

KARL LEONHARD REINHOLD  
AND THE ENLIGHTENMENT

# Studies in German Idealism

*Series Editor:*

Reinier Munk, *VU University, Amsterdam, The Netherlands*

*Advisory Editorial Board:*

Frederick Beiser, *Syracuse University, U.S.A.*

Daniel Dahlstrom, *Boston University, U.S.A.*

George di Giovanni, *McGill University, Montreal, Canada*

Paul Guyer, *University of Pennsylvania, U.S.A.*

Detlev Pätzold, *University of Groningen, The Netherlands*

Andrea Poma, *University of Torino, Italy*

## VOLUME 9

For other titles published in this series, go to  
[www.springer.com/series/6545](http://www.springer.com/series/6545)

# KARL LEONHARD REINHOLD AND THE ENLIGHTENMENT

by

GEORGE DI GIOVANNI

 Springer

*Editor*

George di Giovanni  
Department of Philosophy  
McGill University  
Montreal QC  
Canada  
george.di\_giovanni@mcgill.ca

ISBN 978-90-481-3226-3 e-ISBN 978-90-481-3227-0

DOI 10.1007/978-90-481-3227-0

Springer Dordrecht Heidelberg London New York

Library of Congress Control Number: 2009941848

© Springer Science+Business Media B.V. 2010

No part of this work may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, microfilming, recording or otherwise, without written permission from the Publisher, with the exception of any material supplied specifically for the purpose of being entered and executed on a computer system, for exclusive use by the purchaser of the work

Printed on acid-free paper

Springer is part of Springer Science+Business Media ([www.springer.com](http://www.springer.com))

# Acknowledgments

The Montréal International Workshop on Reinhold and the Enlightenment (2007), of which these papers are the product, was made possible by a generous grant from the *Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada*, and was further financially supported by the *Fonds de recherche sur la société et la culture (Québec)*, McGill University, and the Université de Montréal. To all these contributors it is my pleasure to express my gratitude. I also wish to thank Anna Ezekiel, doctoral student of Philosophy at McGill, for her help in organizing the workshop and also for her highly competent editorial work in preparing the final text of this volume.

The Editor



# Contents

|                                                                                                                                                 |            |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>1 Karl Leonhard Reinhold and the Enlightenment:<br/>Editor's Presentation .....</b>                                                          | <b>1</b>   |
| George di Giovanni                                                                                                                              |            |
| <b>Part I Reinhold, Freemason and Educator of Humankind</b>                                                                                     |            |
| <b>2 Reinhold, Franc-Maçon et philosophe de l'<i>Aufklärung</i> .....</b>                                                                       | <b>15</b>  |
| Ives Radrizzani                                                                                                                                 |            |
| <b>3 Le travail d'<i>Aufklärer</i> de Reinhold auprès<br/>de ses étudiants d'Iéna .....</b>                                                     | <b>29</b>  |
| Jean-François Goubet                                                                                                                            |            |
| <b>4 The Conception of Enlightenment in Reinhold's<br/>"Letters on the Kantian Philosophy" .....</b>                                            | <b>43</b>  |
| Martin Bondeli                                                                                                                                  |            |
| <b>5 Reinhold, Lavater et les Lumières .....</b>                                                                                                | <b>53</b>  |
| Pierluigi Valenza                                                                                                                               |            |
| <b>6 Bürgerliche Aufklärung und streng systematische<br/>Philosophie. Zum Verhältnis von Leben und<br/>Philosophie bei K. L. Reinhold .....</b> | <b>65</b>  |
| Michael Gerten                                                                                                                                  |            |
| <b>Part II Reinhold and the Historical Turn</b>                                                                                                 |            |
| <b>7 Reason's Changing Needs: From Kant to Reinhold .....</b>                                                                                   | <b>89</b>  |
| Daniel Breazeale                                                                                                                                |            |
| <b>8 Reinhold, History, and the Foundation of Philosophy .....</b>                                                                              | <b>113</b> |
| Karl Ameriks                                                                                                                                    |            |

### Part III Reinhold in Struggle with Religious and Moral Issues

- 9 K. L. Reinhold und der Glaube der Vernunft** ..... 133  
Alessandro Lazzari
- 10 Reinhold a Kantian? “Practical Reason” in Reinhold’s  
“Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie”  
and *Versuch einer neuen Theorie des menschlichen  
Vorstellungsvermögens*** ..... 145  
Karianne Marx
- 11 Le «besoin de la raison» dans les *Lettres sur la philosophie  
kantienne* (1786–1787)** ..... 161  
Claude Piché
- 12 Zwei Wege der Kantischen Praktischen Vernunft:  
Reinhold und Fichte** ..... 181  
Marco Ivaldo

### Part IV Reinhold and Systematicity: Theory of Science and Theory of Mind

- 13 Inhalt und Gegenstand der Vorstellung in Reinholds  
Elementarphilosophie** ..... 197  
Faustino Fabbianelli
- 14 Reinhold’s Critics: Kantian and Anti-Kantian** ..... 209  
Brigitte Sassen
- 15 Reinhold’s Road to Fichte: The Elementary-Philosophy  
of 1795/96** ..... 221  
Sven Bernecker
- 16 Architektur und System. Das Verhältnis  
von Gedankengebäude und Baugedanke** ..... 241  
Petra Lohmann
- 17 How Reinhold Helped Hegel Understand the German  
Enlightenment and Grasp the Pantheism Controversy** ..... 255  
Jeffrey Reid

### Part V Appendix: Sources and Materials

- 18 Zwei Wiener Reden Reinholds: Ein Beitrag zu Reinholds  
Frühphilosophie** ..... 269  
Karianne Marx und Ernst-Otto Onnasch



|                                                                                                                                                                      |            |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>19 Reinholds Vorlesungen 1792–1794 über die Kritik<br/>der reinen Vernunft und über Logik und Metaphysik:<br/>Kollegnachschriften Smidt, Kalmann, Krause.....</b> | <b>291</b> |
| Erich Fuchs                                                                                                                                                          |            |
| <b>Bibliography .....</b>                                                                                                                                            | <b>315</b> |
| <b>Author Index.....</b>                                                                                                                                             | <b>329</b> |
| <b>Subject Index.....</b>                                                                                                                                            | <b>333</b> |



# Abbreviations

AK = Kant I (1902ff) Immanuel Kant: Gesammelte Schriften. edited by the Royal Prussian Academy of the Sciences. Reimer, Berlin

ALZ = *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung*

*Batscha* = Reinhold KL (1977) Karl Leonhard Reinhold: Schriften zur Religionskritik und Aufklärung 1782–1784. Batscha Z (ed). Jacobi, Bremen and Wolfenbüttel

*Beyträge* = Reinhold KL (1790, 1794) Beyträge zur Berichtigung der bisheriger Mißverständnisse der Philosophen. 2 Vols. Jena. Reprint edited with an introduction and commentary by Fabbianelli, F. Felix Meiner, Hamburg, 2003, 2004

