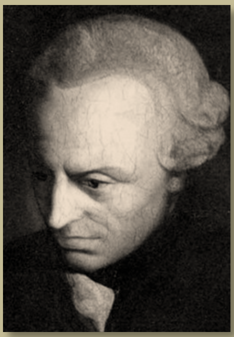
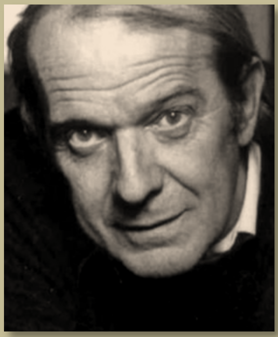
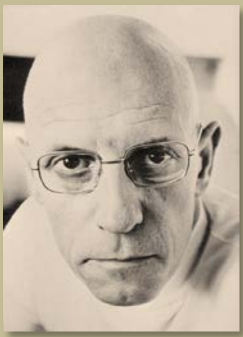
METACRITIQUE

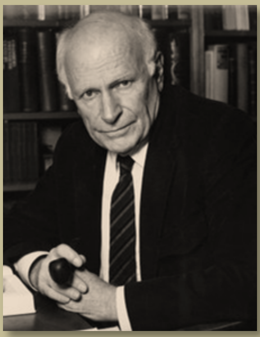
FROM KANT TO KOSELLECK

On the relation between the
transcendental and the empirical
in modern philosophy and history









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Metacritique from Kant to Koselleck: on the relation between the transcendental and the empirical in modern philosophy and history

Master Thesis: a study by Levi van den Bogaard in *30 000* words,
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Ik draag deze thesis op aan mijn grootvader,
ds. Cornelis Johannes Petrus Lam (1928–2012),
een ware genealoog.[1]

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[1] I dedicate this thesis to my grandfather, ds. C.J.P. Lam (1928–2012), a true genealogist.

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Since the organization and ambition of this study may appear somewhat esoteric, it would be appropriate to begin with a clear set of questions and problems to which it is devoted. For it is these which it considers to be the touchstones of all genuine historical and philosophical explorations, and which therefore also guide its narrative. In history it is often not a case of who provides the best solutions but of who raises the right questions about a historical event or process, or indeed (re)describes an already existing problem most astutely. A privileged space is reserved, then, for those who are capable of introducing new problems to an existing field of research or even of generating new fields through the introduction of problems. It is this latter domain which is the subject matter of this study as it traces the conditions of emergence of such a problem. Problems always depend on a certain space of experience and horizon of expectation within which they acquire meaning and significance: what this study seeks to emphasize is that during the last two decades of the eighteenth century a series of rapid changes occur within the history of thought that will inspire the birth of metacritique.

What is metacritique?—Metacritique, or 'critique *of* critique,' is the tradition in modern philosophical and historical thought which problematizes the relation between the transcendental and the empirical and consequently seeks to determine a certain distribution of these domains. One could say that, in historicizing a tradition of transcendental reflection, this study itself in fact constitutes a very modest kind of metacritique; in this sense the self-referential aspect of this study is readily apparent. What does it mean to historicize a tradition of transcendental thinking? This implies, first of all, that this study will forego narrow-minded contrasts between philosophy and history, showing that scholars working in both fields have often indeed struggled with the same issues and continue to do so. The issues in question are reducible neither to philosophical reasoning nor to historical processes, but are nevertheless motivated by both. One goal of this study, in fact, is to demonstrate the value of adopting such a strategy, above all with respect to the topic at hand. Secondly, it implies that philosophical thought becomes a valuable topic of historical analysis, capable of rendering insights into the methodological issues which have governed (or even determined) the historical discipline ever since its inception. Thirdly, it means to approach the contents of the domain of the transcendental as belonging to a historical process. In other words, not to take for granted the fixed, unhistorical nature of the transcendental as many modern scholars have argued it to be, but precisely to open it up to historical and comparative analysis.

What are the 'transcendental' and the 'empirical'?—In its rudimentary form, we can arrive at what is usually considered to be transcendental through the basic formula "the necessary conditions of ...". In other words, the transcendental is that which enables or generates something else, this something else always being the *conditioned*; that is, the empirical. What we can determine about the transcendental beforehand is that it expresses (not possesses) the qualities of conditionality (if *x* then *y*) and necessity (*y* requires *x*). What it conditions, then, is what constitutes the realm of the empirical (the *y* itself), composed of everything that is opened up to experience or, in more scientific parlance, accessible to observation. Despite accompanying it, the transcendental thus always in some way, shape or form *exceeds experience* whilst being necessarily implicated in it. This key feature will prove to be crucial at a later stage of our investigation. If we were, at this point, to continue to fill in the meaning of these concepts in an attempt to settle for a final definition, this would not merely harm the current investigation; it would also flat-out contradict it. For to conflate the distinction between transcendental and empirical with the universal and particular, for instance, would already amount to a postulation of what is not self-evident at all. Rather, we must leave some space for the narrative and its many characters to present us with different configurations of the two concepts and their interrelationship. Only if we can assent to the *regulative* meaning of the concepts as has just been sketched out will we succeed in doing so.

The winding course this narrative follows begins, in any case, with Immanuel Kant (1724–1804). For it is he who, in the *Kritik der Reinen Vernunft* (1781), first introduces the concept of the 'transcendental' within the history of thought and also binds its fate to that of the 'empirical.' As a result, a new problematic is created. The first part of this study will be devoted to tracing the historical development of philosophy's and history's engagement with this problematic until the end of the nineteenth century. For a variety of reasons, later thinkers will reproach Kant for closing down a field of possibilities at the same time as his critical system opens it up. Even his first commentators will proceed to do so, from Hamann, Maimon, Herder and Jacobi to the German Idealists; J.G. Fichte, F.W.J. Schelling, and G.W.F. Hegel. Thus the practice of metacritique is born, which during the nineteenth century blends into the general discourse of the human sciences (the emerging *Geisteswissenschaften* or humanities) and provokes various theories and methods in the disciplines of history and philosophy. The second chapter will pay particular attention to this age's defining obsession with the historical, moving from Ranke's and Droysen's efforts to legitimate history as a science in order to secure its autonomy to Nietzsche's untimely meditation and Dilthey's *Verstehende* contemplation. In the second part of the study, the work of Deleuze, Foucault, and Koselleck, three relatively recent examples in which this modern tradition continues, will be explored, in order to bring to light the same tension between the transcendental and the empirical as motivating their respective projects and operating within their writings; a tension, moreover, to which each responded in his own manner. For all these influential scholars, too, Kant is to be considered as both an important historical figure as well as a significant influence upon their own thought and methodologies. Moreover, 'post-structuralists' Foucault and Deleuze are typically viewed (by proponents and opponents alike) as eager to move away from all that can be remotely considered 'transcendental.' It will be the somewhat polemical task of this study to show that their approaches are in fact far more engaging, nuanced and instructive than has been assumed—by historians in particular.[2]

We can thus formulate the main problem and question motivating the current project as follows: 'How has the problem of the relation between the transcendental and the empirical driven and reshaped philosophical and historical thought during the modern period?' To this predominantly historical question about a theoretical problem, then, corresponds a predominantly theoretical question about a historical problem: 'Can the transcendental and the empirical be assembled within the historical being—the subject of the human sciences—without reinstating the primacy of one over and above the other?' The path that has just been charted will ultimately lead to an answer to this question, but not without raising a third, more fundamental problem, whose solution will remain open, namely: 'How do we, as historical beings, come to see things differently? How do we come to think differently? About the world, about ourselves, about others, about the past, the present, the future…' This is already both a historical and metahistorical question, one proper to the practice of metacritique. That is not to say it would be out of the bounds of historical reflection: whoever assumes this about the discipline of history will be proven wrong during the course of this study.

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[2] Cf. Ed Jonker, *Historie. Over de blijvende behoefte aan geschiedenis* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 2007); in particular, the author's own position on Foucault in Chapter 1 (p. 19 and 26) and the discussion of outspoken critics such as Keith Jenkins and Keith Windschuttle in Chapter 5 (pp. 109-126). Deleuze, then, is usually regarded as too obscure and subversive to even be discussed at any length.

In a general sense we can thus speak of this study as a *history of concepts* insofar as it traces the historical emergence and development of the concept pair transcendental-empirical and the corresponding domains of knowledge it opens onto. The morphology of this concept pair would look something like this: first, a moment of formulation or formation, beginning in 1781 and culminating around 1800; then, a moment of adaptation or translation, stretching out throughout the nineteenth century; finally, a moment of reinvention, beginning during the second half of the twentieth century. But to describe this study in its specificity would be to call it a *genealogy of problematics*. It is a genealogy insofar as it recognizes the significance of struggle and conflict about the foundations and limits of the disciplines and of science in general in explaining historical change. In other words, it does not isolate the historical trajectory of knowledge from the co-constitutive force of power. And it is a genealogy *of* problematics insofar as it (a) affirms the centrality of problems in the history it explores and wishes to account for their conditions of emergence, (b) recognizes the transcendental-empirical pair as the founding modern problematic and (c) sets up this problem as the general form of problematization of the history it traces; that is, as the condition in which the articulation of a diversity of responses and solutions is simultaneously made possible.

