ This focus is erroneous because mathematics, for Fries, unlike philosophy, is only concerned with hypothetical propositions. It does not ask what is true, but merely what follows from a number of selected definitions and axioms (Fries 1803, 10–11/SS 24: 62–3).

The first premise is false, according to Fries, because it overextends the scope of the principle. While it is true that every *judgment* requires a justification, there are other types of cognition, most notably perception, that cannot be so justified. The second premise is false because giving a proof is not the only way to justify a cognition: Fries names demonstration (in the literal sense of showing the truth of a judgment in sensible or *a priori* intuition) and "deduction" (to which I will come back below) as alternatives. In fact, Fries continues, it is clear that the conclusion of the argument cannot be true, for if it were, it would lead directly to an infinite regress. If every cognition is to be validated by means of a proof, then the premises of this proof must be similarly subjected to a proof, etc., *ad infinitum*.

Fries's paradigmatic examples for philosophers who were led astray by this prejudice are Reinhold, Fichte, Schelling, and Bardili (NKV 1: xxi-ii/SS 4: 81), the first three of whom he had already criticized on similar grounds in the aforementioned polemical work *Reinhold, Fichte und Schelling*. These three philosophers, he maintained in this book, had all been driven to the project of trying to derive the entirety of human knowledge from a single first principle precisely because they had convinced themselves that all such knowledge needed to be subjected to proof.¹⁰ Understandably, they had felt that the only way that they could stop the infinite regress brought about by the attempt to prove everything was to posit a supposedly self-evident principle that could serve as a starting point for such proofs. Such a project, however, Fries believed, was hopeless because of the type of arguments already given by Schmid in his Reinhold-review. First, every valid derivation requires at least two premises, so that a philosophy based on a single principle cannot come to even a single derivation (Fries 1803, 65/SS 24:13). Secondly, a logical derivation is a mere formal procedure that can never add content to what is already given in the premises. Thus, the more one wants to derive from given premises, the more content these premises already need to contain. The more content a premise contains, however, the less likely it is to be self-evident. Therefore, the idea that one can start a philosophical system with a self-evident principle that must

¹⁰ Undoubtedly, Reinhold, Fichte, and Schelling would all have protested against this interpretation of their projects. Be that as it may, works such as Reinhold's *Ueber das Fundament des philosophischen Wissens*, Fichte's *Ueber den Begriff der Wissenschaftslehre*, and Schelling's *Darstellung meines Systems der Philosophie* undeniably did suggest such an interpretation to most of their readers.

nevertheless contain maximum content is nothing more than an illusion (Fries 1803, 11–12/SS 24: 63–4). When such philosophers nevertheless believe, Fries maintained, that they are deriving the entirety of human knowledge from a single principle, they are fooling themselves. In actual fact, they are merely being led by loose associations, and constantly rely, without realising it, on introspection (Fries 1803, 22–8, 271/SS 24: 74–80, 323). In other words, their philosophy, too, in fact is empirical psychology, but one that is completely unguided by proper psychological method.¹¹

Though Reinhold, Fichte, and Schelling were obvious targets in this regard, it is perhaps not so clear why Fries believed Kant to be guilty of this same rationalist prejudice. Kant, after all, certainly did not accept the idea that all human knowledge can be proven to be true. In fact it had been one of the fundamental doctrines of Kant's critical philosophy that factual knowledge (i.e., knowledge with an existential component) necessarily depends on evidence from experience that cannot be further subjected to proof.¹² Fries both acknowledged and commended this, but, he argued, Kant did not go far enough in his rejection of the rationalist prejudice. Even though the latter exempted empirical (and mathematical) knowledge, he nonetheless believed that pure philosophical judgments must ultimately still all be subjected to proof: "Kant [...] presupposes like all the others that *what is asserted by pure reason* it must first have subjected to proof" (NKV 1:xxvi–ii/SS 4:84, my emphasis). Though Fries's interpretation of Kant on this point was and is controversial, it is certainly true that support for this interpretation can be found in Kant's first *Critique*, particularly in the methodology chapter at the end of the work. Here Kant strictly distinguished pure philosophy from mathematics and the empirical science on the grounds that philosophy ought to be an exclusively discursive science, which may not rely on any form of intuition (in Kant's technical sense of the word). Philosophical certainty can therefore only be obtained by what Kant likes to call "*acroamatic* (discursive) *proofs*, because they can only be conducted by means of mere words" (A735/B763). Furthermore, in the same chapter Kant devoted an entire section to discussing a set of rules for what he there consistently calls "transcendental proofs" (A783–95/B810–23). Thus despite Kant's insistence

¹¹ On the accusation that Reinhold, Fichte, and Schelling's projects actually unintentionally rely on psychology, compare (Fries 1798, 187–88/SS 2: 282–94).

¹² I discussed this doctrine in my (2015, 117–20). See also chapter 5, §3.

that not all knowledge can be proven to be true, Fries believed, he nevertheless retained "proof" as the only genuine method of justification in philosophy.

Now, Fries argues, if it is true that Kant was a victim of a restricted version of the rationalist prejudice it becomes easy to see why he felt that transcendental philosophy itself has to be *a priori*, and subsequently why he feels that empirical psychology has to be completely excluded from this discipline. For Kant, after all, the transcendental philosophy was supposed to function as a tribunal for metaphysical principles, deciding which of these principles could be justified, and which could not. The rationalist prejudice, however, necessarily leads one into believing that the only way to justify the principles of metaphysics is to prove them. And once one comes to this conclusion it is simply obvious that transcendental philosophy necessarily has to be *a priori*. After all, and here Fries was fully in agreement with Kant, it would be absolutely foolish to think that one can prove *a priori* conclusions on the basis of empirical premises (NKV 1:xxxvi/SS 4:93).

Once we reject the both the rationalist and the Kantian prejudice, however, we no longer have any reason to retain this conception of transcendental philosophy. This, Fries argues, makes it at least a possibility that we can have an empirical-psychological transcendental philosophy, which for Fries ultimately meant: a transcendental philosophy based on the data of inner sense. Such a reconstructed transcendental philosophy could still provide a justification for metaphysics, and establish this discipline as a real science, provided that the justification does not take the form of a proof. During the first decade of Fries's career most of his energy would be devoted to this project, to which we will now turn.

3. *Transcendental Philosophy as Empirical*

Psychology

Fries, we have seen, argued at length for the *possibility* of an empirical-psychological transcendental philosophy. So far, however, I have said little about why he thought that such a psychological reconstruction of Kant's philosophy to be necessary. Interestingly, despite Kant's own warnings against mixing transcendental philosophy and psychology, Fries's motivation for this

psychological reconstruction was very much rooted in a central line of thought present in Kant's first *Critique*. In the preface to the first edition of this book, Kant had famously described the state of metaphysics in his time as one of chaos and anarchy. The only solution to this dire state was, in his estimation, a critique of pure reason: "a critique of the faculties of reason in general, in respect of all the cognitions after which reason might strive *independently of all experience*" (Axii, translation adapted). Such an investigation would decide "the possibility or impossibility of a metaphysics in general, and the determination of its sources, as well as its extent and boundaries" (Axii).

Despite the familiarity of these passages, commentators rarely take note of the underlying idea that is expressed here and that Kant shared with Fries, namely the emphasis on the genetic side of the *a priori*: cognition is *a priori* when it is the autonomous *product* of reason (understood in its broad sense, as the collection of our higher cognitive powers).¹³ In other words, if we are to have *a priori* cognition in this sense, our faculties of cognition must be capable of exhibiting spontaneous activity.¹⁴ Thus, Kant defines *a priori* cognitions as those that have their source "independent of all experience and even all impressions of the senses" (B2) and notes that "in *a priori* cognition nothing can be ascribed to the objects except what the thinking subject *takes out of itself*" (Bxxiii, my emphasis).¹⁵ It is also for this reason that Kant thinks Locke's "physiology of the human understanding" (Aix) fails: not, as is often thought, because it searches for the *origins* of *a priori* cognition *per se*, but rather because it does not allow for any of these sources to be non-empirical. The claim regarding reason's spontaneous activity, however, is a strong psychological thesis that stands in conflict with radical empirist¹⁶ views of the workings of the human mind. Fries also adopts this thesis when he writes: "philosophical [that is: *a priori*]"¹⁷

¹³ Patricia Kitcher (Kitcher 1990, 15–6) and Derk Pereboom (Pereboom 1990, 26) are exceptions.

¹⁴ Spontaneous here should not be taken to mean free or undetermined, but rather self-determined, or determined by its own nature instead of by an external source. See NKV 1:47/SS 4:141–42: "Die ursprüngliche Spontaneität der Erkenntnißkraft soll der Quell der Wahrheit in uns seyn, sie kann also keinesweges vom Willen abhängen, sondern sie muß einem unabänderlichen, nothwendigen innern Gesetz folgen [...]."

¹⁵ For similar expressions, cf. A2, B41, and B241.

¹⁶ For the distinction between empiricism and empirism as I use the terms, see (Hatfield 1990, 271–80) and chapter 5, §3.

¹⁷ That Fries uses "a priori cognition" and "philosophical cognition" interchangeably is clear from (NKV 1: xlvii/SS 4:104).

cognition must be that which pertains to reason by virtue of its pure spontaneity" (Fries 1808, 242/SS 4:7) and "philosophical cognition [...] must be the pure property of reason, must arise only out of itself, must only be dependent on its spontaneity" (NKV 1: xlvi/SS 4:103). Although Fries shares this conception of the *a priori* with Kant, it is only the former who draws the conclusion of this line of reasoning explicitly:

Können wir uns [...] zu einer philosophischen Anthropologie als einer *Theorie des innern Lebens unsrer Vernunft* erheben, aus welcher die subjective Organisation unsrer Erkenntnißkräfte vollständig verstanden würde; so würde aus dieser zugleich folgen, welche Philosophie der menschliche Geist besitzt und allein besitzen kann. (Fries 1808, 241–2/SS 4: 7–8)

In other words: if *a priori* cognition is defined as a product of the spontaneous activity of our cognitive powers, then a critique of pure reason should aim to discover whether, and if so, to what extent, our cognitive powers do in fact act spontaneously. We should grant Fries that it is indeed difficult to see how this particular investigation could take any other form than that of a psychological theory of cognition, that is: a theory that explains to us how human cognition is factually constituted. Furthermore, because such a theory would attempt to uncover the *actual* spontaneous activity of our cognitive powers, it would by necessity be an empirical theory, for, as Kant himself had stressed: "perception [...] is the sole characteristic of actuality" (A225/B273). It is this line of thought, then, that led Fries to the conclusion that transcendental cognition must necessarily be empirical-psychological cognition.

All this means that, in Fries's actual psychological reconstruction of Kant's philosophy, he had to face two important questions: first, does the human faculty of reason, as a matter of fact, act spontaneously? And second, should this be so, in what does this spontaneous activity consist? To begin with the first question, Fries in fact never seriously considers adopting the strict empirist thesis that our faculties of cognition do not act spontaneously, but only respond passively to the stimulation of the (inner and outer) senses. His reason for presuming such spontaneous (*ursprünglich*) activity is again very reminiscent of Kant:

Soll es [...] apodiktische Bestimmungen in unsern Erkenntnissen, soll es überhaupt nur den Begriff der Nothwendigkeit in unsern Vorstellungen geben, so muß der Vernunft im Erkennen eine ursprüngliche dauernde Thätigkeit zukommen. [...] Ihre unmittelbar apodiktische Erkenntniß muß geradezu in solchen ursprünglichen Thätigkeiten bestehen [...]. (NKV2, 34/SS 5:60, cf. NKV2,63/SS 5:90)

If perception alone could never produce a concept that involves universality or necessity, the only options seem to be to either deny that we possess such concepts, or to allow for cognitive activity that is not reducible to perception. Since inner sense, on Fries's account, tells us that we do in fact possess such concepts, only the latter option remains.

Answering the second question, on the other hand, turns out to be a lot more difficult. The reason for this is that, despite rejecting strict empirism, Fries does adopt what may well be called a *moderate* empirism. What I mean by this is that Fries consistently denies the existence of innate ideas and intellectual intuition.¹⁸ Because we are finite beings, all our experience is necessarily limited by sensible intuition. The conclusion that Fries draws from this is that we can only become conscious of the spontaneous activity of our cognitive faculties insofar as it contributes to the production of sensible experience, by actively processing the material provided by our sensibility:

Wenn man nicht um Worte streitet, so enthält jede rationalistische Philosophie die Voraussetzung angeborener Ideen, wir hingegen behaupten, die bloße Vernunft giebt nur die Form an das sinnlich angeregte Bewußtseyn. Es giebt allerdings in unsrer Erkenntniß, Erkenntnisse aus bloßer Vernunft, nämlich die Erkenntnisse *a priori*, die Quellen der Allgemeinheit und Nothwendigkeit, aber diese für sich sind immer nur *formale Apperceptionen*, welche weder im kleinen noch im großen je *ein Ganzes der Erkenntniß* ausmachen, sie kommen *für sich* nur durch die Abstraktion vor, unmittelbar aber jedesmal als Formen an einem Ganzen der Erkenntniß, dessen Material vom Sinn entlehnt ist. (NKV2, 65/SS 5:92)

In other words, the spontaneous activity of reason can never itself become a direct object of awareness. If all of our conscious experience is the product of an interaction of this spontaneous cognitive activity with sensible affection, this activity itself must necessarily be subconscious.¹⁹ How then are we to discover these *a priori* sources of cognition?

¹⁸ See for examples (NKV 2:35–36/SS 5:62) and (Fries 1805, 24–25 / SS 3: 452–53).

¹⁹ This line of thought also clearly echoes certain themes in Kant, such as his claims regarding the 'blindness' of the imagination's synthetic activity (A78/B134). Compare also the following passage from the first *Critique*: "Nun zeigt es sich, welches überaus merkwürdig ist, daß selbst

It is this point at which Fries's emphasis on the necessity of a psychological theory of reason becomes of crucial importance: the goal of such a theory, in Fries's view, should be to provide an explanation of the genesis of our experience, disentangling those elements that can be reduced to sensibility from those that must be the result of spontaneous cognitive activity. The type of theory that results resembles what Patricia Kitcher, in her influential interpretation of Kant, has referred to as "task analysis"; an analysis of the psychological preconditions of the mental tasks that people are observed to perform (Kitcher 1990, 25; cf. Beiser 2014, 77).²⁰ The starting point for Fries's investigations are general observations of inner sense regarding the different kinds of mental states that we find within ourselves. These mental states exhibit the performance of a number of complex cognitive tasks. This is illustrated by the fact that Fries structured the first volume of the *Neue Kritik der Vernunft*, which presents the majority of this psychological theory, in accordance with what he perceived to be the most central mental functions; functions such as perception, memory, judgment, and reasoning. The role of psychology here, for Fries, was to explain how the human mind is capable of performing these cognitive tasks in the way it does. Fries then proceeds by showing that our performance of these various tasks (and the sub-tasks on which they depend) could not in fact be explained on strict empirist premises, but that various *a priori* cognitive activities have to be posited to account for these tasks. Thus, to take but one example, in his discussion of sensibility Fries discusses our ability to recognize the same object by means of different senses and argues that we

unter unsere Erfahrungen sich Erkenntnisse mengen, die ihren Ursprung a priori haben müssen, und die vielleicht nur dazu dienen um unsern Vorstellungen der Sinne Zusammenhang zu verschaffen." (A2).

²⁰ In fact, Fries was a much more explicit representative of the type of transcendental psychology that Kitcher finds in Kant than Kant himself is, even though it should be admitted that Fries made use of more substantial psychological background assumptions than Kitcher allows for. It is therefore unfortunate that Kitcher, basing herself solely on secondary literature about Fries, rejects his philosophical project out of hand as a form of neo-Cartesian introspectionism that had already been adequately refuted by Kant (Kitcher 1990, 6). This is hardly a fair judgment of the merits of Fries's philosophy. Fries was certainly an introspectionist in a weak sense: he believed that inner sense provides the empirical phenomena for which psychology must provide an explanation, much as outer sense does for the natural sciences. This position, however, was definitely not the target of Kant's arguments against Cartesianism, and it in fact remained popular for much of the nineteenth century. On the other hand, Fries, like Kant, rejected introspectionism in a strong sense: the idea that we have a special, infallible access to the contents of our own mind (NKV 1:92/SS 4:156), as well as the idea that we can simply observe the nature and workings of the human mind through inner sense (NKV 1:248-49/ SS 4:312-13).

would not be able to do this if our cognitive faculties did not unite the affections of our various sense modalities in a single space that is common to all:

Für unsre ganze Erkenntniß der Außenwelt ist diese oder jene Empfindungsweise immer nur das veranlassende, wir erhielten aber in ihr weder Einheit noch Zusammenhang, nur zerstreute einzelne Bilder, wenn sich nicht eine *allen Sinnen gemeinschaftliche vereinigende Anschauung* jedem zu grund legte. Der Tisch, der Baum, oder irgend ein einzelner Gegenstand, ist uns ein Ding unter bestimmter Gestalt im Raume, diese Vorstellung ist die vereinigende, wodurch wir das eine und gleiche Ding erkennen, es mag uns für Betastung, Gehör, Gesicht oder welchen Sinn sonst in die Anschauung fallen. (NKV 1: 66–67/SS 4:166–67)

Since the affections of the various senses are fundamentally heterogeneous, they cannot themselves provide any clue as to how this synthesis is to be performed. From this, Fries concludes that this single overarching representation of space cannot be the product of sensible affection, but has to be the product of the spontaneous activity of our cognitive faculties.

In this way, then, Fries hoped ultimately to arrive at a complete psychological theory of all the autonomous contributions that our cognitive faculties make to the production of our experience of reality. Admittedly, this type of method is not without its problems. Perhaps most importantly, though Fries's procedure might suffice to exclude empirist explanations for the psychological phenomena that he examines, it is not always clear why one should accept the particular Kantian explanation that Fries favoured. To justify such an explanation, and the cognitive mechanisms that are posited by it, Fries would also have to show in each case that this explanation is superior to other non-empirist candidate explanations for the same phenomenon, such as those presented by the Leibnizian and Herbartian schools of Fries's time. It is far from clear, however, given the relatively immature state of psychology in Fries's time, how this could be achieved in absence of modern controlled experimentation. Despite such problems, however, Fries's method did represent somewhat of an advance over earlier faculty-psychological approaches such as those of Heusinger and Schmid. Already in this time, as we have seen (chapter 3, §4), this approach was criticized because of its seemingly arbitrary positing of a number of mental faculties as the causes of different types of mental representations. Such "explanations," it was argued, are in reality little more than different ways of categorizing mental phenomena. This criticism does not apply to Fries's

psychology; though he too accepted the terminology of faculties, a faculty, in his theory, is not a mysterious *virtus dormitiva*, but rather refers to a set of cognitive mechanisms required to explain how a given sensible input is transformed in a rule-bound way into a given psychological phenomenon. Therefore, while Fries's concrete psychological discussions may appear too speculative for modern tastes, and though they indeed had far less influence on the development of psychology as a science than those of Fries's contemporary and acquaintance Herbart, within the tradition of faculty-psychology it was a notable step forward.

4. *Justifying the Principles of Metaphysics:*

Deduction

At this point it should be clear why Fries believed it necessary for transcendental philosophy to be reconstructed as a psychological theory of human cognition. Even if his readers were willing to grant, however, that the development of such a theory is a feasible project and that it is in principle possible to discover and map the spontaneous activity of the human cognitive faculties, Fries still had another question to answer. Both Kant and Fries, after all, intended for transcendental philosophy to provide a justification for the synthetic *a priori* principles of metaphysics. The question, then, is how a transition from an empirical psychological theory of cognition to these metaphysical principles could possibly be made. Or, in other words, how are we to get from the conclusions of the psychological investigation, which, despite being *about* the cognitive activity that is *a priori* in the sense outline above, are still very much empirical in nature, to the *a priori* concepts and principles of theoretical philosophy? Since Fries was almost exclusively criticized on this point in the later reception of his philosophy (see the conclusion, §2), it is of significant importance that we understand how Fries answered this question. Kant had rejected an empirical-psychological interpretation of transcendental philosophy primarily because he had believed such a transition to be impossible. Fries's psychologistic predecessors, furthermore, had not even attempted to explain how the step from psychology to metaphysics could be legitimately made, much to the detriment of their attempts to provide a psychological propaedeutic for Kant's philosophy. Fries, however, intended to tackle this problem head on.

As we saw in section two, the main reason for Fries why this question had seemed so intractable was because philosophers had generally presupposed that the principles of metaphysics could only be justified by proving them to be true. Insofar as these principles really are the first principles of this science, however, he plausibly argued, it is impossible per definition to prove them, for any such proof would require premises, and it would then be these premises that would be the real first principles of metaphysics. Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to think that just because these principles cannot be proven to be true, they are entirely arbitrary and illegitimate. All we need, Fries maintained, is to conceive of a mode of justification that is better suited for this particular subject matter. This new mode of justification, Fries called "deduction."

What, then, is deduction? More specifically: how is deducing a claim different from proving it? Fries gave his most explicit characterization of this newly introduced mode of justification in the following passage from the *New Critique*:

[Eine Deduktion] soll das Gesetz in unsrer unmittelbaren Erkenntniß aufweisen, welches einem Grundsatz zu Grunde liegt, und durch ihn ausgesprochen wird, da wir uns aber hier dieses Gesetzes eben durch den Grundsatz bewußt werden, so kann die Deduktion einzig darin bestehen daß wir *aus einer Theorie der Vernunft ableiten*, welche ursprüngliche Erkenntniß wir nothwendig haben müssen, und was für Grundsätze daraus nothwendig in unsrer Vernunft entspringen. (NKV 1: 284/SS 4: 406)

Admittedly this passage is rather dense, but we can understand what Fries is after when we keep in mind the the foregoing discussion of the role and nature of a psychological theory of cognition. The "immediate cognition" (*unmittelbare Erkenntnis*) of which Fries speaks in this quotation is a central concept in his philosophy, which has nevertheless been frequently misunderstood. Readers have often interpreted this notion as a commitment to a Jacobian-inspired doctrine of immediate rational (or even mystical) knowledge of *a priori* truths, and have subsequently criticized Fries for simply dogmatically asserting the truth of all the synthetic *a priori* claims that Kant had tried to justify.²¹ While Fries's formulations on this point are sometimes misleading, this interpretation is nevertheless implausible, given Fries's consistent denial that we have any sort of immediate non-sensible knowledge (see §3). The confusion is caused by the

²¹ For example (Sachs-Hombach 1999, 134–35; and Mechler 1911, 22–7, 87).

fact that the German '*Erkenntnis*,' much like the English 'cognition' can be used not only to describe the products of cognitive activity, but also to describe this cognitive activity itself. Fries uses the term in both senses, but when he speaks of immediate cognition he means this in the latter, performative sense.²² "Immediate cognition," for him, therefore does not refer to immediate knowledge, but rather to cognitive activity that is not mediated by perception; it is the spontaneous activity of our cognitive faculties that determines how the empirical information that comes in through perception is processed. We have also seen that spontaneous, for Fries, does not mean free: our cognitive activity is certainly rule-bound, it just so happens to be the case that at least a number of these rules are not empirical, in the sense of being dependent on regularities in the stimulation of our senses, but are rather determined by the nature of our cognitive system. It is these rules, then, that are the "laws within our immediate cognition." The last part of the passage repeats the doctrine, which I have already discussed above, that we cannot become directly conscious of these laws, but can only discover them by means of developing an adequate psychological theory of cognition.