*Beyträge* II.1 = Reinhold KL (1794) Über den Unterschied zwischen dem gesunden Verstande und der philosophierenden Vernunft in Rücksicht auf die Fundamente des durch beide möglichen Wissens. See *Beyträge* above

*Briefe* = Reinhold KL (1786–1787) Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie. Der Teutsche Merkur 3 (1786): 99–127, 127–141; 1 (1787): 3–39, 117–142; 2 (1787): 167–185; 3 (1787): 67–88, 142–165, 247–278. Cited according to letter number (1–8)

*Briefe* (1790–1792) = Reinhold KL (1790–1792) Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie. 2 vols. Leipzig: Göschen. Reprint edited with commentary by Bondeli M. Schwabe, Basel, 2007, 2008

*Briefwechsel* = Baggesen J (1831) Aus Jens Baggesen's Briefwechsel mit Karl Leonhard Reinhold und Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi. Baggesen C, Baggesen A (eds). 2 vols. F. A. Brockhaus, Leipzig

*Differenzschrift* = Hegel GWH (1801) Differenz des Fichte'schen und Schelling'schen Systems der Philosophie, in Beziehung auf Reinhold's Beyträge zur leichtern Übersicht des Zustands der Philosophie zu Anfang des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts. Seider, Jena. Reprinted in GW IV:1–92. Translated into English by H. S. Harris and W. Cerf as The difference between Fichte's and Schelling's system of philosophy, in connection with Reinhold's contributions to a more convenient survey of the state of philosophy at the beginning of the nineteenth century. SUNY Press, Albany, 1977

*Entwurf* = [Reinhold KL] (1795) Entwurf zu einem Einverständnis unter Wohlgesinnten über die Hauptmomente der moralischen Angelegenheiten als Versuch eines Beitrags zur Läuterung und Befestigung der öffentlichen Überzeugung. Circulated in manuscript form in 1795. Published in *Verhandlungen über die Grundbegriffe und Grundsätze der Moralität aus dem Gesichtspunkte des gemeinen und gesunden Verstandes*, by Karl Leonhard Reinhold. F. Bohn, Lübeck/Leipzig, pp 161–210, 1798.

*Erhards Denkwürdigkeiten* = Varnhagen von Ense KA (ed) (1830) Denkwürdigkeiten des Philosophen und Arztes Johann Benjamin Erhard. J. G. Cotta, Stuttgart and Tübingen

*Fichte im Gespräch* = Fuchs E (ed) (1978–1992) J. G. Fichte im Gespräch: Berichte der Zeitgenossen. 6 vols. Frommann-Holzboog, Stuttgart–Bad Cannstatt

*Fichtes Briefe* = Fichte JG (1919) Fichtes Briefe. Bergmann E (ed). Insel, Leipzig

*Fundament* (English tr.) = Reinhold KL (1791) Über das Fundament des philosophischen Wissens. J. M. Mauke, Jena. Partial translation into English as “The foundation of philosophical knowledge (excerpt)” by George di Giovanni in di Giovanni G, Harris HS (eds) *Between Kant and Hegel: Texts in the Development of Post-Kantian Idealism*, 2nd edn. Hackett, Indianapolis, pp 51–103, 2000

*Fundament* (Meiner) = Reinhold KL (1791) Über das Fundament des philosophischen Wissens. J. M. Mauke, Jena. Reprint edited by Wolfgang H. Schrader. Meiner, Hamburg, 1978

GA = Fichte JG (1962–2005) Gesamtausgabe der bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften. Lauth R, Fuchs E, Gliwitzky H (eds). Frommann-Holzboog, Stuttgart–Bad Cannstatt

GGA = *Göttingische Anzeige von gelehrten Sachen*

GW = Hegel GWF (1968) Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel: Gesammelte Werke, edited by Rheinisch-Westphalischen Akademie der Wissenschaften. Meiner, Hamburg

HZM = Reinhold KL (1785) *Herzenserleichterung zweyer Menschenfreunden*, in vertraulichen Briefen über Johann Kaspar Lavaters Glaubensbekenntnis. Reich, Frankfurt/Leipzig.

*Jacobi's Briefwechsel* = Roth F (ed) (1825–1827) Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi's auserlesener Briefwechsel. 2 vols. Fleischer, Leipzig

*Korrespondenz I* (1773–1788) = Reinhold KL (1983) Karl Leonhard Reinhold Korrespondenzausgabe der Österreichischen Akademie. Fabbianelli F, Heller E, Lauth R, Hiller K, Radrizzani I, Schrader W (eds). Vol. 1, *Korrespondenz 1773–1788*. Frommann-Holzboog, Stuttgart–Bad Cannstatt

KrV = Kant I (1781, 1787) *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*. Translated into French by A. J.-L. Delamarre and F. Marty in *Kant: Œuvres philosophiques*. Vol. 1. Paris:

Gallimard, 1980; by A. Tremesaygues and B. Pacaud as *Critique de la raison pure*. Paris: PUF, n.d. Translated into English by Norman Kemp Smith as *Critique of pure reason*. London: Macmillan, 1929; by Werner S. Pluhar as *Critique of pure reason*. Hackett, Indianapolis, IN, 1996; by Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood as *Critique of pure reason*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge/New York, 1998. Cited according to the standard pagination of the A (1781) and B (1787) editions

*Letters* = Reinhold KL (2005) *Letters on the Kantian Philosophy*. Ameriks K (ed), Hebbeler J (trans). Cambridge University Press, Cambridge

*Offenbarungskritik* = [Fichte JG] (1792) *Versuch einer Kritik aller Offenbarung*. Hartung, Königsberg

*Phenomenology* = Hegel GWH (1807) *Phänomenologie des Geistes*. Bamberg and Würzburg. Reprint Wessels HF, Clairmont H (eds). Meiner, Hamburg, 1988

TM = *Der Teutsche Merkur*

*Verhandlungen* = Reinhold KL (1798) *Verhandlungen über die Grundbegriffe und Grundsätze der Moralität aus dem Gesichtspunkte des gemeinen und gesunden Verstandes*. F. Bohn, Lübeck/Leipzig

*Verhandlungen* (English tr./tr. angl.) = Reinhold KL (1798) *Verhandlungen über die Grundbegriffe und Grundsätze der Moralität aus dem Gesichtspunkte des gemeinen und gesunden Verstandes*. Partial translation into English by Sabine Roehr as “Deliberations of sound common sense, for the purpose of evaluating moral, right-ful, political and religious matters.” In: Roehr S (ed) *A Primer on German Enlightenment: With a Translation of Karl Leonhard Reinhold’s “The Fundamental Concepts and Principles of Ethics.”* University of Missouri Press, Columbia, pp 157–251, 1995

*Vermischte Schriften* = Reinhold KL (1796, 1797). *Auswahl vermischter Schriften*. 2 vols. J. M. Mauke, Jena

*Versuch* = Reinhold KL (1789) *Versuch einer neuen Theorie des menschlichen Vorstellungsvermögens*. Wiedtmann and Pauke, Prague/Jena. Reprint Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, Darmstadt, 1963



