

Cambridge University Press & Assessment
978-1-009-24494-7 — Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi and the Ends of the Enlightenment
Religion, Philosophy, and Reason at the Crux of Modernity
Edited by Alexander J. B. Hampton
Frontmatter
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Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi and the Ends of the Enlightenment

Jacobi held a position of unparalleled importance in the golden age of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century intellectual history. Nonetheless, the range and style of his thought and its expression has always posed interpretative challenges that continue to hinder his reception. This volume introduces and evaluates Jacobi's pivotal place in the history of ideas. It explores his role in catalysing the close of the Enlightenment through his critique of reason, how he shaped the reception of Kant's critical philosophy and the subsequent development of German idealism, his effect on the development of Romanticism and religion through his emphasis on feeling, and his influence in shaping the emergence of existentialism. This volume serves as an authoritative resource for one of the most important yet underappreciated figures in modern European intellectual history. It also recasts our understanding of Fichte, Hegel, Kierkegaard, and others in the light of his influence and impact.

ALEXANDER J. B. HAMPTON is Assistant Professor at the University of Toronto, specialising in metaphysics, poetics, and nature. His publications include *Romanticism and the Re-Invention of Modern Religion: The Reconciliation of German Idealism and Platonic Realism* (Cambridge, 2019), *Christian Platonism: A History* (Cambridge, 2021), and the *Cambridge Companion to Christianity and the Environment* (Cambridge, 2020). He is currently writing a study of nature and the metaphysics of participation.

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'In the past fifty years, Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi has proved his great importance for the study of German philosophy in its great formative years (1780–1830). Jacobi was behind every important controversy and he was a central influence upon every major thinker of the era. Despite his great importance, the anglophone world has been very slow to appreciate Jacobi. Now, with Alexander Hampton's excellent anthology, we can say that it has finally got up to speed. This volume contains first-rate articles by some fifteen specialists on every aspect of Jacobi's thought; it is indispensable for every student of Jacobi and German Idealism.'

Frederick C. Beiser, Professor of Philosophy,
Syracuse University

'Despite his enormous importance for the development of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century German intellectual history, F. H. Jacobi remains a relatively under-explored figure within anglophone philosophical scholarship. This volume makes a significant contribution to remedying that gap, with a cross-disciplinary set of essays exploring Jacobi's role in central debates over issues such as scepticism, nihilism, and the relation between faith and reason. A vital new resource for those interested in key debates that shaped Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment German thought.'

Allen Speight, Professor of Philosophy, Boston University

'In recent years, philosophy in the Anglo-American world has broadened its scope to include consideration of more than just the work of Kant and Hegel from the "classical" German tradition. Fichte, Schelling, and the "early German Romantics" are now quite well established as part of contemporary philosophical debate. The work of Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi (1743–1819), in contrast, has been largely absent from much of that debate. As this volume shows, Jacobi was a crucial figure in the development of German Idealist and Romantic philosophy, and German theology, who also plays an important, but often neglected, role in subsequent debates. This collection of essays will serve as a valuable introduction to an original and provocative thinker.'

Andrew Bowie, Emeritus Professor of Philosophy and
German, Royal Holloway University of London

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For George di Giovanni

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Δος μοι που στῶ / Give me a place to stand.
Archimedes

[chosen by Jacobi as epigraph to
*Über die Lehre des Spinoza in Briefen
an den Herrn Moses Mendelssohn*]

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George di Giovanni is Professor of Philosophy Emeritus at McGill University, where he is also associated with the School of Religious Studies. As the leading English language scholar on Jacobi, he produced the first extensive English edition and translation of his major literary and philosophical classics, *Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi: The Main Philosophical Writings and the Novel 'Allwill'* (1994 and 2009). He has written and translated extensively on the German late Enlightenment and Early Romantic period, including the monographs *Hegel and the Challenge of Spinoza: A Study in German Idealism, 1801–1832* (2021), and *Freedom and Religion in Kant and his Immediate Successors: The Vocation of Humankind, 1774–1800* (2005).

