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KARL AMERIKS

*Professor of Philosophy at the University of Notre Dame*

DESMOND M. CLARKE

*Professor of Philosophy at University College Cork*

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KARL LEONHARD REINHOLD

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*Letters on the  
Kantian Philosophy*

EDITED BY  
KARL AMERIKS

*University of Notre Dame*

TRANSLATED BY  
JAMES HEBBELER

*University of Notre Dame*



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## Preface

The editor and the translator of this volume are heavily indebted to many other scholars. Very useful advice on specific points was offered by Alessandro Lazzari, Alexander von Schönborn, Angela Smith, Christian Johnson, Daniel Breazeale, David O'Connor, Doris Jankovits, Eric Watkins, Faustino Fabbianelli, Fred Rush Jr., Gary Gutting, George di Giovanni, Günter Zöller, Lara Ostaric, Manfred Frank, Marcelo Stamm, Martin Bondeli, Megan Halteman Zwart, Noell Birondo, Paul Franks, Sabine Roehr, and Stephen Dumont. The translation benefited especially from the help of Susanne Hebbeler, and some very difficult points in Reinhold's notes were clarified by Andrew Rosato and Patrick Gardner.

In comparing the two versions of the text and working out the best way to display the complex relation between them, the editor was fortunate to have the invaluable advice and assistance of the translator, James Hebbeler. Encouragement and advice from Hilary Gaskin at Cambridge University Press were of enormous help throughout the project.

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## Introduction

Analysis and hermeneutics – or rather the ‘analytic principle’ and the ‘hermeneutic principle’ – arose in music history (or at least attained historical significance) as opposite ways of unraveling the difficulties posed by the reception of Beethoven.<sup>1</sup>

Reinhold’s *Letters on the Kantian Philosophy* is arguably the most influential work ever written concerning Kant. On the basis of the stunning success of the *Letters*, Reinhold was appointed professor of philosophy at Jena, and his engaging lectures quickly drew unprecedented crowds. Overnight, his teaching turned the small university town into the center of the next generation of German thought and the first professional home of the German Idealists: Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel. It also helped to attract to Jena an extraordinary constellation of writers, including Schiller, Hölderlin, Novalis, and Friedrich Schlegel, who all began to focus on Kant and to react to him in terms of the way that the Critical system was initially presented by Reinhold.

Reinhold’s success had its preconditions in Kant’s difficulties. When the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* appeared in 1781, Mendelssohn and Goethe found it impenetrable in form, and the first reviewers harshly criticized its idealist content. In 1783 Kant issued a shorter account of his Critical philosophy in the *Prolegomena*, but this work is so condensed and so riddled with touchy reactions to criticisms

<sup>1</sup> Carl Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1980), p. 11. Given what happened after Reinhold, Kant may be to subsequent philosophy what Beethoven is to subsequent music.



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that it did little to improve the early reputation of the *Critique*. Reinhold dramatically changed this situation by presenting a version of Kant's Critical thought that made it highly accessible and attractive to a readership extending far beyond the ranks of professional philosophy. No wonder that Kant quickly expressed his appreciation to Reinhold:

I have read the lovely *Letters*, excellent and kind sir, with which you have honored my philosophy. Their combination of thoroughness and charm are matchless and they have not failed to make a great impression in this region. I was therefore all the more eager somehow to express my thanks in writing, most likely in the *Deutscher Merkur*, and at least to indicate briefly that your ideas agree precisely with mine, and that I am grateful for your success in simplifying them.<sup>2</sup>

The *Letters* appeared originally as a series of articles in the leading Weimar journal, *Der Teutsche Merkur*, published in issues from August 1786 to September 1787. The journal was edited by C. M. Wieland, an eminent literary figure who was also Reinhold's father-in-law and energetic ally in defending Enlightenment causes. A book version of the *Letters*, twice as long as the set of original articles, was published in 1790. It made a series of terminological changes, added a few new themes (e.g., aesthetics), and expanded the format from eight to twelve letters.<sup>3</sup> A second volume, dealing with topics such as law, politics, and the will, was added in 1792, and in the twentieth century the two volumes of the 1790s were reissued together in a single volume. Although it is the 1790 version that is now cited most often, because of its greater availability in libraries, it is best to encounter the *Letters* first in the compact format of the original journal version. It is this version, therefore, that constitutes the basic text of the present translation, although an appendix is also provided with all the lengthier additions in the later version.

One look at the titles of the individual letters discloses Reinhold's momentous decision to turn attention away from the abstract epistemological issues at the heart of the *Critique's* arguments – what Reinhold called its “internal grounds” – and toward its concrete practical and

<sup>2</sup> Kant to Reinhold, December 28, 1787, *Correspondence/Immanuel Kant*, ed. Arnulf Zwieg (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 271. See also the letters of D. J. Jenisch to Kant, May 14, 1787, L. H. Jakob to Kant, March 26 and July 17, 1786, and Reinhold to Kant (calling him a “second Immanuel”), Oct. 12, 1787.

<sup>3</sup> For details, see below, [Note on the texts and translation](#), and [Appendix](#).

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religious “results” (Fourth Letter, p. 117n.). At this time, these results had been discussed by Kant himself only briefly, in remarks in the last sections of the *Critique* (see the Solution of the Third Antinomy, A 546/B 574–A 557/B 585, and the Canon, A 795/B 823–A 830/B 858) and a few short works such as the essay “What Does it Mean to Orient Oneself in Thinking?” (1786).<sup>4</sup> Reinhold’s uncanny ability to capture Kant’s ultimate positive aims contrasted with other readers at the time, such as Mendelssohn, who had taken the *Critique* to intend an “all-crushing” attack on traditional systems. This was a common and understandable reaction, since Kant claimed to have refuted all theoretical proofs of God and immortality. This situation gave Reinhold a chance to gain fame by effectively bringing out, in contrast, the neglected affirmative goal of the Critical system. It is almost as if Reinhold were clairvoyant in 1786 about the position that Kant was to elaborate only later, in the extensive treatment of the moral argument for God in the *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788) and the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (1790) – a point that can be totally missed if one reads only the 1790 *Letters*.