# Chapter 1

## Karl Leonhard Reinhold and the Enlightenment: Editor's Presentation

George di Giovanni

Karl (or “Carl,” as Reinhold himself spelled his name) Leonhard Reinhold is a philosophers’ philosopher, so to speak—not widely known outside the circle of cognoscenti except, perhaps, as a popularizer of Kant who repeatedly changed philosophical positions during his lifetime and, at one point, was the object of one of Hegel’s most scathing attacks. Such allegations are not altogether false. But neither do they reflect the true character of Reinhold as a philosopher, or his position in the German intellectual scene at the crucial time of transition from late Enlightenment to early Romantic age. As a matter of fact, the popularization of Kant had begun at the hand of the Jena theologians long before Reinhold’s publication of his first series of Kantian Letters in 1785/86 (see Hinske 1995, 231–43). Reinhold’s specific contribution to this popularization process was the arguably very constructive move of injecting the Critique of Reason into the Spinoza-dispute that Jacobi had instigated in 1785, thereby altering both the tenor of the dispute and the course that the reception of Kant’s critical work was to take. As for Hegel’s criticism of Reinhold, it must be viewed in context (see *Differenzschrift*, GW 4,1–92). The fact is that Hegel had held Reinhold in high esteem when a student of theology at Tübingen, and that his first exposure to Kant’s Critique had been through Reinhold’s interpretation of it (see J. Reid, in this volume). This is a circumstance that was to have definite later consequences. Hegel’s mature work might owe more to seminal ideas occasioned by Reinhold than Hegel himself might have recognized or would have been ready to admit. Finally, regarding Reinhold’s much publicized changes of philosophical positions, it must be said that these changes were in Reinhold’s attitude towards other philosophers and do not, therefore, necessarily denote an incapacity on his part to pursue a coherent and consistent personal philosophical agenda. On the contrary, the changes can be seen, on the one hand, as indications of the new clarity that Reinhold had achieved in each case, when confronted by a new philosophical claim, regarding his own fundamental beliefs, and, on the other hand, as evidence of a laudable moral quality. Reinhold was not

---

G. di Giovanni  
McGill University, Montréal

one to subordinate loyalty for any school of thought to his unqualified pursuit of truth, regardless of where that pursuit might take him.

So much to set the record straight and clear the air of misleading prejudices. The fact nevertheless remains that Reinhold was not a philosopher on a par in originality and profundity with such of his contemporaries as Kant, Fichte or Hegel, and why in his day many thought that indeed he was on a par with them, or why he would have had the influence that he actually had, or why we should bother with him at all—all this needs explaining, at least to the extent of providing some general context for the essays in this volume. To state the case in brief, Reinhold's appeal both as *Mensch* and philosopher, and the consequent source of his influence, lay in the unique mixture of strengths and weaknesses that he exhibited precisely as *Mensch* and philosopher. As an individual, his strength lay in his life-long adherence to personalist values that were typical of the Enlightenment. As a philosopher, he demonstrated his intellectual creativity by recognizing and exploring the new possibilities that Kant's critical philosophy offered for grounding these same values on perhaps a more solid conceptual foundation—in effect hijacking Kant's critical project for the purposes of an agenda which was still that of the Enlightenment. Again, as an individual he gave evidence of the authenticity of his beliefs by eventually entertaining doubts about the capacity of critical reason to deliver on the moral promises that he had originally seen it as offering, to the point of even harboring, in company with Jacobi, the suspicion that in fact the new idealism undermined the same values which he, Reinhold, had hoped that it would buttress. These were his strengths. As for his weaknesses, his shortcoming as a philosopher lay in his failure to recognize where the revolutionary aspect of Kant's concept of reason and rationality truly lay, in this way blunting the violence of Kant's critical revolution by shrouding it into the abstractions of a still Enlightenment reason. And as both *Mensch* and philosopher, it lay in his failure to recognize that, in order to re-establish his personalist values on a stronger conceptual basis, one would have had to carry the same revolution even further than Kant himself, and even Fichte, had done, disembarassing it of the Enlightenment abstractions under which both Kant and Fichte still labored. Reinhold, in other words, was not enough of a revolutionary. He might have indeed promoted Masonic and even Illuminist projects all his life long (see Radrizzani, in this volume), and he might have never demurred in defending the proclaimed ideals of the French revolution. But this is precisely the point. His mindset never went beyond the abstractions of those ideals. The net result was the picture that we have of Reinhold, *Mensch* and philosopher, at the turn of the nineteenth century. This is the Reinhold who gravitates together with Jacobi towards the religious positivism of Bouterwek, Fries and Schleiermacher, while at the same time upholding the abstruse logical realism of Bardili, and finally falling back on a cure for all philosophical and cultural diseases based on Hamann's old idea of a critique of language. In itself this last was not at all a bad idea, except that, when advanced as a prescription for social therapy, it gave evidence of a strange quietism, a basically Tory belief that all is well with us if we are just clear about it. But is not this picture—I mean, this recognition that after Kant nothing can be quite the same as before, yet this recourse in the search of something new to fragments



of what was in fact already past—is not this a dress-rehearsal of much of the nineteenth century? Reinhold is of historical and philosophical interest because he, more so than any of his contemporaries, stands as a transitional figure mediating the late Aufklärung and the nineteenth century. A logical sequel to the present volume would be one on the theme of precisely Reinhold and the nineteenth century.

The case of Reinhold (1757–1823) is a complex one. I have stated it only in outline and, admittedly, much too vaguely. Let me add some details—first, in regard to his personal life. At first a novice in the Jesuit order until its dissolution, Reinhold was eventually ordained priest as a member of the Congregation of the Barnabites. Even as a priest in Vienna, however, he became deeply involved in the city in the activities of the local Masonic lodge which, at the time, was dominated by the ideology of the Illuminati. The lodge was clearly committed to the secret schemes of social engineering promoted by that sect. Reinhold's extensive Masonic-inspired social activities, including his later attempts at reforming the society itself, are well documented. They continued unabated, but in Protestant Germany, after the society had been dissolved in Catholic Austria and Catholic Bavaria, and after Reinhold himself, finally repudiating his monastic vows, had fled Vienna with the help of the local Masons and had found refuge in Protestant Weimar. It is in this city that Reinhold joined Wieland (whose daughter he married) in the production of the *Teutscher Merkur* and, on the pages of this same journal, published his first series of the so-called Kantian Letters. In these articles he presented Kant (an author whom he had earlier criticized as an example of uninspired scholasticism) as the mediator between Jacobi and Mendelssohn. The great public success of the Letters led shortly after to his appointment as professor of Kantian philosophy to a newly established chair at the University of Jena. It is at this time, arguably the most creative in Reinhold's life, that he attained his highest standing in the public eye, gaining the reputation of being, after Kant, the new great German philosopher. At Jena Reinhold formulated his first attempts at systematizing Kant's Transcendental Idealism on the basis of a single principle, thus making its truth transparent and acceptable to everyone. Also at Jena he got involved in his earliest and most bitter disputes (notably with his colleague C. C. E. Schmid and the eccentric but philosophically acute Solomon Maimon), while at the same time winning a large following among his students.<sup>1</sup> Some of them remained loyal to him to the end. But Reinhold did not stay long at Jena. For reasons that are still not well understood, he abandoned his academic chair in the city (where he was replaced by Fichte, the new philosophical rising star) in order to accept a university position in the far northern city of Kiel, in effect exiling himself from the hubbub of intellectual activities in Germany. But the exile was only geographic. At Kiel, Reinhold still continued his massive literary output—still experimenting with the idealism of Kant, then with that of Fichte; always concerned with the issue of what constituted true human freedom and genuine religion; never reticent to engage in, or contribute

---

<sup>1</sup>For a discussion of his activities with the student societies, see Goubet (in this volume).

to, disputes and debates (notably the one that eventually drove Fichte away from Jena); and always relentless in his efforts at social reform.

