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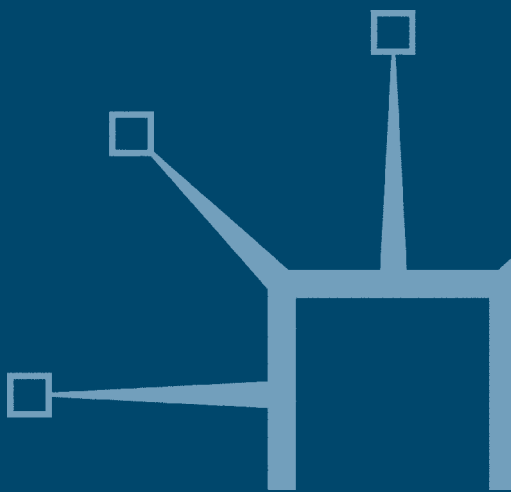
Kant and Spinozism

Transcendental Idealism and Immanence from Jacobi to Deleuze

Beth Lord



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Kant and Spinozism

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First published 2011 by
PALGRAVE MACMILLAN

Palgrave Macmillan in the UK is an imprint of Macmillan Publishers Limited, registered in England, company number 785998, of Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS.

Palgrave Macmillan in the US is a division of St Martin's Press LLC, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010.

Palgrave Macmillan is the global academic imprint of the above companies and has companies and representatives throughout the world.

ISBN 978–0–230–55297–5 hardback

This book is printed on paper suitable for recycling and made from fully managed and sustained forest sources. Logging, pulping and manufacturing processes are expected to conform to the environmental regulations of the country of origin.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Lord, Beth.
Kant and Spinozism : transcendental idealism and immanence from Jacobi to Deleuze / Beth Lord.
p. cm. — (Renewing philosophy)
Includes bibliographical references.
ISBN 978–0–230–55297–5
1. Spinoza, Benedictus de, 1632–1677. 2. Kant, Immanuel, 1724–1804. I. Title.

B3998.L57 2011
199'.492—dc22

2010033963

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
20 19 18 17 16 15 14 13 12 11

Printed and bound in Great Britain by
CPI Antony Rowe, Chippenham and Eastbourne

For my parents, Barry Lord and
Gail Dexter Lord

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Series Editor's Preface

The presence of Spinoza in critical philosophical reflection has grown as the years have gone by. Once thought of as a mere corrective to Descartes, albeit still thereby confined within Cartesian thought, Spinoza has increasingly been resorted to as the basis for a sustained challenge to the 'modern' philosophical conception. This general rehabilitation of Spinoza is, however, one that reverses in a signal way the damning verdict passed on his philosophy during both his life-time and for over a century afterwards. Paradoxically, Spinoza is re-discovered and prospects for re-reading him are canvassed for the first time, in the aftermath of the reaction to Kant's Critical revolution. This is paradoxical in lots of respects, not least that the rationale for resort to Spinoza in the wake of the Critical revolution is hardly an obvious move.

In this work we have charted the move from seeing Spinoza as an adversary to critical philosophy to an ally of it. The stages of the work re-trace both the ways Spinoza is used and abused in the process of response to the Critical revolution and also how Kant's own evolving reaction to 'Spinozism' can be understood. The first important motif of this work is the way in which philosophers are captured within an image, an image that freezes some elements of their thought, distorts others and works to render comprehension of their work very difficult. This process of formation of an image of thought is one that is, however, not entirely static. The second motif of the work concerns how this image can be open to change by a process of interaction between subsequent positions that comprehend and fail to comprehend each other partly through exchange of an image of previous thought. The possibilities of philosophical comprehension are themselves revealed to be tied to a process of illusory relation to positions different from both one's own and those of the thinker captured within an image.

Kant's own diagnosis of philosophical illusion is one that describes its appearance as inevitable. 'Human reason has this peculiar fate, that in one species of its knowledge it is burdened by questions which, as prescribed by the very nature of reason itself, it is not able to ignore, but which, as transcending all its powers, it is also not able to answer.' (Avii). What Kant does not do, until the final chapter of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, is to describe a 'history of pure reason'. When, in the last chapter

of the *Critique*, he does finally describe such a notion, it is one that indicates a division that 'future workers must complete' (A852/B880). This suggestion that such a history is a possible one is one that has been subjected, however, to remarkably little investigation. One of the results of the inquiry being presented in this book is that the history of pure reason belongs within the province of transcendental illusion.

Kant's reaction to Spinoza and, even more, to 'Spinozism', is one that charts a series of mis-recognitions, and not merely or even especially on Kant's own part. The attempt to view Critical philosophy within the confines of perspectives formed to a large degree by the image of Spinoza was one that ensured that the nature of the revolution Kant had intended to carry out was persistently misunderstood.[1] Kant's contemporaries understood the nature of his philosophy in ways that varied rather dramatically and which consistently contrasted with the comprehension Kant himself had of it. In this mis-recognition of Kant the seeds were sown for a *riposte* from Kant himself to his contemporaries that helped to ensure that the gap between the Critical philosophy and a positive reading of Spinoza widened.

In this work Beth Lord shows how this peculiar situation creates a very specific type of history, a particular set of patterns of reading of the Critical philosophy and the attempted recovery of themes derived, in some important sense, from the work of Spinoza. In opening this out for renewed investigation Lord, to a certain extent, travels again paths that have others previously have taken.[2] Despite this, however, new connections are forged here and an opening is made for understanding how twentieth-century French philosophy can be seen to have a reaction to the period of the immediate context of Kant's Critical revolution that, whilest drawing from German Idealism, is also at variance with that movement. Of all the philosophers who have taken inspiration from Spinoza none is more prominent than Gilles Deleuze and yet the ways in which Deleuze's engagement with Spinoza also involves a negotiation both with Kant and with the critical readings and mis-readings of Kant that are inflected by 'Spinozism' is a story that is here certainly newly told.

Questioning received understandings of the nature of philosophical modernity is a central point of *Renewing Philosophy*. In assuming a posture to the history of the reaction to Critical philosophy that uses and abuses the image of Spinoza Lord has provided more than just a particular history, even one that is rarely accessed and assessed. She has also provided us here with a signal comprehension of the philosophical problems of comprehending the history of philosophical modernity itself. There is, here, an opening to a kind of renewal that arises from

a form of comprehension of historicity that is itself philosophically complex. It is as part of such an engagement with modernity that this work stands as part of this series and it is to be hoped that the work will both encourage further both such philosophical reflection and a deeper awareness of the complex intertwined nature of philosophical positions, one that enables a simple freezing of the way any given position should be presented. Most significant in this regard is the way the nature of the rise of immanent understanding in philosophy can be seen, and what types of resistance to it are both useful and instructive of the need to view transcendental illusion as something integral to the prosecution of philosophical understanding, seeing it therefore as also historically requiring, for the furtherance of philosophy itself, the further proliferation of misunderstandings. This paradox may well provide one of the deepest lessons of this deeply engaged book.

GARY BANHAM
Series Editor
Renewing Philosophy

Acknowledgements

The research in this book was made possible, in part, by a doctoral grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the Overseas Research Scholarship, and research leave from the University of Dundee. I am grateful for the support of these institutions and that of my colleagues at Dundee: Nicholas Davey, James Williams, John Mullarkey, Rachel Jones, Roger Young, Johanna Oksala, Lily Forrester, and Dominic Smith. I am grateful to the organizers and participants of conferences and seminars at which I gave talks, including those at Aberdeen, Cork, Dublin, Dundee, London, Manchester, Seattle, Stirling, and Warwick. I would like to thank Andrew Benjamin and Stephen Houlgate for their roles in the book's earliest stages, series editor Gary Banham for his encouragement and advice, and Priyanka Gibbons at Palgrave Macmillan for her patience. Sincerest thanks to James Williams for his comments on Chapter 6, to Karin de Boer for her comments on Chapter 1, and to Henry Somers-Hall for discussions influencing Chapter 5. The support of my parents, to whom this book is dedicated, has been invaluable. My warmest thanks go to two people without whom this book would never have been finished (several times over): my good friend and colleague John Mullarkey, who persuaded me of the importance of finishing the book, and my husband, Jim Tomlinson, who always reminded me of its ultimate unimportance.

Abbreviations

Texts by Immanuel Kant

C	*Correspondence*, trans. and ed. Arnulf Zweig (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999)
CJ	*Critique of Judgment*, trans. Werner S. Pluhar (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987)
CPR	*Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (London: Macmillan, 1929)
CPrR	*Critique of Practical Reason*, trans. and ed. Mary Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997)
LM	*Lectures on Metaphysics*, trans. and ed. Karl Ameriks and Steve Naragon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997)
MFNS	*Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science,* in Kant, *Philosophy of Material Nature,* trans. and ed. James W. Ellington (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1985)
NF	*Notes and Fragments*, ed. Paul Guyer, trans. Curtis Bowman et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005)
OP	*Opus Postumum*, ed. Eckart Förster, trans. Eckart Förster and Michael Rosen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993)
OPA	*The Only Possible Argument in Support of a Demonstration of the Existence of God,* in Kant, *Theoretical Philosophy 1755–1770*, trans. and ed. David Walford and Ralf Meerbote (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992)
WDM	'What does it mean to orient oneself in thinking?', in Kant, *Theoretical Philosophy after 1781*, ed. Henry Allison and Peter Heath, trans. Peter Heath et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002)

References to the *Critique of Pure Reason* are to the standard A and B editions. All other references are to the Akademie volume and page numbers. References to the *Opus Postumum* also include page numbers in the Cambridge University Press English translation.

Texts by Baruch Spinoza

E	*Ethics*, in Spinoza, *A Spinoza Reader: The Ethics and Other Works*, trans. and ed. Edwin Curley (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994)
TIE	*Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect*, in Spinoza, *Complete Works*
PPC	*Principles of Cartesian Philosophy*, in Spinoza, *Complete Works*
CW	*Complete Works*, trans. Samuel Shirley, ed. Michael L. Morgan (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2002)

References to the *Ethics* follow Edwin Curley's system of abbreviation: part number in roman numerals, followed by proposition (P), corollary (C), scholium (S) or definition (D) number. (For example, E IP29S = *Ethics* Part I, Proposition 29, Scholium.) Other works are cited by section number followed by page numbers in the *Complete Works*.

Other texts

DR	Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (London: Athlone, 1994)
G	Johann Gottfried Herder, *God: Some Conversations*, trans. Frederick H. Burkhardt (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1940)
Ideas	Johann Gottfried Herder, *Ideas for a Philosophy of the History of Mankind*, in Herder, *J. G. Herder on Social and Political Culture*, ed. and trans. F. M. Barnard (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969)
MPW	Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi, *The Main Philosophical Writings and the Novel Allwill*, trans. George di Giovanni (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994)
VT	Solomon Maimon, *Versuch über die Transcendentalphilosophie*, in Maimon, *Gessamelte Werke*, Vol. II (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1965)

References are to these editions unless otherwise stated.

Introduction

This book is about the developing relation between Kant and Spinozism from 1785 to around 1800. It is not about Kant's relation to Spinoza, for the simple reason that Kant probably never read or considered Spinoza directly. Instead, his response to Spinoza is always mediated through the various interpretations of Spinozism that arose in the late eighteenth century. Kant's understanding of, and subsequent response to, Spinozism was shaped by three key texts: F. H. Jacobi's *Concerning the Doctrine of Spinoza in Letters to Herr Moses Mendelssohn* (1785), J. G. Herder's *God: Some Conversations* (1787) and Solomon Maimon's *Essay on Transcendental Philosophy* (1790). These three books defined Spinoza's philosophy for late eighteenth-century German thought, representing it respectively as dogmatic rationalism, naturalism, and idealism, and presenting it as a compelling alternative to Kant's transcendental idealism.

At the same time, in different ways, Jacobi, Herder, and Maimon all attempted to show that transcendental idealism ought to become Spinozistic if it was to overcome certain problems internal to it. Kant's understanding of Spinoza is, from 1785 onwards, refracted through these responses to his own philosophical position, meaning that his engagement with Spinozism is always also an engagement with the limits and problems of transcendental philosophy. Examining Kant's relation to Spinozism reveals not only the development of his understanding of these Spinozistic variants, but also a line of critical self-reflection concerning transcendental philosophy itself.

The inclusion of twentieth-century French philosopher Gilles Deleuze may appear incongruent in this context, yet I hope to show that he is continuous with the other thinkers considered here. Without reducing Deleuze to rationalism, naturalism or idealism, I think we can and should read him as a post-Kantian Spinozist, at least in some strands of his

enormously complex *Difference and Repetition*. I will argue that Deleuze, no less than Jacobi, Herder, or Maimon, uses Spinozism to develop a position that reacts against Kant's transcendental idealism while also indicating their point of convergence. And despite the obvious anachronism, I will suggest that Kant does, in a sense, reflect on and develop his thought in response to the problems of transcendental idealism that Deleuze identifies. That is because these problems had already largely been formulated by Solomon Maimon, a thinker who until recently has been considered marginal to Kant studies and to philosophy generally. I will argue that Kant takes Maimon's criticism of transcendental idealism far more seriously than commentators have previously imagined, and that the influence of Maimon can be seen both in Kant's *Critique of Judgment* and in his *Opus Postumum*. It is in responding to Maimon that Kant can be said to respond to Deleuze. The interrelations of Kant, Maimon, and Deleuze are the subject of Chapters 5–7.

The focus on Maimon, and on Kant's and Deleuze's Maimonism, is what marks this study out in a crowded field. The development and role of Spinozism in late eighteenth-century German philosophy have been covered expertly in a number of recent books (though without being the exclusive focus of any of them). Paul Franks provides exhaustive discussion of Jacobi's *Concerning the Doctrine of Spinoza* and its influence on Kant and others as part of his impressive study of the origins of German Idealism.[1] Both Frederick C. Beiser and John H. Zammito demonstrate the importance of Herder's Spinozistic naturalism to the development of Kant's thinking in the 1780s, and Zammito in particular draws attention to the instrumental role Herder's texts played in the ideas, arguments and structure of Kant's *Critique of Judgment*.[2] Inevitably I cover some of the same ground as these studies, though making, I hope, original contributions to their debates. Where the present book enters new territory is in its sustained attention to Maimon and Deleuze as Spinozistic readers of Kant. While Franks, Beiser, and Zammito discuss Maimon, no one has yet recognized his importance to the development of Kant's thinking, nor investigated the influence Maimon's Spinozism had on Kant's transformation of transcendental idealism in his *Opus Postumum*. Similarly, though Maimon's significance for Deleuze is widely recognized, little has been said about his role in shaping Deleuze's mediation of Spinoza and Kant. Interpreting Maimon and Deleuze as Spinozistic critics of Kant continuous with Jacobi and Herder is one of this book's aims in constructing a story about Kant and Spinozism.

What emerges from this study is that Kant's rejection of Spinozism is the consistent rejection of a doctrine of immanence. Kant sees his

own system to be 'immanent' in the sense that his claims about reality remain within the bounds of possible knowledge (CPR A295–6/B352, A643/B671). His commitment to this principle of epistemic immanence means he must reject all dogmatic claims about ontological immanence: the doctrine that the metaphysical ground of reality is within and causally connected to its empirical instances. For the same reason, Kant opposes the doctrine of naturalistic immanence which states categorically that there is nothing external or transcendent to the natural world. Kant objects to Spinozism on both counts: Spinoza's claim that 'God is the immanent, not the transitive, cause of all things' (E IP18) dogmatically asserts that a supersensible substrate really exists and immanently causes empirical objects, and that it does not transcend nature. Kant is opposed to the equation of this immanent metaphysical substrate with God, for reasons that have less to do with theology than with assuring a place for morality in nature. As we will see, for Kant the idea of God can only be thought as separate from the world.

What is interesting is that all four of our thinkers attempt to import immanence into Kant's system in their attempts to resolve its internal problems. Jacobi argues that Kant tacitly relies on a doctrine of ontological immanence in distinguishing between appearances and things in themselves. Herder suggests that naturalistic immanence should be adopted to explain the role of teleology in nature. These arguments, and Kant's responses to them, are the subject of the first four chapters of this book. Chapters 5 and 6 centre on Maimon's and Deleuze's attempts to deepen the immanence that already characterizes transcendental idealism. Maimon asserts that Kant's own epistemic immanence is incomplete without an account of the immanent genesis of the content of knowledge. Deleuze, building on this view, argues that there is already a principle of immanent genesis in Kant's system, in the form of the pure difference of being and thought that is also found in Spinoza. Kant's own attempt to incorporate a principle of immanent genesis into transcendental idealism in the *Opus Postumum* is treated in Chapter 7.

This study of the development of Kant's relation to Spinozism is thus also a study of Kant's changing response to the question of immanence. Kant consistently resists ontological and naturalistic immanence, even at the point where his own philosophy of nature appears to demand it. Yet as I hope to show over the chapters that follow, this does not necessarily entail a theistic or philosophically conservative insistence on transcendence. In rejecting Spinozistic immanence, Kant rejects the ontological unity of substance, and the conflation of God, man and nature in an indifferent unity. It is this rejection of a grounding metaphysical unity that

enables him to keep the way open for a philosophy of difference, thereby revealing a 'Spinozism' of a deeper kind. This, at least, is Deleuze's contention: Kant and Spinoza, in different ways, set the terms for a philosophy of difference by showing that unity and identity issue from the pure difference of being and thought. In this respect, we might see Kant and Spinoza on the side of a philosophy of difference, over against the German Idealists.[3]

In the remainder of this introduction I provide historical and philosophical background to the question of Kant's relation to Spinozism. First I give a brief summary of prevailing attitudes towards Spinozism in Kant's time and consider the likely extent of Kant's knowledge of Spinoza. I then give an overview of the philosophical ideas of Spinoza's *Ethics* that will be relevant to the later chapters of this book, and indicate the limitations of the interpretation of Spinoza that went on to influence Jacobi and others: that of Pierre Bayle. Finally, I indicate what can be expected in the chapters to come.

Kant and Spinozism: Some context

It is generally assumed that 'Spinozism' consistently stood for two conjoined ideas for Kant and his contemporaries: *Schwärmerei* (enthusiasm) and atheism. Yet the meaning of 'Spinozism' changed over the last 15 years of the eighteenth century through its appropriation by different philosophical movements. It changed correspondingly in Kant's estimation. What was dismissed in the 1770s as an absurdity had by the late 1790s gained recognition as a position vying with, and even coinciding with, Kant's own: Spinoza's dogmatism had become 'Spinoza's transcendental idealism' (OP 21:22, p. 228). Among the different 'Spinozisms' that were in play at different times, what seems certain is that none of them was grounded in a thorough study of Spinoza on Kant's part, for there is no evidence that any such study ever took place.

It is unclear how familiar Kant was with Spinoza. Hamann claimed that Kant admitted that he had never studied Spinoza, and that his preoccupation with his own system left him neither the time nor the inclination to get involved with anyone else's.[4] Kant's texts hardly help us in determining either the extent of Kant's knowledge or his genuine view. There is scant reference to Spinoza in Kant's work, and what there is seems to repeat the well-worn positions that Spinozism is dogmatic rationalism, atheism, and enthusiasm amounting to absurdity. Kant's published remarks on Spinoza invite the conclusion that Kant's attitude was one of general indifference tinged with the standard criticisms of

his time.[5] Moreover, it is unclear whether Kant's published views on Spinoza represent his real thoughts or the need to make his distance from Spinozism and atheism explicit at a time when his attitudes to religion were under scrutiny.[6] Kant evidently did disagree with much of Spinoza's thinking, but the extent to which he found it objectionable may have been exaggerated for pragmatic reasons.

There are good reasons to reassess Kant's attitude to Spinoza, particularly given the above-mentioned recent work on the importance of Spinozism to the philosophical concerns of late eighteenth-century Germany.[7] As Beiser remarks, Spinoza's position with respect to the German intellectual establishment was transformed from scapegoat to saint in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, with all of the major thinkers of the early nineteenth century taking up Spinozism in one form or another.[8] This period of Spinoza revival coincides exactly with Kant's most productive years, in which all three Critiques, his moral works and his book on material nature were published, as well as influential essays on anthropology and teleology. Indeed, Kant's reputation as a major philosopher was established on the back of this Spinozistic resurgence: Reinhold brought Kant's first *Critique* to public attention by emphasizing its relevance to the pantheism controversy.[9] The major philosophical problems that emerged in the last 20 years of the eighteenth century were inflected with Spinoza even as they were occasioned by Kant's first *Critique*, from Jacobi's criticism of reason to the German Romantics' revival of monism. Kant's engagement with those problems, and the development of his own work in terms of them, tells us that Kant's attitude to Spinoza cannot have been one of simple indifference.

It is inconceivable that Kant did not have some familiarity with Spinoza, but whether or not this came from reading Spinoza's texts is another matter. The *Ethics* was published in Germany in 1677 in Latin, and in 1744 in German, but reading it was discouraged where it was not prohibited outright in German universities right through the eighteenth century.[10] Kant may have read Spinoza first hand, but his earliest introduction to Spinozism was most likely through Pierre Bayle's influential dictionary entry and the proliferation of Spinoza refutations that were published in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Bayle's 1697 *Dictionnaire historique et critique* determined the intellectual reception of Spinoza for over a century by asserting the identity of Spinoza's God with the world. Bayle oversimplified the complex relation Spinoza sets out in Part I of the *Ethics* between substance, attributes and modes, to arrive at the reductive formula that God is identical to material

nature. Bayle thereby foregrounded the most objectionable aspects of Spinoza's ontology, his denial of transcendence and creation:

> God, the necessary and infinitely perfect being, is indeed the cause of all the things that exist, but he does not differ from them at all. There is only one being and one nature, and this nature produces in itself, and by an immanent action, all that we call 'created'. It is at once agent and patient, efficient cause and subject; it produces nothing that is not its own modification.[11]

On Bayle's account, Spinoza's God is the material of all bodies, the subject of all thoughts, and both subject and object of his moral commands. In the words of a recent commentator, 'Spinozism thus appears as a gigantic fusion of God and the world, which therefore renders the world's contradictions incomprehensible'.[12]

Largely on the same basis, Christian Wolff presented Spinoza's philosophy as a series of absurdities. Intended as a defence against accusations of Spinozism against him, Wolff attempts a systematic refutation of Part I of the *Ethics*, insisting that Spinoza's definitions are wrong, his principles are confused and the text is a 'unique system of atheism' and universal fatalism.[13] Wolff's refutation was influential and became the standard line on Spinoza for the generation that followed. Leibniz, by contrast, whose more careful interpretation was based on close study of the *Ethics* as well as his own correspondence with Spinoza, presents a detailed and fair account. His *Comments on Spinoza's Philosophy* does not reject Spinozism outright but contrasts Spinoza's system with his own.[14] Most importantly, Leibniz's objections to Spinoza reflect philosophical disagreements about God, freedom and the soul, rather than the fear and loathing of Spinozism that had become standard. Hume too, one suspects, may have had more sympathy with Spinoza than he was able to express.[15]

The majority of criticisms of Spinoza in the early eighteenth century were denunciations of his atheism and fatalism, thinly veiled as philosophical critiques of his positions on God, providence and free will. The vituperative nature of these attacks reflects the mainstream view governing the German universities that Spinoza's beliefs were not only absurd, but also dangerous. Ever since it became widely known that the anonymously published (and promptly banned) 1670 book *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* had been written by him, Spinoza acquired a reputation as a political and religious radical of the most dangerous kind. He was supposed not only to have invented a metaphysics that

saw no distinction between God and nature, but also to base on it logical demonstrations for the illusoriness of contemporary political and religious structures. Furthermore, his work was seen to advocate anti-establishment principles concerning democratic freedoms in matters of religious belief and political conviction. Here was a philosophical system that appeared to reject all forms of authority – including that of God and the Bible – and could be used to justify the positions of political radicals and religious reformers. The establishment condemnation of Spinoza went hand in hand with suppressing radicalism, for Spinoza's texts were seen to have the power to threaten political and religious authority throughout Europe. The universities had particularly to be kept free of such heterodox influence, such that in the early eighteenth century a published denunciation of Spinoza was virtually a requirement for taking up an academic post.[16]

Nevertheless, undercurrents of Spinozism continued to build through the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries among freethinkers all over Europe. As Beiser argues, these thinkers saw in Spinoza not an atheistic rejection of God, but a pantheism that fulfilled their need for a democratic and universal religion where Protestantism had failed to deliver.[17] In Germany, Spinoza's 'pantheism' was attractive to Lutherans who had become disillusioned with the outcomes of the Protestant counter-Reformation: if Spinoza was right that the Bible was a historical text open to literary criticism, then he was also right that true knowledge of God comes through our own intuition. Universal and democratic access to the divine could be assured if the transcendent God of theism was replaced with the immanent God of pantheism. Spinoza's pantheism was the basis for a host of progressive political ideals that broke with establishment authority. In Spinoza the reformers found support for their ideals of tolerance, democracy, freedom of speech, freedom of belief and the separation of church and state. Thinkers who saw the need to progress democratic aims in the political sphere, and who believed in the Lutheran idea of an immediate and universal relation to God but distrusted the authority of the Bible, found their champion in Spinoza.

'Spinozism' in Germany prior to 1785 had little to do with the interpretation of Spinoza's texts or ideas. The term was, rather, shorthand for a number of strands of political and religious radicalism towards which attitudes were fiercely divided. As Herder remarked in 1787, 'everything preposterous and godless was, and to a certain extent is still, called Spinozistic' (G 77).[18] For the establishment, Spinozism meant atheism, fatalism, and the threat of revolt; for the radicals, it meant a holistic, democratic, and open approach to God and government.

Given this context, what might Kant's sympathies have been? The authorities who governed the university at Königsberg were anxious to suppress Spinozism, but the university had a strong Wolffian element which, though outwardly anti-Spinozist, was open to the critical consideration of radical thinking. Kant's university training there would have instilled in him a respect for philosophical refutations of Spinoza, if not for the outright denunciations of the previous generation. His early lectures suggest that as a young academic with a career to build, Kant felt compelled to repeat the standard line on Spinoza to his students. Yet Kant's commitment to democratic ideals, his infatuation with Rousseau and the influence of Königsberg's diverse and sometimes radical philosophical community should have made him curious about the Spinozist cause, even if he was not himself drawn to it. Two prominent figures in Königsberg when Kant was a student in the 1740s were Martin Knutzen, reportedly Kant's favourite and most influential teacher, who published a defence of Christianity against the British deists (including the 'Spinozist' John Toland) and Christian Gabriel Fischer, who had been banished from Prussia but returned to publish a Spinozistic text on God and nature. Controversies over these texts and figures formed the backdrop, if not the foreground, to Kant's studies.[19]

Wolff's refutation was probably the main source for Kant's few remarks on Spinoza before 1785. These remarks demonstrate a basic familiarity with Spinoza's monism and a concern with its implications for God, the self, and the world. Specifically, Kant rejects the view that finite things are modes of a single substance on the ground that it confuses the relation of inherence between substance and accident with that of dependence between cause and effect. On Kant's view, Spinoza makes the world and all human minds accidents of God rather than his created effects, leading to both fatalism and 'dogmatic egoism' (LM 28:41, 206–7; *cf*. NF 17:297, 18:541–3). Spinozism is egoism, Kant thinks, because its single substance, God, is the only abiding subject of which we can predicate our thoughts, including thoughts about ourselves. Self-consciousness means that either the self is a subject – in which case it is the one substance, God – or it is an accident of that substance, in which case it is not a subject of its own thoughts.[20] A further consequence is that Spinoza 'destroyed the concept of God' by equating him with the world.[21]

Kant's other line of attack from this period is that Spinozism is enthusiasm (*Schwärmerei*, sometimes translated as 'fanaticism'). His remark 'On Philosophical Enthusiasm' aligns Spinoza with the Platonic doctrine of knowledge as recollection. Plato's theory of the agreement

of our representations with objects, Kant explains, relies on archetypal ideas that humans cannot understand in conceptual thought, and can only be encountered in the original being through an intellectual intuition. This theory becomes 'enthusiastic' insofar as it raises

> the suspicion of participating in [a] communion with God and the immediate intuition of these ideas (mystical intuition), and even of finding in them the immediate object of all of our inclinations, which have previously been applied to appearances as their types only through a misunderstanding.
>
> (NF 18:435)

Spinozism, 'theosophy by means of intuition', is the final stage of the Platonic notion that all ideas are intuited in God. Kant appears to acknowledge that Spinozism is equally rooted in Aristotelian empiricism, but argues that it returns to the Platonic delusion when it seeks completion of empirical causes in the unconditioned. Spinoza makes the typical dogmatic error of mistaking the subjective conditions of reason for the objective conditions of things in themselves, and his Platonism leads him to posit the latter as a single divine substance in which all things inhere. Spinozism combines dogmatism about a single metaphysically real object with enthusiasm for the divine nature of that object, and is therefore 'the true conclusion of dogmatic metaphysics' (NF 18:436, *cf.* 18:437–8). Beyond scorn for it, only 'the critique of reason' can accomplish anything against enthusiasm.

Kant's first *Critique* confirms this view while acknowledging that enthusiasm has its attractions. Though he abjures the Spinozist anti-establishment, he recognizes its irresistibility to students. So confident is Kant in the power of the critical method, however, that he believes it renders such tendencies harmless. The critical method dispels the errors of the freethinker such that the latter gives no cause for alarm. Reading Spinoza is therefore a critical exercise, and more worthwhile than reading his dogmatic denouncers:

> We are very ill-advised in decrying as dangerous any bold assertions against, or audacious attacks upon, the view which already has on its side the approval of the largest and best portion of the community; in doing so we are ascribing to them an importance which they are not entitled to claim. Whenever I hear that a writer of real ability has demonstrated away the freedom of the human will, the hope of a future life, and the existence of God, I am eager to read the book,

> for I expect him by his talents to increase my insight into these matters. Already, before having opened it, I am perfectly certain that he has not justified any one of his specific claims; not because I believe that I am in possession of conclusive proofs of these important propositions, but because the transcendental critique, which has disclosed to me all the resources of our pure reason, has completely convinced me that, as reason is incompetent to arrive at affirmative assertions in this field, it is equally unable, indeed even less able, to establish any negative conclusion in regard to these questions. For from what source will the freethinker derive his professed knowledge that there is, for example, no supreme being? This proposition is outside the field of possible experience, and therefore beyond the limits of all human insight. The reply of the *dogmatic* defender of the good cause I should not read at all. I know beforehand that he will attack the sophistical arguments of his opponent simply in order to gain acceptance for his own; and I also know that a quite familiar line of false argument does not yield so much material for new observations as one that is novel and ingeniously elaborated. The opponent of religion is indeed, in his own way, no less dogmatic, but he affords me a welcome opportunity of applying and, in this or that respect, amending the principles of my Critique, while at the same time I need be in no fear of these principles being in the least degree endangered.
>
> (CPR A752–4/B780–2)

Spinoza and the early German Spinozists are the unnamed 'freethinkers' of the 1781 (A) edition of the first *Critique*. Kant evidently sees himself to be justified in not reading them, for transcendental critique knocks down dogmatic claims without needing to take the trouble to understand them. But he does not advocate censorship: students should be allowed to read the freethinkers' doctrines in order to hone their critical skills. Indeed, if young people are kept shielded from such 'dangerous propositions', they are all the more likely to find them attractive once discovered. Far better to acquaint them with such material as part of their 'thorough instruction in the criticism of pure reason' (CPR A754–5/B782–3). The radical views of the Spinozist, dogmatic as they are, ought to be critically examined, not uncritically denounced.

Yet Kant himself did not undertake a systematic critical examination of Spinozism. In 1781 he had no reason for doing so: he saw Spinozism as the dogmatic metaphysical foundation for an unsupportable religious belief, absurd but insignificant. Kant was certain that Spinozism, like other dogmatic positions, could be dismantled through critique, and left it up

to his readers to take on the task if they felt so compelled. But then came the events of the mid-1780s: the pantheism controversy and the revival of Spinozism as a philosophical movement promising to reunify metaphysics, science and faith in the wake of Kant's critical deconstructions. A group of younger thinkers, their interest spurred by the Jacobi–Mendelssohn dispute, turned to Spinoza and found his position to be more than just an opportunity to apply Kant's critical method. Rather than expose Spinoza's dogmatism through critique, they sought to find ways of upholding it alongside Kantian principles. Some found Spinoza to offer the strongest available alternative to transcendental idealism; others were convinced that Kantianism was compatible with Spinozistic naturalism. What Kant had believed to be a minor and forgettable variant of dogmatism had, within the space of a few years, resurged as a dynamic philosophical movement hugely attractive to his own students and followers. Kant's remark in the Preface to the 1787 (B) edition of the first *Critique*, that 'criticism alone can sever the root of *materialism, fatalism, atheism, free-thinking, fanaticism,* and *superstition* […] as well as *idealism* and *scepticism*' (CPR Bxxxiv), is aimed no longer at Spinoza himself or the early freethinkers, but at his own readers who were in danger of succumbing to the new Spinozism.[22]

Jacobi's *Concerning the Doctrine of Spinoza* changed the way Spinoza was read in Germany and undoubtedly influenced Kant's understanding and attitude. Indeed, according to Hamann, until Kant read Jacobi he had never been able to make sense of Spinoza.[23] This was equally true of others: the pantheism controversy made Spinoza acceptable to the intellectual establishment, but also gave them a new way to engage with Kant. The change in attitude towards Spinozism in the 1780s and 1790s had a profound impact on Kant's thinking. While his early references to Spinoza suggest that Kant upheld a weak version of the conventional views of his time, his work after 1785 shows that he increasingly thought Spinoza was worth taking seriously enough to argue against in print. In the second and third *Critiques*, Kant presents Spinoza's system as posing a genuine, if mistaken, alternative to his own.

Spinoza and Spinozism: Some positions

In this section I offer a brief overview of Spinoza's ontology, to serve as a grounding and reference point for my discussion of Jacobi's, Herder's, Maimon's and Deleuze's interpretations of Spinoza in the chapters that follow. Because interpretations of Spinoza in the late eighteenth century were heavily influenced by Bayle, one aim of my explanation of Spinoza

is to show how Bayle misreads one of the most fundamental ideas of Spinoza's ontology: the idea that God is nature. This misreading was to have far-reaching consequences.

Bayle was not wrong to assert that Spinoza's God is identical with the world. Nor was he wrong to state that Spinoza's God produces the world immanently. But Bayle's readers drew misguided conclusions from his account because the complexities of Spinoza's metaphysics were ignored. 'Spinozism' was thought to be based on the principle that God produces a world with which he is identical: this God was taken to be nothing more than the sum total of natural beings and the ideas of those beings. That makes Spinoza's God a vast extended being that contains the ideas of these beings, but does not think them with any intelligence or intention. It is no wonder that those who condemned Spinozism did so on the basis of the absurdities his system apparently generated. In this view, God exists as a mere physical being, producing things as its own effects but not creating anything separate from itself. With no intelligence, agency or will, and denied the powers of creation and transcendence, this is not God at all, but a sum total of reality in which all things, ideas, and events are contained but not intelligently directed. Accusations of atheism and fatalism seemed warranted on the basis of Bayle's account.

If we take atheism to be the denial of the God of theism, there is no doubt that atheism characterizes Spinoza's thinking. More precisely, Spinoza believes that the biblical representation of God is a mere image – a partial and confused version – of what God truly is. For Spinoza, God is not a transcendent being who thinks intentionally and creates freely, but *being as such*. As Herder stresses, we cannot call atheistic a system in which God is in all being, and all being is in God. Many of the essential characteristics of the Judeo-Christian God are, in fact, preserved by Spinoza, including infinite existence, power, knowledge and love. The key characteristics he denies are transcendence and creation, along with those 'eminently human' characteristics of absolute will, free choice, and moral judgement. Spinoza shows these to be fictitious, and reveals that the true understanding of God involves immanent productivity according to the necessity of its own nature.

Spinoza's identification of God with being is not an identification of God with the experienced world. While the world is indeed encompassed in Spinoza's God, the relation between substance, attributes, and modes means that God's being is infinitely more than extended nature. In Part I of the *Ethics*, Spinoza demonstrates that there is only one substance, and that substance is God.[24] Substance as such is pure, indeterminate

being that is ontologically and epistemologically dependent on itself alone. It is in itself and is conceived through itself. As 'cause of itself' its essence necessarily involves existence; its nature is to bring about its own existence. This means that substance is eternally active, for substance cannot have started to cause itself (except through a creation *ex nihilo*, which Spinoza implicitly rejects). If substance exists, it necessarily and eternally exists as the activity of bringing about its being. It is both the power to cause its actuality and the actual effect of its own causal power.

The activity, or power, of substance is its very essence (E IP34): to be is to act. Substance is the power of self-actualization.[25] The attributes give substance (or its power) its determination: a substance must have at least one attribute, which determines how its essence is perceived. The attribute is neither a property nor an effect of substance, but is the substance itself, as determined (and therefore perceived) in a certain way. As Spinoza puts it, the being of substance is 'expressed' through its attribute(s) (E IP10S). In a key demonstration (E IP5), Spinoza proves that there cannot be more than one substance of the same attribute. So each substance has its own attribute(s) unique to it; each substance is differently determined, its essence differently perceived. Being entirely distinct, substances cannot cause or limit one another, meaning that every substance is infinite in terms of the attribute(s) unique to it. That is, every substance is infinite 'of its nature' (E IP8). God, however, is defined as 'a being absolutely infinite, that is, a substance consisting of an infinity of attributes, of which each one expresses an eternal and infinite essence' (E ID6). While a single-attribute substance actualizes itself infinitely as one type of being, God actualizes itself infinitely as *infinite* types of being. A substance of infinite attributes is an infinite power that makes itself actual in every way possible. God's being leaves no attributes for other substances to exist *as*. God is therefore the only substance, and cannot be conceived not to exist. For if *being* did not exist, there would be no being or conceiving of anything at all (E IP11).

Ethics Part I shows that God is identical with being as such, and not strictly with the experienced world. There are, in fact, several ontological steps between God and the world. First we must focus on two of God's infinite attributes: extension and thinking. These are the only attributes the human mind conceives, meaning that the world we experience and conceive is but a tiny segment of God's infinite being. Extended bodies and thinking minds and ideas are 'in' God, as expressed through these two attributes, and are ontologically and epistemologically dependent on God. 'Whatever is, is in God, and nothing can be or be conceived

without God' (E IP15). Minds and bodies are not substances, but *modes* of God. Spinoza's modes are the properties of substance – in other words, the properties of a power of self-actualization. They should not be considered as fixed properties attached to a static thing, but as the changes and interactions, or 'affections', of this eternal activity. In this sense, modes are both properties inhering in God and the effects of its causality.[26] This is possible because God actualizes itself immanently: the effects of God's causality remain 'in' God, as its modes. 'God is the immanent, not the transitive, cause of all things' (E IP18). For Spinoza, effects are always bound up in, and follow necessarily from, their causes (E IA3–4).

Spinoza's God is being that encompasses all beings and causes all effects. God exists as both substance and modes, as both cause and effects. Yet the difference between God as substance and God as modes is maintained as the difference between the activity of being and the actualized beings that follow from it. Spinoza's expression 'God or Nature' indicates the equivalence of these terms, but also this difference. This is expressed in Spinoza's famous distinction between *Natura naturans* and *Natura naturata*:

> By *Natura naturans* we must understand what is in itself and is conceived through itself, or such attributes of substance as express an eternal and infinite essence, that is, God, insofar as he is considered as a free cause. But by *Natura naturata* I understand whatever follows from the necessity of God's nature, or from any of God's attributes, that is, all the modes of God's attributes insofar as they are considered as things which are in God, and can neither be nor be conceived without God.
>
> (E IP29S)

The ontological difference between being and beings is internal to God, allowing the causality of beings by being – and the inherence of beings in being – without any separation. God is understood both as the power of actualization and as actualized product. There is nothing outside God which God creates or transcends. 'God must be called the cause of all things in the same sense in which he is called the cause of himself' (E IP25S).

The process of God's immanent causality, while obscure, is important insofar as it allows us to pinpoint just where Bayle and his followers misunderstood Spinoza. At E IP21–23, Spinoza explains that God's causality of finite modes is mediated by two levels of infinite mode.[27]

The first of these (the 'immediate infinite mode') is the immediate product of God's attributes, and may be thought to constitute laws and order within an attribute. The second (the 'mediate infinite mode') is the product of God's attributes as mediated by the immediate mode; it is the infinite individual within an attribute, or 'the face of the whole universe'.[28] Considered in terms of the attributes of extension and thinking, we may understand this material as follows. God's being, determined as extension, causes an infinite order of physical relations (the immediate infinite mode of 'motion and rest'), from which follows an infinite physical individual. God's being, determined as thinking, causes an infinite order of relations of ideas (the immediate infinite mode of 'infinite intellect'), from which follows an infinite thinking individual. Finite physical bodies and finite minds and ideas are the 'certain and determinate' expressions of these infinite individuals. In other words, finite modes are the limited and changing parts of what is really one single individual understood in two different attributes. Table 0.1 provides a summary of these aspects of Spinoza's ontology.

It is not difficult to see where Bayle and his followers went wrong. They believed Spinoza's God to be identical with the sum total of physical nature and, less prominently, with the sum total of ideas. But further attention to Spinoza's ontology reveals that these sum totals are not substance *as such*, but rather the mediate infinite *modes* of substance. The sum total of physical nature – the totality of bodies understood as one being – is the infinite physical individual, the single, infinite 'surface' of the physical universe and not its metaphysical 'depth'. Spinoza discusses the infinite physical individual in Part II of the *Ethics*,

Table 0.1 Outline of Spinoza's ontology

Substance (indeterminate being)	*Attributes (what substance is determined as)*	*Immediate infinite mode (what the attribute is immediately expressed as)*	*Mediate infinite mode (what the attribute is mediately expressed as)*	*Finite modes (what the attribute is determinately expressed as)*
Substance/God	Extension	Infinite motion and rest	Infinite physical individual	Physical bodies
	Thinking	Infinite intellect	Infinite thinking individual	Minds/ideas
Natura naturans		*Natura naturata*		

where the context clearly indicates that it is the infinite totality of physical bodies:

> If we conceive of [a finite physical body] composed of a number of individuals of a different nature, we shall find that it can be affected in a great many other ways, and still preserve its nature. For since each part of it is composed of a number of bodies, each part will therefore be able, without any change of its nature, to move now more slowly, now more quickly, and consequently communicate its motion more quickly or more slowly to the others. But if we should further conceive a kind of individual, composed of [these composite] individuals, we shall find that it can be affected in many other ways, without any change of its form. And if we proceed in this way to infinity, we shall easily conceive that the whole of nature is one individual, whose parts, that is, all bodies, vary in infinite ways, without any change of the whole individual.
>
> (E IIL7S, translation modified)

It is this individual that Bayle takes to be identical with Spinoza's God. For Spinoza, the infinite physical individual is in God and part of God, but it is God existing as mode, not as substance. So while it is right to say that God is the sum total of the experienced world, it is wrong to say that God's essence is to be just this sum total. God's essence as infinitely self-actualizing substance is prior to, and in no way dependent on, its expression as the sum total of physical nature. And it is the essence of Spinoza's God as substance that Bayle glosses over. He ignores the distinction between *Natura naturans* and *Natura naturata*, treating Spinoza's God as if it comprised only the latter. Bayle treats being as if it were the totality of beings. This misunderstanding was to have far-reaching consequences, influencing not only the anti-Spinozist tirades of the early eighteenth century, but also the Spinoza revival of the 1780s.

Spinoza's determinism and apparent fatalism are the other major points of contention for eighteenth-century anti-Spinozism. To readers of Bayle, it looked as if finite beings were determined as limitations of God himself, who, being equivalent to nature, could have no intelligence or freedom. Again, this is an oversimplification of Spinoza's position. Certainly Spinoza's God does not have the intentional intelligence or free choice of the biblical God. Spinoza's God has perfect understanding of itself in the infinite intellect, but does not make judgements or choices. Modes do not come about through God's free decision, but follow from

the necessity of God's nature. God's causality operates according to this necessity. But far from denying God freedom, this for Spinoza is the very definition of freedom: to 'exist from the necessity of its nature alone, and [to be] determined to act by itself alone' (E ID7). God is free not in the sense of exercising free will, but in the sense of being determined only by itself (E IP17C2, IP17S). As Spinoza explains, to deny free will to God represents a power rather than a constraint: if God had the freedom to choose to actualize some but not all of its being, then God would contradict its essence as self-actualizing substance. God's essence is to unfold its being according to the perfect order of its nature; to attribute free will to God is to deny it the power to produce 'infinitely many things in infinitely many modes' (E IP17S).

One result of the denial of intentions to God is Spinoza's rejection of final causes. Spinoza's God does not produce according to purposes or in accordance with any teleological aim. God does not favour human beings (or any good or pious subset of them), and nothing in nature is 'purposive' for human use or understanding. Nor is the universe progressing towards any goal. Spinoza explains that human beings, basing their understanding on their own purpose-oriented behaviour, naturally interpret the world as if it were provided for their own purposes ('Eyes for seeing, teeth for chewing, plants and animals for food […] they consider all natural things as means to their own advantage', E IApp.). To assume on this basis an 'intelligent designer' of the universe is to commit the intentional fallacy on a grand scale. 'Those who do not understand the nature of things […] firmly believe, in their ignorance of things and of their own nature, that there is an order in things […] as if order were anything in Nature more than a relation to our imagination' (E IApp.). Value judgements about 'good, evil, order, confusion, warm, cold, beauty, ugliness' are always made from the perspective of a particular finite mode (E IApp.). God has no purposes and makes no judgements, and is indifferent to our interests, goodness and suffering.

Human beings misunderstand themselves if they believe they act from free will or intentions. Finite modes, as the effects of the necessary unfolding of God's nature, are fully determined. 'In nature there is nothing contingent, but all things have been determined from the necessity of the divine nature to exist and produce an effect in a certain way' (E IP29). Although we speak of contingency and possibility from a limited, human perspective, there is neither possibility nor contingency in nature: all being that can exist does exist, and exists necessarily. Human choices and actions are always the effects of causes, some bound up in our essence, and others imposed by the world around us. No choice,

thought, or action is the product of a free will. 'The will cannot be called a free cause, but only a necessary one' (E IP32).

While denying that we have any absolute freedom, Spinoza upholds human freedom in another sense. Human beings can become more free insofar as we pursue those thoughts and actions determined in us by our essence, and try to avoid those determined in us by external things and the passions they cause us to feel. Spinoza's definition of virtue, and the basis for his ethics, is that we do those things we are determined to do by our natures. Good is what is useful for preserving our natures and furthering our power, and bad is what prevents us from doing so (E IVD1, IVD2, IVD8). As we increase our power to be what we are essentially determined to be, we increase our virtue and our freedom. This is the subject of Parts IV and V of the *Ethics*. These ethical sections were almost entirely ignored by the late-eighteenth century readers of Spinoza. Based on Spinoza's denial of free will, they concluded that Spinoza denied morality and freedom (with Herder as a prominent exception). On the basis of this interpretation, Spinoza's system became one of blind determinism, in which human life has no hope for improvement, virtue or freedom, and, without faith in God, no basis for belief in an afterlife of rewards or punishments.[29]

As for Spinoza's theory of knowledge, the subtleties of this were similarly ignored, resulting in a caricature of Spinozism as a variant of dogmatic rationalism. Spinoza's rationalism has been vastly overstated, for notwithstanding his belief in the power of reason to understand reality truly, Spinoza can be said to be an empiricist in his emphasis on experience as the basis of our acquiring true ideas. Spinoza famously posits three kinds of knowledge: imagination, which includes all sensory, empirical and inferential beliefs; reason, the understanding of adequate ideas through deduction and common notions; and intuition, the true understanding of God's attributes from which follows true understanding of the essences of things (E IIP40S2). Though imagination is the source of falsity and error, it is not wholly false, and its objects are not illusory. In imagination we know true ideas, but inadequately: our knowledge is partial and confused. Reason understands the limits and corrects the errors of imagination, yet is not strictly opposed to it. Rational knowledge is the complete, true and adequate understanding of ideas that were previously imagined partially or inadequately. It is not the case that Spinoza thinks of the finite world and our empirical knowledge of it as an illusion, as Jacobi, for instance, believes. The world of finite modes is a world of appearances: we can understand them, but only within the limits determined by our finite bodies and minds.

The structure of the book

This book has seven chapters that follow a broadly historical trajectory. Individual chapters can be read independently, or in their natural couplets.

Chapters 1 and 2 are about the engagement with Spinozism that emerged from the pantheism controversy. Chapter 1 looks at Jacobi's influential interpretation of Spinoza and his suggestion that Kant's philosophy can be improved through its affinity with Spinozism. In chapter 2 I examine Kant's response to Jacobi through his rejection of Spinozistic dogmatism in 'What does it mean to orient oneself in thinking?' and the *Critique of Practical Reason*.

Chapters 3 and 4 focus on Kant's relationship with Herder. In chapter 3 I explain their disagreements over naturalism and teleology, and show that Herder's Spinozistic naturalism prompts Kant's key arguments for teleological judgement in the third *Critique*. Chapter 4 focuses specifically on Kant's argument against Spinozism in the *Critique of Judgment*, and its importance for the aims of that text.

Chapters 5 and 6 are about Maimon and Deleuze. Chapter 5 focuses on Maimon's attempt to deepen transcendental philosophy and make it account for the genesis of the content of knowledge by fusing Spinozism with Kantianism. Chapter 6 examines the complex interrelation between Deleuze, Kant, Spinoza, and Maimon, looking at Deleuze's 'transcendental empiricism' as a Maimonian response to transcendental idealism, and arguing that Deleuze sees a version of a philosophy of difference in both Kant and Spinoza.

Finally, Chapter 7 and the conclusion look at Kant's *Opus Postumum* as a response to the demands of Maimon and Deleuze, and at Kant's puzzling appeal in his last days to 'Spinoza's transcendental idealism'.

1
Jacobi's Provocative Suggestion

The possibility that Kantian philosophy could be fused with Spinozism was first raised by Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi in his 1785 book *Über die Lehre des Spinoza in Briefen an den Herrn Moses Mendelssohn* (*Concerning the Doctrine of Spinoza in Letters to Herr Moses Mendelssohn*). The lasting influence of Jacobi's text, from his interpretation of Spinoza to his rejection of reason, connects *Naturphilosophie* to Nietzsche, to twentieth-century French philosophy and beyond. This chapter starts by explaining how this text arose from the pantheism controversy of the 1780s. I then turn to Jacobi's interpretation of Spinoza and show that it is decidedly post-Kantian. At the same time, Jacobi reads Kant Spinozistically. In interpreting these philosophers through each other, Jacobi creates the conditions in which followers of Kant were able to combine his philosophy with Spinozism.

More significantly, Jacobi is the first to propose that the resources of Spinozism can resolve the internal problems of transcendental idealism and thereby 'save' the critical philosophy. Spinozism is in a position to help Kant, Jacobi thinks, because transcendental idealism is already Spinozistic in its basic ontological structure: Jacobi tries to argue that the immanence characterizing Spinoza's substance can also be found in Kant's first *Critique*. Kant's antagonism to Spinoza is sharpened by this provocative suggestion that the two philosophers share a commitment to an immanent relation between being and appearances.

The pantheism controversy and its ontological stakes

Kant, like many others, was first introduced to Spinoza – as opposed to the 'Spinozism' decried by Bayle and Wolff – by Jacobi's 1785 book *Concerning the Doctrine of Spinoza in Letters to Herr Moses Mendelssohn*, the

text that ignited the pantheism controversy of the 1780s. Jacobi was by no means the first to treat Spinoza as a serious philosophical contender, but he examined Spinoza afresh, largely unencumbered by the trappings of the Wolffian tradition and the bias of anti-Spinozist rhetoric. His book rehabilitated Spinoza not only as philosophically respectable, but as relevant to contemporary debates, particularly those set in motion by Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. Yet Jacobi's text is hardly a careful assessment of Spinoza's and Kant's positions. Rather, he crashes Spinoza and Kant together in a way designed to set sparks flying, and to upset dogmatic rationalists and transcendental idealists alike.

The key events of the pantheism controversy took place between 1783 and 1785.[1] What started as a personal dispute between Jacobi and Moses Mendelssohn over the question of G. E. Lessing's commitment to Spinozism escalated into a public argument as each of the two key players raced to publish and to establish as authoritative his own account of the dispute. In 1783, Jacobi revealed to Mendelssohn that Lessing had declared himself a Spinozist just before his death – a fact that Mendelssohn, despite his 30-year friendship with Lessing, had apparently not been aware of.

Mendelssohn's concern was to save Lessing's reputation by showing that his Spinozism was consistent with morality and religion, and therefore not of the dangerous variety; Mendelssohn himself had argued that such an interpretation of Spinoza was possible in his 1755 book *Philosophische Gespräche*. To make his case he needed more information about Jacobi's conversations with Lessing. Jacobi sent Mendelssohn an embellished transcript of the conversations, in which Jacobi casts himself as both interpreter and critic of Spinoza.

His critique of Spinoza represents a critique of philosophy as such. Jacobi agrees with Lessing's reported remark that 'there is no other philosophy but the philosophy of Spinoza', but concludes that all philosophy must end in Spinozistic fatalism (MPW 187). Jacobi's purpose in writing the dialogue is not to attack Spinozism, which he takes to be the paragon of philosophical consistency. Rather, it is to criticize all philosophy grounded on reason on the basis that it, like Spinozism as its most consistent example, falls inevitably into atheism and fatalism. Thus Jacobi's critique of Spinozism was also a critique of Mendelssohn's own philosophical rationalism, and Mendelssohn was all the more motivated to refute Jacobi in print.