There was also a negative side to Reinhold’s shift of focus toward later, more popular, and “spiritual” themes, because this shift made the value of the Critical philosophy seem to hinge entirely on Kant’s highly controversial moral argument from pure practical reason and the implications of his unusually demanding notion of duty. According to this argument, we all ought to strive for the “highest good,” i.e., a situation with an ideal coordination of justice and happiness, and therefore we must “postulate” the conditions that appear necessary to the rational possibility of hoping for this end, namely our own immortality and a God with the requisite power, knowledge, and goodness. The approach of the

<sup>4</sup> In these years, Kant wrote, in addition to the *Prolegomena*, the essays “Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Intent” (1784), “An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?” (1784), “On the Conjectural Beginning of the History of Humanity” (1786), and “Remarks on Jakob” (1786). Especially relevant for Reinhold and Kant’s work in this decade as a whole is a passage at *Critique of Pure Reason* A 589/B 617: “For granting that there are in the idea of reason obligations which are completely valid, but which in their applications to ourselves would be lacking in all reality – that is, obligations to which there would be no motives – save on the assumption that there exists a supreme being to give effect and confirmation to the practical laws, in such a situation we should be under an obligation to follow those concepts which, though they may not be objectively sufficient, are yet, according to the standard of our reason, preponderant, and in comparison with which we know of nothing that is better or more convincing.” Quotations from the *Critique* are from the Norman Kemp Smith translation (London, Macmillan, 1929), with the standard A and/or B references to the first and/or second German editions.

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*Letters* turned attention entirely away from the crucial beginning and middle sections of the *Critique*, which define the core of Kant's system and establish the metaphysical preconditions of the moral argument: the proofs of the synthetic *a priori* structures of space and time, the Transcendental Deduction of the categories, the Analogies argument for the principle of causality, and the restriction of all our determinate theoretical knowledge to a realm of space and time that is transcendently ideal and not characteristic of things in themselves.

This shift of focus may well be a major factor, still not fully appreciated, in the centuries-long split between two very different schools of approach to Kant and philosophy in general. In Anglophone countries, which did not experience the direct impact of Reinhold's *Letters* (Reinhold's work was not available in English until late in the twentieth century), the "spiritual" side of Kant's thought was more and more neglected in favor of theoretical aspects of the *Critique* that overlap with the broadly naturalist concerns of empiricism and traditional analytic philosophy. In Reinhold's own environment, however, the *Letters'* choice of a much broader range of issues was a first cause, or at least a crucial early sign, of a very different kind of orientation, one that has continued to dominate Continental philosophers. The Jena philosophers and their followers were all mesmerized by the project of trumping Reinhold's work by presenting their own variation of a post-Critical treatment of the "spiritual" interests behind Kant's postulates – an issue that remained incidental, at best, in the analytic tradition.

This is not to say that most writing in the Jena tradition has been explicitly oriented toward spiritual topics. Reinhold himself attempted to make good his relative neglect of Kant's theoretical arguments by beginning to develop, right after the original *Letters*, a system of his own, the so-called Elementary-Philosophy, which was supposed to provide a more adequate general foundation for the Critical philosophy. This was the first of many attempts – by Reinhold as well as his followers – to formulate "internal grounds" better than Kant's own for the sake of most effectively achieving what was taken to be "in spirit" the same admirable "results" that the *Critique* promised.<sup>5</sup> The core materials of the

<sup>5</sup> This strategy is most striking in cases where Kant and Reinhold still allow that God may exist literally as a transcendent person, whereas later writers allow no more than that God may exist "in spirit," i.e., in the fulfilled spirit of human culture. The contrast of letter and spirit was a very common topic of the period.

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paradigmatic foundationalist version of this post-Kantian project can be traced in the changes in the 1790 version of the *Letters*, an edition that already gave an indication of Reinhold's fateful intention to move beyond being regarded as a mere catalyst for other philosophers.

### The situation of philosophy before the *Letters*

Three main factors – the *Enlightenment*, *Jacobi*, and *Kant* – determined the philosophical context facing Reinhold in the 1780s. To understand the significance of the *Letters*, one needs to appreciate what Reinhold's most deeply entrenched views were before he had even heard of Kant, what the dominant philosophical dispute was at that time in Germany, and what was so remarkable about the specific strategy of resorting to Kant's first Critical writings as a response to this situation.

Reinhold spent his early years in Vienna as a liberal Catholic priest and prolific Enlightenment activist, supporting the far-reaching but controversial reforms initiated during the reign of Emperor Joseph II (1780–90). Feeling it necessary to seek more freedom elsewhere, he left Austria and Catholicism behind forever when he abandoned both his country and the order of the Barnabites on November 18, 1783, three days after his twenty-sixth birthday. The first main influence on Reinhold – and the one with the longest hold on him – was thus the set of progressive practical ideals that he brought along with him when fleeing to Weimar and Protestantism. The second main influence on the *Letters* was the Pantheism Controversy, which erupted in Germany in 1785 upon the publication of F. H. Jacobi's *On the Doctrine of Spinoza in Letters to Mr. Moses Mendelssohn*.<sup>6</sup> Jacobi insisted that Mendelssohn – and thereby in effect all traditional philosophers – had to choose between the alleged fatalistic and Spinozistic position of Lessing and the only alternative Jacobi thought was feasible, a libertarian and anti-rationalist version of Christianity. The third main factor on the scene was the long shadow cast in 1781 by the first edition of Kant's massive *Critique*, a work that befuddled its first readers not only because of its unusual difficulty but also because of its many ambiguous stances. It seemed aimed, for

<sup>6</sup> For a concise review of the Pantheism Controversy, see Allen Wood, "Translator's Introduction," in *Religion and Rational Theology/Immanuel Kant*, tr. and ed. G. di Giovanni and A. Wood (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 3–6. See also below, n. 11.

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example, at sharply criticizing, and yet also somehow defending, numerous core claims of commonsense experience, modern science, metaphysical reason, and the Christian tradition.

Reinhold's *Letters* elegantly tied all these themes together by arguing that everyone else had failed to notice the obvious solution, namely that Kant's work had to be read properly and positively from back to front. After this reorientation, it was supposedly easy to see that Kant had succeeded in his *ultimate* aims, which concerned philosophy of religion, and that he had already provided, in a remarkable feat of anticipation, an enlightened solution for the situation of philosophy after Jacobi. Even without presenting anything like a full-length review of the *Critique*, Reinhold presumed that his *Letters* could show how the Kantian philosophy contained the means for meeting Germany's most crying needs – and for bolstering his own hopes of gaining influence as an authoritative spokesman of the age. This was an extraordinary program, and Reinhold came very close to succeeding on all fronts.