This is a short sketch of a very active life, an epigraph rather than a life. But it suffices to bring out the one element which, more than any other, makes Reinhold a man of the Enlightenment. Reinhold saw himself, first and foremost, as an educator of humankind—his vocation, that of bringing the light of reason to the masses of the people and in this way of giving birth to a new, rationally enlightened humanism. And this was a vocation inspired by the optimistic belief (typical of the Enlightenment movement) that human nature is essentially rational; that all people, therefore, once the obscurantist influences of political tyranny and vested interests have been removed and the truths of reason are clearly presented to them, could not but accept these truths and behave accordingly. It is this Enlightenment belief that provides the connecting thread that runs across Reinhold's changes in philosophical positions and in fact gives them at least programmatic coherence. It explains both Reinhold's social activities, which surely were a continuation in a new mode of what the young Reinhold must have considered as part of his priestly pastoral vocation, and his concern with the rhetoric of philosophical discourse. Reinhold might have indeed been inspired in his first attempts at systematizing Kantianism by Kant's idea of an architectonic of reason. But in Reinhold's mindset the idea was invested from the start with a pragmatic meaning that it did not necessarily have for Kant. This is all to the credit of Reinhold, all evidence of his originality. But it was also the factor that most of all stood in the way of his appreciating Kant's own originality—of recognizing how much Kant had broken from the tradition within which Reinhold, on the contrary, still operated. This is a point to which I have already alluded, and is in need now of further elaboration.

Much could be said on the subject. In the present forum I restrict myself to four points which, more than any other, highlight the issues with which the essays that follow are grappling, namely the historical nature of philosophical discourse, the primacy of practical reason, the possibility of a religion of reason, and the place of sensibility in Reinhold's theory of mind.

1. Reinhold has been credited for having originated the "historical turn," that is, the conflation of philosophy and history of philosophy, that was to become the hallmark of Hegelianism and of much of nineteenth century philosophy. And there is indeed no doubt that Reinhold is the one who gave a new twist to what was fundamentally an Enlightenment belief, itself a secularization of Christian eschatology, in the progression of history towards a final revelation of truth. He famously interpreted this progression as a play of opposing philosophical positions—each true but limited in its truth; each therefore logically calling for completion in the opposite position; the two calling together for a synthesis in a third, which third, itself limited in its own way, calls for completion in an opposite, thus repeating the process at a more comprehensive level of truth. As one would expect, Reinhold locates the appearance on the historical scene of Kant's critical project at the point where all the aspects of truth have serially already been exposed. Kant's contribution was to show how they could be reconciled negatively, i.e., by duly limiting them; Reinhold's own, to show how this could be done positively by deriving the various aspects from one single

principle. All this was, of course, highly imaginative and original. It must be remembered, however, that the school-philosophy on which Reinhold must have been trained in his seminary days was not innocent of historical considerations; that, on the contrary, referring to the tradition was *de rigueur* in scholastic disputations. Reinhold's account of past opinions was certainly richer in historical content (though not necessarily more accurate or sophisticated) than anything that the school-texts had to offer. Yet his pattern of historico-philosophical progression seems strangely to follow that of a scholastic *quæstio disputata*: (1) *videtur quod*, (2) *sed contra*, (3) *respondeo dicendum quod*, where the *respondeo* represents a way of overcoming the opposition of the two just-stated positions. The difference, which is again a mark of Enlightenment triumphalism, is that Reinhold believed that he could make a complete historical system of these positions and counter-positions, and that his *respondeo*, coming as it did at the maturity of time, could be final and all-comprehensive.

Also Kant's dialectic of reason follows this basic scholastic scheme, and it is likely that Reinhold, however conditioned to it by earlier education, directly drew his inspiration from it. Here, however, is where Reinhold failed to see where Kant's originality truly lay, and, unlike Fichte or Hegel, failed to exploit it by carrying it out to its logical conclusion. The point is that Kant's dialectic of reason was intended as a means to stay what he took to be reason's tendency to fall into illusions, a tendency which he even called "natural" and which, though controllable, cannot be eliminated (KrV, A297/B353ff.). Now, that reason generates its own illusions; that it can be, therefore, the source of error; but that it is nonetheless capable of setting up its own tribunal to bring these illusions to trial—this, I believe, is where Kant's great revolution lay, one incomparably greater than the so-called Copernican turn, the epistemic value of which was at any rate highly dubious. By that claim, Kant had put an end with one single stroke to the long-standing Platonic tradition which, by making reason infallible, could explain everything except the fact that we make mistakes, and had to account for the latter phenomenon with such *ad hoc* explanations as the "weakness of the senses" and/or the "weakness of the will." Error (and this applies to moral error as well, as we shall see in a moment) has its source in reason itself. But, if reason is naturally given to delusion, and philosophy is the work of reason, it follows that the latter must necessarily begin its search for truth from a fallen state, always by first trying to recognize, and to extricate itself from, a conceptual delusion which, historically, it has already incurred. In this sense, historicity is essential to philosophy, its work necessarily a dialogue with its past. It also follows that to believe that one can attain a system in which the truth of things can finally be expounded to the satisfaction of all, as Reinhold believed, must be itself a delusion. Reinhold's "historical turn" is superficial. It is still an illusionary show (a *Schein*) of Enlightenment reason. This is the most notable example of what I meant when I said that Reinhold had in fact blunted the revolutionary edge of Kant's Critique by shrouding it in Enlightenment abstractions.