What, then, does it mean for "a law within immediate cognition" to "lie at the basis" (*zu Grunde liegen*) of a philosophical principle, or, in other words, for a philosophical principle to express this cognitive law? Fries is not as clear on this point as one might like, but it is easier to understand if we first focus on the deduction of concepts, rather than principles. Even though Fries only speaks of principles in the passage quoted above, the second volume of the *New Critique* does include a deduction, again, in Fries's sense of the word, of Kant's categories of the understanding.²³ The fundamental idea here is that these categories are engendered by the subconscious spontaneous activities of the understanding and mirror them at the conscious level. Thus, for example, when our cognitive system synthesizes various impressions from our different sense-modalities to provide us with a spatiotemporal unity in experience, this cognitive activity is mirrored on the conscious level by our concepts of substance and property. Similarly, the synthesis of different sensible impressions in accordance with a determined temporal schema is mirrored by our notion of causality. This, then, is

²² See for example (NKV2, 34/SS 5:60, quoted above), where Fries characterizes "immediate cognition" in terms of "original activity" (*ursprüngliche Tätigkeit*).

²³ This deduction starts at (NKV2, 89/SS 5:118).

the sense in which these concepts express reason's spontaneous activity. Conversely, this activity lies at the basis of these concepts in the sense that this is where they find their origins: were our cognitive faculties to be constituted differently, we would not have the categories that Fries believed we do in fact possess. Together these two claims enabled him to defend two central Kantian doctrines: 1) that the categories are *a priori* concepts and 2) that they only find their legitimate application within the realm of experience.

The principles of philosophy, then, are deduced in much the same way.²⁴ The single difference is that instead of dealing with individual instances of spontaneous cognitive activity, Fries here considers, as I already indicated above, the rules that regulate the occurrence of these activities. What underlies a principle such as the principle of causality (that every event has a cause), for Fries, is the particular psychological law that regulates reason's spontaneous synthetic activity in such a way that it makes possible our experience of time as a single unified whole:

Es wird z.B. nach dem Gesetz der Causalität: jede Veränderung ist eine Wirkung, gefragt, so vergleiche ich nicht beyde Begriffe um die Wahrheit des Gesetzes auszumitteln, sondern die Theorie zeigt mir schon im Großen, in welchen Verhältniß reine Zeitbestimmungen und Kategorien in unsrer Vernunft stehen [...]. (NKV 2:62–63/SS 5:89)

In other words, a deduction of a metaphysical principle [*Grundsatz*], according to Fries, provides a link between two very different types of laws: The psychological laws that regulate our cognitive activity, and that form the underlying subjective ground for our metaphysical principles on the one hand, and the metaphysical laws (such as the law of causality) that are postulated by these principles on the other.²⁵

This does not yet answer, however, how the deduction of a principle is specifically different from a proof of that same principle. In fact, this question has become more pressing. The reason for this is that the principles of metaphysics could be considered to be the most general laws of reality, and as such, the

²⁴ In addition to his deduction of the categories and principles, Fries also attempts a deduction of Kant's Ideas. This is an interesting topic in its own right, which must, however, be left for another occasion.

²⁵ I wish to thank an anonymous reviewer for the *Journal of the History of Philosophy* for pointing out the necessity of making the distinction between these two types of law more explicit than I did in an earlier version of this text.

psychological laws of cognition are only a more concrete instantiation of these laws. As Fries himself notes, however, any investigation that intends to prove the principles of metaphysics on the basis of the psychological laws of cognition must necessarily already presuppose these principles when formulating the laws of cognition in the first place, and this would make the argument viciously circular:

Sollten jene Grundsätze [of metaphysics] durch dieses Verfahren auf irgend eine Art bewiesen werden, so wäre das Verfahren freylich durchaus inkonsequent, denn wir zeigen aus einer Theorie der Erkenntnisse, warum sie in unsrer Vernunft vorkommen, und diese Theorie des Erkennens ist nur ein einzelner Theil der innern Naturlehre, wogegen jene Grundsätze zum Theil die ersten Gesetze aller Natur überhaupt sind. Ihre Wahrheit wird also schon vorausgesetzt unter den Gründen ihrer Deduktion. (NKV 1: xxxiii–iv/SS 4:90)

The reason, Fries emphasizes, why this critique does not affect his doctrine is that, as he uses the terms, proofs and deductions have very different purposes: whereas a proof is intended to establish the *truth* of a certain claim, deductions, as he understands them, merely establish that the *use* of a certain concept or principle is justified.²⁶ He expressed this different purpose of deduction most clearly in the preface to the second edition of his NKV:

Kant hatte die Rechtfertigung des Gebrauches der Kategorien mit dem Worte *Deduktion* benannt. Ich habe diese Benennung beybehalten, weil meine Rechtfertigung denselben Zweck hatte [...]. (NKV²1, xxi/SS 4:49)²⁷

Kant, however, at least on Fries's reading, is far from consistent in trying to achieve this purpose, as is evidenced by his usage of terms such as 'transcendental proofs.' In fact, Kant is constantly tempted to try and show that the principles of pure philosophy are true after all, but in doing so misinterprets what his arguments really achieve, according to Fries:

²⁶ Despite Fries's insistence on the contrary, however, Karl Popper still accused him of this type of vicious circularity in his (Popper 1994, 13). For a discussion of this criticism in the context of the Münchhausen-Trilemma, see (Sachs-Hombach 1999, 125–7).

²⁷ Dieter Henrich's influential (Henrich 1989) shows convincingly that Kant adopts this use of the term deduction from the juridical practices of his time. Compare also (Rosenberg 1975, 612): "What Kant explicitly intends is that the conclusion of a transcendental deduction state, not a matter of fact, but a matter of right. It is, in other words, to say that something may be done. It articulates a principle of permission."

In der That beweisen Kant's transcendente Beweise nicht, daß in der Natur jede Substanz beharre, jede Veränderung eine Ursach habe, alles was zugleich ist, in Wechselwirkung stehe, sondern sie zeigen nur, daß die menschliche Vernunft das Bedürfnis habe, die Gesetze als Wahrheiten vorauszusetzen, wenn sie die Erscheinungen als in einem Erfahrungsganzen verbunden beurtheilen wolle. (NKV²1:xvii/SS 4:45)

Fries's reconstructed transcendental philosophy cannot tell us whether these principles are true, for an understanding of human cognition, no matter how complete, would never be able to settle this question.²⁸ It will, however, be able to tell us that, given how human cognition works, we will not be able to come to any systematic knowledge of the world of experience without implicitly presupposing the categories to be valid and the philosophical principles to be true. As Frederick Beiser correctly notes about Fries: "A deduction [provides] a *subjective* justification for these principles, because it shows how they are part of our basic mental economy, our fundamental ways of perceiving and conceiving the world, without which we would understand nothing at all" (Beiser 2014, 75). As such, these concepts and principles are the very conditions of experience.

5. *The Importance of Fries's Reconstruction*

In the foregoing discussion I have repeatedly emphasized how Fries, despite his psychological reconstruction of transcendental philosophy, can nevertheless be understood as developing a number of ideas that were already of central importance to Kant's philosophy. Indeed, in many respects Fries remained much more loyal to Kant than most of the other self-proclaimed Kantians around 1800. In fact, if one looked merely at the results of their respective philosophical systems, one would find it difficult to distinguish Fries from Kant at all: space and time are still the *a priori* forms of intuition; Kant's twelve categories retain their prominent place as the *a priori* concepts that guarantee the unity of

²⁸ Sometimes one finds it hard to escape the impression that history repeats itself, for one finds clear echoes of Fries's argument in Stroud's criticism of Strawson's Kantianism: "Both [Kant and Strawson] appear to assume that skepticism will be disarmed by argument alone only if it can be refuted, and the propositions which it would challenge are positively proved by transcendental means" (Stroud 1994, 240). And one page later: "What calls into question the validity of the last step of would-be transcendental arguments from the way we think to the way things are is the apparently simple logical observation that something's being so does not follow from its being thought or believed to be so. Something's being so does not follow from everyone in the world's believing it to be so, from everyone's fully reasonably believing it, even from every reasonable person's being completely unable to avoid believing it" (241).

experience; and freedom, immortality, and God are still presented as unknowable Ideas of reason. Given such similarities, it is easy to overlook that Fries's treatment of Kant was highly innovative. In this final section I therefore want to take a closer look at the most important implications of Fries's methodological innovations for Kantian philosophy: 1) transcendental holism, and 2) a relative conception of the *a priori*.

What I mean by Fries's transcendental holism is best explained by contrasting it with the popular view that what is most characteristic of Kant's philosophy is his invention of the transcendental argument, or, in Kant's own terms, the "transcendental proof." Kant's own explanation of the nature of such a proof can be found in a well-known passage in the aforementioned section in the methodology chapter of the first *Critique*:

Wenn ich über den Begriff von einem Gegenstande a priori hinausgehen soll, so ist dieses, ohne einen besonderen und außerhalb diesem Begriffe befindlichen Leitfaden, unmöglich. [...] Im transzendentalen Erkenntnis, so lange es bloß mit Begriffen des Verstandes zu tun hat, ist diese Richtschnur die mögliche Erfahrung. Der Beweis zeigt nämlich nicht, daß der gegebene Begriff [...] geradezu auf einem anderen Begriff [...] führe; denn dergleichen Übergang wäre ein Sprung, der sich gar nicht verantworten ließe; sondern er zeigt, daß die Erfahrung selbst, mithin das Object der Erfahrung, ohne eine solche Verknüpfung unmöglich wäre. (A782-3/B811-2)

Despite the influence that this passage has exerted on later conceptions of transcendental arguments, it contains many of the typical Kantian ambiguities that made possible the extremely diverse reception of his philosophy around 1800. It is, for example, far from clear what '*Erfahrung*' is supposed to mean in this passage.²⁹ Does it designate any particular experience? The totality of experience? Human experience? Or perhaps even the/our concept of experience? The fact that Kant in this passage apparently uses 'experience' and 'object of experience' as equivalents certainly does not help to resolve this question. Secondly, what kind of possibility is at stake when Kant speaks about the possibility of (the object of) experience? Are we talking of physical (psychological), metaphysical, logical or perhaps conceptual possibility? And, third, what type of conditions are the conditions of experience of which Kant

²⁹ Many scholars before me have commented on the ambiguity of this term in Kant's work. Lewis White Beck, in fact, even argued that Kant already used the term equivocally in the very first sentences of the *Critique of pure Reason* (Beck 1978, 40-1; cf. Allison 2015, 234-5; Ginsborg 2006; and Kemp Smith 1918, 52).

speaks? Are they internal conditions, that is: constitutive parts of (our concept of) experience? Or are they external conditions, which make possible our experience but do not themselves belong to it? The answers to these questions strongly differ, depending on which of the many interpretations of Kant's transcendental method one favors.

Many of Fries's innovations come to light when we compare his approach to (at least one very prominent interpretation of) Kant's account of transcendental proofs. First, as we have already seen, Fries rejects the idea that "proofs" are the proper form of justification for transcendental philosophy. Second, Fries deals with the ambiguities in Kant's account in a very straightforward fashion: the relevant notion of experience for him is *actual human experience*, of which we are aware through inner sense, and the relevant preconditions of human experience are *external* and *psychological*. Perhaps the most important difference with Kant, however, is that for Fries the idea that there can be a distinct class of transcendental *arguments* is already mistaken. It is at this point that the holism characteristic to Fries's approach becomes clear.³⁰ Transcendental philosophy, in his view, ought not to take the form of a set of individual arguments, but instead, as we saw, of a theory of human cognition. Importantly, Fries does not use the term "theory" in the informal sense in which it can just mean any kind of explanatory account. A theory, for him, is not merely a collection of claims that together serve to explain some phenomenon; rather, in order to prevent mere *ad hoc* hypothesizing, a theory must be a coherent whole and all of its parts only make sense in relation to all the other parts.³¹ This means, most importantly, that individual claims within this theory cannot be justified or criticized in isolation, but that it is only the theory in its entirety that can be critically evaluated. Subsequently, this also means that all Fries's deductions of the *a priori* concepts and principles of pure philosophy cannot be evaluated as individual arguments, but that they all stand or fall with his psychological theory of cognition as a whole. This approach is also reflected in

³⁰ Critics, of course, will point out that there are passages in Kant that can be interpreted as a commitment to holism. I am thinking in particular of the footnote in the preface where Kant speaks about the possibility of using parts of the transcendental philosophy as warrants for other parts. I do not wish to argue the point here, which is why I only spoke of "one prominent interpretation" of Kant's philosophy above.

³¹ See Fries's extensive discussion of the notion of a theory (NKV 1:296–309/SS 4:419–35). (Pulte 2006, 106–8) contains helpful discussions on the same topic, as well as on Fries's account of theory formation.

the structure of Fries's *Neue Kritik*: it is only after the theory of cognition is presented in its entirety that Fries begins with the deduction of the *a priori* cognitions of philosophy.³²

Even more innovative than this holistic approach to transcendental philosophy, is what we may call Fries's conception of the relative *a priori*. This would certainly have been a very strange notion to Kant, as it is, I suspect, to many modern readers. The *a priori*, after all, is supposed to be the necessary and unchanging nature of reality, whereas the empirical is contingent per definition. For this reason Kant was still fairly optimistic that his philosophy would be able to determine for all time the full extent of our *a priori* knowledge. Fries's reconstruction of transcendental philosophy leaves no room for such optimism. His theory of cognition is after all not only unapologetically psychological; it is also explicitly empirical. This is not to say, as we have seen, that he intended to eradicate the difference between the empirical and the psychological: *a priori* cognition was as necessary and unchanging for Fries as it was for Kant. The important difference is that for Fries, what *a priori* concepts and principles we are entitled to is itself relative to empirical facts about human cognition. An empirical theory, however, is always in principle vulnerable to being refuted, or to being replaced by a better theory, and an empirical theory of human cognition is no different in this regard.³³ This means that on Fries's account the philosopher's work, too, is never completed, and that one must always be prepared and willing to revise one's philosophical system on the basis of the latest empirical advances.

Importantly, Fries's subtle conception of the interdependence between the empirical and the *a priori* allowed him to adopt a moderate, but highly interesting position in the debates concerning the proper relationship of philosophy to the empirical sciences that were rapidly emancipating themselves from philosophy during Fries's lifetime.³⁴ On the one side, he strongly rejected the idea, represented most powerfully by German Idealism, that philosophy's role was to be a legislator for these sciences. Such ideas, Fries believed, could

³² The presentation of the theory of cognition takes up all of volume one, and proceeds well into volume two. The actual deductions start from §103 onwards.

³³ This, of course is no mere possibility. Compared to modern cognitive science, Fries's theory of the human mind understandably appears rather naive and simplistic.

³⁴ See (Pulte 1999) for a more extended discussion of Fries's views on this relationship with special focus on the natural sciences.

only be seen as naive and presumptuous in light of the fact that it was precisely the emancipation of these sciences from philosophy (and particularly metaphysics) that had made possible what significant advances they had made in modern times. If philosophy was to follow this example and become a real science, then, it ought to take a more modest approach, making use of the latest empirical results in the justification of its own *a priori* principles. Undoubtedly, it was this conception that earned him the sympathy of a significant number of practicing empirical scientists in his own time, many of whom had little patience for the pretensions of the Idealists to provide *a priori* deductions for all the results of the empirical sciences.³⁵ One of the most entertaining examples of this attitude is the fierce polemic *Schelling's und Hegel's Verhältniss zur Naturwissenschaft* (1844). Here is but one sample:

Schelling hat zwar kein einziges Experiment *Faraday's* gemacht, aber nachdem sie einmal gemacht waren, hatte er gut sagen: "Ich hab's vorhergesagt, Galvanismus = chemischer Process," ein Satz, der, als er ausgesprochen wurde, völlig unbegründet war und selbst jetzt nach *Faraday's* Entdeckungen eben immer noch leer und gehaltlos bleibt [...] *Schelling* war nun allerdings so Klug, seine Aussprüche meist in der Allgemeinheit und Ambiguität zu halten, wie seit dem Orakel zu Delphi alle Propheten, und deshalb ist er meistens nicht zu widerlegen. (Schleiden 1844, 29)³⁶

The author of this work was Matthias Schleiden, who was not only the co-founder of cell theory in biology, but also a devoted student of Fries.³⁷ Other empirical scientists of note like Carl Friedrich Gauß, Wilhelm Eduard Weber, and Alexander von Humboldt were sympathetic correspondents of Fries.³⁸

On the other side, however, Fries, despite his respect for the empirical sciences, never succumbed to the popular Enlightenment idea, represented by philosophers like David Hume, that philosophy should reinvent itself as an empirical science of the mind. Instead, he believed in a productive interaction in

³⁵ Admittedly, such deductions on occasion bordered on the absurd. Fichte, for example, is reported to have at one time boasted that he had already given an *a priori* (in both senses of the term) deduction of Friedrich August Wolf's empirical proof that the poetry that we call Homeric could not in fact have been the work of a single historical author. Such claims, of course, were unlikely to be taken seriously by scholars devoted to empirical research (Kühn 2012, 250–1).

³⁶ Schleiden then continues for many pages to ridicule the many "*wunderliche Sachen*" that were "discovered" *a priori* by the *Naturphilosophen*.

³⁷ I say a little more about Schleiden, and his role as founder of the first Friesian school, in the conclusion, §2.

³⁸ For Gauß and Weber's correspondence with Fries, see (Weber, Gauß, and Nelson 1906), for Humboldt (Henke 1867, 260)

which philosophical theory had to remain adequate to modern empirical science, but in which empirical scientists could also come to a better self-understanding through philosophy. More concretely in relation to our topic: though it is true, as we have seen, that empirical psychology in Fries's view ought to justify our *adoption* of the principles of metaphysics, these ought not themselves to be interpreted as psychological principles. Metaphysics, for Fries, is and ought to remain a separate, *a priori* discipline that engages with some of the most fundamental concerns of humanity. Contrary to later interpretations of his philosophy, therefore, Fries cared greatly about making sure that philosophy would not be swallowed up in its entirety by psychology.³⁹

The concern for such a strict separation, however, was not a concern for all representatives of Kantian Psychologism. In 1798, the year in which Fries published his first articles, the most radical thinker of the psychological tradition was born; a thinker who had absolutely no sympathy for any such attempts to save pure philosophy. Philosophy, he would argue, can only survive and thrive if it abandons its pretensions to be an *a priori* status, and converts itself entirely into empirical psychology. This thinker was Friedrich Eduard Beneke.

³⁹ On the neo-Kantian reception of Fries as someone who reduces philosophy to psychology, compare the conclusion, §2.

Chapter 5

Radical Psychologism: Friedrich Eduard Beneke

1. *A New Generation*

Despite being only twenty-five years younger than Fries, Friedrich Eduard Beneke (1798–1854) belonged to a new generation of Kantians.¹ Unlike Fries, who had become acquainted with Kant's critical philosophy during the height of its fame, Beneke only began to study Kant's over a decade after the latter's death. Such a chronological gap, unimportant as it may come to seem after 200 years have passed, has a significant impact on the reception of a philosopher. Beneke's generation was already far removed from that of the orthodox Kantians, which had accepted Kant's philosophy almost in its entirety, and with great enthusiasm. It was also unlike the generation that came to the fore in the 1790s, which had taken a more revisionary attitude towards Kant's doctrine, but for which it had still been a viable project to develop and defend improved versions of his philosophy. For Beneke and his contemporaries, by contrast, Kant had already become somewhat of a historical figure, albeit one of the highest importance. They therefore had little interest in the concrete details of Kant's philosophical theory, which had already come to look somewhat antiquated at the time. Instead they were concerned with what they took to be the single core innovation that had been brought about by Kant's philosophy.² For a young philosopher in the 1820s it would have been perfectly acceptable to call oneself a Kantian while contradicting or ignoring most of the doctrines that Kant would have considered to be absolutely essential to his philosophy. Beneke, as we shall see, was a very typical representative of this generation.³

¹ An account of Beneke's (rather tragic) life can be found in (Beiser 2014, chap. 3), which also contains a good general overview of Beneke's philosophy.

² It may be objected that this phenomenon was far from new, but that in fact Fichte had already adopted a similar attitude in the 1790s. On this point, however, see the introduction, §5.

³ The most famous representative of this generation was doubtlessly Arthur Schopenhauer, who was a colleague of Beneke at the university of Berlin during the early 1820s. Needless to say, both thinkers had rather different ideas concerning the nature of the innovation represented by Kant's philosophy.

This changed attitude towards Kant and his philosophy had important consequences for the version of Kantian psychologism that Beneke would come to defend. With Fries he shared the central idea that Kant's transcendental philosophy ought to be interpreted, against its author's intentions, as a system of empirical psychology. For Fries, however, this psychological reconstruction had been a necessary means to saving as much of Kant's critical philosophy as possible, including much of his metaphysics. This desire to conserve a large part of Kant's original philosophy had made it necessary for him to develop the subtle account of deduction that enabled him to maintain a strict distinction between the empirical-psychological and the pure parts of philosophy (chapter 4, §4). Beneke felt no such need. For him, emphasizing and expanding the psychological dimension of Kant's philosophy was no mere means to an end, but rather the end itself. Philosophy, in Beneke's view, could only be a real science if it was reconstructed as empirical psychology in its entirety, and Kant's philosophy was of value only insofar as it had contributed to this revolution. All other dimensions of Kant's doctrine could therefore be discarded as being inessential. Beneke, in other words, radicalised Kantian psychologism.

Because of Beneke's divergence from a number of central Kantian doctrines, it will be helpful to start, in the next section, with a more substantial discussion of Beneke's attitude towards Kant's philosophy. As we shall see, Beneke hailed Kant as the thinker who had finally introduced a true empiricism in German philosophy. In section three I hope to shed further light on this rather surprising claim by discussing the nature and extent of Beneke's empiricism. The last two sections will then be devoted to Beneke's claim that philosophy can only survive and prosper if it becomes empirical psychology. Section four discusses three of the central features of this psychology: Beneke's theory of inner sense; his proposed methodology for psychology; and his approach to the doctrine of *a priori* forms. In section five, finally, I discuss Beneke's claim that all philosophical disciplines are, or should become, (applied) psychology.

2. Beneke the Kantian

Beneke's rejection of many of Kant's core doctrines, a number of which we will consider in this chapter, had the result that he has often been ignored in works on the history of (neo-)Kantianism (Beiser 2014, 143–4). As I argued in the

introduction (§4), however, a study of the history of early Kantianism benefits from a form of methodological neutrality on this point. Instead of presupposing a necessarily anachronistic criterion for what one has to accept in order to count as a Kantian, our starting point should be an author's own judgment on the matter. The role of the historian, then, is not to evaluate whether this judgment is true or false, but rather to try and understand why the author in question identified with Kant's philosophy.