Mendelssohn's plan was to publish a book on Lessing that would clear his character, while also attacking Jacobi's view that all philosophy ends in atheism. Jacobi signalled his intent to meet Mendelssohn's challenge,

and a series of letters containing interpretations, objections and replies passed between them. But the posturing and secrecy of both men, along with delays in their correspondence brought about by illness, escalated their suspicion about one another's intentions. Mendelssohn became increasingly impatient with Jacobi's dismissal of his objections, his 'incomprehensible' explanations and his slowness at replying to letters. In July 1785 Mendelssohn informed Jacobi that he would press on with publication of his book, *Morgenstunden oder Vorlesung über das Dasein Gottes* (*Morning Hours or Lectures on the Existence of God*), without showing Jacobi a draft as they had previously agreed. Believing that Mendelssohn was trying to wrest control of his material, Jacobi became paranoid that his conversations with Lessing would be misrepresented, and that Jacobi himself would be cast as a Spinozist. Jacobi hastily and secretly put together his own book, comprising his dialogue with Lessing and his subsequent correspondence with Mendelssohn.

Jacobi's *Concerning the Doctrine of Spinoza in Letters to Herr Moses Mendelssohn* was published in September 1785, one month before Mendelssohn's *Morning Hours* appeared. It was Jacobi's book that contained the explosive revelations that Lessing was a Spinozist who 'could not accept the idea of a personal, absolutely infinite being' (MPW 197), thus casting Jacobi as critic of Spinozism and defender of faith. Mendelssohn's book is mild by comparison: it defends philosophical rationalism and argues that Lessing advocated a 'purified pantheism' that was consistent with upholding reason. Infuriated not only by Jacobi's publication of their private correspondence but also by Jacobi's pre-emption of his book, Mendelssohn quickly wrote a riposte, his *An die Freunde Lessings*, exposing Jacobi's intentions. Whether precipitated by the events or not, Mendelssohn became ill and died four days after delivering the manuscript to his publisher. Jacobi was blamed for hastening his death and became the object of rebuke from Mendelssohn's friends in Berlin intellectual circles.[2]

It is well recognized that the pantheism controversy did not truly concern pantheism. Mendelssohn accepted Jacobi's claim that Lessing was, in some sense, a pantheist. The controversy concerned the implications pantheism could be considered to have. For Jacobi, Lessing's avowal of pantheism was exemplary of the fall into atheism, fatalism and nihilism that was the inevitable end point of rationalist philosophy. For Mendelssohn, pantheism could be made consistent with reason, and thus with rational knowledge of God and morality. What was at stake in the pantheism controversy was whether reason could retain its foundational status for philosophy, morality and religion. Thus, as

Beiser argues, the controversy was a battle over the fate of the values of *Aufklärung* thinking: either reason was to justify its authority and immunity to critique, or it was to slide inevitably into nihilism. On the one side were the Berlin *Aufklärer* represented by Mendelssohn; on the other, the Christian fideists – frequently labelled 'enthusiasts' – represented by Jacobi.

Jacobi's *Concerning the Doctrine of Spinoza* is remarkable not only for the debate it stirred up, but also for its detailed, fairly accurate, and relatively sympathetic interpretation of Spinoza. It was not the first, to be sure: positive interpretations of Spinoza's *Ethics*, demonstrating its compatibility with Christianity, had appeared throughout the early eighteenth century, but written by outright Spinozists, they were mistrusted and widely refuted.[3] As already noted, Mendelssohn had attempted to show 30 years earlier that Spinoza was not the dangerous atheist of Bayle's caricature, and that his philosophy deserved objective assessment. But his interpretation of Spinoza followed Wolff's so that, despite finding resources in Spinoza for aesthetic and religious philosophy, it was unlikely to win anyone over to Spinoza's side.[4] By contrast, Jacobi's interpretation stays close to the metaphysical spirit of Spinoza's system, even if it often deviates from the detail of his argument.[5] Jacobi's innovation is to offer a sympathetic interpretation of Spinoza's thought while remaining highly critical of it. His aim is to force the realization among rationalist philosophers of just how Spinozistic they really are.

Jacobi therefore presents Spinoza not as a peddler of absurdities, but as a philosopher one might reasonably be persuaded by. Indeed, he argues that Spinoza is the philosopher one *must* be persuaded by if one is consistent in one's commitment to reason. Jacobi believes that rationalism cannot be made consistent with faith, and must be abandoned. The philosopher who had been most rigorously consistent in his rationalism was Spinoza, whose system leads inevitably to atheism and fatalism. If Leibniz and Wolff had been more consistent rationalists, Jacobi argues, they would have become Spinozists. Philosophers who exalt reason and push it to its logical end must, like Spinoza, abandon God and freedom, ending up in a thoroughgoing scepticism regarding the grounds of morality, religion, and the external world. God and freedom must be kept if we are to avoid scepticism and nihilism, but this can only be accomplished if we admit they are 'completely inexplicable' objects of faith (MPW 193).[6]

The object of Jacobi's critique is reason itself, with Spinoza as its most powerful advocate. His major target is Kant, specifically Kant's supposed

denial of absolute being. For this reason, Jacobi does not interpret Spinoza straightforwardly or systematically. Instead, he presents him in a way that would be most arresting to rationalist readers, especially those who had recently experienced a conversion to Kant's critical philosophy. Jacobi wants Kant and the Kantians to see themselves reflected in the Spinozist mirror, and to see that both Spinozism and Kantianism must be rejected to uphold faith.

Jacobi has a complex agenda in pushing Spinoza forward as Kant's contemporary and rival. The most prominent aspect is his quarrel with Mendelssohn; more important is the imperative to save faith from the rationalist onslaught. But Jacobi is also concerned with ontology: he is perturbed by the apparent disappearance of 'being' from Kant's transcendental idealism, and the implications this must have for beings. Questions concerning the fate of the ontological difference in transcendental idealism underlie Jacobi's parlays: is there any 'being' distinct from beings? If beings are mere appearances, what is being? If being is not an object of knowledge, how can beings be explained? 'Being' seems to have become marginal and unknowable in Kant's system. To show what is at stake in that omission, Jacobi presents Spinoza, for whom being is primary and absolutely knowable.

Jacobi's concern hits at the very basis of Kant's system. Transcendental idealism, in resolving the problems left behind by dogmatic rationalism, also reconstituted ontology. Kant swept away the ontology of being and essences, and replaced it with an epistemic ontology. He was dissatisfied with the Wolffian focus on essences and their concepts: it was precisely through this ontology that dogmatic philosophers claimed knowledge of things in themselves.[7] Kant believed that with the Transcendental Analytic he had surpassed and replaced 'the proud name of an Ontology that presumptuously claims to supply, in systematic doctrinal form, synthetic *a priori* knowledge of things in general' (CPR A247/B303). Ontology would henceforth concern actually existing things as objects of possible experience, and 'being' would refer to their being posited for knowledge. In denying that absolute being could be an object of possible experience or knowledge, Kant effectively excluded God, the soul, things in themselves, and the *omnitudo realitatis* from ontology.[8] From the perspective of rationalist metaphysics, Kantian ontology lacked absoluteness and objectivity, finding its basis in the subject in relation to an external world whose source of grounding was unknown. Transcendental idealism appeared to be an ontology without being – or alternatively, an ontology that left being very much in question.

For Jacobi, Kant's insistence that ontology become epistemic is the basis for a set of gravely worrying beliefs. Jacobi famously takes transcendental idealism to be a mere subjectivism that tacitly assumes the existence of things in themselves while denying their real possibility.[9] Jacobi concludes, in his usual unsubtle way, that Kant denies that there is any reality or absolute being outside of human consciousness, and that this denial must lead not only to scepticism, but to atheism and nihilism too. In Jacobi's view, transcendental idealism is the endgame of a philosophy that exalts reason and rejects faith. Philosophy that insists that truth and knowledge are the preserve of rationality alone ends up denying the existence of whatever evades rational knowledge. As Jacobi sees it, no philosopher had gone so far in that direction as Spinoza, whose affirmation of absolute being was metaphysically preferable to Kantian doubt or denial, but refused the God of theology.

To convince others of the dangers of rationalism, Jacobi aimed to show that Spinoza was far closer to contemporary rationalistic thinking than anyone supposed. If Spinozism was tantamount to atheism and fatalism, so too was the rationalism of the late eighteenth century. As Kantianism and Spinozism were the joint targets of Jacobi's critique, it was important that he demonstrate their closeness in spite of their obvious ontological differences. Thus Jacobi presents Spinoza and Kant as proponents of the same basic ontology: one in which being and beings are distinct but unified through an immanent relation. Jacobi believes that Kant follows Spinoza in holding that appearances, the finite parts of the world, are immanent to being, understood as the infinite whole. But, Jacobi claims, whereas Spinoza affirms the necessary existence of the whole and denies the reality of the parts, Kant does the opposite: he affirms the reality of parts as appearances, and denies the reality of the whole, being as such. So although Spinozism is unsupportable for Jacobi on religious and moral grounds, it is more compelling than 'Kantian nihilism'.

Arguments for the existence of God

Jacobi structures his case in *Concerning the Doctrine of Spinoza* around a similarity he perceives between Spinoza's and Kant's ontologies. His thinking about this similarity was sparked much earlier, according to his own retrospective account in *David Hume on Faith* (MPW 284–5). Jacobi recalls that he first discovered Spinoza in 1763, the year of publication of Kant's essay *The Only Possible Argument in Support of a*

Demonstration of the Existence of God. Beiser describes the outcome of this coincidence:

> This work so excited him, [Jacobi] later confessed, that he had to put it down from time to time to stop his heart from beating so wildly. Jacobi enthusiastically endorsed Kant's new proof of the existence of God; but he accepted it with one significant qualification, one that would have horrified Kant: namely, that it was true only for Spinoza's God.[10]

Kant would indeed have been horrified to learn that his 'grounds for demonstration' were thought to be applicable to Spinoza's God. *The Only Possible Argument* is Kant's ontological turning point, in which he criticizes traditional proofs for the existence of God and sets out, for the first time, his thesis that 'being is not a predicate'. The essay is Kant's decisive step away from the Wolffian ontology of essences and concepts, and towards an ontology where being is positing – the position he would elaborate in the *Critique of Pure Reason*.

In *The Only Possible Argument*, Kant identifies a problem with Wolff: he cannot account for the actual existence of God. In making existence secondary to possibility, Wolff had to admit that God was a possible essence prior to his existence, and that there must have been a time when *nothing* actually existed. But if nothing actually exists, then there is nothing which can be thought, and consequently nothing is possible. So the notion that God's possibility precedes his existence is absurd; it must be that God's existence precedes his own possibility as well as all other possibilities (OPA 2:78–82).[11] Kant insists on returning to actual existence, rather than conceivability, as the necessary starting point for a demonstration of God.

It is not difficult to see why the young Jacobi heard echoes of Spinoza here. Kant seems to argue that a demonstration of God must begin with existence as such, made necessary by the impossibility that God's actual existence could arise out of nothing. Like Spinoza, Kant denies that there is 'possibility' prior to this necessary existence. And since this is the *only* possible argument, Kant appears to suggest that God *is* this eternal necessary existence. However, if this was Jacobi's sense, it was misguided: Kant's text is in fact concerned to show that necessary existence is the only possible basis for arguing for the transcendent, theological God. Furthermore, he explicitly denies that this God could be mistaken for Spinoza's. A brief survey of Kant's argument will highlight Jacobi's error.

In a version of the argument he later develops in the first *Critique*, Kant states 'existence is not a predicate or a determination of a thing' (OPA 2:72). Existence cannot be included in a thing's concept, which remains the same whether the thing is possible or actual. The existence of a possible thing does not add any predicate, but rather indicates that a thing which was possible is now actual. So it cannot be that God adds predicates to a possible thing to make it actual. Existence must instead be understood as the product of God's creative activity or 'absolute positing' (OPA 2:76, 2:73). God, then, cannot be demonstrated to exist just by virtue of the concept of God including every positive predicate; an argument for the existence of a necessary being can be supported only by a demonstration that such a being is absolutely posited. And this can be demonstrated, Kant says, from the nature of possibility. Possibility disappears either with logical contradiction or with the absence of any *datum* for thought. If there were no existence whatsoever, then there would be no real *datum* to be thought, and nothing would be possible. There is no internal contradiction in the denial of all existence, but if nothing exists, 'then nothing which could be thought is given either, and we contradict ourselves if we still wish to say that something is possible' (OPA 2:78). Possibility in general requires that there is *not nothing*: it requires the existence of *something*. Nothing would be possible at all if there were not already some existence 'in and through which all that can be thought is given' (OPA 2:83). That is, something must be posited prior to all possibility, whose non-existence would annul all possibility. And that necessary being must include or ground all other possible beings.

So far, perhaps Jacobi has grounds for seeing an affinity with Spinoza's argument for the priority of God's necessary existence, and even with Spinoza's doctrine that all things are in God (E IP15). However, Kant's view that all possible beings are dependent on one necessary being is different from Spinoza's, as Kant takes care to point out. Kant's necessary being is the real ground of all possibilities, 'but this is not to be understood to mean that all possible reality is included among its determinations' (OPA 2:86). While the necessary being grounds all reality, its essence cannot be equivalent to *all reality*, because it would be bound to include contradictions between real determinations if it were (OPA 2:85, *cf.* CPR A273–4/B329–30). Thus, in line with common criticism against Spinozism, Kant stresses that physical extension cannot be an attribute of a necessary being whose essence includes intellect and will. Kant thereby indicates that his necessary being can in no way be taken to be Spinozistic substance, since he rejects the view (commonly

attributed to Spinoza) that God is equivalent to the sum total of reality. He says instead that real things and qualities relate to the necessary being as either its determinations or its consequences. The essences of finite things cannot therefore be limitations of the necessary being, as the Spinozists were thought to believe.

As explained in the introduction to this book, Spinoza himself does not believe that God is strictly equivalent to the sum total of reality, or that finite things are limitations of God. Spinoza's actual position – as opposed to that constructed by Bayle and Wolff – is somewhat closer to Kant's, insofar as he believes finite things to be the *effects* of God. However, Kant's position cannot be said to be Spinozistic, for Kant makes clear that there must be an ontological distinction between the necessary being and what it effects (OPA 2:85–7). He thereby refuses any immanent relation between God and the world, wherein the world could be said to be 'in' God. The separateness of God from his creation, and therefore his transcendence to it, demonstrates that it is the theological God Kant seeks to ground. Kant goes on to stress that God is not the only substance, that the world is not an accident of God, that God cannot exist in a variety of ways, and that God acts according to intellect and will (OPA 2:85–91). All these points were part of the well-established apparatus of dispelling accusations of Spinozism. A throwaway remark that the God of Spinoza is an absurdity (OPA 2:74) confirms Kant's intention to distance himself from it.

It is not that Jacobi ignores these signals, but rather that he refuses to allow that the Christian God can be proved with the resources of rationalist philosophy. For Jacobi, belief in a transcendent God requires faith in a being who creates *ex nihilo*.[12] In *The Only Possible Argument*, Kant rejects creation *ex nihilo*, and this is just what Spinoza does at the outset of the *Ethics* to demonstrate that God is equivalent to being. So Kant's insistence that God is a transcendent creator is meaningless to Jacobi: for him, a God who is ontologically distinct from his creation must create *ex nihilo*, for otherwise, all being must issue from, and remain part of, God's eternal being. Kant's argument from necessary existence, Jacobi says, cannot demonstrate the Christian God, but only *Spinoza's* God (MPW 282–5). Of course, God's capacity to create *ex nihilo* cannot be rationally explained; it can only be the object of faith. There can be no rational demonstration of the Christian God, for Jacobi. The very best attempts at demonstrating God's existence, Kant's among them, will succeed only in demonstrating Spinozistic substance.

Jacobi's interpretation of Spinoza

Returning to *Concerning the Doctrine of Spinoza*, we can see Jacobi's reiteration and development of these themes in his decidedly post-Kantian interpretation of Spinoza. Jacobi takes the principle *ex nihilo nihil fit* – nothing comes from nothing – to be the basis of the whole of Spinoza's philosophy, and the root of all its problems. Since Spinoza rejects that something could come from nothing, Jacobi says, he rejects the notion that the infinite being could come to be or change, and he rejects transitive creation from the infinite to the finite. The finite must therefore already exist *within* the infinite. Instead of an emanative being, Spinoza 'only posited an *immanent* one, an indwelling cause of the universe eternally unalterable *within itself*' (MPW 188). What comes to be and passes away does not do so in an absolute sense; these changes are the mere surface fluctuations of the infinite substance. From all eternity, the finite has been with the infinite substance, in which 'everything is infinitely, permanently, and eternally actual' (MPW 217).

Jacobi sees that Spinoza distinguishes between substance and finite beings. Unlike Bayle, therefore, Jacobi recognizes the distinction between *Natura naturans* and *Natura naturata*. However, he misconstrues it as a distinction between the real and the illusory, and thereby misunderstands Spinoza's view that all being is actual. Jacobi reads Spinoza as saying that finite beings are real only insofar as they are *in substance*; considered on their own, as determinate modes, finite beings are 'non-beings' in the sense that they have no being in themselves. 'Individual things therefore, so far as they only exist in a certain determinate mode, are *non-entia*; the indeterminate infinite being is the one single true *ens reale*' (MPW 220). But the infinite being itself 'must do without any actuality whatever, for actuality can only be found expressed in determinate individuals' (MPW 199).

Jacobi on the one hand posits a non-actual substance that has real being (Spinoza's God), and on the other, actual determinate entities whose being is illusory (the finite modes). In this way, finite beings, the objects of our perception, are the mere appearances of substance. Substance appears to us *as* determinate, spatially and temporally distinct individuals. The world of time, causality and individual things is mere appearance, attributable to the limitations of human understanding: 'consequence and duration must *in truth* only be a certain way of intuiting the manifold in the infinite' (MPW 188). Yet our thinking is governed by true ideas: true knowledge is within us through our immanent connection to substance and its attributes. The attributes of thought

and extension are the conditions of possibility of our conceiving ideas in the way that we do (MPW 218–19).

While Jacobi's presentation of the argument is very far from how Spinoza himself presents it, his identification of a distinction between finite and infinite perspectives in Spinoza is broadly correct. Spinoza does contrast the eternally real and true perspective of substance with the durational, partial and imaginary perspective of the finite modes. But Jacobi interprets this in terms of the Kantian distinction between appearance and thing in itself, a tactic that seems designed to alarm the Kantian reader. According to Jacobi, Spinoza, like Kant, argues that the world appears to us as determinate things because we are finite beings who perceive things in time; and Spinoza, like Kant, argues that our experiential knowledge necessarily involves certain a priori concepts. Jacobi even suggests that Spinoza's infinite intellect is similar to Kant's transcendental apperception, for he takes both to denote the pure, indeterminate consciousness that is the original condition of thinking and representing (MPW 223).[13]

Jacobi goes on to remark that Spinoza's God, lacking will and understanding, does not act in accordance with final causes. All causality is therefore efficient causality, and finite beings operate according to natural determinism. Yet the interactions between determinate things in nature are merely appearances in the illusory order of time. In the true order of substance, the absolute relations between the essences of things are necessarily and eternally fixed. This, for Jacobi, not only leads to scepticism about reality as it appears to us, but also amounts to fatalism about reality as it is in itself. On Jacobi's account, a Spinozist should be sceptical about the world as experienced, since it is merely the appearance of reality as it is in itself. But if we accept Spinoza's view that we can achieve true knowledge of substance, we must also accept that true knowledge will reveal that reality is structured by a binding determinism. Spinoza's God, says Jacobi, is equivalent to the blind necessity of an eternally fixed system which can be rationally thought but never experienced. This implies that we have no freedom, either insofar as we are finite modes or insofar as we exist in substance.

With no grounds for belief in the world as it appears, no freedom to initiate change, and no providence to hope for, science is fruitless, morality is empty, and religion is pointless. Jacobi takes Spinoza's ethical doctrine to be sophistry, due to his conviction that fatalism cannot be consistent with morality or freedom (MPW 194). Our creative inventions and moral choices are illusions, the epiphenomena of a mechanical system that is devoid of all sensations and thoughts (MPW 189). In such

a system, we can neither strive for goodness nor hope for redemption. The only route open to us is scepticism about the world and nihilism about morals.

The alternative Jacobi proposes is the total embrace of faith, not only in God but also in morality and the experienced world (MPW 234). We should abandon our attempts to explain God and the world rationally, since no system could offer a more consistent account than Spinoza's, and Spinoza's system is doomed to fail. Instead, we should accept that we are guided in much of our knowledge and activity by faith and feeling, and seek understanding through those channels. 'Spinozism is atheism' not because Spinoza denies God, but rather because his system does not allow for faith of any kind (MPW 233+n).

Jacobi's interpretation is rushed and disordered, its inconsistencies presumably exacerbated by his hurrying to publication in the autumn of 1785. He favours grand, sweeping statements and unsupported assertions; this is particularly evident when it comes to Spinoza's atheism and fatalism, where Jacobi relies on his readers' own prejudices to lead them to his conclusion. He leaps from the premise that Spinozism cannot be made compatible with faith to the conclusion that no rationalist philosophy can. In this, Jacobi takes aim at Kant, who had argued in the first *Critique* that the aims of reason and the needs of faith could very well be satisfied together. In interpreting Spinoza through Kant, Jacobi hopes to show that Spinozism is the true precursor to transcendental idealism, and that all rationalist philosophies are the same in their necessary exclusion of the interests of faith.

Bringing Kant and Spinoza together

Having interpreted Spinoza as drawing a Kantian distinction between appearances and things in themselves, Jacobi's next move is to interpret Kant as holding a Spinozistic conception of appearances as inhering immanently in a single being. This move has two strands. First, Jacobi returns to the point he had made years earlier: that Kant's God, if it is to be affirmed at all, can only be the immanent God of Spinoza. He does this by suggesting that Spinoza can resolve Kant's antinomies, reconciling our need for an unconditioned first cause with the series of conditioned natural causes. Jacobi suggests that if Kant wants to affirm both natural determinism and an unconditioned first cause of the world, he can do so only by accepting that the first cause is immanent to the world of appearances, like Spinoza's God. Second, Jacobi argues that this immanent ontology – where the world of appearances is the

illusory product of a single being – is evident in Kant's Transcendental Aesthetic. Jacobi aims to present Kant and Spinoza as sharing the same ontological structure, in which a single being is immanent to appearances. He argues that while Spinoza grants reality to this single being, Kant does not: so unless Kant accepts Spinozism, his system falls into nihilism.

Perhaps it should be stated here that Jacobi's arguments are difficult to follow, sometimes incoherent and generally unconvincing. Nevertheless, they are worth pursuing because they constitute the first attempt to present Kant as a thinker who already adheres to, or would benefit from, Spinozism. They are also interesting in their own right, as attempts to consider Kant's ontology as one based on an immanent relation between the phenomenal and noumenal realms. We will look in turn at the two strands of Jacobi's argument for Kant's Spinozistic ontology of immanence.

The general question of Kant's antinomies is whether, in our idea of the magnitude and origination of the world, we must proceed infinitely from natural cause to natural cause, or whether these causal chains have an absolute, unconditioned origin. The empiricist 'antithesis' position states that the world operates solely according to natural causes which go on infinitely in time and space. The dogmatic 'thesis' position holds that the world is grounded in an unconditioned first cause, has a beginning in time and limits in space, and contains free causality. Kant's position is that both thesis and antithesis err in not distinguishing between the world as appearance and the world as thing in itself. Once we understand that the experienced world is appearance, we see that the series of conditions is merely a regress through possible experience. The series cannot be said to have a beginning in time, limits in space, or a first cause, but nor can it be said to be an infinite chain of events. Rather, the regress in the series of appearances proceeds indefinitely (CPR A505/B533). We must explain the world strictly through this ongoing series of natural conditions, while making use of regulative ideas of free causality and a first cause transcendent to the series to explain its completeness and coherence, as well as morality and religion (CPR A521/B549). Kant takes the solution to the antinomies to be among his most compelling arguments in favour of transcendental idealism.

Jacobi addresses the arguments of Kant's antinomies through the dramatization of his own disputes with Lessing and Spinoza.[14] Jacobi, as a theist, takes the side of the thesis position. To Lessing is attributed the antithesis position, aligned with his supposed Spinozism. The fictionalized

Lessing argues that since nothing comes from nothing, the series of causes and effects in nature must be infinite:

> [Lessing:] The objection that an infinite series of effects is impossible (*bare* effects they are not, for the indwelling cause is always and everywhere) is self-refuting, for if a series is not to arise from nothing, it must be infinite absolutely. (MPW 188)

It quickly becomes clear that the position Jacobi attributes to Spinoza is more complicated. For when the fictionalized Jacobi counters that the world must have a first cause, a fictionalized Spinoza responds that there is indeed a first cause, but one that is immanent to the infinite series.

> [Spinoza to Jacobi:] You claim that one cannot proceed from cause to cause in infinity, but that there must, at some determinate point, be a beginning of action on the side of a first and pure cause. I maintain, on the contrary, that one cannot proceed from cause to cause otherwise than to infinity; that is to say, that one cannot suppose an absolute, and pure, beginning of an action, without supposing that nothingness produces something. This truth, which only needs to be displayed in order to be grasped, is at the same time capable of the strictest demonstration. Hence the first cause is not a cause to which one can climb through the so-called intermediary causes: it is totally immanent, and equally effective at every point of extension and duration.
>
> (MPW 213–14)

Jacobi's Spinoza holds both that there is an infinite series of causes in nature and that there is a first cause, not outside the series of natural causes, but immanent to it.[15] Just like Kant, Jacobi suggests, Spinoza seeks to reconcile the thesis and antithesis positions by showing how both can be maintained without running into contradiction. Just like Kant, Spinoza believes we can accept the naturalistic claim that the world is an ongoing series of causes while also believing the theistic view that the world has a first cause. But Spinoza shows that we can only hold these two positions together if the first cause is understood to be an *immanent* cause – a first cause which is clearly not the God of theology.

In this way, Jacobi reiterates his view that Kant's God can only be the God of Spinozism. Kant argues that we cannot assume an unconditioned

cause within the natural series, or equivalent to that series as a whole, because such a cause could not be an object of possible experience. Instead, we must assume a first cause outside nature, and outside possible experience and knowledge (CPR A532–41/B560–9; A559–65/B587–93). That first cause transcends all of possible experience. Jacobi's Spinoza counters that a transcendent first cause (a cause 'to which one could climb through the intermediary causes') would have to exercise causality *ex nihilo*. Furthermore, since Kant restricts 'being' to the realm of that which can be posited for knowledge, this first cause and its causality are for Jacobi non-beings, the nothingness from which the totality of appearances must arise. If Kant wants to avoid that nihilistic view, Jacobi says, he must admit a first cause like Spinoza's: immanent to the world and eternally self-causing. Transcendental idealism can accommodate an unconditioned first cause, Jacobi thinks, but it must be an immanent cause.

If these passages are indeed targeted at Kant, they are not based on a very accurate reading of him.[16] Jacobi knows that Kant does not believe that God is an immanent cause. But he thinks Kant ought to believe it, and he strives to find evidence in the first *Critique* that Kant holds a Spinozistic philosophy of immanence. This is where he moves to his second point that this evidence is found in the Transcendental Aesthetic.

Jacobi notes that Kant and Spinoza share a metaphysical conception of the infinite, as a whole that is prior to its parts. By contrast, the mathematical concept makes the infinite dependent on the finite parts that constitute it.[17] In the antinomies, infinitude is defined as 'the successive synthesis of units required for the enumeration of a quantum [that] can never be completed' (CPR A432/B460).[18] In this definition, a world of an infinite number of causes would be a forever incomplete synthesis of units and not an infinite whole. Jacobi suggests that Spinoza avoids this problem because he understands the infinite as 'a whole in the strictest sense' (MPW 218). This metaphysical concept of infinity is not the forever incomplete accumulation of parts, but the absolute whole that is prior to its parts.

> The finite is in the infinite, so that the sum of all finite things, equally containing within itself the whole of eternity at every moment, past and future, is one and the same as the infinite thing itself.
>
> This sum is not an absurd combination of finite things, together constituting an infinite, but a whole in the strictest sense, whose parts can only be thought within it and according to it.
>
> (MPW 217–18)

Spinoza's substance is infinite by nature but not in number, whereas its modes are infinite in number but not in nature. Because substance, as an absolute whole, is prior to and immanent to its modes, the completeness of the series of natural causes is set in advance. There is no question of adding causes together in an infinite regress, for with every moment and every cause the wholeness of the series is already assured. In drawing attention to substance as an infinite whole, Jacobi corrects the common misunderstanding, perpetuated by Wolff, that Spinoza's substance is constituted by an infinite number of finite beings.[19]

Jacobi wants to show that in positing an infinite whole that is prior to its parts, Spinoza is just like Kant. To the quote from MPW 217–18 (cited above) is attached Jacobi's famous footnote claiming that sections of Kant's Transcendental Aesthetic clarify Spinoza's doctrine of immanence.

> The following passages from Kant, which are entirely in the spirit of Spinoza, might serve for explanation: '… We can represent to ourselves only one space; and if we speak of diverse spaces, we mean thereby only parts of one and the same unique space. Secondly, these parts cannot precede the one all-embracing space, as being, as it were, constituents out of which it can be composed; on the contrary, they can be thought only as *in* it. Space is essentially one; the manifold in it, and therefore the general concept of spaces, depends solely on [the introduction of] limitations. ….' [CPR A25/B39]; 'The infinitude of time signifies nothing more than that every determinate magnitude of time is possible only through limitations of one single time that underlies it. The original representation, *time*, must therefore be given as unlimited. But when an object is so given that its parts, and every quantity of it, can be determinately represented only through limitation, the whole representation cannot be given through concepts, since they contain only partial representations (since in their case the partial representations come first); on the contrary, such concepts must themselves rest on immediate intuition' [CPR A32/B47–8].
>
> (MPW 218n)

On the face of it, Jacobi's comparison seems innocent. Kant shows us that particular spaces and times are finite limitations that can be represented only through an infinite whole that is represented prior to its parts. This infinite whole is not constructed in experience through the endless addition of unit to unit; the infinite wholes of space and time are pure intuitions, prior to and a condition of the constitution

of experience. We represent space to ourselves as *one* space, not as a whole made up of successive constituent parts but as a whole whose parts 'can be thought only as *in* it' (CPR A25/B39). The concept of particular units of space comes about only through the introduction of limitations, and so must be preceded by a pure intuition of the one space. Similarly, 'the infinitude of time signifies nothing more than that every determinate magnitude of time is possible only through limitations of one single time that underlies it' (CPR A32/B47). When an object is given such that its parts can only be thought as immanent to it, that object must be given prior to its parts, not as a concept but as pure intuition. This metaphysical infinitude of space and time precedes the parts of space and time, and thus precedes the construction of a mathematical infinite.[20]

Jacobi's point is that Spinoza's substance should be understood like Kant's space, not as an infinite series of finite parts, but as an infinite whole from which finite parts derive. He may also intend to indicate that Kant's pure intuitions of space and time not only involve a metaphysical conception of the infinite, but are themselves metaphysically real. Jacobi takes the comparison still further: following his citation of Kant in the footnote, he cites two passages from Spinoza 'as accompaniment to these words of Kant'. Both passages explain a key distinction Spinoza makes between true knowledge of infinite being and our confused representations of finite things.[21] Spinoza notes that the mind 'forms some ideas independently', and that these ideas 'express infinity'. These infinite ideas are the prior condition of our representations. For example, our representation of determinate quantities is possible only because we already have the true idea of infinite quantity (TIE 108, CW 29). When we know things truly, we understand them as modes of infinite substance; when we imagine, or perceive things confusedly, we represent them as being durational and of fixed number.

We can see how Jacobi intends this material to accompany Kant's words. Kant's pure intuition of space and time is supposed to be comparable to Spinoza's true idea of infinite quantity. And when Kant discusses our representation of space and time as determinate parts, that is supposed to be comparable to Spinoza's confused perception of determinate, finite things. In other words, Jacobi draws attention to a distinction he sees in both thinkers between the 'order of truth' for which the infinite whole is primary and the 'order of representation' for which finite parts are primary. Jacobi seems to be saying not only that Kant and Spinoza share a notion of the metaphysical infinite, but also that they share a doctrine of our *knowledge* of the metaphysical

infinite. We have a true intuition or idea of the infinite, but our experience and representation is of its finite parts.

To summarize, the footnote suggests that Jacobi sees a similarity between Kant and Spinoza on two points. First, he thinks the part–whole relation that Kant posits for space and time is similar to the one Spinoza attributes to substance: finite parts are immanent to an infinite whole, and can be thought only as limitations of that whole. Second, Jacobi thinks Kant asserts the priority of our intuition of the infinite whole over our representation of the finite parts, in the same way that Spinoza asserts the priority of true knowledge of infinite being over our images of finite modes. From the perspective of the actual world of representations and experience, however, the finite modes *appear* to have priority (MPW 218–19). For Spinoza, the metaphysically infinite whole is the condition of the finite modes that are its limitations, but from the perspective of time and finitude, what *appears* is a succession of finite modes that build cumulatively into a mathematically infinite whole. Kant similarly claims that infinite space and time and their pure intuition are prior to representations of particular spaces and times, but that in experience 'partial representations come first' (CPR A32). Fully formed experience gives us an infinite number of determinate spaces and times, which are possible only because the infinite whole is already given in pure intuition.

Jacobi's comparison suggests that Kant shares Spinoza's idea that finite parts are immanent to, and determined from, an ontologically prior infinite whole. It suggests, further, that both believe that 'true knowledge' of the infinite whole is the condition of possibility of our fragmented perceptions of finite, determinate things. Jacobi's apparent conclusion is that both Kant and Spinoza are committed to a duality between infinite being and finite appearances that is unified through the immanence of the latter to the former. Furthermore, he thinks both are committed to a duality between true knowledge of the infinite and confused perception of the finite, where the former is a condition of possibility of the latter. So, according to Jacobi, Kant and Spinoza share a doctrine of the immanence of finite parts to a metaphysically infinite being, both on the level of being and on the level of knowledge. To borrow Franks' terminology, Jacobi believes Kant is, or should be, a 'holistic monist'.[22]

Spinozism versus 'Kantian nihilism'

There are undoubtedly many problems with Jacobi's analysis. One in particular is as pressing now as it was for Jacobi's contemporary critics.

Even if Kant and Spinoza have similar views on the structure of the infinite, it remains the case that Spinoza is talking about the individuation of finite beings from a metaphysically real infinite being, whereas Kant is talking about the limitation of parts of the infinite appearances of space and time. As an anonymous reviewer of *Concerning the Doctrine of Spinoza* put it:

> Only one case is possible: either Mr. Jacobi or his reviewer has totally misunderstood Mr. Kant's sense and opinion in the cited passages. Mr. Kant says: there is only *one space*; Spinoza: there is only *one substance*. Kant says: all that we call *many spaces* are only parts of the *unique, all-encompassing space*; Spinoza: everything finite is one and the same as the infinite. How both speak here in the very same spirit, how Kant can here serve as elucidation for Spinoza, we do not in the least comprehend.[23]

Given this major difference in the objects being compared, the similarity is surely only a structural one. Why, then, does Jacobi think the comparison is significant – and significant enough to risk Kant's anger by publishing it?

Beiser and Franks suggest that Jacobi confuses Kant's pure intuition of space with the transcendental idea of the *omnitudo realitatis*, the idea of the sum total of reality from which all determinate beings derive their qualities.[24] The *omnitudo realitatis* is not a concept that contains all possible predicates *under* itself, but rather the idea of a thing that contains all predicates *within* itself (CPR A575–6/B603–4). We think of all determination, Kant says, as occurring through the negation or 'limitation' of this unlimited substrate. There is therefore an analogy between the *omnitudo realitatis* and infinite space as Kant describes it in the Transcendental Aesthetic. Both are infinite wholes of which finite parts are limitations. And in both cases our experience of the finite parts presupposes our prior awareness of the infinite whole, either as pure intuition or as transcendental idea. The analogy is one that Kant draws himself:

> All manifoldness of things is only a correspondingly varied mode of limiting the concept of the highest reality which forms their common substratum, just as all figures are only possible as so many different modes of limiting infinite space.
>
> (CPR A578/B606)

Of course, a structural analogy between infinite space and the sum total of reality does not lead to the conclusion that they are the same object.

And Kant's arguments in both the Transcendental Aesthetic and the Transcendental Ideal should have alerted Jacobi to at least one major difference between the pure intuition of space and the rational idea of the *omnitudo realitatis*: the former is given to us, whereas the latter is a construction of reason. But if Jacobi was confused on the basis of this passage, perhaps he can be forgiven for thinking that Kant's infinite space is really just another name for the *omnitudo realitatis*, and that the *omnitudo realitatis* is similar to Spinoza's substance. As we have seen, Jacobi had seen an affinity between Spinoza's substance and Kant's earlier formulation of the *omnitudo realitatis* in *The Only Possible Argument* 20 years earlier. A link between infinite space and the 'all of reality' would have seemed obvious to him. Given Jacobi's interpretive predisposition, Kant's analogy could be taken to mean that objects of experience are determined, both in terms of their qualities and in terms of their spatial extent, through the limitation of a single infinite whole. And if we suspend the central question of whether that infinite whole is a metaphysically real being or not, it could look like Spinoza's substance – or at least, the version of Spinoza's substance that Jacobi presents.

Now this, I think, is precisely Jacobi's point. Kant's infinite space and infinite time look like Spinoza's substance *only if* we ignore the fact that Spinoza's substance is a thing in itself, in contrast to Kant's infinite wholes which are transcendentally ideal. Jacobi does not confuse these categories. Rather, he wants to draw our attention to their difference, to lead us to his conclusion that Kant's system is nihilistic, whereas Spinoza's is not. Jacobi does not consider Kant's space and time to be things in themselves or variants of the *omnitudo realitatis*; despite Jacobi's many errors and inconsistencies, it is hard to believe he would make such an elementary mistake. He fully accepts that Kant's space and time are transcendentally ideal, *entirely unlike* Spinoza's substance. While Kantian space and time look like Spinoza's substance, their status is entirely different, for they have no metaphysical reality. Whereas Spinoza's substance is real, space and time as infinite wholes are mere appearances or 'nonbeings'.

This is hinted at in the passages Jacobi cites from Spinoza in his footnote, where Spinoza uncharacteristically uses the term 'nonbeings' to refer to representations (PPC App. 1.1, CW 178–9). On Jacobi's account of Spinoza, determinate things are 'nonbeings' or appearances, and only the infinite whole has real being. Jacobi suggests that, like Spinoza, Kant believes determinate things to be appearances that are limitations of infinite wholes. But Spinoza is superior to Kant, Jacobi implies, since Spinoza posits the infinite whole, substance, as

absolutely real and absolutely knowable. For Kant, Jacobi thinks, appearances are the limitations of an infinite whole that is *itself* mere appearance. So, not only are Kant's finite objects 'nonbeings' but they are also the appearances or limitations of infinite wholes that are themselves 'nonbeings'. According to Jacobi, *everything* in Kant's system is a 'nonbeing', lacking being-in-itself. As he will later state in his Supplement on Transcendental Idealism: 'In brief, our entire cognition contains nothing, nothing whatsoever, that could have any *truly* objective meaning at all' (MPW 337).

Jacobi thinks Kant could save his system by embracing Spinozism; otherwise it falls into nihilism. He thinks both Kant and Spinoza stress that being cannot be known truly and fully by a finite mind, and that the appearance of being is mere illusion. But he thinks Spinoza alone asserts that substance is metaphysically real, can be known in part by a finite mind, and can be known fully and truly by the mind in its eternal state. Transcendental idealism denies the being-in-itself of the being which is supposed to support appearances. This view leads to Jacobi's well-known criticism of Kant: that his system is based on a fundamental contradiction between the rejection of the thing in itself and its presupposition for entry into the system (MPW 336). As Jacobi sees it, Kant had shown that reason cannot give us knowledge, and that sensibility and understanding give us knowledge of merely illusory phenomena. Thus, as Beck points out, 'there appears a new alternative to Spinozistic fatalism which is just as bad: Jacobi says that rational philosophy must lead either to Spinozism or to "Kantian nihilism"'.[25]

Jacobi's *Concerning the Doctrine of Spinoza* formed the starting point for reading Spinoza in Germany after 1785. It also had a profound impact on the reception of Kant, as we will see in the next chapter. One effect of Jacobi's text was to cause philosophers to reconsider the ontological priority that had been lost with transcendental idealism – and to resume it by turning to Spinoza. Beyond insisting on the centrality of faith, Jacobi implores philosophers not to leave behind the question of being. If Kant thought that question had been eclipsed by the successes of the first *Critique*, he would be forced to address it again in his subsequent works, as contemporary thinkers increasingly demanded that transcendental idealism accommodate a more satisfactory ontology. 'Being' needed to be accounted for, while allowing Kant's advances in terms of knowledge and naturalism – was Spinozism the answer?

2
Against Spinozistic Dogmatism

Jacobi's *Concerning the Doctrine of Spinoza* reaffirmed that Spinozism was dogmatic rationalism inextricably tied to atheism and fatalism. This enabled Jacobi – however inappropriately – to equate Spinoza's position with Leibniz's on the one hand, and with those of contemporary rationalists like Mendelssohn on the other. Kant already understood 'Spinozism' to name a dogmatic system that asserted the metaphysical reality of a substance without intellect, will or freedom. Following Jacobi's interpretation of the finite modes as illusory, 'Spinozism' was understood to propound idealism about empirical objects too. In the midst of misconceptions that the transcendental idealism of the 1781 *Critique of Pure Reason* was either a kind of metaphysical realism or a kind of empirical idealism, Kant began to see Spinozism as *the* dogmatic system to which he needed to demonstrate his opposition.

Though initially indifferent to Jacobi's attempt to find Spinozism in the critical philosophy, Kant was eventually persuaded of the dangers it posed and made his dissatisfaction clear. In this chapter I look at Kant's rejection of Spinozistic dogmatism in two texts: the essay 'What does it mean to orient oneself in thinking?' and a short section of the *Critique of Practical Reason*. While Kant does not explicitly respond to Jacobi's provocative suggestion that transcendental idealism includes an immanent relation between being and appearances, he does make clear that a doctrine of immanent causation is inconsistent with human freedom and faith: the two things, Kant is anxious to stress, transcendental idealism upholds.

After *The Doctrine of Spinoza*

In spite of its many limitations, Jacobi's book was compelling enough to lead many intellectuals to turn to serious study of Spinoza for the

first time. Kant, however, was not among them. It appears that he read *Concerning the Doctrine of Spinoza*, but initially found Jacobi's arguments unworthy of response.[1] Kant had already demonstrated how natural determinism could be reconciled with ideas of God, freedom, and final causality without relapsing into dogmatism. Furthermore, he had already shown how the needs of reason could be made compatible with the needs of faith – the point that Reinhold was to highlight in his influential *Letters concerning the Kantian Philosophy* in 1786–7.[2] The notion that by upholding the value of reason transcendental idealism would be forced into the impasse of 'Spinozism or nihilism' surely struck Kant as the ill-considered outpourings of one who had not read the *Critique* very carefully. And so Kant's initial response to the Jacobi–Mendelssohn quarrel was one of indifference. 'The Jacobi controversy is nothing serious', Kant remarked to Herz. 'It is only an affection of inspired fanaticism trying to make a name for itself and is hardly worthy of a serious refutation'.[3]

Kant's friends and followers thought differently, however, and implored him to make a public response to Jacobi. In a letter of February 1786, Schütz asked Kant to write

> a declaration stating whether Privy Councillor Jacobi has misunderstood you when, in his book on Spinoza, he introduces your ideas about space and says that they are '*wholly in the spirit* of Spinoza'. It is truly incomprehensible how often you are misunderstood; there exist people who are really in other respects not imbeciles yet who take you to be an atheist.[4]

Herz, Schütz, and Biester urged Kant to come forward to defend Mendelssohn and the principles of reason, and to make Jacobi's irrational 'swarm of rascals … scatter like chaff in the wind'.[5] On the publication of *Morning Hours*, Mendelssohn similarly appealed to Kant for his support in the Enlightenment cause.[6]

However, while Kant found *Concerning the Doctrine of Spinoza* insignificant, he found *Morning Hours* philosophically problematic, for it restated the dogmatic arguments he had refuted in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. If any philosophy was redolent of Spinozism, it was this kind of dogmatic rationalism: Mendelssohn's argument for God's intelligence, Kant remarks, presupposes a Spinozistic substance, an error that could have been avoided had Mendelssohn not mistaken things in the world for things in themselves. When Kant says 'One can use Spinozism in order to overthrow dogmatism', he means that dogmatism can be

refuted through its reduction to the absurdity of Spinozism. 'The critical and practical philosopher fears nothing from such enthusiasms', he adds (Reflection 6278, NF 18:545). Kant surely thought that transcendental idealism could only be considered Spinozistic by someone who mistook it for dogmatic rationalism. It was therefore not his priority to deny Jacobi's accusations of Spinozism, but rather to strengthen his case against dogmatism. It was *Mendelssohn* who needed critical correction in Kant's view, and he began to work on a small contribution to a 1786 criticism of *Morning Hours* by L. H. Jakob.[7]

To Kant's followers, however, this response was insufficient given the trouble Jacobi had caused. Kant was brought further into the pantheism controversy by the worry that his own philosophy was being misused – a worry carefully presented to him by Biester in a letter of 11 June 1786 (C 10:453–8).[8] Biester said it was unfortunate that Jacobi had appealed to the *Critique of Pure Reason* to clarify Spinoza's meaning, thereby suggesting that Kant shared certain Spinozistic ideas. But, he continued, it was more objectionable still that in his April 1786 response to Mendelssohn, *Wider Mendelssohns Beschuldigungen in dessen Schreiben an die Freunde Lessings* (*Against Mendelssohn's Accusations in these Writings to the Friends of Lessing*), Jacobi claimed that Kant was on his side in denying the possibility of rational knowledge of God. Jacobi had gone so far as to proclaim that if Kant was not accused of enthusiasm, then neither should he be.[9] Biester pointed out that Jacobi's defenders were similarly making use of Kantian principles to strengthen their positions; readers would be confused about Kant's position and could be led to believe that Kant supported Jacobi's fanaticism. This was dangerous, since there was already concern in the universities that Kant's critiques of traditional theological arguments posed a threat to religious orthodoxy.[10] Furthermore, Biester argued, the future of European Enlightenment was at stake: at a time when 'fanaticism already confounds half of Europe', it was necessary to defend truth and reason against the threat of 'gross, foolish, dogmatic atheism'. Kant needed to make his position known, to save his own reputation and that of the first *Critique*.

Biester's concerns were well founded, for Jacobi's claims for Kant's affinity with Spinozism had gained currency. A 1786 piece by Hermann Andreas Pistorius, for instance, claimed to find a 'deduction of Spinozism' in Kant's *Critique*.[11] Pistorius follows Jacobi in aligning Kant with Spinoza, but takes a slightly different view. He believes that Kant attributes true reality only to the noumenal world, 'the one sole substance' that exists.[12] What Pistorius takes to be an infinite, eternal, and self-subsistent substance is contrasted to the illusory world of the

spatiotemporal manifold. Appearances, he suggests, are the illusory product of human sensibility perceiving the world in terms of manifoldness and succession. Multiple spaces and times he holds to be imaginary limitations of the one true substance which alone has reality. Since Kant admits that reason has an idea of this substance in his doctrine of the *omnitudo realitatis*, Pistorius concludes that Kant ought to specify his ideas of reason 'in exactly the same way as Spinoza specified them'. In other words, Kant should adopt Spinozistic ideas of God, self, and world, for these alone are consistent with Kant's belief that the noumenal world has real being. On Pistorius's account, Kant is really an atheist who rejects the idea of a personal God because he is a Spinozist who equates God with being.[13]

With Pistorius we see the confusion surrounding Spinozism and transcendental idealism that enabled thinkers around 1786 to consider the two positions complementary. Everyone was sure that Spinozism meant belief in a single infinite substance, of which finite things are illusory limitations. The charge of Spinozism was conflated, on the one hand, with dogmatic belief in a metaphysically real being, and on the other, with idealism about empirical objects. On this basis, Kant accused Mendelssohn of Spinozism due to his reliance on the concept of a single *ens realissimum*. But equally, anyone who misunderstood Kant as positing the reality of noumenal objects or the illusory nature of phenomenal ones was able to draw on 'Spinozism' as an all-purpose criticism. Such misunderstandings of Kant were fairly common, following reviews of the *Critique* which saw it as promoting a kind of empirical idealism.[14] Accusations of Spinozism meant that transcendental idealism had been misconceived on one of its most important points: the distinction between the world as appearance and the world as thing in itself. Evidently, Kant needed to clarify the nature of transcendental idealism, the status of the noumenal, and the place of God, both to strengthen the case against dogmatism and to stress the empirical reality of appearances.

Jacobi's promotion of 'Spinozism' as a catch-all criticism for a variety of philosophical positions upholding reason was evidently successful. He had introduced Spinoza in a way that made him look new and refreshing, while silently drawing on a long tradition of anti-Spinozist prejudice that had used 'Spinozism' as an indiscriminate criticism in just this way. The success of Jacobi's scheme was surely one factor that led Kant to make his revisions for the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, published in 1787: the Refutation of Idealism, the new Transcendental Deduction, and the rewritten chapters on the Paralogisms

and Phenomena and Noumena. In these revised sections, Kant more strongly emphasizes how transcendental idealism differs from both metaphysical realism and empirical idealism. The new Preface situates the *Critique* in terms of the controversy around the place of reason in religion. When Kant claims he had to 'deny *knowledge*, in order to make room for *faith*' (CPR Bxxx), he highlights the necessity of the limitation of reason, and rejects both Mendelssohn's dogmatic assertion, and Jacobi's sceptical denial, of its power. Kant emphasizes that there is room for both philosophy and faith when knowledge is appropriately limited through sound critical method. Where critique is lacking, we are faced with either dogmatic philosophy ('materialism, fatalism, atheism, free-thinking') or irrational faith ('fanaticism and superstition … as well as idealism and scepticism', CPR Bxxxiv). Kant now praises Wolff's philosophical method in contrast to the 'play' and lack of rigour of certain of Kant's contemporaries (CPR Bxxxvii). Kant makes clear that his book follows the tradition of rigorous and scientific thinking and has nothing to do with the illogical, artistic outpourings of those who are themselves Spinozists, or who would accuse Kant of Spinozism.[15]

Orientation in thinking

The themes of the Preface to the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* feature in the essay Kant was writing around the same time, 'What does it mean to orient oneself in thinking?' Published in the *Berlinische Monatsschrift* in October 1786, and responding directly to Jacobi's *Concerning the Doctrine of Spinoza*, this essay is Kant's best-known contribution to the pantheism controversy. Kant criticizes Jacobi for his rashness in denying that reason can justify faith, and Mendelssohn for his belief in reason's capacity for knowledge of the supersensible. Our thoughts about the existence and nature of God are legitimate only if they issue from reason, Kant counters, but reason must renounce any claim to know or to demonstrate anything about God. It is neither theoretical knowledge nor intuitive revelation that grounds faith; rather, rational belief is the exclusive source of the concept of God and the conviction of his existence. Kant closes the essay with a warning that the abandonment of reason leads not only to religious enthusiasm but also to lawlessness in thinking. In such circumstances freedom of thought is inevitably curtailed: the abandonment of reason leads to libertinism in morals, superstition in religion, anarchy or totalitarianism in politics, and, in short, the reversal of 'enlightenment'.

Though Kant does not dwell on Jacobi's allegations of his Spinozism, he does offer a response to Jacobi in two footnotes. Again, Kant is concerned to clarify his own anti-dogmatism, and to show that Spinozism entails the atheism and fanaticism he abjures. In the first footnote, Kant clarifies that his *omnitudo realitatis* is distinct from any transcendentally real entity such as Spinoza's substance. He then stresses that God's existence is for him a matter of necessary rational presupposition, not of rational *knowledge* or intuitive faith. In this way, Kant distances himself from both Mendelssohn and Jacobi. The assumption of the existence of God, he says, is a subjective 'need of reason' which must not be taken for objective knowledge (WDM 8:137–8). Reason needs to assume an original, unlimited being of which all other beings are limitations. But this need does not give us licence to claim knowledge of the existence of such a being; it allows us only to presuppose it as a condition of our judgements concerning nature and morality (WDM 8:138n). Kant points out that Jacobi holds an incompatible set of views: Jacobi insists that although Spinoza's concept of God is consistent with all the principles of reason, reason must reject it as impossible, while at the same time accepting that God's reality can be demonstrated from other, non-rational sources (WDM 8:144). It is therefore *Jacobi* who falls into scepticism and nihilism: his position 'cannot be reconciled with any faith, or with the holding true of any existence at all' (WDM 8:143–4).

Kant's second footnote more explicitly shows transcendental idealism to be incompatible with Spinozism. He starts by stating that Spinozism is dogmatism:

> It is hard to comprehend how the scholars just mentioned [that is, Jacobi and Mendelssohn] could find support for Spinozism in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. The *Critique* completely clips dogmatism's wings in respect of the cognition of supersensible objects, and Spinozism is so dogmatic in this respect that it even competes with the mathematicians in respect of the strictness of its proofs.
>
> (WDM 8:144n)

As we will see in the next chapter, Kant takes Herder's 'syncretistic' Spinozism to be flimsy, artistic, and illogical, whereas he sees 'Spinozism proper' as being so strict that its proofs are virtually mathematical. If Kant takes Wolff to be the model of philosophical rigour – a point he reiterates in this essay – then Spinoza and Herder fall on either side of that model, the first too dogmatic, the second too undisciplined. He believes the *Critique of Pure Reason* achieves the perfect balance: neither

mathematical nor artistic, but scientific.[16] Since its central purpose is to determine the limits of rational knowledge and to rein in dogmatism, the *Critique* could not plausibly be said to defend Spinozism.