One can, however, sympathize with Reinhold. Kant himself had apparently not fully recognized the revolutionary implications of his idea of reason. If rationality

is inherently discursive, and therefore inherently self-critical and self-reformable; if meaning is the product of precisely this rational discursiveness, then the very idea of a pure objectivity which only a supposed purely intellectual intuition would be able to deliver—an idea which Kant still entertained as a regulative hypothesis—ceases to make any sense at all. For to attain any such objectivity would entail stepping outside the realm of meaning, and thereby lapsing into a state of purely natural existence where the very notion of “objectivity” loses contextual meaning. This is not to say that, on Kant’s understanding of discursive reason, “truth” necessarily becomes a merely rhetorical device, as if Kant were a post-modernist *avant du temps*. On the contrary, what it means is that issues of truth can be significantly raised, and significantly resolved, only within well defined spatio-temporal limits, yet that within those limits “truth” truly applies. Of course, this is exactly what Kant had in mind. But to the extent that he retained *as normative*, albeit problematically, both the idea of a view of things from no particular point of view and the associated myth of a “thing in itself” which we are “fire-walled” (so to speak) ever to attain, to that extent he had reduced the whole realm of experience to mere phenomena. But phenomena have only ersatz existence. They are nothing in themselves. In a reality like theirs which, not unlike that of Spinoza’s modes, is essentially a disappearing act, strict limits are not possible. Kant had de facto undermined his very project of establishing significant limits to the search for truth.

Now Fichte and Hegel had recognized both the revolutionary character of Kant’s idea of discursive reason, and also the consequences of retaining the “thing in itself” as understood and used by Kant for systematic purposes.<sup>2</sup> How they dealt with the new situation is a problem all by itself that does not concern us here.<sup>3</sup> So far as Hegel is concerned, it meant that true limits are ultimately to be found only in the works of the spirit, i.e., in nature as recreated in the medium of thought. Accordingly, it also meant for him that the exclusive content of the so-called absolute idea is “method,” or reason’s own capacity to generate meaning. Be that as it may, the point now is that Reinhold, far from recognizing the dubious validity of Kant’s alleged critical ignorance, exploited it instead (certainly contrary to anything that Kant himself had in mind) as a warrant for re-introducing through the back-door, under the rubric now of noumena that can be thought of but not known, the same psychological and theological constructs that past metaphysics had advanced dogmatically. The failure this time was not just one of not appreciating where the nerve of Kant’s critical revolution truly lay, but of believing that, after Kant, things still could be as they were before.

2. The interests of practical reason provided the warrant for the legitimization of what otherwise were, on Kant’s critical premises, purely subjective constructs of reason. One can understand why Kant’s stated supremacy of practical over

---

<sup>2</sup>There are perfectly legitimate, because limited, contexts where it makes perfect sense to speak of “a thing” in itself.

<sup>3</sup>For the difference that Fichte made, see di Giovanni (2005), Ch. 6.

theoretical reason would have appealed to Reinhold. It suited his temperamentally pragmatic nature and his whole attitude towards philosophy, which he understood as a science of right living. One must also give credit to him for having understood that the way in which Kant had conceptualized that supremacy, namely by identifying the “will” with “practical reason,” directly led to a formalism in moral matters. It elevated the moral agent to the status of an impersonal, universal principle of lawfulness, while by the same token demoting him as an historical self, reducing him to the status of a material that has no moral value per se but which must be subsumed under laws that transcend him precisely as individual. But it was the historical individuality of the self that was of special interest to Reinhold. Accordingly, Reinhold refused to identify “will” and “reason,” and reasserted the basically Christian belief that the human individual has freedom of choice, that is to say, that the will is originally undetermined with respect to the moral law and itself the originaive cause that overcomes this indeterminacy. Reinhold’s claim was at the time a scandal to many. It notoriously gave rise to yet another hotly fought dispute in the eighteenth century’s waning years (see Piché, in this volume; di Giovanni 2005, Ch. 4).

Also Fichte, who had accepted Kant’s stated supremacy of the practical over the theoretical reason, had however refused to accept the identification of reason and will. Like Reinhold, he too was to reaffirm the human capacity for free choice. But Fichte was to couch the issue of freedom in terms which were completely new and more in keeping with Kant’s revolutionary idea of reason. Reinhold had set up the issue still in cosmological terms, on the still Leibnizian assumption of a physically harmonious universe, the kind that a theologian such Johann J. Spalding, or, for that matter, Adam Weishaupt, the founder of the *Illuminati*, would have accepted. And he became involved, therefore, in a fundamentally still scholastic debate as to whether, in such a universe, there is any room at all for indeterminacy, let alone for a particular yet self-determining cause. This was precisely the kind of debate that Kant wanted to eliminate from metaphysics by relegating it to the realm of the “*for us* unknown,” but which Reinhold was reintroducing on the warrant of an interest of practical reason. In fact, the debate had no relevance at all to the issue of human freedom as Fichte now understood it. The issue was rather one of determining how nature *de facto* appears to us once reason has intervened in our experience of it. This is Kant’s reason, essentially a reflective and idealizing capacity. Its immediate effect is that, when *what is the case* according to nature is measured against *what ideally might be the case*, that is to say, when confronted by the possibilities that reason presents in accordance to its interests precisely as reason, nature itself becomes morally problematic. Its being what it is becomes a morally contingent situation towards which, whether by simply acquiescing to it, or rebelling against it, or despairing about it, or building hopes on it, or what have you, we must *freely* take a moral stand. In other words, it is the moral indeterminacy of nature, itself brought about by the intervention of reason, which is at issue in matters of human choice—not its physical determinacy which comes into play only in particular contexts and in morally contained limits. Of course, all of this could have been

gathered directly from Kant. But Fichte avoided the formalism of Kant's moral theory by capitalizing precisely on the historicity which, on a critical understanding of reason, necessarily extends to its practical employment as well. The fact is that reason is at work in experience even before we are aware of its presence and its effect. We are born into a moral situation, *parti pris*, and since such a situation consequently appears to us as itself a fact of nature, the feeling is that we have colluded with nature in bringing it about. In other words, no less than theoretical reason, practical reason is bound to begin its work from a fallen state, in an effort at redeeming by personal effort a decision already impersonally made. But this is a task that needs accomplishing through a program of moral clarification, and through the establishment of social institutions that make such a clarification possible. No cosmological theory about physically determinate or indeterminate causes, no worry about physical happiness (as if the latter had any moral value), would do the job.

Whether Fichte himself succeeded in the formulation of this program; whether his idea of a moral perfection which humans must strive to achieve but, like a necessarily transcendent goal, never hope to attain, betrays the presence in his mind of still classical metaphysical assumptions—all this constitutes an issue all by itself. Hegel, whose sensitivity to the historicity of reason is not in doubt, was notably to reject both the supremacy of practical over theoretical reason and the idea of an endless striving after moral perfection. But the point is that Fichte was exploring new ways of thinking that Kant's idea of reason had made possible. Whereas he was exposing the meaninglessness of the noumenal space which Kant, on the basis of a now critically maintained *docta ignorantia*, had still retained for classical metaphysics, Reinhold was instead still building on it. Here is again an instance of Reinhold advancing to the nineteenth century while still holding on to fragments of the past.