That Beneke considered himself to be a Kantian is easily established. The central role that Kant played in Beneke's understanding of his own philosophy was already apparent in his very first publication, the *Erkenntnißlehre nach dem Bewußtsein der reinen Vernunft* (Beneke 1820b), in which Beneke uses the preface to frame his own philosophical project as a continuation of the task that Kant had set out to achieve in his first *Critique*. Of all the philosophers, he claims later on in the same work, it had been Kant who had "come closest to the truth" (Beneke 1820b, 213–4). And in the so-called *Jubelschrift* that he later wrote at the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* he maintained:

Nur die wahre Kantische Lehre also ist es, was uns die Zukunft bringen wird [...] Kant's Lehre, nicht seinem Buchstaben nach [...] sondern seinem Geiste nach; Kant's Lehre, welche zugleich die Lehre aller klaren philosophischen Denker bei allen gebildeten Völkern ist. (Beneke 1832a, 89)

What, then, was it that made Kant's philosophy so special? Interestingly, and somewhat surprisingly, Beneke did not place the importance of Kant's philosophy in one or more of Kant's positive doctrines, but rather in its *negative* function:

[Kant's] Grundtendenz ist nur *negativ* oder in ihrer *polemischen* Richtung klar und bestimmt durchgeführt. (Beneke 1833, 93)

Erfassen wir [...] Kant's Unternehmen in seiner ganzen Tiefe: so ergibt sich augenscheinlich als die *Grundtendenz* desselben die Feststellung und Durchführung des Satzes: Daß *aus bloßen Begriffen* keine Erkenntniß des *Seienden* oder keine Begründung der *Existenz* des in diesen Begriffen Gedachten möglich sei. (Beneke 1832a, 12)

Initially, this may hardly seem like a ringing endorsement of Kant. Agreement on what is not good philosophy, after all, is easy to come by, and may hardly seem sufficient to establish a strong link between two philosophical systems. This was

also the view of at least some of Beneke's contemporaries, who, as Beneke himself reports, were less than enamoured with his claim that Kant's philosophy was of primarily negative value (Beneke 1833, x–xi). Yet, Beneke could justifiably point out that on this matter he had the most important authority on his side: Kant himself. In fact, in the preface to the second edition of the first *Critique*, Kant was explicit on this point:

Man wird bei einer flüchtigen Übersicht dieses Werks wahrzunehmen glauben, daß der Nutzen davon doch nur *negativ* sei, uns nämlich mit der spekulativen Vernunft niemals über die Erfahrungsgrenze hinaus zu wagen, *und das ist auch in der Tat ihr erster Nutzen* [my emphasis]. Dieser aber wird alsbald *positiv* wenn man inne wird, daß die Grundsätze, mit denen sich spekulative Vernunft über ihre Grenze hinauswagt, in der Tat nicht *Erweiterung*, sondern [...] *Verengung* unseres Vernunftgebrauchs zum unausbleiblichen Erfolg haben [...]. Diesem Dienste der Kritik den *positiven* Nutzen abzusprechen, wäre eben so viel als sagen, daß Polizei keinen positiven Nutzen schaffe, weil ihr Hauptgeschäfte doch nur ist, der Gewalttätigkeit, welche Bürger von Bürger zu besorgen haben, einen Riegel vorzuschieben, damit ein jeder seine Angelegenheit ruhig und sicher treiben könne. (Bxxiv-xxv)

For Kant, the negative use of reason, as employed in the first *Critique*, was first and foremost necessary to ensure that metaphysical speculation would no longer be able to corrupt true morality and religion: knowledge, as Kant famously phrased it, had to be denied in order to make room for faith (Bxxx). For Beneke, too, this consequence of Kant's negative doctrine was of the highest possible importance (Beneke 1832a, 17–8). Like a number of other protagonists of the psychological tradition (Bouterwek, Fries), Beneke had been deeply influenced by what he perceived to be Jacobi's deep moral and religious insight, and it was precisely in passages such as the one quoted at length above that Kant's position seemed to come closest to Jacobi's self-confessed anti-philosophy.⁴

On top of this, however, Beneke maintained that Kant's negative doctrine that speculation alone is insufficient to obtain knowledge is also of significant value in the theoretical domain. In this domain, this doctrine, if universally accepted, would finally bring to an end all of the ancient, but meaningless metaphysical controversies and bring about an eternal peace in philosophy, just as Kant had envisioned. Then, and only then, Beneke argued, would it be possible

⁴ See (Beneke 1822a, 1–2): "[Ich halte] Jacobi, ohne alles Bedenken, für den größten Selbstdenker [...], welchen außer Kant unsere Zeit hervorgebracht hat." Beneke discusses the value of Jacobi works at length in his review of an edition of the latter's collected works (Beneke 1822c).

for philosophy to be a real science, and to make actual progress, based on sober empirical observation. The real spirit of Kantianism, therefore, is empiricism!⁵

It is this spirit of empiricism, then, which for Beneke was sufficient reason to consider Kant to be the founder of a truly scientific philosophy that would end all arbitrary speculation in this discipline. That is not to say, of course, that Beneke wanted to make the claim that Kant was the first empiricist, for he was well aware of the British and French traditions in philosophy, and had studied their most important thinkers in depth. In this sense, Beneke admits, Kant's philosophy is not revolutionary, but rather has to be considered a relative latecomer on the scene (Beneke 1832a, 18). Nonetheless, Kant's work was especially important, for at least two reasons:

First of all, even though Kant's philosophy was not entirely new, but should be placed in a longer tradition, Beneke still considered it the most advanced representative of this empiricist tradition. I will discuss this point at length in the next section.

Secondly, and at least as importantly, the publication of Kant's first *Critique* had marked the beginning of a new era for Germany. Whereas the English and the French had long since embraced the spirit of empiricism the German lands had lagged behind and had remained in a state of out-dated scholasticism. While the French and English thinkers had been making significant advances, not only in the study of nature, but even in the study of the mind, German philosophy had remained entirely dependent on the meaningless manipulation of an arbitrary technical vocabulary. Kant's enormous achievement had been that he had pointed the German people the way towards modernity, so that they could finally take their rightful place amongst the other civilized nations (Beneke 1832a, 18–21).

Unfortunately, Beneke notes, Kant's attempt to direct German philosophy towards modernity had not been entirely successful. Surprisingly, he notes, one finds that in the aftermath of Kantian philosophy a new scholasticism had taken hold that is even more damaging than the old, insofar as it is infinitely more vigorous and dictatorial: German Idealism. The success of Fichte, Schelling and

⁵ See (Beneke 1832a, 66–8). On this point Beneke has a surprising ally in Strawson, who asserts (2006, 19) that several themes found in Kant may form the framework for "a truly empiricist philosophy."

Hegel, in Beneke's view, threatened to undo all that Kant had accomplished.⁶ Not only this, but they did so in the very name of Kant himself! Yet in the end, Beneke believed, modernity would be victorious, and German philosophy would return to a true Kantianism:

Allerdings wird es [...] in Deutschland noch eines schweren Kampfes bedürfen; aber gewiß wird zuletzt die jetzt unterdrückte *Erfahrungsphilosophie* den Sieg davon tragen. *Kant's* Philosophie war, ihrem tiefsten Grunde nach, ein kräftiger Anlauf hiezu, der nur misglücken mußte, weil die alte Methode noch zu übermächtig war in Deutschland, als daß selbst ein so erhabener, selbständiger Geist, wie *Kant*, ganz davon sich hätte losmachen können. Aber wir sind ein halbes Jahrhundert seitdem älter geworden; wir haben das Unwesen der Spekulation in den abschreckendsten Gestalten vor uns aufsteigen sehen; und so kann es nicht lange mehr währen: der Kantianismus *in seiner vollen Reinheit* wird über die metaphysische Methode triumphieren! (Beneke 1832a, 88–9)⁷

Yet, for Beneke this return to Kant could not mean a return to the *letter* of Kant's philosophy, as for example Schmid had still urged against Fichte. The reason for this, as Beneke argued, is that Kant was at least in part himself to blame for this revival of scholasticism in the name of his philosophy. After all, as Beneke emphasized in the above quotation, in the end not even "a sublime and independent mind" like Kant's had been able to completely shake off the dominant German culture of scholasticism. This was apparent in the fact that even though the final conclusion of Kant's investigations in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (that the human powers of cognition are limited to experience), had been a strong form of empiricism he had come to these conclusions by means of a speculative, *a priori*, method. Yet, Beneke argues, this attempt undermined the whole project from the beginning. After all, if it is true that only perception can

⁶ On this point, Beneke approvingly cites the influential intellectual August Wilhelm Rehberg: "[Die Kantische Philosophie] war an sich selbst in ihren wesentlichsten Theilen zu stark als daß ihre Gegner ihr viel hätten schaden können. Desto mehr ist dies von ihren Anhängern geschehen. [...] Kant had noch die traurige Erfahrung machen können, daß Alles, was er in der Wissenschaft, welcher er die Kräfte seines Geistes und die Anstrengung eines langes Lebens gewidmet hatte, zu wirken gesucht, durch diejenigen selber vereitelt ward, die sich seine Schüler nannten, und die Befreiung von den Fesseln der Schulweisheit nur dazu benutzten, neue für Andere zu schmieden" (cited in Beneke 1832a, 44–5).

⁷ For this reason, Beiser correctly considers Beneke's *Jubelschrift* "one of the very first neo-Kantian manifestos" (Beiser 2014, 144). Beneke regularly reminds his readers, with reference to Kant's famous declaration against Fichte, that the claim that German Idealism was a perversion of the Kantian spirit was not merely his own, but had been shared by Kant himself (Beneke 1832c, 253–4, 1833, 103–4). For this reason, Beneke maintained, Fichte, Schelling and Hegel ought really to be considered competitors to Kant's, unlike Fries and Herbart who, despite their faults, at least followed the real spirit of the critical philosophy (Beneke 1833, v).

bring us knowledge of facts, and that no knowledge is possible from mere concepts alone, then these limitations should apply to philosophical knowledge as well. Kant's claim that philosophy has to be an *a priori* and purely conceptual science can therefore only be the grossest of inconsistencies:

Nun frage man sich: auf welche Weise hat Kant die Erkenntniß [seiner] Theorie gewonnen, die doch unstreitig ebenfalls den Regeln unterworfen sein muß, welche Kant als allgemeine Regeln für unser Erkennen aufstellt?—Da er dieselbe als eine *objektiv-wahre*, als eine in der Natur des menschlichen Geistes *wirklich* begründete darstellt, so konnte er sie unstreitig nur aus *innerer Erfahrung* gewonnen haben. Erfahrung allein kann ja, nach eben dieser Theorie, die *Existenz*, des Gedachten, Erfahrung allein uns verbürgen, daß wir nicht bloße Hirngespinnste denken [...] (Beneke 1832a, 27–28, cf. 65, and 1833, 22).

Beneke thus posited a very similar problem for Kant's philosophy as Fries had done, and he also drew the same conclusion on the basis of this problem: philosophy, if it is to be a scientific discipline, necessarily has its starting point in an empirical doctrine of inner experience, that is: an empirical psychology. We will take a closer look at Beneke's psychology in section four. Since his particular understanding of the tasks and possibilities of psychology are dependent on his empiricism, however, we shall turn to this topic first.

3. Beneke the Empiricist

Beneke's commitment to empiricism requires further explanation because historically this term has been used to describe a number of different doctrines. Most importantly, 'empiricism' has been used to designate both a class of theories about the justification of our knowledge and a class of theories about the psychological genesis of this knowledge. In order to answer the question in what sense Beneke is an empiricist, then, it is important to separate these two senses in which the term is used, and examine for each individually whether Beneke adheres to a theory of this class. Following Gary Hatfield (1990, 271–80), I will make this task easier by reserving 'empiricism' for the relevant theories of justification, and 'empirism' for the relevant theories of genesis. I shall shortly discuss each in turn, and consider the relation of empiricism to empirism and vice versa before relating these discussions to Beneke's philosophy.

As is often the case with -ism words, 'empiricism' cannot be strictly defined. Roughly speaking, however, the term applies to all theories of justification that state that perception is the sole source of justification. Empiricist theories can be ranked from weak to strong, depending on the scope granted to this principle. The strongest form of empiricism, in other words, would not allow any exceptions to the principle, so that even disciplines such as logic and mathematics ought ultimately to be considered empirical sciences. More moderate forms, in comparison, may hold that all "synthetic" knowledge (to use Kant's terminology) needs to be justified empirically, but that analytic judgments are *a priori*. A weak empiricism, finally, may try to limit the scope of the principle even further, for example by allowing that "formal" as opposed to "material" knowledge may be justified *a priori*. Kant of course, adopted this last position.⁸

"Empirist" theories, in contrast to "empiricist" theories, are not theories of justification, but theories of the genesis of our cognition. Again roughly speaking the principle of empirism is that all our representations are the product of sensibility alone. Most commonly, such theories are contrasted with "nativist" theories, which hold that there are elements in human cognition that are innate. Naturally, like empiricism, empirism admits of weaker and stronger variants, again depending on the relevant scope of its principle. Thus, a weak psychological empirism may posit only that the entire *content* of representation derives from sensibility; a stronger variant would posit the same of both *form and content*; and the strongest version would posit that not only form and content, but that even all cognitive *activity* (such as the ability to reason, abstract, remember, etc.) has to be explained solely with reference to sensibility, rather than to any innate ability of the mind. This means that, while all empirists would presumably deny the existence of innate representations, they may or may not deny the existence of innate cognitive faculties, powers, *a priori* forms, *a priori* concepts, intellectual intuition, etc.

The relations between empiricism and empirism are complex. Historically, defenders of strong forms of empiricism were more often than not also committed to some form of empirism, and indeed, their empirism frequently motivated their empiricism. Hume, for example, founded his entire philosophy

⁸ For discussions of Kant's empiricism, see (Sperber 2015, 117–20; and Engfer 1996, 420).

on the "first principle [...] in the science of human nature" that "all our simple ideas proceed, either mediately or immediately, from their correspondent impressions" (Hume 2009, §1.1.1). It is on the basis of this principle, ultimately, that he rejects all non-empirical knowledge, except that based only on a reflection on the similarities between such simple ideas. Condillac, to name a second example, even made the dependence of his (empiricist) theory of justification on his (empirist) theory of cognition explicit:

It is from the knowledge we have gained of the operations of mind and of the causes of their progress that we must learn how to conduct ourselves in the search for truth. (Condillac 2001, 2.2 introduction)⁹

Such historical connections between empirism and empiricism are certainly no coincidence, for the genesis of human knowledge and the justification of this knowledge are not completely independent. A thinker, for example, who denies the existence of innate representations will also not be able to grant such representations a role in the justification of *a priori* knowledge. The stronger one's empirism, then, the more likely one is to be an empiricist.

Such connections partly explain why the term 'empiricism' has come to be used for both empirist and empiricist positions. When people talk about "the British empiricists," for example, it is often unclear whether this categorisation is made on the basis of their theories of the genesis of knowledge or on the basis of their theories of justification. Despite the historical and conceptual associations between empirism and empiricism, however, these theories are conceptually separate, and they can be defended independently of the other (cf. Hatfield 1990, 279–80). Fries, for example, as we saw in the last chapter, on the one hand denied all forms of innate representation, but on the other hand defended the possibility of *a priori* knowledge in metaphysics. Beneke, as I will argue, is an even better (and completely opposite) example of the conceptual independence of empiricism and empirism; though he accepts a very strong form of empiricism about the justification of knowledge, he rejects all forms of empirism about the genesis of knowledge.

⁹ Admittedly, Hume and Condillac are among the strongest example of this kind of connection between empirism and empiricism. The case is less clear-cut in other early-modern philosophers who are generally categorised under the label 'empiricism,' such as Francis Bacon and John Locke, but this is due mostly to the fact that their empirism is not as thoroughgoing as that of Hume or Condillac. See (Engfer 1996) for helpful discussions.

That Beneke is committed to a (very strong) version of empiricism regarding justification is not controversial. Consider for example the following passage from his *Jubelschrift*:

Nur in Folge eines Zusammenflusses besonderer und für die Klarheit des Denkens eben nicht günstiger Umstände konnte es geschehen, daß das Wort 'Empirismus,' welches ursprünglich doch nichts weiter bedeutet, als auf Erfahrung begründete Wissenschaft und Kunst, seit geraumer Zeit schon bei uns mit schwerer Verdammung gebrandmarckt ist. Der auf Erfahrungen sich gründenden Wissenschaft kann nur dann ein Vorwurf gemacht werden, wenn sie die Erfahrungen bloß äußerlich, ungenau, oder falsch erklärend und ohne Urtheil kombinirt; sonst aber weiß man in der That nicht, worauf anders eine Wissenschaft des *Wirklichen* (und eine solche soll und will doch jede wahre Wissenschaft sein) gegründet werden könne. (Beneke 1832a, 67)

'*Empirismus*,' for Beneke, thus refers to the *empiricist* theory that all real sciences ought to have their foundation in experience, or, in other words, that their knowledge-claims can only be justified empirically. Now, interestingly, Beneke presents the above passage as an explanation of the empiricism that Kant had introduced in German philosophy, for it is directly preceded by a quotation of the famous opening lines of the first *Critique*, in which Kant declared that "there is no doubt whatever that all our cognition begins with experience" (B1). Furthermore, Beneke's emphasis on the necessity of experience for knowing "das Wirkliche" is clearly intended to echo Kant's claim that "perception [...] is the sole characteristic of actuality [*Wirklichkeit*]" (A225/B273). Such references, however, obscure the real difference between Kant's very weak empiricism and Beneke's radical empiricism, which, in this passage, is hidden away between parentheses. Though Kant did not believe that we could have *a priori* knowledge of actual states of affairs (that is, facts), he could find a place for *a priori* knowledge precisely because he believed there to be sciences (logic, mathematics, and pure philosophy) that did not give us factual, but only formal knowledge. For Beneke, however, as the line between parentheses indicates, *every* science is a science of the factual, and therefore the only real kind of science is empirical science.

The paradigm case of geometry can serve as an illustration of this difference: Kant, as is well-known, had famously argued that geometry could be synthetic *a priori* because it was a formal science about space as the pure form of intuition. The truth of the propositions of Euclidean geometry, then, according to

him, was warranted by the fact that they could be demonstrated by constructions in *a priori* intuition. Beneke, however, rejected the idea that space and time are *a priori* forms of intuition (more on this below), and for this reason he could not accept this interpretation of geometry. Insofar as Euclidean geometry is true at all, Beneke maintains, it must necessarily be true of factual, empirical space, rather than of a supposed *a priori* space, and we have no other access to this empirical space than through perception. The truth of geometry is therefore empirical truth.

Naturally, Beneke was not ignorant of the fact that geometers typically do not do empirical research, nor did he believe that this is what they should be doing. Rather, the thesis that he defended is that geometry, for its status as a science, is entirely dependent on the possibility of its application to empirical space. Insofar as mathematicians are doing pure geometry, he argues, the only thing that they are doing is hypothetically spelling out what would be the case if a number of premises (such as the postulates of Euclidean geometry) were true statements about empirical space.¹⁰ In abstraction such reasoning may be perfectly valid, but as long as it tells us nothing about reality it cannot be regarded as knowledge. Considered by itself, then, and despite the sophistication that this discipline has achieved, geometrical results are themselves akin to judgments such as "all dryads live in forests," which is a valid judgment that would have been true had there actually been dryads. The only reason, then, why the results of geometry actually count as knowledge, and why geometry itself is a science, and not a mere intellectual game like chess, is that they can have a meaningful application to reality (see Beneke 1820b, 48–50, 56–8). Since the final goal of science is knowledge; since formal validity alone is insufficient for knowledge; and since only empirical adequacy can guarantee the distinction between formal validity and knowledge; all science must necessarily be empirical science. Since Beneke excludes any possibility of *a priori* science, his empiricism regarding justification in fact brings him much closer to the positions adopted by the early modern empiricists than it does to Kant.

¹⁰ "Die gesammte mathematische Erkenntniss giebt nur *Gleichungen, abstrakte Formeln, hypothetische Sätze*, in welchen ausgesagt wird, dass, wenn sich das Eine findet [...] eben deshalb sich auch das Andere [...] finden müsse: aber sie kann aus sich selber heraus nicht das Mindeste darüber ausmachen ob und wo sich das Eine und das Andere finden" (Beneke 1842, 287–8).

Beneke's enthusiastic adoption of empiricism, however, is matched by an equally decisive rejection of all forms of empirism:

Denn auch der Verfasser [Beneke himself] obgleich mit seinen Bestrebungen um die philosophische Erkenntniß rein auf das Selbstbewußtsein oder die innere Erfahrung sich stützend, legt dessenungeachtet der menschlichen Seele *a priori* inwohnende oder angeborene Kräfte, Formen, *ja gewissermaßen einen angeborenen Inhalt des Vorstellens bei*. (Beneke 1833, vi, my emphasis; cf. 37–8, [a] 1832, 66)

The adoption of so many *a priori* elements in cognition may seem an odd match with Beneke's refusal to accept any form of *a priori* knowledge. Frederick Beiser, for example, sees this passage as evidence that in the 1830s Beneke rejected his (earlier) empiricism:

In the preface to his *Die Philosophie in ihrem Verhältnisse zur Erfahrung*, Beneke states that he agrees with the speculative systems that there are *a priori* forms or powers of the mind, and that there is philosophical knowledge independent of experience. This marks a shift in position from his earlier work. It is possible that Herbart's harsh judgement made him retreat from his extreme empiricism (Beiser 2014, 157n., my emphasis)

This interpretation, however, is neither plausible on textual grounds,¹¹ nor is it necessary once we keep the issues of empiricism and empirism strictly separate. If we do so, we find that Beneke's acceptance of empiricism and rejection of empirism is perfectly consistent, for two reasons:

First, the acceptance of empiricism is not necessarily dependent on an empirist theory of the genesis of knowledge. To become convinced of the truth of empiricism it is sufficient, in Beneke's view, to simply consider what we mean when we are talking about knowledge (Beneke 1820b, 45–58). We therefore do not have to depend at all on any controversial psychological theory. Matters are rather the other way around: because the principle of empiricism is the principle of all true science, and since psychology is one such science, any theory of the genesis of human cognition must necessarily depend on the acceptance of empiricism.

Conversely, and this is the second reason, the adoption of an empiricist principle in psychology does not necessarily lead to an empirist theory of the

¹¹ In the very same work, Beneke writes: "[P]hilosophische Erkenntniß *a priori* der Erfahrung [ist] nur eine Idee, obgleich sie *als solche* vollkommen gerechtfertigt werden kann. Auf keine Weise aber läßt sich eine philosophische Erkenntniß *a priori* und unabhängig von *aller*, auch der allgemeinen innern Erfahrung rechtfertigen" (Beneke 1833, 37).

genesis of knowledge. After all, Beneke argues, following Fries, it is possible to discover *a priori* elements of cognition by means of empirical research.

Die allerdings in unserem Geiste *a priori* gegebenen Formen sind, wenn überhaupt, doch nicht wieder *a priori*, sondern *nur durch Erfahrung* zu erkennen. (Beneke 1832a, 66)¹²

To remain a consistent empiricist, all that Beneke has to deny is that these *a priori* elements in cognition can either themselves be counted as knowledge, or provide a sufficient basis for the justification of knowledge independent of perception.

To answer the question with which we started this section, then, Beneke is an empiricist, but not an empirist. This rejection of empirism is important, because it was most likely for this reason that Beneke always felt more affinity with Kant than with the early modern empiricists. In fact, addressing the question of his relationship to the English and French empiricists, it is precisely this issue that he stresses. After criticizing the German rationalist psychologies as being outdated, he notes:

[M]an hat mich [...] mehrfach beschuldigt, daß ich mit meinen Ansichten *noch viel weiter zurückliege*: indem dieselben nur die *sensualistischen* Behauptungen von Locke und Condillac reproducirten, welche doch (wie man hinzufügt) die *oberflächlichste* und *seichteste* Auffassung des Seelenlebens enthielten die nur überhaupt denkbar sei. Wird nicht auch in der Psychologie als Naturwissenschaft (sagt man) zuletzt Alles von den *sinnlichen Empfindungen*, als von dem Grundelementarischen abgeleitet? (Beneke 1845a, 250)

This accusation, Beneke argues, is unjust on two points. First of all (and here Beneke admits his affinity with these thinkers), because the British and French psychologists were not nearly as superficial as this accusation makes them out to be. In fact, Beneke feels, since they have not simply rested content with the postulation of various faculties to explain mental phenomena, but have actually enquired into the origin of these faculties, their investigations have gone much deeper than those of traditional German psychology (Beneke 1845a, 252).

¹² Though Beneke does not cite Fries in this passage, we have it on the former's own testimony that he already studied Fries intensively at a young age, and that the latter had an important influence on him (Beneke 1833, 102; and 1845, 81). While he does not specify in what this influence consisted, it is hard to imagine that he would not have picked up this particular argument, given its prominence in Fries's work.

Secondly, insofar as there is some truth in the claim that the sensualist psychology is superficial, this does not apply to Beneke's psychology:

Allerdings [...] ist es keinem Zweifel unterworfen, daß die Vernunft, das Ich, [etc.] ungleich tiefere Gebilde sind als die sinnliche Empfindung. Das heißt [...]: um jene in uns zur Bethätigung zu bringen, müssen Tausende von elementarischen Spuren aus dem Inneren oder aus der Tiefe der Seele hervortreten, während die elementarische sinnliche Empfindung ohne ein solches hinzutreten ausgebildet wird. *Aber diese Vergleichung trifft ja nur die Gegenstände [...], nicht die Methode oder den wissenschaftlichen Charakter der Systeme.* (Beneke 1845a, 251, my emphasis, cf. 269)

In other words, it is precisely the postulation of *a priori* elements in human cognition that mark the key difference between Beneke's psychology and that of the British and French empiricists.¹³ Here, Beneke felt that he had a stronger ally in Kant.