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on the philosophy of religion. Some recent publications are *Hegel-Lexikon* (ed., 2006), 'The Interest of Reason Is to Go Without God: Jacobi's Polemic Against Philosophical Theology' (2014), and 'How to Break the Ill-Fated Bond Between Religion and Violence' (2020).

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Anders Moe Rasmussen is Associate Professor of Philosophy in the Department of Culture and Society at Aarhus University and Senior Fellow at Max Weber Kolleg in Erfurt, Germany. He is the co-editor of *German Idealism Today* (2017) and *Kierkegaard im Kontext des*

Deutschen Idealismus (2014). He has published several articles on seventeenth- and eighteenth-century philosophy, including 'Self, Hope and the Unconditional: Kierkegaard on Faith and Hope' (2015), 'Glaube, Offenbarung, Existenz: Die Fortführung der Jacobischen Vernunftskritik bei Schelling and Kierkegaard' (2014), and 'Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi: Two Theories of the Leap' (2009).

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Foreword

I record this brief reflection in order to express my gratitude for the appearance of this book. It emerges from an exemplary conference, held at McGill's School of Religious Studies and in the historic Birks Building, in late September 2019. It will long remain in the memory of many. The conference, 'Jacobi: At the Crux of Modernity, A Bicentenary Colloquium', was conceived and directed by Professor Alexander J. B. Hampton of the University of Toronto, and administered by Hadi Fakhoury, then at McGill and currently at Harvard's Center for the Study of World Religion. It was funded generously by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the German Academic Exchange Service, and by Cambridge University Press, as well as by both the Department of Philosophy and the School of Religious Studies at McGill. I am particularly grateful for the latter collaboration, and that these two units can find, so readily and so often, so many occasions for common investment.

This particular occasion was marked by the extraordinarily and uniformly high level of contributions, by the length and quality of the conversations that they occasioned, and by the collegial spirit of our lunches and dinners together. The conviviality is especially to be noted. The conference assembled philosophers, religionists, and theologians, younger and senior scholars, from quite different interpretive traditions from Belgium, Canada, England, Germany, Holland, and the United States. Methodological and thematic investigations were advanced alongside treatments of Fichte and Flatt and Hamann and Schelling and Schleiermacher and the Muenster Circle, which were advanced alongside historical-philosophical, and historical-theological investigations. It was genuinely a learned society, and the conference was interdisciplinary in a way often claimed and yet rarely attained.

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This volume is a tribute, as was the conference, to the importance and influence of the work of our colleague George di Giovanni, Professor of Philosophy Emeritus and Associate Member of the School of Religious Studies at McGill. I wish to recognise and reiterate here the gratitude that all participants felt towards Professor di Giovanni for this accomplishment and lasting legacy. No one in the Anglophone world has done more to understand and explicate the enigmatic figure of F. H. Jacobi, whose significance for nineteenth-century German philosophy is explored expertly throughout this volume. Jacobi once claimed that he was caught in the tension between a pagan mind and a religious heart. This is a tension that will resonate with many engaged in the philosophy of religion and that, together with Jacobi's struggles with the many and contrasting notions of religion of the late Enlightenment and early Romanticism, also makes him a central figure in this field.

The book is also a reflection of the kind of collaboration between philosophers, theologians, and religionists that is required for the thorough comprehension of figures such as Jacobi. This collaboration Professor di Giovanni has always promoted at McGill, through the scope and character of his work, and the irrepressible energy of his engagement with his sources.

Testimony to his influence on new generations of young scholars are the theses and dissertations written at McGill under his supervision, in Philosophy and in Religious Studies, on German Idealism, all dealing with the at time strained, but always complex, relation of its protagonists with religion. And the influence of this collaborative spirit extends further. McGill-Queen's University Press has just announced a new series in the philosophy of religion, for which George di Giovanni and I will serve as co-editors. The first volume in that series, a translation and interpretation of Jacobi's *Divine Things*, the only text left untranslated in Professor di Giovanni's landmark text, *Main Philosophical Writings and the Novel Allwill*, will appear soon. A Canadian Society for Philosophy of Religion has

recently been formed; its inaugural conference, long deferred by the COVID-19 pandemic, will also be held at the Birks Building in 2022.