3. Reinhold was a pious man. Nobody will fault him for that. In fact, it is his piety which can be seen as providing, if not the logical coherence of his intellectual career, at least its steady motivational force. It was also the factor which, most likely, forced him finally to recognize the incompatibility of his basic beliefs and the new idealism that Kant had spawned. As in other areas, in that of religion Kant had been an innovator. It was a widely held Enlightenment belief that, once the dogmas of institutionalized religion were purified of all the non-essential content that was the produce of historical accident and the imagination, religious practices would either disappear or be re-established on a secure rational basis. The shortcoming of this view was that it failed to notice that, even granted on theoretical grounds that there is a God, and also granted that, as a matter of fact, the pious individual normally identifies the God to whom he prays or otherwise engages in cultic activities with the God whom he might also assume for scientific explanatory purposes, there is nonetheless a marked subjective difference between theoretical and religious belief. The move from the one to the other needs explaining. Why would anyone want to pray to a supposed First Cause? Or is the Reason which the French Revolution enthroned on the altar of the Notre Dame cathedral the same as the reason that motivates scientific research? As I have just said, the



difference needs explaining, and it is again to the credit of Kant that he had recognized it and had also tried to account for it. Religious belief in God, according to him, presupposes the intervention of moral obligation. It is existentially motivated by the subjective need of an individual moral agent to rest assured that, while always acting solely because obligated by the Law and with no other selfish interest in mind, he will nonetheless eventually be awarded with an amount of physical happiness consistent with his moral worth. It is the presence of this subjective need for happiness as motivating factor that differentiates religious belief from both scientific praxis and moral obligation and thereby also ensures that religion will never disappear as a dimension of human existence.

It must be said that in singling out the need for happiness as the motivating factor of religion Kant was not being particularly original. Both Spalding and Adam Weishaupt had expressed a similar view, and in that they were voicing a widespread Enlightenment attitude towards religion (see di Giovanni 2005, 6–10, 44–47, and *passim*). Kant's originality lay in finding for the latter an irreducible yet containable place within his critical system of reason without thereby lapsing into the naturalism of the typical *Aufklärer*. However, since according to that system religion seeks to satisfy needs which are per se natural but, because they are essentially heteronomous, become irrational when autonomous moral obligation intervenes, one can take his move as one more indication of the de facto result of the system, namely, that it made the irrational a by-product of reason itself. From the standpoint of moral obligation, the fact there are natural desires and that such desires require satisfaction becomes an irreducible surd that requires religious myth (duly coached in rational constructs) in order to be rationally contained. How much this result promoted the cause of religious piety is of course an issue all by itself. Astounding as it might seem, many of Kant's religiously inclined contemporaries, the early Reinhold included, found his position attractive, apparently unaware that Kant had instrumentalized religion, in fact turning belief in God into a means for keeping natural desires in check while promoting the transcendent goals of morality in general. He had made God into a tool of human praxis. To their excuse it must be added that they did not have Marx, or Nietzsche, or Freud, to enlighten them on the subject. Reinhold, however, was to recognize at one point that Kant's morality, and the religion that it brought in train, did not safeguard the personal values of the historical individual which where *his* motivating factor. This was to his credit. His piety needed the God of Christian revelation. Perhaps, it was precisely Fichte's rational defence of the possibility of revelation that originally attracted him to his position (see Lazzari, in this volume). But one can understand why he would irresistibly gravitate towards Jacobi. What we have, again, is the picture of a man who still clung to the Enlightenment's belief in the rationality of all things. As the *Aufklärer* that he still was, he was suspicious of the cultic elements of religion which he considered to be the product of superstition, and hence was unable to see that it is in those practices that religion best fulfils its salvific function by humanizing such otherwise irrational events of human existence as being born or dying. But he was at the same time uncomfortable with the abstractions of reason, and, like many of his contemporaries, finally fell upon feeling,

strangely endowed with the power of intuition, for the comprehension of the rational truth that he had been seeking all along. This is again the picture of Reinhold we have been trying to present, no longer satisfied with the Enlightenment, yet still clinging to it.

4. Reinhold attained notoriety in his day as an original philosopher for his attempt at reforming Kant's critical theory of experience by founding it on one secure principle. This is the attempt for which he is still best known and also, as the Bibliography of this volume attests, the subject of much scholarly enterprise. The case is a complex one, and not easy to present in quick format. One can gather, however, a quick picture of how much Reinhold indirectly contributed to the further development of critical theory—of how innovative he actually was, even though failing at the same time to recognize the true nature of his innovations—by measuring him again against Kant. As Kant himself recognized, the great distance that separated him from his dogmatic predecessors lay in the new epistemic role that he assigned to the senses (KrV, A43–A44/B60–B61). According to his theory, sensations no longer were the confused representations which they were assumed to be by both rationalists and empiricists, but constituted rather an area of experience *sui generis*, immediate yet itself informed by a bodily *a priori* specific to it. It constituted, in other words, a spatio-temporal domain within which a subject of experience could recognize as actually given—just in case they happened to be so given—objects otherwise only conceptually intended. By this reformulation of the status of the senses in experience, Kant had at one stroke restricted possible cognition to the objects of sense-experience and at the same time transformed the traditional theory of knowledge into a phenomenology of the mind. To know now meant to recognize the presence of objects in sense experience, just in case such a presence is given. The categories define the subjective modalities that have to be satisfied in order for the recognition to be possible. This was indeed a revolutionary move. But Kant had retained the empiricist notion of “sensations,” as if these were merely passive events, in themselves blind and rhapsodic, and therefore had made himself vulnerable to the objection that, as conceptually recognized, objects can be given only as reconstructed in the imagination—in fact, therefore, not “given” in any serious sense. It was precisely in order to pre-empt any such objection that Kant undertook his arguably impossible transcendental arguments.

But this is not the place to rehearse the vicissitudes of Kant's arguments. The point is rather that Reinhold's attempt at systematizing all the elements of his theory under the single principle of “representation” was, though not necessarily Kantian in spirit, a real stroke of genius. Quite apart from the fact that it injected into Kant's theory of knowledge the factor of intentionality which the theory required in order to be true to itself, it effectively eliminated in it the opposition between passive sensation and active thought which made for all its difficulties. If the mental complexity that goes with representation is what constitutes the defining mark of anything that belongs to mental life, then the operations of the traditional faculties of the mind can be taken as each already completely constituting by itself a type of conscious existence, for each is *ex hypothesi* a form of representation. There is no need of the synthesis of various



contributing factors, potentially opposed to each other, that Kant had postulated. This is not to say that a synthesis is not therefore required, as if the mind did not in fact constitute an organic unity. But such a unity is of a genetic nature. One faculty can be taken as presupposing another historically as a less complex, although in itself already complete, form of consciousness. It presupposes it as a background which it transforms reflectively according to its own *a priori*, and in this way it makes ready a new mental material for yet a more complex form of reflection, a higher type of conscious existence. On this model, one could indeed say what Jacobi had already claimed in 1787, namely that reason is a more sophisticated, a more sensitive, form of sensibility (cf. Jacobi 1787, 125ff.; tr. 300ff.; it is significant that in the same context Jacobi refers to Leibniz). In effect, Reinhold had gone back to Leibniz's notion of "perception," but without Leibniz's dogmatism. For it was a mental universe, rather than a cosmic one, that he was modeling on the definition of "representation."