4. *Philosophy as Psychology*

At the end of the previous section I discussed Beneke's psychology primarily in negative terms, as a project that rejected both the traditional German *Vermögenspsychologie* and the psychological empirism characteristic of early modern British and French psychology. Given the central role of psychology in Beneke's philosophy, however, a more extensive positive examination is called for.¹⁴

Indeed, the importance of psychology for Beneke's philosophical project is hard to overstate, and Beneke himself does not shy away from sweeping

¹³ In the discussion that follows, Beneke's main target is Condillac. Locke, as Beneke also notes, is not a typical sensualist, because of his postulation of a variety of faculties that contribute to experience. His errors are therefore deemed closer to those of the German psychologists. Condillac, however, is said to make the true sensualist error of not admitting anything inherent to the mind, and of trying to explain all our operations and capacities by means of sensibility alone (Beneke 1845a, 259–61). This, however, leads to consequences that are clearly absurd: "Daß es Condillac hiemit vollkommen Ernst ist, zeigt eine andere Stelle, wo er geradezu sagt, daß der Grund für das zurückbleiben der Thiere in ihrer Seelenentwicklung bloß darin zu suchen sei, daß sie zu wenig Bedürfnisse haben!" (Beneke 1845a, 263, most of the quotation italicized in original)

¹⁴ A complete survey of Beneke's psychology is both impossible and undesirable for the purposes of our investigation. Below I only examine the themes that I consider to be most central for understanding Beneke's position in the psychological Kantian tradition. The best general overview of Beneke's psychology is still (Brandt 1895). Unfortunately, this is not so much a recommendation of that particular book as it is a complaint about the complete absence of decent scholarship on this topic. Further research would provide a valuable addition to our understanding of the origins of scientific psychology in the nineteenth century.

statements when addressing the issue. One of the central goals of his philosophy, he claims in the *Jubelschrift*, aside from introducing empiricism as the sole method of the sciences, is:

die *Psychologie*, und zwar eine, mit Ausschließung aller materialistischen oder metaphysischen Beimischungen, *rein auf unser Selbstbewußtsein* begründete Psychologie zum *Mittelpunkte* zu machen für die gesammte Philosophie: zu der Sonne von welcher alle übrigen philosophischen Wissenschaften ihr Licht empfangen. (Beneke 1832a, 89)

How Beneke envisioned the relation of psychology to the other (philosophical) sciences shall be the topic of the next section. For now, let us begin by noting that already in this passage, Beneke clearly distinguishes his ideal for psychology from two other projects that were prominent in his own time (see the introduction, §6): the physiological approach to psychology, which in Kant's time had been spearheaded by Ernst Platner, was still influential in the nineteenth century and was at the end of Beneke's life represented by such illustrious figures as Fechner and Helmholtz; similarly, the metaphysical approach, which had in the eighteenth century been promoted by the Wolffians had found new protagonists in Johann Herbart and his followers. By rejecting both these projects, and by opting for a pure psychology based purely on self-consciousness, Beneke joined the cause of the facts-of-consciousness psychology that had been a characteristic feature of the psychologistic Kantianism from its very conception.¹⁵

While this type of project may look rather naive from a modern perspective, it was still a serious contender for determining the future of psychology throughout the entire nineteenth century. The fundamental distrust with respect to introspection that is so typical of modern psychology was simply not a feature of its nineteenth-century counterpart. That is not to say that Beneke's contemporaries were uncritical about the idea of basing psychology on inner sense. Indeed, a number of prominent methodological problems concerning the use of inner sense had been raised at least as early as the late

¹⁵ Reinhold, Heusinger, Schmid and Fries had all adopted this facts-of-consciousness approach to psychology. Nevertheless, this agreement should not be overstated. While they are further removed from the physiologists and the metaphysicians than they are from each other, there were significant disagreements within this group, especially with regard to our supposed access to these facts. Reinhold and Schmid had argued for *a priori* knowledge of at least some of these facts. Fries and (unsurprisingly) Beneke, maintained that all our knowledge of mental facts is empirical.

eighteenth century (e.g., Schmid 1791, 109–20). These problems included questions regarding the very status of inner sense as a sense on par with the outer senses, the generalizability of results obtained by means of one's own inner sense, the possibility of doing experiments based on inner sense, and the instability of inner sense.¹⁶ I shall therefore first examine Beneke's theory of inner sense, and the role that this inner sense plays in his psychology as a whole, before turning to the method of his psychology and, finally, his doctrine of *a priori* forms of cognition. Taken together, these three discussions will enable the reader to form an accurate impression of the nature of Beneke's psychology.

The content of psychology: inner sense

Beneke's doctrine of inner sense is just one of the many examples where Beneke directly contradicts a central Kantian teaching. One of the key features of Kant's account of inner sense, especially in the second edition of the first *Critique*, had been a rejection of the superiority of inner over outer sense. Many early modern philosophers had affirmed this superiority as a consequence of their doctrine that the human mind only has representations as its direct object of consciousness. For this reason, all perceptions of outer sense were held to be necessarily mediated by inner sense: I perceive directly, by means of inner sense, that I have a representation of a book that lies in front of me, but whether I have this idea because my outer senses were affected by a real physical book or (perhaps) because of my regular abuse of hallucinogens is a matter of inference. Because of this extra step of inference (with its corresponding risks), outer sense was often considered to be an inferior source of knowledge. Against this common account, Kant had argued that the objects of both inner *and* outer sense were mere appearance, and the objects of outer sense were therefore no more external to consciousness than those of inner sense. For this reason he had rejected the idea that one sense was mediated by the other, and had instead declared their complete equality in terms of the relation to their respective objects (A66–80/B274–9).

Beneke, however, did not see the Kantian theory of inner sense as an improvement of the early modern one sketched above. In his view, the early

¹⁶ Beneke raises all these problems (and others) in various places. See (Beneke 1833, 40, 65, and 1845, 9, 30)

modern thinkers had been perfectly correct in ascribing a higher degree of certainty to the perceptions of inner sense than to those of outer sense. The reason why Beneke did not accept Kant's argument for the equality of inner and outer sense is that he rejected the Kantian doctrine that time is the *a priori* form of inner sense (Beneke 1845a, 57, 59). The rejection of this doctrine, however, undermines Kant's premise that the perceptions of inner, as well as of outer sense are mere appearance. In fact, Beneke argues, the claim that inner sense only provides us with appearances is not even intelligible, for while it makes sense to make a distinction between how material objects really are and how we perceive them to be, the same cannot be said for conscious representations. If we consider our awareness of our own representations to be mere appearance, this would imply that what we are conscious of is a representation of a representation. Is this meta-representation itself also mere appearance? If so, infinite regress seems hard to avoid. If not, inner sense clearly allows us to perceive at least some objects that are not mere appearances (Beneke 1820a, 58). In this respect, then, Beneke concludes, inner sense is clearly superior to outer sense.

This was, of course, not a new argument. Indeed, Jacobi had already considered the idea that we are aware of nothing but appearance a *reductio ad absurdum* of Kant's philosophy as early as 1782 (Jacobi 2004).¹⁷ To Beneke's credit, however, he does not rest content with this argument alone, but rather tries to get to the root of the traditional problems surrounding inner sense.¹⁸ This root, he argues, is the presupposition, which Kant shares with many of the early moderns, that inner sense really is an extra *sense*, completely analogous to the five outer senses. If this presupposition were true, Kant would be completely right in claiming equality for inner and outer sense. For this would mean that

¹⁷ Even Kant had to admit in the second edition of the *Critique*, probably in reply to the many critiques on this point, that the doctrine that inner sense only acquaints us with appearances has the air of paradox (B152–3).

¹⁸ "[W]ährend es Descartes, Locke, Berkeley, Leibniz, etc. auf des Nachdrücklichste für widersinnig erklären, wenn man annehmen wollte, die *Dinge außer uns* seien in sich selber so, wie wir sie empfinden und wahrnehmen, so bleiben die *Wahrnehmungen unseres Selbstbewußtseins* durchaus von ihnen unangefochten. Sie lassen für *diese* die *volle Wahrheit* stehn, welche sie den Wahrnehmungen von den Außendingen absprechen; sind in Betreff *ihrer nicht* Idealisten. Aber freilich können wir auch nur hieraus schließen, das sie denselben im strengeren metaphysischen Sinne volle Wahrheit zuschreiben: indem sie darauf überhaupt nicht die Untersuchung mit der Spannung und Schärfe gewandt haben, welche das Interesse der Metaphysik erfordert" (Beneke 1845a, 55).

inner sense, much like the outer senses, would be dependent on affection, which does not depend on the object of perception alone, but which is always an interaction of the external stimulus and the constitution of the sense organ. In this case, therefore, it would indeed be true that inner sense gives us only appearance (Beneke 1845a, 58–60).¹⁹ This conception of inner sense, however, "is a mere speculative fantasy" (59).

What, then, is inner sense, if not an actual sense? In Beneke's view, inner sense (if we want to maintain this name) is best understood as an *observational ability*. Beneke addresses the difference between such an observational ability and the mere perceptual powers of the senses in an important passage in his *Die neue Psychologie*, which I will quote at length:

Das Beobachten ist überall nicht etwas, was uns, wie das Wahrnehmen und Empfinden, *von selber* würde. Giebt es doch Unzählige, welche auch den Phänomenen der *äußeren* Natur gegenüber nie zum Beobachten kommen!—Zu diesem *gehört mehr als die Sinne*. Man setze, ein Arzt tritt vor ein Krankenbett mit einem Verwandten des Kranken, welcher demselben als treuer Pfleger zur Seite gestanden hat. Wer von beiden wird die Symptome der Krankheit vollständiger und genauer auffassen.—Der Erstere sieht den Kranken zum ersten Male, der Zweite hat ihn vielleicht mehrere Tage und Nächte lang nicht aus den Augen gelassen. Dessenungeachtet wird unstreitig meistens der Vorzug auf der Seite des Arztes sein. Woher dies?—Ganz einfach, weil der treue Pfleger auf das unmittelbare Wahrnehmen beschränkt ist, der Arzt zugleich die Anschauungen und Begriffe, welche von früher her seinen geistigen Besitz bilden, in seine Wahrnehmungen hineinlegt, und dieselben eben hierdurch zu *Beobachtungen* steigert. (Beneke 1845a, 15)

The difference between a sense and an observational ability, as we can make out from this passage, is at least twofold. First, whereas we are born with our senses, the ability to observe has to be acquired: unlike most full-grown adults, small children are not even aware of a distinction between an inner and outer world, let alone that they can observe the former (Beneke 1845a, 31). This is something they have to learn through continuous practice. Secondly, unlike perception, observation is a conceptual ability; to observe means not simply to perceive, but to direct our perception, and to focus on particular aspects of what is perceived, with the help of one's conceptual tools, and according to a preconceived purpose.

¹⁹ The fact that Beneke was aware of this argument and also addresses it is overlooked by Beiser, who criticizes Beneke on this point (Beiser 2014, 170).

In Beneke's view then, to say that we make use of inner sense is not to say that we obtain new perceptions of our inner life through some mysterious extra sense organ, but rather that we take the perception that are already being provided by our regular, external senses and instead focus our attention on the fact that these are *our* perceptions. To say that we have an inner sense may therefore just as well be interpreted as the claim that we have mastered a number of concepts that enable us to describe this subjective side of our perception:

Die *innere Wahrnehmung* geschieht keineswegs [...] durch einen angeborenen inneren Sinn, sondern die *inneren Sinne* [...] bestehn in *den Begriffen, welche sich auf die psychische Qualitäten, Formen, Verhältnisse beziehn*. (Beneke 1845b, 119–20)

As a consequence, inner sense also admits of gradations: those who have more experience with inner observation and those who possess more precise concepts are better capable of observing what occurs in the mind than those who have to make do with little practice and rough everyday concepts, just like the trained doctor from Beneke's example observes more when seeing a patient than the untrained amateur does. In addition, this means that for Beneke, in contrast to many early modern thinkers, inner sense is not infallible. When observing ourselves, we can make use of unfit concepts, or we can be too overhasty in their application, overlooking differences between mental phenomena. All of this can lead to gross error in psychological inquiries.²⁰

In fact, Beneke maintains, the capacity for inner observation is much more difficult to train to a sufficient level than our capacity for the observation of external objects. The reason for this is that we are natural creatures with needs and desires. In order to fulfil these needs and desires we are far more dependent on outer sense than we are on inner sense, and therefore our attention is

²⁰ In the secondary Kant-literature, the view that inner sense consists in either the actual direction of our attention to the subjective nature of our representations, or in our ability to do so has been referred to as the "reflection theory of inner sense" (Ameriks 1982, 243–8). According to Ameriks, "probably most interpreters" nowadays interpret Kant as defending such a theory (243), precisely because of the seeming absurdities that follow if inner sense is understood as a sense in the literal meaning of the word. As an interpretation of Kant, however, this does not seem to me convincing, precisely because, as Beneke makes clear, such a capacity for reflection is to be understood as a conceptual ability. For Kant, however, the application of concepts to perception in judgments is precisely what introduces the possibility of error. See for example A293/B30: "the senses do not err; [...] not because they always judge correctly, but because they do not judge at all" (A293/B30).

constantly drawn towards the external objects, and thus pulled away from our inner world. This problem can only be overcome by means of significant self-discipline and continuous exercise. Additionally, inner observation is made more difficult by the fact that our self-love and vanity interfere with our self-observation (Beneke 1833, 40).

These difficulties were part of the reason, Beneke argues, why, up to his own day, psychology had lagged so far behind the successes of the natural sciences. Yet, in principle psychology has the potential to not only match these accomplishments, but even to supersede them. For although it is more difficult to train inner than outer observation, inner observation, for Beneke, remains superior in principle. On this point he is more than happy to accept the early modern argument: even though judgments of inner sense are not infallible, they do ideally just describe directly what is contained in our observation, whereas judgments of outer sense always contain an inference from our perceptions to something beyond these perceptions:

Wie viel größer auch die Schwierigkeiten für die Beobachtung und wissenschaftliche Bearbeitung [...] sein mögen, als bei der Erkenntniß der äußern Natur: so ist doch auf der anderen Seite die menschliche Seele von allem existirenden das Einzige welches ohne fremdartige Vermittelung in seiner *vollen Wahrheit*, in seiner *Innerlichkeit* von uns erkannt werden kann. (Beneke 1832a, 100)²¹

Inner sense, for Beneke, can therefore provide all the material that we need for a true scientific psychology, which can even be superior to physics, provided that psychologists are well-trained, and adhere to a strict method.

Psychology's methodology: copying the natural sciences

Beneke's defence of inner sense as the sole source of content for psychology is only the beginning of his account of what psychology should ideally look like. Provided that inner sense can in fact fulfil this function, after all, there still remains the question how one can make use of this content for the purposes of psychological explanations. This question had to be answered by Beneke's psychological methodology.

Beneke, however, did not consider this to be a serious difficulty. As the title to one of his publications on psychology, the *Lehrbuch der Psychologie als*

²¹ See also (Beneke 1820a, 3–4, 1833, 12, [b] 1845, 12).

Naturwissenschaft (Beneke 1845b) already indicates, he believed the method of psychology to be no different from that of the natural sciences. That method is to collect and compare many different observations, determine what in them is identical, to trace these phenomena back to a number of fundamental powers, and then use these powers to explain and predict new psychological phenomena (Beneke 1820a, 1).²²

In somewhat more detail, this means, for Beneke, that psychology starts with an analysis of the observations of inner sense. As we have seen, Beneke rejected early modern sensualism, and instead posited the existence of certain *a priori* forms and processes that contribute to cognition. This also entails the rejection of a psychological theory that I have earlier in this dissertation referred to as 'psychological atomism' (cf. chapter 1, §5). For Beneke, the earliest conscious representations are not mental atoms, such as simple sensible impressions, but rather highly complex syntheses of forms and sensible material. The role of analysis, then, is to artificially reduce the complexity of the mental phenomena as far as possible, and ideally to bring them back to their most basic elements (Beneke 1833, 48).

Beneke admits that this procedure is not without difficulties, and that we will make many errors in our analysis before we can expect success. This apparently modest claim, however, is not without difficulties, because in order to be able to recognise and correct errors we also need a criterion of success. This criterion of success, however, cannot simply be empirical adequacy, for we cannot perceive the simpler elements (that are the result of our analysis) in isolation. Assuming then, that multiple possible analyses of the same complex experience are possible, how do we decide which of these analyses is correct?

Beneke, unfortunately, does not address this question explicitly, but a possible criterion might be found in a notion of separability. Though individual features of complex perceptions cannot actually be separated from such perceptions, we can nevertheless determine whether an element is in principle separable from other elements in that perception by means of a comparison with

²² On this point, Beneke and Fries are in complete agreement, compare (Fries 1807, 26/SS 89–90). Fries, however, is by far the more subtle thinker where it comes to scientific method. His extended discussions of inference, deduction, theory and probability, to name just a few examples, have no analogues in Beneke's corpus. This is doubtlessly due, at least in part, to the fact that Fries, unlike Beneke, had been trained in the natural sciences.

other perceptions. As an illustration, consider the fact that we cannot imagine a shape without a colour. Though this is true, we can nevertheless determine that specific shapes, such as triangles, are separable from specific colours, such as red. The reason why we can do this is because we can compare representations of red triangles with representations of triangles that are not red, and with representations of red shapes that are not triangles. Supposing, per impossibile, that one could compare all possible representations, this method would allow one in principle to make a list of all the most basic psychological elements, despite not being able to isolate these elements in the imagination.²³ Given, however, that we cannot achieve such a complete comparison, we can nevertheless approximate it by continuing to gather more empirical data for comparison (Beneke 1833, 30–1).

In Beneke's methodology, this stage of analysis is succeeded by a stage of induction. Unsurprisingly, given his epistemological empiricism, Beneke considers induction to be the proper method for all the sciences (Beneke 1820b, 50–4, 103n.; and 1845, 295).²⁴ In psychology, induction would take the form of a careful examination of the relations (such as co-occurrence, sequential appearance, etc.) between the basic elements of representations in experience, and the attempt to discover regularities in these relations. These regularities, in turn, can then help us establish hypotheses about underlying psychological laws in the construction of experience (Beneke 1833, 24–5). Finally, these hypotheses have to be tested with the aid of new observations.

With regard to this stage, too, Beneke discusses certain potential difficulties. One of these difficulties is the argument, that was often made in these times, that psychological hypotheses cannot really be tested, because there is no analogue to experimentation in a science that only makes use of inner sense.

Beneke's answer to this problem is twofold. First of all, he argues, experimentation can contribute a lot to a science, but it is not strictly necessary

²³ Furthermore, by giving names to each of these elements, one would be able to realise Reinhold's old dream of designing a stable, unambiguous, and precise technical vocabulary for philosophy. This is an ideal that Beneke also explicitly affirms (Beneke 1833, 81–5).

²⁴ Beneke's theory of induction is somewhat untypical, however, principally in that he believes in the possibility of complete induction, for example in mathematics. He furthermore believes that in the case of psychology, induction can overcome Hume's argument and serve to establish strictly necessary causal laws. Unfortunately a complete discussion of Beneke's views on induction would take us too far afield here, but compare for example (Beneke 1820b, 103; 1820, 29ff., 1833, 41–44.; and 1822, 18–20).

even in the natural sciences, as the case of astronomy shows us (Beneke 1845a, 19–20). More importantly, however, the presupposition that psychological experiments are not possible is simply false:

[D]ie Behauptung, man vermöge für die psychologische Beobachtung *keine experimente anzustellen* [ist] *entschieden falsch* [...]. Wir können z.B. über einen Gegenstand denken, nachdem wir vorher über einen ähnlichen gedacht, oder über einen in diesem oder jenem Grade davon verschieden, und mit diesem oder jenem Grade von Anstrengung, während dieser oder jener Länge der Zeit. [etc.]. In dieser Art würden sich noch *unzählige andere Variationen* namhaft machen lassen. (Beneke 1845a, 20)²⁵

Admittedly, this conception of psychological experiments is still very rough. How, one may well ask, would one determine the "*Grade von Anstrengung*"? How does one objectively determine the result of such an experiment? And how does one control for what we nowadays call lurking variables? Nevertheless, the fact that Beneke is concretely thinking about the possibility of various experiments was in itself already innovative within the introspective tradition of psychology, which had always relied primarily on observations and reports from everyday life.²⁶ Furthermore, at the end of the nineteenth century, psychologists such as Hermann Ebbinghaus would in fact be executing experiments that, while being significantly more sophisticated, were nevertheless of the type that Beneke has in mind in the passage quoted above.²⁷

Another serious problem for Beneke's introspective psychology was that of external validity. How, after all, would one be able to make sure that the results obtained from one's own inner observation would also be applicable to other people? This difficulty, as Beneke realised, is not easy to solve, because one cannot simply depend on the self-reports of other people. Given that Beneke considered inner observation to be an ability that needs to be developed to a high degree to be useful for psychological investigations, and given that most people have not developed this ability to the required degree, one simply cannot

²⁵ Cf. (Beneke 1833, 40–1). Compare also (Beneke 1820a, 17), where Beneke references experiments with deaf-mute people to learn about the connection between thought and speech.

²⁶ Although the term 'Experimentalseelenlehre' was already in use, in practice it served as a synonym to 'Erfahrungseelenlehre.' That is, it was used to denote that the doctrine was empirical, rather than speculative, and did not imply any conception of controlled experiment (Eckardt et al. 2001, 147–8). In fact, experiments on human subjects were widely considered to be impossible, or at the very least unethical (e.g., Abel 1786, xxxi; Schmid 1791, 114).

²⁷ For Ebbinghaus's experiments about human learning curves, see for example (Ashcraft 2006, 216–20)

rely on their claims, even if one could make sure that they were speaking truthfully (Beneke 1845a, 14–15). Eventually, Beneke's best solution for this problem was to make use, as much as possible, of the testimony of those individuals whose capacity for self-observation was undisputed. The best examples of such individuals, in his view, are famous poets, such as Shakespeare, Walter Scott and Goethe, but in general Beneke suggests that one can make use of "autobiographies, confessions, memoirs, collections of letters, diaries, [...] and works of phantasy that are true to nature" (Beneke 1845a, 23).²⁸ This is an interesting solution, but it is not altogether convincing. Given that these authorities are supposed to help test the universal validity of our psychological hypotheses we may not presuppose this validity. But how is one to decide who may count as an authority on self-observation without already presupposing certain results with which these authorities agree? In order to do this one must somehow already be able to judge whether someone's expressed observations are accurate, but this is precisely something that one cannot do without already knowing in advance that one's own self-observations are universally valid. It is difficult to see, however, what other solutions for this problem would have been available to a thinker such as Beneke, who felt that psychology needs to depend on inner sense alone. These problems of generalizability of results to other subjects would therefore continue to haunt the introspectionist approach in psychology and would contribute to its eventual decline.

Psychological doctrine: a priori forms

Now that we have a general idea of Beneke's ideal for psychology, let us look at the psychological doctrine that is most important for our purposes, because it is so intimately related to Kant's philosophy: the doctrine of *a priori* psychological forms. As we have seen throughout this dissertation, this doctrine had always been a key theme of the psychological tradition; whereas the German Idealists had objectified these *a priori* forms by disconnecting them from the individual subject, philosophers such as Schmid, Bouterwek, and Fries had emphasized this doctrine and used it as a bulwark against the Idealists' claims of knowing the thing in itself or the Absolute.

²⁸ The idea that literary and historical works can serve as a reliable source for psychology is a widespread idea around 1800, which was also expressed by Kant in his *Anthropologie* (AA 7:120. For other examples, see (Carus 1808, 483; Schmid 1791, 13).