This is not however an effort to subsume all posterior accounts of knowledge and reality under the umbrella of Kantianism and, as such, to deny their specificity or novelty. Rather, the effort is to think in terms of an actual problematic which continues to inform philosophical and historical thought, and thus to work from the inside out instead of imposing from the outside a determining structure onto the thoughts and ideas analyzed. This requires of us, first of all, that we recognize the centrality of this theme in modern thought. As the historical survey will show, the heterogeneity of questions and problems gathered under the rubric of the transcendental-empirical pair is precisely what accounts for the continuing relevance of these concepts. Moreover, this study is not merely a further recapitulation and 'repetition' of metacritique because in detaching from it and establishing it as an object of study, a 'difference' becomes possible at the same time; in an external sense, a reinterpretation of the significance of metacritique; in an internal sense, a reinterpretation of the relation between the transcendental and the empirical; which, when combined, will lead us onto a reassessment of the conditions of possibility of history and—by extension—of the human sciences as a whole.

I – History of the Transcendental

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Formulation

Kant and the Birth of Metacritique (1780–1800)

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Prior to making our move back into the density of the past, I would like to characterize the general form of problematization itself, as adopted in this study, in the following way: between thought and milieu an opening emerges; in a spatial sense a distance, in a temporal sense an interval; not an absolute but relative distance with its own historicity, a problematic interval which can therefore be traced and accounted for in terms of cause and effect, yet only to a certain degree insofar as it opens up to the new and unforeseen—a problematization of that which up to now had been taken for granted, as thought folds back unto itself and reflects upon on its own conditions. Consequently, what we might call a '*transcendental event*.' We can indicate this precise movement in the remarkable set of events that take place in the German speaking regions of Europe (which as such share a unilingual discourse) near the end of the eighteenth century. Let us begin by investigating the conditions which set them off from three different levels of abstraction, namely a short, middle and long term perspective.

1.1 TO WHAT DOES KNOWLEDGE OWE ITS LEGITIMACY?

Accounts of this modern event considering a short timeframe often begin by telling the story of Immanuel Kant and his critical project as being born from a decade of silent reflection and ascetic living, erupting at last from the depths of a mind with a passion for duty and need for routine, given a fitting image by his daily, rigidly timed walks through Königsberg (today's Kaliningrad)—the Prussian city he would seldom leave but where he felt himself to be a citizen of the world, a *Weltbürger*.[3] Here, in May 1781, Kant's *Kritik der Reinen Vernunft* (henceforth *Kritik*) was first published and entered upon an equally deafening silence, interrupted only by a single dismissive review.[4] This in turn provoked the 1783 publication of the polemical introductory text *Prolegomena zu einer jeden künftigen Metaphysik, die als Wissenschaft wird auftreten können*. When a string of essays applying the critical principles to various fields of knowledge (including history) followed, Kant's public voice was finally heard, and by the end of the 1780s his reputation has been established.[5]

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[3] Cf. Roger Scruton, *Kant: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

[4] Helmut Holzhey and Vilem Mudroch, *Historical Dictionary of Kant and Kantianism* (Lanham: The Scarecrow Press Inc., 2005), xiii, 3.

[5] Although tempting for historians, it would be wrong to begin with—or worse, stick to—the texts in which Kant explicitly draws the historico-philosophical consequences from the system he develops in his main work, rather than to begin with these works themselves. One might even say it amounts to a certain confusion of cause and effect. The most important historical argument for this is the fact that the late eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth century reception and influence of Kant, *both* among philosophers and historians, centered chiefly around the three critiques (in decreasing order) and not the additional texts. To be sure, these individual texts did contribute greatly to the general popularization of Kantian philosophy, but were not necessary in order to get a fruitful debate going well before 1800 about the meaning and importance of the critical system.

The use of such narratives is however limited, not least because—from a middle-term perspective—Kant's critical project did not take shape within a solitary vacuum but within a vibrant intellectual (and political) environment. During the 1760s, the four main factors that predominated the cluster of intellectual conditions within which Kant's critical project would foment were a) widespread acceptance of the principles of Newtonian physics in natural science from the second half of the eighteenth century onwards; b) growing dissatisfaction with the dominance of Wolffian rationalism and its brand of metaphysics, resulting in the countermovement of *Popularphilosophie*; c) positive reception of the Scottish Enlightenment project of a 'science of man' which sought to apply the Newtonian laws to history—with particular emphasis on Hume's skeptical inquiry into human nature; d) the influence of (and controversy surrounding) Rousseau's political philosophy of moral freedom and autonomy after publication of *Émile* and *Du contrat social* in 1762.

We can recognize in Kant a desire to translate all of these conditions into a single, integral solution. If we were to take account of the main ambitions of Kant's own philosophical undertaking, we can see them converge upon a single issue to which a specific problem-question pair corresponds. This problem is, simply put, the *legitimacy of knowledge*, inviting the question: What are the conditions of possibility of knowledge in general? For to determine the grounds upon which metaphysics is permitted to call itself a science—which is the battleground on which Kant fights his greater fight—inevitably also means to lay down the rules regarding *what constitutes science in general*, that is to say to demarcate the borders between science and non-science (or pseudoscience). Critique as the tribunal of reason thus grants itself the right to, in turn, assign the scientific disciplines their rightful place, rules of employment and final limits within a newly established order. Whilst acting as a supreme governing principle within the domain of knowledge, critique also claims to establish the source, domain and limit of such governance. It does so on the basis of a reason of which it is the accompanying element: critique, thus understood, is the self-examination and self-limitation of reason.[6] Hence the Introduction states that "reason should take on anew the most difficult of all its tasks, namely, that of self-knowledge".[7] To that end, we must "institute a court of justice, by which reason may secure its rightful claims while dismissing all its groundless pretensions, and this not by mere decrees but according to its own eternal and unchangeable laws; and this court is none other than the **critique of pure reason** itself."[8]

1.2 TWO SENSES OF THE COPERNICAN REVOLUTION

From a long-term point of view, critique thus appears as a transposition—into the realm of knowledge—and inversion—as negative and instrumental function—of the problem of governance that had existed in European (city) states from the 15th and 16th centuries onward. This problem has now become a universal one, on which Kant has to say the following in a revealing footnote within the Preface:

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[6] The historical, philosophical and ethical implications of this insight will be studied in depth in Nietzsche's discussion of the ascetic ideal in the third treatise of *Zur Genealogie der Moral* (1887).

[7] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), A xii; 101.

[8] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A xii; 101.

> "Our age is the genuine age of **criticism**, to which everything must submit. **Religion** through its **holiness** and **legislation** through its **majesty** commonly seek to exempt themselves from it. But in this way they excite a just suspicion against themselves, and cannot lay claim to that unfeigned respect that reason grants only to that which has been able to withstand its free and public examination."[9]

Everything between heaven and earth is now opened up to criticism: having established this first sense in which one could speak of Kantian critique as representing a 'Copernican revolution' it now becomes necessary to investigate a second sense in which this qualification applies. For why, amongst all of this enlightened rhetoric, did Kant think it necessary to invent the concept of the transcendental as intrinsically related to the empirical and how does it figure within the critical system? A rich invention of novel concepts or re-invention of existing concepts sets in motion the critical project, a majority of which are designed to form pairs with opposing senses. To answer this question we must begin with the most well known of these dualisms, which are the *a priori-a posteriori* and analytic-synthetic pairs, the former referring to knowledge gained either prior to or from experience and the latter to judgments—knowledge or cognition always takes the form of a judgment, that is, a relation between a subject and predicate—in which the predicate is either contained within the concept or goes beyond it.[10] Both pairs stand apart but, rather than being reducible to each other, interlock to form a foursquare grid of which one angle is elected to share in the destiny of metaphysics. Such a table might look as follows:

	analytic	synthetic
a posteriori	hypothetical	empirical
a priori	logical	transcendental

Kant's theoretical exercise becomes truly original when it introduces this notion of 'synthetic *a priori* judgments'.[11] Such judgments are neither derived from experience nor envelop their concept completely and, as a consequence, are to be considered transcendental. In the positive sense, they are therefore independent of all experience *and* stand in relation to something outside of the concept they enclose. All valid knowledge produced in mathematics, physics, and philosophy is of this kind, Kant argues. But how is it possible, i.e. to what does it owe its legitimacy? This is the technical problem at the heart of the critique, the solution of which must be sought in the workings of human reason (*Menschliche Vernunft*). In order for Kant to redirect our attention away from things *as* they may be regarded 'in themselves' to objects *of* experience, and to make us aware of the revolutionary significance of this "change in the ways of thinking," a comparison is drawn with Copernicus, the Renaissance astronomer credited with bringing about the paradigmatic shift from the Ptolemaic to the heliocentric model of the cosmos.[12] Looking at the history of science, Kant sees precursors to his methodological approach in the examples of mathematics and natural science, who "have become what they now are through a revolution brought about all at once," and proposes that we, "at least as an experiment, imitate it".[13] Accordingly, Kant's summarizes his own experiment in the following oft-quoted sentence: "Hence let us once try whether we do not get farther with the problems of metaphysics by assuming that the objects must conform to our cognition [*die Gegenstände müssen sich nach unserem Erkenntnis richten*]".[14]

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[9] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A xi; 100.

[10] Ibid., A 2, A 7/ B 11; 127, 130.

[11] Ibid., A 10; 132.

[12] Ibid., B xvi.

[13] Ibid., B xvi.

If we want to follow in Kant's footsteps and make this shift in how we view ourselves and the world, we must follow him into the realm of the transcendental. Kant, for the first time, endows the noun and adjective 'transcendental' with a decisive sense no longer connected to the metaphysical sense of 'transcendent.' The transcendental comes to represent the *form* of knowledge, that is, the specific *modes* in which we are able to know objects: "I call all cognition **transcendental** that is occupied not so much with objects but rather with our *a priori* concepts of objects in general. A system of such concepts would be called transcendental philosophy."[15] While the transcendent is what goes beyond the limits of possible experience, the transcendental is what constitutes the conditions of possibility of experience. Thus, in the 'Transcendental Aesthetic,' Kant introduces his innovative theory of space and time, which argues that perceiving time and space as inherent qualities of the 'outside' world would be entirely mistaken; instead, time and space reflect the manner in which the mind itself is constituted and are therefore transcendental. Next, in the 'Transcendental Analytic,' Kant deduces the pure concepts and principles of the understanding as the conditions of possibility of experience (empirical knowledge).