Next, Kant says, whereas the *Critique* shows that the table of categories must supply all the material for pure thinking, 'Spinozism speaks of thoughts which themselves think, and thus of an accident that simultaneously exists for itself as a subject' (WDM 8:144n). It is not clear what Kant means by this curious remark. Henry Allison takes it to be 'a cryptic expression of [Kant's] basic line of objection to Spinoza's metaphysics', a basic line Allison constructs from Kant's brief lecture remarks on Spinoza.[17] Allison claims that Kant's main source for understanding Spinoza is Wolff, and that Kant's main problem with Spinozism, as revealed in his lectures, is its confusion of inherence with dependence. That is, Kant takes Spinoza to conflate the relation of dependence between cause and effect with the relation of inherence between substance and accident. As Kant presents it in his lectures, this means there can be no distinction between the substantiality of God and the substantiality of things, and therefore no substances that are *caused* by God. If the self-conscious mind is a thinking substance, then either it is God (and so 'Spinozism is egoism'), or it must understand itself as an accident of God, which contradicts the concept of a logical subject of thoughts. Allison contends it is this absurdity that Kant is attributing to Spinoza with his remark in the Orientation essay about 'thoughts which themselves think'.

Kant's lectures on metaphysics do indicate that he saw the dependence–inherence conflation as characteristic of Spinozism; that this conflation is Spinozism's central problem is eventually proposed in the *Critique of Judgment*. Yet while Allison is undoubtedly right that this problem forms the background to Kant's discussion of Spinoza in 'What does it mean to orient oneself in thinking?', I do not think he is right to explain Kant's cryptic remark along these lines. Instead, we need to recognize that Kant's main source for understanding Spinoza in 1786 is no longer Wolff, but Jacobi; and Jacobi's *Concerning the Doctrine of Spinoza* is the immediate occasion for the Orientation essay. Specifically, we can point to the passages from which Kant very likely drew the idea that 'Spinozism speaks of thoughts which themselves think'. Jacobi explains that Spinoza defines minds as God's ideas and *vice versa* (MPW 221–5). He further attributes to Spinoza the views that 'thought is nothing but the being that feels itself' and that the will is an accident which nevertheless feels its own being and acts as an individual (MPW 205–7). Jacobi thus presents Spinoza's concept of the human mind as an accident

of God/substance that nevertheless exists for itself as a self-conscious subject; it is both a thinking thing and a thing thought by God.

If Kant's cryptic remark does indeed refer to this material of Jacobi's, then I suggest that Kant means the following by it. Spinoza understands minds to be the thoughts of God, so thoughts themselves must actively think. In their active thought these finite minds are subjects, but for Spinoza, finite minds are nevertheless the accidents of substance. Thus 'Spinozism speaks of thoughts which themselves think, and thus of an accident that simultaneously exists for itself as a subject'. Kant stresses that the *Critique's* table of categories allows for accidents inhering in substances, not for accidents existing for themselves as self-conscious subjects. It is impossible, therefore, that Jacobi could find Spinozism in the *Critique*. The Spinozist idea of an accident that is also a subject 'is not to be found in the human understanding' – that is, among its pure concepts – 'and moreover cannot be brought into it' (WDM 8:144n).[18]

Kant then criticizes Spinoza for claiming to have insight into 'the impossibility of a being the idea of which consists solely of pure concepts of the understanding, which has been separated from all the conditions of sensibility, and in which a contradiction can never be met with' (WDM 8:144n). Here Kant is referring to Spinoza's rejection of the theistic God. Kant claims that Spinoza has no grounds on which to assert the impossibility of this God, since the idea of God cannot contain any contradiction but also cannot be disproved through experience. Kant admits that the possibility of a personal God is not thereby demonstrated, but maintains that the assumption of its possibility is allowed. So Kant leaves the way open for rational faith in a personal God, while Spinoza's illegitimate assertion of the impossibility of that God opens the floodgates to all varieties of atheism, pantheism, and made-up faith. Jacobi's adherence to enthusiastic fideism is a direct consequence of his infatuation with Spinozism and insufficient attention to Kant's arguments:

> It is just for this reason that Spinozism leads directly to enthusiasm. By contrast, there is not a single means more certain to eliminate enthusiasm from the roots up than that determination of bounds of the pure faculty of understanding.
>
> (WDM 8:144n)

Spinozism leads not only to enthusiasm but also to the superstition, moral lawlessness, and political anarchy that follow from it. In short, Spinozism runs directly contrary to the enlightenment of which Kant

is a champion. Kant concludes that he cannot be accused of Spinozism, either philosophically, religiously, or morally.

Kant does not address Jacobi's most interesting and provocative point, that Kant and Spinoza share an ontological model in which appearances are immanent to being. Instead, Kant's response to Jacobi in 'What does it mean to orient oneself in thinking?' reflects the major problems he saw in Spinozism at that time: its dogmatism, its absurdity, and its atheism. With this, Kant presumably thought he had said enough to dispel Jacobi; perhaps to respond in detail to Jacobi's text would be to concede it too much significance. Kant's essay is largely concerned to uphold transcendental idealism against recurrent dogmatism, and to promote Kant's doctrine of rational belief as the way through the impasse between reason and faith. Beyond making clear that his own system was not dogmatic, atheistic, or enthusiastic, Kant was not concerned with confronting Spinozism further.

The threat to freedom in the *Critique of Practical Reason*

Though Kant's direct response to Jacobi was minimal, the accusation of Spinozism had an impact on many of his subsequent texts. The influence of Jacobi's book, and the growing interest in Spinoza by younger thinkers, meant that Kant had to address and respond to Spinozism as a serious philosophical position. Kant's texts after 1786 increasingly identify Spinozism as the opponent of transcendental idealism, and show a growing awareness of it as a threat. Franks argues that following Jacobi's *Concerning the Doctrine of Spinoza*, Spinoza replaces Leibniz as the paradigmatic metaphysical realist in Kant's writings. Whereas Kant's dogmatic sparring partner in the first *Critique* is a Leibnizian, Franks says from the *Critique of Practical Reason* onwards, 'Spinozism is the greatest rival of Kant's own transcendental idealism.'[19]

This should not lead us to imagine that Kant developed a well worked-out critique of Spinoza's arguments to take the place of his earlier refutations of Leibniz. Since 'Spinozism' was now used to refer to a number of sometimes incompatible positions – metaphysical realism, empirical idealism, dogmatism, atheism, fatalism, and enthusiasm – this term could be used to name the generalized 'other' of transcendental idealism, just as it had been used by earlier generations to name the 'other' of officially sanctioned philosophy. After 1786, it sometimes seems for Kant that anyone who is not a transcendental idealist is a 'Spinozist' of one kind or another. Kant's brief discussion of Spinozism

in the *Critique of Practical Reason* is intended once again to distance Kant's own position from both dogmatic metaphysics and enthusiastic fideism, thus constituting a further contribution to the pantheism controversy.

Kant's focus on the power of practical reason in the second *Critique* can be seen, in part, as a response to Jacobi's opposition of reason and faith.[20] Kant presents practical reason as offering grounds unavailable to theoretical reason for establishing the reality of human freedom and for postulating God's existence as the moral author of the universe. The reality of freedom and God can be asserted in a practical sense, to meet a need of reason, although they cannot be known theoretically. These assertions are rationally based, but are not the knowledge claims of theoretical reason, meaning that Kant can affirm their validity without overstepping the bounds of possible experience. Practical reason and its postulates are the basis of a rational faith for which Kant now makes a much stronger case than he had previously. It is not merely possible but 'morally necessary' to assume the existence of God, 'a being that is the cause of nature by *understanding* and *will*' (CPrR 5:125). The stressed words indicate just those characteristics that Spinoza's God is believed to lack. The rejection of Spinozism is not, of course, a major aim of the second *Critique*, but it is a consideration behind Kant's demonstration that his system has a more certain place for human freedom and a transcendent God than previously appeared.

Kant's brief remarks about Spinoza in the *Critique of Practical Reason* indicate how transcendental idealism, in contrast to dogmatism, upholds freedom and the theistic God.[21] First he argues that his own system saves freedom from Spinozism, which 'threatens [it] with complete destruction'. In his discussion of the practical necessity of assuming the reality of freedom, Kant suddenly raises the problem that God, being the cause of the existence of all substances, must also be the cause of all their effects (including human action), and this would seem to destroy human freedom (CPrR 5:100). Indeed, if actions were determinations of humans as things in themselves, then God would be the cause of all of them, and freedom would be lost (CPrR 5:101). Transcendental idealism saves freedom, however, by drawing a distinction between God's creation of the existence of things (as things in themselves), and the causality by which human actions (as appearances) come about. To say that God is the creator of all beings as noumena is not to say that God is the direct cause of all appearances (CPrR 5:102). So, while God is the author of the universe and the creator of things as they are in themselves, God cannot be said to be the cause of appearances or

actions in the sensible world, thereby leaving room for free will and moral responsibility.[22] Kant remarks that if transcendental idealism is not adopted, along with its distinction between creation and causation, 'nothing remains but Spinozism' (CPrR 5:101–2).

We might note here that conflating the creation of beings with the determination of their effects is a feature more obviously associated with Leibniz than Spinoza. As we will see, Kant follows Jacobi in taking Leibniz to be 'Spinozistic' in this respect. To understand the context of Kant's remark, we must return to Jacobi's suggestion, discussed in Chapter 1, that Spinoza has a distinct way of resolving the antinomies. The third antinomy concerns whether all causality is natural, implying an infinite chain of causes, or whether the world includes free causality unconditioned by other causes. Kant argues that free and natural causality look incompatible only when the world of events is treated as a thing in itself. When it is treated as appearance, we find that the world must be understood as an indefinite chain of natural causes, and that we may maintain the idea of free causality outside of, and separate from, the realm of appearance in order to explain human action and moral responsibility. Human actions may be explained by both natural and free causalities.

Following Jacobi, however, we can see a way in which Spinoza might resolve the third antinomy based on the immanent relation between metaphysically infinite substance and its mathematically infinite modes. Spinoza's finite modes, including human beings, act and exist as parts of an infinite series of natural causes which is the expression of a prior infinite whole. No individual event in nature is freely caused, Spinoza would say, but nature as a whole, with its infinite series of causes, *is* freely caused in the sense that it is the effect of self-causing substance that is determined to act by itself alone. For Spinoza, the world is both an infinite chain of natural causes *and* is freely caused by God; so, according to this reconstruction, natural causality and freedom can be reconciled.

It is important to note that these different 'resolutions' of the third antinomy rest on different definitions of freedom.[23] Putting it simply, whereas Kant understands free causality as unconditioned causality capable of originating a causal series, Spinoza defines a free cause as one that is determined to act by itself alone (E ID7). On this basis, only God is truly and completely free for Spinoza, although humans and other beings can develop a degree of freedom, becoming more free as they become more self-determined. For Spinoza, a person's action that is fully determined through natural causes can also be understood to be

free, to the extent that it follows from the nature of that person alone. Kant too allows that the same action can be explained through both natural determination and free causality, but for him this is due to our assigning it both empirical and intelligible causes (CPR A544/B572). For Kant, free causality transcends natural determination, whereas for Spinoza, they coincide. Spinoza reconciles freedom and determinism by making God's freedom identical with his self-determination, and therefore identical with the determinism of all being. God's causation of the existence of beings is thereby conflated with the determination of effects. While a finite being can be free in the sense of becoming more fully the cause of his own actions, his actions are ultimately determined through God as the whole system of causes.

There is no evidence that Kant was aware of Spinoza's account of human freedom: Jacobi, who ignores the sections of the *Ethics* in which it is discussed, simply denies that there is freedom (in the Kantian sense) in Spinoza's system. But Jacobi does put considerable emphasis on Spinoza's determinism, and explains very clearly how it is equivalent to the self-causation of substance (that is, freedom in the Spinozistic sense). On Jacobi's account, Spinoza's God acts through natural causes which are the 'mere appearances' of a true order of events that is eternally fixed. As far as Kant is concerned, this kind of system would indeed 'threaten freedom with complete destruction' (CPrR 5:100).

> A human being would be a marionette or an automaton, like Vaucanson's, built and wound up by the supreme artist; self-consciousness would indeed make him a thinking automaton, but the consciousness of his own spontaneity, if taken for freedom, would be mere delusion inasmuch as it deserves to be called freedom only comparatively, because the proximate determining causes of its motion and a long series of their determining causes are indeed internal but the last and highest is found entirely in an alien hand.
>
> (CPrR 5:101)

If there is human freedom in Spinoza's system, it can only be a comparative freedom, Kant says, because it describes apparently spontaneous actions which are, in fact, determined by God. Spinozism destroys freedom, and transcendental idealism saves it.

The Spinozism Kant names here seems capable of describing a range of deterministic systems. As we noted earlier, this passage appears to refer to Leibniz rather than Spinoza. It is Leibniz who sees God as a kind

of artist who is the highest cause of our actions, whereas Spinoza explicitly denies that God is this kind of being. Leibniz himself distinguishes his position from Spinoza's in these terms:

> I do not admit what Spinoza says that God, by the same necessity, 'is his own cause and the cause of all things' and that the power of things is the power of God. God necessarily exists, but he produces things freely. And while the power of things is produced by God, it is distinct from divine power, and things themselves operate, even if they may have received their forces for acting [from elsewhere].[24]

As Leibniz explains, his own system allows things to operate independently of God while their power to act nevertheless remains the effect of God's power. Spinoza, Leibniz suggests, does not allow even this degree of freedom, because for him, God's power is not distinct from the power of things. Whereas Spinoza 'holds that the soul acts in accordance with the laws of motion and external causes … I [Leibniz] say that the soul acts spontaneously and yet as a spiritual automaton'.[25] Why does Kant substitute criticism of Spinozism for criticism of Leibniz?

Kant's suggestion is that the difference between the Leibnizian and Spinozistic positions is irrelevant: neither allows for freedom in anything more than a comparative sense. That Kant puts Leibniz in the same category as Spinoza is not surprising on the hypothesis that 'Spinozism' has become shorthand for dogmatic rationalism. In fact Mendelssohn, who is mentioned in the next sentence, is most likely the specific target of Kant's remark. Moreover, Kant seems to follow Jacobi's suggestion that there is little difference between the Leibnizian and Spinozistic positions. Both hold that God causes effects in the sensible world, the Leibnizian through a conception of God as the transcendent harmonizer of all events, and the Spinozist through a conception of God as the immanent cause of all events. Kant's reference to a 'thinking automaton' echoes Leibniz's and Spinoza's remarks about 'spiritual automata',[26] both of which are quoted by Jacobi when he argues for the equivalence of their doctrines of freedom (MPW 192n). Not only do Leibniz and Spinoza agree that freedom is illusory, says Jacobi, but both posit 'a non-thinking something' as first cause and absolute ground of the world (MPW 192). Leibniz, like Spinoza, 'did not accept a transcendent cause of the world, but only an immanent one' (MPW 191).

If Kant follows Jacobi in finding Leibnizian and Spinozistic determinism indistinguishable, he also appears to accept Jacobi's assertion that

Spinozism is the most consistent and paradigmatic of all forms of dogmatic rationalism. Kant seems to concur that all dogmatic rationalism – Leibniz's and also Mendelssohn's – collapses into Spinozism and will therefore face the dangers of fatalism and atheism. Kant explains this by showing that Spinoza's system supersedes Leibniz's. For Leibniz, substances are things in themselves existing *in* space and time, and God is a thing in itself outside space and time. This leads to the problem that God's creation and determination of substances must be conditioned by time, which contradicts the concept of God as infinite and independent (CPrR 5:101). For the Spinozist, by contrast,

> space and time are essential determinations of the original being itself, while the things dependent upon it (ourselves, therefore, included) are not substances but merely accidents inhering in it; for, if these things exist merely as its effects *in time*, which would be the condition of their existence itself, then the actions of these beings would have to be merely its actions that it performs in any place and at any time.
>
> (CPrR 5:102)

As Kant presents it, Spinoza's substance is not in space and time, though its accidents – individual things such as ourselves – are. Spinoza's substance, then, must include space and time as determinations which are conditions for the existence of its effects. The actions of human beings are really the non-spatial and eternal actions of God, but they are perceived by us to take place at a specific place and time. Thus, Kant concludes, Spinozism maintains both the spatiotemporal nature of God's effects and the non-spatiotemporal nature of God's causality, a feat which the Leibnizian account fails to achieve.

The conception of space and time as either 'determinations' of substance or 'conditions' of modes is entirely foreign to Spinoza. It suggests that space and time are attributes of substance and that attributes are somehow conditions of the modes' existence. However Spinoza accounts for space and time – and it is not entirely clear how he does account for them – it is not in terms of attributes.[27] Furthermore, while modes follow from the attributes of substance, the attributes are not 'conditions of their existence' in the way that space and time are formal conditions of intuitions in the Transcendental Aesthetic. Evidently Kant's view of Spinoza is mistaken. But we can easily see how he might have arrived at that view based on Jacobi. As we saw in Chapter 1, Jacobi says that Spinoza (a) posits a distinction between substance as a thing in itself and

modes as spatiotemporal appearances and (b) takes attributes to be conditions of possibility of the existence and conception of modes. Kant sees no reason to distrust Jacobi on this, and concludes that Spinoza's understanding of space and time is closer to his own than it is to Leibniz's. He thinks Spinoza makes a step in the right direction by differentiating a non-spatiotemporal thing in itself from its spatiotemporal effects:

> Thus Spinozism, despite the absurdity of its fundamental idea, argues more consistently than the creation theory can when beings assumed to be substances and *in themselves existing in time* are regarded as effects of a supreme cause and yet as not belonging to him and his action but as substances in themselves.
>
> (CPrR 5:102)

If you do not accept that space and time are ideal, Kant says, then you must accept that space and time are essential determinations of substances – either of Leibnizian things in themselves or of a single Spinozistic substance. The inconsistency of the Leibnizian position means that if one denies transcendental idealism, 'nothing remains but Spinozism'. To be a consistent dogmatic rationalist, then, one must accept that existing things are the immanent effects of a single thing in itself; and that entails the denial of freedom and a transcendent God. Transcendental idealism provides the only alternative to dogmatism, atheism and fatalism. Kant reiterates his commitment to a notion of God that is the creator and moral author of the universe, but that is not the cause of individual effects within that universe. God can be thought to be the ontological ground of a realm of appearances without being its immanent cause – indeed, we must entirely reject the notion that God is an immanent cause if human freedom is to be saved.

Kant's discussion of Spinozism in both the *Critique of Practical Reason* and the 'Orientation' essay indicates not only his resistance to Jacobi's accusation of his own Spinozism, but also his reliance on Jacobi's interpretation of Spinoza. In the next chapter I look at the version of Spinozism that sought to supplant Jacobi's and inaugurated a different line of Spinoza interpretation: Herder's appropriation of Spinoza in the service of *Naturphilosophie*. As we will see, this brought another dimension to Kant's criticism.

3
Herder and Spinozistic Naturalism

Jacobi's interpretation of Spinoza extended the standard view that Spinozism was dogmatic and atheistic. J. G. Herder's *God: Some Conversations* presented an alternative view: Spinozism should be understood as a vitalist naturalism consistent with Christian faith. The immanent relation between Spinoza's substance and finite modes becomes organic and dynamic for Herder, and Spinoza's God is now cast as intelligent, wise, and providential. Kant, seeking an explanatory principle for natural diversity in his own philosophy of organic nature, saw that he had to repudiate Herder's Spinozistic naturalism and his attempt to reconcile it with teleology.

In this chapter, after explaining Herder's interpretation of Spinoza and outlining the history of Kant's rejection of Herder's philosophy of nature, I examine their competing accounts of natural diversity and purposiveness. I show that Kant develops his key arguments for teleological judgement in the first introduction to the *Critique of Judgment* directly in response to Herder's Spinozistic naturalism. Kant's *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (to give it its proper title), in demonstrating the cognitive necessity of non-naturalistic modes of explanation, is a decided rejection of Herder's Spinozistic 'power of nature'.

Herder's interpretation of Spinoza

Six months after the publication of Kant's 'What is it to orient oneself in thinking?', Johann Gottfried Herder came out with his book on Spinoza, *God: Some Conversations* (1787). Herder's contribution to the pantheism controversy returned to an idea that had originally been raised by Lessing and Mendelssohn, but rejected out of hand by Jacobi: that Spinozism could be made consistent with Christian faith. Herder

had been reading Spinoza since the 1770s, and Spinozistic principles of monism, naturalism, and immanent causality were prominent in his work. When Jacobi sent him an account of his conversations with Lessing in 1783 in the hopes of gaining his support, Herder disappointed him by declaring that while he did not share Lessing's pantheism, he was sympathetic to his Spinozism. This was perfectly acceptable, Herder argued, since Spinozism was not atheism, pantheism, or fatalism, but rather was consistent with a holistic theism, Christian moral values, and a commitment to scientific naturalism.[1] He had long intended to write 'a little essay' on Leibniz, Shaftesbury, and Spinoza (G 67). The pantheism controversy of 1785–6 provided him with the right circumstances in which to present Spinoza in a different light: not as a dogmatic rationalist, but as the proponent of a dynamic and vital naturalism.

Herder was responsible for several advances in Spinoza interpretation. First, he takes a critical stand against the anti-Spinozism of the previous hundred years, explaining that the accounts of Bayle, Wolff, and others were historically determined and should not detract from the value contemporary readers could find in Spinoza's texts. Second, while Herder is not the first to argue that Spinoza's philosophy is compatible with Christian values, he is the most influential thinker to do so. Third, and most importantly, Herder interprets Spinoza's substance as dynamic being. Jacobi had brought the interpretation of Spinoza out of the Wolffian dark ages by stressing the notion of the immanent unity of substance, but Herder sees that what Spinoza demonstrates is the *dynamic* immanent unity of an *active* being. Jacobi's account, which presents Spinoza as a rationalist whose primary concern is with a single real unchanging being, did not challenge the view that Spinozism was a variant of metaphysical dogmatism. Herder, by contrast, presents Spinoza as a vitalist concerned to promote a single dynamic system of God and nature, the force of which powers the progressive development of an ever-changing universe. Herder made it more difficult for Kant and others to refute Spinoza, but also more important that they do so; Spinoza could no longer be dismissed as an atheist, but had to be considered as a serious contributor to debates on the organization of nature and God's place in it. This way of reading Spinoza was to supersede Jacobi's, setting the terms for German Romantic and Idealist uses of Spinoza. Accordingly, the focus on 'life' and 'power' as key concepts for Spinoza interpretation in the twentieth century is directly indebted to Herder.[2]

The difference between Jacobi's and Herder's positions is played out between the characters Philolaus and Theophron, whose five conversations make up Herder's *God*.[3] Philolaus initially maligns Spinoza, having

been convinced by Bayle of his atheism and fatalism, until Theophron explains the historical reasons for Bayle's denunciation and persuades Philolaus to read Spinoza for himself. When he does so, Philolaus discovers Spinoza's life to have been a model of Christian virtue and his *Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect* to reveal not 'an insolent atheist' but rather 'a metaphysical and moral enthusiast' (G 90). Herder quotes at length from the opening passage of the *Treatise*, in which Spinoza describes his resolution to inquire into the highest good.[4] Herder paints Spinoza not as a cold metaphysician, degenerate atheist, or political rebel, but as an inquiring soul for whom philosophy and the pursuit of virtue are a way of life. Like Socrates, Spinoza lived frugally and virtuously; like Aristotle, he is concerned with the highest good; like other Enlightenment thinkers, he seeks to replace unfounded, superstitious beliefs with certain knowledge. Above all, like Herder himself, Spinoza believes in a holistic universe driven by divine power.

It is this point that Herder deploys in his attempt to wrench Spinozism free of atheism. Herder argues that Spinoza's infamous equation of God and substance does not make him an atheist, for it means that Spinoza sees God in everything as 'divine power'. This power, while mysterious in its operations, must be the immanent force driving the production, existence, and relations of things:

> We do not know what power is, or how power works. Still less do we know how the Divine Power has produced anything, and how it imparts itself to everything according to its nature. However, that all things must depend upon one self-dependent nature, in their existence, their relationships, as well as in every expression of their powers, no consistent mind can doubt.
>
> (G 97)

Herder shows that Spinoza's God is not to be understood as an inert substance or as the dead matter of the world; God is not equivalent to the totality of world stuff. Instead, God must be understood as the singular, original power through which all bodies and minds come to be and change. Far from denying God's omnipotence, Spinoza affirms it as the ground for all material and mental forces. God is not matter, but the force that generates and animates matter.

Admittedly, Herder says, Spinoza makes extension an attribute of God and implies that matter is part of God's essence – an atheistic view that Herder concedes ought to be rejected. But Spinoza should not be blamed for falling into this mistaken view, for he was writing at a time

when the natural sciences were in their infancy, and was ignorant of the fact that matter is made up of forces. As a result, Herder says, Spinoza erroneously equates matter with inert extension and makes the latter an attribute of God. Had he understood that matter and thought are truly dynamic, he would have understood that divine force expresses itself through the infinite forces in nature without the need to differentiate attributes of thought and extension. Indeed, Herder says, had Spinoza understood dynamism, he would not have needed to postulate attributes at all. With hindsight, we should understand the truth of Spinozism not to be the atheistic view that God is equivalent to matter, but rather 'that the Deity reveals Himself in an infinite number of forces in an infinite number of ways' (G 103).

Herder sees Spinoza as having a nascent theory of dynamic being which was universally misunderstood because it had to be expressed in the Cartesian language of extended matter. In reading his own dynamism into Spinoza's substance, however, Herder ironically misses the dynamism inherent in Spinoza's own conception of substance.[5] Substance is, after all, the power or activity of actualizing its being, giving special emphasis to the proposition 'God's power is his essence itself' (E IP34). This is not the 'divine power' or original life force of Herder, to be sure, but rather the power by which God's being unfolds according to the necessity of its nature. The attributes of extension and thought are two of an infinite number of ways this activity occurs, such that extension is dynamic from the start. Herder, however, does not see the original metaphysical dynamism of Spinoza's substance. Instead he simply substitutes what he takes to be inert extension with a physically dynamic field of forces and imagines the latter is the entire expression of substance, leading to the view that substance exists in no other way but as material forces. Effectively, Herder argues that Spinoza's God exists through a single attribute: extension, understood dynamically. His remark that Spinoza can do without the infinite attributes confirms this. But he thereby denies that substance exists in any other way but as dynamically physical matter. Contrary to his intentions, Herder in fact reaffirms the erroneous Baylean view that Spinoza's substance is equivalent to extended nature.

In equating substance with the natural world, Herder contends that we can know much more about the universe and God than Spinoza supposed. Empirical natural science is a method for gaining understanding of nature as a whole, including the human mind and God/substance itself. Since Herder replaces Spinoza's infinite attributes with a single attribute of dynamic extension, he denies that there is any aspect of

being that is not constituted by material forces and not accessible to human knowledge:

> In all universes [God] reveals Himself through forces. Furthermore this infinity of forces in God which expresses His essence, has no limits whatever, although it reveals the same God everywhere. Thus, we must not enviously inquire of any other universe how the Deity has revealed Himself in it. Everywhere it is the same as here. Everywhere organic forces alone can be active, and every one of them makes attributes of an infinite God known to us. … The world is not held together by space and time as by its very essence, by the principle of its own existence, since everywhere only organic forces may be at work in it.
>
> (G 104)[6]

For Herder, we come to know God through the investigation of natural forces, particularly the forces of organic generation, for 'in generation itself there lies the marvel of an implanted, indwelling power of the Deity' who 'has limited Himself, as it were, in the natural constitution of every organism' (G 106–7). Every natural being points to an original, immanent, omnidynamic God who expresses himself as the power with which the universe exists, changes, develops, and moves. Herder quotes St. Paul's 'In Him we live and move and have our being', a phrase Spinoza himself makes reference to in illustrating his theory of immanence.[7]

Herder shows that finite things are *in* God without being *parts* of God. He takes seriously Spinoza's claim that substance is indivisible (E IP12–13) and that finite modes must be understood as its 'affections', or changes, and not as its parts (E IA5, IP25C). Jacobi had argued that Spinoza's finite beings are limitations of a prior infinite whole; Herder counters that finite things are reducible to natural forces which cannot be understood as limited parcels of divine force. Spinoza's substance, then, does not have the kind of part–whole relation to its modes characteristic of Kant's space and time. Instead, natural forces are inseparable expressions of the original divine power, constantly being produced by it while also being encompassed in it. Divine power is the 'primal Force of all forces' that generates and sustains the activity of the natural forces. 'All things are … expressions of divine force, products of an immanent eternal activity of God in the world. But they are not separable parts of an entirely indivisible, single Being' (G 108).

Towards his argument that Spinozism is consistent with Christianity, Herder tries unconvincingly to mitigate Spinoza's denial that God acts

intentionally. To do this he stresses God's vital character. God is not an 'abstract, lifeless deduction from the world' but a living being with infinite powers of thought and action (G 122). Spinoza must therefore accept that God is not only supremely active, but also supremely wise; God's power cannot be that of blind necessity, but must be a power of purposive design. It would appear impossible to reconcile Herder's account here with Spinoza's explicit denial that God acts purposively in the Appendix to Part I of the *Ethics*. Again, however, Herder contends that Spinoza misunderstood this point due to his ignorance of the dynamism of matter and his insistence on differentiating the attributes. The problem, as Herder sees it, is that by separating thought and extension into different, non-interacting attributes, Spinoza made it impossible for thinking to direct material production. Had Spinoza understood thought and matter to be animated by the same dynamic force, he would not have needed to separate God's thought from his materially productive activity. Once God is understood as this primal force, we see that his wisdom and his productivity are one and the same, and that the universe progresses according to 'intelligent necessity' (G 123–4).

Herder does not attempt to argue that Spinoza's God acts from free choice. He approves Spinoza's rejection of the anthropomorphic Leibnizian image of God as 'a brooding artist' who deliberates over creation or 'plays with worlds as children play with soap bubbles' (G 125). But that God does not make choices does not prevent God from acting according to a wise purpose. The necessity of God's activity reveals the perfection and absolute wisdom of what he creates. Incredibly, in the face of very strong resistance from the *Ethics*, Herder finds God/substance to have a teleological aim. Spinoza, he claims, denies final causes on the level of individuals and species, but affirms that the whole universe is intelligently designed to progress towards its own perfection. In this way, Herder affirms Spinoza's natural determinism while upholding a principle of purposiveness. Acting of necessity and acting for the sake of an end are compatible, and so, therefore, are scientific naturalism and faith in a wise creator. Indeed, for Herder, Spinozism perfectly unites scientific naturalism, Christian faith, and philosophy.

The responses of Jacobi and Kant

Herder was critical of Jacobi's interpretation of Spinoza and of his conception of a transcendent and unknowable God. In this respect, Kant sided with Jacobi: while he objected to his irrational faith, he believed in the *kind* of God Jacobi had faith in. Herder's God, an original vital

force immanent to all beings, was anathema to Kant and Jacobi both. Much as Kant disputed Jacobi's claims for intuitive, a priori knowledge of the divine, he utterly rejected Herder's assertion that God's existence and nature could be understood *a posteriori* through natural science.

When Kant's supporters rushed to criticize Herder's pantheism, Jacobi, who had been anti-pantheistic from the start, saw his opportunity to get Kant on his side at last.[8] In 1789 he sent Kant a copy of the second edition of *Concerning the Doctrine of Spinoza*, which included two supplements criticizing Herder's *God*. Specifically, Jacobi argues that God cannot be both intelligent and impersonal, as Herder claims. If Spinoza's God is an impersonal force, it must also be a power of blind necessity; teleology cannot be reconciled with a system of merely efficient causes (MPW 363–7). Citing two passages from Kant's *Only Possible Argument*, Jacobi implies that he and Kant are on the side of 'the system of final causes, or rational freedom'; by contrast, Herder tries and fails to uphold teleology within a Spinozistic system of natural necessity (MPW 367).[9] In a further concession to Kant, the second edition of *Concerning the Doctrine of Spinoza* adds a codicil to the offending footnote about space and time: 'that the Kantian philosophy is not accused of Spinozism, one need not say to any sensible person'.[10]

Jacobi's objection to Herder's fusion of determinism and intelligent design – or of the necessity of the universe with its purposiveness – was what finally won him Kant's approval. In a letter which is now well known, Kant wrote to Jacobi on 30 August 1789 to thank him for his 'handsome book on Spinoza's theory':

> You have earned distinction, first of all for having clearly presented the difficulties of the teleological road to theology, difficulties that seem to have led Spinoza to his system. To dash with hasty, enterprising steps toward a faraway goal has always been injurious to a thorough insight. He who shows us the cliffs has not necessarily set them up, and even if someone maintains that it is impossible to pass through them with full sails (of dogmatism), he has not on that account denied every possibility of getting through.[11]

To understand Kant's remark, we must note that in August 1789 Kant was working on the *Critique of Judgment* and was heavily preoccupied with reconciling teleology and natural determinism. Jacobi's supplement on Herder was well timed to strike a chord. Jacobi denies 'that there can be an in-between system … between the system of final causes and the system of purely efficient ones', but goes on to say that a teleological

system can include mechanistic causation, as long as God has intellect and will as his highest powers (MPW 366). Kant was in the midst of developing his own argument for just this position in the *Critique of Judgment*, a position which he now saw had to be set specifically against the false solution offered by Herderian Spinozism.

The two systems of mechanism and teleology are the 'cliffs' to which Kant refers in his letter to Jacobi. The difficulty of upholding a mechanistic system of nature together with a system of final causes led Spinoza to deny teleology and the intentional God altogether, he implies. Herder's attempt to pass between the cliffs by forcing teleology into Spinoza's system was doomed to fail due to Herder's dogmatism concerning the possibility of theoretical knowledge of God and final purposes. Jacobi, however, like Kant himself, shows that such passage is not impossible, and Kant praises him for acknowledging the utility of 'the compass of reason' in this endeavour. Kant suggests – as he will argue in the *Critique of Judgment* – that freedom is the key to the reconciliation of mechanism and teleology in a superior theology. The question of whether we reach this theism through instruction by historical events or through supernatural inspiration is 'incidental', says Kant – though as Zammito points out, whether the idea of God is reached through science or revelation is hardly an incidental question for either Kant or Jacobi.[12] Kant approves of Jacobi's refutation of 'the syncretism of Spinozism and Deism in Herder's *God*', noting that syncretism is usually based on insincerity, a quality 'especially characteristic of this great artist in delusions'. Finally, he excuses himself for criticizing Jacobi in 'What does it mean to orient oneself in thinking?' 'I was requested by various people to cleanse myself of the suspicion of Spinozism', he says, and 'therefore, contrary to my inclination, I wrote this essay'.[13]

In Kant's letter to Jacobi we see his specific rejection of Herder's attempt to 'syncretise' Spinozism and theism through reconciling mechanism and teleology. Why should Kant have been particularly exercised about Herder's misguided attempt to import final causes into Spinoza's system of natural necessity? Zammito, in *The Genesis of Kant's Critique of Judgment*, argues that it was because Herderian Spinozism had emerged as the leading alternative to Kantianism for explanation in the natural sciences.[14] Herder's *God*, the culmination of the naturalist, vitalist, and pantheist philosophy that Herder had been propounding for nearly 20 years, represents the overt 'Spinozization' of a position that had already gained a considerable following. Kant saw that anyone attracted by this murky set of views could easily fall into either dogmatism or determinism, with all the antinomies that implied. The 'aesthetic' style

of Herder's writings – for which read populist, unscientific, and lacking in rigour – readily won followers, some of whom had previously been persuaded by transcendental idealism.[15] Kant reacts against Herder not only to assert the superiority of his own system, but also to establish that he is neither a naturalist nor an idealist about purposes in nature. To understand the exigency of Kant's rejection of Herder's teleological naturalism, we must look at their clashes over Herder's earlier work.

Herder's teleological naturalism

The history of Kant's rivalry with Herder goes back to the 1760s, when Herder was one of Kant's brightest and most devoted students. Tensions began to arise between the two as Herder's *Naturphilosophie* developed in a decidedly different direction from the critical philosophy. Kant was suspicious of Herder's friendship with Hamann, whose influence he detected in the mysticism of Herder's early writings. Herder initially took up an anti-rationalist position, stressing that feeling, not reason, was the key to knowing God. This relied on a monistic conception of the unity of God, humanity, and nature: God was the immanent 'world-soul' and nature 'his beautiful garment' (G 10–11 [translator's introduction]). Herder's fusion of theism and naturalism, his emphasis on intuitive access to truth, and his assertion of the unity of the whole system through a fundamental vital force were increasingly distasteful to Kant, who took both the content and method of Herder's writing to be contrary to rigorous thinking.[16] His irritation with the growing adherence to Herder's 'genius-cult' is expressed in a number of essays from the mid-1780s, nowhere more forcefully than in his reviews of the first two parts of Herder's *Ideas for a Philosophy of the History of Mankind*.

The influence on Herder of both Kant and Spinoza is evident from his earliest work. Herder was impressed by the historical account of nature that Kant proposed in his 1755 *Universal Natural History and Theory of the Heavens*, but also by Spinoza's doctrine that man is 'part of nature'. Accordingly, he developed a naturalistic account of the origin of reason that was bound up with a monistic conception of a single universe encompassing both physical and mental phenomena, powered by God's immanent vital force. In his 1772 essay on the origin of language, Herder argues that language and reason can be explained by the need to remember, generalize, and communicate facts about survival.[17] Two years later, in his *This too a Philosophy of History for the Formation of Humanity*, he argues that cultures must be interpreted according to their own internal conditions and values: universal or absolute principles are

at best too general to explain human activities, and at worst entirely illusory.[18] Human activity cannot be explained through a fixed human nature or a universal reason, Herder argues; it requires a genetic account, based on its internal and external material conditions. He posits organic forces as the basis of nature and its historical progress. By 1774, Herder had pitched a vitalist account of the human organism as a single living power, with a single organic force animating both the mental and the physical. The body is a living organism, and the mind is the highest degree of the body's organization.[19]

Ten years later this idea was applied on a universal scale in *Ideas for a Philosophy of the History of Mankind*.[20] In this immense book that seeks to provide an explanation of everything, Herder blends anthropology, history, and natural science to put forward a view of a universe organized according to natural principles by organic forces. He rejects Kantian positions on biology and history along the way, with Kant's 1775 essay 'Of the different races of human beings' a particular target. Kant argues there that the potential variations of a species are part of the 'germ' or 'seed' of the organism and emerge according to environmental conditions, meaning that racial differences are preformed in the essence of individuals.[21] The differentiation of the human species into races, for Kant, cannot only be a matter of chance environmental conditions, but must be viewed as the result of the intelligent organization of nature.[22] For Herder, environmental conditions alone are responsible for species differentiation, but these are not chance conditions. His 'history of mankind' is a geophysical explanation of the emergence of humanity based on understanding the earth as an organic whole composed of forces.

Organic forces, says Herder, are responsible for the generation of all natural phenomena, including human beings – their bodies, minds, and spiritual potential. These forces organize matter according to a certain organic form, thereby generating individual members of species. Herder argues that the primary characteristic of human organic form is not reason but erect posture: as it is the physiological condition for higher brain functions, Herder takes it to govern the organization of the human body and mind.[23] Our organic form determines the development of reason, knowledge, freedom, and culture, and directs us towards a state in which our highest potentialities as humans are fulfilled. This is what Herder calls *Humanität*; it includes peaceful society, organized religion, and the understanding of divine providence, the achievement of which represents the universe at its most highly organized. Every living being is naturally directed towards this highest goal, so the universe is organized

to progress, through the operations of organic force, towards the perfection of its organic form as a whole (*Ideas* 255–72).

Closely following developments in biology, one of Herder's concerns in *Ideas* is to explain natural diversity.[24] Organic form determines an individual's physical organization and directs it towards the goal of the universe in its own species-specific way. But since organic form determines a thing as a member of a species in general, it must leave very much undetermined at the individual level. What, then, accounts for the infinite variety in nature and generates particular differences between individuals?

> No two leaves of any one tree are exactly alike in nature; still less two human faces or two human constitutions. … 'No man', says Haller, 'is exactly similar to another in his internal structure; the system of the nerves and blood vessels differs in millions and millions of particulars, so that amidst the variations of these delicate parts, we are scarcely able to discover in what they agree'. If the eye of the anatomist can perceive this infinite variety, what about the possibly even greater variety that may characterize the invisible powers inherent in so intricate an organization? Is not every man, in spite of his external resemblance to other men, in the last analysis (because of this uniquely individual internal structure) a cosmos in himself and, as such, a wholly incomparable being?
>
> (*Ideas* 282)[25]

Herder hints here at the worry to which Kant will give full expression in the *Critique of Judgment*: nature might be so diverse that it foils all our systems of classification (CJ first introduction, 20:203, 20:213–14). Whereas Kant is genuinely disturbed by the potential gap between natural order and artificial system, Herder's belief in the teleological directedness of organic force overcomes this worry. The unity and order of nature are revealed in experience through organic forces, which organize nature into a hierarchical system of species. We need not worry about the inadequacy of our classification so long as it is based on this system. Individuals will always manifest more unique differences than can be accounted for through their species classification, but since the divine mind 'has everywhere combined the greatest possible multiplicity with unity', we need not be concerned that those differences will disrupt species divisions (*Ideas* 283). Indeed, individual differences are part of the divine mind's teleological strategy, for they cause the organic forms of species to change and progress towards nature's universal goal.

Herder's rejection of 'top-down' principles in favour of 'bottom-up' organization is illustrated by his theory of race. He strongly asserts that there is one human species sharing the same organic form. Our species is differentiated and individually determined according to environmental, historical, and cultural factors known collectively as 'climate'. While some common characteristics will appear in individuals of the same region, climate affects each individual differently according to his or her unique constitution: 'every living being absorbs all the external influences in a manner peculiar to itself and modifies them according to its organic powers' (*Ideas* 293). The supposed 'races' of humankind identified by Kant and others are rejected by Herder. Physical differences do not reflect essential differences but merely differences in climate: there are no races, only nations, each of which is strongly tied to the environment and culture that has constituted it. Herder develops on this basis a remarkable critique of conquest, enslavement, cultural annihilation and environmental devastation, aimed pointedly at European activity in the Americas and Africa (*Ideas* 282–91).

Herder aims to provide a naturalistic explanation of human diversity based on empirical evidence. As in *God*, however, it is difficult to understand how he can successfully combine a rigorous naturalism with a teleological universe, and his attempt to do so inevitably leads him back to the metaphysics he aims to avoid.[26] Metaphysical overtones are apparent not only in the supersensible nature of organic force (which would lead Kant to accuse him of 'highly dogmatic metaphysics'[27]), but also in the determinative relation between organic form and individual members of a species. Herder frequently resorts to the language of essences, ideas, and internal natures, suggesting that organic form is the vitalist substitute for the dogmatic concept of essence or thing in itself. Organic form is sometimes set out as the immanent 'life force' or *conatus* that drives an individual to persevere in its being, but at other times as an 'idea' transcendent to and determinative of multiple individuals. Germs containing organic form lie dormant 'since Creation' until they are vitalized by organic force, and a new individual is 'the realization of a latent idea' that was 'inherent in creative and forever actively thinking nature' (*Ideas* 273, 291–2). As in *God*, Herder offers a vitalist version of divine creation, with organic force and organic forms replacing God and divine essences.

Yet Herder rejects the theory of preformation and denies that organic forms are eternally fixed. Organic form changes as an individual absorbs ever-changing climatic factors. The 'essence' of an individual therefore varies in response to variations in its existence, contributing to the

development of the species over time. Organic force, with its teleological ambit, ensures that these factors work harmoniously to allow organic form to develop in response to climate while preserving certain intrinsic characteristics:

> No-one would expect that the rose should become a lily, or the dog a wolf in another climate. Nature has made them distinct genera, and prefers that they should perish rather than change so radically. But the rose can degenerate and the dog can acquire certain wolf-like characteristics. This lies in the nature of the historical process, and the mutation or degeneration always occurs as a result of more or less sudden and more or less violent changes effected by the opposing organic forces. Both contending forces exert considerable influence, yet each in its own manner. Climate is a chaos of heterogeneous elements, and hence acts in various ways. Gradually these diverse environmental elements penetrate the inner nature of a being, and bring about changes in its genetic and acquired characteristics. Its genetic life force, to be sure, offers resistance of varying duration and intensity in conformity to the uniqueness and inner homogeneity of its own organization. But as it is not independent of the heterogeneous external factors, it must accommodate itself to these in due course.
>
> (*Ideas* 293)

While organic form determines how the individual will relate in general to its climate, it can be modified by the infinite differences of climate. This natural reciprocity suggests a metaphysical reciprocity between the 'essence' or 'idea' of a thing and the conditions of its actualization. This continuous and progressive feedback is the process that drives the development of each species towards its own perfection and that of the universe as a whole. Herder's version of an epigenetic principle explains how organic force drives teleological development: the individual is generally determined by the idea but feeds back the specificities of actuality to modify the idea, which goes on to determine a new individual. 'A man's life is one continuous series of changes. … The species as a whole goes through a ceaseless metamorphosis' (*Ideas* 282–3).[28]

In short, Herder argues that a living being is not determined purely through its concept, and cannot be explained through general principles. Only a genetic explanation shows how a finite being has been generated through the reciprocal relation of the general concept governing its possibility and the actual conditions in which that concept is realized.

Because those conditions are different at every moment, the concept will never be fixed or complete; because the reciprocal relation is an ongoing process, the genetic explanation will always be open-ended. This process is Herder's answer to the question of what explains individuals' general and specific determinations. Organic beings find their principle of complete determination only in the process of their development, the always-unfinished march towards perfection. The teleological end point is the perfectly organized universe in which every individual is completely determined and 'finished', its place in the single perfect organism assured.

Kant's reviews of Herder

Kant reviewed Part I of Herder's *Ideas* in the *Allegemeine Literatur-Zeitung* of February 1785. His review is a particularly vicious example of his disdain for Herder's style and views. It opens with a dismissal of Herder as an eloquent lightweight whose tendency to assimilate material from across the arts and sciences renders his work exempt from ordinary standards of judgement. Kant goes on to attack Herder's method, which substitutes for logical precision, careful distinctions and consistent principles 'a sagacity adept in the discovery of analogies and a power of imagination bold in the use of them', and an appeal to sentiment which makes his points appear more significant than they are.[29] Kant characterizes Herder as an enthusiast who ought to curb his 'lively genius', and *Ideas* as a work of poetic imagination with little philosophical or scientific merit.[30] Herder is guilty of the same 'inspired fanaticism' as Jacobi: where Jacobi appealed to intuitive knowledge of God, Herder claims inferential knowledge of immanent organic force. Kant objects that explaining natural organization through organic force is 'the endeavour to want to explain *what one does not comprehend* from *what one comprehends even less*'.[31] Even worse, in claiming that organic force is inferred from its experienced effects, Herder transcends the limits of possible experience and goes beyond natural science. Despite his claim to 'set aside all metaphysics and approach the problem from an empirical and physiological point of view' (*Ideas* 256), Herder ends up postulating a quasi-metaphysical entity as the *explanandum* of the entire system he sets out.

In other words, Kant thinks Herder falls prey to an antinomy: he asserts that being is infinitely diverse and naturalistically explained, but falls back on an absolute supernatural cause to account for its unity and completeness. This is inevitable, Kant says, given that nature may be too

heterogeneous for its genesis to be explained in naturalistic terms. Herder is right, therefore, to make use of a teleological principle to demonstrate the unity behind nature's heterogeneity, but he cannot justify the claim that the source of that principle is part of nature. The idea that all the differences of nature are unified in a single, self-forming, and purposive power 'lies entirely outside the field of the observational doctrine of nature and belongs merely to speculative philosophy; but even there, if it were to find reception, it would wreak great devastation among the accepted concepts'.[32] The 'devastation' that would arise from ascribing teleological power to a material force can move in two directions. Either nature is construed as a blindly purposive force undetermined by ideas, or divine intelligence is transferred onto nature. The first of these alternatives is roughly Herder's position in *Ideas*; the second is the 'Spinozized' view he goes on to develop in *God*.

Kant rejects the second view, that nature has divine intelligence, on the grounds of his utter refusal to consider a living matter. As Zammito stresses, 'there were few ideas Kant struggled to keep divided more than life and matter. … The radical removal of life from matter defined it into impossibility'.[33] Kant's definition of life as 'the faculty of a being to act in accordance with laws of the faculty of desire', with the faculty of desire defined as 'a being's faculty to be by means of its representations the cause of the reality of the objects of these representations' (CPrR 5:8), restricts life to those beings that produce effects according to intentions. Since this kind of causality can be traced only to the strictly human characteristics of free will and reason – characteristics which are, furthermore, grounded in man's noumenal being rather than his material being – it is illegitimate to extend 'life' or any kind of intentional activity to nature (MFNS 4:544).[34] In the *Critique of Judgment*, Kant suggests that nature's ability to produce organisms, beings that seem to be idea-governed, might be called an 'analogue of life' (CJ 5:374–5). Yet he finds even this terminology problematic, for it attributes to matter either life or an artistic soul, both of which conflict with its nature (see also CJ 5:394). Organisms, or 'organized beings', cannot be attributed to nature alone, and nature cannot be judged to have produced them according to ideas.

Could a non-living nature be purposive – that is, act purposively but without intentions or ideas? Kant objects to this view on the grounds of the illegitimacy of postulating 'basic powers' (*Grundkräfte*, sometimes translated 'fundamental forces') *a priori*, as explained in his essay on teleological principles.[35] Having reduced all experienced powers to the smallest possible number, we infer from these effects an

unexperienced cause, a 'basic power'. The basic power expresses only this causal relationship (as 'attractive force' does to actual attraction, for instance), and must be exemplified in experience. Herder's organic force, however, as the basic power that causes organized beings, has no such relation to experience. For organized beings, Kant says, are possible only through the relation of all their parts to one another as ends and means; this basic power would have to be thought as a cause effective according to ends. Our experience of that kind of causality is restricted to our own idea-governed production of works of art. Since nature does not act according to ideas, however, an organic force would have to organize matter through a purposiveness not determined by an idea. This kind of causality – 'purposiveness without an end' – would require the *a priori* invention of a new basic power and is therefore 'entirely fictitious and empty'.[36] A cause that is 'blindly' purposive, determined by no idea or end, is an illegitimate invention of reason. Either we give up all determination of the cause of organized beings, Kant says, or we think it as an intelligent, intentional being on the analogy of our own artistic productivity; since that being cannot be material, it must be supersensible or divine.

We see that the central themes and arguments of the *Critique of Judgment* emerge from Kant's objections to, and ongoing *contretemps* with, Herder.[37] For Kant, Herder's appeal to organic force is patently the wrong way to reconcile natural science with teleology. If we insist that there is a purposive nature not determined by ideas, we invent a kind of causality unsubstantiated by experience; if we suggest that it is determined by ideas, we illegitimately imagine a living nature with intelligence and will. Either way, the naturalist position ends up subverting itself by positing ideas unsupported by experience.

The Spinozistic tendency Kant takes issue with here is no longer dogmatism, atheism, or determinism, but a thoroughgoing naturalism that is apparently incompatible with any notion of purposiveness. Kant says in his letter to Jacobi that 'Spinoza saw that he had to do away with purposes altogether': Kant sees Spinoza's naturalism as superior to Herder's, on the grounds that he cuts purposiveness out of the equation entirely rather than illegitimately attempting to force teleological principles onto matter. Spinoza is not only the most consistent of the dogmatists, but also the most consistent of the naturalists (CJ 5:421). In the late 1780s, Spinoza becomes, for Kant, the figure of both the rationalist and the empiricist strands of resistance to transcendental idealism. The need to find the right way of understanding nature as a system is therefore closely bound up with the need to overcome Spinozism.

The problem of diversity and the power of judgement

I now turn to Kant's development of the principle of purposiveness and the power of judgement in his essay 'On the use of teleological principles in philosophy' and the first introduction to the *Critique of Judgment*. The opposition to Herder's teleological naturalism involves the rejection both of 'living matter' and of a blindly purposive cause; Kant faces the challenge of needing to account for natural diversity as well as, or better than, Herder without following either of these routes. For, despite his reliance on the mysterious concept of organic force, Herder had achieved something that had so far eluded Kant: an account of nature in its infinite differences.

Returning briefly to their competing theories of race, we see that Herder is able to account not only for the variations shared by geographically distinct human groups, but also for the infinite diversity between individuals within those groups, due to his theory that each individual undergoes reciprocal determination in its own particular way. In what Susan Meld Shell calls 'a seemingly limitless plasticity', individual differences are part of an ever-changing nature only very loosely bounded by fixed determinations of organic form.[38] Kant rejects Herder's view that climatic factors introduce variations into organic form, for it would mean that chance external occurrences affect a thing's formative internal nature. Kant does not believe that natural organization can come about so contingently, nor does he accept that chance can explain the necessary heredity of certain physical characteristics. Instead, he says, we must view the appearance of racial differences as predetermined, limited, and fixed by a wise creator. Individual variations may be explained through the mechanical operations of climate, but where this is impossible we may consider 'purposive causes'.[39]

The idea of purposive causality is developed in Kant's 1788 essay on teleological principles, where a principle of purposiveness explains both the appearance of the four fixed racial predispositions and the infinite differences displayed by individuals within those races.[40]

> The variety among human beings of the same race is in all likelihood just as purposively supplied in the original phylum in order to ground and subsequently develop the greatest degree of manifoldness for the sake of infinitely different ends, as is the difference of the races, in order to ground and subsequently develop the fitness to fewer and more essential ends – yet with the difference that the latter predispositions, once developed (which must have occurred already in most

> ancient times), do not let new forms of this kind come about any more and do not let the old ones become extinct either, whereas the former, at least to our knowledge, seem to indicate a nature that is inexhaustible in new characters (outer as well as inner ones).[41]

Kant's suggestion that different races are designed for different purposes, read alongside his characterization of the races as predisposed to different extents of industriousness and culture, is among the most objectionable ideas in 'On the use of teleological principles in philosophy'. Kant implies that skin colour is purposive not only for differences in climate, but also for different possibilities of activity and achievement.[42] He claims that while the essential predispositions of the four races do not change, however, individuals of every race display differences which vary and are not inherited. To account for these limitless differences, which appear contingent with respect to the four racial 'categories' of the human species, we appeal to 'infinitely different ends'. Following Kant's rejection of Herder, these ends cannot be known to be in nature itself. However, because we act towards our own moral purposes in nature, we 'may not neglect their *possibility* in the world … – hence natural *teleology* as well as the possibility of a nature in general, i.e., transcendental philosophy'.[43] We must think purposes in nature as possible, in conjunction with our ideas of freedom and God, *as well as* understanding the possibility of nature in general according to transcendental concepts and principles.