Though Beneke, too, believed that our cognition is dependent on *a priori* forms, he is surprisingly critical of Kant's particular theory of these forms. One reason for this was that he did not believe that the *a priori* forms that Kant had actually posited, most importantly the forms of intuition and the categories of the understanding, could serve as a defence against the Idealist theories of the Absolute. Quite the contrary, Beneke argued, these forms ought to be considered an obstacle to the type of sober, empirical, scientific philosophy that he himself favoured. The doctrines of the subjective, *a priori* nature of space and time in particular had the potential to undermine our confidence in the objectivity of empirical knowledge, and to invite precisely the sort of obscure philosophizing about the things in themselves that Beneke considered to be so objectionable in German Idealism (Beneke 1832a, 33–4). Furthermore, even though the doctrine that causality is itself only a form of the understanding was intended to serve as a refutation of Hume's scepticism regarding causes, it in fact only establishes a scepticism of an even more radical kind:

Nach Hume's Theorie blieb es ja zweifelhaft, ob nicht der ursächliche Zusammenhang, wenn er auch in seiner Objektivität *nicht von uns erkennbar* sei, doch in den Objekten *wirklich existire*. [...] Die Kantische Theorie dagegen behauptet mit apodiktischer Gewißheit ihren *rein-subjektiven* Ursprung. (Beneke 1832a, 36–7, cf. 1842, 11)

Secondly, aside from such more general philosophical concerns, Beneke objected to these doctrines on the basis of his psychological methodology. Even if Kant had in fact been right that space, time, and the categories are forms of human cognition without any objective referent, Beneke argues, we would have no way of knowing this, because there is no way of testing this hypothesis empirically. This, for Beneke, is especially clear for the claim that space and time are the forms of intuition: if, he argues, space and time are the form of *all* intuitions, then one cannot imagine the content of such intuitions as being distinct from these forms. But if this is the case, Beneke argues, there cannot possibly be a criterion to decide whether this is so because all objects just happen to be in space and time, or because our sensibility imposes space and time on our perception (Beneke 1820b, 130, cf. 1832, 29–33).²⁹ Since these

²⁹ It should be noted that this argument goes too fast. One might argue that spatial illusions provide just such a criterion. If it can be shown (as indeed it can) that in certain cases our perceptual system is led to misrepresent spatial relations (or, without begging the question: represent *inconsistent* spatial relations), this might be taken as evidence that space, at least as we

claims, then, cannot be tested empirically, and since Beneke does not accept any form of *a priori* justification, he concludes that Kant's theory that space and time are the *a priori* forms of intuition cannot be supported. The consequence that Beneke draws from this critique, however, is not that the idea of *a priori* forms should be abandoned completely, but rather that a new theory of such forms is called for. The question that we have to answer, then, is why Beneke believed that such a new theory can escape his own arguments against Kant.

The answer to this question, I believe, can be found in what we may, somewhat anachronistically, call Beneke's *naturalism*. What I mean by this is best explained by means of a comparison with (Beneke's interpretation of) Kant. Kant, according to Beneke, believed his *a priori* forms of cognition to be independent of the world of experience in a very strong sense. Since they were supposed to provide the conditions for experience, the philosopher from Königsberg maintained that they could not themselves be objects of experience:

die reinen Anschauungen des Raumes und der Zeit und die Kategorien sollen, von der Seite des Subjektes her, die einfachen Grundelemente unserer Erscheinungserkenntniß bilden: sie können also unmöglich selbst wieder *Erscheinungen* sein. (Beneke 1832a, 28)

Furthermore, since time was itself a form of cognition, these forms could also not possibly be subject to change throughout time. This resulted in a very static understanding of the human mind, which Beneke found altogether unacceptable:

Die von Kant aufgestellten Grundkräfte oder Grundformen: die reinen Anschauungen der Zeit und des Raumes, die reinen Verstandesbegriffe, die schematisirende Urtheilskraft, der kategorische imperativ, werden gleich von Anfang an *fertig* in die Wissenschaft eingeführt, und für ein steifes Zusammenwirken mit einander. [...] Wir erhalten nicht bloß ein System des menschlichen Geistes, sondern *der menschliche Geist selber wird zu einem Systeme* in Kant's Darstellung, zu einem todten Begriffsschematismus. (Beneke 1832a, 68)

This static understanding of human cognition, however, Beneke argues, runs wholly counter to actual experience. If Kant had taken the effort to examine earlier forms of consciousness he would soon have realised that the cognitive structure as found in healthy adults, far from being an innate and permanent structure, is the result of a long and difficult developmental process. Beneke

perceive it, is constructed by our sensibility. Furthermore, Beneke could already have found such an argument in Fries's work, see (NKV 1: 137–40/SS 4: 245–9).

himself describes his difference with Kant on this point in terms of a distinction between "pre-formed" and "pre-determined" structures of consciousness. Because healthy human individuals develop more or less the same cognitive structures, there presumably has to be some disposition present at birth that brings about this development (pre-determination), but this should not be confused with the idea that these cognitive structures are themselves innate (pre-formation):

Die Formen des Begehrens, des Fühlens, des Urtheilens, des Schließens, des Wollens, etc. existiren [...] ursprünglich gar nicht in unserer Seele; sind in derselben nicht *präformirt*, sondern *nur prädeterminirt* gegeben (Beneke 1845a, 73).³⁰

The structures of the human mind, in other words, are not a static system, but rather form an organic whole that is part of the very same world of experience of which this cognitive system tries to make sense. Contrary to what the early modern empiricists believed, according to Beneke, Kant was right to claim that the idea of pure perception that is not structured according to forms inherent in our cognitive system, is a myth. We are living creatures, and as such perception is not primarily a source for theoretical knowledge, but it plays a fundamental role in the satisfaction of our needs and desires; because of this, our mind is not a passive recipient, but from the moment of our birth it processes, selects and transforms incoming sensory stimulation in accordance with its own inherent forms (Beneke 1820a, 75; and 1845, 96, 105). Contrary to the German faculty psychologists, however, amongst which he counted Kant, our perception is not only determined by our faculties and their *a priori* forms, but these faculties are also shaped and transformed by the very sensory input that they process. Our cognitive faculties, in other words, are natural entities within the world of experience that are subject to the same processes as other natural objects. The main task of psychology, then, which, despite their mistakes, has been understood better by the empiricists than by the faculty psychologists, is to give an account of how our cognitive system develops in interaction with these sensory stimuli:

³⁰ Beneke's point is well taken, although there is a serious methodological question as to how he envisions a study of the non-adult mind, based on inner sense alone, given that children, according to his own theory, have not yet developed this sense.

[D]ie Hauptaufgabe für die ganze Psychologie besteht gerade darin, nachzuweisen, durch welche Prozesse sich fortwährend die Vermögen zu erregten oder bewußten Entwicklungen, und umgekehrt wieder diese zu Vermögen, ausbilden. (Beneke 1845a, 105)

Although Beneke does not spell this out, it is presumably precisely because these forms are not static and eternal, but subject to development, that a distinction between objective elements in perception and the subjective contributions to perception can be made. One can after all compare the differences between people at various stages of development, given the same initial stimuli. This dynamic picture of the human cognitive system also means, however, that it is impossible to provide a general account of the *a priori* forms of cognition that Beneke accepts. For this and other reasons, even though a detailed account of Beneke's developmental psychology would be of great value, it will have to be left for a future investigation.

5. *Psychology as Foundation*

I began the previous section with a quotation of a passage in which Beneke described psychology as the "central point of all philosophy," and as "the sun from which the other philosophical sciences receive their light." This is not merely an overblown metaphor for Beneke. Indeed, one finds similar claims, often phrased in even stronger terms, in many of his works. For example:

Ist [...] alle Wissenschaft Wissenschaft der menschlichen Seele, weil eben diese sie auffaßt und festhält: so muß sie unauslöschlich den Stempel derselben an sich tragen *und die höchste Grundlage der Seelenkenntniß wird die höchste Grundlage aller Wissenschaft sein.* (Beneke 1820a, 7–8, my emphasis)³¹

And:

³¹ Cf. (Hume 2009, introduction): "'Tis evident, that all the sciences have a relation, greater or less, to human nature [...] 'Tis impossible to tell what changes and improvements we might make in these sciences were we thoroughly acquainted with the extent and force of the human understanding, and cou'd explain the nature of the ideas we employ, and the operations we perform in our reasonings. [...] [T]he science of man is the only solid foundation for the other sciences [...]."

Das Logisch-Richtige und Unrichtige, das Schöne und das Häßliche, das Sittliche und das Unsittliche, das Recht und das Unrecht, und was sonst noch Problem der Philosophie werden kann, sind nur verschiedene psychische Bildungsformen [...] *Die gesammte übrige Philosophie* [aside from psychology proper] *also ist nichts anderes als eine angewandte Psychologie.* (Beneke 1832a, 90–1, my emphasis)

These are very radical claims, even within the psychological Kantian tradition. For the protagonists of this tradition during the 1790s, as we saw in chapter three, psychology was to serve only as a propaedeutic: a necessary starting point for philosophy, but by no means its (only) foundation. And even Fries, with his psychological reconstruction of Kant's whole transcendental philosophy, had insisted on making a hard distinction between psychology and pure philosophy, which was marked by his novel conception of 'deduction.' Beneke, however, was either not aware of this subtle distinction in Fries's philosophy, or simply did not have the patience for it. As he makes very clear in the passages quoted above, all philosophy is either (applied) empirical psychology, or it is no philosophy at all.³² There have been few authors in the history of philosophy, therefore, for whom the label of 'psychologism' has seemed more fitting. Indeed, this label originated in a discussion of Beneke's philosophy.³³ Yet, given the many negative connotations that this term has acquired over the last century, we would do well to look beyond this label, and to examine the concrete relationship that Beneke envisions between his core psychological theory and the traditional philosophical disciplines. Since our current investigation has from the start been limited to theoretical philosophy alone, I will only discuss psychology as a foundation for logic and metaphysics here, ignoring such disciplines as ethics and aesthetics. I believe, however, that the discussion of Beneke's logic would also offer a substantial starting point for a future enquiry into the understanding the relationship between these latter disciplines and psychology in Beneke's work.

³² Note that in the first quotation Beneke does not limit the scope of his claim to the philosophical sciences alone, but claims that *all* sciences find their foundation in psychology. This seems to have been either an imprecise formulation or a consequence of the overconfidence of youth, however, because in later works he is careful to always speak only of the philosophical sciences.

³³ Namely, in Erdmann's *Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie* (Erdmann 1866, 636; cf. Kusch 1995, 99). See also the conclusion, §2.

A new logic

There are various standard arguments against the idea, which has nevertheless enjoyed quite some popularity in the history of philosophy, that logic is a form of applied psychology, or even that psychological results can be at all relevant for logic. One of these objections is a version of Hume's old problem that no valid inference is supposed to be possible from claims about what is the case to claims about what ought to be the case. Since logic, so the argument goes, is a normative discipline that tells us how we *ought* to reason, psychology's results about how we actually reason cannot impact the results of logic at all. A second objection can be found in Kant's argument that because of their empirical and contingent nature, psychological claims cannot provide a ground for the norms of logic. These norms, Kant famously argued, are meant to be valid for all reasoning and acting creatures, and can therefore not be dependent on the contingent facts of human psychology (cf. Philipse 1989).

Much more can be said, both in favour and against these arguments, but since they are at least initially plausible let us grant them for the purposes of our investigation. One question that may then guide our investigations is whether or not Beneke runs afoul of these arguments. I will answer this question with a qualified 'no.'³⁴

The reason why Beneke, for the most part, can escape these objections is because his interpretation of the tasks of logic differed strongly from the more traditional conception of this discipline. If what we expect from logic, Beneke argues, is that it will teach us how to think, we are bound to be sorely disappointed:

Von der Logik gestand es doch jeder zu, daß sie eben so sicher fortschritt als die Mathematik; warum aber sind alle Versuche durch sie auf Schulen *denken* zu lehren so unfruchtbar ausgefallen und haben statt lebendigen Ergreifens dieser Wissenschaft eben nur unbegriffene Formeln den Kindern eingeprägt [...]? Offenbar deshalb, weil man, um die *Logik* lebendig in sich aufzunehmen, [...] schon *denken* können [...] muß. (Beneke 1820b, 113–4)

³⁴ It has often been noted in the last few decades that while philosophers almost univocally agree that 'psychologism' is a bad thing, this apparent consensus hides the fact that there are various widely diverging ideas about what psychologism means and why it is objectionable (cf. Kusch 1995, 4–6; Mohanty 1989, 1–2; Crane 2014, 2–3). For this reason, the general question "Is Beneke's philosophy objectionably psychologistic?" is far from helpful without further specification. Since I cannot discuss all interpretations of psychologism here (even if I would have been so inclined), the task of measuring Beneke up to one's own preferred objection to psychologism will be left to the reader.

The only reason why people nevertheless believe that we can improve people's thought by means of teaching them logic is that we misunderstand what it means for logic to be a normative discipline. Properly understood, Beneke thought, this only means that this discipline has norms as its object, but it cannot itself *justify* these norms.³⁵ In fact, absolute norms, in Beneke's view, can never be justified by means of philosophical argument, but are only justified by the experience of their validity in what he, following Jacobi, calls "life":

Für [das Leben] gilt noch immer jenes geniale Wort Jakobi's, daß die Philosophie nur ein *Buchstabe* ist, der das Leben nicht zu schaffen, nur ein *logisches Kunstwerk*, das den in sich gewissen Geist nicht zu vertreten vermag. Man hüte sich, in thörichter Verblendung den Lebendigen bei den Todten zu suchen, sondern lasse vielmehr Leben und Geist mächtig walten und schaffen, wo Leben und Geist geweckt werden soll" (Beneke 1820b, 119–20)

Philosophy, instead, can only "depict" (*abbilden*) life, and it is for this reason, he continues on the same page, that nobody has ever learned how to think by learning logic, nor has become religious by studying religious science "and so on, for all fields of human knowledge." When people therefore accuse him of confusing how people actually think with how they ought to think, this accusation completely misses its mark:

Noch in der Beurtheilung meines "Systems der Logik etc." wird mir wieder entgegengeworfen daß ja "die Narrheit nach psychologischen Gesetzen eben so begreiflich werden müsse wie das Denken eines Newton und Laplace" — Nun wohl (antworte ich) so erklären wir durch diese Gesetze in der Seelenkrankheitskunde die Narrheit, und in der Logik das normale und das geniale Denken. Jenem Einwande liegt das Vorurtheil zum Grunde, als könne und solle die Logik die Norm des Denkens irgendwie *erst aus sich erzeugen*. (Beneke 1845a, 94)³⁶

³⁵ All real normativity, for Beneke, finds its source in "life," rather than in "philosophy." Here one finds yet another important influence of Jacobi on Beneke's thought: "Für [das Leben] gilt noch immer jenes geniale Wort Jakobi's, daß die Philosophie nur ein *Buchstabe* ist, der das Leben nicht zu schaffen, nur ein *logisches Kunstwerk*, das den in sich gewissen Geist nicht zu vertreten vermag. Man hüte sich, in thörichter Verblendung den Lebendigen bei den Todten zu suchen, sondern lasse vielmehr Leben und Geist mächtig walten und schaffen, wo Leben und Geist geweckt werden soll" (Beneke 1820b, 119–20). He continues that philosophy should limit itself to depicting (*abbilden*), and then: "Durch Logik hat noch niemand scharf denken gelernt, durch Religionswissenschaft ist noch niemand religiös geworden, und so fort, durch alle Gebiete des menschlichen Wissens."

³⁶ See also (Beneke 1842, I, 8–9), where Beneke explicitly states: "[Die Logik] soll nicht bloss eine *Beschreibung* von Dem geben, was im Denken *wirklich geschieht* [...]. Die Logik [...] hat wesentlich die Bestimmung, sich über dies Alles zu erheben als *Gesetzbuch* des Denkens. Dem gegenüber aber dürfen doch unstreitig die Gesetze und Ideale der *Logik* eben so wenig [...] *in der Luft*

In other words, while Beneke's logic is indeed based on observations of actual human thinking, it does not merely describe how humans think. What it takes as its starting point are our actual beliefs about what valid reasoning is, and our capacity to distinguish valid from invalid inferences. What logic can add, Beneke maintains on the same page, is only "*Klarheit, Bestimmtheit [und] Zusammenhang der Auffassung.*" One may, of course, Beneke admits, respond that this does not suffice, for the simple reason that people can often be (and in fact often are) wrong in their estimation of what is and what is not valid reasoning. This is true, but it is questionable whether non-psychological logic is better off in this regard: after all it is not possible to prove a logical norm without presupposing further logical norms, both as premises of the proof and as rules for the validity of the proof. Beneke's point that logic (be it psychological or not) cannot warrant its own normativity seems well taken.

On this point, it should also be stressed that Beneke did not wish to replace any of the traditional proofs of (what he calls) Aristotelian logic with new "psychological" proofs (whatever that would mean). In fact, his distinction between formal validity and material truth that formed the core of his philosophy of mathematics can easily be extended to the deductive proofs used in logic. His objection to traditional logic, then, is not that it is invalid (Beneke 1832b, 3–4), but rather that it accomplishes very little. Syllogistic logic, Beneke complains can only be used to guide our reasoning when we are trying to discover implications of that what we already know:

Schon Baco hat der Aristotelischen Logik mit Recht vorgeworfen, daß die in ihr betrachteten Denkformen untauglich seien, die wissenschaftliche Erkenntniß irgendwie *über das Gegebene hinaus* und *weiter* zu führen. (Beneke 1833, 15)

Given, however, that most of our thought is not directed towards analysing the implications of what we already know, but towards discovering new information, logic in its traditional form can scarcely pretend to be a science of valid thought in general. In Beneke's ideal, therefore, psychology does not serve to improve on the traditional matter of logic, but rather to help extend it and make it more useful for reasoning in everyday life and science. This is why

schwebende Gesetze oder Ideale sein [...] Vielmehr sind sie in engem *Anschliessen an die Wirklichkeit und aus ihr heraus* zu bilden."

Beneke calls his logic a "*Kunstlehre des Denkens*": its most important purpose is to give advice on how to "avoid errors and obstacles," and on how to achieve the greatest possible perfection in thought (Beneke 1832b, iii).

Seen in this light, Beneke's reference to Francis Bacon in the passage quoted above is far from incidental. In fact, it is more than likely that Beneke modelled his ideal for logic after Bacon's project in the *Novum Organum*.³⁷ Not only does he share the latter's rejection of a sterile, theoretical, and purely syllogistic logic, but his focus on the various pitfalls for actual human thought is akin to Bacon's famous discussion of the Idols. Both thinkers, plausibly, assume that most errors in actual reasoning find their cause in the natural dispositions of human reasoning, rather than in an insufficient acquaintance with the abstract rules of traditional logic. In order to improve our reasoning, therefore, we should care less about studying these rules, and more about bringing about the conditions that contribute to good reasoning (Beneke 1842, I, 13–5). Once this project is accepted, it is not difficult to see why Beneke believes that logic has to take the form of applied psychology. Once psychology has provided a genetic account of the elements of thought and their relations, we would have all the materials we needed for understanding why, and under which conditions human reasoning tends to err:

Aber auch für das Denken kommen doch Störungen, Entstellungen, Verdeckungen seiner wesentlichen Grundverhältnisse vielfach in der Wirklichkeit vor; und was noch mehr ist, dieselben lassen sich voraussehen, vermeiden, verbessern. Ist es da nun nicht angemessen, dass wir die Erklärung dieser und die dafür geeigneten Vorschriften ebenfalls in unsere Wissenschaft [Logic] aufnehmen?" (Beneke 1842, I: 10)

This knowledge, Beneke believes, is far better fit than formal logic for improving our reasoning, because it can help us to develop practical maxims for avoiding, or at least minimising the effect, of the typical human errors in reasoning. For example, to minimise error from prejudice, one should constantly ask oneself whether one has a preferably "complete and clear memory of the manner in which one came in the possession of a cognition" (Beneke 1832b, 45–6). Perhaps most importantly for Beneke, given his empiricism, is that in this renewed conception of logic there is the possibility for a discussion of induction that does

³⁷ That Beneke read Bacon intensively and was strongly influenced by his work, we have on Beneke's own authority, see (Beneke 1833, 102). For the significance of Bacon's reform of logic for Beneke, see (Beneke 1832b, 6–7).

not treat it as a type of (invalid) deduction (Beneke 1842, II, 4).³⁸ Beneke's logic, then, like Bacon's, is intended to provide the scholar with the most general instruments for the acquisition of knowledge, and ought not to be limited to the study of mere formal abstractions.

We can conclude, that Beneke's claim that logic must take the form of applied psychology does not rest on a confusion of the factual and the normative, or between actually valid reasoning and what is believed to be valid reasoning. Rather, it is part of an attempt to shift the task and scope of logic. Admittedly, this is no longer an appealing prospect from our current perspective, for while we should avoid the term 'fallacy,' there is one crucial respect in which Beneke's psychologism in logic would certainly no longer be acceptable. Despite the fact that for Beneke, as we have seen, logic does not simply describe actual human reasoning, the topic of this discipline is still an idealised form of human reasoning. Because of the progress made in formal logic later in the nineteenth century, however, logicians have moved away from this understanding of logic. We now possess a large number of highly sophisticated logical systems that have no pretence whatsoever of describing human thought, or even of describing how humans ought to reason. As a result, all study of actual human thought, including its faults and biases, has been expelled from logic, which has thereby emancipated itself from psychology.³⁹ In a sense, this development has run parallel to that of our conception of geometry's relationship to actual space. But while Beneke's conception of geometry was very modern in this respect, the same cannot be said for his conception of logic, and it is doubtful whether the important advances in logic that have been made since his time could have been made had logicians adopted his psychological programme.

Metaphysics: answering Fichte's challenge

Psychologism in metaphysics has never been as popular as in logic. The obvious explanation for this is the fact that the possible relation of logic to psychology is

³⁸ The logical status of induction remains a topic of controversy in our own day (cf. Musgrave 1989).

³⁹ See (Beth and Piaget 1966, 142): "[Logic's] growing axiomatisation or formalisation has made of it a logic without a subject, and if the logicians, by reason of the exigencies of this specific technique, have taken no further interest in the effective mechanisms of mental life, psychology would in its turn be at a loss to find in the subject's thought the 'parallel' of the multiple axiomatics which characterise the diverse logics, and which allow the foundations of one and the same logic in a formally equivalent way."

much clearer than that of metaphysics to psychology. Indeed, one plausible argument that we already encountered in our discussion of Fries is that if metaphysics studies the most general structures of reality, psychology (which after all studies only a particular part of this reality) ought to be dependent on metaphysics, rather than the other way around.

Fries, as we have seen, got around this argument by opting for a mutual dependence: psychology as a science was indeed deemed to be subject to the most general principles of metaphysics, such as the principle of causality, but only psychology could provide a subjective warrant for our *adoption* of these principles. Furthermore, in Fries's view, psychology had to remain entirely neutral with regard to the truth of the principles of metaphysics. For Beneke, however, such subtleties must have appeared as only another form of scholasticism. If we are to have a truly scientific metaphysics, he maintains, it, no less than the other philosophical disciplines, has to be a form of applied psychology.⁴⁰ Given that the scope of metaphysics is much wider than psychology's, however, Beneke owed his readers an explanation as to how applying the results of psychology can help us in the realm of metaphysics.

Before discussing this explanation, however, we may well first ask why Beneke wanted to grant a legitimate place to metaphysics in philosophy at all. As we have seen, Beneke's admiration for Kant stemmed primarily from what he called the latter's empiricism, and for the critique of metaphysics that stemmed from this empiricism. Because of this, someone who had just read Beneke's early *Erkenntnislehre* and *Erfahrungsseelenlehre* would have most likely expected Beneke to reject metaphysics in its entirety. Such readers would not have been far from the truth, because Beneke, even more so than Kant, was in fact intent on eradicating almost all of traditional metaphysics.