Kant's Copernican turn is therefore twofold: all knowledge must be subjected to critique; but whenever employed it will direct us back to ourselves, because the condition of possibility of such a critique is *that which subjects itself to it* in hopes of gaining genuine self-knowledge. It follows from our analysis that the fate of the critical project is from the beginning bound up with the possibility of a science of man, or, as it would come to be referred to in German, an *Anthropologie*.

1.3 TRANSITION FROM CRITIQUE TO METACRITIQUE

Kantian critique is thus ontology turned epistemology, which insofar as it examines the workings of human cognition, inevitably gives rise to an anthropology; a puzzling movement reaching its apogee in the enigmatic symbol of the 'I' as the transcendental unity of apperception in thinking, a real object but not an actual substance. This leads us onto a wealth of unresolved issues. Kant had introduced philosophical thought to what he considered to be the realm of the transcendental—of the necessary conditions of possible experience—without rendering intelligible the process *through which* such knowledge is gained. Thus reason was itself still left without a proper legitimization of its authority, heightening the pressure for a solution. Kant had made the authority of philosophical reason dependent on the possibility of a critique of this reason.[16] Because his successors implicitly affirmed the new law of critique laid down by Kant, they also had to face the new and pressing problems that it seemed to generate. The new question became: How is the critique of knowledge possible? Kant's immediate critics recognized the inherent problematicity of the criticism they voiced in the wake of Kant's seminal work, whose extraordinary complexity and novelty of its operation, along with the importance critique accorded itself, simply demanded response.

At this point we are crossing over from Kantian critique into the domain of metacritique. By the 1790s, Kant's 'criticism' appeared to have been "superseded by interpretations, corrections, and new developments of his teachings by others."[17] In other words, all of Kant's subsequent work had already *merged with* the upward trend of metacritique. There are at least two ways in which we can locate the birth of metacritique already within the Kantian system itself. First, the original *Kritik* professes an implicit metacritical theory; a theory about the possibility of critique itself rooted in the assumption of a priori reasoning. Second, in the interval between, on the one hand, the appearance of the first *Kritik* in 1781 and, on the other hand, the appearance of the *Prolegomena* in 1783, the second edition of the *Kritik* in 1787, and the second and third critiques in 1788 and 1790, respectively, Kant assimilates some of the criticisms aimed at the original *Kritik*. It would be beyond the scope of this study to outline all these complex interrelations or to provide a comprehensive analysis of each of these texts. Instead, we will have to rest content with a brief familiarization with four of Kant's most outspoken metacritics, namely Johann Georg Hamann, Salomon Maimon, Johann Gottfried von Herder and Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi. Other important documents from this period, which unfortunately cannot be discussed here but deserve to be mentioned, are the *Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie,* published by Karl Leonard Reinhold in 1786-7; the *Aenesidemus*, a response in 1792 to this '*Elementarphilosophie*' from a Humean skepticist position at the hand of Gottlob Ernst Schulze; the revised edition of the *Philosophische Aphorismen* by Ernst Platner from 1793; and finally Friedrich Schlegel's *Transcendentalphilosophie* which appeared in 1801.

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[14] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B xvi.

[15] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 12; 133.

[16] Frederick C. Beiser, *The Fate of Reason. German Philosophy from Kant to Fichte* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987) 1.

From left to right: Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi, Johann Georg Hamann, Salomon Maimon, Johann Gottfried von Herder.

1.4 HAMANN

According to Frederick Beiser, Johann Georg Hamann (1730–1788) "could not repress his curiosity about Kant's progress with the first *Kritik*" already during the 1770s: "Indeed, such was Hamann's interest in Kant's magnum opus—his "Moral der reinen Vernunft," as he called it—that he helped to arrange a publisher for it, J.F. Hartknoch. Then, through his connections with Hartknoch, and without Kant's consent, he managed to obtain the proof sheets as soon as they came out. In this furtive manner Hamann became the first person to read the *Kritik* apart from Kant himself."[18] As a result, Hamann had already completed a first draft of his essay a few weeks after Kant's work was published. In 1784, after repeated requests by Herder, he finally completed the text and gave it the title "*Metakritik über den Purismus der Vernunft*," but it would only be published posthumously in 1800. Nevertheless handwritten copies of the essay circulated amongst an inner circle of friends and reached *inter alia* Herder and Jacobi, thus exerting a clear "subterranean influence" on the metacritical discourse that would appear at the end of the eighteenth century.[19]

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[17] Holzhey and Mudroch, *Historical Dictionary of Kant and Kantianism*, 4.

[18] Frederick C. Beiser, *The Fate of Reason*, 38.

Hamann can rightfully be credited with being the very first thinker to turn critique against itself. We might define the central problem which animates his 1784 essay as: What is the nature of this reason which is both source and target of critique, and what are *its* conditions and limits?[20] Hamann introduces Kant's own problem in the following manner: "Among the hidden mysteries the problem of which (let alone the solution) has apparently not yet entered into a philosopher's heart is the possibility of the human knowledge of objects of experience without and before any experience and after this the possibility of a sensible intuition before any sensation of an object."[21] Here, Hamann straightaway reverses Kant's own claim in the Introduction to the *Kritik* that "there cannot be a single metaphysical problem that has not been solved here, or at least to the solution of which the key has not been provided."[22] Rather than participating in science's characteristic search for definite solutions to problems, Hamann prefers to stay with the problems themselves and attempt to view them for what they really are. Rather than contesting Kant's arguments on their own terms, and in so doing remaining entirely within the framework of the *Kritik*, Hamann thus assumes an outside perspective on things. From this external point of view he is able to oversee what misconceptions lie concealed beneath the esoteric style and structure of Kant's text, what underlying motivations can be brought to the surface—a methodological approach which clearly resurfaces in such figures as Nietzsche and Foucault. In accordance with this procedure the *Metakritik* develops three angles from which to assess the presuppositions that feed into Kant's arguments, namely *history*, *language* and the *body*. Without exaggeration we can claim that these three concepts will be the touchstones of the tradition of metacritique, offering lines of argument that will recur in nearly every subsequent scholar featuring in our narrative.

In writing about the *Kritik*'s 'purism'—as the title states—Hamann thus assumes a position of *im*purity. From this vantage point he is able to infer that regarding history, transcendental philosophy seeks to sever its ties to the traditions of the past; that regarding language, transcendental philosophy aspires to the putative universality of a near-mathematical style and vocabulary as a means of avoiding ordinary language's ambiguity; that regarding the body it is exclusively occupied with cognition independent of experience. In demonstrating each of these errors, Hamann already performs the opposite tendency, littering his text with historical, biblical and mythological references, adopting a curious and animated style whose mocking tone is rather the opposite of Kant, and reminding the reader on several occasions of the corporeal origins of our knowledge. Thus he writes about language: "Sounds and letters are therefore pure forms *a priori*, in which nothing belonging to the sensation or concept of an object is found; they are the true, aesthetic elements of all human knowledge and reason. The oldest language was music, and along with the palpable rhythm of the pulse and of the breath in the nostrils, it was the original bodily image of all temporal measures and intervals."[23] At the same time, we find contained within these sentences another layer of Hamann's argument, a positively transcendental one. Here we tread the ground of an *even purer* realm of natural language, wherefrom words themselves appear as having "an aesthetic and logical faculty," making them "pure and empirical intuitions as much as pure and empirical concepts."[24] In language thus lies the answer to "the synthetic mysteries of the forms *a priori* and *a posteriori* corresponding and contradicting themselves": it represents the unifying principle of the sensible and intelligible, the subjective and objective, which Kant could not provide. The "genealogical priority of language" answers Kant's question of "how is the faculty of thought possible?" because it is the true ground of this entire faculty.[25] For the future realization and elaboration of this transcendental force of language Hamann places his trust in the upward movement of critique, writing that "the dew of a pure natural language can be born only from the dawn of the promised imminent regeneration and enlightenment."[26]

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[19] Frederick C. Beiser, *The Fate of Reason*, 38.

[20] Ibid., 39.

[21] Johann Georg Hamann, "Metacritique on the Purism of Reason," in *Hamann: Writings on Philosophy and Language*, ed. Kenneth Hayes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 206.

[22] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A xiii; 101.

[23] Hamann, "Metacritique on the Purism of Reason," 211.

Generations of scholars after Hamann, including Fichte and Hegel, will continue to search for a power to elevate to the level of a transcendental unifying principle. But in searching for this single criterion all of them still tacitly affirm that paradigmatic duality of transcendental and empirical generated by Kant.

1.5 MAIMON

Salomon Maimon (1753–1800) made his entrance to the tradition of metacritique in 1790, largely as an outsider, offering an original and influential contribution to an already intensified discussion with his *Versuch über die Transzendentalphilosophie*. By contrast, the critique itself was an internal one, attempting to resolve a central issue from within the critical framework. In his *Lebensgeschichte*, published already in 1792, Maimon wrote that, as with his studies of other 'systems' (Spinoza, Hume, Leibniz), he had taken a hermeneutic approach towards the *Kritik*, striving to assume the viewpoint of the author with the ambition to achieve an internalization of this standpoint.[27] Moreover, as proclaimed in a letter to Kant from 1789, Maimon wrote his work out of a "love of truth" and desire to attain this highest of goals, awakened in him by "a man who has reformed philosophy (and hence every other science)".[28] Through their shared friend Markus Herz, Kant would write in a detailed response that "none of my critics understood me and the main questions as well as Herr Maimon does".[29] For this reason alone Maimon's *Versuch* merits our careful attention.