The notion that reason employs an *idea* of purposiveness had been developed in the Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. In the first *Critique*, 'reason in its hypothetical employment' has the job assigned to reflective judgement in the third: to find universal laws and match particulars to them, based on regulative principles that give experience its coherence and systematicity (CPR A642–68/B670–96). The aim is not to demonstrate the universality of these laws, but rather 'to bring unity into the body of our detailed knowledge, and thereby to *approximate* the rule to universality' (CPR A647/B675). Reason works with a projected systematic unity that lends coherence to the tasks of understanding. Thus, reason gives us a way of smoothing over particular differences in nature, even when understanding is at a loss to do so: its principle, that empirical laws have systematic unity, ensures that differences can be assimilated into a system of experience. Natural diversity can be dealt with, Kant argues, through principles of homogeneity, variety, and affinity, 'for all the manifold differences are then related to one another, inasmuch as

they one and all spring from one highest genus, through all degrees of a more and more widely extended determination' (CPR A658/B686). According to the speculative interest of reason, this unity is regarded as a purposive unity originating in the intentions of a supreme being (CPR A686/B714). It is this idea of purposiveness that is at play in the essay on teleological principles.

However, as he worked on the *Critique of Judgment*, Kant evidently became dissatisfied with that way of accounting for nature's infinite variety – a question that had occupied him throughout his career. Bernasconi sees the turn to natural diversity in the third *Critique* as an extension of Kant's 'obsession with racial diversity', and suggests that the scant mention of race in this text reflects how controversial the matter had become.[44] While Kant's longstanding interest in human variety undoubtedly contributed to the themes of the third *Critique*, its guiding question arises from a basic implication of transcendental idealism's having overthrown the rationalist model of the complete conceptual determination of individuals. Objects are determined as 'things in general' by the categories. But the conditions for an object of possible experience in general, as set out in the Transcendental Analytic, do not (and are not intended to) fully determine any objects in particular. Transcendental principles determine only those aspects that objects can be known to have *a priori*. Kant's attempt to make transcendental principles more specific, as he does in the 1786 *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*, does not take us much further, since the *a priori* concepts of matter provided there are still too general to account for particular differences in density (MFNS 4:517–8, 523–5).[45] Empirical concepts meanwhile, though taken from experience, are universal and cannot fully determine particular differences or account for new differences which appear contingent with respect to them.

This is what Zammito calls the 'problem of empirical entailment': neither transcendental nor empirical concepts entail the full individuality of the intuition.[46] For Deleuze, it is this problem above all that requires the move to 'transcendental empiricism', a development I will discuss in Chapter 6.[47] This is the problem that opens the *Critique of Judgment*, in both its first and second introductions: no matter how precise the conceptual determination of experience, there will always be a remainder of individual differences that escapes it. The 'infinite diversity' of nature is a preoccupation of both introductions, accompanied by the worry that nature's 'disturbing boundless heterogeneity' may be beyond our ability to grasp and classify (CJ first introduction, 20:203, 209; CJ 5:185–6). Yet if we are to achieve anything in natural science, we

must take in these differences and organize them under concepts and laws, and those laws must have some claim to necessity:

> Since the laws that pure understanding gives *a priori* concern only the possibility of a nature as such (as object of sense), there are such diverse forms of nature, so many modifications as it were of the universal transcendental concepts of nature, which are left undetermined by these laws, that surely there must be laws for these forms too. Since these laws are empirical, they may indeed be contingent as far as our understanding can see; still, if they are to be called laws (as the concept of a nature does require), then they must be regarded as necessary by virtue of some principle of the unity of what is diverse, even though we do not know this principle.
>
> (CJ 5:179–80)

Some principle of unity must be in play which enables us to form and order empirical laws where all we see is diversity and contingency. Where is this unity to be found? Certainly, all objects of experience are unified insofar as they are 'objects of possible experience'. However, as Kant points out in an important footnote to the first introduction, this does not constitute the synthetic unity of a *system* of experience:

> These empirical cognitions do form an analytic unity of all experience, in terms of what they necessarily have in common (the transcendental laws of nature I just mentioned); but they do not form that synthetic unity, of experience as a system, that connects the empirical laws under a principle even in terms of that in which they differ (and where the diversity can be infinite).
>
> (CJ first introduction, 20:203–4n)[48]

Kant finds the source of this unity in purposiveness: not the rational *idea* of the purposive unity bestowed on nature by God, but rather a *concept* of the purposiveness of natural things for our cognitive faculties. Just as the categories give synthetic unity to every particular experience, 'the purposiveness of nature' gives synthetic unity to our power of judging empirical nature as systematic (CJ first introduction, 20:204n). Purposiveness is a rule, like a category, but instead of unifying the manifold into one experience, it unifies our ability to judge our experiences reflectively. It is a rule, or maxim, that judgement gives from itself, to itself (CJ 5:185–6). Judgement tells itself to reflect on nature in terms of nature's appropriateness for our power of judging it. This does not

interfere with our determining things as objects of experience, for this rule is specific to reflective judgement, whose role it is to find empirical concepts and laws and subsume particulars under them. The rule ensures we do this in the same sort of way each time, and assures us that all empirical particulars *can* be so subsumed. As Kant puts it in the first introduction:

> The principle by which we reflect on given objects of nature is this: that for all natural things *concepts* can be found that are determined empirically. This means that we can always presuppose nature's products to have a form that is possible in terms of universal laws which we can cognize. For if we were not allowed to presuppose this, and did not base our treatment of empirical representations on this principle, then all our reflection would be performed merely haphazardly and blindly, and hence without our having a basis for expecting that this is in agreement with nature.
>
> (CJ first introduction, 20:211–12)

Reflective judgement, unguided by the principle of nature's purposiveness for judgement, would arrive at empirical laws by chance and could never count on their necessity or affinity with other laws.

Given that Kant had found a seemingly comfortable solution to the problem of natural diversity in the Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic, why does he lose faith in it at the opening of the *Critique of Judgment*? Why is the task of referring experience to a principle of systematicity reassigned from the hypothetical use of reason to the power of reflective judgement? To put it simply, Kant now needs to show that systematicity plays a role not only in the rational organization of our knowledge, but also in the formation of cognition itself. This imperative has emerged from Kant's disagreement with Herder concerning teleology. Kant's first *Critique* position suggests that cognition of natural beings – connecting the manifold of appearances by means of concepts and bringing it under empirical laws – is possible (though not complete or coherent) without the idea of purposes, which is applied only at the later stage of ordering cognitions. If the principle of purposiveness is not present in the activity of cognition, if it plays no role in the formation of empirical knowledge, then it remains possible to understand natural things, and even to assign empirical laws to them, without appealing to purposes. And that means it remains possible, at least for our understanding, that all natural beings are formed mechanically and by chance.

Kant has already asserted, in the essay on teleological principles, that it is impossible to understand organized beings in that way. Yet his position in the first *Critique* leaves open the troubling possibility that we can experience, understand, and think about these beings mechanistically; reason's regulative ideas of systematic unity and purposiveness are applied to these cases with no more necessity than they are applied to other natural things. By 1790, Kant wants to argue that the very *cognition* of organized beings is problematic without a principle of purposiveness, and that principle must be operative in the activity of understanding.[49] However, purposiveness is not a condition of possibility of objects of experience in general, and cannot be understood to be part of nature itself. Kant needs to make purposiveness an unavoidable feature of cognition, yet without making its principle constitutive of experience. Purposiveness therefore becomes the transcendental principle of reflective judgement, a principle that judgement gives to itself. It is neither found in nature, nor given to nature, but it is an essential ingredient of our judgement of nature and the practice of natural science. Lest we imagine that judgement is *naturally* caused to deploy this concept, Kant stresses that the reflective activity of judgement is not mechanistic or naturalistic, but *artistic* (CJ first introduction, 20:214). Purposiveness can *in no way* be considered to have its source in nature. It is to move decisively away from Herder's naturalism that Kant puts purposiveness at the heart of cognition.

Paul Guyer argues that moving systematicity down from reason to judgement reflects Kant's developing conception of the discovery and formation of empirical laws.[50] Finding empirical laws involves cooperation between the determinative activity of applying *a priori* concepts to intuitions, and the reflective activity of matching empirical particulars with universal laws. In some cases, there are as yet no laws, but in order to discover them, we must presuppose that nature is amenable to our concepts. The presupposition of systematicity, therefore, must be prior to empirical concepts; it is no longer workable to make that presupposition an idea that regulates concepts already attained. In the first *Critique*, it is reason's interest in completeness that demands this regulative idea. There, systematicity is a 'cognitive desideratum which is independent of any demand of the understanding and instead more closely allied to pure reason's own demand for unconditional completeness in knowledge'; it can be applied to empirical concepts, but it is not a necessary condition for the understanding's discovery and use of those concepts.[51] In the *Critique of Judgment*, by contrast, the presupposition of systematicity is a condition not only of organizing

empirical laws (lower ones under higher ones), but also of discovering them at all.

> The presupposition of the systematicity of nature is required not just to ensure that we can systematize our empirical concepts, which are themselves discoverable without reference to such systematicity, but in order to ensure that for any empirical intuition we can find at least some empirical concept. … The suggestion is that we must presuppose a degree of organization among the uniformities of nature in order to have a reasonable expectation of discovering them.[52]

It is not just a matter of whether reason is satisfied with the unity of empirical concepts and laws, but whether cognition can arrive at such concepts and laws at all. Systematicity, then, must be considered an element of cognition; a principle guiding judgement in its reflective activity.

The principle of purposiveness is there right from the start and lurks behind all the understanding's empirical activities, yet without being a pure concept of understanding that would determine what nature *is* for us. Instead, it is the principle of reflective judgement, and determines how nature *seems* to our cognitive faculties. This, for Kant, is the right way to bring teleology into nature: as a principle that operates alongside cognition, parallel to it, filling in its gaps when differences occur that our concepts and principles cannot account for. In rejoinder to Herder, Kant says we can deal with natural differences, with nature's disturbing boundless heterogeneity, because of a special parallel power: not an organic power, but the power of judgement. Purposiveness is neither part of nature, as Herder argued, nor an idea of reason, but a principle bound up with the very way we know and judge. Kant is neither a Herderian naturalist nor an idealist about purposes. Perhaps Kant expresses this when he explains that the concept of purposiveness 'belongs to reflective judgement, not to reason, because the purpose is not posited in the object at all, but is posited solely in the subject: in the subject's mere power to reflect' (CJ first introduction, 20:216). Purposes are not in objects and cannot be rationally posited to be in objects; instead, purposiveness is a rule by which we judge, an indispensable component of cognition.

Kant develops *Urteilskraft*, the power of judgement, as the alternative to Herder's 'power of nature' in solving the problem of diversity. With the power of judgement, Kant demonstrates that nature's infinite diversity does not demand explanation through a teleologically directed organic

force of infinite plasticity, but instead reveals the cognitive necessity of non-naturalistic systems of explanation. Nature's 'disturbing boundless heterogeneity' itself points to the irreducibility of our cognitive faculties to nature, just as beautiful and sublime nature, in their different ways, indicates the non-naturalistic basis of our moral faculties. Our need for what is more than natural – a need that is no longer only rational, but also *cognitive* – is the theme that joins together the two halves of the *Critique of Judgment*. Kant's third *Critique* is precisely not a 'critique of the power of nature', but a *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. Kant makes clear that it is judgement, not nature, that has the artistic power of teleological organization, and that it is judgement, not nature, that requires an investigation into its conditions of possibility. The third *Critique* is set against naturalism from the outset: it is set against Herder's naturalism, and therefore against the new Spinozism. The detail of Kant's rejection of this kind of Spinozism is the subject of the next chapter.

4
Critiques of Teleological Judgement

The question of judging organized beings is central to the second half of the *Critique of Judgment*. In his essay on teleological principles, Kant had argued that organized nature requires us to think an intelligent supersensible cause if we are to avoid appeals to blind purposiveness or intelligent nature. The Critique of Teleological Judgment expands on this argument by establishing the necessity that we judge organized beings teleologically, and demonstrating that every alternative means for explaining natural purposes fails. This argument, at the heart of the *Critique of Judgment*, is directed explicitly against Herder and Spinozistic naturalism. It is here that we find Kant explicitly and extensively criticizing Spinoza.[1]

This chapter focuses on Kant's refutation of Spinozism in the Critique of Teleological Judgment. I begin with a brief discussion of Kant's doctrine of organized nature in the third *Critique*, showing how his rejection of immanent causality leads to the question of how we are to judge natural beings as determined both mechanistically and teleologically. The need to avoid Herder's naturalistic solution to this problem requires Kant to uphold the contingency of nature and the intentionality and transcendence of God. These concerns underlie Kant's criticism of Spinoza, which I consider in detail. Finally, I examine Kant's appeal to the intuitive intellect, believed by some to reveal a hidden affinity to Spinozism. I will argue instead that these sections indicate Kant's strongest rejection of the immanent causality of Spinoza's God. Kant's problem with Spinozism does not, ultimately, rest on his belief in teleology, but on his objection to immanence.

The rejection of immanent causality

In this section I continue to trace Kant's thinking about organic nature, building on the work done in the previous chapter. In Chapter 3 we saw

that Kant's concepts of purposiveness and the power of judgement were developed in contrast to Herder's naturalism, and expressed in the essay on teleological principles and the first introduction to the *Critique of Judgment*. The main body of the third *Critique*, especially its second half, the Critique of Teleological Judgment, builds the case against Spinozistic naturalism still further by showing that organic nature necessarily leads us to ideas of final causes and a transcendent, supersensible substrate. Kant must establish the contingency of organisms for the understanding, for contingency reveals the idea of the supersensible substrate as a need not only of our rational thinking of nature, but also of our *cognition* of nature. The principle of purposiveness can only be effective at the level of empirical judgement if a natural product is regarded as not having been necessitated through natural laws. Its contingency in respect of these laws is key:

> That very contingency of the thing's form is a basis for regarding the product as if it had come about through a causality that only reason can have. Such a causality would be the ability to act according to purposes (i.e. a will), and in presenting an object as possible only through such an ability we would be presenting it as possible only as a purpose.
>
> (CJ 5:370)

As Allison remarks, 'Only if he can refute [Spinoza's] claim that "in nature there is nothing contingent […]" [E IP29] can Kant succeed in establishing a critical function and an *a priori* principle for the faculty of judgment. And this, after all, is the basic goal of the Third *Critique*.'[2] Kant needs to save contingency without attributing it either to a 'blind purposiveness' or to a natural intelligence. Equally important as upholding contingency in nature, therefore, is positing an intelligent purposive cause separate from nature.

To do this, Kant returns to the question of organized nature. He initially defines a natural purpose as a thing 'that is both cause and effect of itself (though in two different senses)' (CJ 5:370). It is striking that the same definition can be applied to Spinoza's God (E ID1–3). Kant does not intend this connection, but does mean to distinguish the self-generative causality of organisms from the mechanistic causality of inorganic matter. He illustrates this in three ways with the example of a tree (CJ 5:371–2). First, one tree causes another tree of the same kind, such that the tree species produces itself. Here the tree species is the cause of the individual trees which are its effects, without existing separately

from them. Second, in its growth, the individual tree is both cause and effect of itself. While external materials contribute to its growth, the tree transforms these materials into a species-appropriate form and is *itself* the cause of its development. Third, the preservation of one part of the tree is both cause and effect of the preservation of another part. There are, then, at least three levels of immanent causality at work in the organism: the level of the species, the level of the individual, and the level of the parts of the individual.

Kant, however, does not appeal to immanent causality, but to final causality. 'For example, although a house is the cause of the money received for rent, yet, conversely, the representation of this possible income also caused the house to be constructed' (CJ 5:372). It is difficult to see how the causal relation between the house and the money – where the house is the efficient cause of the money, and the money is the final cause of the house – is in any way similar to the self-generation of the tree. Kant's point is that we cannot make sense of the immanent causality of organisms without a concept of final causes. Just as the representation of the money is understood to be the final cause (or purpose) of the construction of the house, a representation of the tree is thought to be the final cause (or purpose) of the tree's generation. We necessarily judge the tree's existence as having come about through an idea, thereby involving something that is outside the laws of nature and not necessitated by those laws. In other words, instances of immanent causality in nature cannot be explained wholly naturalistically, because they include something that appears contingent with respect to the laws of nature. These cases can only be understood in terms of final causes.[3]

A natural purpose is understood to be governed by an idea of the whole that determines the possibility of its parts. But the organism is not brought about through an idea given from elsewhere like a work of art is. Instead, it produces itself in such a way that we judge it *could* have been caused by an idea. A natural purpose is a whole whose unity comes about through its parts being reciprocally cause and effect of its form, such that the idea of the whole, if present 'in a being possessing the causality in terms of concepts that would be adequate for such a product', could be its final cause (CJ 5:373). The connection of efficient causes (wherein the parts cause the whole) can, at the same time, be judged to be a causation through final causes (wherein the idea of the whole causes the parts). Yet the efficient causality between the parts of the tree is not the same as that between the gears of a watch. The parts of a natural purpose must be understood to *produce* one another reciprocally: each

part is the efficient cause and effect of the existence of every other part. 'Only if a product meets that condition […] will it be both an *organized* and a *self-organizing* being, which therefore can be called a *natural purpose*' (CJ 5:374). We reflectively judge organized nature by a principle that is also its definition: '*an organized product of nature is one in which everything is a purpose and reciprocally also a means*. In such a product nothing is gratuitous, purposeless, or to be attributed to a blind natural mechanism' (CJ 5:376).[4]

What Herder might designate the immanent purposive causality of an organism is for Kant a special case for reflective judgement. The organism's reciprocal efficient causality, while we assume it to be explicable in terms of natural laws, cannot be empirically cognized without a concept of final causes (CJ 5:383). In contrast to Herder, Kant does not attribute purposiveness to nature itself, and denies that purposiveness is a constitutive concept of understanding or reason. We cannot determinatively judge organized beings to be natural purposes, since strictly speaking 'the organization of nature has nothing analogous to any causality known to us' and is not explicable in terms of our *a priori* concept of nature (CJ 5:375). However, we do legitimately use 'a remote analogy' with our own purposive causality to guide our empirical investigation. In regulating reflective judgement, the principle of purposiveness allows us to consider natural things in terms of a law-governed order beyond that of mechanistic causation (CJ 5:379). And this allows us to judge nature in terms of its particular empirical laws forming an intrinsically purposive system:

> [The] concept of a natural purpose leads us necessarily to the idea of all of nature as a system in terms of the rule of purposes, and we must subordinate all mechanism of nature to this idea according to principles of reason (at least in order to test nature's appearance against this idea). The principle of reason applies to this idea only subjectively, namely, as this maxim: Everything in the world is good for something or other; nothing in it is gratuitous; and the example that nature offers us in its organic products justifies us, indeed calls upon us, to expect nothing from it and its laws except what is purposive in the whole.
>
> (CJ 5:379)

Kant believes organized matter shows that natural science is guided by both mechanism and teleology. We are required constitutively to understand nature in terms of mechanistic laws alone. Insofar as they

are 'objects in general', organized beings are determined by *a priori* laws of nature as set out in the Transcendental Analytic of the first *Critique*; insofar as they are material bodies, they are determined by the laws of matter specified in the *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*. These laws also *regulate* our empirical investigations. In finding empirical laws and an empirical system for material bodies, reflective judgement operates according to the maxim that mechanical laws are sufficient for judging the possibility of these bodies. Kant's point, however, is that organisms cannot be understood strictly as material bodies, because we judge their intrinsic form to include something that is not necessitated by *a priori* laws. Their self-organization appears contingent with respect to the laws of nature and matter, and reflective judgement needs an additional maxim to empirically cognize and systematize them. Reason's concept of a purpose must be employed to regulate our judgement of nature in cases where it displays organization. Only through the use of this concept can we reflectively judge nature in all its causal relations: not only those of mechanistic efficient causality, but those of reciprocal efficient causality too (CJ translator's introduction, lxxviii–ix).

Thus reflective judgement follows two maxims that regulate the empirical cognition of nature. But the grounds of these maxims appear to conflict when applied simultaneously, leading to an antinomy. On the one hand, reflective judgement obeys the maxim that 'all production of material things and their forms must be judged to be possible in terms of merely mechanical laws'; on the other, it follows the maxim that the possibility of some products of material nature must also be judged in terms of final causes (CJ 5:386–7). This is an antinomy of judgement, the two sides of which represent the conflicting needs of the understanding and reason as they regulate reflective judgement in its investigation of nature.[5] Kant shows that if these were constitutive principles concerning the productive basis of nature – if the dispute were over whether or not nature is *produced* strictly through mechanical causation – we would end up with an antinomy of *reason* (CJ 5:387). That is the kind of antinomy found in the first *Critique*; we might expect its resolution to lead to a regulative idea for considering the productive basis of nature *in general*. But the problem *here* is how reflectively to judge a specific object, an organism, in terms of the conflicting principles of mechanism and teleology. If we employ both maxims concerning the same object, then we judge that object *both* as fully necessitated by mechanical laws *and* as contingent in respect of those laws. Judgement cannot be guided by both principles simultaneously concerning the *same object* unless the principles are reconciled (see CJ 5:411–12, and

CJ translator's introduction, lxxxviii–xci). The antinomy concerns how reflective judgement is to be guided between the two 'cliffs' of naturalism and teleology, a voyage which left Herder capsized on the rocks.[6]

This is where Kant's worry about Spinozism emerges. If Kant follows Herder in failing to reconcile the two principles, then the Kantian account of nature is in danger of collapsing into naturalistic determinism. This danger arises from the first *Critique*: in the Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic, Kant suggests that a single unifying principle – a single kind of causation or fundamental power – may be thought to ground a systematic science of nature. Thus he does not demonstrate, but does leave open the possibility, that all of nature is explicable in terms of mechanistic causation. The Appendix suggests that nothing in our experience will ever prove the impossibility of reaching the goal of explaining nature through a single causal principle, even though we may never reach that goal (CPR A648–68/B676–96).[7] This leaves the way open for Kant's position to be conflated with Spinozistic naturalism. A Kantian attracted to *Naturphilosophie* could conclude from the first *Critique* that nature is to be judged exclusively in terms of mechanism, fully determined through natural laws down to its most specific elements. In this view, contingency in nature could be construed to be an idea of reason, an illusion, or a problem that shows that our understanding has not advanced far enough in its specification of natural laws. Without a demonstration that the contingency of certain natural forms is a necessary feature of our judgement, Kant's position remains open to being conflated with a thoroughgoing naturalism.

Kant's dispute with Herder in the 1780s, and his essays on teleology and biology, led him to see that he had to reject this kind of naturalism, which he found to be insufficient for natural science.[8] By 1790, the possibility that the first *Critique* left open – the possibility of unifying natural science in a single kind of causality – had to be closed down. Guyer points out that the third *Critique*

> appears to argue precisely what the first *Critique* supposed never could be shown, namely that we have good reason to suppose that we can never succeed in bringing all of nature under a single principle attributing a single fundamental power to a single kind of substance.[9]

That is, the third *Critique* must show that our experience *does* indicate the impossibility that we could ever explain nature wholly through mechanistic causation.[10] Furthermore, Kant now sees that a wholly

naturalistic account of nature leaves the 'gulf' between nature and freedom unbridgeable. If freedom is to actualize its purposes in nature, 'it must be possible to think of nature as being such that the lawfulness in its form will harmonize with at least the possibility of the purposes that we are to achieve in nature according to the laws of freedom' (CJ 5:175–6). A nature judged to be exclusively determined by natural laws could not harmonize with freedom in this way; only a nature judged to include purposiveness makes possible a transition 'from lawfulness in terms of nature to the final purpose set by the concept of freedom' (CJ 5:196). Whereas theistic determinism 'threatens freedom with complete destruction' (CPrR 5:100), naturalistic determinism threatens freedom with the impossibility of realizing its purposes in the phenomenal world. In order to uphold the possibility of harmony between freedom and nature, Kant must show that certain aspects of nature are necessarily judged as contingent with respect to natural laws.

This not only saves freedom, but also saves his own system from being conflated with *Naturphilosophie*, pantheism, hylozoism, and Spinozism. The *Critique of Judgment* must demonstrate the critical philosophy to be incompatible with those positions, and to provide the only possible reconciliation of the needs of understanding with the needs of reason: the aims of science with the aims of faith. As Zammito says of the antinomy of judgement, 'Kant aimed not at the "conflict" of empirical research maxims but rather at the issue of plausible metaphysics of nature as a whole'.[11] This is the context for Kant's refutation of Spinoza.

'Spinoza has taken this contingency away'

I turn now to the detail of Kant's criticism of Spinoza in §§72–3 of the *Critique of Judgment*. Prior to resolving the antinomy, Kant considers four dogmatic attempts to account for nature's purposiveness. They are dogmatic because they assume that the dispute about purposiveness concerns 'objective principles concerning the possibility of things, whether through causes that act intentionally or only those that act unintentionally' (CJ 5:391). All are therefore opposed to Kant's view that the dispute concerns the *subjective* maxims we use in *judging* purposive natural products.

The four dogmatic systems are classified according to whether they believe purposes in nature are real and intentional or ideal and unintentional, and according to whether they think the purposive form of organized beings has a physical or hyperphysical cause. The two idealist systems (ancient materialism and Spinozism) reject the reality of

Table 4.1 The four dogmatic systems of CJ §§72–3

	Purposive form has a physical cause	**Purposive form has a hyperphysical cause**
Purposes are ideal and unintentional	*Materialism or Casualism* Purposiveness is caused physically and unintentionally; Doctrine of lifeless matter; Associated with Epicurus or Democritus	*Spinozism or Fatalism* Purposiveness is caused hyperphysically and unintentionally; Doctrine of lifeless God; Associated with Spinoza but idea is 'much older'
Purposes are real and intentional	*Hylozoism or Pantheism* Purposiveness is caused physically and intentionally; Doctrine of living matter (world-soul); [Associated with Herder]	*Theism* Purposiveness is caused hyperphysically and intentionally; Doctrine of living God; [Associated with Jacobi]

teleology and suggest that the appearance of purposiveness in nature is explained by an unintentional, 'lifeless' cause. The two realist systems (hylozoism and theism) affirm the reality of teleology and assign it an intentional, 'living' cause. The idealist systems are represented by Epicurus/Democritus and Spinoza; the realist systems are not explicitly linked to individual philosophers, but their contemporary representatives are likely Herder and Jacobi (Table 4.1).[12]

Taking each of the four positions in turn, Kant argues that none succeeds in explaining natural purposiveness or teleological judgement. Materialism fails to explain purposiveness as the outcome of either a physical process or an illusion of judgement, because it relies on blind chance to explain the production of natural purposes through laws of motion (CJ 5:392–3). It is 'so manifestly absurd, if taken literally, that we must not let it detain us' (CJ 5:391). Theism, by contrast, holds that purposes in nature are intentionally caused by an original intelligent being. To postulate that the basis of purposiveness lies beyond nature, the theist must demonstrate that it cannot result from mere mechanism, but he cannot succeed due to the limitations of our cognitive power (CJ 5:395). Nonetheless Kant prefers theism to all the other forms of dogmatism. If Jacobi is indeed the representative for theism, Kant may intend to reiterate his support for him over Herder.[13] The advantage of theism is that it avoids both naturalistic determinism and blind purposiveness; it 'is best able to rescue the purposiveness of nature from idealism; for it attributes an understanding to the original

being and so introduces an intentional causality to account for the production of natural purposes' (CJ 5:395). Only Kantianism or theism can save us from the dangers of Spinozism, just as Kant intimated in his letter to Jacobi.

What about hylozoism, which like theism appeals to intentional causality to account for the production of natural purposes, but which appeals to nothing outside nature? Hylozoism holds that this causality comes from 'the analogue of a power that acts according to intentions': organic force or the life of matter (CJ 5:392). Either matter is thought to be originally living (as in hylozoism proper), or matter is thought to be animated by an immanent principle such as a world-soul (as in pantheism). Hylozoism fails in Kant's view because its very concept is contradictory. As we have seen, Kant could not accept the concept of a living matter. He defines life as the ability of a being to act intentionally in accordance with representations and desires, a definition which excludes all of material nature. 'We cannot even think of living matter as possible. The very concept of it involves a contradiction, since the essential character of matter is lifelessness, *inertia*' (CJ 5:394). Hylozoism proper, then, cannot stand. The pantheist variety of hylozoism, which claims that matter is endowed with life by a world-soul 'and that nature as a whole is thus an animal' (CJ 5:394), is rejected just as Kant earlier rejected Herder's concept of organic force. The life principle can be inferred only from empirical observation of natural purposiveness, and yet natural purposiveness is supposed to be explained by the life principle. This circular explanation not only fails to explain purposiveness, but also appeals to an illegitimate metaphysical principle.[14]

The only remaining contender is Spinozism. Spinozism, Kant says, is distinguished from hylozoism in that it takes purposiveness to be ideal and unintentional; like materialism it holds that purposive form is the result of natural determination, but it refers it to 'the hyperphysical basis of matter and of all of nature' (CJ 5:391). The hyperphysical basis is not a world-soul, organic force, or other principle supposedly knowable through natural science, but 'something supersensible, which therefore our insight cannot reach' (CJ 5:391). Kant understands this supersensible basis to be the unity of a simple subject in which all things subsist. For Kant, Spinoza's substance is neither the living nature of hylozoism nor the mechanistic nature of materialism, but a supersensible substrate of nature that is 'lifeless' and without purpose.

Lacking life, understanding and intentions, Spinoza's substance cannot ground our freedom or final purpose in nature; it cannot bridge the gulf between nature and freedom, and, by extension, cannot overcome

the dispute between science and faith. Spinoza's substance is 'quite unintelligible' because, Kant implies, we cannot think a supersensible substrate that contains no ground for freedom. Spinozism is 'fatalistic' because it attributes the appearance of purposiveness not to the understanding of the original being, but to the necessity of its nature (CJ 5:391–2). If there are any natural purposes in Spinoza's system, their existence and form are necessitated, meaning that they are not *purposes* at all.

Kant's interpretation of Spinoza, which focuses on his dogmatic metaphysics, clearly shows the influence of Jacobi. By implication, Kant is critical of the naturalistic appropriation of Spinozism. He takes care to distinguish Spinozism from Herderian naturalism on several grounds: Spinozism denies the reality of purposes, it posits an unknowable original being, and it denies life to God and nature. Above all, it affirms a being beyond nature that cannot ground freedom, teleology, or faith: proponents of *Naturphilosophie* are therefore misguided in their attempts to use Spinozism to reconcile science and faith. Kant's aim is to undermine naturalism, not to clarify his readers' understanding of Spinoza. Yet his presentation of Spinoza indicates an insight which Herder apparently lacks: that Spinoza's God is more than mere physical nature, and is not fully cognizable exclusively through the methods of natural science. Characterizing Spinoza's substance as a 'hyperphysical' substrate, while not entirely accurate, does at least acknowledge that Spinoza's substance is not equivalent to mere physical matter, as Bayle (and ultimately Herder) believed.[15] Kant also recognizes that Spinozism utterly repudiates teleology, and cannot be accommodated within Herder's teleological naturalism.

Ironically, Kant corrects the mistakes of the Spinoza interpretation provided in Herder's *God* using tools borrowed from Jacobi's *Concerning the Doctrine of Spinoza*. Recall Kant's letter praising Jacobi's refutation of Herder's 'syncretism' of Spinozism and teleology.[16] Having decided that Jacobi is a more trustworthy guide to Spinoza than Herder is, Kant relies on Jacobi to ground his critique. Kant's detailed criticism, to which we will now turn, is based specifically on three points made prominently by Jacobi. First, Spinoza's substance is the immanent cause of its modes; second, Spinoza's God has no will or understanding; and third, Spinoza's God is lifeless. On this basis the central point of Kant's refutation of Spinozism in §73 is that Spinoza's system denies purposiveness and fails to explain teleological judgements. Kant subsequently concludes in §87 that Spinozism cannot ground freedom, morality, or faith.

Kant's argument that Spinozism cannot account for purposiveness proceeds as follows.[17] First, he argues that Spinoza's concept

of substance, as the unity of all things in one subject, excludes the possibility of its causal relation to natural beings. This means there are no 'products' of nature that could be thought to be purposively caused in the first place:

> Spinoza … wants to relieve us of [any need to] inquire into the basis that makes purposes of nature possible, and wants to deprive the idea of this basis of all reality. He does this by refusing to count them as products at all. Instead he regards them as accidents that inhere in an original being; and he attributes to this being, the substrate of those natural things, not causality regarding these things, but merely subsistence.
>
> (CJ 5:393)

Kant relies here on Jacobi's explanation of immanent causation: Spinoza's God or substance causes its modes immanently, such that its *effects* remain *in* it. Kant does not accept that modes inhering in a substance can also be the causal effects of that substance; for him, if modes are not substances, they can only be accidents inhering in substance. Kant understands the Spinozistic relation between substance and its modes not to be an actual relation of causal dependence, but merely a logical relation of inherence. Kant reiterates this point in another text of 1790, in which he once again attacks Herder's doctrine of organic force:

> The proposition: 'the thing (the substance) *is* a force', instead of the perfectly natural 'substance *has* a force', is in conflict with all ontological concepts and, in its consequences, very prejudicial to metaphysics. For the concept of substance, that is, of inherence in a subject, is thereby basically entirely lost, and instead of it that of dependence on a cause is posited; just as Spinoza wanted to have it, since he affirmed the universal dependence of all things in the world on an original being, as their common cause, while making this universal active force itself into a substance, and in so doing converted that dependence of theirs into inherence in the latter. In addition to its relation as *subject* to accidents (and their inherence), a substance certainly also has the relation to them of *cause* to effects; but the former is not identical with the latter. Force is not that which contains the ground of the existence of accidents (for substance contains that); it is rather the concept of the mere relation of substance to the latter, *insofar* as it contains their ground, and this relation is completely different from that of inherence.[18]

Both a substance and a cause can be the ground of consequences; the difference is whether the consequences lie inside or outside the ground. A substance is a cause only if it is an 'outer' ground for the inherence of accidents in another substance.[19] Insofar as it is an inner ground of the inherence of its own accidents, a substance is not a cause. Indeed, organized beings are examples of substances that *cause* effects that remain *in* those substances, and it is precisely the *insufficiency* of the natural laws of substance and causality for explaining this phenomenon that requires us to judge it in terms of final causes.[20] Kant believes that Spinoza's idea of an immanent cause is simply incoherent: it confuses the internal relation of substance to accident with the external relation of cause to effect. When Spinoza says that substance or God is the efficient cause of all beings, Kant implies, Spinoza confuses inherence with dependence.

This confusion is, for Kant, typical of the ancient form of pantheism, which he takes to be the source of Spinoza's doctrine. In trying to satisfy reason's demand for absolute unity in the principle of natural things, ancient pantheism borrowed this unity from the idea of a single substance in which all natural things inhere as attributes. Through the ontological unity of substance, this doctrine attempted to account for purposiveness without positing any intentional purpose:

> Though this substance would not be the cause of the world through [its] understanding, it would still be the subject containing all the understanding that the beings of the world have. Hence, though this being would not produce anything in accordance with purposes, yet all things, because of the unity of the subject whose mere attributes they are, must still of necessity relate purposively to one another, even without there being a purpose [or] intention. And so these people introduced idealism concerning final causes: for instead of [making] the unity [...] of a multitude of purposively connected substances a unity of causal dependence *on one* substance, they turned it into a unity of inherence *in one* substance. This system, considered from the side of the inhering world beings, then became *pantheism*; and considered from the side of the sole subsisting subject, the original being, it (later) became *Spinozism*. Rather than solving the problem concerning the first basis of the purposiveness of nature, this system instead denied it; for the concept of that first basis, deprived of all its reality, had been turned into a mere misinterpretation of [the] universal ontological concept of a thing as such.
>
> (CJ 5:439–40)

Ancient pantheism and Spinozism take final causes to be ideal, Kant says, because they deny that there is any real basis that *causes* anything at all. The modes or accidents of this substance are not caused by or separate from it, meaning that they cannot be considered *products*. Rather than trying to solve the problem of the origin of our purposive judgements about certain natural products, Kant argues, pantheism and Spinozism avoid it by denying that there are either products of nature or anything that causes them.

As we have just seen, the unity of Spinoza's substance is problematic for Kant, as he takes it to be an illegitimate metaphysical extension and misinterpretation of the concept of a 'simple subject'. Nevertheless Kant acknowledges that with the unity of substance providing the basis for natural forms, Spinoza's system fulfils one condition of a successful explanation of purposiveness: natural beings, as accidents of the single substance, are unified in the unconditional necessity of substance (CJ 5:393). However, Kant says, it is impossible to judge this nature as having *unity of purpose*. Unity of purpose is a special kind of unity: it does not follow from a connection of things in one subject, but necessarily refers to a cause that has understanding (CJ 5:393). So for nature to have unity of purpose, it must be thought to be the effect of an intelligent cause, not the accident of a non-intelligent substance. 'Unless these formal conditions are met, all unity is mere natural necessity, and if we nevertheless attribute it to things that we represent as external to one another, then it is blind necessity' (CJ 5:393–4). Having decided that Spinoza's substance is neither causal nor intelligent, Kant concludes that it cannot possibly produce unity of purpose.

Without unity of purpose, the ontological unity of Spinoza's substance cannot account for purposiveness. Furthermore, Kant adds, purposiveness requires that certain natural forms appear contingent with respect to the laws of nature, whereas for Spinoza, all things are fully and necessarily determined through substance.

> Spinoza does indeed provide natural forms with something that all purposiveness requires – viz., unity in their basis. (For the original being is unconditionally necessary, and so are all natural things, which inhere in it as accidents.) But the *unity of a purpose*, [which is also required for such purposiveness,] cannot be thought unless the natural forms are also contingent; and yet Spinoza has taken this contingency away from them and has thus also deprived these forms of everything *intentional*, and has deprived the original basis of natural things of all understanding.
>
> (CJ 5:393)

In 'taking away' the contingency of natural forms, Spinoza 'deprives' them of intentional causation and similarly 'deprives' God of understanding and will. In other words, according to Kant, Spinoza's dogmatic view is that nature *objectively* does not include contingency or intentional causation. Without contingency in natural products, there is no route to the idea of an intelligent, intentional God, but only to strict determinism through natural laws. The original basis of this system cannot be a God of understanding and will, making it a blind determinism; lacking intentional action, Spinoza's substance is 'a lifeless God' (CJ 5:392n).

Kant's criticism amounts to the claim that Spinoza's substance does not, and cannot, include purposiveness. Nor can Spinoza's substance give rise to the *idea* of purposiveness, since that idea cannot arise from the representation of its mere ontological unity (CJ 5:394). Kant concludes that with the ontological unity of substance, Spinoza tries to offer a basis that explains the purposive connection of natural objects, but fails due to his denial of the contingency of natural forms and an intentional, intelligent, external cause (CJ 5:393–4). Spinozism can explain neither purposiveness in nature nor the fact that we judge nature teleologically. It evades the problem of purposiveness by denying that the supersensible substrate is causal or intelligent. Yet the fact remains – and even Spinozism 'does not deny' – that certain natural products appear to be purposively caused (CJ 5:393). Accordingly, the question of the possibility of these natural products can only be addressed if our assumptions about the supersensible substrate are explicitly anti-Spinozistic ones:

> The question remains absolutely unanswerable (for our reason) unless we treat it as follows: we must think of that original basis of things as a simple *substance*; the quality that enables this substance to give rise to the specific character of the natural forms based on it, namely, their unity of a purpose, we must think of as its intelligence; and the relation of this substance to those natural forms we must think of as a *causality* (because of the contingency we find in everything that we think possible only as a purpose).
>
> (CJ 5:421)

Spinoza's critique of teleological judgement

Kant is, of course, right to say that Spinoza denies the reality of purposes in nature. He is correct that Spinoza denies contingency to natural beings and intentionality to God. But Kant's criticism of Spinoza is

invalid, because he attacks Spinoza's dogmatic claims about the nature of substance rather than his *critical* claim explaining teleological judgement. Only Spinoza's critical claim is really comparable to Kant's own position, and it is that claim Kant ought to have discussed. That Kant does not discuss it is almost certainly due to his ignorance of Spinoza's critique of teleology, which does not feature in Jacobi's synopsis and which Herder, to advance his own teleological reading of Spinoza, had to gloss over.

In sum, Kant's argument is this: Spinoza accepts that nature displays purposiveness and attributes this purposiveness to the unity of substance, but without unity of purpose, substance cannot provide an explanation either for the appearance of purposiveness or for our teleological judgement of these cases. Kant is wrong to characterize Spinoza's position in this way, for Spinoza does not try to explain purposiveness by appealing to the unity of substance. Spinoza nowhere argues, and would not accept, that the unity of substance causes 'things of nature to be connected in terms of purposes' (CJ 5:393). Spinoza explicitly denies that nature as a whole has a purpose that determines the form and connection of its parts. The unity of substance means that all things are connected, certainly, but they are connected according to efficient and not final causality. Spinoza does not attempt to 'explain' purposiveness in terms of substance because he understands that purposiveness *does not follow* from substance (and thus such an 'explanation' is impossible). However, Spinoza accepts that nature can *appear* purposive from the perspective of our limited knowledge, and explains why it is that we *judge* nature in terms of final causes. Thus, Spinoza does provide an explanation for our teleological *judgement* of natural beings – an explanation that Kant misses entirely.

Spinoza discusses teleological judgement in the Appendix to Part I of the *Ethics*, where he exposes common 'prejudices' about God and nature that could be an obstacle to true understanding.

> All the prejudices I here undertake to expose depend on this one: that men commonly suppose that all natural things act, as men do, on account of an end; indeed, they maintain as certain that God himself directs all things to some certain end, for they say that God has made all things for man, and man that he might worship God.
>
> (E I App.)

Spinoza explains that historically, human beings, ignorant of the true causes of things but conscious of being driven by their desire to seek

their own advantage, believed that their own actions were intentional, purposive and freely willed (E I App.). They inferred that all events were caused in the same way, if not by themselves then by a 'ruler of Nature' similarly endowed with intentions and free will. This fallacy was supported by their experience of nature, which contained numerous means for fulfilling their desires: 'eyes for seeing, teeth for chewing, plants and animals for food, the sun for light, the sea for supporting fish. … Hence, they consider[ed] all natural things as means to their own advantage' (E I App.). Essentially, they believed their own actions were directed towards purposes, and then imagined that other natural beings, all of nature, and God itself were similarly purpose-oriented. From there developed the image of a God who intentionally designs and directs nature for the good of humankind, an image of a God that is 'eminently human'.

For Spinoza, every finite mode perceives the world from the perspective of seeking its own advantage, so it is inevitable that we should judge natural things as intentionally produced to fulfil human ends.[21] That we judge nature to have order, beauty or ugliness similarly reflects the extent to which we find nature suitable for fulfilling our desires (E I App., IV Pref.). Our judgement, determined by our *conatus*, reflects on things in terms of their utility or hindrance for seeking our advantage. And what is *most* to our advantage is true knowledge: our *conatus* seeks things that are useful for building reason (E IVP26). It is therefore entirely natural, unavoidable and even useful that we see nature in terms of its suitability for human knowledge, but it is wrong to imagine that nature truly *is* organized in terms of purposes or directed towards our cognitive needs. God has no purposes and makes no judgements: 'as he exists for the sake of no end, he also acts for the sake of no end' (E IV Pref.). Rationally we can come to understand that God, nature, and humanity operate according to the eternal necessity of substance, and that all things can be explained through efficient causes. But much human knowledge is imaginary, partial and fragmentary, based on experience, inference, hearsay, and tradition. We *imagine* that nature is purposive, that we are free and that God acts intentionally. As we understand the efficient causes of nature more clearly and rationally, we leave the fiction of final causes behind.

The purposiveness with which Spinoza takes issue in the Appendix to Part I is what Kant calls 'relative natural purposiveness': the usefulness we judge a thing to have for human beings, or for some other end external to the thing itself (CJ 5:367). Kant agrees with Spinoza that this kind of judgement reflects the perspective of the judger, and denies that

cases of relative purposiveness really justify teleological judgement (CJ 5:369). What does Spinoza say about the *intrinsic* natural purposiveness which, for Kant, characterizes organized beings and *requires* a judgement in terms of final causes? Spinoza alludes to this kind of purposiveness in the Preface to Part IV, where he criticizes our tendency to judge objects of nature in the same way that we judge human-produced artefacts. A work of human art can be judged according to how completely it fulfils the purpose or idea of the man who creates it. But if we judge a natural object as something that (more or less adequately) matches an idea of that object, we illegitimately compare the object to a universal idea of what that thing is. That is because we imaginatively form universal ideas that are mere empirical composites but that we take to be models of a species or genus (E IV Pref., IIP40S1). We judge a natural being as having been produced through such an idea due to our ignorance of its particular explanation through efficient causes.

Spinoza would not disagree with Kant that we *do* judge certain natural objects as if they were produced through ideas, like objects of art. He also accepts that we judge natural objects as contingent, reflecting our imperfect understanding of the necessity with which all things truly exist (E IP33S1). Spinoza takes contingency and purposiveness to be part of our experience of nature, just as they are for Kant. But whereas Kant claims that contingency and purposiveness are necessary ingredients of reflective judgement, Spinoza argues that they are fictions we employ due to the limitations of our knowledge. A final cause 'is nothing but a human appetite insofar as it is considered as a principle, or primary cause, of some thing' (E IV Pref.). The example Spinoza gives (coincidentally anticipating Kant's own example in §65) is of habitation being the final cause of a house. In truth, a man has a desire to build a house, caused by his imagining the conveniences of living there. His desire 'is really an efficient cause, which is considered as a first cause, because men are commonly ignorant of the causes of their appetites' (E IV Pref.). Similarly, 'a thing is called contingent only because of a defect of our knowledge' (E IP33S1).

On the face of it, Kant and Spinoza have rather similar views on teleological judgement. Spinoza does not offer a distinct theory of judgement, but his account of imagination includes the activities Kant attributes to reflective judgement: finding empirical concepts (such as those of genus and species) for particulars and organizing them into a system. Kant and Spinoza both believe that this process of empirical cognition involves a concept of purposiveness: we inevitably judge natural things in terms of their suitability for knowledge, and in terms of their production through

purposes. Both argue that we get the concept of purposiveness from our own intentional activity, and that it is a concept that judgement 'puts into' its reflection on objects (see CJ First Introduction, 20:235). Neither one accepts that purposiveness is constitutive of nature: Spinoza would concur with Kant that 'the purpose is not posited in the object at all, but is posited solely in … the subject's mere power to reflect' (perhaps substituting 'imagine' for 'reflect') (CJ First Introduction, 20:216). However, they hold this view for different reasons. Spinoza argues that objectively there are no final causes, that God has no purposes or intentions, and that, despite the inevitability of our doing so, we are mistaken to interpret nature in this way. Kant, of course, rejects these dogmatic claims. For him, the truth about final causes and divine intentionality are beyond our possible knowledge, but these ideas are needed to regulate reflective judgement where mechanistic laws are inadequate to explain natural forms.

Kant is justified in objecting to Spinoza's dogmatic claims about God and nature, which transcendental idealism cannot accept. On the grounds of his own definitions of substance and causality, he is justified in objecting to Spinoza's conception of substance as the immanent cause of its modes. But he is not justified in criticizing Spinoza for failing to explain teleological judgement, or for seeking to explain purposiveness by reference to the ontological unity of substance. Instead of addressing Spinoza's argument about our judgements of nature, which he needs to do if he is to refute Spinoza's explanation of those judgements, Kant addresses Spinoza's argument about the original *basis* of nature, and finds, inevitably, that purposiveness cannot be explained in that way. If Kant were legitimately to compare his own account of purposiveness with Spinoza's, he would address Spinoza's account of why nature *appears* purposive from the perspective of human understanding. Instead, Kant attacks Spinoza's argument that nature excludes purposes and contingency on the level of the supersensible. In attacking Spinoza's 'noumenal' claim, he ignores a 'phenomenal' claim that is very close to his own position. Just where he seeks to distance transcendental idealism from Spinozism, Kant leaves open a loophole for those thinkers looking to combine the two.

The intuitive intellect and 'the peculiarity of the human understanding'

Even stronger evidence for an affinity between Kant and Spinoza seems to be provided in the sections that follow. Kant's appeal to the intuitive

intellect in §§76–7 gave the German Romantics and Idealists grounds for belief that a conflation of Kantianism with Spinozism was not only possible, but also anticipated by Kant himself.[22] Some contemporary commentators follow this line: Zammito argues that Kant unintentionally subverts his critique of Spinoza by revealing their underlying closeness on the level of the supersensible.[23] In this section I look at Kant's discussion of the intuitive intellect and conclude instead that it establishes his rejection of Spinozistic immanence.

There is some support for what we might call the Romantic view that Kant secretly propounds Spinozism, for in §76, through the idea of 'intuitive intellect', he introduces a supersensible being that is not characterized as a personal God or anthropomorphic creator. This is a being whose intuition is not sensible, whose thinking is not conceptual, and for whom there is no distinction between possibility and actuality (CJ 5:402). Its objects, things in themselves, are actualized in the act of being thought. It is 'a power of complete spontaneity of intuition' (CJ 5:406). The intuitive intellect is not like our own discursive understanding: it does not need to move from the conceptual universal to the intuited particular or to achieve harmony between them. Instead, the intuitive understanding proceeds 'from the *synthetically universal* (the intuition of a whole as a whole) to the particular, i.e., from the whole to the parts' (CJ 5:407). From its perfect understanding of the whole follows its understanding of the parts of that whole, meaning that for it, the parts are fully and necessarily determined.

For the discursive understanding, thinking is necessarily separate from the being of the given. For the intuitive understanding, the activity of thinking *is* the genesis of the being of what is thought. Kant seems to make the intuitive intellect an ontological ground for things in themselves that operates not through eidetic creation, but through spontaneous activity as such. This bears a more than superficial resemblance to Spinoza's substance, whose self-causing activity – bilaterally expressed as physical and thinking activity – generates beings and the ideas of them. In this context, Kant's distinction between intuitive and discursive understanding can be seen to map on to Spinoza's distinction between the perspective of God and the perspective of the finite modes. In different ways, both stress that finitude involves the inability of our thinking fully to generate or determine the external object. For Kant and Spinoza both, insofar as we are finite beings, we determine experienced particulars through concepts that do not fully capture them, and proceed from these parts of nature to the whole.[24] For Spinoza as

for Kant, the finite human understanding is limited by space, time and sensible intuition, which thereby condition our experiential knowledge of nature. The incompleteness of our knowledge makes concepts of contingency and purposiveness inevitable only for the finite, discursive understanding. It looks as if Kant agrees with Spinoza that from the supersensible perspective there is nothing contingent in nature, and that final causes are merely a function of our inability to understand the full and necessary determination of things.

It is important to stress, however, that Kant's intuitive intellect serves an epistemological function rather than an ontological one. Kant does not intend a positive characterization of the intuitive intellect: it is characterized negatively, as our idea of an understanding that is not discursive. That it is *our* idea of such an understanding is crucial; it hardly needs to be spelled out that Kant differs from Spinoza in making a transcendental claim rather than a dogmatic one. For Kant, it is only from our perspective, in the realm of appearances with the 'peculiar character of our understanding', that we arrive at this idea of the intuitive intellect at all. It is certainly not Kant's aim either to posit a supersensible substrate that has an intuitive intellect or to claim objectively that final causes are illusory. The thinkers criticized in §§72–3 make those dogmatic assertions concerning the objective reality of final causes; Kant, by contrast, argues that we are unable to prove the objective reality of this concept precisely because it refers to a supersensible basis (CJ 5:396).

Moreover, the intuitive intellect is not to be thought as an ontological substrate, but as the understanding that would *cause* such a substrate. It would bring about the being of this substrate through its mere activity of thinking, to be sure, but the substrate – nature as thing in itself – would be an effect *separate* from the intuitive intellect. The imperative that we think of noumenal nature as external to its original, thinking cause runs through these sections. It is this above all that makes Kant's intuitive intellect irreconcilable with Spinoza's substance. We can think of Spinoza's substance as an intuitive intellect, but we cannot abstract from the fact that it is the immanent cause of the beings it actualizes. Those beings remain *in* the substance that causes them. Kant does not allow that an understanding that *thinks* and *causes* beings could also *be* those beings: he utterly repudiates the concept of immanent causality and would strongly deny that such a concept could be attributed to his idea of intuitive intellect. Indeed, in §§76–7 Kant goes further, for he effectively claims that the limitations of discursive understanding *prevent* us from thinking of the supersensible cause of nature in Spinozistic terms.

Instead, we necessarily think of nature as the effect of 'an intelligent cause (a God)' who is *separate* from his creation (CJ 5:400). These sections of the *Critique of Judgment* resist a Spinozistic reading, and Kant must have been disheartened to see the next generation of idealists return to it nevertheless.

While the intuitive intellect of §§76–7 is not the idea of a creator God, our ability to conceive of a kind of understanding different from our own, not constrained by our subjective conditions, does lead us to that idea. To elucidate the two kinds of understanding, Kant returns to the distinction he had made in the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*: human *discursive* understanding must apply concepts to (that is, it must *think*) a manifold which is separately intuited in sensibility, whereas for an *intuitive* understanding there is no such gulf between thought and intuition. Human 'derivative' intuition, which depends on the given existence of the object in space and time, is distinguished from an 'original intuition' which gives the existence of its object, the thing in itself, in intuiting it (CPR B71–2, B135, B138–9, B145). Concepts, categories and transcendental principles are tools for the discursive, not the intuitive understanding. The latter does not require them, since its intuitions involve the production and true knowledge of its objects. Our discursive understanding cannot think the objects of an intuitive intellect, for when we attempt to do so we apply the categories to objects not in space and time, leading to a 'noumenon in the positive sense' (CPR B307–9).