This is especially true for the traditional debates concerning freedom, immortality and God. Not only does Beneke, like Kant reject any theoretical knowledge concerning the existence of these objects, but he also rejects Kant's influential practical arguments that were intended to rationally justify at least our faith in their existence (Beneke 1832a, 98–9, 1840, 482–95). God and

⁴⁰ However, cf. (Beneke 1842, 26n.), where Beneke, unfortunately without much explanation, does frame psychology and metaphysics in a relationship of mutual dependence. It is hard to see, however, how this view can be made compatible with the supposed status of metaphysics as applied psychology.

immortality are indeed, Beneke claims, matters of faith, but this is a completely non-rational faith that cannot be justified by philosophers.⁴¹ Even more radically, Beneke rejects freedom, understood as the ability to act independent of causal determination, in its entirety. The only meaningful sense in which we are free is that our actions can be determined by our own nature, rather than by merely external causes (Beneke 1840, 338–9). Kant's supposed principles of metaphysics, finally, which still played an important role in Fries's philosophy, fare little better than the ideas of reason in Beneke's account. The principle of causality is the only one of these principles that is even deemed worthy of a lengthy discussion by Beneke, and the conclusion of that discussion is that this principle is ultimately just empirical and based on induction: not on a positive induction, which would attempt to generalize from known examples that fall under the principle, but on a negative induction, which proceeds by trying to find counter-examples. The justification for the principle of causality, then, and the special status that is often given to it, is merely that no such counter-examples can be found (Beneke 1840, 327).

What positive task, then, remains for metaphysics in Beneke's philosophy? Only one: "Die Grundaufgabe der Metaphysik ist: '*das Verhältniß unseres Vorstellens zum Sein*' zu bestimmen" (Beneke 1822b, 8, cf. 1840, 3). This question, of course, had had a rich history in metaphysics ever since the publication of Descartes's sceptical worries in the *Meditations*. It is important to note, however, that this question had also played a special role in the polemic between Schmid and Fichte, and had thereby acquired a special significance in the conflict between the psychologistic Kantians and the German Idealists. In his polemic against Schmid, Fichte had brought up this question, not just as a central problem in metaphysics, but as the very essence of philosophy.⁴² Whereas all the other sciences carved out their own domain within the realm of experience, philosophy, Fichte had argued, does not have its own domain within experience,

⁴¹ This is yet another instance in which Beneke was strongly influenced by Jacobi.

⁴² Mit dem ersten Schritte zum Nachdenken über sich selbst, unterscheidet der Mensch Vorstellungen, die in ihm, und Dinge, die außer ihm seyn sollen. Beide sind von ganz verschiedner Natur und Wesen, aber die letztern stimmen mit dem erstern vollkommen überein [...]: dies ist es, was der Mensch zunächst annimmt. Aber es darf nur ein wenig über diese seltsame Harmonie, und den Grund, warum er sie behaupten möge, nachdenken, so entsteht ein Zweifel über sie, und eine Nachfrage nach dem Grunde dieser angenommenen Harmonie. Alle Philosophie von Anbeginn an, bis jetzt, hat die Beantwortung dieser Frage zu ihrem letzten Zwecke gehabt [...]. Meines Erachtens [...] ist die Frage welche die Philosophie zu beantworten hat, folgende: wie hangen unsere Vorstellungen mit ihren Objecten zusammen [...]?" (GA I.4: 247)

but instead asks how the representations that constitute the realm of experience relate to their objects. A philosophy, such as Schmid's, however, that took the facts of consciousness as its starting point and refused to transcend these, would never be able to even address that fundamental question, and for this reason, Fichte had argued, Schmid ought not even to be considered a philosopher at all (chapter 3, §3).

In Fichte's view, then, the question concerning the relationship between representations and their objects marked the most important distinction between his philosophy and the type of psychological project represented by Schmid. This view was in a sense confirmed by Fries, who had argued that philosophy could not possibly answer such questions concerning the "transcendental truth" of our representations, and had left this question to faith (Fries 1808, 242–3/SS 4: 8–9). When Beneke did posit this question, therefore, and gave it a position almost as central as Fichte did, it seems that he intended to break with the psychological tradition on this point. On top of this, it also seems, given his claim that metaphysics, too, is a form of applied psychology, that Beneke intended to take Fichte head on by proving that it is in fact possible to answer this central question of metaphysics on the basis of inner observations alone.

Appearances, however, can be deceiving, for when Beneke addresses the question how a psychology based on inner observation could possibly help us in determining how our representations relate to objects that are supposedly independent of them, a subtle, but decisive shift in his formulation of the question takes place:

Unsere Grundaufgabe ist, zu erklären, wie wir *überhaupt dazu kommen*, dem Vorstellen (oder genauer, den psychischen Entwicklungen, welche wir *nachher* "Vorstellungen" nennen) ein Sein gegenüberzustellen. (Beneke 1822b, 23)⁴³

⁴³ It is worth comparing this to a strikingly similar passage in Kant's first *Critique*: "Wir haben Vorstellungen in uns, deren wir uns auch bewußt werden können. Dieses Bewußtsein aber mag so weit erstreckt, und so genau oder pünktlich sein, als man wolle, so bleiben es doch nur immer Vorstellungen, d. i. innere Bestimmungen unseres Gemüts in diesem oder jenem Zeitverhältnisse. *Wie kommen wir nun dazu, daß wir diesen Vorstellungen ein Objekt setzen*, oder über ihre subjektive Realität, als Modifikationen, ihnen noch, ich weiß nicht, was für eine, objektive beilegen?" (A197/B242, my emphasis).

Now, if we formulate the essential question of metaphysics in this way, Beneke's claim that metaphysics is a form of applied psychology becomes a lot more plausible, for explanations about how we come to believe certain things fall squarely within the domain of this science. Critics, however, will complain, with some justification, that this reformulation involves some sleight of hand; the original question, after all, did not concern the origins of our *belief* that our representations relate to objects, but rather whether this belief was true. Therefore, even if Beneke provided an entirely satisfactory answer to the former question, *Fichte's* question would still not have been answered.

Eventually, then, Beneke has no other option than to withdraw to the traditional Schmid-Fries line of responding to Fichte's question. Rather typically, however, Beneke opts for a more radical version of this strategy. The point that Schmid and Fries had urged against Fichte was that while the possibility of external-world scepticism implied by the latter's question was indeed a worrying possibility, it was not a possibility that could ever be refuted by the philosopher. Beneke, on the other hand, refused to even take this scepticism seriously. Once we have explained how we come to believe in a world beyond our representations and know that all humans necessarily share this belief, such Cartesian scepticism is no more than meaningless scholastic quibbling that has no bearing on actual life or science. All "Idealists, those who denied an independent being in its entirety" and those who "merely doubted it as being uncertain" have communicated their claims and doubts, Beneke notes, and they have done so presumably to the very people whose existence they, according to their own doctrine, claimed to deny or doubt. They were, in other words, caught up in a ridiculous self-contradiction:

Der lächerlichste Widerspruch gewiß! — Die Philosophie soll die *ernsteste* Wissenschaft, und die Wissenschaft *ernster* als das Leben sein; und doch müssen wir leider uns noch immer nach der Zeit sehnen, wo man in der Philosophie anfangen wird, nur in dem Maße ernst, wie im Leben, zu sein!
(Beneke 1822b, 26)

It is difficult not to be somewhat dissatisfied by this answer. After all, given that Beneke, as we saw, overturned the Kantian parity of inner and outer sense, and argued that unlike inner sense, outer sense only acquainted us with its objects indirectly, by means of an exclusive direct awareness of our own

representations, he invited precisely the Cartesian quibbles that he did not wish to take seriously.

6. *Disappointed Expectations*

The philosophical works of Beneke and Fries represent the best and most original that the psychological tradition had to offer. Yet, like most intellectual traditions, this tradition was far from homogeneous: while Fries and Beneke found their starting point in very similar interests and concerns with regard to Kant's philosophy, the resulting philosophical systems are very different in their approach as well as in their conclusions. Most importantly, they represented very different ideas of the nature and future of the discipline of philosophy in a context in which more and more empirical sciences were successfully emancipating themselves from this discipline. Though Fries was a highly innovative thinker in many ways, he nevertheless defended a rather conservative conception of philosophy and its relation to the sciences. His transcendental psychology, as we saw, was intended to guarantee the legitimacy of a pure, *a priori* philosophy, and he hoped that such a philosophy, in interaction with the individual empirical sciences, would be able to preserve the unity of science (Pulte 2006). Beneke, on the other hand, intended a completely different future for philosophy. Not only did he argue strongly against the possibility of *a priori* science, but he believed that philosophy ought itself to ultimately become just one more empirical science (albeit a very important one), namely empirical psychology. Ultimately, however, neither of these thinkers had his way. Though philosophy retained its claims to being an *a priori* discipline until our own time, Fries would have been greatly disappointed to see that it did so at the cost of isolating itself from the empirical sciences, and that these sciences themselves would become ever more specialised and fragmented. Beneke, for his part, would have been disappointed that far from philosophy becoming empirical psychology, psychology would actually be expelled from philosophy. This expulsion came to a dramatic climax when in 1913 many of the leading philosophers in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland signed a petition to the effect that empirical psychologists should no longer be considered for chairs in philosophy (Kusch 1995, 186–99). Psychology, as we know, ultimately blossomed as an autonomous science, but the separation of these disciplines,

which was accompanied by the growing conviction that philosophy was not psychology and vice versa, did not, as one may understand, have beneficial consequences for the reception of Kantian Psychologism.

Conclusion

1. *The End of a Tradition*

Philosophical traditions, I said in the introduction, are not defined by a number of necessary and sufficient conditions for membership, but by family resemblances between the individual philosophers who together constitute this tradition: philosophers who are inspired by more or less similar sources and motivated by more or less similar concerns to act in more or less similar ways. Furthermore, traditions, as we saw, are not static, but admit of different generations, in which the tradition is transformed in accordance with the changing demands made on philosophers by developments in their broader intellectual context.

All this means that the question regarding the end of a tradition cannot be answered in any straightforward way. Though I ended the present account of Kantian Psychologism with Friedrich Eduard Beneke, this is not to say that later philosophers were no longer attracted to a psychological approach to Kantian philosophy. One of the most prominent later proponents of such an approach was Jürgen Bona Meyer, who, in 1870, published a book entitled *Kant's Psychologie*. In this book, Meyer argued at length that Kant's philosophy had a psychological foundation:

Wenden wir uns [...] zur Betrachtung des Verhältnisses der Philosophie Kant's zur Psychologie, so ist es [...] unzweifelhaft, dass Kant's kritische Gesamtarbeit durchweg auf einer psychologischen Grundlage unternommen ist und überall in ihren Haupttheilen von psychologischen Voraussetzungen getragen wird. (Meyer 1870, 40)

For Meyer, who was one of the earliest proponents of Neo-Kantianism,¹ this was not a mere historical question of interpretation. Rather, he believed that this was the philosophical project that should be taken up again by contemporary philosophers, and that would determine the future of philosophy (1–3). That this project is highly similar to that of the representatives of Kantian Psychologism is

¹ For background on Meyer and his Neo-Kantianism see (Köhnke 1986; and Beiser 2014, 328–55).

no coincidence, for Meyer was familiar with the works of many of these authors, and he referred explicitly to Reinhold, Schmid, Fries, and Beneke in his book.

Similarly, in 1891, one finds a book by a certain Otto Schneider with the promising title *Transcendentalpsychologie*, in which the author, about whom little is known, explicitly posits himself as following in Beneke's footsteps, and writes in the introduction:

Von diesem Standpunkte aus wandte ich mich [...] dem nach meiner Überzeugung wichtigsten Werke der ganzen bisherigen Philosophie, der Kritik der reinen Vernunft zu und führte, wie ich glaube, den Nachweis, dass dasselbe im besten Sinne eine *psychologische*, allerdings nicht eine reine erfahrungsmässige, sondern eine transcendentalpsychologische Durchforschung des auf Erkenntnis gerichteten menschlichen Geistes sei (Schneider 1891, 2).

And thirteen years later, in 1904, in a text entitled *Die kritische Methode und das Verhältnis der Psychologie zur Philosophie*, the Göttinger philosopher and mathematician Leonard Nelson maintained, explicitly agreeing with Fries:

Der Gegenstand der transzendentalen Untersuchung, die den Inhalt der Kritik bildet, sind [...] Erkenntnisse a priori. Erkenntnisse aber erkennen wir nur durch innere Erfahrung. Die transzendentalen Erkenntnisse der Kritik ist also offenbar Erkenntnis aus innerer Erfahrung. (Nelson 1970 I, 41)

If we really wanted to stretch the point, we could perhaps even place the latest revival of psychological interpretations of Kant, and particularly the work of Wayne Waxman, in this line of reception.

Nevertheless, though one could in principle continue an account of Kantian Psychologism well into the twentieth century, there are good reasons to end this account with Beneke. In the introduction, and throughout the book I have emphasized the importance of context; different generations of Kantians, I argued, found markedly different audiences for their work, and this had a significant influence on the types of works they wrote, the kinds of positions they adopted, and what they felt needed to be made explicit or, on the contrary, could be left implicit. By the time that Beneke was writing his later works, circumstances were again changing. This change of context is marked most importantly by the death of Hegel in 1831, and the decline of German Idealism that followed. The precise reasons for this decline were complex, but at least one important factor was the fact that the pretence of the German Idealists to unite all that could properly be called science in a single philosophical theory came to

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seem more and more naive as the individual sciences became ever more specialised. Though all of the representatives of the psychological tradition would have witnessed the turning fortunes of German Idealism approvingly (most did not live to see it), these developments had significant consequences for Kantian Psychology as well. This tradition, as we have seen, had been intertwined with German Idealism from its very reception; the psychological approach to Kant's philosophy had been presented by its protagonists as an alternative, and, indeed, as *the only* viable alternative to the speculative metaphysics of Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel. It was this consideration, as much as the internal theoretical virtues of the psychological approach, that had motivated many thinkers who had been sympathetic towards this psychological Kantianism. With the decline of German Idealism, part of the context in which the psychological tradition had made sense as a coherent philosophical project was also starting to disappear. Furthermore, this decline of German Idealism ushered in what Schnädelbach and Beiser (following the former) have called a period of "identity crisis" (Schnädelbach 1983, 17; and Beiser 2014, 188). During these years, philosophers began to question the nature and role of philosophy anew, which also meant that new questions, problems, and topics, such as the issue of materialism, came to be central in philosophical debates. Due to such discontinuities, Beneke's death represents a natural endpoint for the psychological tradition.

Having thus completed my account of Kantian Psychology, I will use this conclusion to further situate this account in three respects. In section two I aim to give the reader a better idea of the historical significance of Kantian Psychology as a tradition, especially in comparison to German Idealism, by discussing the reception of the two most important representatives of this tradition, Fries and Beneke. In section three, I return to a question that I raised in the introduction, namely the validity of interpreting Kant's work in terms of a strict dichotomy between psychology and epistemology. Such a distinction, I will argue, cannot serve as a useful starting point for reading Kant because this distinction was the historical product of a number of disciplinary shifts in which Kant played a role, but that continued far into the nineteenth century. In the fourth section, finally, I will ask whether the study of Kantian Psychology has a future. My modestly optimistic conclusion is that though we ought not to expect

that this tradition will become a part of the philosophical canon, the conditions for a renewed interest in this tradition from the side of historical scholars are in place.

2. *The Reception of Kantian Psychology*

My account of Kantian Psychology has been primarily internal; throughout the present dissertation I have attempted to convince the reader that Kantian Psychology was (contrary to what much of modern Kant-scholarship may lead us to expect) a reasonable attempt, within its intellectual context, to resolve a fundamental tension in Kant's philosophy. This dissertation, in other words, has been primarily an exercise in reception history. Because of this approach, however, I have so far not discussed the question regarding the historical efficacy of this tradition itself. I will take up this question here.²

Now, the reception of a tradition is often limited to its most innovative representatives, and that is no different in the present case. Though Schmid was occasionally discussed in particular histories of the reception of Kant's philosophy (e.g., Rosenkranz 1840, 307–11), and Bouterwek was somewhat more frequently discussed because of his work on aesthetics and his support of Jacobi (e.g., Fortlage 1852, 364–7), it was nonetheless only through Fries and Beneke that the psychological reception of Kant had a real influence on later philosophical thought. I will therefore focus on the reception of these two thinkers.

To form an accurate and balanced picture of the reception of Fries and Beneke, it is necessary to draw from a number of sources. The most direct influence that philosophers exert is usually through their teaching, so I will begin with a short discussion of their most prominent students. In the second subsection, I then continue with an examination of the representation of Fries and Beneke by some of the most important German historians of philosophy during the middle of the nineteenth century. Finally, I turn to the reception of

² For the following review I have fortunately been able to rely in part on previous work. (Beiser 2014) contains discussions of the reception of Fries and Beneke, as well as psychological Kantianism more generally, (Geldsetzer 1999) provides an account of discussions of Fries in older histories of philosophy, and (Kusch 1995) provides a number of sources for the reception of Kantian Psychology in the psychologism discussions around 1900. Aside from Beiser's book, (Henke 1867) and (Brandt 1895) also contain useful biographies of Fries and Beneke respectively.

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Fries and Beneke in Neo-Kantianism. The picture of the historical importance of Kantian Psychologism that emerges from these three sources is that, while this tradition was certainly not as famous or influential as German Idealism, it was nevertheless widely recognised throughout the nineteenth century as an alternative approach to Kant's philosophy that had to be taken seriously. Interestingly, one also finds that throughout the nineteenth century this reception became more and more narrow. Where in the middle of the nineteenth century one still finds regular discussions of Fries's and Beneke's thoughts on such topics as ethics or philosophy of religion, towards the end of the century, these discussions come to focus almost exclusively on the topic of psychologism. It was this development that would ultimately seal the fate of Kantian Psychologism.

The students of Fries and Beneke

The fact that Fries and Beneke exerted influence on a significant number of capable students is in itself a noteworthy fact, because both thinkers were banned from teaching during an important part of their career. Fries lost his right to teach in 1819, after becoming involved in a student-movement intended to bring about a unified German state.³ Though he was allowed to teach physics and mathematics again during the second half of the 1820s, he only regained the right to teach philosophy in 1837. Similarly, Beneke's right to teach was revoked in 1822, only shortly after the (promising) start of his teaching career in Berlin, presumably because his early book on ethics, the *Grundlegung zur Physik der Sitten*, was deemed politically dangerous. There is also some evidence, however, that this ban was motivated by a desire to eliminate outspoken critics of Hegelianism either by Hegel himself (who was at the time the most famous professor in Berlin), or at least by his supporters at the university and in the

³ The original cause for this scandal was Fries's participation in the famous *Wartburgfest* of 1817, where student fraternities of various German universities called for a unified Germany — a cause that Fries supported. Though this participation had few immediate consequences, it made him a controversial political figure. This reputation certainly did not help his case when one year later, Karl Ludwig Sand, a student of Fries and founder of a nationalist fraternity murdered the playwright August von Kotzebue for his supposed betrayal of the German nation. In the aftermath of this deed, Karl August, the duke of Weimar, saw himself forced by pressure from the leaders of other German states to deny Fries his right to teach at the university of Jena and therefore (as a consequence of treaties between the German lands) also at any other German university.

Prussian government.⁴ Nevertheless, Fries and Beneke still managed to attract enough students for later historians to be able to refer to a 'Friesian' and even a 'Benekian' school of philosophy (Fischer 1862; and Siebert 1905, chapter 3–4).

The most important of Fries' students were the influential theologian Wilhelm de Wette (later professor at the university of Berlin, where he also introduced Beneke to Fries's work); the philosopher Ernst Friedrich Apelt; and the botanist Matthias Schleiden, one of the founders of cell theory in biology. Several years after Fries's death in 1843, four of his former students, who had all become professors in Jena (Apelt and Schleiden, the mathematician Schlömilch, and the zoologist Heinrich Schmid), erected a journal entitled *Abhandlungen der Fries'schen Schule* (1847–1849). This journal had as its explicitly stated purpose to publish texts "in the spirit of [...] the critical school, as this name was understood when it was founded by Kant, and further developed by Fries" (Apelt et al. 1847, 3). In some ways this first Friesian School, as it later came to be known, reminds one more than a little of the later Vienna Circle: as the editors of the *Abhandlungen* stressed in the programmatic introduction to the journal, the single most important criterion for the truth of a philosophical system was its consistency with the "exact sciences":

[U]nsere Philosophie [hat] eine Probe ihrer Richtigkeit [...], wie keine andere wieder. Jede Philosophie, die mit den exacten Wissenschaften übereinstimmt kann wahr seyn, jede, die diesen widerstreitet, muß nothwendig falsch seyn. Wir wissen aber, daß die Kantisch-Friesische Philosophie, und nur diese allein, diese Probe der Wahrheit bestehen kann. (Apelt et al. 1847, 3–4)

By uniting as a school, the Friesians hoped to be able to promote and strengthen this relationship between philosophy and the sciences more effectively. This affinity of Fries's philosophy to mathematics and the empirical sciences would also be a core theme for the second Friesian School, which I discuss below.

Beneke was harmed in his capacity to teach at an earlier point in his career than Fries was, and consequently less successful in binding students to his doctrine, but he nevertheless had some students of note. Most important amongst these were the philosophers Karl Fortlage, who turned towards psychology under the influence of Beneke, and the famous historian of

⁴ Beiser (2014, 148–9, especially n. 30) weighed the available evidence, but did not come to a definite conclusion.

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philosophy, Friedrich Ueberweg. Furthermore, during his lifetime Beneke was particularly influential in the field of pedagogy, where a significant number of followers sought to apply his psychological doctrine (cf. Siebert 1905, 174–8; and Köhnke 1986, 83–7).

Fries and Beneke in early histories of philosophy

German historians of philosophy during the 1840s, '50s, and '60s almost invariably devoted a significant number of pages to the doctrines defended by Fries and Beneke. Interestingly, many of these discussions were also fairly charitable, keeping in mind that most historians at this time were of a Hegelian persuasion. On the contrary, no such principle of charity can be discovered in Hegel's own account of the place of Fries in the history of philosophy. In Hegel's lectures on the topic, Fries is thrown together with Bouterwek and Krug as an "arbitrary, ignorant" sideline of Fichte's (!) subjective philosophy (GW 20: 418–20). One may well suspect that Hegel's personal antagonism towards Fries played some role in this assessment (chapter 4, §1.2).

Though Rosenkranz followed Hegel in his judgment that Fries is generally "superficial" (Rosenkranz 1840, 430), and though he believed that Beneke had not really grasped Kant's question about the possibility of the synthetic *a priori*, he also had eyes for their merits. Fries's views, he acknowledged, "were and are shared by many" (435), and Fries is said to have made a genuine contribution to certain philosophical fields (430). In particular, Rosenkranz praised Fries's philosophy of science as an achievement in a truly Kantian spirit (432). Beneke's psychological-philosophical work is described as being "related" to Fries's, and is praised for its psychological and pedagogical insights (435–6).

Erdmann's account of Fries and Beneke was mostly neutral in its evaluation, and very factually discussed their views. Like Rosenkranz, he mentioned Fries's views on the role of psychology for philosophy, but gave equal attention to other topics, such as Fries's views on religion and teleology, and also emphasized that Fries had a significant following that "acted like a closed phalanx" after his death (Erdmann 1866, 396–400). Interestingly, though the section on Beneke is simply a factual discussion of his views, this section was significantly expanded in the second edition of 1870. Erdmann's judgment of Beneke had at that point become remarkably positive, and he concluded that the

Hegelian school as committed an "injustice" by not paying attention to what was really novel in this philosophy (Erdmann 1870, 646). This discussion is furthermore of particular interest since it is precisely here that Erdmann coins the (at that point evaluatively neutral) term 'psychologism' (*Psychologismus*) to describe the views of Beneke (636). This term, as we shall see below, would not only dominate philosophical discussions around 1900, but would also have a lasting impact on the reception of Kantian Psychologism.