It was Maimon's belief that Kant had already fully elaborated what transcendental philosophy consists of, and that in his own work he was simply carrying into full effect Kant's critical idea. He writes: "The great Kant supplies a **complete idea** of transcendental philosophy (although not the whole science itself) in his immortal work *The Critique of Pure Reason*. My aim in this enquiry is to bring out **the most important truths** of this science."[30] Maimon's crucial insight into transcendental philosophy consists in this, that he recognizes—contra Kant's static account—the demand for a method which is both synthetic and genetic in order not to rely on any empirical order. Maimon agrees with Kant on the transcendental necessity of the categories of thought but finds that, in the *Kritik*, they are sealed off from the particulars of intuition to such an extent that understanding and sensibility appear to be wholly incompatible, while it was precisely Kant's argument that "[t]houghts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind."[31] In a letter to Reinhold he would sum up this problem by stating that "[p]hilosophy has not been able to build a bridge which makes the transition from the transcendental to the particular possible."[32] The question thus becomes: *How* does the form of thought connect with its matter? In other words, how to reconcile the transcendental and the empirical domain?

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[24] Hamann, "Metacritique on the Purism of Reason," 215.

[25] Ibid., 211.

[26] Ibid., 213.

[27] Salomon Maimon, *An Autobiography*, trans. J. Clark Murray (Paisley: Alexander Gardner, 1888), 279-80.

[28] Salomon Maimon, *Essay on Transcendental Philosophy*, trans. Nick Midgley, Henry Somers-Hall, Alistair Welchman and Merten Reg (London: Continuum, 2010), 228.

[29] Immanuel Kant, *Correspondence*, ed. Arnulf Zweig (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 311.

[30] Salomon Maimon, *Essay on Transcendental Philosophy*, 8-9.

A synthetic method must be found to deal with this problem. In the *Kritik*, Kant argues that concepts (the transcendental categories) must be applied to intuitions from without, and that determining objects through concepts is a process wholly external to the empirical realm. Maimon regards the transcendental as Kant's great discovery but argues that it must be explored further and taken further than Kant was willing to do. Next to Kant's question on the possibility of metaphysics in general, "*quid juris?*," we must reintroduce the scepticist question "*quid facti?*" in order to determine whether or not we actually have experience, i.e. empirical knowledge.[33] Maimon differs from Kant in that he regards this question as still unproven. He builds upon Kant's argument in the *Prolegomena* regarding the fact that the categories are conditions of possible experience, arguing instead that the categories are "conditions of perception in general, which no one can doubt."[34] Arguably, then, Maimon himself makes the move from conditions of *possible* experience to conditions of *real* (but not actual) experience, and he does so on the basis of a theory of "differentials".[35] Maimon boldly claims that "differentials of objects are the so-called *noumena*; but the objects themselves arising from them are the *phenomena*".[36] From this angle Kant's dualisms appear to collapse into a single movement in which objects do not just 'appear' to the understanding but rather 'arise': "the business of the understanding is nothing but **thinking**, i.e. producing unity in the manifold, which means that it can only think an object by specifying [*angiebt*] the way it arises or the rule by which it arises [*die Regel oder die Art seiner Entstehung*]".[37] This means that the understanding can never think an object as already arisen, but only in as caught in the process of arising, "i.e. as flowing [*fliessend*]."[38] The understanding does not subject the (*a posteriori*) given to *a priori* rules but lets the particular object *arise* in common with these particular rules or types of differentials. Understanding something is done through understanding *how it is produced*, it does not follow *from* intuition but rather grasps the production *of* intuition. From the standpoint of a 'true', objective critique, the differentials of sensation are not objects of experience or intuition but ideas of the understanding (*Verstandsideen*) that are grasped by the concepts (the categories) and turned into a whole or totality as 'ideas of reason'. But in our world of finitude there is neither consciousness of the initial differentials of sensation from which a synthesis is born in the understanding, nor consciousness of the complete

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[31] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 51, B 75; 193-4.

[32] Abraham P. Socher, *The Radical Enlightenment of Solomon Maimon. Judaism, Heresy, and Philosophy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 89.

[33] Salomon Maimon, *Essay on Transcendental Philosophy*, 9.

[34] Ibid., 137.

[35] Ibid., 20.

[36] Ibid., 21.

[37] Ibid., 22.

[38] Ibid., 22.

(that is, infinite) synthetic end result. Hence "we start in the middle with our cognition of things and finish in the middle again."[39]

Yet, while for Kant we can never reach knowledge of things as they are in themselves, Maimon holds that "cognition of things in themselves is nothing other than the complete cognition of appearances."[40] This is crucial because it leads to the realization that metaphysics is not the science of what is forever *outside* of appearances, but the science of the *limits* of appearances themselves which, although they cannot be objects of cognition, are "so closely connected to the objects that without them no complete cognition of the objects themselves is possible. We approach ever closer to cognition of them according to the degree of completeness of our cognition of appearances."[41] Dwelling in the middle of things thus means to always be located at the *limit* of things.

That a kind of ungrounding seems to take place in the same movement that attempts to ground metaphysics helps to explain the appeal of Maimon to recent thinkers such as Deleuze. The question of whether Maimon's internal critique of critique still leaves him a Kantian is one he prefers to leave open: "To what extent I am a Kantian, an anti-Kantian, both at the same time, or neither of the two, I leave to the judgement of the thoughtful reader."[42] Regardless, Maimon's search for a synthetic and genetic method that overcomes the Kantian dualisms will exert a profound influence on the development of German Idealism. For instance, in an impassioned letter to Reinhold in 1795, Fichte will write: "My respect for Maimon's talent knows no bounds, I firmly believe, and I am ready to prove, that he has turned upside down the Kantian philosophy as it has been generally understood and as you yourself understand it."[43]

1.6 HERDER

The relation between Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803) and Kant is incredibly complex and one would have to devote several books to it in order to fully comprehend it. A devoted student of intellectual antipodes Kant and Hamann between 1762 and 1764, Herder would develop an idiosyncratic fusion of anthropology (as historicized philosophy), aesthetics and theology. Herder and Kant in fact shared in a common project of the development of a science which would put man in the middle to observe and experiment one's way into the laws of his nature. In line with this science of man, that is to say anthropology, all the domains of philosophy—metaphysics, ethics, logic—had to be reformulated. But from the 1770s onwards, when Kant first started teaching his course on anthropology, the critical way in which he sought to execute this shared project increasingly estranged Herder. Yet even after the early friendship between Kant and Herder had grown sour and turned into a hostile feud, Herder still recalled with pleasure the lectures of his old teacher, claiming that Kant's philosophy "awakened one's own thinking".[44] Herder would continue to regard these years, which are now designated as belonging to the pre-critical period in Kant's development, as Kant's best ones. At the occasion of the appearance of the first *Kritik*, Herder admitted to finding little inspiration to study the demanding text, and made no contribution to its popularization in the cultural scene of Weimar, where he lived.[45] Kant responded to this taciturnity of his former student in 1785 with a harsh and uncompromising review of his Herder's latest work, *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*. The irony was such that here Kant was essentially attacking his own pre-critical views to which Herder still subscribed. Though Herder amended some parts of his next work in light of Kant's criticisms, an explicit response did not appear until the year 1799, under the title *Eine Metakritik zur Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (with a first part entitled *Verstand und Erfahrung* and a second part entitled *Vernunft und Sprache*).

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[39] Salomon Maimon, *Essay on Transcendental Philosophy*, 181.

[40] Ibid., 249.

[41] Ibid., 249.

[42] Ibid., 9.

[43] Daniel Breazeale, *Fichte's Early Philosophical Writings* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), 383-84.

[44] Quoted from English in Manfred Kuehn, *Kant. A Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 130.

Despite all this, Herder is probably the least significant figure in the early metacritical tradition, for two good reasons. First, his metacritique will, for the most part, simply iterate the points about language, history and the body already covered by Hamann in his 1784 essay. Second, Herder's highly polemical tract would be received poorly at a time when Kantian critique seemed to be *the* new and ultimate 'truth' and was perceived to be identical to philosophy itself.[46] Herder would be blamed and ostracized for misunderstanding Kant and thereby philosophy as such: for instance, in a review by A.F. Bernhardi; and J.G.K.C. Kiesewetter, a former student of Kant who had written a two-volume examination of the work, would even refer to it in a letter to Kant as "Herderish babbling, unworthy of refutation".[47] As a result, the impact of Herder's impassioned polemic was limited to a belated reception and adaptation by Humboldt. Nevertheless there are some insights to be gained from the text to which we will now turn.

The main argument of Herder's *Metakritik*, whose structure carefully follows that of the *Kritik*, is that the condition of possibility of critique lies precisely in that which it seeks to obscure through formal reasoning, namely language and ordinary experience. Pure reason does not exist apart from language: "The human soul thinks *with words*".[48] All concepts Kant claims to deduce transcendentally in the Analytic section of the *Kritik* are already there in the concrete richness of ordinary language. The whole of reason is to be found residing within this empirical realm, answerable only to a "*Sprachkritik*" as the genuine form of critique.[49] Such a critique is still necessary because language is the product of history and consists of many contradictions and ambiguities, but it need not in any case take the abstract and artificial form of Kant's version. In the hands of Kant, critical philosophy turns into a "*philosophia schismatica*" capable only of creating dualities and antinomies.[50] By revealing to us the linguistic structure which defines the *a priori* condition for all that can be thought and expressed and which determines our experience of the world, *Sprachkritik* will confront us with our rational nature as much as with our historical being. Thus, to the extent that Herder denies a 'beyond of' language in, for instance, geometry and arithmetic (as Kant does), he makes language into the 'new transcendental' through which alone the world becomes intelligible to us. The inevitable result is that the transcendental schema *loses* its universal status but nevertheless *retains* its transcendental quality. This is a point poorly understood by most commentators: Herder raises the three pillars of history, language and the body *to* the transcendental realm rather than doing away with it entirely.[51]

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[45] Frederick C. Beiser, *The Fate of Reason*, 149.