In the *Critique of Judgment*, Kant reiterates that we are able to conceive of an understanding that is not discursive and for which there is no distinction between thinking and intuiting. Due to the fact that our power to think is 'quite heterogeneous' from our power to intuit, we necessarily distinguish between the possibility of things in the concept, and the actuality of things for sensible intuition (CJ 5:401–2). For an intuitive intellect, by contrast, to think is to intuit: 'all things cognized by [it] *are*' (CJ 5:403). For this kind of understanding, thinking a thing would also be its actualization, without the mediation of production through concepts. 'If our understanding were intuitive, it would have no objects except actual ones. … The distinction between possible and actual things holds merely subjectively, for human understanding' (CJ 5:402). As in the first *Critique*, this underlines the fact that concepts of pure understanding (here, possibility and actuality) are legitimately applied only to things as they appear to us. Now there is an additional implication for contingency: since the intuitive intellect does not require concepts, it does not need to subsume

particulars under them either. In completely understanding its objects, the intuitive intellect completely determines them, leaving no room for contingency. An intuitive intellect 'could have no representation whatever of … the contingency of those [objects] that do exist, nor, consequently, of the necessity to be distinguished from that contingency' (CJ 5:403, *cf.* CJ 5:406–7). Since it understands all things in terms of necessary determinations, an intuitive intellect would posit no distinction between mechanistic and purposive causality. For an intellect through whose *thought* a thing is also *given*, all things come about in a necessary and unified way.

That we are capable of conceiving an intuitive intellect does not indicate anything positive about the noumenal realm. It only indicates that we are capable of conceiving an understanding for which all of nature would be completely determined and necessitated. And this mere thought, that what appears contingent to us can also be understood (though not by us) as necessitated, is enough to ground our belief that all of nature is lawfully unified at the supersensible level. That belief, in turn, grounds our assumption that all of nature *can* harmonize with our cognitive faculties. So the concept of the harmony of nature with judgement – the presupposition that is the 'transcendental principle of judgment' (CJ first introduction, 20:209) – is necessarily referred to the concept of an intuitive intellect.

Although we do not attribute any purpose to the intuitive intellect (CJ 5:407), the 'peculiar character of our understanding' means that purposes inevitably enter into our conception. In representing the seemingly contingent harmony of nature with our judgement as being *necessary* relative to a different kind of understanding, we also represent nature's seemingly contingent products as being completely determined for that understanding. Our discursive intellect applies universals to particulars, so that for us, the particular always contains something contingent with respect to the universal (CJ 5:407). This is true of all particulars, but (Kant implies) is particularly apparent in the case of organized matter.[25] For the intuitive intellect, as we have seen, an organism would be fully determined and contain nothing contingent: it proceeds from the intuition of the whole organism to the complete determination of its parts. But when *we* try to represent this kind of whole-to-part thinking, to try to imagine the complete determination of the parts of an organism by its whole, we can only do so in terms of purposive creation.[26] We cannot imagine that 'the whole *contain[s]* the basis that makes the connection of the parts possible', for this would impute a life principle to a natural being, and 'in the discursive kind of

cognition this would be a contradiction' (CJ 5:407, emphasis added). We can only understand the form and connection of parts of the organism as following from the *representation* of the whole.

> Hence such a whole would be an effect, a *product*, the *representation* of which is regarded as the *cause* that makes the product possible. But the product of a cause that determines its effect merely on the basis of the representation of that effect is called a purpose. It follows from this that the fact that we represent products of nature as possible only in terms of … the causality of purposes and final causes, is merely a consequence of the special character of our understanding.
>
> (CJ 5:408)

We are unable to conceive of how an intuitive intellect understands an organism – or, by extension, the systematic whole of nature – except as the product of that intellect's idea. Again, this indicates nothing positive about the noumenal realm, but demonstrates that purposiveness and intentional production are concepts that pertain only to our cognitive powers. It is impossible *for us* to represent organisms as produced in any way except through purposes. It does not follow that it is impossible for organisms to be produced through mechanical means, 'for that would be tantamount to saying that it is impossible (contradictory) *for any understanding* to represent such a unity … without thinking of the production as intentional' (CJ 5:408). Thinking of organisms as intentionally caused reflects a constraint on our understanding that another understanding may not have. With the idea of an understanding that is not discursive, we maintain the possibility that things as they are in themselves are fully explicable and determinable through a single kind of causality. The aspects of nature that appear contingent with respect to mechanistic laws would have the same basis in the supersensible as those aspects that appear necessitated by those laws. This enables us to judge an object as being simultaneously contingent (for our understanding) and necessitated (for a different kind of understanding), and allows Kant to resolve the antinomy of judgement (see CJ 5:410–15 and CJ, translator's introduction, xcii–xciii).

What is more pertinent to our concerns here, however, is the fact that our cognitive peculiarities inevitably lead us to think of the intuitive intellect as a purposive cause. In a sense, we add 'unity of purpose' to the mere ontological unity of the intuitive intellect. It is suitable for this addition because it is already conceived as an

understanding – unlike Spinoza's substance, which (for Kant) has no understanding and *cannot even be represented* as a purposive cause. But even if Kant had recognized that Spinoza's substance has understanding, he would not allow that it could be thought as a purposive cause of noumenal nature, because it is not separate from nature. Note the words Kant stresses in the passage quoted above from CJ 5:408: 'product', 'representation', and 'cause'. These are precisely the terms that cannot be said of Spinoza's substance, according to Kant, but that *must* feature in our thinking of nature's supersensible basis. The peculiarity of discursive understanding constrains us to judge natural beings as products (not accidents) of an original cause (not substance) that is intentional and intelligent (not blind necessity). The concept of intentional causation by an ontologically separate being is not an optional idea that we might or might not use in natural science, Kant implies, but a necessary assumption that grounds the principles of judgement. Replacing the idea of 'an original understanding, as cause of the world' (CJ 5:410) with an idea of Spinozistic substance is simply not an option for us.

Kant requires the idea of a supersensible substrate to reconcile mechanism with teleology as maxims for reflective judgement. Further, the *Critique of Judgment* shows that this supersensible substrate must be thought to underlie both nature and freedom, thus bridging the gulf between them. But Kant makes very clear that this substrate must be thought to be the product of an *intelligent* causality *separate* from nature. Only this idea of the transcendent God as 'moral author of the world' can ground our conception of nature as an arena suitable for morality as the final purpose of creation (CJ 5:450). This is the point of Kant's strongest resistance to Spinoza. For Kant, our understanding, due to its limitations, simply cannot accommodate the idea of God as an immanent cause of his creation. That does not rule out the possibility that God *is* an immanent cause – or rather, that supersensible nature is produced by an immanent life principle. But it does rule out our *thinking* of God and nature in that way. Perhaps this explains Kant's remark that Spinoza's concept of God is 'quite unintelligible' (CJ 5:391).

In §87, Kant warns that someone who wants to be good but does not believe in the moral concept of God – 'Spinoza, for example' – will be unable to achieve his moral purposes. His failure will be directly related to his inability to see the harmony between the laws of nature and his own moral obligations. As a result, his aims will be meaningless, his life purposeless and his experiences governed by despair at the disorder of

the world. Worse, he will see himself and his fellow humans as nothing more than their materiality, subjected to

> all the evils of deprivation, disease, and untimely death, just like all the other animals on the earth. And they will stay subjected to these evils always, until one vast tomb engulfs them one and all (honest or not, that makes no difference here) and hurls them, who managed to believe they were the final purpose of creation, back into the abyss of the purposeless chaos of matter from which they were taken.
>
> (CJ 5:452)

Kant's apocalyptic vision of the meaningless life and painful death of the Spinozist is intended as a stark warning not to reject the idea of an intentional 'living' God for a lifeless, purposeless substance.

5
Maimon and Spinozistic Idealism

The first four chapters of this book have looked at Jacobi's and Herder's different attempts to fuse Kantianism with Spinozism. Both these thinkers argue that the resources of Spinozism should be used to resolve problems in transcendental idealism: the problem of accounting for the being of reality (Jacobi), and the problem of explaining the diversity of nature (Herder). We have seen that both try to find a point of convergence between Kant and Spinozism by arguing for the immanent causation of the supersensible substrate, and that this is the point that Kant most strongly resists. We now turn to two more thinkers who appeal to immanent causation in their attempts to import Spinozism into transcendental idealism, but who do so in a more profound way. Both Solomon Maimon and Gilles Deleuze argue that Kant needs a concept of immanent genesis, not to address specific problems in ontology, epistemology, or philosophy of nature, but to make transcendental idealism what it should be: an exercise that is properly transcendental and appropriately idealistic.

In this chapter I introduce the thought of Solomon Maimon and explain how his *Essay on Transcendental Philosophy* constitutes the most significant attempt to bring Spinozism into Kantian philosophy. After two sections setting out how Maimon came to his unique understanding of Kant and Spinoza, I provide a detailed interpretation of the first three chapters of his *Essay* and explain why and how he attempts to construct a Spinozistic rewrite of Kant's first *Critique*. Maimon's purpose is to show that transcendental idealism cannot work unless it posits the reality of a *Spinozistic* supersensible substrate underlying appearances. Maimon thereby attempts to do just what Kant suggests is impossible for us in the *Critique of Judgment*: to think a supersensible substrate that is both an intelligent and an immanent cause. Kant, far from dismissing this as

the ravings of a dogmatic rationalist, declared Maimon to be the most astute of his critics. This admiration, I will suggest, is borne out in both the *Critique of Judgment* and *Opus Postumum*.

Maimon and Kant

As Kant was invoking the idea of the intuitive intellect to solve the problems of the *Critique of Judgment*, another thinker was insisting that just such an intellect had to be posited to solve the broader problems of transcendental idealism. This was Solomon Maimon, who argued that Kant's discursive intellect, with its separation of intuition from thought, could be understood to be the ground of the transcendental laws of nature only if it was conceived as the limited 'mode' of an intuitive intellect. The discursive understanding, for Maimon, was to be understood as *generating its object in thought*, just like the intuitive understanding, but in a partial and confused way. Moreover, the objects of this process of generation were to remain *in* the intellect that generated them: the products of an immanent genesis. Things in themselves would be the completely determined modes of an intuitive intellect, while appearances would be the spatiotemporally limited, and incompletely determined, modes of a discursive intellect. In this system, all objects are ideal, and reality is found exclusively in the intuitive intellect and its power to generate being in thought. Maimon thereby builds a Spinozistic idealism within a Kantian structure. This is the eighteenth century's most profound attempt to fuse Kant with Spinozism.

Maimon is still little-studied, partly because no critical edition of his major work exists and partly because he was quickly eclipsed by his most assiduous followers: Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel.[1] Maimon was ridiculed and ignored in his own time and his work neglected, despite recognition of its importance by both Kant and Fichte. The latter declared that future centuries would 'mock his generation bitterly' for failing to take seriously the thinker who had 'completely overturned the entire Kantian philosophy, as it has been understood by everyone until now'.[2]

Decidedly an outsider of the Enlightenment, Maimon was at the same time one of its most remarkable products. Salomon ben Joshua (who changed his name to Maimon in honour of Moses Maimonides) was a Lithuanian Jew who, following an early life of extreme poverty, managed to make his way to Berlin, introduce himself into Enlightenment circles, teach himself German, and publish 10 books and numerous articles responding to the major philosophical problems of the age. This was all

the more astounding given that he had virtually no formal education or consistent source of income. Maimon's *Autobiography* describes his impoverished childhood and early marriage, his rejection of orthodoxy and subsequent exclusion from the Jewish community, his journey across Europe, and his attempts to join the intellectual scene of 1780s Berlin. Through befriending Moses Mendelssohn he eventually found a way in, and managed to live as a writer and philosopher, financially supported by his friends. But despite his many publications and their favourable reception, he was reviled for his shabby manners, intellectual intractability, and almost certainly his religion. Maimon's Jewishness was not accompanied by the social refinement possessed by those Jews (such as Mendelssohn and Herz) deemed acceptable by the Berlin intellectual establishment. He led a penurious existence, but his influence on the German Idealists after his death in 1800 was profound. Maimon's major work, the *Versuch über die Transcendentalphilosophie* (*Essay on Transcendental Philosophy*), was the starting point for Fichte and was subsequently important for Schelling and Hegel.[3]

Kant first encountered Maimon when Marcus Herz sent him the manuscript of Maimon's *Essay on Transcendental Philosophy* in April 1789 with a letter of introduction. Herz describes Maimon as 'formerly one of the crudest of Polish Jews' who had managed to educate himself to an extraordinary degree:

> By means of his genius, shrewdness, and diligence he has achieved a command of virtually all the higher disciplines and especially, just lately, a command of your philosophy or at least of your manner of philosophizing. Indeed he has achieved this to such an extent that I can confidently assert him to be one of the very, very few people on earth who comprehend you so completely.[4]

A covering letter from Maimon proclaims that out of his love for truth, he felt compelled to study the first *Critique* and to 'reconstruct the whole of my thinking in order to come into accord with it'.[5] Maimon approached Kant's text in the same way that he had studied every other philosopher he came across:

> On the first perusal I obtained a vague idea of each section. This I endeavoured afterwards to make distinct by my own reflection, and thus to penetrate into the author's meaning. Such is properly the process which is called *thinking oneself into a system*.[6]

Maimon 'thought himself into' Kant's philosophical system, but with a mind that was already attuned to the systems of Spinoza, Leibniz, and Hume. Maimon reports that immersing himself in all these systems together, 'I was naturally led to think of a coalition-system. … I put it gradually in writing in the form of explanatory observations on the *Critique*, just as this system unfolded itself to my mind.'[7]

The result was the *Essay on Transcendental Philosophy*, which is perhaps best described as a re-telling of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* from the four simultaneous perspectives of a Spinozist, a Leibnizian, a Humean sceptic, and a transcendental idealist. While the result must have seemed as garbled in 1789 as it does today, the method of polyvocal commentary was characteristic of the only critical tradition Maimon had been formally schooled in. Talmudic interpretation requires the scholar to read the core text synoptically with four commentaries written in its margins, the aim being to grasp how all the texts together form a coherent whole.[8] Maimon's aim is not to take a single critical position against Kant, but rather to provide the streams of commentary which, when read *with* Kant, lead to the truth. This makes the *Essay* a difficult text, as Maimon acknowledges.[9] While it is structured around a sceptical challenge to Kant, Maimon sees his work as *continuing* Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* through providing the interpretive commentary that raises problems, offers correctives, and ultimately takes transcendental idealism further. Maimon does not want to reject Kant for a return to Spinozistic or Leibnizian rationalism; nor does he recommend capitulation to Humean scepticism. He views transcendental idealism as a genuinely progressive step beyond these systems. But he believes that Kant does not go far enough in his transcendental investigations to solve the problems left by these earlier thinkers. Maimon's project is an attempt to push transcendental philosophy further, until it discovers the rationalist structure within which alone Kantianism is credible. Maimon's overarching question can be posed in this way: what are the transcendental conditions of transcendental idealism itself?

Kant was working on the *Critique of Judgment* when he received Maimon's manuscript. He read the first few chapters of the *Essay* and was highly impressed by them. In his reply to Herz he wrote that he had seriously considered sending the text back unread, except that

> one glance at the work made me realize its excellence and that not only had none of my critics understood me and the main questions as well as Herr Maimon does, but also very few men possess so much acumen for such deep investigations as he.[10]

This remark is surprising given Kant's subsequent attitude to Maimon. Kant arranged for him to be sent a copy of the *Critique of Judgment* when it was published in 1790, the same year Maimon's *Essay* appeared. Maimon then wrote to Kant twice in quick succession, seeking his opinion on two shorter essays – one comparing Kant and Francis Bacon as philosophical reformers, the other defending a naturalistic theory of the world-soul.[11] Neither one was likely to meet with Kant's approval, and if Kant read them, he did not reply. Maimon wrote Kant three more letters and sent one more essay in the early 1790s; Kant did not reply to any of them.[12] Kant was a poor correspondent and in explanation to others cited his declining health and the pressing nature of his own projects. But in this case it seems Kant was deterred by the social undesirability he associated with Maimon's Jewishness. There is evidence of Kant's attitude in a letter to Reinhold of 1794:

> For the past three years or so, age has affected my thinking. … I feel an inexplicable difficulty when I try to project myself into other people's ideas, so that I seem unable really to grasp anyone else's system and to form a mature judgment of it. (Merely general praise or blame does no one any good.) This is the reason why I can turn out essays of my own, but, for example, as regards the 'improvement' of the critical philosophy by Maimon (Jews always like to do that sort of thing, to gain an air of importance for themselves at someone else's expense), I have never really understood what he is after and must leave the reproof to others.[13]

Kant's ugly (though rare) anti-Semitic comment was probably intended to placate Reinhold rather than to attack Maimon.[14] Nevertheless, it seems that Kant not only shared the prejudices of the Berlin intellectual scene, but allowed those prejudices to diminish his admiration for an astute mind. Maimon had shifted in Kant's estimation from a person of the sharpest philosophical acumen to someone reducible to an established anti-Semitic caricature.

That Maimon had Spinozistic sympathies only fed the prejudices of the *Aufklärung* establishment and further lowered him in Kant's view. And yet Maimon's Spinozism, I will suggest, was exactly what Kant found so intriguing when he first read Maimon's manuscript, and what led him to declare Maimon his best and most profound critic. Indeed, it is not impossible that §76 and §77 of the *Critique of Judgment* were written in response to Maimon.[15] Crucially, Maimon presented Spinozism neither

as dogmatism nor as naturalism, but as a superior kind of idealism that could rival Kant's own.

Maimon and Spinoza

Maimon's reading of Spinoza is unique in that it arose neither from the pantheism controversy nor from the formulaic outputs of eighteenth-century anti-Spinozist discourse. Maimon's knowledge of philosophy was almost entirely self-taught: he used the technique of immersive textual study that he had learned in his early Talmudic education, and based his arguments largely on his own convictions. Unschooled in Wolffian philosophy and unfamiliar with the anti-Spinozist tirades of its followers, Maimon read Spinoza from an unbiased standpoint that was impossible even for a sympathetic reader like Herder. Nor was his initial reading influenced by Jacobi's *Concerning the Doctrine of Spinoza*, for Maimon read Spinoza several years before its publication. Instead, Maimon's encounter with Spinoza was mediated by his background in Kabbalah and his reading of Maimonides. Even before he read Spinoza, Maimon claims, he became familiar with the substance–mode relation from the Kabbalistic doctrine of *tzimtzum*, or divine self-limitation.[16]

However, he found the intellectual climate cold to his interests. His *Autobiography*, published in 1792, explains that his early enthusiasm for Spinoza was as unbounded as his naivety about expressing that enthusiasm to others:

> As a man altogether without experience I carried my frankness at times a little too far, and brought upon myself many vexations in consequence. I was reading Spinoza. His profound thought and love of truth pleased me uncommonly; and as his system had already been suggested to me by the Kabbalistic writings, I began to reflect upon it anew, and became so convinced of its truth that all the efforts of Mendelssohn to change my opinion were unavailing.[17]

Through the influence of Mendelssohn, and perhaps to avoid embarrassing him, Maimon came to accept that it was impolitic to proclaim oneself a Spinozist. His published texts consequently play down his Spinozism, proclaiming instead a reliance on Leibniz. Nevertheless, he rails against the hypocrisy and 'political dodging' of philosophers who abjure Spinozism in spite of its affinity to their own thinking.[18] He cannot understand the purpose of Jacobi's dispute with Mendelssohn, since 'if Spinozism is true, it is so without Mendelssohn's assent. Eternal

truths have nothing to do with the majority of votes, and least of all where, as I hold, the truth is of such a nature, that it leaves all expression behind'.[19] It is in this commitment to truth – an absolute truth that can be rationally understood but not adequately represented – that Maimon's Spinozism most often reveals itself.

Maimon rejects Jacobi's claim that Spinoza's system is atheistic, but without supporting Herder's claim that Spinozism is consistent with Christianity. Instead, he gives metaphysical reasons why Spinozism cannot be atheism. Atheism rejects the idea of a first cause altogether, and finds sufficient reason for every effect in its immediate cause. So the atheist denies the reality of the unity of disparate effects, because he denies that there is a reason for their connection. Spinozism, by contrast, makes one substance the immediate cause of all effects and the principle of their unity:

> Every particular effect in nature is referred by [Spinoza], not to its proximate cause (which is merely a *mode*), but immediately to this first cause, which is the common substance of all beings. In this system *unity* is *real*, but *multiplicity* is merely *ideal*. In the atheistic system it is the opposite. *Multiplicity* is *real*, being founded on the *nature of things themselves*. On the other hand, the *unity*, which is observed in the order and regularity of nature, is merely an *accident*, by which we are accustomed to determine our *arbitrary* system *for the sake of knowledge*. It is inconceivable therefore how anyone can make out the Spinozistic system to be atheistic, since the two systems are diametrically opposed to one another. In the latter the existence of *God* is denied, but in the former the existence of the *world*. Spinoza's ought therefore to be called rather the *acosmic* system.[20]

Maimon argues that Spinoza grounds the unity of natural effects in a single first cause, whereas an atheistic system gives no grounds for such unity. The *real* ontological unity of a first cause is, for him, sufficient to show that Spinoza is not an atheist. In this way Maimon rejects Kant's criticism of Spinoza in the *Critique of Judgment*. For Maimon, it is atheistic naturalism – and perhaps also Kantianism – that fails to give reality to the ontological unity that would alone ground order and regularity in nature. Spinoza affirms the reality of that ground and the ideality of its effects. For this reason, he contends, Spinozism is not atheism but 'acosmism' – a point that Hegel would later reiterate.[21]

Maimon agrees with Jacobi that Spinoza sees the modes as *ideal* and substance as the sole real being. Yet Maimon understands the relation

between substance and modes to be *causal* and not merely inherent. He states that while particular things inhere in substance as its modes, substance is the 'first cause', 'proximate cause', and 'immediate cause' of those modes (echoing Spinoza's use of these terms at E IP16C3 and IP28S). The modes are real only insofar as they are 'things in themselves' caused by, but remaining within, substance. In contrast to Kant, Maimon recognizes that Spinoza takes the modes to be both inherent in and *causally produced* by substance.[22] Yet insofar as the modes appear as empirical objects, they are, for Maimon, ideal, meaning that Spinoza's God does not really exist as finite minds or finite bodies. Similar views are found in Maimon's Kabbalistic writings and in his commentary on Maimonides (who denies that corporeal characteristics pertain to God).[23] Maimon reads Spinoza as following this doctrine, and therefore as denying the reality of the finite objects of our intuition and experience. For Maimon, Spinoza takes objects to be transcendentally real but empirically ideal, in an inversion of Kant's formula.

The conceptual conditions of the form of sensible intuition

How, then, did Maimon try to fuse Kantianism with Spinozism, and why did Kant find this such a profound response to his system? We will now turn to Maimon's long and complex *Essay on Transcendental Philosophy* to try to answer these questions. While the *Essay* deserves a thorough interpretation and analysis,[24] my discussion here is limited to its first three chapters, which best demonstrate Maimon's project and moreover appear to be the sections that Kant read.[25] While Maimon's aims are fairly clear, it is difficult to work out a coherent interpretation. His chapters are poorly structured, his writing is frequently confused, and just when he is on the point of clarifying some topic at last, he diverges into another. To make matters worse, it is a challenge to disentangle Maimon's interpretation of Kant from his working out of his own theory: some of his most important points are stated in lengthy endnotes which form a kind of meta-commentary on the relation of his text to Kant's. In short, whether by accident or design, Maimon presents his thinking unclearly and unsystematically. A certain amount of guesswork is involved in interpreting the *Essay* at a satisfactory level of detail, as even Kant acknowledged: 'it is difficult to guess the thoughts that may have hovered in the mind of a deep thinker and that he himself could not make entirely clear'.[26]

I have suggested that Maimon's text is guided by asking after the transcendental conditions of transcendental idealism itself. This question is cast through raising a sceptical problem to which Maimon believes only a fully rational account of reality can provide the solution. Taken at its most basic, Kant's argument for the validity of the categories goes something like this:

1 Without synthetic *a priori* principles, experience would not be possible as the necessary and lawlike connection between distinct representations.
2 Experience is possible as the necessary and lawlike connection between distinct representations.
3 Therefore, synthetic *a priori* principles are conditions of possible experience.

Maimon accepts that if experience really does consist in the necessary and lawlike connection between distinct representations, then the categories are its conditions of possibility. But while Kant analyses the concept of experience down to its basic elements, he does not prove that 'possible experience' is a fact. Maimon therefore disputes the second premise in the argument, namely, that 'experience' is possible, as distinct from a contingent flux of representations. He claims that Kant presupposes that necessary and lawlike connections *are* actually a feature of experience. Following Hume, Maimon argues that experience gives us no evidence of universal laws or necessary connections between events, and can therefore give us no evidence that the categories really do structure it. That doesn't make the argument for the categories invalid, but without some proof that experience really does involve those connections, there is a gap between experience and the synthetic *a priori* principles that are supposed to structure it (VT 186–8).

Maimon presents himself as the 'jurist' of Kant's Transcendental Deduction, who demands that the facts of the case (the question *quid facti*) be proved before the right to make a claim on it is deduced (the question *quid juris*; see CPR A84/B116). Because Kant does not establish the fact of experience, Maimon says, the right of pure *a priori* concepts to be employed in experience is still in question. There remains a gulf between sense intuitions, which are disparate and contingent, and pure concepts of the understanding, which are universal and necessary. So, returning to Kant's own guiding question, how are pure *a priori* concepts to be applied to the matter of sense? Maimon believes Kant fails to answer this question adequately because his system is

founded on the absolute heterogeneity of sensibility and understanding. This duality, Maimon believes, is tantamount to Cartesian dualism, and like Descartes, Kant cannot account for how such independent faculties interact (VT 182–3). Only a rationalist account, in which thinking is completely adequate to reality, and in which all being is fully expressed by its concept, can answer both *quid facti* and *quid juris* to Maimon's satisfaction. But Maimon does not just want to reverse direction and return to pre-Kantian rationalism. He wants to show that Kantianism only makes sense *within* rationalism, and that a rationalist account of reality is its transcendental condition.

His first move, then, is to show that Kant's Transcendental Aesthetic can only work *within* a rationalist superstructure. Maimon believes that Kant's doctrine of space and time as forms of intuition is valid as far as it goes, but it presupposes a rationalist account of space and time as conceptual relations. In this way he preserves the structure of the Transcendental Aesthetic while ultimately rejecting Kant's view that space and time are *a priori* yet non-conceptual elements of knowledge.[27] There are, for Maimon, deeper structures that make it possible that intuitions of space and time are the forms of sensibility, and Kant's mistake is that he does not go far enough in his transcendental investigations.

Maimon accuses Kant of not having demonstrated the fact that all intuitions are spatiotemporal. 'We recognize simply that, up to the present, *we have never had* an intuition without space and time, not that *we cannot have one* without them. … Kant simply *presupposes* the fact, but does not *prove* it' (VT 342). Maimon argues that we *could* in fact have an intuition without space or time. An intuition of a homogeneous expanse of red, for instance, would not be spatial, because there would be nothing external to the intuition to which it could be related, and nothing within the intuition that would allow it to be divided into relatable parts. Nor would this intuition be temporal, for there would be no change in it or outside it by which successive moments could be distinguished. Without an intuition of diversity, we have no intuition of space or time, for there is no means of any kind of comparison (VT 13–18).[28] This counter-example tells us something important, Maimon thinks: if space and time are indeed intuitions, as Kant says, then diversity must be a formal condition of possibility of all intuition.

Space and time are therefore not the most basic forms of sensibility. It is possible to represent space and time as intuitions (and thus to represent everything else in space and time) only because intuition is already formed by diversity. Where does this diversity come from? Maimon sees it as a necessary condition not only of intuition, but also of thought.

The business of thinking is to produce 'unity in diversity'. If there were no diversity in the content of our thought, we could conceive logical objects (determined solely by the law of non-contradiction), but not real objects, for the latter are determined through differences in their predicates. Without diversity forming the content of thought, there would be no consciousness of real objects or comparison of their concepts (VT 344–6, 33). Diversity is therefore the formal condition both of conceptual thought and of spatiotemporal intuition. But that means the basic form of thinking is *the same as* the basic form of sensibility. Based on this shared transcendental condition, Maimon treats sensibility as a *variant* of understanding that operates in a limited sphere. 'Unity in diversity' is the universal form of thinking *all* real objects; space and time are the *particular* forms of *intuiting* those real objects that are *sensible*.

> What are space and time? Kant affirms that they are the forms of our sensibility and up to this point, I am entirely of the same opinion as him. I add simply that these particular forms of our sensibility have their foundation in the universal forms of our thought. In effect, the condition of our thinking in general (our consciousness) is unity in diversity. … Space and time are therefore the particular forms thanks to which unity in the diversity of sensible objects is possible, and thereby these objects themselves in that they are objects of our consciousness.
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> (VT 15–16)

Sensible objects appear in space and time because they appear as a manifold, and they appear as a manifold because diversity is the necessary form of all real (and not merely logical) thinking. Maimon now argues that the form of diversity in thinking is preceded by *concepts* of space and time. The concepts of space and time – pure reciprocal exteriority and pure succession – are relational concepts of pure difference. Difference comes from nowhere but these relational concepts. Following Leibniz, Maimon argues that to understand two things as differing is to understand them as differing conceptually, and that means we compare their concepts either 'side by side' in space or 'one after the other' in time. Since all real objects differ conceptually, all must necessarily be *thought* in space or time.[29] The concepts of space and time are the forms of pure difference that are the condition of possibility of thinking the real. Unity in thinking is thereby achieved, for to understand things as analytically different is to understand them as synthetically unified in

'a space' or 'a time' (VT 21).[30] As Bergman puts it, time and space 'are the conceptual framework of differentiation included in the unity, or of the unity that includes the differentiation within it'.[31]

The diversity that makes possible the intuitions of space and time has its source in the pure difference of the concepts of space and time. Maimon states that while Kant is not wrong to posit space and time as intuitions, he fails to recognize the concepts of space and time that the intuitions necessarily presuppose. He does not deny that we have intuitions of space and time, nor that these intuitions form sensibility, but he argues that these intuitions, while *a priori*, are neither primary nor pure. The intuitions of space and time are produced by the imagination as 'schema' or 'sensible images' of the concepts of space and time (VT 346). Thus conceptual difference is *thought* as pure reciprocal exteriority or pure succession, but *represented* as the exteriority and succession of sensible things within intuited space and time. Our everyday intuitions of space and time as 'infinite given magnitudes' (CPR A25/B40) are, for Maimon, mere sensible images of conceptual difference. Intuitive space and time are *ens imaginarium*:

> born of the fact that the imagination represents to itself as absolute that which is only a relation to something else. … The imagination, which in a way apes the understanding, represents things a and b as exterior to one another in time and space, because the understanding thinks them as different.
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> (VT 19, 133–4)

Intuitive space and time 'smooth over' the infinite differences that exist between things at the conceptual level. An intuitive intellect would intuit things as they are thought: in terms of pure conceptual difference or pure heterogeneity. Our sensible intuition, however, takes in homogeneous things, because for us, pure difference is 'imagined' and represented in terms of identities – identities which are then represented in terms of empirical differences. We encounter a homogeneous intuition, such as an undifferentiated body of water, and though we do not find different parts in it, we infer them based on the relation of the water to different points on the shore (VT 346–7). Both the homogeneity and the empirical differences are products of imagination which compensates for our incomplete understanding of true conceptual difference. Thus, it can appear to our intuition as if conceptually identical objects were numerically distinct. The world of sensible representation is a confused version of the world as it is conceptually understood. To intuit things sensibly is

to think about them in a partial and confused way – that is, to *imagine* them, in Spinoza's sense.

Through Maimon's reconfiguring, Kant's realm of sensible intuition becomes an imaginary world, but one that is rooted in the truth. Just as Spinoza's imagination differs from reason, Maimon's sensible intuition differs from understanding in degree, not in kind. By denying that sensibility is distinct from understanding, Maimon hopes to overcome the Kantian duality and save transcendental idealism from the gulf between sense intuitions and pure concepts of understanding. He wants to show that there is no problem because there is no gulf: sense intuitions *are* concepts of understanding, represented in a partial, confused, and schematic way. But Maimon has, so far, shown only that the *form* of sensible intuition stems from the understanding. His next move is to show that the understanding also provides the *content* of intuition. For Maimon, the understanding contains both the formal and the material conditions of possibility of the real. In other words, just like an intuitive intellect, human understanding produces real objects as it conceives them, though it does so confusedly. Indeed, Maimon holds that the finite understanding *is* the infinite understanding, in a limited and confused mode.

The rational generation of the content of sensible intuition

Maimon's theory of the production of the content of experience is found in his complex account of differentials in Chapter 2 of the *Essay*. As we have seen, an intuitive intellect intuits things in their pure conceptual differences. Understood in this way, things are not in intuitive space and time, and have no extensive or durational magnitude. Their intensive magnitudes, however, are conceived in abstraction from all quantitative determination. Maimon argues that this is how an intuitive intellect would conceive and intuit real qualities.

But how can a *quality without quantity* be understood? Such a quality taken on its own cannot be an object of consciousness: pure redness, with an extent and duration of zero, cannot be understood distinctly, since in itself it lacks the difference that is a condition of possibility of thinking it. Pure redness can, however, be understood in its difference from pure greenness, even if the extent and duration of both qualities is zero. The relation of difference between red and green means each quality *can be thought* in conceptual space and time, and, moreover, scaled up to any degree of magnitude. The relation

of redness to greenness is not an object of consciousness, and it has no determinate magnitude. It is, instead, a *rule* for generating red objects of any size, from a determinable relation. The relation of pure redness to pure greenness is what Maimon calls the *differential* of the red object (VT 27–32).

The differential is not a part of an object. It is not an atom or a Leibnizian monad. It is roughly equivalent to the mathematical concept of the infinitesimal, a number that is infinitely small but not equal to zero. While Leibniz's calculus is evidently Maimon's point of reference, the differentials have a closer metaphysical kinship with Leibniz's *petites perceptions*, ideas whose intensity is too minute for consciousness, but which form the microstructure of ideas of real objects.[32] Maimon's differential is the most basic element of the matter of sensation: a sense quality infinitely reduced in magnitude, until it becomes nothing but the rule for the generation of that sense quality. Drawing an example from Leibniz, Maimon asks us to think of a triangle whose hypotenuse moves infinitely in the direction of the angle opposite to it. While the triangle becomes infinitely smaller, approaching an extensive magnitude of zero, the relations of the sides remain the same. Even when all quantity has disappeared, the *quality* of the quantity remains, and it is a rule according to which any size of triangle could be generated (VT 394–5).[33] Similarly, in the example above, the relation of redness to greenness is a constant rule, according to which a red object of any size can be generated. A differential is the rule for the generation of a sensible object.

We must therefore not be misled when Maimon aligns the differential with the Kantian noumenon:

> The differentials of objects are what we call noumena, but the objects themselves which proceed from them are the phenomena. The differential of any object is, in relation to intuition, = 0, $dx = 0$, $dy = 0$, etc. But their relations are not = 0; on the contrary, they can be indicated in a determinate way in the intuitions which proceed from them.
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> (VT 32)

The differential is the 'noumenon' from which the phenomenon proceeds, yet Maimon does not use this word in exactly Kant's sense. On the one hand, the differential is 'not an object of our sensible intuition' (noumenon in the negative sense) and also 'an object of a non-sensible intuition' (noumenon in the positive sense; CPR B307).

But the differential must be understood not only to underlie phenomena, but also to *generate* them. At the same time, the differential remains 'in' the phenomenon it generates as the mathematical formula of its production. Unlike Kant's noumenon, which is a mere thought-object with no objective reality, the differential is real and determinable.

From the differentials the understanding generates the content of thought, which is also the content of sensibility. To think of a triangle, and then to represent it in intuition, is a matter of generating it in thought from the rule of its relations. This operation whereby in thinking a concept we produce the object thought is familiar to us from mathematics. Kant had acknowledged something similar in claiming that thinking the concept of a line is also the unity of the act of 'drawing' it in space, thus bringing it into being as an object of knowledge (CPR B137–8). But Kant is left with the problem of explaining how the sensible manifold of the line is given 'prior to the synthesis of understanding, and independently of it' (CPR B145). On Maimon's view, thought and matter must be united from the outset, not subsequently combined. The mathematician's mind is similar to the intuitive intellect in that it need not submit an *a posteriori* given to *a priori* rules, but instead 'makes [the given] itself in conformity to these rules' (VT 82).[34] To respond adequately to the *quid juris* question, Maimon says, the content of thought – which is also the content of sensibility – must be generated as mathematical objects are generated.

How is the content of thought, 'the real of sensation', produced from differentials? From the differentials alone it would seem that the understanding can only generate the diverse sense qualities (intensive magnitudes) corresponding to those differentials. How are rules applied to this manifold of intensities such that they can be synthesized into whole objects governed by necessary relations? Maimon argues that the necessary relations between things (such as the relation of properties that determines wax to be substantial and the causal relation that determines fire to melt it) are already included in the differentials of their qualities. 'From the real relations of the differentials of different qualities, the understanding draws the real relations of these qualities themselves' (VT 355–6). It seems, then, that the understanding generates a manifold of sensible intensities *already formed* by Kantian categories. The categories do not therefore need to be externally applied to intuitions, but are always already applied to 'their elements,' that is, to the intensities in the process of their generation from the differentials (VT 355). These elements, intensities 'flowing' from differential and categorial rules, are the matter of thought.

For Maimon, the matter of thought is also the matter of sensibility. But in sensibility we intuit intensities as they are represented by imagination. Objects of sensibility are therefore the fixed, schematized, crystallized representations of what the understanding thinks as 'flowing' (VT 33). Sensible objects are, as it were, the 'contraction' of the flowing intensities of thought. They are the finished products of a process of the generation of qualities from rules, of matter from form, or of the real from the idea. The understanding produces the content of experience from its form. With this, Maimon asserts he has resolved the *quid juris* question. There is no problem about applying categories to objects of sensibility, because objects of sensibility are wholly products of the understanding. To put it another way, there is no sensibility, there is no given and there is no application: there are only ideas of understanding, expressed either as rules (differentials), as generative processes (intensities), or as fixed objects (sensible representations).

These three expressions of reality are objects, respectively, for infinite understanding, finite understanding, and sensible intuition. An infinite understanding with an intuitive intellect conceives reality purely in terms of differentials, that is, in terms of pure conceptual differences. Reality for it is comprised of rules: from each rule proceeds all the information needed to completely conceive and generate the thing in question. However, since the rule produces all the relations the thing will ever have (stretching infinitely into the future), an infinite amount of generation follows from each rule. The generation of the real from the differential is therefore an infinite task: one that the infinite understanding accomplishes immediately, but that a finite understanding can never complete. The finite understanding conceives the rule but is incapable of completing its unfolding, such that reality is for it a set of forever incomplete processes of generating intensities.

Thus the differentials are, for us, what Maimon calls 'ideas of understanding', a term he bases loosely on Kant's ideas of reason (VT 75, CPR A322/B379ff). For example, the rule for generating a circle requires that an infinite number of equal lines be drawn from a central point. The understanding conceives the rule and engages in generating a circle in thought, but completing this generation would require it to draw an infinite number of lines. The finite understanding is forever *approaching* the completion of the process, leading Maimon to make use of the analogy of the mathematical asymptote:

> The asymptotes of a curve are complete with respect to their rule, but always incomplete with respect to their presentation. We understand

> the manner in which they must be constructed in order to be complete, without being able to construct them completely.
>
> (VT 79)

'Ideas of understanding' are formally complete, but materially incomplete. The finite understanding cannot think any real object as fully formed, but only 'in the process of its formation, that is, as flowing' (VT 33). For us, matter flows infinitely from its rule.

By contrast to the infinite understanding with its full conceiving of reality, the finite understanding has only a partial conceiving of the real. Representation fills in the blanks where complete understanding is lacking. In sensibility, we represent the flowing processes of thought as fixed objects. Thus, we *intuit* a finished circle, despite the fact that the process of its generation in thought is never complete. The completion of the object is accomplished by the imagination, which schematizes and 'contracts' thinking. As Bergman explains:

> The imagination provides the understanding with a definite schema of the object in place of the incomplete idea of the infinite progression, and thus supplements the non-completed object. Our finite understanding cannot, for example, comprehend the complete concept of 'gold' but the imagination creates a substitute of this complete comprehension and gives the 'given' gold to our senses, the matter that we see and touch. … Thus the imagination fills the gap between the finite and the infinite mind.[35]

The intuited object is therefore not the particular instance of a fixed universal concept, but rather the schema, image or contraction of an infinite idea. 'It is not concepts, but *ideas* of understanding, to which objects correspond' (VT 75).

Ideas of understanding explain for Maimon Kant's belief that there are synthetic *a priori* judgements. From the perspective of infinite understanding, all true judgements are analytic, since all the predicates of a thing follow necessarily from differential and categorial rules. Finite understanding, lacking the capacity fully to unfold these predicates, does not perceive the analyticity of its true judgements. The limitations of our understanding mean that we posit a set of synthetic *a priori* principles, but Maimon denies that there truly are any such principles. In this way, he accepts that Kant's account of the formation of knowledge is valid from our subjective perspective of sensible intuition. But from the true, objective perspective, knowledge is formed in our

understanding, through its power to generate intuitions in thought, just as the intuitive intellect does.

Using Spinozism to save Kantianism

Through these doctrines Maimon believes he has answered the *quid juris* question and therefore the *quid facti* question too. In answer to the question of what gives us the right to apply concepts to sensible intuitions, Maimon says that sensible intuitions are objects of thought, whose form and content are supplied by the understanding. His answer to the question of what makes experience a fact is that there is no experience, strictly speaking: there is only thinking that is more or less confused. Kant's system on its own, Maimon claims, cannot adequately answer either of these questions, due to its divide between understanding and sensibility. In order to uphold transcendental idealism we must recognize that it is valid only within the broader rationalist structure that is its condition of possibility.

The kind of rationalism Maimon wants to draft in is evidently Spinozism, as is clear in this summary of his criticism of Kant:

> How can the understanding submit to its power (to its rules) that which is not in its power (given objects)? If we follow Kant's system, according to which sensibility and understanding are two entirely distinct sources of our knowledge, the question … is insoluble. By contrast, according to the system of Leibniz and Wolff, where sensibility and understanding both flow from the same source of knowledge (their difference consists only in the degree of completeness of this knowledge), the question can be easily resolved. Take, for instance, the concept of cause, that is, the necessity that b follows a. In Kant's system, we do not understand by what right we apply a concept of understanding (necessity) to a determinate intuition (succession in time). Kant seeks to get around the difficulty in admitting that space and time … are *a priori* representations in us, which gives us the right to attribute the *a priori* concept of necessity to a determinate succession in time which is also *a priori*. But, since intuitions … are, even when they are *a priori*, heterogeneous from concepts of understanding, this hypothesis does not help us at all. On the other hand, following the system of Leibniz and Wolff, time and space are (albeit confusedly) concepts relating things in general, and we have the right to submit them to rules of the understanding. We admit (at least as idea) an infinite understanding for which the

> forms are at the same time the objects of thought, or which produces from itself all the possible types of relations between things (ideas). Our understanding is precisely the same, except in a limited way. This idea is sublime and (once developed) must, I think, enable the greatest difficulties of this kind to be lifted.
>
> (VT 63–5)

Kant remarks on this passage in his letter to Herz. He sees that Maimon's key principles are not attributable to Leibniz and Wolff, but to Spinoza:

> Those who are familiar with the teachings of these men [that is, Leibniz and Wolff] will find it difficult to agree that they assume a Spinozism; for, in fact, Herr Maimon's way of representing *is* Spinozism and could be used most excellently to refute the Leibnizians *ex concessis*.[36]

The meaning of this last clause, Melamed suggests, is that Maimon's theory implies that monads cannot be independent substances created by God; Leibniz had admitted that if it were not for monads, Spinoza would be right, and Kant may have that 'concession' in mind.[37] In any case, what Kant takes to be Spinozistic is evidently Maimon's 'sublime' idea that our understanding is a finite mode of the infinite understanding, 'which produces *from itself* all the possible types of relations between things' (VT 65, emphasis added). For Kant, this implies an immanent cause that fully determines the human mind, making both divine intentionality and human freedom impossible.

Maimon responds to the charge of Spinozism in a long endnote to the passage above. 'More than one reader thought he recognized Spinozism here', Maimon declares, and 'in order to avoid all misunderstandings of this kind, I am going to explain myself once and for all' (VT 364–5). His explanation is unfortunately rather obscure, but it gives us an indication of the aspects of Spinozism Maimon thought were needed to save transcendental idealism. Essentially, Maimon believes that only Spinozistic rationalism can adequately account for 'real objects' in all their differences; without it, Kant's transcendental idealism can only account for 'objects in general'. To put it another way, the problem that the diversity of natural beings might exceed our ability to determine them through natural laws – the problem that launches the *Critique of Judgment* – is irresolvable in terms of the theory of knowledge provided by the *Critique of Pure Reason*.

Kant, of course, saw this himself, and was in the midst of addressing the problem by introducing a principle specific to reflective judgement – the principle of purposiveness – when he received Maimon's manuscript. Kant thinks Maimon is the critic who understands him best, I propose, because Maimon had arrived at the same conclusion as Kant: *that empirical cognition must necessarily carry with it the idea of an intuitive intellect, if we are to be able to account for nature's infinite differences*. This, one of the principal points that Maimon argues for in the early chapters of the *Essay*, is exactly the point Kant develops in the Critique of Teleological Judgment. Kant, of course, attributes our idea of the intuitive intellect to the 'peculiarity' that our understanding is limited to cognizing and determining things as appearances. But this account would not satisfy Maimon, for it does not give the sufficient reason for our understanding's limitations. Maimon therefore offers an alternative argument: our empirical cognition is necessarily accompanied by the idea of the intuitive intellect because the former is *in* the latter. In other words, he makes the same point as Kant, but in a Spinozistic register, based on the notion that the discursive intellect is a limited mode of the intuitive intellect. Thus, very briefly, a dialogue opens between Kant and Maimon concerning how transcendental idealism is to account for differences: Maimon argues it cannot do so without the underwriting of Spinozistic rationalism, and Kant insists that it can. Kant's refutation of Spinozism in the third *Critique* may well be aimed at Maimon, the comparatively long treatment reflecting Kant's respect for Maimon's critical astuteness.

Turning now to Maimon's aforementioned endnote, we see that he gives two reasons why Spinozism is crucial for a Kantian account of the empirical cognition of natural differences. First, Spinozism can account for 'real objects', and, second, it grounds our idea of the intuitive intellect. Regarding the first point, Maimon claims that in thinking through and generating things from ideas of understanding, the finite understanding produces 'real objects'. This is a middle stage in the transition from thinking possible objects to sensing actual ones. As we have seen, the genetic process is never completed in the idea, and it itself does not result in the object of intuition (which must be represented by the imagination). But during the generative process, as the idea of understanding flows from its differential, the understanding produces its own object: 'a real object, of which the object of intuition is the schema' (VT 365).[38] It is as if a snapshot were taken of the idea's flowing. Real objects are these hypostatized and 'objectified' ideas of understanding, determined *a priori*, but not yet represented in sensible

intuition (VT 373–4). These determinate intensities are objects for the discursive understanding, and replace the Kantian object in general. Instead of being determined 'externally' by categories, the real object is determined 'internally' by differences.

Real objects have objective validity through a 'transcendental principle of determinability', which governs the real object by grounding the necessity of certain syntheses of relations (a right-angled triangle can, and must, be a real object, but a sweet triangle cannot be).[39] The real object is real but not actual, completely determined in thought, but not given through imagination in sensibility. To quote Bergman again:

> Thought produces reality. [However,] reality is not *given* to us through thought but only through the imagination 'which imitates the understanding'. In this manner Maimon distinguishes between the real (*reell*) object which is created and determined by the pure understanding and the actual (*wirklich*) object which is *given* to us, without being thought, by the imagination alone. … In contradistinction to 'actuality', reality is based on the understanding and is supported by the principle of determinability.[40]

Thought produces the real object, of which the actual object is the schema. Although the actual object is 'imaginary', it is not fictional. The imagination produces what is sensed but not thought; 'that which can only be sensed', to use Deleuze's phrase (DR 57). The actual object adds something to the real object, making the latter 'more determined' from our point of view. It is in this way that real objects can 'be thought as determined by the intuitions that derive from them' (VT 196). Through sensible intuition, we determine real objects as actual, and in this way make the transition from possibility to actuality.

Now, the infinite understanding is an idea that is actualized through our own finite understanding, which is its schema. 'This schema refers to the idea, and the idea refers to the existence of the thing itself, without which this idea and its schema would themselves be impossible' (VT 365). Presumably what Maimon means is that the actuality of our finite understanding necessarily refers to the infinite understanding as the idea from which it has been generated and schematized. At the same time, the idea of the infinite understanding is only thinkable for us insofar as it is understood to be actualized in existing finite minds. Through this process, we do think of the infinite understanding as an object: not an object of intuition, but a 'real object' of understanding. The idea of the infinite understanding gains objectivity for us because

of the actuality of our own finite minds. And thus *all* objects of our sensible intuition must refer back to the infinite understanding, because our minds and everything we think are its schema:

> I distinguish myself from Kant only in that I admit, in the place of three ideas that he supposes, one single idea (an infinite understanding), and that I attribute an objective reality to this idea, not considered in itself (that goes against the nature of an idea), but simply to the extent that it receives objective reality for us, in various ways, from the objects of intuition. And inversely, the intuitions have objective reality only because we must finally be able to resolve them in this idea.
>
> (VT 366, *cf.* 195–6)

Thus, for Maimon, the very fact that we have sensible intuitions is evidence of an infinite understanding of which our own understanding is a limited mode. Indeed, our production of the content of sensible intuition is a limited part of the activity of the infinite understanding, of which our understanding has a determinate idea. This, at least, seems to be Maimon's meaning.

If Maimon intends this to be an argument for the necessity of assuming an infinite understanding, it is an exceedingly poor one. As Beiser points out, it is unclear whether Maimon grants the idea of the infinite understanding a regulative or constitutive status.[41] But it seems Maimon intends this endnote only to provide a 'sketch' of a system that would require further proof; if this is Spinozism, he says, his detractors should attack the proof and not the name (VT 367). Certainly, Maimon aligns himself with Spinozism in the sense that he takes the infinite understanding to be the infinite idea of all reality, of which our own minds (and all our objects of intuition) are modes. Furthermore, he suggests that our idea of the infinite understanding cannot be the idea of a merely *possible* being; we necessarily think it as *actualizing* itself as our own minds and the objects of our sensible intuition. That is, we necessarily think of the infinite intellect as actual because our understanding is a mode of the infinite intellect, and our thinking is a limited instance of its thinking. The idea of the infinite intellect is *in us* because we are *in it*. Kant, in his own treatment of the intuitive intellect, only posits the idea we can have of it insofar as our understanding is limited to determining things as appearances. But on Maimon's view – for whom appearances are imaginative representations – Kant merely *imagines* an infinite understanding, and closes himself off from investigating the source of his imagining.

Kant's mistake, in Maimon's view, is to stop short in his transcendental investigations such that he never gets beyond imagined representations and the concepts applied to them from the outside. Kant asks what formally conditions the world of sensibility, but not what 'really' generates it; he accounts for how our understanding determines objects in general, but not of how it determines real objects. Kant's system does not recognize *difference* as the condition of both thinking and sensibility. Without the form of difference, we cannot think a real object, but only a logical object in general. Identity 'is the form of all thinking in general (even purely logical thinking), while [difference] is the form of all thinking of the real, and thus of an object of transcendental philosophy' (VT 345–6). Kant's categories, based on the form of identity, can only ever determine an object in general, and not a real object. There will always be a gap between the conceptual and the real. This problem might have been solved if Kant had allowed for ideas of understanding, but there is no place for this kind of thought-object in Kant's system, meaning that the understanding never *thinks* the real. Instead, Kant's understanding thinks in terms of identities and concepts of logical objects: it has no way of meeting the real of sensation or, subsequently, for dealing with the myriad differences sensible nature throws up.

Thus, according to Kant's system we will only be able to recognize 'external' differences between representations, not the differences from which real objects (and, ultimately, sensible intuitions) are generated. So long as Kant treats natural things as objects in general, and not as real objects, he will not be able to explain the differences they manifest. He will not be able to explain how we cognize and determine those differences from the outside because, Maimon thinks, this operation cannot take place from the 'external' position of an understanding that determines sensible givens as objects in general. The differences of the object can only be cognized from the 'internal' position of an understanding that generates and determines real objects.

Kant's solution to this problem is to stress that the understanding does not only determinatively judge things as objects in general, but also reflectively judge them in terms of their specific laws. To regulate the operation of reflective judgement he introduces the principle of purposiveness and embarks on the difficult path of justifying teleological judgement. Maimon's radically different solution, which might have led to an alternative *Critique of Judgment*, is to suggest that the problem of cognizing nature's differences disappears if we see our finite understanding as continuous with the divine infinite understanding, as generating real objects in thought. This is Maimon's Spinozistic idealism: Spinozistic

because it is grounded in the doctrine of a single self-active substance, idealistic because it asserts that reality consists entirely of the modes of thinking of this substance. Simultaneously pre-Kantian and post-Kantian, Maimon at once looks back to Spinoza and looks forward to Fichte. And Kant seems to recognize here neither a dogmatic throwback nor an idealist upstart, but a genuinely incisive response to the problems generated by his own system. Maimon is both more transcendental and more idealist than transcendental idealism; determining the conditions of possible experience is irrelevant, for Maimon, without having determined the conditions of the real.

Kant's response to Maimon

I have suggested that Kant thinks Maimon is his best critic because Maimon had arrived at the same conclusion that Kant reached in the Critique of Teleological Judgment, but through different means: if we are to account for natural difference, empirical cognition must carry with it the idea of an intuitive intellect. If I am right, then Kant's response to Maimon is found in §§72–7 of the *Critique of Judgment*, where Kant agrees that the empirical cognition of difference requires the idea of intuitive intellect, but categorically denies that this must be underwritten by Spinoza's God.