## *The Enlightenment background*

Reinhold's optimism was rooted in the most basic philosophical features of his initial concerns. From the time of his earliest writings, the most distinctive feature of Reinhold's commitment to the Enlightenment was his insistence on finding a way to support social reform with a philosophy that met the double demand of being *popular* and *systematic* in the best sense. It is easy to see how this demand arose, even if it ultimately took a rather unusual form. The fundamental practical goal of Enlightenment reforms was to give common people a chance to determine themselves through rationality, and thus to become free from the arbitrariness of natural powers and traditional authorities – in a word, to achieve autonomy. "Enlightened despots" such as Joseph II constantly ran into the paradox, however, of having to "force others to be free," and they often resorted to methods of deception or worse in order to try to wean their subjects away from a deeply engrained attachment to unenlightened beliefs and customs. Initially at least, Reinhold had a very confident "Leibnizian" conviction that there was an alternative, that the Enlightenment did not have to resort to such questionable methods. It could proceed by analysis, a "clearing up" – to use the literal meaning of the verb form of the German term *Aufklärung* – of confused ideas in a

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way that in principle could be readily acknowledged by anyone with common sense. For Reinhold, this approach required philosophical principles that were more than simply universal in validity and scope (*allgemeingültig*), i.e., applying to and helping all humanity in principle; it also demanded principles that were methodologically universal (*allgemeingeltend*) in the sense of being “universally accepted,” or at least such that in fact they could be easily acknowledged. Reinhold was not interested in popularity in a crude sense, but he also did not want to encourage a retreat to authoritarianism by relying on basic principles that could be properly justified only by advanced specialists. Moreover, he was very struck by the fact that recent scientific and legal advances had created a situation in which people were already using principles that were rational not merely “in themselves” but also in a way that everyone could directly appreciate. Reinhold’s challenge was to find a means for constructing principles with a similar transparency in the fields of philosophy, morality, and religion, so that all members of modern society could finally lead a thoroughly autonomous life.

All this can help explain why, up to and during the period of the *Letters*, Reinhold was unwilling to promote the Enlightenment by a relatively loose philosophical system or a strategy of division of labor. Even later he continued to insist that a linkage of “popular” and “systematic” credentials in one’s principles was not a mere abstract ideal but a deeply felt need of the age, and he went so far as to claim that, “Rights can be recognized by states only when philosophers are clear about them.”<sup>7</sup> Moreover, he believed that if principles were to be not only satisfying for philosophers but also capable of holding up as “popular” in the long run, then they had to be organized in a highly systematic way and given an irreversible “scientific” foundation. This insistence on finding a philosophy satisfying the *double demand* of strong conditions of popularity as well as systematicity was a major factor in Reinhold’s interest in Kant, since he thought that the *Critique*, and the *Critique* alone, was properly oriented toward meeting this demand. Later, however, as a consequence of ambitious presumptions about the way this demand should be met, Reinhold began to turn away from Kant. By 1790 Reinhold had come to believe that not only Kant’s work but even his own

<sup>7</sup> Reinhold, *Über das Fundament des philosophischen Wissens: Über die Möglichkeit der Philosophie als strenge Wissenschaft* (Jena, Mauke, 1791; repr. Hamburg, Meiner, 1978), p. vii. Cf. my *Kant and the Fate of Autonomy* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 123.

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initial exposition of the Critical philosophy was inadequate; hence the differences between the two versions of *Letters*. The revolutionary *Critique*, which was to provide by itself a practically sacred new ground for all future philosophy, turned out to need a hasty reformulation in terms of Reinhold's new doctrine of the foundation of philosophy in a single basic faculty of representation (*Vorstellungsvermögen*). This doctrine was grounded in a supposedly transparent and absolutely self-determining "principle of consciousness" (*Satz des Bemusstseins*).<sup>8</sup> Reinhold felt that this principle could do a much better job of meeting the double demand than Kant's system by itself, which now seemed neither absolutely fundamental nor truly universally accessible. Like many readers in our own time, Reinhold worried that Kant appeared to start his system at too "high" a level, one that took ordinary knowledge and notions such as concept, intuition, space, and time as "given" starting points rather than as items derived from a foundation in something absolutely elementary, such as the bare notion of mental representation. In a very short time, Reinhold – like each of his German Idealist successors in turn – changed from playing the role of an after the fact John the Baptist for Kant's "gospel" to setting himself up as the pope of a new infallible system.<sup>9</sup>

## The Pantheism Controversy

The initial version of the *Letters* still focused on conveying the value of the end points of the Critical philosophy rather than on seeking an ideal foundational formulation of its starting points. This focus made sense given the role that the Pantheism Controversy played in mediating Reinhold's early interests in the Enlightenment and Kant. The underlying issue here concerned *Jacobi's* conception of the capacities of philosophy as a theoretical discipline in general. *Jacobi's* highly negative view of these capacities played a central role in the way that Reinhold and all his so-called Kantian successors began their thinking about the core options in modern philosophy. For *Jacobi*, not only Spinoza or Lessing but

<sup>8</sup> "The representation in consciousness is distinguished by the subject from the subject and the object and related to them both," *Fundament*, p. 78. Cf. George di Giovanni, "The Fact of Consciousness," in *Between Kant and Hegel*, ed. G. di Giovanni (Indianapolis, Hackett, 2000), p. 14.

<sup>9</sup> This new period turned out to be brief as well. After objections from others in Jena, Reinhold moved toward a less foundational system in the 1790s, and then often changed his views again to accommodate new positions such as Fichte's philosophy.

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traditional theoretical philosophy in general encouraged pantheism because it appeared to be able to do little more than link dependent particulars together with one another as part of a necessarily connected all-inclusive whole. It thus left no room for thinking of oneself as an absolutely free individual, related to other independent individuals and a God who transcends the world-whole. While Jacobi found the most consistent version of deterministic holism in Spinozism, he realized that there was also a skeptical Humean version of it which started from a position that is more epistemological and subjectivist than ontological and rationalist. On this psychologistic version of traditional philosophy, one had to begin simply with certain inner representations, and then, as long as one remained rigorous and consistent, the best that one could end up with was an internal aggregate of necessarily connected (i.e., associated) representations. Here again, ultimate finite individuality and personal freedom were lost, and there was no longer any external nature, any plurality of actual beings, physical or personal, that could be legitimately asserted.