The Hegelian historian who most extensively discussed Fries's work, and who gave him a very central role in his account of German philosophy around 1800, was Kuno Fischer. When Fischer became rector of the university of Jena, he gave a lecture (later published) entitled *Die beiden kantische Schulen in Jena* (1862). Kant's philosophy, Fischer claimed here, is characterised by the fundamental duality that it can both be read as a system of speculative metaphysics and as an "anthropology" of the human mind (13). Because these two sides of Kant's philosophy are mutually exclusive, however, they have been developed by two separate Kantian schools, which both had their origins at the university of Jena. The founder of the anthropological school, according to Fischer, was Fries, and the conflict between Fries's school and that of the German Idealists, he went as far as to claim, even was the principal conflict in the philosophical debates of that time (7–8). This build-up and the respect with which Fries is treated throughout the text, however, do make it somewhat surprising that ultimately Fischer rejected Fries's Kantianism on the basis of the simple argument that "what is *a priori* can never be known *a posteriori*." To show that *a posteriori* psychological knowledge of *a priori* cognition is not only possible but necessary, was, as we have seen, one of Fries's main aims, so Fischer's argument clearly begged the question. Fallacious arguments, however, often have no less of an impact than valid ones and, as we shall see below, Fischer's argument would be repeated frequently in the decades that followed.

To complete our overview of the early representation of Fries and Beneke, we will consider the histories of philosophy of Fortlage and Ueberweg, which are of particular interest since these authors were at one point students of Beneke. Because of their background it is not surprising that they gave ample attention to the latter and to a lesser extent to Fries. The most interesting aspect of Fortlage's treatment is that aside from individual discussions of Fries and

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Beneke, he also included an extra section entitled "von der Umlegung der Philosophie vom metaphysischen auf den psychologischen Standpunkt" (Fortlage 1852, 437–40). In this section, Fortlage claimed that philosophy in recent decades had been in the process of moving away from metaphysics and was instead starting to adopt psychological principles and methods. As part of these developments, Fortlage not only named Fries, Beneke, and Herbart, but also, interestingly, Schopenhauer. Furthermore, he judged that this psychological approach to philosophy was actually closer to Kant's project than its speculative counterpart, because "Kant himself found the premises [...] while following not the synthetic, but the psychological method" (437). Fortlage's own evaluation of these developments was entirely positive. Psychology, in his view, had not only characterised the recent past of philosophy, but it will also be its future:

Dieser Spiegel psychologischer Beobachtung im innern Sinn, welcher bereits zu Kant's Zeit dem vorigen Jahrhundert eine kurze Weile glänzend offen gestanden, hat sich von neuem aufgethan, um sich nicht wieder zu verhüllen. Der Mensch hat endlich den Weg zu sich selbst gefunden und steigt getrost die finstern Leitern herab zur Unterwelt. (439)

Though Ueberweg did not violate the presumed neutrality of the historian this radically, he was also clearly sympathetic towards Fries and Beneke. Most notable in his discussion of Fries is that, unlike Fischer, he did recognise the distinction that the former made between the psychological examination of *a priori* cognitions and the question of the truth of these cognitions (Ueberweg 1866, 190). He also noted the influence that Fries exerted on a significant number of students, as well as on Beneke (191). Beneke himself is described somewhat cautiously as having made discoveries that will have a "decisive value for psychology and all branches of philosophy, insofar as those rest on psychology," after which an extended discussion of his individual works and his core psychological claims follow.

Fries and Beneke in Neo-Kantianism

When we compare the reception of Fries and Beneke in the middle of the nineteenth century to their reception in Neo-Kantianism, we can notice two important changes: on the one hand, Fries and Beneke came to be more frequently discussed in this later period, but on the other hand, these discussions came to be far more thematically focussed. Both of these changes had a single

cause, which is easily identified: it was during these years that the problem of psychologism took centre stage in German philosophy. In these discussions, Fries and Beneke became paradigm examples of psychologistic positions, which explains their more intensive reception, but it also meant that they came to be discussed almost exclusively in relation to the question of whether psychology could provide a legitimate foundation for philosophy. Subsequently, whereas earlier commentators without exception discussed Fries's and Beneke's philosophy separately, around 1900 they are almost always discussed together, because they are now treated as representatives of the same position.

This renewed attention for the psychological tradition is already visible in Otto Liebmann's *Kant und die Epigonen*, a book that has often been seen as the founding work of Neo-Kantianism because of the famous dictum with which Liebmann closed almost every chapter: "Also muß auf Kant zurückgegangen werden." Liebmann's main historical claim in *Kant und die Epigonen* is similar to that of the aforementioned text by Fischer and, indeed, to that of the present dissertation. This is the claim that there is a tension in Kant's work that leads to the possibility of multiple strongly divergent interpretations that have been defended and developed further by various of Kant's successors in the early reception of the critical philosophy.⁵ In comparison to Fischer's simple dichotomy, however, Liebmann added a "realist" school, represented by Herbart, and a "transcendent" school (Schopenhauer) to the empirical-psychological school founded by Fries and the speculative school of the German idealists. Though Liebmann referred to Fries as one of the "great architects" of Kantian philosophy (1865, 8), the chapter devoted to Fries (like all of the chapters in the book) is entirely polemical in nature. The message of the chapter can be summarised in one of its sentences, which would anticipate much of the Kant-scholarship of the following century: "Die eigentliche Tendenz der Kantischen Kritik für eine *psychologische* zu halten, ist das ärgste Mißverständnis, was ihr widerfahren kann" (151). Liebmann's book was highly successful and would come to strongly influence the reputation of Fries amongst later Neo-Kantians. This is unfortunate, because Liebmann's Fries is little more than a straw-man; like Fischer, he completely ignored Fries's extended and subtle discussions about

⁵ Though in Liebmann's view, this tension is caused by Kant's postulation of an obscure *Ding an sich*, rather than by his implicit dependence on psychological concepts and premises.

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the proper role of psychology for philosophy, and treated him as someone who derives metaphysical results from psychological inductions, precisely the sort of misunderstanding that Ueberweg warned against a year later.

Liebmann could not yet make use of the term 'psychologism,' but when Erdmann introduced the term in the decade that followed, it did not take long for critics of Fries and Beneke to adopt it as a polemical term. The first (to my knowledge), and also the most interesting of these polemical works was a text published by Wilhelm Windelband in 1884, entitled "Kritische oder genetische Methode?" In this text, Windelband not only repeated Liebmann's rejection of psychological interpretations of Kant, he went as far as to start his article with the bold claim that it had been the entire point of Kant's philosophy to "oppose to the psychologism of his contemporaries a new conception of the task and the manner of cognition of philosophy" (Windelband 1884, 247). This claim sat uneasily, of course, with the many seemingly psychological elements in Kant's own work, as well as with the prominent psychological reception of his works that we have encountered throughout the present dissertation. Windelband, however, was not afraid to bite this bullet. The appearance of psychology in Kant's works, he argues, is merely a sign that Kant was still struggling with the proper presentation of the revolutionary ideas that he wanted to communicate (246, cf. 249). In reality, psychology is entirely alien to the spirit of Kant's philosophy. The "psychologism, as represented by Fries and Beneke" (247) therefore necessarily appeared to Windelband as a perversion of Kantian doctrine. Despite this rejection, however, he admitted that as far as psychologistic theories go, the Kantian Psychologism represented by Fries and Beneke possesses a "great superiority in comparison to similar earlier theories," due to its connection to Kant's philosophy. Yet, he concludes, this is only a sign that the "splendour of Kantianism is such that it lends nobility to all its opponents" (247-8).

Though perhaps rhetorically strong, it is noteworthy that this argument, which in one stroke transforms Fries and Beneke from Kantians into opponents of Kant, is rather obscure. One would very much like to know how Kant's philosophy could have lent the psychologism of Fries and Beneke any kind of superiority if there had not been something in the critical philosophy that lend itself to such psychologism in the first place, but Windelband remained silent on

this issue. His interpretation of this psychologism, furthermore, was no more charitable than Fischer's or Liebmann's, for he too read this as the attempt to prove philosophical principles from psychological premises.⁶ This is all the more unfortunate since Windelband's own position in fact resembles Fries's to a significant degree. "Psychologism," Windelband maintains, must fail because philosophical principles cannot be proven to be true at all. They can, however, be shown to be necessary presuppositions of human cognition (257). And though empirical psychology cannot provide a foundation for philosophy in the strict sense, it can serve as a "guiding thread" for philosophical investigations:

Da es keine Möglichkeit giebt, bloß aus dem Zwecke der Allgemeingiltigkeit alle die besonderen Bedingungen für die Erfüllung desselben deductiv abzuleiten [...] so bedarf die Philosophie des *Leitfadens* der empirischen Psychologie um sich in geordneter Weise auf die einzelnen Axiome und Normen zu besinnen. (277–8)

Fries, as we have seen in chapter four, would have happily admitted all of these claims.

Unfortunately for Fries and Beneke the label "psychologism," employed by Erdmann in a neutral manner, and polemically by Windelband, would stick. Richard Falckenberg's *Geschichte der neueren Philosophie*, for example, discussed Fries and Beneke sympathetically, but nevertheless did so under the heading "Der Psychologismus: Fries und Beneke" (Falckenberg 1886), a title seemingly copied from the identically titled final section of Windelband's *Geschichte der neueren Philosophie* (Windelband 1880). Later authors would follow this practice (Eisler 1907, 12; Thormeijer 1916, 68; and Moog 1918, 304). When, in the wake of the attacks on psychologism by Frege and Husserl 'psychologism' became synonymous with 'psychologistic fallacy', however, Fries's and Beneke's association with this label became an immediate argument against their philosophical work, and they therefore became easy targets in the polemics against psychologism that began at the end of the nineteenth century and that reached its climax in the first two decades of the twentieth century (see Kusch 1995, 95).

All this is not to say that Fries and Beneke had no sympathisers at all during this period. Ueberweg, as we saw, had already warned against simplistic

⁶ "Sie ist der 'hoffnungslose Versuch' durch eine empirische Theorie dasjenige zu begründen, was selbst die Voraussetzung jeder Theorie bildet" (261).

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interpretations of Fries in 1866. Siebert complained in his history of philosophy of 1905 that the Neo-Kantians unjustly ignored Fries, because they "misunderstood the nature of [Fries's *Neue Kritik*] and accused him of a psychologism that he had never accepted" (Siebert 1905, 78). As we already saw at the start of this conclusion, there were also several authors who made it explicit that they were following in the footsteps of Fries and Beneke.

Aside from his influence on individual German philosophers, such as the aforementioned, and from his importance in pedagogical discussions, Beneke even enjoyed a small but notable reception in the Anglophone world. Most importantly, John Stuart Mill wrote to Alexander Bain in 1844:

I am reading a German professor's book on Logic—Beneke is his name—which he has sent to me after reading mine, and which had previously been recommended to me by [John] Austin and by [John] Herschel as in accordance with the spirit of my doctrines. It is so in some degree, though far more psychological than had entered into my plans. Though I think much of his psychology unsound for want of his having properly grasped the principle of association (he comes very close to it now and then), there is much of it of a suggestive kind. (Mill 1963, 618)

How widespread this British reception actually was is difficult to assess, but given that authors as prominent as Austin and Herschel were recommending Beneke's work it is likely that his name was not entirely unknown in their intellectual circles. This would also explain why Beneke's name appears again, a few decades later, in an article in *Mind* (by its then-editor G.F. Stout) with the sufficiently self-explanatory title: "Herbart Compared with English Psychologists and with Beneke" (Stout 1889). At some point, Beneke's work even made its way to the United States, where a certain Francis Burke Brandt devoted his doctoral dissertation at Columbia College (now Columbia University) to the explanation and defence of Beneke's doctrines (Brandt 1895). This is best assumed to have been an isolated case, however, for Beneke's name does not seem to appear in other American work in this period, and Brandt himself (about whom very little is known) does not seem to have been influential.

Most important for the reception of Fries's philosophy around 1900 was the revival of the Friesian school by Leonard Nelson, who (together with friends) founded a philosophical discussion circle known as the *Neufriesische Schule*. This discussion circle gathered first in Berlin, and later in Göttingen. Like the first Friesian school, the new Friesian school was characterised by the fact that its

members came from a wide variety of disciplines, and that all were highly interested in the relation of philosophy to the particular sciences. Products of this discussion circle were published in the *Abhandlungen der friesischen Schule, neue Folgen*, which counted six volumes. The most important Friesians in this school were Nelson himself, "a man of unique achievement" according to one of his famous contemporaries (Popper 1961, 3); the philosopher and sociologist Julius Kraft (who later founded the journal *Ratio*); and Rudolf Otto, the influential theologian and religious scholar. Perhaps even more importantly, however, many academics who were not devoted Friesians also participated in the discussions of the new Friesian school, and thus became acquainted with Fries's doctrines.⁷ Given that the university of Göttingen was at this time amongst the most renowned in the world, it is not surprising that many of these participants later became renowned academics in their own right, such as the Nobel-laureates Otto Meyerhof (medicine) and Max Born (physics), the mathematician and philosopher of science Kurt Grelling (who published with Nelson), and the sociologist and economist Alexander Rüstow.⁸ The most important philosopher who was influenced by this circle (though never himself a participant) was Karl Popper. Popper came into contact with the Friesian school through the abovementioned Julius Kraft, to whom he was distantly related, and was convinced by Kraft to study the work of Fries and Nelson. This resulted most notably in a long chapter in his (posthumously published) *Die beiden Grundprobleme der Erkenntnistheorie* entitled "Kant and Fries," in which he criticized both thinkers, but in which he also characterises Fries's Kantianism as an important predecessor to his own view of the possibilities and limits of science (Popper 1994). The fact that Fries, who was himself a capable practitioner of both mathematics and the natural sciences, always found more sympathy amongst empirical scientists and philosophers of science than he did amongst pure philosophers is hardly a coincidence given his constant emphasis

⁷ That the discussions in the new Friesian school were indeed quite varied is clear from the first volume of the new reincarnation of the *Abhandlungen*, which, aside from a series of articles on Fries, also contains articles about non-Euclidean geometry, physiology, and the difference between the scientific and religious worldview.

⁸ A more extensive list of participants of the *Neufriesischen Schule* is given, notably under the title "Die psychologistische Umgestaltung des Kritizismus" in (Ueberweg and Oesterreich 1923, 471–8).

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on philosophy's dependence on interaction with these other disciplines (chapter 4, §5).

Ultimately, however, these lines of influence proved too weak to keep the names of Fries and Beneke alive amongst philosophers. When the passionate debates about psychologism ended in the late 1920s (Kusch 1995, 98), no agreement on the definition of 'psychologism,' nor on the decisive argument against it had been reached. Nevertheless, that "psychologism" was a philosophical fallacy that had to be avoided at all cost had become the established opinion. Whereas the names of Fries and Beneke were at least still well-known in the early twentieth century as the paradigms of a supposed psychologism that was to be exterminated, this too ended when the debates about this question were replaced with a silent consensus. From this point onwards, Fries and Beneke became part of a forgotten tradition.

3. Epistemological vs. Psychological Kantianism?

I began the present dissertation with a distinction, which has been highly influential in Kant-scholarship, between epistemological and psychological interpretations of Kant. My suggestion in the introduction, however, was that this approach to Kant's philosophy is anachronistic, and risks distorting our image of this philosophy. It is now time to say something more in support of this suggestion, and to explain how knowledge of the development of the psychological tradition can help us understand the epistemology-psychology dichotomy as a historical product. That psychology only emancipated itself from philosophy towards the end of the nineteenth century is an oft-noted fact, which I already discussed in the introduction. That epistemology only became a philosophical discipline in the course of this same century is, however, not as commonly appreciated, so this is where we shall now turn our attention.

The reader will recall that in the introduction I quoted Frederick Beiser's claim that Herbart "implicitly subordinate[d] epistemology to psychology, as if there could [be] no question of epistemology being a separate discipline on its own." The problem with this claim, as I see it, is that it seems to presuppose a division of philosophical subdisciplines that is simply given. Such a presupposition would certainly be mistaken. Though some philosophical

disciplines, like logic and ethics, have been recognised at least since ancient Greek philosophy, epistemology was a nineteenth-century invention, which was only made possible by developments in three other disciplines: metaphysics, logic, and psychology.⁹ Once we recognise that the opposition between psychology and epistemology as two separate disciplines only becomes intelligible in the course of the nineteenth century, it should be clear that this dichotomy cannot serve as a starting point for an adequate interpretation of Kant's philosophy.

It is not true, of course, that before the nineteenth century philosophers simply did not ask questions about knowledge; indeed, such questions have been a central philosophical concern at least since Socrates. Before the nineteenth century, however, such questions were discussed within multiple philosophical disciplines. In the eighteenth century, questions about knowledge were most prominently discussed under the headings of "logic," "metaphysics," and "psychology."¹⁰ Amongst these disciplines there was, at least in theory, a rough and somewhat fluid division of labour in answering questions about cognition: metaphysics discussed the relation of our cognition to the world; psychology studied our actual cognition as mental states and processes; and logic studied ideal cognition. In practice, however, the boundaries between these disciplines were not so strict, and the same questions could be treated in multiple disciplines.¹¹ Whether, for example, one discussed the basic elements of human knowledge in one's handbook on metaphysics, logic, psychology, or all three was a matter of more or less arbitrary choice. In this context, where three disciplines were already studying human cognition, it was far from obvious that a new philosophical discipline dealing with this topic was called for. This only changed because of developments within each of the older disciplines that started (though by no means were completed) during the eighteenth century: first, there was the growing scepticism towards the possibility of metaphysics as a real science, which cast doubt on its ability to answer *any* question, including

⁹ Epistemology's origins in the nineteenth century have been discussed by (Köhnke 1986, 58–108), who also extensively discusses Beneke's role in these developments. I have made substantial use of Köhnke's account in what follows, but the historical thesis that this genesis was made possible by developments in metaphysics, logic, and psychology is my own.

¹⁰ Though psychology came to be recognised as a (to some extent) autonomous philosophical discipline only towards the end of the eighteenth century. Before that German philosophers generally followed Wolff in classifying psychology as a part of metaphysics.

¹¹ See (Eckardt et al. 2001, 46–61) for three case-studies.

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questions about cognition; second, there was the move towards the renewed conception of logic as a formal discipline that abstracts from actual cognition, which made it less relevant for answering the traditional questions about human knowledge (Beth and Piaget 1966, 142); psychology, finally, started the long process towards becoming an independent science at the end of the eighteenth century; a development that eventually led to the dominant view at the end of the nineteenth century that psychology could not answer "real" philosophical questions (Kusch 1995, 157–205). With one of these disciplines discredited, one becoming much more specialised than it had been before, and the last emancipating itself from philosophy, it became an urgent problem what role philosophers could still play in answering questions about the nature, possibility, and extent of human knowledge. Faced with this problem, philosophers were forced to reflect anew on the nature of their own practice; a self-reflection that culminated in the invention of a new philosophical discipline with a new set of questions and methods that was to clearly distinguish it from logic, metaphysics, and, above all at the end of the nineteenth century, psychology. The result of this self-reflection was a new philosophical discipline: epistemology.

Importantly, all three of these developments found an early and influential expression in Kant's work, and for this reason there is something to be said for the often-made claim that Kant ushered in an "epistemological turn" in philosophy (e.g., Posy 2003, 73). Nevertheless, the very fact that they were early expressions means that they had not yet reached the clarity and decisiveness that they would towards the end of the nineteenth century.¹² For this reason, it does not seem helpful to me to think about Kant's philosophy in terms of a strong dichotomy between epistemology and psychology. On the contrary, we can maintain that Kant's philosophy in many respects depended on his psychological theory of human cognition while still recognizing the important role that Kant played in the eventual formation of a separate discipline of epistemology.

¹² Kant's arguments against metaphysics were not intended to eradicate that discipline, but to start it anew on a more solid foundation; though Kant defends the idea of a formal, "general logic" that abstracts from all content, the object of this logic is still the form of *thought* itself (A54/B78), rather than of something that *can* be thought; and though Kant in the first *Critique* imagines a time when empirical psychology will have its "own home" outside of philosophy, in a position equivalent to that of the empirical natural sciences (A849/B877), the skeptical remarks about psychology in the *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe* make it clear that Kant could not yet really imagine what such a science would really look like.

Once we recognize that the invention of epistemology was a long process to which Kant's philosophy was one (important) contributor, we can also appreciate how important the polemics between the German Idealists and the representatives of Kantian Psychology were in further developing the impulses present in Kant's work. Kant's anti-metaphysical arguments, as we have seen, were a key theme in the battle of the psychological tradition against the speculative methods of German Idealism. For most of the representatives of Kantian Psychology, it had been precisely this scepticism towards metaphysics that had driven them to search for a starting point in psychology. With regard to this latter discipline, both the German Idealists and a number of the representatives of Kantian Psychology contributed to the eventual split between philosophy and psychology in important ways. The German Idealists, on the one hand, emphasized and radicalized Kant's claim that psychology was irrelevant for (pure) philosophy, by polemicizing against supposed "facts of consciousness" and by disconnecting their notion of Absolute Reason from the mere individual subject. Schmid, Fries, and Beneke, on the other hand, contributed to the same result from the opposite direction; by defending the legitimacy of psychology as an independent discipline, and by seriously engaging with questions about the proper objects and methods of a newly to be formed science of empirical psychology. Interestingly, however, both the German Idealists and the most important representatives of Kantian Psychology opposed Kant's "scholastic" conception of logic as a formal discipline devoid of all content. One of the central concerns for the German Idealists was precisely to eliminate Kant's merely formal conception of reason, and subsequently, content had to be re-introduced into logic.¹³ On this point, Beneke actually agreed with the German Idealists, albeit for different reasons, for he, too, rejected Kant's view that logic should abstract from "all empirical conditions under which our experience is exercised" (A52-3/B77). Since logic ought to teach us how to reason better, it precisely should not abstract from such conditions, because the

¹³ This theme is already present in Fichte's *Grundlage der gesamten Wissenschaftslehre*, in which the principles of logic are interpreted as abstractions from constitutive moments of the absolute subject. The point is far more explicit, however, in the introduction to Hegel's *Logik*, where he argues at some length against the idea that "logic, since [...] matter does not not in the least depend on it, can give only the formal conditions of genuine knowledge, but does not itself contain real truth; or again, that logic is only the *pathway* to real knowledge, for the essential component of truth, the content, lies outside it" (GW 5: 36, translation from Hegel 2010, 24).

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quality of our reasoning is affected by such conditions (chapter 5, §5). Fries, for his part, rejected "the absurd separation of the investigations of empirical psychology, logic and metaphysics," which has resulted in a logic that only deals with "forms that have been bled dry [*ausgesaugten Formen*]" (Fries 1807, 33–4/SS 4: 127–8).

Despite this last point, it is not surprising, given the fact that two of the fundamental conditions for the development of epistemology as a discipline became core themes in the philosophical conflict between German Idealism and Kantian Psychologism that the first prominent use of '*Erkenntnißlehre*' in a sense resembling its modern meaning occurs in this context, namely in Beneke's *Erkenntnißlehre nach dem Bewußtsein der reinen Vernunft*.¹⁴ "Erkenntnißlehre," Beneke explains, is not only a philosophical discipline, but in fact the *prima philosophia*, because it is this discipline that asks questions about the nature, limits, and genesis of cognition in general, and philosophical cognition in particular; it is only after having answered these questions successfully that the philosopher ought to engage with other philosophical disciplines (Beneke 1820b, 1–3). Interestingly, Beneke is very much aware that both the term 'Erkenntnißlehre' and the philosophical discipline that it designates are new phenomena:

Die Aufgabe [note: not the discipline itself] einer *Erkenntnißlehre* in der höheren Bedeutung, in welcher man sie jetzt unter mancherlei Namen bearbeitet, ist in ihrer ganzen Wichtigkeit erst durch *Kant* hingestellt worden. (1)

And, later:

In einer solchen Sonderung [from the other philosophical disciplines] aber ist die Erkenntnißlehre eigentlich nur von der *kritischen* Schule bearbeitet. (128)

At the risk of spelling out the obvious, this should not be taken to mean that after all it was really *Beneke* and not *Kant* who invented epistemology. The point is precisely that epistemology was not invented overnight, and Beneke's work, like *Kant*'s was only a stage in this development. In his *Erkenntnißlehre*, Beneke, as said, still emphasizes the importance of questions about the *genesis* of

¹⁴ Wilhelm Traugott Krug had already used the word in his (1801), but he did not use it to designate a novel philosophical discipline, but rather a part of metaphysics that is only distinguished with regard to its topic (Köhnke 1986, 69–70).

cognition (an emphasis equally present, but much-ignored, in Kant); questions that twentieth-century epistemologists would have considered entirely alien to their discipline. Yet, it is an undeniable fact that the term '*Erkenntnißlehre*,' used to designate a special discipline of philosophy, rapidly gained in popularity in the decades that followed. Whether this was in part because of Beneke's influence, or whether Beneke was simply the first to give voice to an idea that was simply "in the air" will have to remain an open question here.