In his comments on the *Essay*, written to Herz and intended to be forwarded to Maimon, Kant indicates the reason for his approval: Maimon 'agrees with me that a reform must be undertaken, if the principles of metaphysics are to be made firm, and few men are willing to be convinced that this is necessary'.[42] We might take Kant to mean that Maimon shares with him a broadly transcendental approach to metaphysics rather than a dogmatic one. But we might equally read this remark in the light of the development of the *Critique of Judgment*. At the outset of the letter, Kant tells Herz that he is occupied 'in producing the last part of the *Critique*, namely, that of *judgment*, … and in working out a *system of metaphysics*, of nature as well as morals, in conformity with those critical demands'.[43] In May 1789, Kant saw the third *Critique* in terms of the goal of uniting nature and freedom in a single supersensible substrate – as Zammito says, a metaphysical idea if ever there was one.[44] Kant was therefore aware of a specific need 'to make the principles of metaphysics firm', namely, the need to explain how freedom was to actualize its purposes in nature. He had to demonstrate that the idea of the supersensible ground of *freedom* was also transcendentally necessary for our *cognition* of nature. He recognized that Maimon too saw that

cognition required the idea of a metaphysical ground as a transcendental condition, 'though he takes a very different path than I do'.[45] Kant thinks that Maimon, like him, sees that nature and reason can be reconciled only if we seek a single supersensible substrate through a strictly transcendental route.

Kant's response in the letter to Herz is largely concerned with an explanation of where he thinks Maimon goes wrong. This consists of a précis of the fundamentals of transcendental idealism: the limitations of discursive understanding, the restriction of knowledge to phenomena, and the impossibility of our cognizing (let alone generating) things in themselves. Kant also explains why there is no need for Maimon's 'ideas of understanding'. Yet his response suggests that Kant understood and appreciated what Maimon sought to do. He recommends that Maimon publish his work (though he declines to write a preface on the grounds that 'it is after all largely directed *against me*').[46] He advises Maimon to address not only the principles of *a priori* knowledge, but also his solution to the tasks of pure reason in the antinomies. These

> might convince him that one cannot assume human reason to be of one kind with divine reason, distinct from it only by limitation, that is in degree – that human reason, unlike the divine reason, must be regarded as a faculty only of *thinking*, not of *intuiting*; that it is thoroughly dependent on an entirely different faculty (or receptivity) for its intuitions, or better, for the material out of which it fashions knowledge; and that, since intuition gives us mere appearances whereas the fact itself is a mere concept of reason, the antinomies (which arise entirely because of the confusion of the two) can never be resolved except by deducing the possibility of synthetic *a priori* propositions according to my principles.[47]

We can see this as Kant's rejection of Maimon's Spinozistic, or more broadly rationalistic, tendencies. But we can also see it as an invitation to Maimon to consider the metaphysical problems of the antinomies through his unique transcendental approach: particularly, perhaps, the problem of freedom. How can a Spinozistic substance generate freedom as well as nature? If this question was not taken up by Maimon himself, it was certainly taken up by those who followed him.

6
Deleuze and Spinozistic Difference

As explained in the introduction, twentieth-century French philosopher Gilles Deleuze is included in this book due to his continuity, as a critic and interpreter of Kant, with Jacobi, Herder, and Maimon. Vincent Descombes has remarked that 'Deleuze is above all a post-Kantian', and without wishing to reduce Deleuze to rationalism, naturalism, or idealism, I think his response to Kant can and should be read in terms of post-Kantian Spinozism.[1] Moreover, Deleuze is important in the 'Kant and Spinozism' story because he has been prominent in a twentieth-century Spinoza revival just as significant as the eighteenth-century one of Jacobi and Herder.[2] In this chapter I will argue that Deleuze, like the other thinkers under consideration here, uses Spinozism to challenge transcendental idealism, while also indicating that Kant and Spinoza converge on the point of immanent genesis. In this respect, and in respect of several key ideas of his major work *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze is the contemporary inheritor of Maimon.

This chapter examines the complex interrelation between Deleuze, Kant, Spinoza, and Maimon. In the first section I interpret Deleuze's 'transcendental empiricism' as a Maimonian response to transcendental idealism. I look at the importance of Maimon for Deleuze, showing how Maimon's account of the immanent genesis of objects of sensibility (*via* Martial Guéroult's interpretation of it) influenced the thinking of *Difference and Repetition*. I then turn to the limitations of Maimon's thought, and show how Deleuze overcomes them with his more profound philosophy of difference. Finally, I argue that Deleuze sees a version of this philosophy of difference in both Kant and Spinoza. The ineluctability of the difference of being and thought, and the immanent power of this difference to generate the real, is what marks Kant and Spinoza out from rationalism and idealism, and draws them together as precursors to Deleuze's philosophy of difference.

Transcendental empiricism as Maimonism

Deleuze has a complicated relationship with Kant. It often appears that they are at odds, with Deleuze's 1963 *Kant's Critical Philosophy* being described as book on an enemy.[3] Yet Deleuze criticizes Kant in order to save transcendental philosophy from its own traps, principally that of the gulf between sensibility and thought. His aim is not to destroy but to develop and deepen transcendental philosophy. This tendency is evident from his earliest works of 'critique' to his final essay on the transcendental field.[4] In this respect, Deleuze is a critic of Kant in the same sense that Maimon is. His major work, *Difference and Repetition*, like Maimon's *Essay*, can be read as a kind of retelling of the *Critique of Pure Reason* – though one that also involves retellings of Plato, Leibniz, Hegel, Nietzsche, Bergson and multiple others.

Deleuze shares with – indeed, takes from – Maimon several key elements of a criticism of Kant.[5] First and foremost, Kant is not sufficiently transcendental: his approach is 'too empirical', investigating merely the superficial relation of externally applied concepts to representations, and never delving into the 'depth' of what makes those representations what they are. Second, Kant cannot account for the 'depth' of appearances because transcendental idealism captures only the conditions of possible experience, not the conditions of real experience. The latter requires an investigation into the immanent genesis of the real, and like Maimon, Deleuze argues that the real is generated from the idea. Third, Kant cannot see that real objects have their condition of possibility in pure difference, because his conception of difference is merely empirical and applies only to objects in general. Briefly, Kant cannot account for the being of the sensible, which Deleuze, following Maimon, argues must be explained genetically through ideas and pure differences. Indeed, Smith argues that the two exigencies set by Maimon for transcendental philosophy – the search for the genetic elements of the real, and the positing of a principle of difference to account for it – are the primary components of Deleuze's transcendental empiricism.[6]

Whereas Maimon aimed to make Kant's philosophy both more transcendental and more idealistic, Deleuze wants to replace transcendental Idealism with 'transcendental empiricism'. This does not make Deleuze more focused than Maimon on empirical objects, nor less concerned with ideas. The thinking of Maimon and Deleuze could equally be called realism or idealism, were it not for the strong philosophical associations these terms already carry. What neither thinker espouses (contrary to

some interpretations of Deleuze) is a naturalism or materialism that denies metaphysical depth to the empirical.[7] Equally, neither posits a metaphysical reality that is transcendent and external to the empirical. Both are concerned with what is *immanent* to the empirical, the transcendental conditions that generate the real. This is a 'superior empiricism' where 'the conditions of experience in general become the genetic conditions of *real* experience'.[8] Maimon and Deleuze thereby attempt to overcome the Kantian gulf between being and thought, though as we will see, they do this in different ways.

Deleuze's notion of 'real experience' has its lineage in both Kant and Maimon. For Kant, 'real' means qualitative or intensive, and 'the real of sensation' refers to material existence in space and time, insofar as it is subjectively represented. The real of sensation 'gives us only the consciousness that the subject is affected, and which we relate to an object in general' (CPR A166/B207–8). This 'real' element that makes us conscious that we are affected is synthesized in terms of pure concepts in order to become an object of possible knowledge. Maimon subsequently writes of the 'real object' as opposed to the Kantian 'object in general': while the latter is a complex of generic concepts used to determine the given, the former is the determinate object generated from differentials in the understanding. Though Maimon's 'real object' is an object of thought, it is composed of the intensities that flow from the differential as it is 'generated' in the idea, thus preserving Kant's sense that the 'real' has intensive magnitude. Deleuze similarly upholds the real object, but returns to Kant's view that it is the real of *sensation*. The real of sensation 'can never be known *a priori*, and … it follows that sensation is just that element which cannot be anticipated' (CPR A167/B209). It is that in experience *which can only be sensed*, and which cannot be known *a priori* through pure concepts.[9]

The inability of transcendental idealism to account for the real of sensation, and the subsequent 'loss' of the real of sensation amidst the formal apparatus of sensibility, constitutes Deleuze's primary criticism of Kant. Of course, the *a priori* unintelligibility of the given is absolutely fundamental to transcendental idealism. In this sense, Deleuze can be seen to respond to what Kant called the 'peculiarity' of discursive understanding: that finite beings do not create or fully understand the things they experience.[10] Whereas an intuitive intellect produces things in thinking them, the finite mind must wait for produced things to affect it, and make use of representations and concepts to think those things either in their absence or in their generality. A gap opens between the world and the finite subject: there is a gulf between *being* that is given in

advance, and *thought* that is spontaneously created, leading philosophy to question the adequacy of concepts to reality.

Deleuze, like Maimon, sees that this problem reaches a pinnacle in Kant, who makes the separation of being and thought the explicit basis of his system. For Kant, the thought of a finite mind can never be adequate to being, since the existence of a thing involves 'the real of sensation' that can only be received in experience. The limitation of the human understanding is that it 'can only *think*, and for intuition must look to the senses' (CPR B135). Our thinking makes up for the unintelligibility of the given by synthesizing it in pure concepts. The problem that the conceptual products of understanding cannot be directly applied to the mysteriously produced given is acknowledged by Kant in the Schematism, where he argues that conceptual relations must be schematized as spatiotemporal relations in order to apply to spatiotemporal representations (CPR A137–47/B176–87). For Maimon and Deleuze this solution is insufficient, for the question is then how a conceptual relation is translated into a temporal schema without relying on a *conceptual* determination of time that would alienate it from the representation.[11] The understanding, trapped among its concepts, is fundamentally at odds with the real being whose means of production it cannot know. The result is to drive being and thought even further apart, as thought directs itself to its own products (including the 'empirically real') and the causes of the real withdraw into the noumenal realm. The Transcendental Aesthetic, 'the science of the sensible', becomes founded on 'what *can* be represented in the sensible', and not on the 'being *of* the sensible' (DR 56–7).

Like Maimon, Deleuze thinks the problem will not be overcome as long as transcendental philosophy concerns itself with the conditions of possible experience, for then it remains on the level of conceptual representation and the 'object in general', and does not reach real being. This explains what Deleuze means when he says that Kant's system 'remains external' and that transcendental idealism is 'too empirical'.[12] Kant cuts his investigations off from the conditions of the real, since those conditions are not objects of possible experience. This is perfectly expressed in that striking passage of the B-edition Transcendental Deduction:

> In the above proof [of the Transcendental Deduction] there is one feature from which I could not abstract, the feature, namely, that the manifold to be intuited must be given prior to the synthesis of understanding, and independently of it. How this takes place, remains here undetermined.
>
> (CPR B145)

Deleuze's post-Kantian ontology can be characterized as an attempt to determine 'how this takes place', and Chapter 4 of *Difference and Repetition* a challenge to the Transcendental Deduction.

In seeking what lies within and gives rise to real experience, it seems that Deleuze wants to recover a more determinate version of Kant's noumenon, much as Maimon did with his differentials. Like Maimon, Deleuze wants a noumenon that does not have an external, transcendent relation to phenomena. He seeks 'the noumenon closest to the phenomenon' which is *internal* to it and produces it *immanently* (DR 222). This noumenon is not the indeterminate thought of an intelligible ground, but the being *of* the sensible which is both determinable and determining, and which can only be *sensed*, not represented in imagination. The distinction between *the sensible* and *that which can only be sensed* – Deleuze's transformation of the phenomenon-noumenon distinction – is between something that can be recognized and represented, and something that can only be encountered:

> Something in the world forces us to think. This something is an object not of recognition but of a fundamental *encounter*. What is encountered may be Socrates, a temple or a demon. It may be grasped in a range of affective tones: wonder, love, hatred, suffering. In whichever tone, its primary characteristic is that it can only be sensed. In this sense it is opposed to recognition. In recognition, the sensible is not at all that which can only be sensed, but that which bears directly upon the senses in an object which can be recalled, imagined, or conceived. … The object of encounter, on the other hand, really gives rise to sensibility with regard to a given sense. It is not an *aistheton* but an *aistheteon*. It is not a quality but a sign. It is not a sensible being but the being *of* the sensible. It is not the given but that by which the given is given.
>
> (DR 139–40)

The sensible is Kant's 'empirically real' world of possible experience, whereas the encounter is the real of sensation – 'just that element which cannot be anticipated' (CPR A167/B209). The encounter is forced into the sensible realm by something that is a real (but not empirically real) transcendental condition (but not of possible experience). This is where Deleuze draws on Maimon's notion of intensity. Intensity is insensible in terms of representation, and unthinkable in terms of concepts. But the fact that it cannot be grasped by the empirical exercise of the faculties of 'common sense' does not render it unintelligible; rather, the intensive

condition of the given is internal to thought and *must* be thought. This is not conceptual thought applied to an already given object; it is the thought that is forced on us in the encounter, in the *giving* of the given (DR 192–4).

In this complex way, Deleuze makes the Kantian 'real of sensation' (intensive magnitude) the product of a Maimonian genetic condition (intensity) immanent to thought. For Deleuze as for Maimon, the real transcendental conditions of the given are *ideas*, within which intensities flow and surge. Ideas and intensities are virtual in the sense that they are real but not actual. This marks another important way in which Deleuze draws on Kant.[13] Kant, in his own way, also locates the conditions of the given in ideas: conditions that can never be experienced, but that force themselves upon our thought. Our thoughts of what produces and individuates being are the transcendental ideas of soul, cosmos and God. But while Kant's ideas can legitimately be thought as the conditions of our *thinking* of the genesis of being, they cannot be assumed to be the *real* conditions of that genesis. Furthermore, Kantian ideas are legitimate only when they regulate *conceptual* thinking (unifying empirical concepts of nature, for instance). For Kant, if we attempt to investigate the genetic conditions of being, we will arrive at transcendental ideas whose explanatory power is limited to the realm of concepts of possible experience, and never reach the conditions of the real of sensation.

This is why Kant's transcendental ideas are important but frustrating for Deleuze. Kantian ideas are undetermined 'problems' concerning the genesis of being, expressed in the paralogisms, antinomies and ideal of pure reason. The noumenon and the infinite understanding for which it would be an intelligible object are the ultimate 'problems' (CPR B310–12). But these problems are determined and 'solved' only in relation to represented appearances and concepts of understanding. Problems that cannot be solved in relation to these external conditions are 'false problems' that generate transcendent objects as their illusory solutions (DR 168–70, 161–2, *cf*. CPR A328/B384–5, A476–84/B504–12). The antinomies, for instance, are insoluble if we assume their ideas relate to the real being of a complete universe, first cause, and so on. They are resolved only when their ideas are restricted to regulating our thinking about possible experience. Deleuze thinks this makes the truth of the Kantian idea dependent on the possibility of finding a solution in its external relation to representation, and not on its internal power (DR 161–2). The constitutive power of the idea to determine and even *generate* being is distrusted and suppressed by Kant, leaving it only a regulative power to determine thinking. It is not that transcendental idealism is

unwilling to investigate the conditions of being in the idea, Deleuze thinks; rather, it is unable to do so, for it cannot trust the power of ideas except insofar as they are considered *not* to be constitutive of being.

Any Kantian investigation into the conditions of being will find itself re-routed back into the conditions of possible experience. In this sense, transcendental idealism is 'too empirical' for Deleuze. Its grounding assumption, that thought and being are strictly separate, blocks every attempt to investigate the conditions of the genesis of being. At the same time, it denies that the idea has any positive internal power, precluding the possibility that ideas have a productive connection to being. Deleuze sees Kant's philosophy as a kind of empiricism that deals with structures of thought as they are *applied externally* to received givens. Transcendental idealism is not transcendental enough for Deleuze, because it cannot show how these structures of thought are really and internally connected to receptivity and the given. Similarly it is not a transcendental *idealism*, because Kant's ideas are mere meta-structures of conceptual thought denied any real transcendental power.

This reveals another aspect of Deleuze's charge. The determination of things through concepts is a process external to those things that relies on empirical differences. These are not the essential differences that internally determine what beings are; they are just 'unconnected determinations' among the diversity of the given, 'indifferent to one another' (DR 28). These external differences enable us to determine things relative to one another or 'negatively' (Irish postboxes are green, not red; this is an Irish postbox, not a British one), but they do not account for how they are positively determined in the first place. The latter requires a concept of difference in itself, where *differences in kind* affirmatively determine and individuate things. Through their external differences things differ merely in degree, because they all resemble each other at some level of generality, and it is that resemblance that allows comparisons and judgements to be made.[14] (Irish and British postboxes resemble each other in every respect except their colour, whereas an Irish postbox and a bacterium resemble each other only at the level of highest generality.) Kant's categories are the terms of this highest generality that render objects of experience the same in their objectivity in general, but different in the degree of their spatial extent, temporal duration, qualitative intensity, causal efficacy, and so on. The determination of the given takes place through applying the terms of highest generality to it from the outside. Determination, for Kant, takes place *externally* to the given, between the object of intuition and the concepts of understanding.

It is in this sense that the mistake of empiricism is 'to leave external what is separated', while that of dogmatism is to fill it (DR 170). Dogmatism fills the gap between a determinable object and its conceptual determination either by arguing for the *a priori* complete determination of the former by the latter (Leibniz) or by showing that they necessarily collapse into a new indeterminate unity (Hegel). But empiricism leaves the determinable object and its conceptual determination separate, such that the determinable–determinant relation is external to the thing to be determined. In this respect 'there is still too much empiricism in the *Critique* (and too much dogmatism amongst the post-Kantians)' (DR 170). A more profound transcendental philosophy must consider how determination, and the crucial relation between determinable and determinant, operates internally to the thing, such that the determination of the thing is no broader than the thing itself. Externally determining conditions will only give us 'objects in general' that differ in degree, and the mass of possible experience. Deleuze's *Ideas* are the internally determining conditions that produce intensive real objects that differ in kind. Arguably, Deleuze's Ideas are more Maimonian than Kantian: like Maimon's 'ideas of understanding', they are unfinished, unfixed processes of actualizing differential relations (DR 245–6, 209). Yet unlike Maimon's, Deleuze's Ideas do not pertain to or stem from an understanding; it is rather that finite minds are among the actual products of the virtual syntheses of Ideas.[15]

This is Deleuze's 'transcendental empiricism'. It is an empiricism that is transcendental in that it looks into the depth, interior, or *being* of experience and does not remain on its surface. Equally, it is a transcendental philosophy, but one whose objects are not appearances. Its objects are Ideas, and yet it cannot be called an idealism in the standard sense, because Ideas are not the products of a subject or a mind. Ideas force themselves through minds and make thinking and being not only possible, but real. Transcendental empiricism is not concerned with the 'empirically real', but with the real immanent to the empirical; it is not concerned with the 'transcendentally ideal', but with what is transcendental in the Idea.

Difference and determination

In this section we will look at how Deleuze draws explicitly on Maimon, and also how he criticizes and departs from Maimon, with respect to the philosophy of difference. Maimon and Deleuze both espouse a system of the affirmative production and actualization of qualities from differential relations. Real productivity of intensities from differences in kind is distinct from the actual products that differ in degree in the realm of

imagination or sensible representation. These realms are not external or transcendent to one another: virtual differential productivity is immanent to its actual product, and the sensible is the 'surface contraction' of the intensities of the idea. A process of reciprocal determination among differentials generates real intensities, and this is the point on which Deleuze explicitly names Maimon. Deleuze takes from Maimon (*via* the interpretation of Martial Guéroult) this element of the microstructure of the genesis of the real. Yet Deleuze's discussion also reveals the limitations of Maimon's philosophy of difference: it ultimately relies on identity to ground difference, and unifies being and thought in the infinite understanding. In this respect, Maimon is too Leibnizian, and not Spinozistic enough.

Deleuze says that it is Maimon 'who proposes a fundamental reformulation of the *Critique* and an overcoming of the Kantian duality between concept and intuition' (DR 173). For Kant, the determinant concept is applied to the determinable intuition from the outside, such that the transcendental moment is one of conditioning, and the requirement to account for the genesis of the given is renounced. The question of the internal constructability of the determinable is suppressed in order to focus on the external construction of the object of experience. For Kant, therefore, difference is spoken of only in external terms. The relation between determinable intuition and determinant concept produces an identity (the object in general) that is the basis only for empirical differences in degree. For Maimon, on the other hand, Deleuze implies, difference is *internal* to determination, which takes place between determinable and determinant elements in the *idea*. The relation is not one of conditioning the object of experience, but of generating the real object, where the two elements are related in *reciprocal* determination.

> Maimon's genius lies in showing how inadequate the point of view of conditioning is for a transcendental philosophy: both terms of the difference must equally be thought – in other words, determinability must itself be conceived as pointing towards a principle of reciprocal determination. The concepts of the understanding recognize reciprocal determination, if only in a completely formal and reflexive manner; for example, in the cases of causality and reciprocal influence. The reciprocal synthesis of differential relations as the source of the production of real objects – this is the substance of Ideas in so far as they bathe in the thought-element of qualitability.
>
> (DR 173)

Determinability must be conceived not in terms of the one-way conditioning we find in Kant, but in terms of a reciprocal determination where 'both terms of the difference' are thought.[16]

We can better understand reciprocal determination by looking at Deleuze's source for this idea: Martial Guéroult's 'very important' book on Maimon (DR 324).[17] Deleuze quotes a passage from Maimon's *Essay* that states that the difference between red and green is not the empirical difference between their sensible qualities, but the more profound difference in kind between their differentials. 'A particular object is the result of the particular rule of its production or the mode of its differential, and the relations between different objects result from the relations between their differentials' (VT 33). In a footnote Deleuze cites passages from Guéroult. Guéroult says that for Maimon, determinability rests 'no longer on an extrinsic given, but results from the original synthesis that is the source of reality', an original synthesis that takes place according to reciprocal determination.[18] The latter is opposed to the Scholastic model of negative determination, which Kant had maintained as part of the transcendental ideal of the *ens realissimum*.[19] Maimon accepts that a concept can be defined through the process of affirming and negating pre-existing predicates ('Irish postboxes are green, not red'), but a real object cannot be. A real object is determined to be what it is by its differential rule that positively *generates* its predicates: predicates which are new and different in kind from others, because they are generated specifically with it. A thing is red not because it is 'negatively determined' in terms of some pre-existing possible predicate 'greenness', but because the rule by which red is generated involves its difference in kind from green. 'Only positive predicates, to the extent that they exclude each other reciprocally by difference (and not by opposition), are taken into consideration', Maimon says (VT 85).

If red is to emerge according to the principle of difference, as Maimon claims, it cannot be that red differs only from green; it must differ from every other colour, and indeed, every other possible quality too. Furthermore, since red is not a general concept but a rule for generating a singular red instance, *this instance* of red differs in kind from, and must differentially exclude, every other instance of red. The rule for this instance of red, then, must be a differential relation to every other possible quality. The reason that this instance of red emerges (as real object) is that its differential includes and *determines* its relation to all other qualities, and at the same time, its relation to all other qualities determines it to be what it is. This is what Guéroult calls 'reciprocal determination' as the reason for the emergence of qualities. The differential

of a quality is, in itself, indeterminate, but it becomes determined when 'both terms of the difference' are thought. The differential *includes* its difference in kind from every other quality. When the differential is thought through all these relations of difference, both sides become determined. The relations are determined by the differential from which they follow, but at the same time, the differential gains its determination only from these relations.[20] Determinability rests on this original synthesis.[21]

When we say that the rule (or differential) for generating a quality includes its differences in kind from every other possible quality, we must not imagine that a sum total of possible qualities already exists, waiting to enter into relations with one another. 'Other possible qualities' emerge *only as differences* through the thinking of a specific differential. These differences are singular and in each case 'new', which is why Guéroult calls qualities-as-differences 'singularities'.[22] The complete thinking of the rule for this instance of redness involves the difference of *this* redness from *that* greenness, a difference in kind that emerges exclusively in this case. Each differential generates a unique set of singularities. The complete thinking of a differential involves the full comprehension of all its differences in kind: in this activity of thought, the differential becomes *completely determined*. Thus, for Maimon, a thing is completely determined if all its differences have been thought, all its singularities generated. Only the infinite understanding can comprehend a thing in its complete (reciprocal) determination; for it, all reality is completely determined in terms of internal differences. Guéroult calls the infinite understanding *the idea of reality*, the idea in which determinability is played out among these determinable–determining differences.[23] So, where Kant says the synthesis of all predicates in the idea of a sum total of possibility is necessary for the constitution of complete concepts, Maimon counters that the synthesis of all differences in the idea of reality is necessary for the constitution of real objects (*cf.* CPR A572/B600).

What Deleuze draws from Maimon, by way of Guéroult, is a particular way of understanding the relations between determinable, determinant, and determination. Determination takes place in the ideal synthesis that produces real objects, and the elements of that synthesis are determinable differentials (rules for the production of qualities) and determinant differences (qualities-as-differences, or singularities). Internal to the idea, therefore, is a synthesis of differences whose outcome is not simply an indeterminate chaos but determinate, real and objective. This is how Deleuze overcomes the potential criticism that the Idea is chaotic and its productions arbitrary.[24] The capacity of the Idea to

really determine intensive objects from differences is perhaps what Deleuze means by 'qualitability' in the passage quoted above (DR 173). He posits a threefold sufficient reason for determinateness in the Idea: quantitability (the determinability of the differential relations), qualitability (the reciprocal determination of differential relations), and potentiality (the complete determination of differential relations) (DR 176, 181, *cf.* 171). Deleuze evidently draws on Guéroult's interpretation of Maimon's infinite understanding as the 'single idea of reality' as a model for Ideas in *Difference and Repetition*. 'Ideas appear [as …] a system of differential relations between reciprocally determined genetic elements' (DR 173–4).[25]

Yet Deleuze also makes a significant departure from the Maimonian 'single idea'. Deleuze's Idea does something that Maimon's does not: it 'integrates variation'. For Deleuze, what is generated (or integrated) from the differential is not a fixed relation between qualities (the relation between sides of a triangle), nor even the variable determinability of that relation (the relation insofar as it can be scaled up into a triangle of any size). Rather, what is generated from the differential is the 'degree of variation of the relation itself'. Deleuze argues that the differential relation *varies*, so that what is integrated from it is not a fixed quality or series of fixed qualities, but the quality's *continuous multiplicity*. Deleuze's use of this term draws on Bergson: whereas a discrete multiplicity is an extended, measurable quantity that can be divided into multiple entities of the same nature, a continuous multiplicity is 'a succession of qualitative changes, which melt into and permeate one another'.[26] It is an intensity whose 'division' changes its nature to produce pure differences in kind (DR 182–3).

Maimon's differentials differ in kind, but they do not vary. A Maimonian differential is different from all the others, but it is a fixed relation capable of generating a corresponding quality of variable magnitude (a triangle of any size; redness of any extent). After all, Maimon describes the differential as a *rule* for producing a quality of variable magnitude. In this, Maimon does just what Deleuze ascribes to Leibniz: he identifies differentials with *variability* rather than *variety*, fixing the differential relation such that it corresponds to the discrete multiplicity of a self-identical quality (a series of triangles varying in size; shades of red on a scale) (DR 172). Deleuze sees this as a kind of atomism in which the differential is a fixed essence that resembles the objects generated from it. For Deleuze, the differential is not a fixed formula that produces a number of shades of red, but pure and *varying* difference from which flows a *continuity* of red intensities that cannot be divided into identifiable elements. The differential

relation is never self-identical but varies in itself to produce a continuous multiplicity, as Williams explains:

> Pure differences are continuous variations that cannot be fixed in terms of forms, concepts or functions. As such, pure differences cannot be named accurately, in the sense of identified with a concept, or shown, in the sense of identified with an ostensible thing, or demonstrated, in the sense of identified with an actual process. Becoming this red, becoming closer to this red, being turned from red to orange through the addition of yellow are not pure differences.[27]

Thus, Maimon is guilty of adopting the 'image of thought' in which the production of reality is taken to rest on the resemblance of the real to the ideal, or of the actual to the possible. His philosophy of difference is insufficient for Deleuze, because Maimon grounds differential production in the identity of rules and qualities.[28]

A further criticism of Maimon can be gleaned from Deleuze's text: Maimon covers over the difference of being and thought. This is due to his particular combination of Spinozistic monism with absolute idealism. For Maimon, the being of a quality (its differential) is identical to the thinking of it in the infinite understanding; there is no 'being' of it beyond its being thought. The reunification of being and thought in infinite understanding, without any attention to their prior difference, means that Maimon's system is grounded in identity. The infinite understanding is a unified whole that precedes and grounds any thinking of difference. Certainly the infinite understanding is structured by difference, and thinks things in their differences in kind. Certainly determination is based on emergent differential relations and not a pre-existing sum total of predicates. Certainly there is a significant attempt to think pure difference that is not opposition, contradiction or negation. But in Maimon's system differences in kind, and their reciprocal determination, can be thought only because the infinite understanding is already capable of thinking each difference in relation to all the others. The 'whole' of infinite thinking is presupposed for the thinking of any singular difference; as Deleuze says of Leibniz, 'the world, as that which is expressed in common by all monads, pre-exists its expressions' (DR 47). The fact that each difference, in being thought, generates anew its differential relations to every other difference means that each difference expresses (in its unique way) a 'whole world' that is already thought. 'Those formulae according to which "the object denies what it is not", or "distinguishes itself from everything that it is not", are logical

monsters (the Whole of everything which is not the object) in the service of identity' (DR 49).

While Deleuze never explicitly criticizes Maimon along these lines, it seems to me that he must take Maimon to be too Leibnizian, and not Spinozistic enough. As I will suggest in the next section, Spinoza preserves the internal difference of being and thought and thereby has a preferable starting point for a philosophy of difference. Although Maimon asks the right questions and understands the immanent genesis of being from difference, he fails to achieve a philosophy of difference on Deleuze's terms because his account of differential production is grounded in identical rules and qualities, and his system is grounded in the identity of an infinite understanding.

Kant's discovery of difference

Surprisingly, it is in Kant, not in Maimon, that Deleuze finds the basis for a philosophy of difference, and it is this Kantian 'discovery of difference' to which we now turn. In Chapter 1 of *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze says this:

> Rather than being concerned with what happens before and after Kant (which amounts to the same thing), we should be concerned with a precise moment within Kantianism, a furtive and explosive moment which is not even continued by Kant, much less by post-Kantianism. … For when Kant puts rational theology into question, *in the same stroke* he introduces a kind of disequilibrium, a fissure or crack in the pure Self of the 'I think', an alienation in principle, insurmountable in principle.
>
> (DR 58)

The moment in question is one that makes the spontaneous self an other to itself in §25 of Kant's B-edition Transcendental Deduction (CPR B157–9). Deleuze discusses this moment repeatedly – twice in *Difference and Repetition* (DR 58 and 85–6), in the Preface to the English edition of *Kant's Critical Philosophy*, and in an essay based on that Preface – indicating its importance for his interpretation of Kant.[29] Deleuze sees this as a crucial moment in discovering that determination is grounded in the difference of being and thinking: not the difference between the given and the concept that grounds the external determination of possible experience, but the more profound difference between being and thinking that grounds the *internal determination of the real*. Kant's 'fractured I', where this difference is

found, therefore has the same structure as Deleuze's Idea, and has the potential to ground a differential ontology.

Let us turn first to Kant's text to see the moment to which Deleuze refers. In §24 of the B-edition Transcendental Deduction, Kant shows that inner sense on its own contains only the form of intuition without a combined manifold, and therefore contains no determinate intuition. The understanding, through the spontaneous act that relates the manifold to the 'I think', combines the manifold and determines it. In this way, indeterminate intuitions are produced as determinate representations that can be thought. Even time (the pure form of inner sense) cannot be represented, determined or thought unless its manifold is combined, in the drawing of a line, for instance. The self, insofar as it is intuited in inner sense, is equally indeterminate unless its manifold is combined by the understanding. The indeterminate self and the self that determines it are the same subject, and yet they are distinct. But there is no difficulty here, Kant says: since I am an appearance in space and time, I must be 'given' to my own passive receptivity, and synthesized by my own active spontaneity, just like any other object (CPR B154–6, *cf.* B131–3).

The complexity of this position is drawn out in §25. In the activity of combining the manifold, 'I am conscious of myself, not as I appear to myself, nor as I am in myself, but only that I am. This *representation* is a *thought*, not an *intuition*' (CPR B157). That is, the 'I think', which is responsible for *determining* intuitions, involves the *indeterminate* thought of my existence. My existence is not immediately determined by the 'I think', for it can be determined only through a combination of the manifold of inner sense. The consciousness of my existence that arises with the 'I think' gives me no knowledge of my existence. 'Accordingly I have no knowledge of myself as I am but merely as I appear to myself' (CPR B158).

Deleuze rightly points out that this is Kant's response to Descartes' Cogito, which states that determination ('I think') directly implies an undetermined existence ('I am') determinable by it ('I am a thing that thinks').

> The entire Kantian critique amounts to objecting against Descartes that it is impossible for determination to bear directly upon the undetermined. The determination ('I think') obviously implies something undetermined ('I am'), but nothing so far tells us how it is that this undetermined is determinable by the 'I think'. … Kant therefore adds a third logical value: the determinable, or rather the form in which the undetermined is determinable (by the determination).

> This third value suffices to make logic a transcendental instance. It amounts to the discovery of Difference – no longer in the form of an empirical difference between two determinations, but in the form of a transcendental Difference between the Determination as such and what it determines; no longer in the form of an external difference which separates, but in the form of an internal Difference which establishes an *a priori* relation between thought and being.
>
> (DR 85–6)

In Kant's rejection of the immediacy of 'I think therefore I am', Deleuze finds that Kant adopts transcendental empiricism – just for an instant – and discovers the pure difference internal to the relation of determination. This difference establishes an original relation between thought and being that is deeper than the relation between concept and given.

To understand Deleuze's point, we need to look at Kant's important footnote to §25. Kant reiterates that while my existence is already given with the 'I think' that determines it, my existence cannot be immediately determined. For the mode in which I am to determine my existence – that is, the manifold to be combined by the 'I think' – is not immediately given. It must be intuited in time, which makes my indeterminate existence determinable by the 'I think'. But the 'I think' thereby determines something different from itself: it determines its existence *as it is given in time*. Thus, 'I cannot determine my existence as that of a self-active being; all that I can do is to represent to myself the spontaneity of my thought, that is, of the determination' (CPR B158n, *cf.* B407).

The 'I think', in the act of determining its existence, *prevents* the determination of its own activity. And so the determination of my existence is a movement of self-differing. Determination is not here a matter of subsuming some given being in general under an external concept that would determine it as my being. It is a matter of *producing* my being by internally differentiating it from my thinking. This is the moment in which Kant approaches a theory of immanent differential genesis: the 'I think' generates itself from its own differential relation to itself. The difference means there is no possibility of adequately thinking my spontaneity; it can only be *represented* insofar as receptivity experiences the spontaneity of my thought being exercised upon it, as if from outside it. The self cannot enact or *be* its own thinking activity. For this reason, Deleuze characterizes this moment with Rimbaud's phrase 'I is an other' (DR 86).[30] Time is the condition of determinability of the self, and the hinge on which I generate my difference from myself.

I cannot experience or know the spontaneity of my thought; I can only experience its effects in time.

Kant's 'fractured I' grounds determination in an original difference of undetermined being and determinant thinking. The fractured I *is* undetermined being, the determinability of that being and the activity of determining it. In this sense, it has the same problematic unity as Deleuze's Idea:

> Ideas … present three moments: undetermined with regard to their object, determinable with regard to objects of experience, and bearing the ideal of an infinite determination with regard to concepts of the understanding. It is apparent that Ideas here repeat the three aspects of the [fractured] Cogito: the *I am* as an indeterminate existence, *time* as the form under which this existence is determinable, and the *I think* as a determination. Ideas are exactly the thoughts of the Cogito, the differentials of thought.
>
> (DR 169)

The spontaneous activity of Kant's fractured I remains undetermined as it determines its being, thereby producing itself as that which can only be represented as an other. Correspondingly, Deleuze's Idea, in its activity of determining itself with regard to objects of experience, remains undetermined with regard to its object. The object of the Idea is the virtual *problem*, and its self-determination is its integration into actual solutions. As the Idea determines itself through actual solutions in the realm of the sensible, its virtual object, the problem, 'must be represented without being able to be directly determined' (DR 169). The problem becomes determined *by analogy* with the objects of experience it relates to. So the Idea *is* its differing from itself. It produces itself as the determinate solutions (singularities and events) that make its problematic being fundamentally undeterminable, and thinkable only in terms of representation. As a result, problems can be represented in terms of experience and concepts, though the problematic being of the Idea is fundamentally undetermined and unrepresentable. Just as Kant's passive self 'receives the activity of [its] own thought as an other',[31] Deleuze's actualized Idea receives the activity of the problem as an other. This other has a powerful capacity to shock: it is the 'being of the sensible' that can only be sensed, the unthinkable that must be thought (DR 199–200).

The Idea, like the 'fractured I', indicates the priority of time in the determination and genesis of real experience. 'Ideas are exactly the thoughts of the [fractured] Cogito' because they enact the activity of

thinking determining its own being *as* the unfolding of time. Time is not the form of intuition or the form of actualized solutions, but the form of the determinability of being by thought. For Kant, it is the form internal to the I that continually *produces* the I as differing from itself. For Deleuze, time is internal to the Idea: its unfolding is the activity of the Idea determining itself and preserving its own indeterminacy. Time is understood here as the pure difference that establishes the *a priori* relation between thinking and being (DR 86).[32] It is not that thinking determines being *in time*, as if thinking and being were concept and object standing opposed to one another in a temporal container. Rather, time is the difference internal to both the fractured I and the Idea: thought determining being *is* the unfolding of time and the operation of difference ('Time itself unfolds … instead of things unfolding within it', DR 88). This indicates an original and irreducible relation that does not merely condition but *generates* experience: the relation of the difference of thinking and being that can be formulated 'thinking–time–being' or 'determinant–determinable–undetermined'. Ideas contain these 'dismembered moments' as 'an internal problematic objective unity' (DR 170).

It is clear that determination does not take the form of a judgement between a concept and an object, and that the thinking and being spoken of here do not refer to a subjective mind or actual objects. Rather, this is a deeper ontological relation that forms the internal structure of Deleuze's virtual, pre-individual Idea and, he thinks, Kant's transcendental unity of apperception. The original relation of the determination and genesis of the real is the relation of being and thinking differentiated by time. Deleuze thinks Kant is wrong to locate this differential relation in a subject, where the difference and its generative power become covered over. The fracture in the I is 'quickly filled by a new form of identity' and obscured by the external difference between spontaneity and receptivity (DR 87). As we have already seen, Kant is 'too empirical' in focusing on thought and being in external opposition, whereas the post-Kantians are 'too dogmatic' in filling the gap between them (Fichte's 'I am I' being paradigmatic). Yet in this moment of the Transcendental Deduction, which even the post-Kantians do not recognize, Kant discovers pure difference. 'For a brief moment we enter into that schizophrenia in principle which characterises the highest power of thought, and opens Being directly onto difference, despite all the mediations, all the reconciliations, of the concept' (DR 58).

Thus the fractured, self-differing I is, for Deleuze, the essence of Kant's Copernican revolution and 'constitutes the discovery of the transcendental' (DR 86). For here Kant discovers *the genetic conditions of real experience*

in the pure difference of being and thinking. Without this difference internal to the fractured I, experience and determination are grounded in the identity of an infinite mind for whom there is no being that cannot be thought. In this kind of system, actual experience will be nothing more than a copy of a 'possible reality' determined in advance. This is the problem with Maimon, who unifies being and thought in an infinite understanding and grounds the genesis of the real in predetermined rules. As Deleuze says of Leibniz, where rules are predetermined there is a moral imperative for a given space to be filled in a fixed way (DR 198);[33] that is, both the content of experience and the space in which it plays out are determined in advance, and the future is foreseeable. Where experience is grounded in the pure difference between being and thinking, however – either in Kant's fractured I or in Deleuze's Idea – the sensible is determined *as it is generated*. Experience is produced as surprising and unforeseeable: from pure difference emerges the real encounters that 'cannot be anticipated' and that shock us into thinking.

Being and thought

What, then, is the ontological explanation of the pure difference that grounds determination and the genesis of the real? Where do Ideas come from, if their differences are not to be resolved in the identity of an infinite understanding? Ideas are 'the differentials of thought' not in Maimon's sense of fixed rules of an infinite understanding, but in the sense that their activity is the operation of difference. For Deleuze, invoking Nietzsche's throw of the dice, the only rule is to *throw* into an open space (DR 198). The movement and unity of the Idea originate in the affirmation of chance, an affirmation that is repeated (differently) with each throw. The throw of the dice carries out the determination of differential elements that constitute the Idea. Deleuze's dice are not thrown by an infinite understanding ('God does not play dice', as Einstein had it), nor indeed by a finite understanding with its fractured Cogito. Rather, throwing is an imperative of being: being throws itself, the whole of itself, again and again, each throw necessitating different determinations of differentials, different configurations of problems, and different Ideas. This should not, however, be understood as a succession of individual throws or affirmations, which would merely be a 'bare' repetition of the same. The throw of the dice is repeated, but each 'takes the chance all at once, and instead of having the different, or different combinations, result from the Same, has the same, or the repetition, result from the Different' (DR 200–1). The 'clothed' repetition of the

dice-throw ranges over all Ideas through all their variations to 'perplicate' them (DR 201, 187) – that is, to differentiate them as 'differently lit versions of the whole of Ideas'.[34]

Framing his discussion in terms borrowed from both Nietzsche and Heidegger, Deleuze suggests that Being (capital B) is this clothed repetition of the whole of being (lower case b) throwing itself, the 'eternal return' of being. The difference between being and Being is that between 'the being of beings' and the power of unfolding or giving. For Deleuze, being is not the same or the common, and its unfolding does not take place according to a constant rule. 'If "being" is above all difference and commencement, Being is itself repetition, the recommencement of being' (DR 202). Being (capital B) that is the repetition of difference is characterized in Nietzschean terms in *The Logic of Sense*:

> Nomadic singularities are no longer imprisoned within the fixed individuality of the infinite Being (the notorious immutability of God), nor inside the sedentary boundaries of the finite subject (the notorious limits of knowledge). This is something neither individual nor personal, but rather singular. Being not an undifferentiated abyss, it leaps from one singularity to another, casting always the dice belonging to the same cast, always fragmented and formed again in each throw. … The new discourse is no longer that of form, but neither is it that of the formless: it is rather that of the pure unformed. … As for the subject of this new discourse (except that there is no longer any subject), it is not man or God, and even less man in the place of God. The subject is this free, anonymous, and nomadic singularity which traverses men as well as plants and animals independently of the matter of their individuation and the forms of their personality. 'Overman' means nothing other than this – the superior type of *everything that is*.[35]

Being (capital B) is the pure unformed, the to-be-formed, that is formed in its own pure affirmation of its own repetition. Being therefore interiorizes the undetermined, determinability, and determination in a problematic unity the affirmation of which gives rise to problems or Ideas. It could be called the Idea in which all other Ideas are connected.

This 'Idea of Ideas', discussed here in terms of Being, may equally be characterized in terms of Thought. It is infinite thought, but not the thought of a conscious mind or universal spirit, as Jones explains:

> infinite thought remains unconscious in its most important sense: not as a universal mind, but a purely differential, structural unconscious

> of Ideas, devoid of the self-reflexive unity ascribed to it by Kant, no longer characterised by the purified, complete understanding of Maimon, and divorced from the substantive, repressed alter-ego reified by Freud in his worst moments. Instead, just an immanent virtual multiplicity, both ideal and real … that structures and systematises all of these elements without constituting a centre – a pure genetic thought of the undetermined, the determinable, and the determined.[36]

Deleuze's immanent virtual multiplicity can be characterized as Being *or* Thought because it is equivalent to neither being nor thinking. Rather, it is the repetition of the difference of being and thinking *as* the unfolding of time and the genesis of the real. Thus, in the repeated throwing of being, the difference of being and thought is a refrain that is necessarily reprised. There is no chance that the fractured I will be healed, that on some throw of the dice thought will perfectly comprehend being. In Being or Thought, in the repetition of the throw, the difference between being and thought is *every time* reconstituted (DR 199). This is because the dice-throw cannot cancel the condition of time: the eternal return of the dice-throw is becoming, 'the perpetual openness of time' that forms the fractured I.[37]

Kant's fractured I is therefore closely bound up with Deleuze's Idea. When Kant discovers the generation of the self in/as time – however briefly glimpsed and however decisively covered over – he sees the truth of what Beistegui calls *onto-hetero-genesis*.[38] The identities of experience are the actual and sensible condensation of intensities in Ideas that are the products of the repetition of the difference of being and thought. Determination is not a matter of the subsumption of a given under a concept, but of the genesis of the given from the self-differing of being. This activity of self-differing is a powerful remainder, an imperative that 'cannot be thought and must be thought and can be thought only from the point of view of the transcendent exercise' (DR 199). If the notion of a 'transcendent exercise' of thought recalls the noumenal, it is in Deleuze's sense of 'the noumenon closest to the phenomenon'. When a faculty is properly transcendental,

> it is indistinguishable from its disjointed, superior, or transcendent exercise. Transcendent in no way means that the faculty addresses itself to objects outside the world but, on the contrary, that it grasps that in the world which concerns it exclusively and brings it into the world. (DR 143)

That is, the faculty of thought must escape its immanence to 'possible experience' (that is, immanence in *Kant's* sense), and delve 'transcendently' into the transcendental (which is immanent to experience in *Deleuze's* sense).[39] Only then will we be able to think the imperatives of being that are forced on us as questions.

The difference of Kant and Spinoza

I will close this chapter by noting that for Deleuze, Kant's discovery of pure difference is the moment of his Spinozism. For the Ideal structure of determinant–determinable–undetermined that Deleuze finds in Kant's fractured I, he also sees in Spinoza's substance. Although Deleuze does not explicitly align Kant with Spinoza, their affinity is suggested through his indication of their common potential to develop a differential ontology.

In his book *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza* (published in the same year as *Difference and Repetition*), Deleuze identifies three 'triads of substance'. The first reads 'Substance expresses itself, attributes are expressions, and essence is expressed'.[40] Spinoza's substance *is* its essence and its attributes, and yet these three terms signify different aspects of determination. The essence of substance is undetermined being that is determined by the attributes, so that the essence of substance is to be extended, to be thinking and to be in infinite other ways too. Substance, as 'cause of itself', determines its own essence through its attributes, while attributes are 'dynamic and active forms' of determinability and expression.[41] So here we have the Deleuzian structure that is by now familiar: substance is the active determination of its own undetermined essence through the attributes which are its own form of determinability. Substance *purely in its activity* cannot be conceived; it can only be conceived *through* the attributes which determine its essence in infinite ways. Thus, the movement of substance expressing itself can be seen in the same light as the movement of the fractured I determining itself or the Idea actualizing itself. Substance produces itself as an original relation of difference between its undetermined being and the determining activity of its being. Yet all three moments are part of one movement of Being that is *expression*.

Expression is in no way an act whereby an outer state designates, represents or resembles an inner state. Instead, it is the 'logic' according to which beings and ideas are internally generated. 'The logic of expression that Deleuze finds in Spinoza is a logic of univocity, where things are thought in their being, since the act of thinking something is the

same act that produces it', says Macherey.[42] But the *univocity* of being and thought – their 'speaking with one voice' – does not mean their identity in an overarching infinite understanding.[43] Instead, Spinoza's God expresses itself univocally *as* the difference between thinking and being, the difference which constitutes its power. In the movement of expression Deleuze sees the throwing of being: the repetition of the difference of being and thinking. Again, this is not the empirical difference between matter and ideas or between bodies and minds. Nor is it the difference between the attribute of extension and the attribute of thought, since this difference is necessarily prior to the determination of substance by the attributes. Instead, it is that more profound difference of being and thinking from which the process of determination follows. Indeed, expression – unlike creation, participation and emanation, which operate according to resemblance – can only take place through a difference internal to it.[44]

Deleuze discusses this as the difference between the 'two powers' of God. Spinoza's God has the power of being and the power of thinking, *distinct from* and in a special sense *prior to* the attributes of extension and thinking. 'If one may use a Bergsonian formulation, the absolute has two "sides", two halves. If the absolute possesses two powers, it does so in and through itself, involving them in its radical unity.'[45] While the difference between being and thinking is primary in the 'radical unity' of God, it has an essential relation to the attributes. On the one hand, the two powers of God are the ground of the attributes. On the other hand, the attribute of thought is the determining form of the power of thinking, and the infinite other attributes are the determining forms of the power of being.[46] Thus the attributes are the condition of the expression of the difference of being and thinking, while this difference grounds the attributes and is in a sense prior to them. For Spinoza as for Kant, a tripartite determination both emerges from, and is a condition of the genetic operation of, the difference of being and thought.

We can see this difference in the very first principles of Spinoza's *Ethics*, which state indirectly that prior to determination by the attributes, *being is* and *being is conceived*. The difference between being and thought is the genetic condition of Definitions 1 and 3 of *Ethics*, Part I. From this original difference it follows that what is cause of itself *exists* and must be *conceived* as existing; and that substance *is* in itself and *is conceived* through itself. This original difference runs through the entirety of the *Ethics*: substance is Being that thinks itself. This difference is not oppositional or external; thinking and being are not

opposed to one another 'in' something else. Nor is being collapsed into thinking as in Maimon's idealism. Rather, *what is* is conceived, and what is conceived *is*. The very nature of substance is to differ from itself, and in this difference lies its power – its power to immanently generate the real. 'God's power, by which he and all things are and act, is his essence itself' (E IP34).

Taking his 1968 texts together, Deleuze suggests that Kant is Spinozistic in finding in the fractured I the same structure of *internal* difference between being and thinking that Spinoza finds in substance. Indeed, Deleuze suggests that the *power* of that difference to generate the real – to generate Ideas, encounters, and problems – can be found in Kant's fractured I. The potential for a differential ontology and an account of the given that is immanent and genetic, is there in Kant. Kant could have taken the first *Critique* in a Spinozistic and even Deleuzian direction, Deleuze implies. But Kant covers over this difference, replacing it with a merely external difference between thought and being as the difference between concepts and intuitions.

Deleuze sometimes gives the impression that the task of reclaiming the original, internally determining difference of being and thought is one he shares with the post-Kantians. In 1955 Deleuze wrote a review of Jean Hyppolite's *Logic and Existence*.[47] Hyppolite stresses the immanent nature of Hegel's concept as simultaneously being and sense, 'being that says itself'.[48] Deleuze finds in Hyppolite's reading an important way in which Hegel follows Spinoza and thereby overcomes Kant's externalization of the being–thought difference: 'the external, empirical difference of thought and being [in the Kantian system] has given way [in Hegel] to the difference identical with Being, to the difference internal to the Being which thinks itself'.[49]

Kerslake sees in Deleuze's review a statement of his philosophical aim: to construct a philosophy of difference in order to fulfil immanence, just as Hegel does. If Kerslake is right, then Deleuze's purpose from 1955 onwards is to construct an ontology where Being thinks itself and internalizes difference (*is* that difference) that is not the difference of opposition. 'It is in Spinoza that Deleuze finds the fullest flowering of an alternative model of immanent self-differentiation that remains faithful to the Hegelian schema, but which also presents a notion of difference without contradiction.'[50] In subsequently suggesting that Kant discovers this model, Deleuze indicates that Kant shares an ontological foundation with Spinozism. There is a sense in which Deleuze follows Jacobi in this, yet without thereby accusing Kant of dogmatism. Instead, Deleuze invites Kant to develop and keep open this Spinozistic tendency,

not to become a Maimonian idealist, but to become a transcendental empiricist. If Deleuze is a Spinozistic post-Kantian, it is in this sense, that he wants to continue a thread that he sees running through Spinoza, Kant, and Hegel (even if Kant covers over this thread with exteriorized difference, and Hegel loses it to a principle of contradiction), and on to Nietzsche and Bergson: 'To think internal difference as such, as pure internal difference, to reach the pure concept of difference, to raise difference to the absolute'.[51]

7
Spinozism in the Ether: Kant's *Opus Postumum*

In this chapter I turn to Kant's *Opus Postumum*, the text in which his relation to Spinozism is at its most puzzling and intriguing. In this final text, Kant appears to affirm a single material substance produced by the subject's self-positing. This substance, the ether, is at once a material and transcendental condition of possible experience, and goes some way towards satisfying Maimon's and Deleuze's demand for a genetic condition of real experience. Moreover, a number of cryptic references to 'Spinoza's transcendental idealism' are out of line with Kant's usual antagonism towards Spinozism. While I will defer discussion of these references to this book's conclusion, they raise a number of immediate questions. Did Kant see the mature form of his transcendental idealism as compatible with Spinozism, or with a materialist or idealist variant of it? Did the development of the concept of ether make him re-evaluate his attitude towards Spinoza? Does Kant truly move to a theory of the immanent production of empirical objects from a single substance?

This chapter addresses these questions by focusing on the 'ether proofs' that form the core of the *Opus Postumum*. I will not argue that this text reveals a wholesale overturning of the critical philosophy or even a significant reformulation of transcendental idealism. Relatedly, I will not argue that Kant's attitude towards Spinoza has fundamentally changed. However, I will argue that Kant takes seriously the Spinozistic demand, articulated by Maimon and Deleuze, that his philosophy become more profoundly transcendental to account for the genesis of real sensations. Ether is not a Spinozistic substance, but it resembles a Maimonian 'idea of understanding', produced by the finite understanding as the content of its experience. There is a move in the *Opus Postumum* towards a theory of immanent production that would provide the 'depth' of the basic structure of transcendental idealism. Through Kant's complex and

different attitude to Spinozism in this text, we see that his relation to Maimon, and also Deleuze, is much richer than first appeared.