Jacobi was most concerned with the practical implications of this conception of philosophy. It seemed to him that it clearly divested life of any personal meaning, any significant origin or goal, and thus undercut all ordinary belief, morality, and theistic religion.<sup>10</sup> His alternative was to propose that this whole conception had made the mistake of becoming fixated on *demonstration*. We should realize that we do not exist “only to connect,” in the sense of merely gathering contingent representations or brute material items together in one whole, however immense. Rather, the fact is that we are always already – when not misled by bad philosophy – open to the direct “revelation” of intrinsically meaningful external matters.<sup>11</sup> There was an obvious consequence of these views for Jacobi’s philosophy of religion. Since for him the dominant conception of philosophy could not even justify ordinary claims about any other finite beings, physical or personal, he could contend that believers did not have to be embarrassed

<sup>10</sup> A dramatic reformulation of Jacobi’s worries can be found in the transition from part 11 (“Doubt”) to part 111 (“Faith”) of Fichte’s 1800 essay, *The Vocation of Man*, ed. P. Preuss (Indianapolis, Hackett, 1987).

<sup>11</sup> See Jacobi’s famous statement in *On the Doctrine of Spinoza in Letters to Moses Mendelssohn* (Breslau, Löwe, 1785), p. 31, “in my judgment the greatest service of the scientist [philosophical writer, *Forscher*] is to unveil existence, and to reveal it [*Dasein – zu enthüllen, und zu offenbaren*].” Translation from *Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi, The Main Philosophical Writings and the Novel “Allwill”*, ed. G. di Giovanni (Montreal and Kingston, McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1994), p. 194.



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by the supernatural beliefs of Christianity, for these were in no worse a position than the everyday claims that this philosophy had put into question. In other words, Jacobi's readers could either accept "traditional" philosophy and a meaningless annihilation of their own selves as ultimate individuals, or they could reject this "nihilistic" position and continue to hold onto their everyday ontology and whatever moral and religious claims also seemed to be "revealed" to them. For Jacobi, the lesson of mainstream theoretical philosophy was that it led at best to a so-called "knowledge" of representations that could never be fulfilling. Jacobi's aim was to bring his readers back to the satisfying non-demonstrative beliefs that they had always held, in such a way that even in a modern context they could continue to lead a life of belief open to others and to faith.

The options that Jacobi insisted on were a huge embarrassment for most Enlightenment philosophers. Jacobi's personal charm, his education and broad contacts (he was a good friend of most of the leading Enlightenment figures, including Goethe), and his reputation and style as a writer made it difficult to dismiss him as a reactionary crackpot. It was therefore all the more disturbing that Jacobi's agenda appeared so opposed to the mainstream of the later German Enlightenment, which assumed precisely that one did *not* have even to think about facing the stark choice of either an unsatisfying "rational" philosophy or a literally supernatural religion. Instead, one could select one of many different, supposedly satisfying forms of rational religion, or "natural theology." The differences between most eighteenth-century successors to Descartes, Leibniz, and Locke were relatively minor in this context. Enlightenment philosophers tended no longer to see any need to insist on the miraculous doctrines of Christian "special revelation," but for a long time they continued to assert that rational philosophy and "natural teleology" point toward at least the likelihood of a God who provides a meaningful existence and final end for human individuals. By the later eighteenth century, however, the corrosive influence of figures such as Hume and Spinoza had led a new generation of philosophers to suspect that none of the old techniques of theoretical philosophy could defend a position encouraging this kind of rational religion, let alone anything like "old-time" supernaturalism.

### *Kantian practical reason*

Reinhold's response to this situation in 1786 was to propose that *Kant* had already provided an ideal way to endorse a version of rational religion

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after all, one that saved genuine morality, ultimate personal individuality, and the key claims of Christianity. He argued that the discussion between Jacobi and Mendelssohn did not need to be taken to reveal the limits of reason or rational religion as such. It showed only the limits of the traditional “dogmatic” and theoretical metaphysics that was unfamiliar with Kant’s Critical vindication of reason and religion on pure practical grounds.

Reinhold’s concern with religion was connected to a very serious complication that many readers of the *Critique* chose to ignore or downplay in the 1780s, as many still do to this day, namely that the Critical philosophy by no means excludes transcendent metaphysics and supernatural religion in all senses. As Reinhold astutely recognized, although Kant cleared away *theoretical arguments* for assertions about God, freedom, and immortality, he also promised an elaboration of the rightful claims of pure *practical reason*, and an extended defense of at least some *true* and *substantive non-theoretical beliefs* of a traditional religious nature. For Kant, these beliefs had to be called “pure practical” and “non-theoretical” simply because the only adequate *epistemic ground* for them was a premise set that was not entirely theoretical but included as an essential component some strict moral considerations. It was very important, however, that the *content* of such beliefs – given transcendental idealism and the postulates’ conclusions affirming a just God and immortality – still expressed truths specifiable in non-moral terms, for example, the existence of beings with non-spatiotemporal powers.

Reinhold expected his advocacy of Kant’s philosophy to have considerable popular impact, and to gain support from the relevant authorities in liberal regimes, because it could provide them with a convenient escape from the threatening extremes that Jacobi had presented. If a rational but non-dogmatic defense of religion was feasible, then the culture wars of *Aberglaube* and *Unglaube* – superstitious faith and crude nonbelief – could be avoided. This strategy would endear Reinhold to the great majority of his readers, who were still relatively traditional. Just as importantly, it would also attract more progressive thinkers who eschewed all supernatural notions but remained very interested in finding some way to secure the secular value inherent in the Critical notion of the highest good, namely the thought of a realm of full human satisfaction and justice. That Kant himself still connected this value to fairly traditional ideas of God, freedom, and immortality was not surprising, given the fact that this

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complex of ideas had a very well-known anticipation and democratic pedigree in favorite texts of the time, such as the threefold creed of Rousseau's "Savoyard Vicar" (1762).<sup>12</sup> In progressive Jena, "results" at least *somewhat like* Kant's postulates thus became a common goal, even while practically everyone, including Reinhold himself soon, also thought it necessary to come up with better "premises" than Kant's own.<sup>13</sup> This was true even of figures such as the young Schelling, who as a student was extremely disturbed by the attempts of theologians in Tübingen to modify the general argument form of Kant's postulates for their own orthodox ends. The "Earliest System Program of German Idealism" (1796 or 1797) was perhaps the most famous expression of this desire of the leaders of the new generation to succeed Reinhold by reaching the *underlying* "spiritual" goal of Kant's postulates in a more radical way of their own.