This, I repeat, was a stroke of genius. There could not have been Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre*, let alone Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, without Reinhold's theory. Hegel famously alluded to Reinhold's definition of representation (which was in effect a definition of "intentionality") in the Introduction of his work (GW IX.58:25–26). But, be his influence as it may, the fact is that Reinhold went on to insist on Kant's distinction of thought and sensation; he went on to insist on the unknown "thing in itself" as the cause of sensations, without apparently realizing that he had in fact provided the conceptual means for overcoming the problems with which Kant's theory was affected precisely because of the elements Reinhold was still insisting on. As a result, he made himself vulnerable to the attacks of Schulze/Aenesidemus and the even sharper ones of Solomon Maimon.<sup>4</sup> Here again is a picture of Reinhold imaginatively forging ahead while at the same time hanging on to a fragment of the past—this time the empiricist notion of "sensation" and of "thought" which the latter calls for.

This quick sketch of Reinhold should not be taken as a summary of the essays that follow, all of them the product of a recent workshop on Reinhold, nor, for that matter, as even necessarily agreeing with the views presented in them. It is intended solely to call attention to themes which, in one way or another, run across all the essays, in the hope of motivating them. Nor do the essays themselves necessarily agree with one another. To bring out possible fault lines in the interpretation of an author is one of the tasks of a workshop. Since Reinhold, not unlike Jacobi, is a philosopher whose thought cannot be divorced from his personal life, the original workshop contributions were deliberately solicited to cover his activities, not only as speculative thinker, but as social reformer and educator as well. Moreover, since the workshop was intended to take a pulse of the current state of Reinhold scholarship, included in this volume are also the critically edited texts of two hitherto unknown Reinhold's addresses to the members of the Vienna Masonic

---

<sup>4</sup>For different takes on Reinhold's theory of representation, see the contributions in Part IV of this volume. See also di Giovanni (2000). The English translations of the relevant texts of Schulze and Maimon are included in this last reference.

lodge, and a list of materials relating to his activities as a professor at Jena. These texts and materials will eventually find their proper place in the critical edition of Reinhold's works now in preparation.

The international workshop on the theme of Reinhold and the Enlightenment of which these essays are the product was held in Montréal, on the campus of McGill University, on June 8 to 11 of 2007. The participants were for the most part members of an informal group that had already met three times in the past to take the pulse of current research on Reinhold as well as to contribute to it. The earlier meetings had been held at Bad-Homburg (1988), Luzern (2002), and Rome (2004). The geographical diversity of these meetings, and the nationality mix of the participants, attest to their truly international character. The present volume is also a case in point. Its contributors represent eight different countries. This is a circumstance that Reinhold, committed universalist *Aufklärer* that he was, would have greatly appreciated, just as he would have appreciated the multilingual medium of presentation. The presence of German is of course all too fitting, because of the subject matter. As for English and French, they reflect the *in situ* setting of the Montréal meeting—the campus of an English-speaking, originally Scottish, university in a mostly French-speaking corner of North America.

To all these contributors it is my pleasure to express my gratitude.

## References

- Di Giovanni, George. 2000. "The Facts of Consciousness." In *Between Kant and Hegel: Texts in the Development of Post-Kantian Idealism*, edited and translated by George di Giovanni and H. S. Harris, 2–50. Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett.
- . 2005. *Freedom and Religion in Kant and His Immediate Successors: The Vocation of Humankind, 1774–1800*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich. 1801. *Differenz des Fichte'schen und Schelling'schen Systems der Philosophie, in Beziehung auf Reinhold's Beyträge zur leichtern Übersicht des Zustands der Philosophie zu Anfang des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts*. Jena: Seider. Reprinted in GW IV:1–92. Translated into English by H. S. Harris and W. Cerf as *The Difference between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy, in connection with Reinhold's Contributions to a More Convenient Survey of the State of Philosophy at the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century*. Albany: SUNY Press, 1977.
- Hinske, Norbert. 1995. "Ausblick: Der Jenaer Frühkantianismus als Forschungsausgabe." In *Der Aufbruch in den Kantianismus: Der Frühkantianismus an der Universität Jena von 1785–1800 und seine Vorgeschichte*, edited by Norbert Hinske, Erhard Lange and Horst Schröpfer. Stuttgart–Bad Cannstatt.
- Jacobi, Friedrich Heinrich. 1787. *David Hume über den Glauben, oder Idealismus und Realismun. Ein Gespräch*. Breslau. Translated into English by George di Giovanni as "David Hume on Faith, or Idealism and Realism: A Dialogue (1787)." In *Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi: The Main Philosophical Writings and the Novel "Allwill,"* translated with an Introductory Study, Notes, and Bibliography, edited and translated by George di Giovanni, 253–338. Kingston and Montreal: McGill–Queen's Press, 1994.

**Part I**  
**Reinhold, Freemason and Educator**  
**of Humankind**

## Chapter 2

# Reinhold, Franc-Maçon et philosophe de l'*Aufklärung*

Ives Radrizzani

Reinhold a été Franc-Maçon, un Franc-Maçon convaincu, qui plus est Illuminé, jouant dans cet Ordre un rôle de premier plan. Il a en particulier étroitement assisté Bode, le successeur de Weishaupt à la tête de l'Ordre. Il a, après le décès de Bode, lui-même repris le flambeau, lancé divers projets de fondation de sociétés, collaboré avec Schröder à la réforme de la Maçonnerie, participé dans ses vieux jours à la création d'une Loge à Kiel dont il a tenu le marteau jusqu'à sa mort, la Loge «*Luise zur gekrönten Freundschaft*». Si l'on excepte une lettre écrite à son père à l'âge de 15 ans, la première lettre que nous connaissions de lui est sa demande d'affiliation à la Loge viennoise «*Zur Wahren Eintracht*» (À la Vraie Concorde). Les dernières lettres que nous possédions de lui, récemment retrouvées dans le matériel de la Loge «*Luise zur gekrönten Freundschaft*» et écrites au printemps 1823, sont toutes liées à son activité maçonnique. Dans l'entre-deux, toute sa carrière est émaillée de rencontres maçonniques. Initié à Vienne, il fut affilié notamment à la prestigieuse Loge Amalia à Weimar, membre d'honneur d'une Loge de Hambourg, d'une Loge danoise et d'une Loge de Reval (aujourd'hui Talinn).

Reinhold ne fut pas seulement une figure-clé du paysage maçonnique de l'époque, mais aussi et surtout un philosophe. Connu d'abord comme grand vulgarisateur de Kant, il est, au début des années 90, l'époque où il développe son propre système, au centre de la vie philosophique en Allemagne, avant de s'exiler pour le Nord. Se faisant par la suite tour à tour le disciple de Fichte, l'ami de Jacobi, puis le zéléateur du bardilisme, il revient à une phase plus personnelle avec sa *Synonymique*.

Comment Reinhold entendait-il concilier ces deux pans de son activité? Telle est la question qui nous guide et à laquelle cette contribution se propose d'amener un premier élément de réponse à travers l'examen de quelques textes appartenant aux premières années de sa production.