Matter, forces, and ether

The *Opus Postumum* is the compiled notes, fragments and partial manuscripts Kant wrote between 1796 and 1803 and left unpublished at the time of his death.[1] While this final text of Kant's has been accessible for much of the twentieth century, it has only fairly recently attracted critical attention and been drawn into the mainstream of Kant studies. Yet it is difficult to interpret this text with much confidence. The 13 fascicles of the *Opus Postumum* are so varied and wide-ranging that it sometimes seems one could find in them material both to affirm and to contradict any position. This makes the text both fascinating and frustrating: it seems to reveal Kant both at his most materialistic and at his most idealistic, and suggests an intriguing rethinking of earlier positions.[2] Its incompleteness may tempt us to take isolated parts of it to be decisive, or to read it as an intentionally fragmentary text like those of the German Romantics.

We must avoid reading the *Opus Postumum* as either a conclusive statement of Kant's final system or as a Romantic deconstruction of system. We can, however, follow certain threads of Kant's thinking and draw some possibilities from them, without making any pronouncements about the whole. Certain elements, at least, are readily understandable in terms of the aims of Kant's earlier texts, and the ether proofs are one such element. Ether is the concept of a dynamical plenum Kant introduces in order to ground a systematic physics, unify the content of experience and explain the genesis of bodies. In this section I give an overview of the ether theory advanced in the *Opus Postumum*, suggesting that Kant develops the unique concept of a transcendental condition of possible experience that is also a material condition of real experience.

Kant's turn to the concept of ether is motivated, in part, by concerns that follow from the third *Critique*. There, he showed that to ensure the systematicity of nature's particular laws, reflective judgement must be guided by the principle of nature's purposiveness. But the principle of purposiveness, while sufficient to guarantee that nature's laws are systematic in general, is not enough to account for the actual systematic unity of natural forces. That unity cannot be inferred from an aggregate of empirical data nor derived from *a priori* laws of matter; yet an account of it is required if physics is to be a science. As in the *Critique of Judgment*, something is needed to intercede between the *a priori*

concept (which determines the particular in too-general terms) and the intuition (which will otherwise appear contingent with respect to *a priori* laws). What is needed is a transition from the *a priori* laws of matter to a systematic empirical doctrine, by way of an *a priori* principle of the unity of specific forces in nature: a 'Transition from the Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science to Physics'.[3]

The Transition is needed 'to specify a method of bringing about the systematic knowledge of physics by providing *the outline of a system* of all objects of the outer senses'.[4] An outline system of all actual material objects must be anticipated *a priori*, and achieving this outline will be the Transition. This involves the search for a set of concepts that belong both to the *a priori* concepts of metaphysics and to the empirical principles of physics. In anticipating the systematicity of the specific forces of material nature, these concepts determine our understanding of the formation of specific types of bodies. The Transition thereby aims to explain the genesis of individual bodies from a unified system of forces.

Kant also aims to solve a problem left over from the *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*. There, he analysed the empirical concept of matter *a priori* and reduced it to the constant conflict of the fundamental forces of attraction and repulsion. But while this conflict explains how matter in general fills a space, it does not explain how matter is formed into determinate bodies with different shapes, sizes, powers and abilities. The analytic reduction of the concept of matter to its most basic elements does not lead directly to a synthetic determination of how those basic elements produce individual bodies or effects, and Kant admitted that from the concepts of the fundamental forces, he could not explain the specific variety of matter (MFNS 4:525). It seems that Kant was reminded of this problem in 1792, when J. S. Beck, commissioned to write explanatory excerpts of Kant's major writings, wrote to Kant to ask how his dynamical theory could explain the differences of density in matter.[5] In reply, Kant admitted that his tentative solution – that the relation between universal attraction and differences in repulsion accounts for differences in density – leads into 'a circle that I cannot get out of'.[6] As Förster explains, the 'circle' arises from the fact that universal attraction (gravitation) is proportional to the mass or density of matter: universal attraction depends causally on density, which is then said to be the effect of attraction.[7]

In order to resolve the 'circle', Kant decided that both local cohesive attraction and universal gravitational attraction are required to account for bodies of differing densities. This led him to posit a

universal matter, composed of gravitational attraction and expansive repulsion, surrounding cohesive–repulsive bodies. This universal matter he calls ether, not as an object of experience, but as 'the idea of an expansive matter whose parts are not capable of any greater dissolution, because no attraction of cohesion is to be found in them'. The force of cohesion does not pertain to the ether itself, but to the bodies which result from its oscillating forces. Bodies are thus differentiated from the dynamical field of matter as a whole: 'To assume such a matter filling cosmic space is an inevitably necessary hypothesis, for, without it, no cohesion, which is necessary for the formation of a physical *body*, can be thought.' Thus Kant distinguishes a 'primary matter' from the 'secondary matter' originally dissolved and distributed in it. The primary matter (ether), composed of universal attraction and repulsion, is in a 'continuous and everlasting oscillation' of compression and expansion that causes secondary matter to unify into bodies through cohesive attraction balanced by repulsion. The oscillation of the ether produces the cohesion of secondary matter into bodies through the 'living force' of generating impact between repulsive forces (OP 21:378–9, p. 12).[8]

Ether is thus meant to provide a non-corpuscular explanation of the production of individual bodies. It also provides a cause for the fundamental forces of attraction and repulsion, something Kant left unresolved in *Metaphysical Foundations*. Attraction and repulsion are now 'secondary' moving forces rather than 'fundamental' forces. But this leaves the 'primary' forces of the ether without grounding. Where does this original matter come from, and what justifies us in positing it? This is the question leading to Kant's attempts to demonstrate the existence of ether *a priori*, the question that necessitates a 'transcendental deduction' of the ether.[9] Kant wants to show that what justifies us in positing this primary matter is the possibility of experience itself.

The ether (also called caloric, more or less interchangeably[10]) is characterized as a single continuum filling cosmic space through the oscillation of force. This concept was not new to Kant: he had used ether to ground his theory of matter in a number of pre-critical texts.[11] Edwards contends that Kant never ceased to believe that matter was grounded in a dynamical continuum. This may be true, but the development of the critical philosophy meant he could no longer take this grounding to be absolute. Accordingly, in the first *Critique*, Kant argues that the dynamical continuum is a transcendental principle for the possibility of experience. In the Anticipations of Perception he showed that experience is 'full' of reality, and empty space cannot be an object of perception

(CPR A172/B214); in the third analogy he argued that the experience of coexistence is possible only on the transcendental condition of the thoroughgoing reciprocity, or dynamical community, of all substances (CPR A211/B257). In the first *Critique*, it is a condition of the possibility of experience that appearances interact in a continuum without empty spaces. This is a transcendental principle constitutive of experience; it does not prove that the material world really *is* a dynamical continuum outside of possible experience.[12]

How does Kant arrive at a *material* principle constitutive of experience? In *Metaphysical Foundations* he says that the transcendental principle of reciprocity allows us to think *a priori* of a matter, such as the ether, that entirely fills its space without any void (MFNS 4:534). Kant even suggests that ether may be thought as 'the ground of the possibility of the composition of a matter in general', a supposition that has support but remains 'quite hypothetical' (MFNS 4:563–4). The hypothesis of ether makes its way into the *Critique of Judgment* too, where Kant speculates that it could give objectivity to simple sensations such as pure colours and tones.[13] An objective sensation such as 'the green colour of a lawn' is merely an intensive magnitude with no manifold (CJ 5:224–6). Yet if the pure colour is thought as the regular vibration of the ether, it becomes manifold: if the mind perceives not only the effect of the vibrations (that is, the colour), but also their frequency, then the mind has something to synthesize. In that case, the sensation of pure colour would already include formal determination of the manifold, and the mind could reflect on its suitability for cognition (and therefore its beauty). The ether here constitutes 'the being of sensation': the depth that makes pure colours and tones *real objects* despite their immateriality.

In the first and second editions of the third *Critique*, Kant says that even if colour and tone are produced by the vibrations of the ether, he 'doubts very much' that these vibrations can be perceived directly by the mind (CJ 5:224; see also CJ 5:324–5). But in the third edition (1799), Kant changes the text to say that *he does not doubt at all* that colour is the effect of vibrations of ether, or that the mind perceives them.[14] This shift reflects Kant's changing attitude towards ether through the 'Transition' project of the *Opus Postumum*. In the passages from around 1796, Kant postulates ether as a mere hypothesis 'indispensably necessary' for his new theory of matter. But by the time of 'Übergang 1–14' (called 'The Ether Proofs' in the English translation), probably written in 1799, Kant thinks of ether as a categorically given material without which outer experience would be impossible.

> There exists a matter, distributed in the whole universe as a continuum, uniformly penetrating all bodies, and filling all spaces (thus not subject to displacement). Be it called ether, or caloric, or whatever, it is no hypothetical material (for the purpose of explaining certain phenomena, and more or less obviously conjuring up causes for given effects); […] Its actuality can be postulated prior to experience (*a priori*) for the sake of possible experience.
>
> (OP 21:218–19, pp. 69–70)[15]

This clearly marks a development, not only for Kant's theory of matter, but also for his transcendental philosophy as a whole. For Kant no longer says that ether is just a useful hypothesis for explaining individual bodies; he now claims that the ether *exists*, and that its existence can be postulated *prior to experience*, for the sake of experience. Kant stresses that ether is not an empirical concept that comes *from* experience. Rather, it exists prior to and *for* experience, and can be considered *a priori*. Through this concept we understand that all possible experiences are originally unified in one infinite, dynamically full space and time. All the material content of our experiences comes from this original unity, which is therefore the ground of their determinations and differences.

Generating the content of experience: Kant's Maimonism

With a basic understanding of ether in place, we can now move on to investigate its affinity to ideas of the whole of experience in Maimon and Spinoza. First, however, we need to clear up a potential misunderstanding. It is evident that the ether, though a condition of possible experience, has a different claim to reality than does the transcendental principle of reciprocity of the first *Critique*. That is, in positing its necessary existence as a ground of experience, Kant seems to give ether the metaphysical reality normally ascribed to hypostatized ideas. It may appear that the ether is simply the reification of the *omnitudo realitatis*. I do not think this is the case. Instead, as I will suggest, the ether has less in common with a Kantian idea of reason than it does with a Maimonian 'idea of understanding'.

In the Transcendental Ideal chapter of the first *Critique*, the unity and material content of experience were explained by the *omnitudo realitatis*, the rational idea of the sum-total of all possibility. Kant said there that we must presuppose a sum-total of predicates that contains all possible material for experience and guarantees that concepts are completely determined. As we saw in Chapter 1, the sum-total is not

thought as an aggregate but a *whole* of which well-defined objects are the limitations:

> the material for the possibility of all objects of the senses must be presupposed as given in one whole; and it is upon the limitation of this whole that all possibility of empirical objects, their distinction from each other and their complete determination, can alone be based. No other objects, besides those of the senses, can, as a matter of fact, be given to us, and nowhere save in the context of a possible experience; and consequently nothing is an object *for us*, unless it presupposes the sum of all empirical reality as the condition of its possibility.
>
> (CPR A582/B610)

While this regulative idea of an '*All* of reality' cannot be assumed to be objectively given, reason naturally tends to hypostatize it in a completely determined thing in itself, the ideal of the *ens realissimum*. We regard all possible objects as derivatives of this 'supreme and complete material condition of the possibility of all that exists' (CPR A576/B604). The hypostatization occurs because the *distributive* unity our experiences have by virtue of the application of the categories to all of them is confused with the *collective* unity that experiences are thought to have independently of our understanding (CPR A582/B610). Through a transcendental subreption, the idea of a collective unity is thought as a single thing that contains all empirical reality and originates the possibility of all its derivatives.

This is not the case in the *Opus Postumum*. In the ether proofs, the distinction between distributive and collective unity reflects the difference between the subjective connection of experiences and the single and objective 'possible experience' that must be posited *a priori*. The latter is not the hypostatization of the former, but its condition of possibility. This is evident in the following passages, from a section of the text Kant had copied by an amanuensis (likely intending eventual publication):

> There exists only one experience; and if one is to speak of *experiences*, this signifies only the *distributive* unity of manifold perceptions, not the *collective* unity of its object itself in its thoroughgoing determination. […]
>
> The concept of the whole of outer experience presupposes all possible moving forces of matter as combined in collective unity; […] it further presupposes a constant *motion* of all matter […]. For without

> this motion, that is, without the stimulation of the sense organs, which is its effect, no perception of any object of the senses, and hence no experience, takes place.
>
> (OP 22:549–51, pp. 86–7)

The object of collective unity – ether as the dynamic whole of outer experience – precedes and makes possible the distributive unity of the manifold. In the Transcendental Ideal, Kant argued that the distributive unity of experience is achieved by our understanding, whereas the object of collective unity – the *ens realissimum* – is merely thought. In the *Opus Postumum* we are told that the object of the collective unity of experience is *given*, prior to the concept of the distributive unity of experience. Thus in a remarkable reversal of his earlier position, Kant states:

> The object of collectively universal experience (of the synthetic unity of perceptions) is therefore *given*; the object of distributively universal experience, of which the subject forms a concept for itself (of the analytical unity of possible experience) is merely *thought*, for it belongs merely to the form of possible experience.
>
> (OP 22:555, p. 90)

Ether is evidently not the *ens realissimum*. Moreover, the ether cannot be said to be another name for the *omnitudo realitatis* itself, that is, the *idea* of the sum-total of reality. For if ether is not the hypostatization of an idea, nor is it a transcendental idea in any straightforward sense.[16] Consider the following passage:

> The thought of an elementary system of the moving forces of matter (*cogitatio*) necessarily precedes the perception of them (*perceptio*), and, as a subjective principle of the combination of these elementary parts in a whole, is given *a priori* by reason in the subject (*forma dat esse rei*). […] This principle is subjective, for the world-observer (*cosmotheoros*): a basis in idea for all the unified forces which set the matter of the whole of cosmic space in motion. [It] does not prove the existence of such a material, however (for example, that which is called the all-penetrating and permanently moving caloric); to this extent, [it] is a hypothetical material. The idea of this material, however, is what first represents (albeit indirectly) space itself as something perceptible and as an unconditional whole (internally moved and externally, universally moving); this matter is, hence, to be

> assumed as the prime mover (*primum mobile et movens*), subjectively – as the basis for the theory of the primary moving forces of matter, for the sake of a system of experience.
>
> (OP 21:552–3, pp. 81–2)

It seems from the above passage that ether is an idea thought *a priori* by reason that necessarily anticipates our perception of the moving forces. This idea is a hypothetical *ens rationis*. Yet the idea of ether is also said to be an indirect representation of space as a perceptible, unconditional whole. So it seems ether is not only an idea, but also a kind of intuition: not a sensible intuition, nor the pure intuition of space as the form of outer sense, but the pure intuition of space as the *content* of outer sense. The idea carries with it the necessity that it be postulated as actually constituting the content of experience. It is not an idea that has been illegitimately hypostatized into an object; instead, it is an idea the thinking of which is the first representation of the content of intuition, *prior* to experience.

What makes the ether such a difficult concept is that it does not fit into the usual Kantian divisions. It can be seen as an intuition that issues from reason. Alternatively, it can be seen as an ideal representation of the whole of dynamical matter that has constitutive power with respect to experiences. In this sense it verges on the constitutive 'idea of understanding' proposed by Maimon: an idea that makes possible the content of intuition, not only transcendentally but also *genetically*. Indeed, ether seems to be the point at which the ideal *becomes* material, allowing for the possibility of the genesis of the 'real' of experience. A mysterious passage suggests this blurring of idea and intuition:

> Ideas are images (intuitions), created *a priori* through pure reason, which, [as] merely subjective thought-objects and elements of knowledge, precede knowledge of things. They are the archetypes (*prototypa*), by which Spinoza thought all things had to be seen, according to their forms, in God: that is, in what is formal in the elements out of which we make God for ourselves.
>
> (OP 21:51, p. 242)

The meaning of Kant's reference to Spinoza here probably relates to his view, frequently stated towards the end of the text, that Spinoza 'intuits all things in God' (see, for example, OP 22:59, p. 216). These archetypal intuitions are Spinoza's formal elements of knowledge, Kant

thinks, because they are the conditions of possibility of our thinking and perceiving. According to the Spinozist, these intuitions are not only transcendental conditions, but constitutive material conditions too: Maimon's differentials from which the ideas of understanding flow. Kant suggests that he too understands certain ideas as intuitions in this sense: the idea of ether is both formally and materially constitutive of knowledge.

As we have seen, Kant denies that ether is merely hypothetical. The existence of ether must be assumed, he argues, because there would be no outer experience without it. This argument relies on the impossibility of perceiving empty space. The fact that outer objects affect the senses at all indicates that there is a 'primordial' collective unity of experience. If experience were not already *one* – if objects of experience were separated (from each other and from us) by empty spaces, then they could not affect us at all, for there can be no motion of the forces through empty space. Our intuition would have the pure *form* of space, but we would perceive no material *in* space (OP 21:220, p. 70). In order for the senses to be affected at all, and for outer experience to be subjectively possible, space must already be dynamically full. 'There can be no motion for the senses, and hence no forces moving them, save in a *space filled* with matter, […] a material space, as it were' (OP 21:223, p. 72). Ether is this dynamically material space:

> That by means of which space becomes an object of possible experience in general […] is a universally distributed, all-penetrating world-material, possessing moving forces; its actuality rests solely on the principle of the possibility of outer experience and is thus known and confirmed *a priori*, according to the principle of identity. For, without presupposing this material, I could not have any outer experience at all: Empty space is not an object of possible experience.
>
> (OP 21:229, p. 76)

'Space which can be sensed' (OP 21:219, p. 69) is therefore prior to the objects distributed in it and to our intuition of them, enabling us to perceive determinate parts of space and assign locations to things. We could have no perceptions of the parts of space, and thus of individuated bodies, unless we first postulate a whole of space dynamically filled with content.

> The ground for this assertion [of the existence of ether] is: Intuitions in space and time are mere forms, and, lacking something which

> renders them knowable for the senses, furnish no real objects whatsoever to make possible an existence in general (and, above all, that of magnitude). Consequently, space and time would be left completely empty for experience. This material, therefore, which underlies this generally possible experience *a priori*, cannot be regarded as merely *hypothetical*, but as a given, originally moving, world-material; it cannot be assumed merely problematically, for it first signifies intuition (which would otherwise be empty and without perception).
>
> (OP 21:217, p. 68)

Because it originally fills the pure form of outer sense with a continuum of content, 'the all-penetrating caloric [that is, ether] is the first condition of the possibility of all outer experience' (OP 21:551, p. 81). The ether is therefore a necessary concept *for experience*. It is constitutive of experience in the most original sense, 'given *a priori* in pure intuition'. Yet it cannot be demonstrated *from* or *in* experience, since it affects the senses beneath the threshold of apperception and recognition. 'It is not an object of the senses, but rather of sensibility' (OP 21:550, p. 80).[17]

Kant admits there is something strange about this method of postulating the ether's existence: it is an objective claim, grounded on the 'subjective' requirement that space be full of perpetually active matter. 'And to ground this proposition *a priori* and *nonhypothetically* on concepts [is strange]'. What justifies us in doing so is that the whole of space must be given in order for us to receive the manifold as a part, and the thought that ether is this whole, 'space thought hypostatically' (OP 21:221, pp. 70–1, *cf*. 21:226, p. 74).[18] What is really strange, however, is that Kant finds a *transcendental* condition of the possibility of experience in the existence of a self-active, self-subsistent, all-pervasive and dynamical *material* that gives intuitions their content. It seems that the given must now be thought to be generated in the ether; experience is both transcendentally conditioned and materially generated by the same thing. The ether is thus a transcendental condition of possible experience that is also a *genetic* condition for real experience.

> **There exists** outer experience as a collective whole of all perceptions; that is, as *one* all-embracing possible experience. There exists outside us a sense-object, for whose *perception* externally moving forces of matter are required; the empirical representation of these forces, combined in a subject, is the basis of all the appearances, which together form the unity of experience.
>
> (OP 21:582–3, p. 91)

> The goal of all these concepts [of ether, caloric, world-material, etc.] is to have a material principle of the unity of possible experience; one which combines all experiences into a single experience. Without this combination (and its form) there would be no coherent whole of experience; it would, in that case, only be an *aggregate* of perceptions, not experience as a system.
>
> (OP 21:585, pp. 92–3)

The ether is an idea of the collective unity of experience given *a priori* and postulated as being empirically real for the sake of possible experience. It cannot be merely a regulative idea for our understanding the moving forces as a system; it must also be a constitutive concept for the possibility of outer experience as such. We are not to think of ether as the metaphysical ground of experience, but as actually constituting the content of experience. It is not a transcendent thing independent of experience, but the *very material* of experience, the dynamical 'horizon' within which bodies arise and move. The ether is not assumed so that determination can be grounded in a whole of *possible* reality, but in order that there be some *actual* reality to intuit. It is not a 'sum-total of possibility' but a whole of real experience: the object in which material forces and intensities are immanently generated.

This is how Kant responds to Maimon's demand for a genetic account of the content of experience. Maimon had argued that Kant could not justify the 'fact' of experience, due to his utter sundering of sensibility from conceptual thought: 'How can the understanding submit to its power (to its rules) that which is not in its power (given objects)?' (VT 63). For Maimon, the content of experience had to be generated by the understanding, alongside its form. In the *Opus Postumum*, Kant reveals that ether is a necessary condition for the *possibility* of experience, and at the same time a genetic condition for *real* experience. That is, he accepts that 'the real of sensation' requires not only external determination by concepts, but also inner determination by an idea that *becomes material*. Sensation now has a 'depth' constituted by this dynamical whole, and transcendental idealism has been pushed further, to account for its genesis.

Now, this account will not satisfy Maimon's demand unless ether can be shown to be the product of the subject's thought (rather than a 'given' of mysterious origin). If ether is a subjective production, then Kant would seem to accept that not only the form but the *content* of real experience is generated in the thought of a finite mind, just as Maimon does. In fact, although Kant does not adopt the full extent of Maimon's

idealism, he does go on to develop a position along these lines in the sections that follow. He argues that ether is produced by the subject insofar as it is originally affected by moving forces. Since ether is the ground of all perceptions, the perceptions that subsequently affect us are our own products.

> The moving forces of matter can only come together into a *collectively universal* unity of perceptions in a possible experience insofar as the subject, [affected] by them, unites them externally and internally in one concept, [and] affects itself by means of its perceptions.
>
> (OP 22:550, p. 87)

Kant suggests that the subject produces the collective unity of the material forces in the ether. The subject is *affected* by moving forces in that its sense organs are stimulated by their constant motion; it then brings them into one concept, and makes possible both perception and experience. The subject 'affects itself' because it perceives the effects of the ether, which is the subject's own product. The moving forces of matter are independent of the subject, but unless they are brought into collective unity in the ether, they could not be perceived by us. Receptivity has been split into two stages: first, the bare affection of the senses by the independent moving forces, and, second, the affection of sensibility by the effects of the subject-produced ether.

This mirrors Kant's argument for the synthetic unity of apperception in the B-edition Transcendental Deduction. However, Kant's main concern here is not the unity of representations in one consciousness, but the unity of moving forces in one *space*. This brings his account closer to the A-edition Deduction's synthesis of apprehension in intuition. There, Kant argues that *a priori* representations of space or time are *produced* 'through the synthesis of the manifold which sensibility presents in its original receptivity' (CPR A100). The representation of ether appears to be a variant of the pure synthesis of apprehension. It results from stage-one receptivity and takes place at the level of intuition. However, it becomes clear that this original receptivity is inseparable from spontaneity, for in the sections of the *Opus Postumum* known as the *Selbstsetzungslehre*, Kant suggests that spontaneous self-positing is bound up with this original affective relation that results in the representation of ether. In stage-one receptivity, the 'I' appears to itself as a corporeal body that is affected by moving forces, and represents its spontaneity in terms of its own capacity to affect other bodies.[19] Since our *a priori* consciousness of ourselves involves the awareness and exercise of moving forces,

it must arise with the 'pure synthesis' of moving forces that occurs in the production of ether.

Thus, it seems that in the same move that the senses are affected by the moving forces and prompted to represent them as a collective unity, the self is posited as a body affected by and exercising moving forces. Self-positing is also the positing of the ether as the single object of perception. As Förster puts it:

> Self-affection and affection through objects must thus be regarded as two sides of the same coin: 'positing and perception, spontaneity and receptivity, the objective and subjective relation, are simultaneous; because they are identical as to time, as appearances of how the subject is *affected* – thus are given *a priori* in the same *actus*' [OP 22:466, p. 132].[20]

The simultaneity of our being affected by the moving forces, our synthesizing them into a collective unity and our activity of self-positing suggests that receptivity and spontaneity have become less distinct than they were in the first *Critique*. Self-consciousness, if it does arise with our being affected by moving forces, must already be present in sensibility. That means receptivity is no longer strictly passive. As Tuschling remarks, the effect is to 'blur the opposition between intuition and thought, between their transcendental functions, and between conceptual and intuitive determinations of existence'.[21] Beiser concurs that 'understanding and sensibility are no longer static, given, innate, and separate faculties, but expressions or manifestations of a single underlying activity' of self-positing.[22] This reunification of understanding and sensibility was just what Maimon had ordered.

In this complicated reconfiguration of the transcendental deduction, moving forces exist independently of human understanding, but their unity in one whole is the product of a mind which simultaneously posits itself as interacting with these forces. Stage-one receptivity (bare affection) is possible without this productive move, but not stage-two receptivity (perception); all that we *perceive* in receptivity is produced in spontaneity. The determination of the self is, in this sense, also the determination of all its experiential content. 'I am an object of myself and of my representations. That there is something outside me is my own product' (OP 22:82, p. 189). This is the position that finally enables Kant to make the transition to physics: because we produce the whole of the moving forces, we can extract them in scientific investigation. The understanding 'anticipates perception according to the uniquely

possible forms of motion' by 'inserting' the moving forces into the manifold (OP 22:502, p. 146). Physics thereby becomes possible as a system of *a priori* knowledge of the moving forces of sense objects. 'Only those forces which we insert into phenomena can we extract from what is empirical […]. Not observation but experimentation is the means to the discovery of nature and its forces' (OP 22:504, p. 148).

There has been considerable and justified speculation as to whether Kant's focus on self-positing reflects the influence of Fichte. But there is another thinker whose ideas more closely anticipate Kant's in this regard, who we know Kant admired (at least initially): I want to suggest that Kant narrows the gap between understanding and sensibility in response to *Maimon's* demand that understanding produce the content of experience. Kant does not follow Maimon in arguing that matter is *solely* the product of the understanding; nor does he adopt his view that sensibility is merely a confused form of understanding.[23] Yet he suggests that far from being utterly separate, receptivity is in fact saturated with spontaneity. Not just the form but the *content* of perceptions is the product of the subject, such that our spatiotemporal intuitions are largely the product of thought. Although sensibility continues to be affected by the given, and the understanding continues to determine it through concepts, Kant has to some extent closed the gap that Maimon identified. Ether fills the spaces not only between material objects, but also between 'pure receptivity' and 'pure spontaneity', and between the given and conceptually determined 'possible experience'.

Here we might recall Deleuze's remark that 'the mistake of dogmatism is always to fill that which separates, [whereas] that of empiricism is to leave external what is separated' (DR 170). Dogmatism leaves no space between a determinable object and its conceptual determination, whereas empiricism leaves them separate and external to one another. There was, on Deleuze's terms, 'too much empiricism' in the first *Critique*, and 'too much dogmatism' among the post-Kantians. The *Opus Postumum*, in contrast to both these extremes, narrows the gap between the determinable object and its determinant by suggesting that determination is a relation internal to the object that is both transcendental and genetic; yet it does so without collapsing determinable and determinant into an identity. That is, Kant achieves what is in Deleuze's view a more profound transcendental philosophy, without making the dogmatic mistake. Instead, Kant suggests that the determinable (moving forces received by the subject) and the determinant (moving forces spontaneously activated by the subject) are immanently bound up with one another, but in a way that preserves and generates their difference.

The difference of the 'fractured I' (discussed in Chapter 6) is there in the late Kant's self-positing subject, and it is there too in its product, the Idea of ether which may be said to 'swarm in the fracture' (DR 169).

In narrowing the gap between receptivity and spontaneity, Kant meets the demand Maimon and Deleuze share: that he account genetically for real experience. The production of ether by the subject is the production of a whole in which the real of sensation is constituted. The ether is not another name for the noumenal or the supersensible substrate: the ether is the *real* and *ideal* product of the spontaneous subject, from which is actualized what is already in it virtually. The transcendental conditions for any possible experience here become the genetic conditions for a specific real experience.

The organic remainder: Is ether Spinozistic?

If Kant concedes to Maimon that a whole of experience, produced by the subject, is both a transcendental condition of possible experience and the genetic ground of every perception, then to what extent does Kant implicitly adopt a kind of Spinozism? We will see in this section that despite superficial similarities to Spinoza's substance, the ether cannot be understood as the whole of being, or even as the whole of nature. That is because the ether is unable to account for organic nature.

Evidently Kant does not fully accept Maimon's Spinozistic idealism. Maimon had argued that the entire content of experience was produced by the finite intellect, whereas Kant retains a place for a given object not produced by the subject. In this respect, Kant's basic structure of experience, with its division between matter and form, is preserved, although the terms have shifted ground.[24] The distinction between sensibility and understanding is blurred, but is not overcome. The understanding, in producing the ether, relies on the senses being affected by moving forces: it remains a discursive understanding dependent on receptivity. Once we have produced the ether, we proceed from the representation of a whole to the representation of its parts, just like the intuitive intellect described in the *Critique of Judgment*. But this process rests on the familiar synthetic procedure of discursive understanding, which 'can regard a real whole of nature only as the joint effect of the motive forces of the parts' (CJ 5:407). Notwithstanding its new productive role in the *Opus Postumum*, Kant's understanding remains discursive, and is not like the finite intuitive intellect proposed by Maimon.

Nevertheless, it appears that Kant has introduced a quasi-Spinozistic 'whole of matter' that our understanding produces, from which to take

the parts of matter and our perceptions of them. Since in this move we proceed 'from the *synthetically universal* (the intuition of a whole as a whole) to the particular', it would seem that there can be no contingency in the relations of the parts with respect to the whole (CJ 5:407). That is, in physics we know the whole system of laws in advance, such that the particular laws of matter (discovered in experience) are guaranteed to harmonize with the understanding. Due to the ether, our understanding can fully determine material particulars when it encounters them in experience.[25] There is no contingency here, and no need for reflective judgement or a principle of purposiveness distinct from mechanism. Does ether mean that contingency has been eradicated from nature, and that we need no longer posit purposive causes in it? If so, Kant's most powerful objection to Spinozism – that it cannot account for natural purposes – would be rendered ineffective, for the ether would seem to be subject to the same criticism.

Kant appears to acknowledge that ether has Spinozistic overtones, claiming several times that as the absolute unity of possible experience, ether is 'the One and All' of outer sense objects (OP 21:586, p. 93; 22:99, p. 196). While Kant's conscious use of this Spinozistic phrase may be an attempt to connect his position to those of Fichte and Schelling, it may equally signal the respect in which he thinks ether *is* akin to Spinoza's substance. Kant's main objection to Spinozism in the *Critique of Judgment* was that it could not account for purposes in nature because substance is a mere ontological unity lacking unity of purpose. Unity of purpose, Kant argued there, cannot be thought unless natural forms are contingent, 'and yet Spinoza has taken this contingency away from them and has thus also deprived these forms of everything intentional' (CJ 5:393). With the ether, Kant too has taken contingency away from natural forms, and the ether would seem to lack that unity of purpose needed to explain purposiveness. This Kant entirely admits: the ether, like Spinozistic substance, cannot account for purposiveness. But instead of attempting to explain purposive nature through a substance that lacks unity of purpose (as he believes Spinoza does), Kant argues that we must look to a non-material, non-ethereal, source.

Although the ether is 'spontaneous' in generating its own activity, Kant denies that it is a force of life. The ether is strictly material, and Kant maintains that the concept of 'living matter' is contradictory. Ether therefore has a power of self-activity that is not that of an understanding: it includes a *vis viva* or 'living force' sufficient to move and produce inorganic bodies by impact, but not a *vis vivifica* or 'vivifying force' that would be needed to produce *organized* bodies (OP 22:210, p. 30).[26]

The ether's material forces cannot organize bodies or produce natural purposes. Organic bodies are contingent with respect to the laws of physical bodies. They are defined in much the same way as they are in the *Critique of Judgment*: 'an organic body is [...] a body, every part of which is there *for the sake of the other* [... or] in which the inner form of the whole precedes the concept of the composition of all its parts'. Each of its parts contains 'the absolute unity of the principle of the existence and motion of all others in the whole' (OP 21:210, p. 64).

This is precisely the kind of unity that cannot be supplied by the ether. An organic body cannot be generated merely by impact and cohesion; in order to understand its generation, we must posit an immaterial principle, 'possessing an indivisible unity in its power of representation':

> Such a body cannot derive its organization merely from the moving forces of matter. A single (thus, immaterial) being must be assumed as the mover outside or within this body – whether as part of the world of sense, or as a being distinct from it. For matter cannot organize itself and act according to purposes. Whether this being (a world-soul, as it were) possesses understanding, or whether merely a capacity which is analogous to the understanding in its effects, is a judgment which lies beyond the limits of one's insight.
>
> (OP 22:548, p. 85)

Insofar as they are physical bodies, organic bodies are explained by the ether; but insofar as they are organized, we must look to an immaterial cause. Whether part of the world of sense or outside it, this cause cannot itself be composed of the moving forces of nature. Thus it cannot be either the whole or a part of the ether. The possibility of natural purposes cannot be anticipated in advance or fully determined in experience; these bodies can only be judged reflectively. So organic bodies can only be included in the transition to physics by analogy. The fact that we are ourselves self-moving bodies means that we may introduce 'organic forces' into our representation of the ether. Though we have no knowledge of these forces, we introduce them by analogy with the moving forces of bodies generally and with our own faculty of desire. In this way, we are able to think of organic matter systematically and analogously with inorganic matter, in terms of the purposive interactions of species (OP 21:213, p. 66).

Kant's criticism of hylozoism in the *Opus Postumum* is consistent with that of the third *Critique*, yet he appears to be more open to the possibility of an immaterial purposive cause within nature. This is reflected in his

ambiguous comments on the world-soul, such as that in the passage quoted above. He is critical of hylozoist theories such as Schelling's, which posits a world-soul that unifies the organic and inorganic into a universal organism.[27] For Kant, a world-soul cannot have this function: it can only be an immaterial principle invoked to explain the purposiveness of organic nature. In this respect, Kant comes closer to Maimon's conception of the world-soul, an account of which he had read in 1790.[28] Maimon argues that the world-soul is an intelligent power for actualizing the forms of things according to the constitution of their matter, giving bodies their organization and animals their life; 'it is the ground of all possible agency'.[29] At times, Kant seems to affirm this view (for example, OP 22:78, p. 186; 22:97, p. 195). Like Maimon, he is clear that God is not the world-soul (OP 22:58, p. 215; 21:19, p. 225; 21:29–30, pp. 233–4), and in some places seems equally clear that the world-soul is not really an intelligent cause, but an efficient cause analogous to intelligence (OP 22:507, p. 149). Yet he leaves undecided whether the world-soul should be thought as outside organic bodies or as internal to them, as Maimon believes (see, for example, OP 21:183–4, p. 60; 22:295, p. 102; 22:504–7, pp. 147–9). The immaterial cause of purposive nature *may* be thought in terms of a force internal to matter that builds it from within (see OP 22:97, p. 195).

In contrast to his strict delimitation of 'life' to free, rational beings in his earlier texts, the *Opus Postumum* allows that life can be attributed to all organic beings (OP 22:99, p. 197). This suggests, at the very least, that Kant's rejection of hylozoism is moderated by a new willingness to consider nature as purposively organized from within. Nonetheless, Kant is clear that we must continue to assume an *immaterial* principle in order to account for organic nature, and this reveals that his rejection of Spinozism is of the same tenor as that of the *Critique of Judgment*. Kant maintains that something non-natural, which we must think as intelligent, must be assumed to account for organic nature. What has changed is the need to accommodate this idea of a non-natural cause to the new ether theory. But even if such a cause is thought to be *immanent* to nature, it would not be Spinozistic, since it would also have to be thought as intelligent, intentional, and purposive.

The exclusion of organic bodies means that the ether encompasses neither the whole of reality nor the whole of matter. Ether therefore cannot be aligned with Spinoza's substance, or even with the Baylean misinterpretation of it (according to which substance is equivalent to the whole of material nature). This is further demonstrated by the place of free subjectivity in the *Opus Postumum*. The human being, as

both an organic body and a free subject, is not caused by the ether; as we have seen, it stands outside it in an affective relation to it. Furthermore, the need for the subject to contribute pure concepts to possible experience has not changed. The role of the subject is what continues to hold Kant apart from Spinoza, and also from Maimon and Deleuze. Despite his affirmation of real *immanent* transcendental conditions of actuality in the ether, the need for 'external' transcendental conditions in the form of pure concepts has not disappeared. Kant's transcendental and genetic condition for the real is positioned alongside a transcendent subject that must still overlay it with those 'external' concepts not to be found in the ether itself. Kant's adoption of the ether, though it provides a more immanent account of the genesis of experience, is not a move to a wholly immanent system.

Conclusion: Kant on Spinoza: The Last Words

The final sections of Kant's *Opus Postumum*, written near the end of his life, include multiple references to Spinoza. Indeed, with the exception of Newton, Spinoza is the most frequently named figure in the text.[1] These comments are most often found amidst Kant's reflections on man's relation to God and the world, as both a 'moral–practical' subject following the categorical imperative, and a 'technical–practical' subject acting in nature. The following are some examples of these cryptic comments, numbered for ease of reference:

1. God and the world are both a maximum. The transcendental ideality of the subject thinking itself makes itself into a person. Its divinity. I am in the highest being. According to Spinoza, I see myself in God who is legislative within *me*. (OP 22:54, p. 213)
2. According to Spinoza's transcendental idealism, we intuit ourselves in God. The categorical imperative does not presuppose a highest commanding substance as outside me, but lies within my own reason. (OP 22:56, p. 214)
3. God and the world. Nature and freedom. Spinozism and naturalism. Transcendental idealism and personality. The real, which cannot be a sense-object, and the real which must necessarily be such, if it is to be a given object – as space and time are each only one. (OP 22:59, p. 216)
4. *Spinoza's* idea of the highest being – of intuiting all supersensible beings in God. Moral–practical reason. *Transcendental idealism*. […] The transcendental idealism of that of which our understanding is itself the originator. Spinoza. To intuit everything in God. (OP 21:12–14, pp. 220–2)
5. We can know no objects, either in us or as lying outside us, except insofar as we insert in ourselves the *actus* of cognition, according to

> certain laws. The spirit of man is Spinoza's God (so far as the formal element of all sense-objects is concerned), and transcendental idealism is realism in an absolute sense. (OP 21:99, p. 255)

These peculiar and compelling passages raise a number of questions. Does Kant see a parallel between our own inner sense of God's moral legislation of the categorical imperative within us, and Spinoza's view that we intuit ourselves in God? Does Kant refer to Maimon's Spinozism when he writes of 'the transcendental idealism of that of which our understanding is itself the originator' and of the real which must necessarily be a sense object? Does Kant suggest that his own doctrine of self-positing gives 'the spirit of man' the kind of intuitive intellect pertaining to Spinoza's God? Finally, we might note that Kant's Spinoza comments arise with his return to the central problem of the *Critique of Judgment*: the unification of man's moral destiny with a naturalistic universe. Do his remarks on Spinoza reflect – or even repudiate – his criticism of Spinoza in the third *Critique*?

There are many avenues for speculation here, and little evidence to guide us. Different commentators have, understandably, drawn different conclusions from these comments. Given Kant's move to a more immanent conception of nature, we might assume that his remarks on Spinoza reveal an affinity that he had only recently noticed, or could only lately admit. Edwards pursues this line of thinking, arguing that Kant affirms Spinozism in order to move beyond the first *Critique*'s definition of transcendental idealism as a merely formal idealism. He goes as far as to state that Kant characterized 'his final system of transcendental idealism as a form of Spinozism by way of reflection on the epistemological implications of his dynamistic conception of material reality'.[2] I find this interpretation implausible, though it is more attractive than Allison's view that these cryptic references to Spinoza are nothing more than old-fashioned accusations of enthusiasm.[3] Both these accounts are limited by the fact that they take Kant's pre-critical position on Spinozism – as enthusiasm, dogmatism, and atheism – to be definitive of his attitude towards Spinoza. They then interpret his *Opus Postumum* remarks in this light, as either overturning that position or confirming it. What both fail to see is that Kant's position on Spinoza changes over the critical period, in relation to other philosophers' attempts to accommodate Spinozism to naturalism, idealism, and transcendental idealism itself. It is this change that I have tried to examine in this book, and which must form the context for an interpretation of Kant's final remarks on Spinoza.

My commentary on these remarks is relatively brief, because it is so difficult to say anything conclusive about them. Instead of speculating about what Kant might have meant, or trying to push Kant's final writings in the direction of absolute idealism or a philosophy of immanence, I can only approach these passages in light of the interpretation of Kant's relation to Spinoza developed over the course of this book. My position, then, is that Allison and Edwards may both be mistaken to believe Kant is referring to Spinoza at all in these late sections. As we have seen, Kant has little interest in Spinoza himself, but a great deal of interest in the late eighteenth-century Spinoza revival. There is no reason to think that Kant acquired an interest in Spinoza in 1800, but there are very good reasons to think that his awareness of Spinozism was heightened at that time. For despite his warnings against such developments in the third *Critique*, Kant was watching transcendental idealism being remodelled into new systems uniting nature, God, and man, following the plans set out by Herder in *God: Some Conversations*. The name 'Spinoza' in these cryptic passages most likely refers to Herder, and his increasing influence on young transcendental idealists such as Schelling.[4]

To see why this is so, we must focus on the Spinoza remarks in the latest sections of the *Opus Postumum*, written in 1800–1.[5] There are two points of Kant's interest: Spinoza's notion that 'we intuit ourselves in God', and, more puzzlingly, 'Spinoza's transcendental idealism'. These ideas are linked together, as if Spinoza's transcendental idealism is supposed to consist in his belief that we intuit ourselves, and all things, in God (as in quotes 2 and 4 above). Edwards surmises from this that Kant actively sought to integrate Spinozism into transcendental idealism, whereas Allison believes that Kant mistakenly wrote 'transcendental idealism' when he meant to castigate Spinoza's dogmatic idealism.[6] Neither of these suggestions is convincing.

Kant had attributed to Spinoza the doctrine that we 'intuit all things in God' 20 years earlier, in his Reflections on philosophical enthusiasm (NF 18:434–8). There, Spinozism is linked to the Platonic doctrine that we have immediate intuitions of archetypes in the divine understanding. Spinozism is said to exhibit an even higher degree of enthusiasm in holding 'that we are ourselves in God and feel or intuit our existence in Him' (NF 18:438). Kant's conclusion is that Spinozism, having stepped definitively beyond the bounds of possible experience, 'is the true conclusion of dogmatic metaphysics' (NF 18:436). But Kant wrote those Reflections before reading Jacobi, Herder, or Maimon (or indeed Schelling), and before writing the third *Critique* and the ether proofs.

Kant's repetition of the phrase 'to intuit everything in God' in the *Opus Postumum* is therefore not the reiteration of his pre-critical sentiment that Spinozism is dogmatism, but reflects Kant's more complex understanding of Spinozism, refracted through the variants of naturalism and idealism that he was struggling against.

The connection of 'intuiting ourselves in God' with 'Spinoza's transcendental idealism' suggests that Kant has latched on to an idea which, rightly or wrongly, he associates with both Spinoza and transcendental idealism. That idea is that we intuit the supersensible aspects of ourselves – our moral–practical reason – as being in God. Seemingly in connection with both Spinoza and his own transcendental idealism, Kant quotes Paul the Apostle: 'In him we live, move, and have our being' (OP 22:55, p. 214, *cf.* 22:118, p. 201). This is a line Herder used prominently in *God* to illustrate the compatibility between Spinozism and Christianity.[7] Kant, probably aware of Herder's use of it, uses this line to stress the distinction between Spinozism and his own system. By attributing the notion of 'intuiting ourselves in God' to transcendental idealism, Kant does not mean that we intuit ourselves as existing in a metaphysically real divine entity. Rather, through our consciousness of the moral law, we have an idea of our moral selves that is dependent on our idea of God. This idea is, of course, practical and not theoretical. But this moral–practical intuition enables us to connect our actions in nature with our moral aims and faith. This is a familiar Kantian theme: as material bodies, we are part of nature, and as moral persons, we are part of the supersensible. The challenge is to achieve the unity of nature and freedom, as Kant did in the *Critique of Judgment*.

Achieving the unity of nature and freedom was a problem Spinoza avoided, in Kant's view, by doing away with freedom altogether. According to Kant's understanding of Spinoza in the late 1790s, to intuit ourselves in God is to intuit ourselves in a purposeless nature, as beings wholly determined by efficient causes. Kant had argued in the third *Critique* that the Spinozistic ontological unity of God and the world precludes freedom, moral action, and our final moral purpose in nature. For a Kantian, by contrast – as Kant makes clear in this section of the *Opus Postumum* – the unity of God and the world is the ultimate problem that man must solve. Man must effect this unity, not only through adopting the right way of thinking about the unity of nature and freedom (as set out in the third *Critique*), but also by actually *being* the hinge between God and world. In positing himself, man posits both the theoretical idea of a unified world and the practical idea of God. Kant states repeatedly

that man is the being who connects God and the world by virtue of positing his existence as a moral being with free will.

> Man, as animal, belongs to the world, but, as person, also to the beings who are capable of rights – and, consequently, have freedom of the will. [...] God, the world, and I: the thinking being in the world who connects them.
>
> God and the world are the two objects of transcendental philosophy; thinking man is the subject, predicate and copula. The subject who combines them in one proposition. These are logical relations in a proposition, not dealing with the existence of objects, but merely bringing what is formal in their relations of these objects to synthetic unity. God, the world, and I, man, a world-being myself, who combines the two.
>
> (OP 21:36–7, pp. 238–9)

As both a moral being and an inhabitant of the world, the subject as 'rational world-being' thinks God and the world 'in real relation to each other' (OP 21:27, p. 231). To *think* a system of God and the world and thereby to *be* their meeting-point is what Kant now calls the 'highest standpoint of transcendental philosophy' (for example, OP 21:34, p. 237).

In this sense, Kant suggests, we do indeed 'intuit ourselves in God', for to think of ourselves as at once natural and moral beings is to be 'in the world' while also having an idea of ourselves that is bound up with the idea of God. Perhaps Kant implies that this awesome sense of ourselves, as connecting the world and God through our own self-consciousness, explains the tendency of Spinoza and his followers to fall prey to 'the enormous idea of intuiting all things, and *oneself, in God*' (a line Kant prefaces with the name 'Spinoza' at OP 21:50, p. 241). Yet the Spinozists are wrong to conflate God and world on the basis of this self-consciousness, he thinks, because freedom and morality demand that we think of ourselves as connected to a God *distinct* from nature. The distinctness of God and the world is necessary for morality; and this distinctness is exactly the theme of this part of the *Opus Postumum*, through Kant's repetitive refrain of 'God, the world, and man in the world'. Many passages insist that God is the world's author, not its inhabitant, and is definitely not a world-soul (for example, OP 21:31, p. 234). As ever, Kant does not claim the necessary existence of God or freedom, but rather the necessity of assuming them for the unity of transcendental philosophy. His point,

just as in the third *Critique*, is that God must be thought to be separate from the world in order to understand the latter as a suitable arena for moral action.

This does not yet explain Kant's puzzling references to 'Spinoza's transcendental idealism'. To understand this, we must look at 'intuiting all things in God' in a different light. We saw in Chapter 7 that Kant suggests that *intuiting in God* is Spinoza's way of providing the formal conditions of possible experience. Kant believes Spinoza's intuitions are the 'archetypes' by which all things must be seen to be in God, preceding our perceptions and thoughts about things; and Kant suggests that he too allows that some ideas may be archetypal intuitions in roughly this sense (namely, the idea of ether; OP 21:51, p. 242). Now, in this part of the text, Kant repeatedly defines transcendental idealism as philosophy that provides the system of ideas that precedes and conditions possible experience. One of his final remarks is 'transcendental philosophy precedes the assertion of things that are thought, as their archetype, [the place] in which they must be set' (OP 21:7, p. 256). If transcendental philosophy provides archetypes for thinking and perceiving, then Spinoza is indeed a 'transcendental idealist'. For Spinoza intuits archetypes, systematized in God, that make thought and experience possible. Spinoza's God is 'a principle of forms in a system of all relations', and this is how Kant defines transcendental idealism at OP 21:94 (p. 254).

Furthermore, Kant explains that transcendental philosophy is 'the system of ideas of the thinking subject' that unites the formal element of knowledge into one principle of the possibility of experience. In this way, transcendental idealism is the unity of the theoretically and morally self-determining subject (OP 21:87, p. 251; 21:92, p. 253). According to Kant's understanding of Spinoza, God is the only subject; because all things are intuited in God, God necessarily contains the formal element of all experience. This explains Kant's remark that 'the spirit of man is Spinoza's God (so far as the formal element of all sense-objects is concerned) and transcendental idealism is realism in an absolute sense' (OP 21:99, p. 255). That is, Spinoza's God, like Kant's thinking subject, contains the system of ideas that provides the formal element of all sense objects. But a variant of transcendental idealism that gives this role to God (rather than man) is transcendental idealism 'in an absolute sense': it substitutes for subjective formal conditions *absolute* formal conditions. That kind of transcendental idealism is metaphysical realism. 'Spinoza's transcendental idealism, taken literally, is transcendent', Kant says (OP 21:22, p. 228).

By contrast, Kant's transcendental idealism emerges from the human subject, who holds God and world apart even in thinking them in a systematic unity:

> Transcendental philosophy is the act of consciousness whereby the subject becomes the originator of itself and, thereby, also of the whole object of technical–practical and moral–practical reason in one system – ordering all things in God, as in one system.
>
> (OP 21:78, p. 245)

Spinoza's God, too, is one act of consciousness that originates itself and unifies the world with God, thereby ordering all things in God in one system. But Spinoza's God, in Kant's view, collapses God and world into a unity that does away with freedom and morality. Only Kant's self-determining subject unifies the world (the object of technical–practical reason) and God (the object of moral–practical reason), while maintaining their difference. And only Kant's subject unifies theoretical and practical philosophy into one system, while recognizing them as distinct areas of thought. Kantian transcendental idealism is distinct from Spinozism and from new forms of idealism, both ontologically and methodologically. The thinking subject unifies while maintaining differences, because these differences – between the material and the ideal, between being and thought – are the structure of his self-determination.

It is plausible that Kant's motivation for connecting Spinozism to transcendental idealism is once again to discourage those who were trying to conflate the two. This suggests that the purpose of Kant's Spinoza references is his ongoing criticism of the Spinozistic naturalism previously associated with Herder. It is particularly important that Kant revives this critique, since the problem that led Kant to refute Spinozism in the *Critique of Judgment* had raised itself again: it appeared to be possible to hold elements of transcendental idealism and Spinozism simultaneously. Kant may have thought he had refuted Spinozism in his earlier text, but evidently not convincingly enough for young thinkers to abandon it. By 1800, Kant had seen the rise of 'refined Spinozism' and its development through *Naturphilosophie* in the first texts of Schelling. Kant connects Schelling to Spinozism by twice citing a review of his 1800 *System of Transcendental Idealism*, a review that had cast Schelling as the greatest representative of the new Kantian philosophy (OP 21:87, p. 251; 21:97, p. 254). G. C. Lichtenberg, who was sympathetic to both Kantian idealism and 'refined Spinozism', is also named in this context.[8] In other words, the latest sections of the

Opus Postumum do not suggest a new interest in Spinozism so much as an ongoing and heightened concern over those who wanted to fuse it with transcendental idealism.

Moreover, given the striking (even if superficial) resemblance of the ether to Spinozistic substance, Kant needed conclusively to distinguish his position from that of the neo-Spinozists. If the ether proofs were to be published as part of Kant's 'Transition from the Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science to Physics' (and it seems that Kant did intend some of this material for publication), he would need to distinguish his account of ether sharply from those other accounts of unified dynamical nature. He does this by showing that ether is not as unified as those other accounts. Ether explains inorganic matter alone, and cannot explain natural purposes. Nor does Kant intend it to: the admission that ether produces purposively would be to capitulate to hylozoism. Organic nature requires 'an immaterial principle, possessing an indivisible unity in its power of representation' (OP 22:547, p. 85). Although Kant is equivocal about the source of this principle, he is clear that it would have to be something distinct from matter and non-natural, even if immanent to nature. Kant's ether is strictly distinct from God, freedom, and natural purposes, and it is that point that Kant needs to stress in order to distinguish his view from Herderian and Schellingian Spinozism.

This is, I think, the context for Kant's Spinoza comments, and, while they are undoubtedly cryptic, their purpose is surely to make Spinozism once more the foil to Kant's own view that God must be thought as the external, intelligent, and purposive creator of the world. If we fail to think God in that way, and if we fail to understand ourselves as the 'hinge' between God and the world, then Kant thinks we resign ourselves to a world constituted and explained exclusively by forces, a world in which morality and faith are impossible. In 1800, Kant needs to show that science and faith are compatible without being collapsed together, and that if purposes are to be part of our judgements of nature, God and the world must be understood as transcendent intentional cause and separate effect. Kant continues to believe that science and faith, mechanism and teleology, can be reconciled only if Spinozism is put to rest.