### *Historicity, systematicity, and common sense*

Even if it is understandable why Kant's general ideal of the highest good proved highly attractive at the time, it should also be clear on reflection that the philosophical energy behind these appropriations of Kant had to be grounded in something other than the practical arguments of the *Critique* itself. These arguments were woefully condensed, and they did not even seem to be very good representations of Kant's own best thinking at the time. They appeared to insist, quite dogmatically, that we have a "pure" moral "need" to obtain deserved rewards for our moral striving, and yet the very "purity" of this intention seemed in tension with the admission that we have a psychological weakness requiring the thought of God, or of a God-like punishing and rewarding force, to "spur" us on. No wonder that Kant had to work very hard, in his 1786 "Orientation" essay, to try to distinguish his concept of a *necessary need* of pure practical reason as such from anything like the contingent sensible drives or random desires for the supernatural that he took to be the starting point for the unacceptable position of figures such as Jacobi and his ally Wizenmann.

<sup>12</sup> Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile*, tr. B. Foxley (London, J. M. Dent, 1911), pp. 228–78.

<sup>13</sup> See Schelling's letter to Hegel, Jan. 5, 1795, which claims that Kant's philosophy has only given the "conclusions," for which the "premises" are still needed, and that "all imaginable dogmas have been stamped as postulates of pure reason," in *Briefe von und an Hegel*, ed. J. Hoffmeister (Hamburg, Meiner, 1981), vol. 1, p. 13. Reinhold's work was discussed intensively in the Stift in Tübingen and was the focus of Schelling's earliest writing.

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Instead of providing expository details and *direct support* for the moral argument at the center of its own interpretation of the Critical philosophy,<sup>14</sup> the *Letters* introduced three quite different ways of indirectly building a case for Kant: historical, systematic, and commonsensical. First, Reinhold repeatedly illustrated the remarkable way in which Kant sensed and responded to the most basic *needs of the age*, needs that had themselves to be understood in the context of the *whole history* of human culture. This point reflected Reinhold's deep methodological conviction that philosophies and religions in general had to be assessed in terms of their historical responsiveness to the needs of reason in a particular era – a theme that the German Idealists, especially Hegel, followed up on in great detail.

Second, Reinhold repeatedly hinted that Kant had a deep and convincing general analysis of the *subjective structure of our faculties*, and that this structure provided the hidden “internal grounds” and technical authority needed for the Critical philosophy's “scientific” standing. Reinhold assumed that only the absolutely firm grounds of a scientific philosophy could provide an effective program for achieving the kind of reliable practical “results” needed to complete the Enlightenment and to resolve the Pantheism Controversy. He therefore devoted half of the *Letters* to the seemingly out of place topic of philosophy of mind in order to contend that Kant's theory of subjectivity could do much more than answer the specific problem of immortality: the theory could also explain the whole history of the mind–body problem and resolve the main issues of epistemology. By the time of the 1790 edition, however, reflection on these issues led Reinhold beyond Kant's own account and to an emphasis on the notion of a basic faculty of representation. This notion became the foundation of Reinhold's new Elementary-Philosophy, and the previous neglect of the notion provided him with a convenient explanation for the *Critique's* inability to gain full acceptance after all, even after the extraordinary impact of the initial version of the *Letters*.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> For sympathetic treatments of the moral argument, see Allen Wood, *Kant's Moral Religion* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1970), and Robert M. Adams, “Moral Arguments for Theistic Belief,” in *Rationality and Religious Belief*, ed. C. F. Delaney (Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press, 1979), pp. 116–40. Hume and Kant notwithstanding, traditional non-moral arguments for God have also received significant defenses in recent analytic philosophy, notably in the work of Richard Swinburne and Alvin Plantinga.

<sup>15</sup> Similar considerations were soon used by Fichte to claim that nothing like Reinhold's program could succeed until its theory of subjectivity was fundamentally improved. This tactic continues to be repeated by successors of Reinhold and Fichte.

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Both of these points connect with the third general theme that concerned Reinhold, namely the philosophical importance of the Enlightenment notion of *common sense*. Explicit respect for *sound* common sense was central to Reinhold's historical characterization of our own enlightened era, and for him it also provided a systematic standard for adequate theories of subjectivity. Hence he sought a philosophy with premises that were immediately evident and that used as simple notions as possible, such as representation. Even apart from specific issues concerning history and mind, however, common sense had a general methodological value for Reinhold as an irreplaceable touchstone for any philosophy aiming to be both morally responsible and properly popular and systematic.

In sum, while the broadly metaphysical project of a defense of core Christian doctrines (a transcendent God and an immortal soul) on the basis of a foundationalist version of a "Kantian" science of subjectivity dominated the relatively familiar surface of the *Letters*, the articulation of this project was determined throughout by Reinhold's much less well-known, and highly original, appreciation for the philosophical significance of historicity and common sense. Most post-Cartesian philosophers had insisted that one must emphasize either historicity, like Herder and his followers (who modeled philosophy on art and interpretation), or systematicity, like Leibniz and his followers (who modeled philosophy on mathematics and logic) – but *not both* at once. Although Reinhold had special respect for Herder and Leibniz, the *Letters* exhibited a new and immediately influential style of writing that aimed at leading modern philosophy beyond the forced choice of either relativistic historicism or systematic ahistoricity. What made Reinhold's approach even more remarkable was the way that it was combined with a very strong respect for common sense, a respect that could easily seem incompatible with taking very seriously *either* history or traditional systematic philosophy, especially after the impact of modern science. Kant was an influence here too, for, as Reinhold saw, the Critical philosophy was distinctive in aiming to do justice to common sense and philosophical systematicity together – even though Kant severely criticized Herder and never incorporated history into his *methodology* to the degree that Reinhold did.<sup>16</sup> Ironically, it was

<sup>16</sup> See my "Reinhold on Systematicity, Popularity and 'The Historical Turn,'" in *System and Context: Early Romantic and Early Idealistic Constellations/System und Kontext. Frühromantische und Frühidealistische Konstellationen*, ed. R. Ahlers, *The New Athenaeum* 7 (2004), 109–38.

