In this book, Rachel Zuckert provides the first overarching account of Johann Gottfried Herder’s complex aesthetic theory. She guides the reader through Herder’s texts, showing how they relate to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European philosophy of art, and focusing on two main concepts: aesthetic naturalism, the view that art is natural to and naturally valuable for human beings as organic, embodied beings, and – unusually for Herder’s time – aesthetic pluralism, the view that aesthetic value takes many diverse and culturally varying forms. Zuckert argues that Herder’s theory plays a pivotal role in the history of philosophical aesthetics, marking the transition from the eighteenth-century focus on aesthetic value as grounded in human nature to the nineteenth-century focus on art as socially significant and historically variable. Her study illuminates Herder’s significance as an innovative thinker in aesthetics, and will interest a range of readers in philosophy of art and European thought.

Rachel Zuckert is Professor of Philosophy at Northwestern University. She is author of the prizewinning Kant on Beauty and Biology (Cambridge, 2007) and coeditor of Hegel on Philosophy in History (Cambridge, 2017).
HERDER’S NATURALIST AESTHETICS

RACHEL ZUCKERT

Northwestern University, Illinois
To my parents
# Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acknowledgments</th>
<th>page viii</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Note on Citations</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PART I  HERDER’S AESTHETICS</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1  Herder’s Philosophical Naturalism</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2  Synthesis and Critique of Eighteenth-Century Aesthetics</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3  Aesthetics of the Senses</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4  Aesthetics of Expression</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coda to Part I: Cultural Variation and Taste</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PART II  EXPLORATIONS</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5  The Problem of the Sublime</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6  Sculpture and Touch</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7  Aesthetics and (In)Authenticity: Herder’s Reception of Ossian</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Acknowledgments

Over years of working on this project, I have benefited from the help of many people and organizations. I am grateful to the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation and the National Endowment for the Humanities for fellowships that supported work on the project, and to my home institution, Northwestern University, for generous supplemental support. I thank Georg Bertram for serving as a gracious host at the Freie Universität during my stay in Berlin as a Humboldt fellow, and Judith Siegmund, a gracious unofficial host, who held a lovely reading group on Herder at the Universität der Künste. I have learned a great deal from conversation with students in courses on aesthetics at Rice University and Northwestern University, as well as from audiences at the Chicago Area Consortium in German Philosophy workshop, University of Illinois Urbana–Champaign, Johns Hopkins University, University of Chicago, Rice University, the American Philosophical Association, the International Herder Society, the Aesthetics Anarchy conference at Indiana University, and CUNY, where I have presented parts of the book as work in progress. I thank many friends and colleagues for intellectual stimulation and moral support, including Mark Alznauer, Karl Ameriks, Gillian Barker, Marcia Brennan, Bill Bristow, Tim Costelloe, Andrew Cutrofello, Anne Eaton, Kyla Ebel-Duggan, Hannah Ginsborg, Lydia Goehr, Paul Guyer, Lynne Huffer, Peter Hylton, Jörg Kreienbock, Elizabeth Millán, Barbara Montero, Fred Rush, Fransev Russell, Sally Sedgwick, James Shelley, Brian Soucek, Vicki Spencer, and Jack Zammitto, and four anonymous referees for insightful comments. I am grateful to David Johnson both for many discussions of aesthetics and for logistical support with the manuscript. Conversations with dear friend and brilliant philosopher Katalin Makkai made it possible for me to finish this book. Les and James Harris provided helpful consolations and distractions from the headaches the project has occasioned. Michael and Catherine Zuckert have formed me both
Acknowledgments

personally and intellectually in ways of which I will never be fully aware, and for which I cannot be sufficiently grateful; I dedicate the book to them.

I am grateful to the publisher and editors of the Herder Jahrbuch for their kind permission to publish a revised and expanded version of my essay, “Herder and Philosophical Naturalism” (Herder Yearbook [Heidelberg: Synchron] vol. XII 2014, 125–44) as Chapter 1 of the present book. Earlier, shorter versions of Chapters 5 and 6 were published as “Awe or Envy: Herder contra Kant on the Sublime” (Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism 61:3 Summer 2003, 217–32) and “Sculpture and Touch: Herder’s Aesthetics of Sculpture” (Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism 67:3 Summer 2009, 285–99), respectively. Both essays have new introductions and final sections, updated citations, and have been adjusted to fit the argument of the larger work. The first essay has been substantially revised to emphasize Herder’s naturalism, rather than his debate with Kant. Used by permission of the copyright holder: © 2003 and 2009 American Society for Aesthetics (Wiley-Blackwell, Publisher).
Note on Citations

All citations to Herder’s works will be to title or abbreviated title of the work (see below), followed where possible by citation to an English translation and by citation to the German text.

Citations to Herder’s works in German are to the updated scholarly edition: Herder, Werke, ed. Günter Arnold et al. (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1985–2000), abbreviated as FHA, and cited by volume and page number. If a Herder work is not available in FHA, it will be cited in Sämtliche Werke, ed. Bernard Suphan (Berlin: Weidmann, 1877–1913), abbreviated as SWS, followed by volume and page number.

English translations are cited by abbreviated reference to translator and page number. In the case of works that have appeared in multiple translations, I cite the Moore and Forster translations. Abbreviated references are as follows.


Note on Citations

Gaiger  
    Sculpture: Some Observations on Shape and Form from Pygmalion’s Creative Dream, ed. and trans. Jason Gaiger  

M  
    Selected Writings on Aesthetics, ed. and trans. Gregory Moore  

Menze  

SWS  

Abbreviated Titles of Herder’s Works

Beauty of Body  
    “Is the Beauty of Body a Herald of the Beauty of Soul?”

CF1  
    First Critical Forest

CF2  
    Second Critical Forest

CF3  
    Third Critical Forest

CF4  
    Fourth Critical Forest

Change of Taste  
    “On the Change of Taste. On the Diversity of Taste and of Manner of Thought among Human Beings”

CS  
    On the Cognition and Sensation of the Human Soul

Fragments  
    Fragments on Recent German Literature

GSC  
    God; Some Conversations

Ideas  
    Ideas towards a Philosophy of History of Humankind

Image  
    “Image, Poetry, and Fable”

Influence  
    “On the Influence of the Belles Lettres on the Higher Sciences”

Letters  
    Letters for the Advancement of Humanity

Ode  
    Treatise on the Ode

OL  
    Treatise on the Origin of Language

Ossian essay  
    “Excerpt from a Correspondence on Ossian and the Songs of Ancient Peoples”

Painting or  
    “Does Painting or Music Have a Greater Effect?”

Music  
    A Divine Colloquy

Philosophy  
    “How Philosophy Can Become More Universal and Useful for the Benefit of the People”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>xi</th>
<th>Note on Citations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sculpture</td>
<td><em>Sculpture: Some Observations on Shape and Form from Pygmalion’s Creative Dream</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunken</td>
<td>“On the Causes of Sunken Taste among the Different Peoples in Whom It Once Blossomed”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TT</td>
<td><em>This Too a Philosophy of History</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>