Finally, let me note that we should at all cost avoid the risk of giving a teleological interpretation of the genesis of epistemology sketched above. Given how central epistemology has been to the modern self-understanding of philosophers, it is tempting to interpret the appearance of epistemology as a late *discovery* of one of the essential philosophical disciplines, which earlier philosophers had approximated to a greater or lesser degree. This, too, would be a mistake. Epistemology was not discovered, but invented, and had historical circumstances been different, it might never have been.¹⁵ To consider Kant's critical philosophy, then, as Strawson did in the *The Bounds of Sense*, as offering us an almost-epistemology that is unfortunately still polluted (due to historical circumstances) by psychological concepts, claims, and presuppositions is a potentially harmful form of anachronism. I say "potentially" for as long as one's intent is strictly philosophical, as arguably Strawson's own was, any use of the historical material that contributes to philosophical thought is legitimate. If one's intents are to do history, however, this approach can only serve to confound the real historical significance of Kant's philosophy. The present dissertation will have been successful if it has made at least some contribution to dismantling this anachronism and to helping us understand the critical philosophy in its proper context.

4. *The Future of Kantian Psychology?*

Given that Kantian Psychology and its representatives were forgotten for almost the entire twentieth century, we may perhaps say that its history ended a

¹⁵ Such contingency also entails that there may come a time when epistemology will again lose its status as a philosophical discipline. Whether this is only an abstract possibility or an imminent event, as philosophers such as Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Quine, and Rorty have argued, remains to be seen. See (Taylor 1995) for discussion.

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hundred years ago. But does it have a future? Here, my expectations are moderately optimistic. Though it is unlikely that any of the representatives of this tradition will be granted a place in the absolute canon of the history of philosophy, a number of recent developments in (historical-)philosophical scholarship provide a fertile ground for further study of Kantian Psychologism.

The first of these developments is the renewed interest in the psychological dimensions of Kant's philosophy, spearheaded by authors like Kitcher and Waxman, which I already discussed in the introduction. This renewed interest has led to a long list of publications during the past twenty-five years. Even more recently, this interest has also been extended to those authors who substantially influenced Kant's ideas about psychology, such as Wolff and Tetens (e.g., Dyck 2016; Thiel and Stiening 2014; and Sturm 2009, 53–126). It is not unreasonable to believe that this interest could be extended to also incorporate Kant's influence on those of his followers who further developed the psychological dimensions of Kant's philosophy, i.e., the representatives of Kantian Psychologism.

Secondly, the thematic emphasis of Kant-scholarship in general also seems to have shifted towards the end of the twentieth century. Whereas much of twentieth century Kant-scholarship was oriented towards more narrowly philosophical topics, Kant scholars in recent decades, most likely influenced by the success of history and philosophy of science as a field of study, have strongly emphasized the relations of Kant's philosophy to the special sciences. This shift also has implications for the study of Kant's successors. Whereas the philosophical work of Fichte and Hegel in particular offers much that is of value when studying Kantian epistemology or ethics, the representatives of the psychological tradition, and especially Fries and his students, arguably offer a far more interesting perspective on the possible interrelations between Kantian philosophy and the special sciences. It is therefore no coincidence that a recent volume on the Kantian legacy in nineteenth-century science, edited by Michael Friedman and Alfred Nordmann (Friedman and Nordmann 2006) completely ignores German Idealism, but does contain two articles about Fries (Pulte 2006; and Gregory 2006).

Finally, aside from this shift in thematic emphasis, recent decades have also seen a trend towards a more serious contextualisation of the canonical thinkers

from the history of philosophy. For the history of classical German thought, this trend has resulted in a number of excellent studies, such as the influential work of Dieter Henrich and his colleagues on *Konstellationen*, Manfred Frank's work on early philosophical romanticism, and Frederick Beiser's detailed discussions of many of the so-called "minor" philosophers of classical German philosophy. Indeed, the change from 'German Idealism' to 'classical German philosophy' itself illustrates this very trend.

So far, of the authors that represented the psychological tradition, only Fries seems to have really benefited from these developments. While Fries was a very minor figure in German scholarship during most of the twentieth century, and almost completely absent from Anglophone work from this time,¹⁶ recently his name has appeared in a number of prominent publications. Above, I already mentioned the articles by Pulte and Gregory on Fries's philosophy of science in the volume edited by Friedman and Nordmann; Hoglebe and Herrmann edited a volume devoted exclusively to Fries (Hoglebe and Herrmann 1999); in his Hegel-Biography, Terry Pinkard noted, perhaps even somewhat too strongly, that "[a]fter 1809, [...] the real choice in modern philosophy had come down to Fries or Hegel" (Pinkard 2000, 431), and his *German Philosophy 1760–1860* (Pinkard 2002) contains, amongst chapters on the usual suspects, a full chapter on Fries's philosophy;¹⁷ and Paul Franks, in a recent article, discussed Fries as a "post-Kantian response to the standoff between transcendental philosophy and naturalistic methodology" (Franks 2007). Though Franks also mentions Beneke in the context of his discussion of Fries, the philosophy of the former remains neglected in modern scholarship. This is unfortunate, for, as I hope to have shown, Beneke's philosophy remains a highly interesting topic of study, especially for those scholars who are interested in the disciplinary shifts in the wake of Kant's philosophy, or in the emancipation of psychology as an autonomous science. Thinkers such as Heusinger, Bouterwek, and, to a lesser extent, Schmid, are admittedly not similarly suited for individual studies, but

¹⁶ The only real exceptions are (Leary 1978, and 1982), but these were published in social science journals.

¹⁷ Regrettably, Pinkard's account of Fries's philosophy, though not unsympathetic, contains a number of glaring errors. Most strangely (aside perhaps from his complete neglect of Fries's notion of deduction), Pinkard describes Fries as defending an *a priori* psychology that is intended to only be descriptive, not explanatory (Pinkard 2002, 205). Even a casual reading of the relevant texts should suffice to learn that this could not be further from the truth.

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they remain of interest for studies of Kantian Psychology as a tradition. One may hope that the study of this tradition as a whole will be stimulated significantly by Beiser's *The Genesis of Neo-Kantianism*.

In the present dissertation I myself have tried to balance more systematic discussions of the ideas of individual philosophers who represented Kantian Psychology with more contextual discussions about how these ideas fit in with broader trends within this tradition as a whole. As the foregoing chapters have hopefully made clear, it is only when we are aware of this context, and of the ideas that individual thinkers such as Fries and Beneke shared with other representatives of their tradition that we can appreciate what is really novel in their own work. Of course, the psychological tradition that formed the context in which these authors wrote is itself only a small part of a wider context; that of German philosophy around 1800. As I discussed in the introduction, this dissertation has also been an attempt to contribute to our understanding of this larger context, in which Kantianism was not simply a philosophical position, but rather an open discursive field in which thinkers who defended radically different positions could all make a claim to being the true heirs of Kant's philosophy. If we, as historians of philosophy, want to understand this complex discursive field, it is essential that we bracket our own modern interpretations of Kant's philosophy and lend a sympathetic ear to such thinkers, no matter how misguided they may seem at first sight; that we try and find out what *they* saw as the spirit of Kant's philosophy, and why *they* felt that this was valuable. In the present dissertation I have followed this approach. Should my work have been successful, the reader will now at least be somewhat more hesitant to agree with Otto Liebmann: perhaps psychological interpretations are not "das ärgste Mißverständnis, was ihr widerfahren kann" after all.

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Samenvatting

De meeste filosofiestudenten en leken die voor het eerst kennis maken met Immanuel Kants beroemdste werk, de *Kritiek van de Zuivere Rede*, of met de wat kortere *Prolegomena*, raken er snel van overtuigd dat Kants filosofie gebaseerd is op een psychologische theorie over hoe mensen kennis over de wereld vergaren. Dit komt ten eerste omdat zijn werk vol staat van de psychologische terminologie uit zijn tijd: Kant spreekt continu in termen van de zogenaamde kenvermogens (zoals de zintuiglijkheid, het verbeeldingsvermogen, het verstand, en de rede), en verschillende soorten mentale voorstellingen (zoals aanschouwingen, begrippen, en ideeën). Ten tweede leunen veel van zijn argumenten op wat in eerste instantie moeilijk anders dan als sterke psychologische claims geïnterpreteerd kunnen worden. De beroemdste voorbeelden hiervan zijn zonder twijfel dat ruimte, tijd, en causaliteit niet onafhankelijk van de mens in de wereld bestaan, maar slechts vormen zijn die door de menselijke geest gebruikt worden om orde en eenheid te scheppen in een oneindig complexe zintuiglijke ervaring die zonder deze vormen volkomen onbegrijpelijk zou blijven.

Alhoewel een psychologische lezing van Kants werk dus erg voor de hand ligt, hebben de meeste Kant-onderzoekers gedurende de twintigste eeuw zich hier sterk tegen verzet. Volgens deze onderzoekers *verwierp* Kant juist de psychologische benadering van de belangrijkste vragen uit de filosofie die veel van zijn beroemde voorgangers hadden genomen, en wilde hij een volledige scheiding vestigen tussen psychologische vragen over de manier waarop het menselijke kenvermogen werkt, en puur filosofische vragen over de aarde en mogelijkheidsvoorwaarden van kennis. De precieze redenen voor deze anti-psychologische houding onder Kant-experts zijn complex, maar deze kunnen niet los gezien worden van belangrijke ontwikkelingen aan het einde van de negentiende eeuw. In deze periode maakte de psychologie zich voor het eerst volledig los van de filosofie, en werd zij een zelfstandige wetenschap. In deze context was het logisch dat filosofen en psychologen zich vooral richtten op de vraag naar het principiële onderscheid tussen deze twee disciplines, in plaats van op de connecties. Deze houding had als resultaat dat het idee dat de

beantwoording van filosofische vraagstukken weleens afhankelijk zou kunnen zijn van psychologische theorieën erg populair werd. Historici, op hun beurt, wilden natuurlijk graag dat de filosofen die zij zelf bestudeerden relevant bleven voor de moderne filosofie, en daarom is het begrijpelijk dat de Kant-experts in de twintigste eeuw juist heel sterk de puur filosofische en de anti-psychologische dimensies van Kants werk benadrukten.

Vanwege de dominantie van anti-psychologische interpretaties van Kants werk onder de experts wordt er al decennialang aan de meeste universiteiten onderwezen dat psychologische interpretaties van Kants werk wellicht begrijpelijk, maar niettemin foutief zijn. Deze omslag heeft niet alleen gevolgen gehad voor de interpretatie van Kants eigen werk, maar ook voor de geschiedschrijving van het Kantianisme als traditie. Gedurende de late achttiende, en gehele negentiende eeuw was er namelijk een grote groep Kantianen die juist heel erg onder de indruk waren van wat zij zagen als Kant psychologische filosofie, en die deze filosofie verder probeerden te ontwikkelen middels psychologisch onderzoek. Vanuit het perspectief van de twintigste eeuwse Kant-onderzoekers moest het echter noodzakelijk lijken dat deze groep filosofen helemaal niets van Kant begrepen had, en dat het hier om deze reden ook niet werkelijk om Kantianen ging, maar om mensen die slechts dachten dat ze Kantianen waren. In het historisch onderzoek naar de Kantiaanse traditie is daarom bijna alle aandacht gegaan naar een aantal filosofen die beter in het moderne perspectief in te passen waren, en is de groep van psychologische Kantianen vrijwel volkomen genegeerd. Dit is erg jammer, omdat hierdoor ons begrip van de geschiedenis van het Kantianisme in sterke mate vervormd wordt. De huidige dissertatie is een poging om deze vervorming tegen te gaan, en om bij te dragen aan een completer en accurater begrip van de filosofische wereld in Duitsland rond 1800 door de vroege ontwikkeling van de psychologische benadering van Kants werk te analyseren.

De positie die verdedigd werd door de psychologische Kantianen noem ik Kantiaans Psychologisme, een naam die hier verder weinig toelichting behoeft. Binnen de groep filosofen die deze positie verdedigden waren er een flink aantal gedeelde belangen, overtuigingen, en invloeden. Inhoudelijk zijn echter twee thema's het meest van belang. Ten eerste *interpreteerden* al deze filosofen Kants filosofie als zijnde gebaseerd op een psychologische theorie. Ten tweede

waardeerden deze filosofen wat zij zagen als het psychologische uitgangspunt van de Kantiaanse filosofie positief. Dat wil zeggen, zij waren allen van mening dat filosofische theorieën gebaseerd moesten worden op een psychologische theorie over de werking van de menselijke geest. In deze dissertatie richt ik mij volledig op de eerste drie generaties van Kantianen die deze positie verdedigden, ruwweg van de publicatie van de *Kritiek van de Zuivere Rede* in 1781 tot en met de jaren dertig van de negentiende eeuw. Gedurende deze jaren onderging het Kantiaans Psychologisme een sterke ontwikkeling.

In het eerste hoofdstuk beschrijf ik de allereerste generatie van het Kantianisme, die ook wel de orthodoxe generatie genoemd kan worden. De reden hiervoor is dat de meeste Kantianen in deze tijd niet zozeer trachtten een eigen originele bijdrage aan de Kantiaanse filosofie te leveren, maar vooral probeerden om het werk van Kant te populariseren, en aan het grote publiek uit te leggen. Niettemin zie je al in deze jaren dat veel auteurs sterk het accent leggen op de psychologische dimensies van Kants filosofie, en dat veel van de psychologische thema's die in deze jaren (de jaren tachtig van de achttiende eeuw) aan bod komen gedurende de gehele psychologische receptie van Kants werk terug blijven komen. Dit zijn onder meer Kants theorie van de kenvermogens, zijn claims over ruimte en tijd als subjectieve aanschouwingsvormen van de werkelijkheid, en zijn claim dat de menselijke geest in het ervaren van de werkelijkheid niet slechts passief informatie in zich opneemt, maar actief verbindingen legt tussen elementen uit de zintuiglijke informatie (synthese).

Het grootste deel van de dissertatie (hoofdstuk twee, drie, en vier) gaat over de tweede generatie, die ruwweg gedateerd kan worden van 1790 tot in de jaren 1810. In hoofdstuk twee beschrijf ik ten eerste de overgang van de orthodoxie van de jaren '80 naar het meer creatieve Kantianisme van de jaren '90. Waar tijdens de orthodoxe jaren Kants werk vooral werd gepopulariseerd en verdedigd, daar namen de Kantianen van de jongere generatie een meer kritische houding aan. Zij wilden niet slechts herhalen wat Kant al had gezegd, maar daadwerkelijk een naam voor zichzelf maken in de filosofische wereld. In deze jaren werd de psychologie in Kants werk voor het eerst expliciet gethematiseerd en geproblematiseerd. Een belangrijke rol in deze ontwikkeling werd gespeeld door de beroemde Kantiaan Karl Leonhard Reinhold, die claimde

dat Kants filosofie theorie weliswaar de ware was, maar dat de psychologische theorie waarop deze rustte nog onvoldoende expliciet gemaakt en uitgewerkt was. In zijn *Poging tot een Nieuwe Theorie van het Voorstellingsvermogen*, als ook in later werk, trachtte hij deze uitwerking te leveren. Reinholds werk was erg invloedrijk, maar dat had als bijkomend resultaat dat Kants critici vanaf dat moment ook hun schijnwerpers richtten op de "Kantiaanse psychologie." De meest succesvolle van deze critici was Ernst Gottlob Schulze, die in zijn boek *Aenesidemus* met veel succes liet zien dat de door Reinhold verdedigde psychologische theorie ten eerste eenvoudig te weerleggen was op basis van aan alle mensen bekende mentale fenomenen, en ten tweede, zelfs als dit niet het geval was geweest, niettemin niet als fundament voor de Kantiaanse theorie gebruikt kon worden.

Uit deze kritiek werden twee radicaal verschillende consequenties getrokken door de Kantianen uit die tijd, hetgeen leidde tot een splitsing in de Kantiaanse traditie. De meest invloedrijke Kantiaan, Johann Gottlieb Fichte, trok de conclusie dat een psychologische theorie noodzakelijkerwijs te kwetsbaar was voor kritiek om als basis voor een ware filosofie te kunnen dienen. Hij en zijn volgers wilden daarom een revisie van het Kantianisme bewerkstelligen waaruit deze psychologie volkomen geëlimineerd zou zijn. Deze beweging analyseer ik kort aan het einde van hoofdstuk drie, voordat, in hoofdstuk vier en vijf, ik mij wend tot de filosofen die een direct daaraan tegengestelde conclusie trokken. Zij oordeelden dat Reinholds poging om een uitwerking te geven van de psychologische basis van Kants theorie inderdaad mislukt was, maar dat dit simpelweg betekende dat één filosoof gefaald had, en niet dat dit hele project opgegeven moest worden. Om deze reden trachtten zij te komen tot een sterkere psychologische basis voor Kants filosofie.

In hoofdstuk drie analyseer ik drie vroege pogingen uit de jaren 1790 om tot een dergelijke stevigere psychologische basis te komen. De drie auteurs die deze pogingen ondernamen (Johann Heusinger, Carl Christian Erhard Schmid, en Friedrich Bouterwek), probeerden op verschillende manieren om een beginpunt voor de filosofie te ontwikkelen die het beste kan worden aangeduid met de term (gebruikt door Heusinger en Bouterwek) 'psychologische propedeutica.' Zoals ik echter betoog in dit hoofdstuk vertoonden alle drie deze pogingen serieuze gebreken waarop zij ook door tijdgenoten werden aangevallen. Veel van deze

problemen hadden te maken met het feit dat de psychologie nog helemaal aan het begin stond van de weg naar zelfstandigheid als wetenschap, en dat er daarom nog geen duidelijk beeld bestond over de benadering die gekozen moest worden in de psychologie, of de methodes waarvan gebruik gemaakt kon worden. Hierdoor was het voor critici makkelijk om deze vroege pogingen tot het ontwikkelen van een Kantiaanse psychologie aan te vallen. Een tweede groot probleem was dat alhoewel de drie auteurs die ik behandel vast overtuigd waren van de noodzaak om de filosofie te baseren op een psychologisch beginpunt, ze geen helderheid verschaften over de precieze relatie tussen psychologisch onderzoek en de filosofisch-metafysische vragen die ze probeerden te beantwoorden. Hierdoor bleef het onduidelijk welke rol hun psychologische theorieën precies speelden in hun bredere filosofische werk.

Het eerste probleem zou gedurende bijna de gehele negentiende eeuw een rol blijven spelen, maar een duidelijk antwoord op de tweede vraag werd al in het eerste decennium van deze eeuw uitgewerkt door een van de belangrijkste denkers uit de traditie van het Kantiaans Psychologisme, Jakob Friedrich Fries. De oplossing van Fries, die ik in detail analyseer in hoofdstuk vier, was dat de psychologie een subjectieve rechtvaardiging kan leveren voor het aannemen van de principes van de metafysica. Concreet wil dit zeggen dat de psychologie kan aantonen dat deze principes de wetten reflecteren middels welke onze cognitieve vermogens de informatie verwerken die onze zintuigen aanleveren. Dit is weliswaar volgens Fries geen objectief bewijs voor de waarheid van deze metafysische principes (die immers gaan over de aard van de werkelijkheid als geheel, en niet over de aard van onze mentale vermogens), maar het toont wel aan dat wij als mensen alleen maar kennis over de wereld kunnen vergaren als wij ervan uitgaan dat deze principes waar zijn. Deze subjectieve rechtvaardiging van de aanname van de metafysische principes noemt Fries "deductie," en op basis van deze deductie weet Fries een groot deel van Kants filosofie te reconstrueren en te verdedigen.

In het vijfde (en laatste) hoofdstuk richt ik mij op de belangrijkste denker uit de derde generatie van het Kantiaans Psychologisme, Friedrich Eduard Beneke. Kenmerkend voor Beneke is dat hij een veel radicalere houding aannam ten aanzien van Kant dan denkers uit de tweede generatie. Terwijl iemand als Fries nog probeerde om Kants filosofie nog min of meer *en detail* te verdedigen

reduceerde Beneke deze hele filosofie tot één kernidee: dat al onze kennis uit de ervaring komt. Deze schijnbaar simpele these nam in Benekes handen zeer radicale vormen aan. De belangrijkste consequentie hiervan was een afwijzing van bijna alle eerdere filosofie. Filosofen tot en met Kant hadden volgens Beneke eigenlijk altijd geprobeerd om filosofische systemen te bouwen die volledig onafhankelijk waren van de ervaring. Als alle kennis uit de ervaring komt is dit echter volstrekt onrechtmatig. Filosofie, zo argumenteerde Beneke, moet daarom een empirische wetenschap worden. En het enige voor de hand liggende object van zo'n nieuwe empirische wetenschap was de menselijke geest. Filosofie, in andere woorden, moest volgens Beneke volledig omgevormd worden tot empirische psychologie. Zijn gehele project was er vervolgens op gericht om te laten zien hoe alle belangrijke subgebieden van de filosofie, zoals ethiek, logica, en metafysica, op volledig empirisch-psychologische wijze behandeld konden worden.

Ik eindig mijn reconstructie van de vroege psychologische benadering van Kants filosofie met deze zeer radicale vorm van het Kantiaans Psychologisme. In de conclusie, tenslotte, werp ik een bredere blik op deze Kantiaanse stroming vanuit drie verschillende perspectieven. Ten eerste bespreek ik de receptie van deze stroming tot aan het begin van de twintigste eeuw, waarin zij langzaam maar zeker uit de filosofische geschiedschrijving begon te verdwijnen. Ik beargumenteer daar dat deze verdwijning deels te wijten is aan een oversimplificering van de daadwerkelijke posities die verdedigd werden door de Kantiaanse Psychologen in de polemische context aan het eind van de negentiende eeuw waarin filosofen zich sterk afzetten tegen alles wat met psychologie te maken heeft. Vervolgens bespreek ik de tegenstelling die men in veel hedendaagse discussies kan vinden tussen psychologische en puur filosofische (epistemologische) interpretaties van Kant in het licht van het Kantiaans Psychologisme. Hier laat ik zien dat deze tegenstelling niet geschikt is voor een historisch adequaat begrip van Kants filosofie en de receptie daarvan, omdat de daadwerkelijke tegenstelling tussen psychologie en epistemologie pas zijn uiteindelijke vorm begint te krijgen in het midden van de negentiende eeuw. Uiteindelijk werp ik een blik op de toekomst, en op mogelijk verder historisch onderzoek naar de psychologische benadering in de receptie van Kants filosofie. De voorzichtig hoopvolle conclusie die ik daar trek is dat de condities voor een

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hernieuwde studie van deze historische stroming op dit moment uitstekend zijn. Men mag daarom wellicht hopen dat de huidige dissertatie niet op zichzelf zal blijven staan, maar een aanzet en inspiratiebron zal blijken voor zulk verder onderzoek.

Curriculum Vitae

Peter Sperber was born on May 24th, 1988 in Roosendaal, the Netherlands. In 2006, he began his studies in philosophy at Utrecht University, where he finished his bachelor degree in 2009 and his research master degree in 2012 (both *cum laude*). In 2011 he spent a semester at the Ludwig Maximilian University in Munich, where he was usually to be found reading dead German philosophers in the *Englischer Garten*. During the years in which he worked on his Ph.D., he taught a number of courses on the history of philosophy, presented work at conferences all through Europe, spent time abroad in Bordeaux, Barcelona, and Marseille, and authored various publications in international journals. He is currently living in Utrecht with his girlfriend Emily and their cat Immanuel.

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