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precisely the difficulties in the reception of Kant's own writing that forced Reinhold eventually to insist all the more on an "historical turn" in philosophy, and to stress that a special hermeneutical perspective was needed in order for us properly to appropriate the underlying rationality of our philosophical development and its ultimate compatibility with common sense. His aim was to display the complex "fate" that innovative philosophies repeatedly underwent, as they struggled to be understood and to survive throughout the non-transparent dialectic of history, where progress regularly occurred, as Hegel was to insist, "behind the back of consciousness."<sup>17</sup>

All this explains why the titles and contents of the individual Letters are very unlike what would be expected simply by considering the *Critique's* table of contents and the reactions of its other readers. In place of transcendental arguments about space, time, categories, and idealism, Reinhold's readers were treated to new visions of philosophy as essentially historical, "scientific," and practical (in a moral sense) – visions that all turned out to be extremely influential, even if they at first appeared to contradict one another.<sup>18</sup>

### The situation of philosophy within the *Letters*

Reinhold's prior encounter with the Enlightenment, Jacobi, and Kant came to be expressed in the *Letters* as an historically framed defense of common sense, rational Christianity, and Critical subjectivity. Reinhold's Enlightenment orientation is most evident in the First and Fourth Letters, which claim that the core doctrines of both the founder of Christianity and the *Critique's* "gospel of pure reason" were nothing other than the most appropriate responses of reason to the deepest "needs" of common sense (First Letter, p. 121) in the historical situations in which these doctrines were introduced. The Second and Third

<sup>17</sup> G. W. F. Hegel, "Introduction," in *Phenomenology of Spirit*, tr. A. V. Miller (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 56.

<sup>18</sup> Despite their high-flown metaphysical language, the Idealists largely followed Reinhold's pragmatic example in their methodology, although Schelling and Hegel had a very different reaction to Jacobi. Rather than rushing away from the thought of the all-determining world-whole and insisting on free individuality, like Reinhold (and then Fichte), they explored the new option of giving this whole a human face, of showing that it has an *internal teleological* form, so that something like the highest good can be achieved *necessarily within* nature by a "cunning of reason" that need not be regarded as "purely" practical.

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Letters contend, more specifically, that the current era desperately needs an enlightened version of Christianity that secures God's existence as a postulate of moral reason and thus avoids the extremes of Jacobi's anti-rationalism and Mendelssohn's dogmatism. The postulate of a future life, a topic that Kant himself never treats at length, determines the Fifth through Eighth Letters, the whole second half of the work. The practical goal of satisfying the "unified interests of morality and religion" turns out to depend on letting "Critical grounds of cognition" supplant more traditional "metaphysical" theories of the soul. Only a balanced Critical account of the functional interconnection of our spontaneous and receptive powers of subjectivity can provide a basic philosophical "science" of our faculties that delivers us from the twin evils of "spiritualism and materialism."

## *Reason's "need"*

All these concerns surface explicitly in the title of the First Letter, "The Need for a Critique of Reason," a need that is spelled out further in the 1790 title in the typical Reinholdian phrases "spirit of the age," "present state of the sciences," and "universal reformation." The words "need," "critique," and "reason" point directly to Kant's claim that the Critical demonstration of restrictions on what is determinable by pure theoretical reason is the prerequisite to conceiving a possible satisfaction of practical reason's fundamental "need" to achieve the highest good.<sup>19</sup> Although the commonsense notion of just rewards (which is central to the ideal of the highest good) is not intrinsically historical, Reinhold's claim is that, at crucial turning points in our culture, our concern with this notion needed to be vividly stimulated by the moral visions of revolutionary religious figures (Jesus and his followers) and then metaphysically secured by a philosophy (Kant and his followers) that properly defines the bounds of reason. The "spirit of the age" in Germany in 1786 is defined by confusion about these points. Hence, the "present state" of its philosophical "science" requires a "universal reformation" in order to overcome a fundamental misunderstanding about reason itself that is

<sup>19</sup> The crucial consideration here, which Reinhold does not explain, is that according to Kant the exact laws of nature, which necessarily structure our experience, are still compatible with our absolute freedom and immateriality, given the metaphysical ideality of space and time.

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creating despair about the possible satisfaction of humanity's most basic interests.

The First Letter introduces this problem through a summary of worries that incline Reinhold's imaginary correspondent toward pessimism about the Enlightenment in Germany. Sharply conflicting results in metaphysics, especially about the existence of God, have led to "indifference" about reason itself, despite the danger of increasing authoritarianism in politics and nonreasonable attitudes of superstition and nonbelief in religion (pp. 99–105). Reinhold's optimistic reply is that conflicting metaphysical arguments do not by themselves nullify the possibility that reason has a proper and constant concern here, one that can be satisfied once it is reoriented toward grounds that clearly have a chance of universal acceptance (pp. 105–9). As long as there is the possibility of a "rational metaphysics" on such grounds, there may be an escape from the stale options of traditional metaphysics, which deals dogmatically with concepts alone, and "hyper-physics," which makes claims about supernatural powers but lacks a proper basis in intuition to back its claims (pp. 110–16). These extreme options can have a crucial historical role, however, as part of a teleology of reason, wherein reason's own "expectations" disclose the shortcomings of past metaphysical attempts in a systematic way that indirectly points to the new kind of practical metaphysics that is needed now (pp. 117–22). Not surprisingly, precisely this kind of metaphysics is found in Kant's *Critique*, which Reinhold claims, contrary to other interpretations, is neither simply negative and "all-crushing" nor dogmatic and "neologistic"; it has positive "results" that can be "simply" explained and lead to philosophical and religious peace (pp. 123–6). In closing remarks, Reinhold acknowledges the "metacritical" worry that there are continuing disputes about the *Critique* itself and the source of its own authority (how can it non-question-beggingly use reason to evaluate reason?), but he invokes a comparison with Newton to suggest that it is not surprising if a revolutionary approach meets initial resistance because it makes use of new ideas (pp. 126–7).