[46] Jürgen Trabant, "Herder and Language," in *A Companion to the Works of Johann Gottfried Herder*, ed. Hans Adler and Wulf Köpke (Rochester: Camden House, 2009), 135.

[47] Immanuel Kant, *Correspondence*, ed. Arnulf Zweig (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 95n1; 557-8.

[48] Quoted from English in Jürgen Trabant, "Herder and Language," 135.

[49] Jere Paul Surber, "German Idealism Under Fire: Fichte, Hegel, and 'Metacriticism'," in *Hegel on the Modern World*, ed. Ardis B. Collins (Albany: State University of New York, 1995), 97.

[50] Quoted from English in Manfred Kuehn, *Kant. A Biography*, 493n240.

1.7 JACOBI

A fitting ending to this chapter would be a discussion of the open letter Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi (1743–1819) wrote to Fichte, written at the close of the eighteenth century. Although Jacobi had already mounted an extended 'critique of critique' in a supplement to *David Hume über den Glauben, oder Idealismus und Realismus* (1787), entitled "*Über den Transzendentale Idealismus*", he would not draw its existential conclusions until 1799. Transcendental idealism was no more than a subjectivism which assumed the reality of *noumena* whilst rejecting their possibility. Jacobi thus judged Kant's move from ontology to epistemology to be symptomatic of the dawning of a destructive trend in thought which necessarily leads to nihilism. In the letter it becomes clear that Jacobi regards Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre* as a natural expression of the new philosophical paradigm which is Kant's critique of reason. Reason, Jacobi contends, can only gain *a priori* knowledge of what it has already established in agreement with its own laws, which amounts to saying that self-knowledge is the model of all possible knowledge. This leads to solipsism because all we know is given to us in our own representations rather than coming from a reality which can be proven to exist apart from this inner circularity. Outside of the mechanisms of cognition one encounters only the terror of "the nothing, the absolutely indeterminate, the utterly void".[52] Faced with this infinite nothing, Jacobi writes, "I am so assailed, so seized and carried away by it in my transcendental being," that "just in order to empty out the infinite, I cannot help wanting to fill it," which is essentially what the science of the true amounts to.[53]

Jacobi's predicament is such that "I therefore do not see why I, as a matter of taste, should not be allowed to prefer my philosophy of non-knowledge to the philosophical *knowledge of the nothing*, at least *in fugam vacui*. I have nothing confronting me, after all, except nothingness; and even *chimeras* are a good match for that."[54] Thus, the real problem Jacobi introduces in this letter is that either of these choices—"*Nihilism*" as atheism or "*Chimerism*" as mysticism—inevitably leads to nihilism.[55] It is the same line of argument that we will discover in Nietzsche's writings, with the possible exception that Jacobi immediately opts for a philosophy of non-knowledge, that is, faith:

> "Man has this choice, however, and this alone: Nothingness or a God. If he chooses nothingness, he makes himself unto a God, that is, he makes a *phantom* into God, for it is impossible, if there is no God, that man and all that surrounds him should be anything but a *phantom*."[56]

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[51] Cf. Jürgen Trabant, "Herder and Language," 137-8.

[52] Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi, "Jacobi to Fichte," in *The Main Philosophical Writings and the Novel* Allwill, ed. George di Giovanni (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994), 519.

[53] Jacobi, "Jacobi to Fichte," 519.

[54] Ibid., 519.

[55] Ibid., 519.

[56] Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi, "Jacobi to Fichte," in *The Main Philosophical Writings and the Novel* Allwill, ed. George di Giovanni (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994), 524.

Kant's claim that he "had to deny *knowledge* in order to make room for *faith*" clearly held no value to Jacobi.[57] One knows solely oneself or one knows nothing at all: confronted with this choice, the next generation of idealist philosophers, e.g. Schelling and Hegel, will seek to overcome it entirely. Thus, well before the turn of the century, a lively climate of philosophical engagement with Kantian philosophy had already been established. On this ground the leading figures of German idealism, Fichte, Schelling and Hegel, will erect their philosophical edifices. Their respective 'solutions' to the Kantian problem (of critique and its correlative concepts of the transcendental and the empirical)—Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre*, Schelling's *Tranzendental-* and *Naturphilosophie*, and Hegelianism—will continue along the metacritical lines already proposed during the period we have just discussed.

To conclude: we are thus faced with the following paradoxical insight. After Kant, 'original' critique is *no longer possible*; the conditions under which it took shape are irretrievable, belonging to a past which has become fully 'other.' Instead, there is now only metacritique as the 'critique *of* critique.' Furthermore, there are two possible forms this metacritique may take. First, as an *internal* critique which works from the inside, seeking to approximate the standpoint of 'original' critique as a way of adapting it to new conditions; second, as an *external* critique which comes from outside, assuming an external viewpoint on the basis of a faculty or power which putatively exceeds 'original' critique. As a matter of course, the first form will adhere to the division between transcendental and empirical in a manner faithful to Kant; but does not the second form, by virtue of the external point of view it takes towards critique, adhere to the transcendental and empirical too?—*This* is what we must define as the founding modern problematic and proper subject of this study.

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[57] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B xxx; 117.

-2-

Adaptation

Metacritical Features of Nineteenth Century Philosophical and Historical Thought

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At the beginning of the nineteenth century, it appeared that philosophy had evolved from the lowest to the very highest of all faculties in the university organization, and it had done so in large part due to Kant's reformation of philosophy as critical philosophy, i.e. the science which determines the source, domain and limit of all possible scientific knowledge. In its wake, history would follow as its natural appendage which it had been since medieval times.[58] However, the change itself did not come natural at all. In combination with the dramatic political changes sweeping through Europe after the French Revolution and the subsequent Napoleonic era (1789-1815), many (revolutionary) calls for educational reform followed the example of Kant's *Der Streit der Fakultäten* (1798), such as Fichte, Schelling, Schleiermacher, Humboldt.[59] Final paragon of institutional change, then, was the University of Berlin, founded in 1810, where under the auspices of Wilhelm von Humboldt history became for the first time an independent faculty. Here three of the four scholars examined in this chapter would leave their mark on nineteenth century discourse. The historical context of this chapter is thus largely institutional, investigating the struggle within German universities to make history an independent faculty so as to enable it to pursue its own research agenda (or even be eligible for funding within the modern university system). In keeping with this study's claim that scholars working in both fields have often indeed struggled with the same issues, I will start out by addressing the work and thought of two of the most prominent historians of the nineteenth century, Ranke and Droysen, followed by a commentary on the work and thought of two emblematic nineteenth century philosophers, Nietzsche and Dilthey.

2.1 RANKE

The present memory of Leopold von Ranke (1795–1886), even among historians themselves, is still distorted by a persistent view of Ranke as a naïve positivist whose exclusive concern lies with determining how things actually happened; in his most famous phrase, "*wie es eigentlich gewesen*" (found in 1824's *Geschichten der romanischen und germanischen Völker von 1494 bis 1514*).[60] During the thirties of the past century, Walter Benjamin even looked back upon the kind of history written on the basis of this putative 'Rankean positivism' as "the strongest narcotic of the century."[61] At the same time, Ranke is accused of being a so-called irrationalist through his adherence to certain religious and Romantic ideals, exemplified in his penultimate saying that every epoch is immediate to

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[58] Frederick C. Beiser, *The German Historicist Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 19.

[59] Frederick C. Beiser, *The German Historicist Tradition*, 21.

[60] This standard view is found, for instance, in; Ernst Cassirer, *The Problem of Knowledge. Philosophy, Science, and History since Hegel,* trans. W.H. Woglom and C.W. Hendel (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950), 224, 231.

[61] Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 463.

God; "*Jede Epoche ist unmittelbar zu Gott*" (echoing Herder's turn of phrase).[62] From a metacritical perspective, however, Ranke is probably better understood as the historian who sought to redraw the boundaries between philosophy and history through an examination of the possibility and conditions of historical knowledge. Because Ranke largely succeeded in bringing about this fundamental change, it is crucial to investigate the stages of development that led up to it.

In order to achieve his aim, Ranke went back to renegotiate the contradictions and oppositions which had founded the tradition of metacritique through a personal reading of Kant's critical texts as well as those of his early commentators. Precondition for this ambitious effort was that Ranke had to have been—contrary to stated opinion—a philosophically mature academic with original views. To establish this claim some biographical details are needed, on the basis of which it is in fact not without due cause that one of Ranke's biographers even went as far as to state that "[r]arely has history been written with so much awareness of philosophical problems."[63] Ranke spent his formative years at *Schulpforta* (like Nietzsche would some fifty years later), where he acquainted himself with Goethe, Schlegel, and Novalis, followed by a study in Classics and Theology at the University of Leipzig. During this time he would read, ponder and write about the work of Kant, Hamann, Jacobi, Fichte and Schelling. From his notebooks at the time it can be observed that Ranke fully concurred with the boundaries of human cognition insofar as they had been elaborated in Kant's critical works.[64] But another text in particular which had grabbed his attention was Hamann's *Metakritik*, and he would continue to read and endorse the text later on in his career.[65] His attentive reading of Kant's work, supplemented with Fichte, Jacobi and Hamann, led him on to an idiosyncratic position which was both sceptical on the empirical level and idealist on the transcendental level. On the empirical level, Ranke maintained, man is fully nature and must derive whatever *a priori* forms of understanding he may have from experience through learning; on the transcendental level man is apart from nature in his moral autonomy, a realm of freedom which poses an outer limit to historical explanation. Here Ranke opposes the Hegelian notion of the "cunning of reason" which, however the individual may consider himself free, will always outsmart human action in favour of a broader historical necessity; a will of the world spirit which suspends the will of individuals.[66]

Still, there is no denying that Ranke's main motivation for practicing history was a faith in God's providence. But Ranke also quickly recognized that he could not take his faith as a starting point for historical explanation, for that would mean to subordinate history to theology, much the same as he saw happening during the 1820s with philosophy. In 1824, when he was still a teacher at a Gymnasium in Frankfurt,[67] Ranke published his first book, *Geschichten der germanischen und romanischen Völker* (insisting on '*Geschichten*' in the plural), along with a critical appendix that would settle his reputation for being the first historian to apply the principles of the critical method to modern history.