The School of Religious Studies at McGill has long been a site for this collaboration between philosophers and religionists and theologians, and for research on the historical and systematic relations between the traditions of philosophy and theology. It is excellent that this tradition be informed by projects such as this volume. It is important also that it be renewed. Indeed, we are currently celebrating the Ray L. Hart Bequest; this will lead to the establishment of three new and fully endowed chairs in philosophy of religion, as well as another in religion and literature, in the School of Religious Studies. For this reason, we hope that this conference and publication will establish a model for scholarly activities and objects much like it for years to come. For these reasons, I record this Foreword in order to celebrate the advent of this conference and the appearance of this volume. I do so in a context of a still more profound gratitude for the collaboration and generosity of spirit that have marked a full decade of work with Professor di Giovanni.

Garth W. Green
John W. McConnell Professor of Philosophy of Religion
Director, School of Religious Studies
McGill University

Acknowledgments

Those who visited Jacobi, those with whom he corresponded, were some of the most important figures of his age: Goethe, Herder, Diderot, Wieland, Lavater, von Humboldt, Hemsterhuis, and many others. Kierkegaard and Coleridge read him. Feuerbach wrote his dissertation on him. Schelling fought with him. These figures conversed and corresponded with Jacobi, pored through his works, because he never stopped asking questions – and this is how most of us come into contact with him today. We encounter him invariably pressing a question that others around him would have preferred to leave aside so they could get on with the business of writing philosophy. Yet the questions he asked were the very ones that the philosophical enterprise needed to prosecute, about its limits, its intentions, its foundations, and its end. Jacobi was deeply involved in the events of his day not merely as a contributor but as a fundamental influence on their direction, asking questions that helped to shape the philosophical landscape at the turn of the nineteenth century.

This project began with a bicentenary colloquium organised by myself, Paolo Liveri, and George di Giovanni held at the School of Religious Studies of McGill University, Montréal, in September 2019. That event brought together fifteen scholars from seven countries, from a multiplicity of disciplines, all of whom share an interest in the seminal figure at the centre of this volume. The colloquium would not have occurred without the kind support and enthusiasm of Garth Green, Director of the School of Religious Studies. Hadi Fakhoury provided invaluable assistance with the organisation of the colloquium, and Stephanie Zazzera is to be thanked for her kind assistance with organisation.

The present volume would have come together soon after the colloquium but for the fact that a worldwide pandemic disrupted

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our best-laid plans. Lissa McCullough provided invaluable editorial assistance in moving the project forward after the interruption. At Cambridge University Press, Beatrice Rehl has been a strong supporter of the project since its inception. Thanks also to Nicole Percifield for her kindness and support. Financial support for the project was made available through the Social Sciences and Research Council of Canada, the Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst, the School of Religious Studies, the Faculty of Arts, and the Department of Philosophy of McGill University, and the Department for the Study of Religion, University of Toronto.

In 1994 George di Giovanni published his study and translation of Jacobi, and he has made numerous contributions since, not only in publications but also through his teaching and his support for work in this area. For anyone who works on German intellectual history, his contributions are illuminating and indispensable. He has laid a tremendous amount of groundwork for those working in the field, probably more than he knows. As a mark of thanks for his service as he retires, this volume, written by a generation of scholars who have benefited from George's work, is dedicated to him in gratitude.

Abbreviations

The following abbreviations for Jacobi's writings are employed throughout the volume. Full bibliographic details for these and other works by and on Jacobi appear in the back of the volume; see 'Jacobi Sources' (p. 302).

- JBW Jacobi, Friedrich Heinrich. *Briefwechsel. Gesamtausgabe. Reihe I: Text*. Edited by Walter Jaeschke and Birgit Sandkaulen. Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1981–.
- JWA Jacobi, Friedrich Heinrich. *Werke. Gesamtausgabe*. 7 vols. Edited by Klaus Hammacher and Walter Jaeschke. Hamburg: Meiner, 1998–.
- MPW *Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi: The Main Philosophical Writings and the Novel 'Allwill.'* Edited and translated with introduction by George di Giovanni. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994.