### *God's existence as a "result"*

The Second Letter focuses on Kant's positive "result" concerning the existence of God. Reinhold begins by claiming that a significant sign of the power of reason may be found in the "fact" that all cultures have affirmed God's existence. The present age, nevertheless, takes a very dim



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view of reason because traditional demonstrations of God now appear to be very weak, and so we seem to be heading toward two bleak options: “that reason must remove faith” or “faith must be without reason” (pp. 129–31). Here again, the *Critique* points to a saving possibility, a “rational faith” that escapes these options and meets the “need of the age” for a stable system, while showing not only the weaknesses of traditional theoretical arguments for a personal God but also the “impossibility” of any disproofs (including pantheism) of such a God’s existence (pp. 132–3). By establishing the limits of theoretical reason and then making use of “practical reason,” Kant’s position is like faith, for it invokes a non-theoretical ground (namely moral demands) and affirms God, and it is also like reason in general, for it appeals to considerations that are necessary, universal, non-sensory, and systematic (pp. 134–5). Moreover, his approach reveals how reason, as practical, can satisfy the most common person, and not only philosophical experts, because morality is addressed to all (normal, mature) human beings as such and can be appreciated even by those who lack special intelligence or skills. Reason even shows a way to heal class divisions, since the deepest ground of the Critical philosophy lies in an awareness that everyone can have of their own rational self, which is supposedly the same as the proper ground for the proof of God and as old and as universally accessible as common sense (pp. 136–7).<sup>20</sup> Instead of elaborating on exactly how the *Critique* argues from this ground, Reinhold turns at this point to Kant’s 1786 “Orientation” essay. It is here that Kant directly responds to the Pantheism Controversy by indicating that his moral argument for God provides an alternative to both Jacobi’s supernatural anti-rationalism and Mendelssohn’s theoretical rationalism. What Reinhold adds is a typical historical claim that these erroneous extremes were also very valuable, since their development helped to disclose the limits of what philosophy can accomplish within the old dogmatic orientations. Those who say that Jacobi is like Kant are right only in that both philosophers acknowledge some limits to theoretical demonstration. Much more important is the fact that Kant still relies on reason of a universal kind (moral), whereas Jacobi seems to go beyond rationality altogether through immediate and

<sup>20</sup> The most striking passage in this regard is in the Third Letter, where Reinhold calls the moral argument for God “as intuitive and illuminating as the self-consciousness that a human being has of its rational nature” (pp. 30–1).

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particular claims about the supernatural.<sup>21</sup> On the whole, Kant is more like Mendelssohn, who wisely insisted on relying on rational grounds but had too much confidence in theoretical as opposed to practical reason (pp. 138–41).

### *The unity of morality and religion*

The Third Letter attends to the worry, motivated no doubt by Mendelssohn's concerns, that Kant's energetic efforts at "toppling" old proofs of God can give the impression of a basically negative program. Reinhold's reply is that the *Critique* not only affirms God but also achieves a general positive objective in showing how reason provides a "ground of cognition" that secures the "necessary relation of morality to religion" (pp. 3–5). Kant unifies morality and religion "by the head," using an argument for God from pure practical reason to save an era endangered by "morality without religion," whereas Jesus unified morality and religion "by the heart," using an appeal to moral feeling and images of God as a loving and universal father to save an era endangered by "religion without morality" (pp. 6–9).<sup>22</sup> The common democratic orientation of Jesus and Kant, which promises salvation to all as "world citizens," is contrasted with the tyranny of the intervening "orthodox" period, which is found not only in the elitism of the Roman church but also in strands of the Reformation tradition that stress theological claims at the expense of basic moral claims. Reinhold proposes an analogy: Kant's "religion of pure morality" relates to genuine Christianity as, more generally, the true theory of morality relates to proper moral practice (pp. 10–14). This practical orientation is secured by the *Critique*'s proof of the restricted nature of our faculties, which (if sound) undermines the claims of those who assume that we have a speculative faculty for determining – or disproving – the existence of anything beyond the sensible world, either by mere concepts or alleged revelation

<sup>21</sup> This contrast is complicated by the fact that Jacobi, like Kant, contrasted the mere rationality of the understanding with the orientation toward the "unconditioned" that is definitive of reason. They also both affirmed the distinctive need and power of reason to assert something "unconditioned," but Kant, unlike Jacobi, insisted that this power can be properly exercised only through the means of universal practical reason. Cf. my "The Critique of Metaphysics: The Structure and Fate of Kant's Dialectic," in *The Cambridge Companion to Kant and Modern Philosophy*, ed. P. Guyer (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, forthcoming).

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Hegel, *Early Theological Writings*, tr. T. M. Knox (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1948).

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(pp. 15–21). Here again Reinhold does not pause to explain Kant’s main grounds for this crucial “restriction thesis,” namely the *Critique*’s controversial arguments for transcendental idealism.<sup>23</sup> Instead, he quotes a long passage from the “Orientation” essay, which argues that our rational moral conception of God is a “first” condition that would have to be met by any purported intuition of the divine (pp. 22–6).<sup>24</sup> After dismissing any purely theoretical cognition of the divine, Reinhold touts the systematic advantages of the Kantian moral cognition of God. It builds on the conceptual richness of traditional metaphysical approaches while being able – unlike such metaphysics – to affirm concrete individual existence, a result that hyperphysical appeals to intuition can reach only illegitimately (pp. 27–32). The last part of the letter places the moral argument for God in the context of a three-stage universal history of religion: first there was crude historical faith, then there was a crude theology of reason, involving hyperphysical or dogmatic claims, and now, in a third era, higher forms of faith and reason are properly combined in Kant’s pure moral religion (pp. 34–9). The main point of this story goes beyond religion. It exemplifies Reinhold’s more general view that philosophical advances usually incorporate both historical and systematic approaches, and that this occurs through a process of dialectical development within the whole history of culture, which culminates in reason’s reconstructive narrative of its own fulfillment.

## The history of religion

This narrative approach is made explicit in the title of Reinhold’s Fourth Letter, which concerns the “previous course” of conviction in the postulates of God and immortality. Its first pages provide some of Reinhold’s

<sup>23</sup> These arguments depend on very specific and complex claims about how we are limited in *all our determinate theoretical* knowledge by pure forms of space and time, forms that have to be understood as merely “transcendentally ideal” and not applying at all to “things in themselves” beyond sensible appearances. It is no accident that later Reinhold, and then his successors, relied on “shorter” and supposedly better arguments for “idealism” that bypass Kant’s specific considerations about space and time. This procedure led to considerable confusion about the meaning and structure of the main arguments and conclusions of the *Critique*. See my *Kant and the Fate of Autonomy*, chs. 2–3, and *Interpreting Kant’s Critiques* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 2003), chs. 3 and 5.

<sup>24</sup> This may sound as if it is being allowed that we might have such an intuition, but Reinhold goes on to insist that our intuition is sensible and finite, and so we cannot have any intuition, and hence any theoretical cognition, that could demonstrate the existence of an infinite being. This still is not to go so far as the claim that caused scandal in both the Pantheism Controversy and Fichte’s later Atheism Controversy (1798–9), namely that the very existence of an infinite personal being is impossible.