Reinhold n'est pas le seul philosophe de son époque à avoir été Maçon. Son illustre successeur à la chaire de Iéna, Fichte, l'a lui aussi été, comme d'ailleurs Jacobi. Dans une époque marquée par une série de ruptures: l'interdiction de l'Illuminisme bavarois, la Révolution française, la révolution kantienne, on

---

I. Radrizzani  
Académie Bavaoise des Sciences, Munich

enregistre diverses tentatives de faire des Loges une sorte d'école de philosophie. Or l'enjeu est de taille car l'on retrouve dans le microcosme maçonnique les oppositions qui déchirent hors Loge les différentes écoles philosophiques, et la tâche que se fixent, chacun de leur côté, Fichte comme Reinhold, selon des modalités et un succès au demeurant fort différents eu égard à leurs tempéraments respectifs, est de contrôler l'orientation prise par les Loges. Il sera des plus intéressants de constater que les choix qu'ils opèrent et la ligne qu'ils cherchent à imposer présentent à maints égards une forte analogie.

Les textes auxquels nous nous arrêterons dans cette première communication, datant de 1783 à 1788, sont placés sous le signe de l'*Aufklärung*. D'abord partisan fervent de celle-ci, Reinhold va être amené à nuancer sa position. Il s'agira de comprendre les implications philosophico-maçonniques de cette crise de la notion d'*Aufklärung* qui nous paraît s'amorcer au tournant de l'année 1787/88.

## 2.1 La Loge viennoise de la Vraie Concorde (*Zur Wahren Eintracht*)

### 2.1.1 La demande d'affiliation

Le premier document que nous voulons examiner est la lettre dans laquelle Reinhold s'adresse à son ami Aloys Blumauer en le priant de le proposer pour être admis à la Loge maçonnique «*Zur Wahren Eintracht*» (À la Vraie Concorde), en avril 1783 (cf. *Korrespondenz I* [1773–1788], no. 2, 9–12). Reinhold, qui était d'abord entré dans la Compagnie de Jésus, puis, après la suppression de celle-ci en 1773, dans l'Ordre des Barnabites, est, depuis 5 ans, lié par sa profession de foi (datant du 15 novembre 1778), une décision qu'il dit désormais regretter, prise sans avoir été suffisamment mûrie (*ein unüberdachter Schwur*) (11).

Se pliant sans doute aux contraintes de l'exercice, Reinhold livre les motifs qui le poussent à demander son adhésion; ceux-ci sont d'ordre religieux, philosophique, politique et moral. Reinhold critique violemment l'obscurantisme de l'Ordre auquel il appartient, qui célèbre le bonheur des simples d'esprit, entretient soigneusement la plus parfaite ignorance, fait de l'esprit de soumission un devoir, de la vérité et de l'*Aufklärung* des fruits défendus, et maintient ses membres à l'écart du monde et dans l'indifférence des soucis de l'humanité. Par contraste, il chante les louanges de la Franc-Maçonnerie comme source de lumière et comme force de progrès, à la fois institut pédagogique et pratique, promoteur d'une culture non castratrice mais prenant en compte l'homme entier, avec «toutes ses facultés, toutes ses passions et toutes ses forces», élargissant le cercle des connaissances mais incitant aussi à l'action et travaillant à rapprocher l'homme de sa destination. Il loue également la dimension sociale de la Loge: dans son Ordre monastique, non seulement ce n'est qu'en bravant les interdits qu'il peut corriger la mutilation intellectuelle qui lui est infligée, mais il se sent de surcroît arraché à la société, coupé

du genre humain, et éprouve le désir violent (*heftige Begierde*) de se relier via la confrérie à la chaîne de l'humanité (cf. 10–11).

Dans cette lettre, Reinhold donne l'impression de vouloir troquer un Ordre pour un autre. Mais pourquoi encore un Ordre? La réponse qu'il donne est que l'union fait la force, et que l'entraide permet de soulager en conséquence le fardeau de chacun (11).

Dans ces déclarations, Reinhold présente son *credo* maçonnique. Il esquisse une conception de la Maçonnerie qui demandera bien sûr à être affinée, mais à laquelle il restera fidèle jusqu'à la fin de sa vie, avec une continuité de vues frappante, nonobstant le parcours extérieurement erratique de ses adhésions philosophiques. À côté de l'idée de la Maçonnerie comme lieu privilégié pour la recherche de la vérité, comme foyer d'*Aufklärung*, comme école pour le développement et la pratique de l'universalité, comme centre d'échanges sociaux exercés dans un esprit de concorde et de solidarité, comme œuvre d'entraide et comme Eglise morale, on note l'absence significative de toute référence à la dimension secrète de l'Ordre maçonnique.

Plus que d'un *credo*, il s'agit presque d'un plan de carrière, puisque, quelques mois plus tard, Reinhold quittera bel et bien son Ordre, s'enfuyant de Vienne avec l'étroite complicité de la Loge. Celle-ci, tenue longtemps à l'avance au courant du projet, mettra tout en œuvre pour en favoriser le succès, intervenant sur un plan épistolaire en multipliant les lettres de recommandation pour faciliter l'accueil du fugitif, financier en faisant à plusieurs reprises parvenir de généreuses sommes d'argent, juridique en entreprenant des démarches en vue de régulariser la situation et de permettre un éventuel retour.

La conception de la Maçonnerie formulée dans cette première lettre cadrerait au demeurant parfaitement avec l'esprit qui régnait dans la Loge de la Vraie Concorde et qui était très largement imputable à Ignaz von Born, à la tête de la Loge depuis mars 1782 et qui était également un Illuminé de haut rang puisqu'il occupait à Vienne (sous le nom de Furius Camillus) la fonction de Préfet local. La grande idée de Born avait été de faire de la Vraie Concorde une sorte d'Académie pour la propagation des Lumières, sachant avec un art consommé de la diplomatie recruter les esprits les plus brillants de Vienne pour collaborer à ce projet. Des loges de travail (*Übungslogen*) étaient régulièrement tenues, dans lesquelles des conférences portant sur des objets maçonniques étaient prononcées et mises en discussion. Pour donner une plus grande résonance aux travaux de cette Loge de recherche, Born créa en 1783, l'année de l'admission de Reinhold, une revue, le *Journal für Freymaurer* (Journal pour Francs-Maçons). Dans l'«Annonce» de ce journal, il nomme très clairement les buts de la Loge: «La Loge de la Vraie Concorde a, dès l'origine, fait du perfectionnement de l'homme intérieur et de la recherche de la vérité sa tâche principale, l'unique tâche qui pourrait légitimer le Maçon à parler de travail (*Arbeit*)».<sup>1</sup> Dans une lettre écrite à Reinhold en juin 1784, alors que ce dernier a déjà fui Vienne depuis plusieurs mois, Born réaffirme le sens de son

---

<sup>1</sup>Ms. au Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv Wien, Vertrauliche Akten, cart. 66, fol. 295, cité d'après Korrespondenz I (1773–1788), 17n17.