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[62] Leopold von Ranke, *Aus Werk und Nachlass* II: *Über die Epochen der neueren Geschichte*, ed. Theodor Schieder and Helmut Berding (Wien: Oldenbourg Verlag, 1971), 60.

[63] Theodor von Laue, *Leopold Ranke: The Formative Years* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950), 137.

[64] Frederick C. Beiser, *The German Historicist Tradition*, 265.

[65] Leopold von Ranke, *Aus Werk und Nachlass* I, 492-3; cf. Frederick C. Beiser, *The German Historicist Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 286, 286n.

[66] G.W.F. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, trans. Robert F. Brown and Peter C. Hodgson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 96n.

[67] M.A. Fitzsimons, "Ranke: History as Worship," *The Review of Politics* 42, no. 4 (1980), 540-536.

Shortly thereafter, in 1825, Ranke was appointed professor at the University of Berlin, after being heralded by Karl von Kamptz, the director of the education section in the Prussian Ministry of Public Worship, as "restorer of history".[68] This honour was bestowed upon him primarily due to his political conservatism and his belief that the findings of historical research would aid governance: a confirmation of the powers-that-be that would provoke condemnation during the next century. But the phrase also applies in a second sense, because it is from this moment that he will begin to assert the autonomy of history as a science in opposition to the prevailing philosophy of history, which in the hands of Hegel had not only propagated the sovereignty of philosophy over all other disciplines, but also denied history its specificity as a separate discipline by subsuming it under the all-encompassing umbrella of its philosophical activity. For more than fifty years, Ranke would educate an entire generation of historians and instil within them a distaste for philosophy of history (a mood which endures, for instance, in his students Jacob Burckhardt and Dilthey). Ranke taught them that historians were not at all excluded from engagement with philosophical questions, because "our paths as historians lead us to the problems of philosophy. If philosophy were what it should be and history were perfectly clear and complete, the two disciplines would be in complete agreement."[69]

Hegel will reply to Ranke in the 1828 version of his *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte*, noting a distinction between what he calls reflective and original history, the former referring to a type of history which stands at a distance from a past it reconstructs according to sources, of which Ranke is named as an example, and the latter to a type of history in which the author takes part in a single historical development with the events he bases his work on, which is the kind Hegel aspires to.[70] However, as can be observed from the 1831 lectures on the "*Idee der Universalhistorie*," it had been Ranke's insight that a historical practice without the reflective element was unthinkable and above all undesirable, for here lay its power to connect isolated facts and to bring colour to the events of the past, captivating and inspiring the reader's imagination. In opposition to Hegel, but following Kant, Ranke considers the idea of universal history to be a regulative one, a possibility or goal to keep in mind even knowing that one may never attain it.[71] In this sense, too, we should consider his remarks about historical objectivity and about fully comprehending the idea behind an action. According to Ranke, "[t]he historian denies that philosophy has any absolute validity."[72] He is opposed to the philosopher in taking the condition of existence (*Bedingung der Existenz*) as a starting point for an examination of the individual. The phrase 'condition(s) of existence,' first appearing in Kant's writings, will recur not just in Ranke's lectures on historical methodology but also make up a core component of Karl Marx's *Das Kapital* (1867) as well as Nietzsche's *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* (1882). We will investigate the latter text a few pages below. For Ranke, in any case, what sets history apart from philosophy is the "living principle" it discovers in the individual (as both particular object and unique subject), whereas philosophy—proceeding deductively from *a priori* principles—views the individual merely in terms of the general and the universal.[73] For the historian, things must be precisely the other way around; he applies an inductive method which always starts from empirical evidence. In this way only will he be suited to determine the "causal nexus" of events.[74]

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[68] M.A. Fitzsimons, "Ranke: History as Worship," *The Review of Politics* 42, no. 4 (1980), 540-540.

[69] Quoted from English in Georg G. Iggers, *The German Conception of History. The National Tradition of Historical Thought from Herder to the Present* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1983), 80.

[70] G.W.F. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, trans. Robert F. Brown and Peter C. Hodgson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 69, 74-75.

[71] Although he will, at the end of his career, take up this daunting project—and ultimately leave it unfinished.

[72] Georg G. Iggers, *The German Conception of History*, 78.

As far as historical method is concerned, Ranke distinguishes between two procedural levels corresponding to an empirical and transcendental domain. First, Ranke states that history can and should be rigorous, exact, and attentive to certain ground rules; in short, *wissenschaftlich*. That does not imply, however, that history has to adopt the methods of the natural sciences in order to ensure its scientific status. This is an important point because it means that, in principle, Ranke does not recognize the historical science of humanity advanced by Herder and Humboldt as a consonant precursor of his own historical labour. To ensure the theoretical and methodological foundation of history Ranke instead upholds a critical species of empiricism *independent of naturalism*. At the same time, however, Ranke argues that the specificity of history is also crucially found in its being both science *and art*. For without this second level of aesthetic contemplation the historian can never assemble the findings gained through a scientific approach into a coherent whole; and this is what, moreover, historical 'intuition' or 'understanding' consists of entirely. In this sense Ranke's theoretical insights, and their awareness of the artistic element in assembling historical knowledge, have a remarkably contemporary touch to them. Yet, as we said, before this phase commences the critical work has to already be done; it can only follow as its *result*; "Critique must therefore precede the whole intuition."[75] This metacritical arrangement of Ranke's methodology is at variance with the Romantic emphasis on the precedence of intuition: aesthetic intuition is vital to historical practice but always posterior to the initial and determining activity of critique. On the basis of this inverse logic, according to which the transcendental follows from the empirical rather than being its necessary condition, Ranke was able to successfully adapt the boundaries between philosophy and history, setting up a disciplinary structure that exists to this day.

2.2 DROYSEN

While the rejection of naturalism (and thereby of the science of humanity) in historical science began with Ranke, Johann Gustav Droysen (1808–1884) can be credited with initiating the historicist response against positivism, which had only begun to emerge between 1830 and 1842,[76] when Auguste Comte started publishing his *Cours de philosophie positive*. Responsible for transferring in modified form some of Ranke's main convictions about the nature of historical practice and its relation to the other sciences, Droysen is probably best understood as a transitional figure located in the space between Ranke and Dilthey. Although the impact of his work on methodology was limited compared to his actual historical writing and indeed paled in comparison with Ranke's influence, there are some relevant observations to be made about it. During his early career, in a foreword written for his *Geschichte des Hellenismus* (1843), Droysen remarks that the field of theory is still a lacuna within the domain of history, divesting it of a solid definition and justification as a science. "What we need is a Kant," he then says, who will offer a critique which guarantees the conditions and limits peculiar to history, just as Kant had done for all metaphysics in general.[77] If Ranke's debt to Kantian critique had been no more than implicit, Droysen on the other hand will be very explicit about his ambition to assume responsibility for this principal task.

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[73] Ranke, *Aus Werk und Nachlass* IV, 77.

[74] Ibid., 79.

[75] Ibid., 187.

[76] Warren Schmaus, *Rethinking Durkheim and His Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 79.

His *Historik*, as he called it, was to be a comprehensive critique of history, that is, a systematic inquiry into the sources, possibility and conditions of all historical knowledge. This ambition coincided, however, with deep opposition both to naturalism *and* positivism, signalling the beginning of a new trend in nineteenth century historical thought. In Ranke, the difference between history and the natural sciences was not yet grasped as a problem, but by the 1850s, when Droysen started teaching his course on 'Historics', the situation had changed drastically, and he felt an answer was demanded of him. In these lectures, compiled in *Grundriss der Historik* (first published in 1868), Droysen argues that the starting point for history—as for any science—is empiricism, as opposed to the kind of 'physics' found in the natural sciences. History differs from nature in that it cannot obtain a complete account on the basis of general laws derived from sense evidence (and repetitive experimentation within that scheme). The historian's concern is with change (the element of time) and the individual, rather than with permanence (the element of space) and the universal, which is the concern of the natural scientist. More incisively, Droysen then proceeds to distinguish between three types of scientific methods: *erkennen*, *erklären*, and *verstehen*.[78] The first refers to the philosophical method of knowing, the second to the mathematical-physical method of explaining, and the third to the historical method of understanding. Only the last one can be considered a genuine model of explanation of human action and expression; it offers a "morphological" method capable of answering what Droysen considers to be the general problem of historical knowledge: If it is based, as are all sciences, on "the result of empirical perception, experience and research," how, then, can the past become the object of an empirical science?[79]

This was a Kantian problem *par excellence*. In the first *Kritik*, Kant had made the following radical claim about the (ir)reality of past time:

> "Thus one can say: The real things of past time are given in the transcendental object of experience, but for me they are objects and real in past time only insofar as I represent to myself that, in accordance with empirical laws, or in other words, the course of the world, a regressive series of possible perceptions (whether under the guidance of history or in the footsteps of causes and effects) leads to a time-series that has elapsed as the condition of the present time, which is then represented as real only in connection with a possible experience and not in itself; so that all those events which have elapsed from an inconceivable past time prior to my own existence signify nothing but the possibility of prolonging the chain of experience, starting with the present perception, upward to the conditions that determine it in time."[80]

In Ranke, this presentism had not yet been perceived as a problem, but Droysen faced altered conditions. His intellectual milieu was ruled by positivistic thinking, inciting him to become the first historian to problematize the 'empiricity' of the past from a Kantian perspective. In the *Grundriss*, Droysen's solution to the problem is clear. It is the condition of possibility for history as empirical science that the past lives on in the present through the material traces—sources, monuments, remains—it leaves behind. But to this we must immediately add the question of how we can attain knowledge of the past through these traces, that is; What does it mean to understand the past? At this point Droysen also becomes the first historian to reconcile hermeneutics with historicism by placing the concept of *verstehen* at the heart of historical practice, anticipating the later duality of *Verstehen* and *Erklären* that Dilthey will expound. Relying on the hermeneutics of his teachers August Boeckh and Friedrich Schleiermacher, he is able to clarify that interpreting the past is like a process of translation, of learning to understand someone speaking to us in a different language. In order to correctly translate and thus understand historical events, the historian must approach his sources as signs through which the people of the past speak to him. Such an approach is in no way comparable to intuition, as Ranke would have it, because it involves a number of necessary intellectual steps.[81]

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[77] Quoted from English in Frederick C. Beiser, *The German Historicist Tradition*, 289.

[78] Ibid., 298.

[79] Ibid., 298.

[80] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 495; 513.

First of these is the "*pragmatic interpretation*," which consists of a critical reconstruction of the event and its probable causes; second is the "*interpretation of the conditions*," which distinguishes the particular conditions (conditions of space, time, and material means) of the event; third is the "*psychological interpretation*," which is interested in the acts of volition which elicit the event; the fourth and last one, "*the interpretation of the ideas*," leads us onto the ethical forces behind the event.[82] The condition of possibility for (historical) understanding is the "ethical system" that exists in a given period which comprises all shared (moral, political, linguistic) rules and norms.[83] There is no beyond of this transcendental realm, which precedes the particular conditions entirely: "It is under the effect of this factor that the conditions become active and begin to focus themselves."[84] Moreover, it is a cultural fabric which forbids *full* comprehension of the past and limits whatever *partial* knowledge may be gained of the past. It confines understanding to the historian's perspective, his linguistic context and his cultural situation. We should not even strive for objectivity as a regulative ideal, Droysen thinks, because it simply is unattainable. Instead, we should come to terms with this utter inability and reinterpret it as opportunity through striving to multiply and increase our perspectives. This intersubjective activity Droysen calls 'seeing the past "*stereoscopically*"'.[85]

These insights inevitably lead Droysen onto a critique of the critical school (e.g. Niebuhr and Ranke) itself: but now, unlike with his old teacher Hegel, mounted from within the historical discipline. Critique as the critical school understands it, Droysen states, is not all there is to history, because it only corresponds to what should be the initial activity of source criticism. It does not address the reasons for choosing the opinion presented in one source over another, for assessing the authority of one perception over another, which is after all what a source amounts to. This is a quintessentially modern problem insofar as modern history confronts the historian with a seemingly inexhaustible wealth of sources (as opposed to ancient or medieval history). In addition, the critical school unfairly privileges written sources over other sources, such as monuments or works of art (we can certainly grant this criticism in the case of Ranke). Lastly, it is consumed by the search for origins as ultimate beginnings of historical phenomena, as points of absolute standstill which are nevertheless full of historical significance. For Droysen, all beginnings are artificial and exist to serve the narrative; the mystical points of origin the critical school seeks to locate in history should in actuality "be sought exclusively outside the realm of historical research."[86]

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[81] Iggers seems to have misread Droysen on this point, see Georg G. Iggers, *The German Conception of History. The National Tradition of Historical Thought from Herder to the Present* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1983), 111.

[82] Johann Gustav Droysen, "The Modes of Interpretation," in *The Hermeneutics Reader*, ed. Kurt Mueller-Vollmer (New York: The Continuum Publishing Company, 1985), 131.

[83] Johann Gustav Droysen, "The Modes of Interpretation," 131.

[84] Ibid., 128.

[85] Johann Gustav Droysen, "The Investigation of Origins," in *The Hermeneutics Reader*, ed. Kurt Mueller-Vollmer (New York: The Continuum Publishing Company, 1985), 125.

2.3 NIETZSCHE

By virtue of representing as much a break away from the many movements in thought of his age as he was a product of their typical modes of thinking, bound to their discourse, Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900) stands as a key figure in the history of metacritique. Nietzsche's stylistic approach to the practice of critique is very similar to that of Hamann, with both philosophers "using mockery to deny a philosophical problem its status as a problem, to be freed from its grip."[87] In this way, a space opens up for a critical yet playful engagement with the issues at hand, an opening between thought and milieu from which the new and unforeseen might emerge. As with Hamann, Nietzsche's form of critique will involve a renewed emphasis on language, the body and history. However, in order not to get lost within the labyrinth of Nietzsche's thought we will limit ourselves to a discussion of the historical pillar of Nietzsche's metacritical explorations.

Most historians are acquainted with Nietzsche only through his early 'untimely meditation' *Vom Nutzen und Nachtheil der Historie für das Leben* (1874), which is explicitly concerned with the historical discipline.[88] Here the quasi-transcendental concept of life appears on stage as the 'unconditioned condition,' so to speak, on the basis of which a critique is mounted against historical science. However, Nietzsche's early critique of historicism from the perspective of life quickly crosses over into a historical critique of all forms of metaphysical reasoning in *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches* (1878), in which Nietzsche subscribes to a method of 'historical philosophizing,' "which can no longer be separated from natural science, the youngest of all philosophical methods".[89] (*HA* 1). Critical philosophy not only makes the mistake of denying the possibility that something could originate out of its opposite, preferring instead the duality between a 'real' and 'apparent' world, it also commits the sin of thinking of 'man' as an "*aeterna veritas*," "as something that remains constant in the midst of all flux, as a sure measure of things."[90] Yet in reality "[e]verything the philosopher has declared about man is (...) at bottom no more than a testimony as to the man of a very limited period of time."[91] At the same time, Nietzsche will continue to uphold with impressive rigour the Kantian dichotomy between *noumena* and *phenomena* (in the published writings, the doctrine of the 'will to power', for instance, is introduced several times as a—borrowing Kantian terminology—'regulative' hypothesis, not as a claim about the essential truth of the world).[92]

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[86] Johann Gustav Droysen, "The Investigation of Origins," 124.

[87] Kenneth Haynes, "Introduction," in *Hamann: Writings on Philosophy and Language*, ed. Kenneth Hayes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), x.

[88] Cf. Georg G. Iggers, *Historiography in the Twentieth Century. From Scientific Objectivity to the Postmodern Challenge* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2005), 6, 8, 9.

[89] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human. A Book for Free Spirits*, trans. R.J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 12; *HA* 1.

[90] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human*, 12; *HA* 2.

[91] Ibid., 12-13.

[92] cf. Friedrich Nietzsche*, Beyond Good and Evil. Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*, ed. Rolf-Peter Horstmann and Judith Norman, trans. Judith Norman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 35-36; *BGE* 36.

There is a peculiar edge to Nietzsche's turn to historical critique. Nietzsche arguably consumed more historical research than any other philosopher before him (including an avid interest in and critical distance from Ranke),[93] and its results would be at the heart of the writings he himself produced throughout his career. Throughout his life, Nietzsche continued to hold the highest esteem for his Basel colleague Jacob Burckhardt, and during the 1880s he exchanged a series of letters with leading French historian Hippolyte Taine, whom he praised in *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* (1886) as "the *foremost* living historian".[94] Taine was a positivist who advocated the application of experimental methods from the natural sciences to the study of history and society. Nietzsche will take a similar naturalistic stance towards the practice of history, denying the independence of the human sciences, but at the same time he will also subscribe to certain neo-Kantian insights through his repeated readings of Friedrich Albert Lange's *Geschichte des Materialismus und Kritik seiner Bedeutung in der Gegenwart*, which he had acquired in 1866 in the same year it was published.[95] This was just months after he had first discovered the work of Schopenhauer, whose *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* (first published in 1818) had shook him to his core. Thanks to Lange it did not take long for him to mount a critique of the Schopenhauerian position which claimed insight into the true nature of reality (as will). Initially, Nietzsche also welcomed Lange's critical treatment of natural science as a counterweight to what he perceived to be the disenchanting spirit of the nineteenth century, determined by an overenthusiastic, almost fanatic adherence to positivism, materialism, and historicism.[96] Lange had argued in his *History* that the materialistic assumptions of the sciences have a self-undermining effect. In unlocking with ever-greater rigour and precision the secrets of our subjective experience of the world, science repeatedly proves how it can ultimately never get to the bottom of things. However, during the so-called middle period writings, Nietzsche increasingly came to regard this development as above all a great danger to science itself rather than a liberation of the domains of art and religion.