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clearest statements about how these two “articles of faith” show the harmony of Kant’s “systematic philosophy of religion” with both common sense and historical tradition, since Jesus also “rested content with the deliverances of common sense” in favor of these articles (pp. 117–21). Historical development is important nonetheless because in the infancy of Christianity a “pure” reliance on moral considerations would have “undermined conviction.” In the pre-Kantian world, intuitions and concepts were inadequately thematized. Sensible intuitions were at first overly emphasized by common people just as, later, bare concepts were overly emphasized by philosophers (pp. 122–30). Reinhold’s account of this process introduces what is perhaps one of the earliest explicit formulations of the alienation version of the “projection” theory of religion (p. 132).<sup>25</sup> The account explains belief in miracles and incomprehensible divine powers as a hypostatization of powers desired by our own weak reason, a reason that misunderstands its own systematic capacities by picturing them in external, authoritarian terms (pp. 131–4). Building on Jacobi’s analysis, Reinhold describes this development in terms of another analogy: “Rome” (dogmatic Catholicism) completes the alienated systematic development of hyperphysical thought just as Spinoza “completes” the alienated systematic development of theoretical metaphysics (pp. 134–7). Reinhold regards Spinoza as the best of the traditional metaphysicians because he appreciates that a theoretical assertion of the existence of a divine person should involve, like all existence claims, intuition and not mere concepts. Reinhold sums up the perplexities of modern philosophy of religion in terms of its inevitable difficulties in trying to bring together the notions of (a) a necessary being and (b) the “noncomprehensibility” of divine existence without yet appreciating (c) the command of practical reason. The advantages of relying on practical reason are that it does not try to prove God from concepts alone – and *in this sense* it allows that God’s existence is not “comprehensible” – and yet it alone can show

<sup>25</sup> Cf. J. G. Fichte, *Versuch einer Kritik aller Offenbarung* (Königsberg, 1792), §2, “The idea of God [the Giver of Law through the moral law in us] is based on an externalization [*Entäusserung*] of our moral law of something subjective in us into a being outside us; and this projection [*Übertragung*] is the specific principle of a religion instrumental in the determination of the will.” Cited by George di Giovanni, “The First Twenty Years of Critique: The Spinoza Connection,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Kant*, ed. P. Guyer (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 433. Reinhold’s version of the theory already anticipates the dialectical twist of German Idealism, according to which extreme alienation is a fortunate and ultimately rational process that enables a later and deeper recovery of oneself through another.

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that God exists and the concept of a necessary being is instantiated (pp. 138–42).<sup>26</sup>

### *Immortality as a “result”*

The second basic “article of faith,” immortality, dominates the rest of the *Letters*, although only in the Fifth Letter is it discussed directly in relation to Kant’s moral argument. Even there, Reinhold focuses on the context and results of Kant’s postulate rather than the unusually unpersuasive argument for it, which is simply that pure practical reason requires us to believe that we have the opportunity to work toward the highest good in a way that is not limited by the mere natural course of human existence.<sup>27</sup> Once again Reinhold’s main aim is to show how a basic idea of the *Critique* fits all at once the fundamentally historical, systematic, and commonsensical character of reason. He stresses that even though the idea of some kind of an afterlife naturally occurs to common sense, history reveals that the “pure” conception of an immortal soul is a relatively late development, one that requires considerable time for the underlying notion of a mind–body distinction to be adequately developed beforehand (pp. 167–72). The first step in this process is simply the commonsense religious interest – manifested initially without any concern for proof – in a good or bad fate after death as a consequence of actions in this life. Once again, the second step is a dialectical development of extreme positions: bare historical and then bare metaphysical grounds for immortality assist in raising popular interest in the issue and in the tools of mere reason, but their inadequacy leads to the formulation of the moral argument (pp. 173–8). In a final clarification, Reinhold explains that the moral argument does not appeal in an improper way to the feelings of hope and fear, since it insists that first we must please God morally, and not in any manner that involves a hypocritical enslavement to our own passions or an external authority. The key idea is not,

<sup>26</sup> Unfortunately, Reinhold expresses this point simply by concluding, “practical reason requires them to believe what they cannot comprehend” (p. 139) – as if it is a great virtue that the Critical view can be put this way. This is one of several awkward formulations that may have led Reinhold’s readers away from Kant rather than toward him.

<sup>27</sup> See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A827/B855f.; *Lectures on Metaphysics/Immanuel Kant*, ed. and tr. K. Ameriks and S. Naragon (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997), and the review of Kant’s concern with immortality throughout his career in my *Kant’s Theory of Mind* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2nd ed., 2000), ch. 5.

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“be good simply because there will be a reward later” (a motive that is futile because it would destroy one’s goodness from the start), but “because, and only because, you genuinely are striving to be good, you can hope for a proper reward later” (pp. 179–84).

### *Critique of “metaphysical grounds”*

The Sixth Letter attacks “metaphysical grounds of cognition” for the doctrine of immortality. Although Reinhold’s own view of this doctrine is in a sense also highly metaphysical in its presuppositions and implications, the main point that he intends to make is clear enough, namely that traditional *strictly theoretical* arguments for immortality are highly problematic, especially after the *Critique*. Instead of displaying the full “internal grounds” for this Kantian position, however, Reinhold once again calls attention to the benefits of its results: sound arguments from “metaphysical” grounds alone would supposedly hurt, rather than promote, the unity of religion and morality because they would make interest in morality unnecessary (pp. 68–70). The most complicated philosophical issues arise when Reinhold tries to specify exactly what can be theoretically said about the soul nevertheless, once we get beyond all the fallacies of (traditional) metaphysics.<sup>28</sup> He allows that there is nothing “wrong” about a theoretical use of the notion of the soul *if* it is simply meant to designate appearances that are not like those of “outer sense” (pp. 70–2). This may seem to be a mere phenomenological point, but Reinhold goes on to give it a very strong meaning by suggesting that the fact the mind does not appear extended to us implies that it need not be subject to the processes of corruption to which bodies are vulnerable. It is unclear whether he takes this claim as *evidence* that our mind *cannot* in any way go out of existence, or rather as merely a “defensive” way of saying that we do not *have* to say that it must be corruptible simply because bodies are. Unlike Kant himself, Reinhold here does not invoke the doctrine of the transcendental ideality of bodies, and this also leaves it unclear exactly why he thinks that we must ultimately (theoretically, and not merely qua appearance) regard ourselves as beings that are not bodies.

<sup>28</sup> This is a difficult undertaking because of the complexity of the Paralogisms section of the *Critique*, which Kant went on to revise extensively in his second edition. See the Preface to the second edition of my *Kant’s Theory of Mind*.