I have suggested in this book, however, that we need not see Kant's rejection of a Spinozistic philosophy of immanence as a philosophically conservative insistence on a transcendent subject and transcendent God. Instead, particularly when understood through Deleuze's interpretation of Kant, we can see this rejection of Spinozistic unity as the

upholding of a principle of difference. Ultimately, as Deleuze suggests, Kant in this respect shares with Spinoza a fundamental belief in the irreducibility of the difference of being and thought. If Deleuze is right in his interpretation of Kant and Spinoza, then what Kant objects to is not Spinoza, but Spinozism – the conflation of God, man, and nature in an indifferent unity. In this respect, we might see Kant and Spinoza on the side of a philosophy of difference, over against the German Idealists.

Notes

Series Editor's Preface

1. One of the many ways this misunderstanding can be charted has been set out by Karl Ameriks, *Kant and the Fate of Autonomy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).
2. This can be seen, for example, in the resort made at a number of junctions to the work of John H. Zammito, *The Genesis of Kant's Critique of Judgment* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

Introduction

1. Paul Franks, *All or Nothing: Systematicity, Transcendental Arguments and Skepticism in German Idealism* (London: Harvard University Press, 2005). See also Franks, 'All or nothing: systematicity and nihilism in Jacobi, Reinhold, and Maimon', in Karl Ameriks (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to German Idealism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 95–116; and Franks, 'From Kant to Post-Kantian Idealism', *Supplement to the Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 76:1 (2002), 229–46.
2. Frederick C. Beiser, *The Fate of Reason: German Philosophy from Kant to Fichte* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univeristy Press, 1987); Beiser, *German Idealism: The Struggle Against Subjectivism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002); John H. Zammito, *The Genesis of Kant's Critique of Judgment* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992). See also Zammito, *Kant, Herder, and the Birth of Anthropology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).
3. A longer book would need to look at the conflations of Kant and Spinozism by the German Idealists. The scope of this book is limited to three attempts at this conflation during Kant's lifetime, with the addition of Deleuze who, as I suggest, can be seen to be continuous with these thinkers in respect of his engagement with Kant.
4. Hamann to Jacobi, 30 November 1785, quoted in Zammito, *Genesis*, p. 233.
5. This ultimately is Henry E. Allison's conclusion in 'Kant's Critique of Spinoza', in Genevieve Lloyd (ed.), *Spinoza: Critical Assessments,* Vol. IV (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 188–212.
6. See Zammito, *Genesis*, pp. 241–3.
7. In addition to the texts cited in notes 1 and 2 above, see Willi Goetschel, *Spinoza's Modernity: Mendelssohn, Lessing, and Heine* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004) and, for a comprehensive history, Jonathan I. Israel, *Radical Enlightenment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).
8. Beiser, *Fate of Reason*, p. 44.
9. Reinhold's 'Letters on the Kantian Philosophy' appeared in *Der Teutsche Merkur* in 1786–7. See Beiser, *Fate of Reason*, pp. 226–36, and George di Giovanni, 'The First Twenty Years of Critique: the Spinoza Connection',

in Paul Guyer (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Kant* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 417–47.
10. Israel pp. 628–36.
11. Pierre Bayle, *Dictionnaire historique et critique* (Paris: Desoer, 1820), pp. 438–9 (translation mine).
12. Pierre-François Moreau, 'Spinoza's Reception and Influence', trans. Roger Ariew, in Lloyd (ed.), *Spinoza: Critical Assessments,* Vol. IV, pp. 1–22, here at p. 3.
13. Christian Wolff, *Theologica naturalis*, no. 716, quoted in J. C. Morrison, 'Christian Wolff's Criticisms of Spinoza', in Lloyd (ed.), *Spinoza: Critical Assessments*, Vol. IV, pp. 122–37, here at p. 127. On accusations of Wolff's Spinozism, see Israel pp. 541–58.
14. See 'Comments on Spinoza's Philosophy' in G. W. Leibniz, *Philosophical Essays*, ed. and trans. Roger Ariew and Daniel Garber (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1989), pp. 272–81.
15. For Hume's criticism of Spinoza see David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), pp. 240–51. For an argument for their affinity see Wim Klever, 'Hume contra Spinoza?' and 'More about Hume's debt to Spinoza', in Lloyd (ed.), *Spinoza: Critical Assessments*, Vol. IV, pp. 138–53 and 154–71.
16. On Spinoza in German universities see Israel pp. 541–62 and 628–63, Beiser, *Fate of Reason*, pp. 48–60, and David Bell, *Spinoza in Germany from 1670 to the Age of Goethe* (London: Institute of Germanic Studies, 1984). On the publication, banning and illicit circulating of Spinoza's texts see Israel pp. 275–94.
17. Beiser, *Fate of Reason*, pp. 50–1.
18. The 'First Conversation' of Herder's *God* illustrates eighteenth-century attitudes to Spinoza seen from the perspective of the end of that century.
19. Manfred Kuehn, *Kant: A Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 80–3.
20. Allison, 'Kant's Critique of Spinoza', p. 193.
21. Kant, *Lectures on Ethics*, trans. and ed. Peter Heath and J. B. Schneewind (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 27:11–12.
22. Zammito, *Genesis*, p. 187.
23. Hamann to Jacobi, 3 October 1785, quoted in Zammito, *Genesis*, p. 231.
24. A fuller version of my interpretation of Spinoza can be found in my book *Spinoza's Ethics: An Edinburgh Philosophical Guide* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010). Of the many interpretations of Spinoza now available, those I find most compelling (though in very different ways) are H. F. Hallett, *Benedict de Spinoza: The Elements of his Philosophy* (London: Athlone, 1957); Stuart Hampshire, *Spinoza* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987); Edwin Curley, *Behind the Geometrical Method: A Reading of Spinoza's Ethics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988); and especially Gilles Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, trans. Robert Hurley (San Francisco: City Lights, 1988).
25. Or 'potency in act'. See Hallett p. 19.
26. That a thing can be both the inherent property of a substance and the effect of its causality was a particular point of contention for Kant, and remains a point of debate in contemporary Spinoza scholarship. For some discussion of this problem see Steven Nadler, *Spinoza's Ethics: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 81–3.

27. For more extensive explanations of this difficult material see Hallett pp. 31–43 and Curley pp. 30–48.
28. See Letter 63 (Schuller to Spinoza) and Letter 64 (Spinoza to Schuller), CW 917–9.
29. The desire to develop a Spinozism without determinism, and to fuse it with a Kantian idea of human freedom, was a major point for the German Idealists, who are not covered in this book. See Dieter Henrich, *Between Kant and Hegel*, ed. David S. Pacini (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), pp. 92–3.

1 Jacobi's Provocative Suggestion

1. On the pantheism controversy, see Beiser, *Fate of Reason*, Chapter 2; Franks, *All or Nothing*, Chapter 1; and Zammito, *Genesis*, Chapter 11. For an alternative reading focusing on Mendelssohn and Lessing, see Goetschel, parts 2 and 3.
2. Kant, however, suggested that Mendelssohn's death had been caused by his 'overly severe discipline of the body' (15:942). See 'On the philosophers' medicine of the body', trans. Mary Gregor, in Kant, *Anthropology, History, and Education*, ed. Günther Zöller and Robert B. Louden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 182–91.
3. See Israel pp. 645–63. Goetschel has recently argued for the importance of these earlier sources for Jacobi and subsequent readers of Spinoza in Germany; see the introduction to his *Spinoza's Modernity*.
4. See Beiser, *Fate of Reason,* pp. 52–4, Bell, *Spinoza in Germany,* pp. 24–7, and especially Goetschel pp. 85–169.
5. This is not the view of Goetschel, who sees Jacobi's focus on the 'onto-theological' aspects of Spinoza's system to be a distortion of the critical force of Spinozism (pp. 23–32).
6. For a detailed account of Jacobi's critique of reason and defence of faith, see Beiser, *Fate of Reason,* pp. 75–91. See also Henrich, *Between Kant and Hegel*, Chapters 6 and 7.
7. Wolff was, however, responsible for establishing the epistemological priority of ontology, possibly in part to dispel accusations of Spinozism. See Jose Ferrater Mora, 'On the Early History of Ontology', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 24 (1963–4), pp. 36–47, and Lewis White Beck, *Early German Philosophers* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1969), pp. 256–75.
8. I provide a longer study of Kant's reformation of ontology in my unpublished doctoral thesis, *Kant's Productive Ontology* (University of Warwick, 2004).
9. See the 1787 'Supplement on Transcendental Idealism' to Jacobi's *David Hume on Faith* (MPW 331–8).
10. Beiser, *Fate of Reason*, p. 55.
11. Kant had already worked out a version of this argument in the 1755 *New Elucidation of the First Principles of Metaphysical Cognition*, 1:395–7, in Kant, *Theoretical Philosophy 1755–1770*, trans. and ed. David Walford and Ralf Meerbote (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 1–45. Kant also criticizes Wolff's definition of existence at LM 28:554 and CPR A230–1/B283–4.
12. See Henrich, *Between Kant and Hegel*, pp. 91–2.
13. While the suggestion that Kant transposes the 'infinite thought' of rationalism into the finite human mind is intriguing, there is a wide gulf between the infinite intellect of Spinoza's God and the transcendental apperception

of Kant's discursive understanding. Jacobi is not wrong to notice that both philosophers posit something immanent to the human mind that is similarly indeterminate and aparticular, but this claim amounts to little more than pointing out a rationalist element of Kant's theory of knowledge.

14. Paul Franks provides a comprehensive interpretation of this material, and argues that Jacobi thinks Spinoza can solve the third antinomy; see *All or Nothing*, pp. 98–108.
15. Indeed, the *Ethics* includes a series of demonstrations for these claims (E IP16C3, IP17C2, IP18, IP26, IP28).
16. For instance, Kant denies that the idea of an unconditioned cause is one to which we could climb through intermediary causes.
17. On the distinction between mathematical and metaphysical concepts of the infinite, see A. W. Moore, 'Aspects of the Infinite in Kant', *Mind*, New Series, 97 (1988), 205–23.
18. See also CPR A508–15/B536–43. In Jacobi's view, the problem with the thesis and antithesis positions in the antinomies is that they rely on this mathematical concept of the infinite.
19. Bell, *Spinoza in Germany,* p. 73.
20. Moore argues that Kant's space and time must be mathematically infinite and metaphysically finite (pp. 210–1). But Jacobi's suggestion, that space and time are metaphysically infinite due to the priority of the whole over the parts, is, I think, closer to Kant's view.
21. The passages are from the *Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect* (TIE 108, CW 29), and from Spinoza's Appendix Containing Metaphysical Thoughts to the *Principles of Cartesian Philosophy* (PPC App. Part 1, Chapter 1, CW 178–9).
22. See Franks, *All or Nothing,* p. 85: 'The Holistic requirement is that, in an adequate philosophical system, empirical items must be such that all their properties are determinable only within the context of a totality composed of other items and their properties. The Monistic requirement is that, in an adequate philosophical system, the absolute first principle must be immanent within the aforementioned totality, as its principle of unity'. Franks states that these two requirements entail that the first principle is impossible without its derivatives, and that between first principle and derivatives there cannot be a real, but only a modal, distinction (pp. 85–6). As I argue in the introduction, these latter claims are not strictly entailed by Spinoza's system (nor does Franks suggest that they are). They emerge from the Baylean interpretation of Spinozism, through Jacobi and Herder, to become influential for the German Idealists.
23. The review, probably by Schütz, is in *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung* 36, 11 Feb. 1786, quoted in Franks, *All or Nothing,* p. 90.
24. Beiser, *Fate of Reason,* pp. 54–5; Franks, *All or Nothing*, pp. 91–2.
25. Beck, *Early German Philosophers*, pp. 370–1.

2 Against Spinozistic Dogmatism

1. Hamann told Jacobi that Kant had read his book when it was published, but as Zammito remarks (*Genesis*, p. 401n22), Kant probably did not read it very closely.
2. di Giovanni, 'The First Twenty Years of Critique', p. 427.

3. Kant to Herz, 7 April 1786, C 10:442–3.
4. Schütz to Kant, February 1786, C 10:430–1.
5. Herz to Kant, 27 Feb. 1786, C 10:431–3.
6. Mendelssohn to Kant, 16 Oct. 1785, C 10:413–4.
7. See Jakob to Kant, 26 March 1786, C 10:435–8. Here too, Kant implies that Mendelssohn's argument presupposes the Spinozism and atheism it seeks to refute. This short piece appeared as a second preface to Jakob's 1786 text. See 'Some remarks on Ludwig Heinrich Jakob's *Examination of Mendelssohn's Morning Hours*', 8:151–4, trans. Günter Zöller, in Kant, *Anthropology, History, and Education*, pp. 176–81.
8. Zammito (*Genesis*, pp. 235–7) stresses that Biester's letter was decisive in making Kant act. On the consequences of this letter see also Beiser, *Fate of Reason*, Chapter 4.
9. Jacobi's *Wider Mendelssohns Beschuldigungen* appeared in April 1786. Excerpts translated in Gérard Vallée et al. (trans.), *The Spinoza Conversations Between Lessing and Jacobi: Text with Excerpts from the Ensuing Controversy* (London: University Press of America, 1988), pp. 151–60, here at p. 158.
10. Zammito, *Genesis*, pp. 241–2.
11. Pistorius's essay is quoted and discussed in Franks' *All or Nothing* (pp. 93–8). See also Franks, 'From Kant to Post-Kantian Idealism'.
12. Pistorius, review of *Erläuterungen über des Herrn Professor Kant 'Critik der reinen Vernunft' von Joh. Schultze*, quoted in Franks, *All or Nothing*, pp. 94–5.
13. Pistorius apologizes if his 'inferences […] present Mr. Kant's theory in a malicious light', but assures the reader that they do not 'prove anything against the Kantian theory' (quoted in Franks, *All or Nothing*, pp. 95–6).
14. The 1782 Garve-Feder review was particularly influential. See Beiser, *Fate of Reason*, pp. 172–7.
15. See di Giovanni, 'The First Twenty Years of Critique', pp. 426–7. Kant frequently uses accusations of 'artistry' in his *ad hominem* attacks on Jacobi, Mendelssohn and Herder.
16. For Kant's criticism of 'mathematical' philosophy, see CPR A712–38/B740–66.
17. Allison, 'Kant's Critique of Spinoza', pp. 192–3.
18. Leibniz makes a similar objection: 'It is completely alien to every sort of reason that a soul should be an idea. Ideas are purely abstract things, like numbers and shapes, and cannot act'; 'According to Spinoza, the mind is an idea and does not have ideas' (Leibniz, 'Comments on Spinoza's Philosophy', *Philosophical Essays*, pp. 277, 280).
19. Franks, *All or Nothing*, p. 87; see also pp. 108–12.
20. For further discussion of how Jacobi and his followers influenced the development of the second *Critique*, see Beiser, *Fate of Reason*, pp. 109–26, 188–92.
21. Franks offers extensive interpretation and discussion of this material; see *All or Nothing*, pp. 112–40.
22. Kant makes a similar point in the first *Critique* when he argues that God, as first cause, must be thought to transcend the totality of appearances and not merely the appearance initiating the series (which would make God causally connected to appearances).
23. I put aside the question of whether Spinoza can really be seen to resolve the third antinomy, or whether Jacobi really thinks he does, both of which are unimportant for my purposes.

24. Leibniz, 'Comments on Spinoza's Philosophy', *Philosophical Essays*, p. 275. I am not concerned with the accuracy of Kant's presentation of the Leibnizian or Mendelssohnian position here. For discussion of this, see Franks, *All or Nothing*, pp. 119–23.
25. Leibniz, 'Comments on Spinoza's Philosophy', *Philosophical Essays*, p. 279.
26. See Leibniz, *Theodicy*, trans. F.M. Huggard (Chicago: Open Court, 1985), paragraph 52, p. 151, and Spinoza, TIE 85 (CW 24).
27. Extension is, of course, one of the attributes of substance, which could be taken to be equivalent to space. But it is also possible to locate space in an infinite *mode* of substance: the infinite physical individual which is the expression of infinite motion and rest, and comprises all physical individuals as its parts. This is a decidedly non-Kantian understanding of space, and would make space a property of substance rather than an essential determination. The question of time in the *Ethics* is even more vexed. If time can be said to 'exist' for Spinoza, it must be a mode of substance, but there is some suggestion that durational time is imaginary and only eternity truly exists.

3 Herder and Spinozistic Naturalism

1. Beiser, *Fate of Reason*, pp. 158–9.
2. See, for example, Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*; Sylvain Zac, 'Life in the Philosophy of Spinoza', in Lloyd (ed.), *Spinoza: Critical Assessments*, Vol. II, pp. 239–48; Etienne Balibar, *Spinoza and Politics*, trans. P. Snowdon (London: Verso, 1998).
3. Beck (*Early German Philosophy*, p. 386) suggests the main characters represent Jacobi and Herder.
4. The passage Herder quotes (G 86–90) is TIE 1–17 (CW 3–6).
5. Bell, *Spinoza in Germany*, pp. 118–26.
6. Herder may well be the first to draw attention to Spinoza's use of 'expression' to describe God's finite modification of himself (see G 108 and 156). This term, which Spinoza in fact does not use very often, is important for the Romantics and subsequently for Deleuze, as I discuss in Chapter 6.
7. Acts 17:28. Spinoza refers to this passage in Letter 73 (CW 942). This connection was evidently important to Herder: he refers to it three times in *God*. Kant picks up on this connection in the *Opus Postumum*, as I discuss in Chapter 7 (OP 22:55, p. 214).
8. Zammito, *Genesis*, pp. 246–7.
9. The passages Jacobi cites from Kant are OPA 2:89 and 2:94.
10. Quoted in Franks, *All or Nothing*, p. 91.
11. Kant to Jacobi, 30 Aug. 1789, C 11:75–6.
12. Zammito, *Genesis*, pp. 405–6.
13. Kant to Jacobi, 30 Aug. 1789, C 11:76–7. Jacobi's reply (16 November 1789, C 11:101–5) is typically obsequious.
14. See especially Chapters 8–11. Zammito's excellent book is unparalleled in demonstrating the importance of Herder and Spinozism to the development of Kant's thinking in the 1780s and to the *Critique of Judgment*. Zammito treats the Kant–Herder relationship in the 1760s and 1770s in *Kant, Herder and the Birth of Anthropology*.

15. Zammito, *Genesis*, p. 246.
16. Beiser, *Fate of Reason*, p. 149, Zammito, *Genesis*, pp. 178–213 and G 6–10 (translator's introduction).
17. Beiser, *Fate of Reason*, pp. 131–5; Herder, *Treatise on the Origin of Language*, in *Philosophical Writings*, trans. and ed. Michael N. Forster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 65–166.
18. Herder, *Philosophical Writings*, pp. 272–360.
19. Beiser, *Fate of Reason*, pp. 146–7.
20. Parts I and II of Herder's *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* were published in 1784 and 1785. The translation cited here is Herder, *Ideas for a Philosophy of the History of Mankind*, in *J. G. Herder on Social and Political Culture*, trans. and ed. F. M. Barnard (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), pp. 253–326. Kant's separate reviews of these two parts were first published anonymously in the *Allgemeine Literaturzeitung* of January 1785 and November 1785. They are now at Ak. 8:43–66, and translated (by Allen W. Wood) as 'Reviews of J. G. Herder's *Ideas on the Philosophy of the History of Humanity*' in Kant, *Anthropology, History, and Education*, pp. 121–42. Kant turned down the invitation to review Part III, which was published in 1787.
21. 'Of the different races of human beings', Ak. 2:427–43, trans. Holly Wilson and Günter Zöller in Kant, *Anthropology, History, and Education*, pp. 84–97.
22. Following Herder's criticism of this view in *Ideas*, Kant reiterates it in the essays 'Determination of the concept of a human race' (1785; Ak. 8:89–106, trans. Holly Wilson and Günter Zöller) and 'On the use of teleological principles in philosophy' (1788; Ak. 8:157–84, trans. Günter Zöller), both in Kant, *Anthropology, History, and Education*, pp. 145–59 and 195–218. Kant's 'Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim' of 1784 (Ak. 8:15–31, trans. Allen W. Wood in Kant, *Anthropology, History, and Education*, pp. 108–20) similarly criticizes Herder's idea that man's rational purpose could have been produced by nature alone. For a concise contextual survey of Kant's responses to Herder, see Zammito, *Genesis*, pp. 199–213, and J.D. McFarland, *Kant's Concept of Teleology* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 1970, pp. 56–68). On the development of theories of race in the late eighteenth century, see Robert Bernasconi, 'Who invented the concept of race?' in Bernasconi (ed.), *Race* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001, pp. 11–36).
23. For Kant's rejection of the argument from erect posture, see his 1771 'Review of Moscati's work *Of the Corporeal Essential Differences between the Structure of Animals and Humans*' (Ak. 2:421–5, trans. Günter Zöller in Kant, *Anthropology, History, and Education*, pp. 79–81).
24. Michael Mack, *Spinoza and the Specters of Modernity: the Hidden Enlightenment of Diversity from Spinoza to Freud* (London: Continuum, 2010) focuses on the importance of Herder's Spinozism for his theory of diversity.
25. Herder quotes Haller's preface to Part 3 of the German translation of Buffon's *Histoire Naturelle*.
26. H. B. Nisbet suggests that Herder's anthropology, 'despite astonishing knowledge of the empirical sciences, was heavily influenced by older ways of thinking derived from metaphysics or theology' (quoted in Zammito, *Kant, Herder,* p. 11). Zammito points out that no thinker of the late eighteenth century was immune from such influence.
27. Kant, 'Review of Herder's *Ideas*', 8:54.

28. Herder, like Kant, rejects both 'evolution', which regards individual differences as originally implanted in the organism, and 'mechanism', which would have it that differences come about through contingent external causation alone. The theory of epigenesis, by contrast, holds that the 'germ' of the organism has the power to form itself from within, given the right materials and conditions. See also Kant, 'Review of Herder's *Ideas*', 8:62–3; CJ 5:422–4; Helmut Müller-Sievers, *Self-Generation: Biology, Philosophy, and Literature around 1800* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), pp. 26–64; and Timothy Lenoir, 'Kant, Blumenbach, and Vital Materialism in German Biology', *Isis* 71:1 (1980), 77–108.
29. Kant, 'Review of Herder's *Ideas*', 8:45.
30. Kant, 'Review of Herder's *Ideas*', 8:55.
31. Kant, 'Review of Herder's *Ideas*', 8:54.
32. Kant, 'Review of Herder's *Ideas*', 8:54.
33. Zammito, *Genesis*, p. 189; see also pp. 199–213.
34. See also Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. Mary Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 6:211, and LM 28:275.
35. 'On the use of teleological principles in philosophy', 8:181–2. While the essay responds to Georg Forster's objections to Kant's theory of race, much of Kant's criticism applies also to Herder.
36. Kant, 'On the Use of Teleological Principles in Philosophy', 8:181–2.
37. Chapters 7–12 of Zammito's *Genesis* develop a compelling argument for this position.
38. Susan Meld Shell, 'Kant's Conception of a Human Race', in Sara Eigen and Mark Larrimore, *The German Invention of Race* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2006), pp. 55–72, here at p. 61.
39. Kant, 'Of the Different Races of Human Beings', 2:435.
40. On the four racial predispositions, see Kant, 'Determination of the Concept of a Human Race', 8:93.
41. Kant, 'On the Use of Teleological Principles in Philosophy', 8:166.
42. This idea can be traced back to Kant's early lectures on geography and his 1764 *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime*. For an assessment of Kant's racism throughout his writings, see Robert Bernasconi, 'Kant as an unfamiliar source of racism', in Tommy Lee Lott and Julie K. Ward, *Philosophers on Race* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), pp. 145–66.
43. Kant, 'On the Use of Teleological Principles in Philosophy', 8:183.
44. Bernasconi, 'Kant as an Unfamiliar Source of Racism', p. 161; 'Who invented the Concept of Race?', p. 27. See also Timothy Lenoir, 'Teleology without regrets: the transformation of physiology in Germany, 1790–1847', *Studies in the History of Philosophy and Science* 12 (1981), pp. 307–8.
45. For discussion, see Jeffrey Edwards, *Substance, Force, and the Possibility of Knowledge* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), pp. 137–40, and Lord, 'The Virtual and the Ether: Transcendental Empiricism in Kant's *Opus Postumum*', *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 39:2 (2008), 147–66.
46. Zammito, *Genesis*, pp. 158–61. See also G. A. Schrader, 'The Status of Teleological Judgment in the Critical Philosophy', *Kant-Studien* 45 (1953), 204–35, and Paul Guyer, 'Kant's Conception of Empirical Law', *Kant's System of Nature and Freedom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 38–55.

47. 'The categories defined as the conditions of possible experience … are too general or too large for the real. The net is so loose that the largest fish pass through' (DR 68). On Deleuze's assessment of this problem, see Lord, 'The Virtual and the Ether'.
48. In some quotations from the *Critique of Judgment* I have slightly altered Pluhar's translation, for instance, removing his bracketed interpolations and, for the sake of consistency with other translations used, substituting 'representation' for 'presentation' (Pluhar's translation of *Vorstellung*).
49. See, for example, CJ 5:398: 'when we deal with those products of nature that we can judge only as having intentionally been formed in just this way rather than some other, then we need that maxim of reflective judgment essentially, if we are to acquire so much as an *empirical cognition* of the intrinsic character of these products. For we cannot even think them as organized things without also thinking that they were produced intentionally' (emphasis added).
50. Paul Guyer, 'Reason and Reflective Judgment: Kant on the Significance of Systematicity' and 'Kant's Conception of Empirical Law', in Guyer, *Kant's System*, pp. 11–37 and 38–55.
51. Guyer, 'Reason and Reflective Judgment', *Kant's System*, pp. 13 and 28.
52. Guyer, 'Reason and Reflective Judgment', *Kant's System*, pp. 33–4.

4 Critiques of Teleological Judgement

1. The Spinozism Kant rejects in the *Critique of Judgment* is not straightforwardly interchangeable with Herderian naturalism, as we will see. Kant explicitly distinguishes Spinoza's position from Herder's, and relies on Jacobi to provide the detail of Spinoza's arguments. That Jacobi's already sloppy rendition of Spinoza is mediated by Herder and sometimes treated carelessly by Kant makes the task of grasping this material particularly complex.
2. Allison, 'Kant's Critique of Spinoza', pp. 202–3. Notwithstanding Allison's indication of its centrality here, neither the complexity nor the importance of Kant's refutation of Spinozism has been adequately treated. McFarland, for instance, remarks that the refutation of Spinoza is 'a digression from the main point of [Kant's] discussion' (p. 124n). Zammito argues against that assumption (see *Genesis*, Chapter 12).
3. As Zammito puts it, those who advocated an immanent account of organisms were Kant's 'ultimate enemies in the whole controversy over the boundary between the animate and the inanimate …: Hume, the pantheists, and the Spinozists' (*Genesis*, p. 218).
4. For some interesting reflections on the relation of this idea to recent systems theory, see Alicia Juarrero Roqué, 'Self-Organization: Kant's Concept of Teleology and Modern Chemistry', *Review of Metaphysics* 39 (1985), 107–35. Alberto Toscano relatedly considers the Kantian 'paradox' of self-organizing beings in terms of recent theories of individuation and autopoiesis in *The Theatre of Production: Philosophy and Individuation between Kant and Deleuze* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).
5. That making the principles regulative does not solve the antinomy (as Kant's wording in §§70–71 seems to suggest) is made clear by the title of §71, 'Preliminary to the Solution of the Above Antinomy', and by his actual

solution later in the text. See McFarland pp. 120–1, and Guyer, 'Purpose in Nature: What is Living and What is Dead in Kant's Teleology?' in *Kant's System*, pp. 343–72, here at pp. 360–3.

6. Kant to Jacobi, 30 Aug. 1789, C 11:75–6.
7. See Paul Guyer, 'Organisms and the Unity of Science', in *Kant's System*, pp. 86–111, here at pp. 86–7. See also McFarland p. 120.
8. On the insufficiency of naturalistic methods for natural science, see especially CJ §80, 5:418–20.
9. Guyer, 'Organisms and the Unity of Science', *Kant's System*, p. 87.
10. See especially CJ 5:400: 'it is *quite certain* that in terms of merely mechanical principles of nature we cannot … explain organized beings and how they are internally possible' (emphasis added). This, of course, does not mean that organized products of nature *could not be generated* through mechanistic causation. See CJ 5:388–9 and 414–15.
11. Zammito, *Genesis*, p. 225.
12. Kant may well have had Leibniz in mind as exemplary of theism. But Jacobi is just as likely, given that his anti-Herderian appendices of 1789, which Kant found so satisfactory, upheld the intentional causality of an intelligent God over against mechanistic theories of nature.
13. *Cf.* Kant to Jacobi, 30 Aug. 1789, C 11:74–6. Zammito is appropriately suspicious of Kant's motives here. 'That Kant preferred the fourth of the dogmatic options he described is perfectly clear, even though he acknowledged that it could not be proved theoretically. He criticized the others not merely for their dogmatism but for their dogma. And the two which drew the most sustained criticism were "fatality" and "hylozoism", or in other terms, Spinozism and pantheism' (*Genesis*, p. 250). Guyer, by contrast, sees the affirmation of theism as the basis of Kant's solution to the antinomy, since the principle by which the maxims are unified can only be found in a supersensible being that is also intelligent ('Purpose in Nature', *Kant's System*, pp. 361–2).
14. Further criticism of the Herderian position is found in §85, 'On Physico-theology' (CJ 5:436–42).
15. See also Zammito, *Genesis*, p. 258.
16. Kant to Jacobi, 30 Aug. 1789, C 11:74–6.
17. For different interpretations of this material see Allison, 'Kant's Critique of Spinoza', pp. 195–202, and Zammito, *Genesis*, pp. 251–9.
18. 'On a discovery whereby any new Critique of Pure Reason is to be made superfluous by an older one' (1790), in Kant, *Theoretical Philosophy after 1781*, 8:224n. Note that in this text, unlike §§72–3 of the *Critique of Judgment*, Kant aligns Spinozism with Herder's doctrine of organic force.
19. Eric Watkins, *Kant and the Metaphysics of Causality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 261.
20. As Juarrero Roqué remarks, Kant's conception of causality in nature as exclusively external leads inevitably to a theistic God in cases where linear efficient causality is insufficient (pp. 126, 134). See also Toscano p. 35.
21. See Spinoza's letter to Boxel, where Spinoza says that if a triangle could speak, it would say that God is 'eminently triangular' (Letter 56, CW 904).
22. 'Kant failed in his mission to reverse the tide of Spinozism and pantheism in Germany. The treatment he gave these topics in the *Third Critique* served to rally just those who were most adept and interested in his philosophy to the

defense of Spinoza and pantheism, and thus provoked the new metaphysics of German Idealism. … If one accepted both Spinoza's claim that utterly disparate substances could not interact and Kant's claim that empirical man must be seen as free, the only possible recourse was to read what Kant termed the noumenal, transcendent, or intelligible order as in fact the immanent principle of the real, natural, existential order' (Zammito, *Genesis*, p. 259). See also Beiser, *German Idealism*, Part IV, Chapters 2, 4, and 5.

23. 'This *intellectus archetypus*, I contend, tallies altogether well with the intellect of Spinoza's God' (Zammito, *Genesis*, p. 253; see also pp. 255–7). Toscano perhaps makes a similar point, though without reference to Spinoza, in arguing that an 'ontology of the preindividual' provides the solution to the antinomy between mechanism and teleology (p. 23).
24. This only describes Spinoza's 'first kind of knowledge', imagination. When we understand rationally, through the 'second kind of knowledge', we do not proceed in this way but instead deduce true ideas from other true ideas. But the true ideas we are able to acquire never suffice for *fully* understanding particulars; the *full* explanation of any one particular requires an intuition of the whole of nature. Spinoza allows that we *can* proceed from the intuition of the whole of nature to full understanding of its parts; this is the 'third kind of knowledge', intuition (see E IIP40S2 and VP21–42). Although his treatment of this topic is riddled with problems, I would argue that he takes intuitive knowledge to be possible for the mind only insofar as it is eternal. (For a brief defence of this view, see Lord, *Spinoza's Ethics*, pp. 150–5.) Insofar as a mind is finite and durational, then, it either proceeds imaginatively from particulars to concepts or proceeds rationally to understand *some aspects* of particulars through true ideas. Structurally (though not in terms of their epistemological or ontological commitments) this is comparable to Kant's reflective and determinative judgement.
25. On the problems caused for Kant by the applicability of this principle to all particulars, both organic and inorganic, see Guyer, 'Organisms and the Unity of Science' and 'Purpose in Nature', both in *Kant's System*.
26. And this is another important difference between Kant and Spinoza: Spinoza believes we *can* represent intuitive knowledge, even from our finite standpoint.

5 Maimon and Spinozistic Idealism

1. A good summary of Maimon's thought in context can be found in Chapter 10 of Beiser, *Fate of Reason*.
2. Fichte to Reinhold, March–April 1785, quoted in Daniel Breazeale, 'Fichte's Conception of Philosophy as a "Pragmatic History of the Human Mind" and the Contributions of Kant, Platner, and Maimon', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 62:4 (2001), 685–703, here at p. 691.
3. See Beiser, *Fate of Reason*, p. 286, and Breazeale. Solomon Maimon, *Versuch über die Transcendentalphilosohpie*, in Maimon, *Gesammelte Werke*, Vol. II (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1965). References are to VT with the German pagination. In reading the text I have made use of the French translation by Jean-Baptiste Scherrer (Paris: Vrin, 1989). Translations into English are my

own. A full English translation has just been published (unfortunately too late to be used in this book): *Essay on Transcendental Philosophy*, trans. Nick Midgeley et al (London: Continuum, 2010).

4. Herz to Kant, 7 April 1789, C 11:15.
5. Maimon to Kant, 7 April 1789, C 11:15–16.
6. Solomon Maimon, *An Autobiography*, trans. J. Clark Murray (Paisley: Alexander Gardner, 1888), p. 280.
7. Maimon, *Autobiography*, p. 280.
8. See Meir Buzgalo, *Solomon Maimon: Monism, Skepticism, and Mathematics* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2002), p. 3.
9. Maimon, *Autobiography*, p. 280.
10. Kant to Herz, 26 May 1789, C 11:49.
11. See Maimon to Kant, 9 May 1790, C 11:171, and Maimon to Kant, 15 May 1790, C 11:174–6.
12. Maimon to Kant, 20 Sept. 1791, C 11:285–6; 30 Nov. 1792, C 11:389–93; 2 Dec. 1793, C 11:470–1.
13. Kant to Reinhold, 28 March 1794, C 11:494–5.
14. Maimon had recently published his acrimonious correspondence with Reinhold without the latter's consent, suggesting that Reinhold is the person at whose expense Maimon is supposed to have profited. See Beiser, *Fate of Reason*, pp. 317–18. For an enlightening study of anti-Semitism in Kant and German philosophy, see Michael Mack, *German Idealism and the Jew* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).
15. Kant received Maimon's draft *Essay* in April 1789 and his reply to Herz is dated the following month. Zammito, based on Giorgio Tonelli's chronology of the composition of the third *Critique*, states that all of the Critique of Teleological Judgment was written after May 1789 (*Genesis*, pp. 4–8).
16. Maimon, *Autobiography*, 219. See also Yitzhak Y. Melamed, 'Salomon Maimon and the Rise of Spinozism in German Idealism', *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 42:1 (2004), 67–96.
17. Maimon, *Autobiography*, p. 219. Written 10 years after Maimon first read Spinoza, this retrospective account is coloured by the Jacobi–Mendelssohn dispute, even though his initial reading of Spinoza was not. Similarly, by this time Maimon is evidently aware of the Wolffian backlash against Spinozism (and boasts that he has refuted all its objections).
18. Maimon, *Autobiography*, pp. 219–20, *cf*. Melamed pp. 70–3.
19. Maimon, *Autobiography*, p. 232.
20. Maimon, *Autobiography*, pp. 113–4.
21. See, for example, G.W.F. Hegel, *The Encyclopaedia Logic*, trans. T.F. Geraets et al (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1991), §50R, p. 97, and §151A, pp. 226–7.
22. Maimon, *Autobiography*, p. 114.
23. Melamed pp. 79–81.
24. The best volume on Maimon in English is Samuel Hugo Bergman, *The Philosophy of Solomon Maimon*, trans. Noah J. Jacobs (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1967). There is also Samuel Atlas, *From Critical to Speculative Idealism: The Philosophy of Solomon Maimon* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1964). Substantial studies of Maimon exist in German and Italian.
25. Kant's comments indicate that he read Chapter 2 ('Sensibility, Imagination, Understanding, Pure *a priori* Concepts of Understanding or Categories,

Response to the Question *quid juris*, Response to the Question *quid facti*, Doubt attaching to these') and Chapter 3 ('Ideas of Understanding, Ideas of Reason, etc.'). See Kant to Herz, 26 May 1789, C 11:49.
26. Kant to Herz, 26 May 1789, C 11:52.
27. Bergman p. 38.
28. See also Maimon to Kant, 30 November 1792, C 11:391–3.
29. In a complicated argument, Maimon holds that the concepts of space and time exclude each other, so objects are not *thought* in both space *and* time; see VT 16–18.
30. See also Maimon to Kant, 30 November 1792, C 11:392.
31. Bergman p. 40.
32. See Leibniz, 'Preface to the New Essays', in *Philosophical Essays*, pp. 295–9. *Cf.* VT 349–50.
33. See Bergman (p. 60). A brief explanation of Leibnizian calculus, very helpful for understanding Maimon's theory of differentials, is provided by Simon Duffy, 'The mathematics of Deleuze's differential logic and metaphysics', in Duffy (ed.), *Virtual Mathematics: the Logic of Difference* (Manchester: Clinamen, 2006), pp. 118–44.
34. See Bergman pp. 78–9 and Franks, 'All or Nothing: Systematicity and Nihilism in Jacobi, Reinhold, and Maimon', pp. 106–7.
35. Bergman pp. 31–2.
36. Kant to Herz, 26 May 1789, C 11:50.
37. Melamed p. 75. See Leibniz's letter to Bourget in G. W. Leibniz, *Philosophical Papers and Letters*, trans. and ed. Leroy E. Loemker, 2nd ed. (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1989), p. 663.
38. It may appear that by 'real object' Maimon means something similar to a 'real number': a number that is represented by infinite decimals, such as the square root of 2. Yet despite the similarity of this mathematical conception to the infinite unfolding of ideas of understanding, Maimon explicitly denies that irrational roots are real objects, because they cannot be constructed in thought.
39. The principle of determinability is demonstrated in Maimon's extremely difficult transcendental logic, which I cannot go into further here; see VT Chapter 4, and Bergman pp. 93–115.
40. Bergman p. 158.
41. Beiser, *Fate of Reason*, pp. 294–5.
42. Kant to Herz, 26 May 1789, C 11:54.
43. Kant to Herz, 26 May 1789, C 11:49.
44. 'The whole tenor of the consideration was metaphysical in that Kant addressed himself to the intervention of the supersensible in the world of sense' (Zammito, *Genesis*, p. 266).
45. Kant to Herz, 26 May 1789, C 11:54.
46. Kant to Herz, 26 May 1789, C 11:54.
47. Kant to Herz, 26 May 1789, C 11:54.

6 Deleuze and Spinozistic Difference

1. Vincent Descombes, *Modern French Philosophy*, trans. J. Harding and L. Scott-Fox (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), p. 152.

2. On Deleuze's place in the French Spinoza revival of the 1960s, see Pierre Macherey, 'The Encounter with Spinoza', trans. Martin Joughin, in Paul Patton (ed.), *Deleuze: A Critical Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), pp.139–61.
3. Melissa McMahon, 'Immanuel Kant', in Graham Jones and Jon Roffe (eds), *Deleuze's Philosophical Lineage* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), pp. 87–103, here at p. 88. See Gilles Deleuze, *Kant's Critical Philosophy*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (London: Athlone, 1995).
4. See Gilles Deleuze, 'Immanence: A Life…', trans. Nick Millett, *Theory, Culture and Society* 14:2 (1997), 3–7.
5. On Maimon's influence on Deleuze, see Daniel W. Smith, 'Deleuze's Theory of Sensation: Overcoming the Kantian Duality', in Patton (ed.), pp. 29–56. See also Graham Jones, 'Solomon Maimon', in Jones and Roffe (eds), pp. 104–29.
6. Daniel W. Smith, 'Deleuze, Kant, and the Theory of Immanent Ideas', in Constantin Boundas (ed.), *Deleuze and Philosophy* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), pp. 43–61, here at p. 49.
7. For an argument against reading Deleuze as a materialist, see Christian Kerslake, *Immanence and the Vertigo of Philosophy: from Kant to Deleuze* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009).
8. Smith, 'Deleuze's Theory of Sensation', p. 29.
9. I give a longer account of the real of sensation in Kant's Anticipations of Perception in Lord, 'The Virtual and the Ether'.
10. See Levi R. Bryant, *Difference and Givenness: Deleuze's Transcendental Empiricism and the Ontology of Immanence* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2008), and Christian Kerslake, 'Deleuze, Kant, and the Question of Metacritique', *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* XLII:4 (2004), 481–508, who advocate a broadly similar reading. Heidegger also takes this guiding assumption as his critical starting point in discussions of Kant, a similarity which has led Badiou to link Deleuze's ontological motivations to Heidegger's. See Alain Badiou, *Deleuze: The Clamor of Being*, trans. Louise Burchill (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), Chapter 2.
11. Deleuze, *Kant's Critical Philosophy*, pp. 17–18.
12. See Bryant pp. 19–29.
13. On Deleuzian and Kantian ideas, see Smith, 'Deleuze, Kant, and the Theory of Immanent Ideas', and also James Williams, *The Transversal Thought of Gilles Deleuze* (Manchester: Clinamen, 2005), pp. 29–31, and *Gilles Deleuze's Difference and Repetition: A Critical Introduction and Guide* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003).
14. Bryant pp. 19–25.
15. 'Idea' is capitalized in the English translation of *Difference and Repetition*, and I have preserved this when talking about Ideas in the Deleuzian sense.
16. For another discussion of determination in Maimon and Deleuze (one that does not detour through Guéroult), see Jones, 'Solomon Maimon', pp. 117–22.
17. Martial Guéroult, *La philosophie transcendentale de Salomon Maimon* (Paris: Librairie Félix Alcan, 1929).
18. Guéroult pp. 54, 76.
19. According to this model, things are positively determined in terms of certain predicates from the sum total of possibilities, and negatively determined in terms of all the others (see CPR A571–6/B599–604). Out of a totality of

possible predicates, most are whittled away, negatively determined, until a well-defined thing emerges.

20. See DR 173, Guéroult pp. 76–7 and VT 110.
21. It is important to stress that at the level of differentials, redness and greenness differ in kind. They are not different degrees of a general concept of 'colour'. There is no general concept of 'colour' at the level of differentials. Instead, Deleuze says there is an *Idea* of 'colour' made up of all the varieties of differential relations, whose content is actualized in empirically diverse colours. The Idea is a concrete universal that is constituted by virtual differences in kind, and synthesizes actual differences in degree. 'The Idea of colour … is like white light which perplicates in itself the genetic elements and relations of all the colours, but is actualised in the diverse colours with their respective spaces' (DR 206). See also DR 245 and Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, trans. Mark Lester with Charles Stivale, ed. Constantin V. Boundas (London: Continuum, 2004), p. 129. For the origin of this idea in Bergson, see Deleuze, 'Bergson's Conception of Difference', in *The New Bergson*, ed. John Mullarkey (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), pp. 42–65, here at p. 54. See also Bryant pp. 71–2 and Miguel de Beistegui, *Truth and Genesis: Philosophy as Differential Ontology* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2004), pp. 256–8.
22. Guéroult p. 77.
23. Guéroult pp. 76–7, *cf.* VT 86–7.
24. Williams, *Transversal Thought*, p. 15; *Gilles Deleuze's Difference and Repetition*, p. 139.
25. Another named source for Deleuze's Idea, Hoëne Wronski with his 'Kantian interpretation of the calculus' (DR 170), I am not able to discuss here. See Christian Kerslake, *Immanence and the Vertigo of Philosophy*, and Kerslake's chapter 'Hoëne Wronski and Francis Warrain' in Jones and Roffe (eds), pp. 167–89.
26. Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will*, trans. F. L. Pogson (Mineola: Dover, 2001), p. 104. See also Deleuze, *Bergsonism,* trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (New York: Zone Books, 1988), pp. 38–9.
27. Williams, *Gilles Deleuze's Difference and Repetition*, p. 147.
28. Jones reaches a similar conclusion; see 'Solomon Maimon' pp. 122–3.
29. Deleuze, *Kant's Critical Philosophy*, pp. vii–xiii, and 'On Four Poetic Formulas that might Summarize the Kantian Philosophy' in Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Grew (London: Verso, 1998), pp. 27–35.
30. See also Deleuze, *Kant's Critical Philosophy*, p. viii; 'On Four Poetic Formulas', p. 29.
31. Deleuze, 'On Four Poetic Formulas', p. 30.
32. See also Bryant pp. 178–84.
33. See also *The Logic of Sense*, pp. 121–2, where Deleuze characterizes Leibnizian metaphysics by singularities 'imprisoned' in a supreme Self.
34. Williams, *Gilles Deleuze's Difference and Repetition*, p. 151.
35. Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, pp. 122–3.
36. Jones, 'Solomon Maimon', pp. 124–5. On the relation between Ideas and thought, see especially Beistegui, *Truth and Genesis*, pp. 280–9.

37. Bryant pp. 203 and 207. See Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), p. 48.
38. See Part III of Beistegui, *Truth and Genesis*.
39. *Cf.* Kerslake, 'Deleuze, Kant, and the Question of Metacritique', pp. 499–500.
40. Deleuze, *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*, trans. Martin Joughin (New York: Zone Books, 1990), p. 27. For critical discussion of the term 'expression' in Deleuze's interpretation of Spinoza, see Macherey, pp. 142–9.
41. Deleuze, *Expressionism*, p. 45.
42. Macherey p. 146.
43. See Beistegui, *Truth and Genesis*, pp. 237–41.
44. Deleuze, *Expressionism*, pp. 169–86; Miguel de Beistegui, 'The vertigo of immanence: Deleuze's Spinozism', *Research in Phenomenology* 35 (2005), 77–100, here at pp. 91–9.
45. Deleuze, *Expressionism*, pp. 117–18.
46. Deleuze, *Expressionism*, p. 121.
47. This review is discussed in an article by Christian Kerslake, which is the source of my knowledge of it: 'The vertigo of philosophy: Deleuze and the problem of immanence', *Radical Philosophy* 113 (2002), 10–23.
48. Hyppolite, *Logic and Existence*, quoted in Kerslake, 'The vertigo of philosophy', p. 12.
49. Deleuze, review of Hyppolite's *Logic and Existence*, quoted in Kerslake, 'The vertigo of philosophy', p. 12 (interpolations Kerslake's). Kerslake's article offers a rich account of the connections between this 'Hegelian' project and Deleuze's relations to Spinoza and Kant. See also the ensuing discussion between Kerslake and Peter Hallward in *Radical Philosophy* 114.
50. Kerslake, 'The Vertigo of Philosophy', p. 13.
51. Deleuze, 'Bergson's conception of difference', p. 49.

7 Spinozism in the Ether

1. For a history of the text and speculation as to the dating of its sections, see Eckart Förster's Introduction to the Cambridge edition of the *Opus Postumum*.
2. Förster and Guyer, for instance, maintain that with the *Opus Postumum* Kant affirms and develops the transcendental idealism of the critical period, whereas Edwards and Tuschling argue that he alters fundamental points of his critical philosophy and thereby overturns transcendental idealism. See Eckart Förster, *Kant's Final Synthesis* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000); Guyer, 'The Unity of Nature and Freedom: Kant's Conception of the System of Philosophy', in *Kant's System*, pp. 277–313; Edwards, *Substance, Force, and the Possibility of Knowledge*; Burkhard Tuschling, 'Apperception and Ether: On the Idea of a Transcendental Deduction of Matter in Kant's *Opus Postumum*', in Förster (ed.), *Kant's Transcendental Deductions* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989), pp. 193–216.
3. See Förster's Introduction, OP xxxiv–xxxv.
4. Förster's Introduction, OP xxxv (emphasis mine), based on OP 21:492 (not included in Cambridge edition, quoted in Förster, *Kant's Final Synthesis*, p. 6): 'bringing about a systematic cognition of physics … cannot be done

through merely collected experiences because *the sketch of a system* is missing that must be given *a priori*'.

5. Beck to Kant, 8 Sept. 1792, C 11:359–61. See Förster, *Kant's Final Synthesis*, pp. 33–5.
6. Kant to Beck, 16 Oct. 1792, C 11:375–7. See also MFNS 4:533–4.
7. *Kant's Final Synthesis*, 34–5. See also Kant's comments on Beck's letter, C 11:361–5.
8. For a detailed discussion of the physics of the *Opus Postumum*, see part two of Michael Friedman's *Kant and the Exact Sciences* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), and Chapters 7 and 8 of Edwards, *Substance*.
9. Tuschling pp. 200–1. See also Guyer, 'Kant's Ether Deduction and the Possibility of Experience', in *Kant's System*, pp. 74–85.
10. See Friedman, who argues in *Kant and the Exact Sciences* that there are important differences.
11. On the relation of Kant's conception of ether to other contemporary models, see Edwards, *Substance*, pp. 101–32, and Friedman, *Kant and the Exact Sciences*, pp. 264–316.
12. Edwards argues (wrongly, in my view) that the dynamical continuum of the third analogy is an *a priori* necessary *material* condition of possible experience; see the Introduction and Chapters 1–3 of his *Substance*.
13. For a discussion of this passage see Förster, *Kant's Final Synthesis*, pp. 24–47. I discuss this material in greater detail in Lord, 'The Virtual and the Ether'.
14. See Förster, *Kant's Final Synthesis*, pp. 29–30.
15. In all quotes from the OP, material in square brackets has been inserted by the translators, whereas elisions in square brackets […] are my own.
16. Edwards argues that Kant conceives ether as transcendentally real (*Substance*, pp. 173–4), while Förster argues that ether is understood as a transcendental ideal in the critical sense (*Kant's Final Synthesis*, pp. 91–3). Friedman more convincingly argues that the ether is an empirical object whose concept is both regulative and constitutive (*Kant and the Exact Sciences*, pp. 304–9).
17. 'Empty but perceptible intermediary space is, thus, really a matter which, in degree, is imperceptible relative to our sense; it is an object of possible but mediate experience, e.g. light-matter which occupies the space between the eye and the object, and [which] can become an object of experience only by its excitation' (OP 21:229, p. 76).
18. We might note how closely this recalls Jacobi's association of Kantian space with Spinozistic substance.
19. See Förster, *Kant's Final Synthesis*, pp. 105–7.
20. Förster, *Kant's Final Synthesis*, pp. 106–7.
21. Tuschling p. 205.
22. Beiser, *German Idealism*, p. 195.
23. See Beiser, *German Idealism*, pp. 197–8.
24. *Cf.* Beiser, *German Idealism*, p. 197: 'The border line has only been moved, not abolished. There is still a realm of matter that remains contingent for the dynamic categories'.
25. Thus Kant is now clear that reflective judgement is required *only* for organic matter, a position that was implied, but neither stated nor substantiated, in the *Critique of Judgment*.

26. For an argument that Kant's theory of the ether as 'living force' does not allow his anti-hylozoism to be upheld, see Guyer, 'Organisms and the Unity of Science', in *Kant's System*, pp. 86–112.
27. See Förster's note 89, OP p. 274. For discussion of Schelling's 1798 essay 'On the world-soul' and the history of this concept, see Iain Hamilton Grant, '"Philosophy Become Genetic": The Physics of the World Soul', in *The New Schelling*, ed. Judith Norman and Alistair Welchman (London: Continuum, 2004), pp. 128–50.
28. Maimon to Kant, 15 May 1790, C 11:174–6. Maimon's essay 'Über die Weltseele' appeared in the *Berliner Journal für Aufklarung* in 1789.
29. Maimon to Kant, 15 May 1790, C 11:174–5. How these views can be made consistent with Maimon's doctrine in the *Essay on Transcendental Philosophy*, cannot be considered here. See Franks, 'All or Nothing: Systematicity and Nihilism in Jacobi, Reinhold, and Maimon', p. 109.

Conclusion

1. See Howard Caygill, 'The Force of Kant's *Opus Postumum*: Kepler and Newton in the XIth Fascicle', *Angelaki* 10:1 (2005), 33–42. On Spinozism in the *Opus Postumum*, see Guyer, 'The Unity of Nature and Freedom', *Kant's System*, pp. 277–313; Edwards, *Substance*, pp. 182–92; and Edwards, 'Spinozism, Freedom, and Transcendental Dynamics in Kant's Final System of Transcendental Idealism', in Sally Sedgwick (ed.), *The Reception of Kant's Critical Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 54–77.
2. Edwards, *Substance*, p. 191.
3. Allison, 'Kant's Critique of Spinoza', p. 207. Kant does call Spinoza enthusiastic (*schwärmerisch*) at OP 21:19, p. 225, but this is not typical.
4. This is also the view taken by Guyer, who argues that Kant names Spinoza to emphasize the difference between his own theory and the Spinozism of Schelling and his followers ('The Unity of Nature and Freedom', *Kant's System*, pp. 278–9 and 303–13).
5. The suggestion that these writings are a product of Kant's senility is no longer credible. Förster has established that all but a few sheets of the OP were written by 1801, the year in which Kant's health started to decline (OP xxviii).
6. See Edwards, *Substance*, p. 186, and Allison, 'Kant's Critique of Spinoza', p. 207.
7. See G 71, 98n, 113. Spinoza himself uses this quote to show how his understanding of God and nature differs from that of 'modern Christians': 'I maintain that God is the immanent cause, as the phrase is, of all things, and not the transitive cause. All things, I say, are in God and move in God, and this I affirm together with Paul and perhaps together with all ancient philosophers, though expressed in a different way' (Letter 73, CW 942). The original quote is from Acts 17:28.
8. On Schelling and Lichtenberg, see Förster's notes at OP pp. 274–5 and 279–80.

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