From the Nietzsche corpus we will single out two of the many creative responses that are offered to the problems raised by modern critique, namely a positively empirical and positively transcendental one. The first is mainly developed during Nietzsche's middle period writings, in *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* (1882) in particular. Here Nietzsche develops the following argument: Kant has defined the *a priori* conditions of possible experience; Nietzsche does not deny their necessity for us but regards them as the indispensable *errors* we simply cannot do without. Hitherto, Nietzsche claims, the human species has incorporated nothing but error. Such erroneous conditions for life are: the very positing of objects, substances, bodies; the positing of objects that endure, or that are equal; appearance taken for the being of an object; freedom of the will; the subjective estimation of "good", "bad", "evil", taken as objective; furthermore as good-in-itself, bad-in-itself, evil-in-itself.[97] He then proposes to us the project of a 'joyous science' in which the human being as knower, the one who examines his own conditions of existence, engages in the "experiment" of incorporating knowledge and truths.[98] In section 335, Nietzsche incites us to become not 'meta-physicists' but physicists (*Physiker*) of what is necessary both in life in general as well as in our own personal lives. Nietzsche's use of the term 'physics' here is clearly meant to remind us of its forbidden counterpart, namely metaphysics. Opposed to supernatural causes, we can see this stance represented in the naturalist tradition. Nietzche's physics is a kind of empiricism appealing to the incorporation of a conscience behind one's conscience, i.e. the extra-moral virtue of *Redlichkeit*, or intellectual honesty. This honesty is an extra-moral virtue because, in the thinker, it has been incorporated to the extent of becoming an instinctive virtue.[99]

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[93] Cf. *KSA* 8.39 and 11.667, as well as his remarks about Ranke in *Zur Genealogie der Moral* (Third Essay, section 19) and *Ecce Homo* ('Why I Am So Clever,' section 9).

[94] Friedrich Nietzsche*, Beyond Good and Evil. Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*, ed. Rolf-Peter Horstmann and Judith Norman, trans. Judith Norman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 146; *BGE* 254.

[95] Julian Young, *Friedrich Nietzsche. A Philosophical Biography* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 89.

[96] Rüdiger Safranski, *Nietzsche: A Philosophical Biography*, trans. Shelley Frisch (London: Granta Books, 2002), 99.

[97] Cf. *GS* 109, 110, 121; Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science. With a Prelude in Rhymes and an Appendix of Songs*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1974).

The conditionality of life and human existence is thus pivotal to understanding the possibilities Nietzsche envisions for the future of humanity. Whoever fails to realize that conditions exist and will always persist, will never grasp the crucial point that these conditions might also be altered. That is why Nietzsche consistently criticizes every imaginable form of 'unconditionality' in social, cultural, and religious ideas, sentiments and behavior. From a scientific standpoint we must ask, 'What are the conditions of life?'; from a historical perspective we then ask, 'What have we so far viewed as the conditions of our existence?'; but from a philosophical perspective we must ask, 'What might *become* the conditions of our existence?' The experimental activity of incorporation (*Einverleibung*), then, constitutes the condition of possibility for *altering* the conditions of life. Through the activity of incorporation we can gain access to the terrain of '*Lebensbedingungen*'—our conditions of existence—and are able to intervene in a region of necessary conditions that were previously held to be beyond the limit of human possibilities. In Nietzsche's hands, Kant's transcendental limit thus turns into a mobile frontier which, having been made part of an evolutionary scheme, always contains within itself the possibility for a shift towards a new limit.

The second response is developed in Nietzsche's late writings, but most consistently in the 1887 work *Zur Genealogie der Moral*. Here Nietzsche continues the search for conditions of existence but introduces a new element to the equation designed to break the empirical circularity of his earlier conception of historical critique as a 'joyous science' fundamentally geared towards present and future. Nietzsche's new conception of historical critique he calls genealogy, a mode of historical inquiry which is fundamentally geared towards present and past. That is to say, it always takes the present as its departure point for a retracing of a certain lineage back into the depths of the past. In its Preface, Nietzsche is quite explicit about the status of the *Genealogie* as "a *critique* of moral values" in which the problem of the value of values themselves is probed by means of an inquiry into "the conditions and circumstances under which the values grew up, developed and changed".[100] With *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* and *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*, the *Genealogie* belongs to those works most concerned with defining necessary conditions (*Existenzbedingungen*, *Daseins-Bedingungen*, *günstigen Bedingungen*, etc.).

The novelty of genealogical history lies in this, that it is supplemented with a transcendental level: each of the three treatises that together compose the *Genealogie* are centred around what we might call a *transcendental event* (whose internal structure still corresponds to the one introduced at the beginning of the first chapter). In the first essay,

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[98] Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, 171; *GS* 110.

[99] Nietzsche discusses the possibility of instinctive virtues in *GS* 8.

[100] Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, ed. Keith Ansell-Pearson, trans. Carol Diethe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 7; Preface 6.

"'Good and Evil', 'Good and Bad'", it is the downtrodden slaves' revolt in morality in which "*ressentiment* itself turns creative and gives birth to values", as a precondition for Christianity; in the second essay, "'Guilt', 'bad conscience' and related matters", the prehistoric emergence of the remembering, responsible animal out of an internalization of the instinct of cruelty, as a precondition for civilized society; in the third essay, "what do ascetic ideals mean?", the birth of the ascetic ideal from the self-preserving instincts of a degenerating type of (priestly) life, as precondition for philosophy and modern science. All three are long-term historical events, extending over many millennia and impossible to pinpoint with regard to time and place—but they nevertheless took place, Nietzsche argues. Insofar as all three events exceed the boundaries of the empirical yet act as the necessary condition for the emergence of a certain type of experience or mode of living, they can rightfully be designated as transcendental events. Although it might be tempting for the historian of morality to reject Nietzsche's analyses on empirical grounds (e.g. lack of evidence, impossibility of observation),[101] the transcendental events they describe remain valid insofar as the status of these events as necessary condition for the emergence of another, empirically verifiable mode of experience is left undisputed. In this sense they continue, in historicized form, Kant's model of critique.

However, as usual with Nietzsche, there is a more subversive element hidden within both responses that only comes to the surface upon careful analysis. In the first case it is the figure of the knower as the expression of a type of life that is ready to turn against life, to fight with itself and with its environment in order to come to knowledge, but which is always already lived in the service of the greater "economy" of life.[102] In the second case we come up against a similar circularity: it turns out that the whole enterprise of critique—motivated by that unconditional 'will to truth'—is always already carried out on the basis of a moral presupposition. As Nietzsche had already written in a section (entitled 'How we, too, are still pious.') of the Fifth Book added to *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* in 1887, science is based fundamentally on the belief in an unconditional truth. For that reason we are faced with the fact that "it is still a *metaphysical faith* upon which our faith in science rests—that even we seekers after knowledge today, we godless anti-metaphysicians still take our fire, too, from the flame lit by a faith that is thousands of years old, that Christian faith which was also the faith of Plato, that God is the truth, that truth is divine."[103] Nietzsche's great achievement, of course, has been to expose the problem of critique as a *moral* problem, but he does not stop there. Nietzsche forces critique to come face to face with itself: the critique of morality that is enacted on the basis of the quasi-transcendental virtue of honesty (the earlier introduced concept of *Redlichkeit*), representing the will not to deceive oneself, ends up being the ascetic ideal which questions *itself*: "From the very moment that faith in the God of the ascetic ideal is denied, *there is a new problem as well*: that of the *value* of truth.—The will to truth needs a critique—let us define our own task with this—, the value of truth is tentatively to be *called into question* . . ."[104] Nietzsche is very much aware of the self-referentiality of his metacritique which, in critiquing the asceticism of all ideals, still repeats the old idealism. What is at stake is nothing less than the possibility of true thinking and meaningful life. This leads onto the fundamental problem of nihilism, defined most incisively in a famous *Nachlass* note as the process according to which the highest values inevitably end up devaluing themselves.[105] This problem, having been introduced to philosophy for the first time by Jacobi following his estimation of the critical enterprise, now reaches its peak in the third essay of the *Genealogie*, where Nietzsche warns: "what meaning would *our* entire being have if not this, that in us the will to truth came to consciousness of itself *as a problem*?"[106]

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[101] Cf. the critical but sympathetic treatment of Nietzsche's analyses by Daniel C. Dennett, Darwin's *Dangerous Idea. Evolution and the Meanings of Life* (London: Penguin Books, 1996), 461-7.

[102] Cf. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, 73; *GS* 1.

[103] Ibid., 283; *GS* 344.

[104] Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, 113; III 23.

Although to subsequent figures in the tradition of metacritique, Nietzsche will come to present a pivotal moment in its history, and although they will apply crucial insights from Nietzsche in their own work (with Deleuze, Nietzsche's problematization of values and his theory of time, with Foucault, Nietzsche's method of genealogical critique, with Koselleck, Nietzsche's conception of concepts), metacritique has not yet come to terms with what might very well be its outer limit: the problem of nihilism. To date, there have not been any serious philosophical attempts to come to terms with this final and deepest problem posed by Nietzsche's thought.[107]

2.4 DILTHEY

With Nietzsche and Wilhelm Dilthey (1833–1911) begins philosophy's turn towards *historical critique*, the most famous recent representative of which is Foucault. Unlike Nietzsche, however, Dilthey had studied with Ranke and Droysen and would follow them in asserting the autonomy of history as a discipline—and with it the whole of the human sciences or sciences of the mind (*Geisteswissenschaften*). With them, Dilthey also shared a dislike for the philosophy of history, but more importantly, he followed Droysen in his resistance against positivism (Droysen, as we have seen, in fact precedes Dilthey in his emphasis on the hermeneutic concept of *Verstehen*). Because of these conditions, Nietzsche and Dilthey would come to develop two very different expressions of historical critique.

The goal of Dilthey's main work *Einleitung in die Geisteswissenschaften* (first published in 1883) and by extension of his lifework, is to initiate a *critique of historical reason* that will lead the human sciences onto a secure epistemological foundation. What defines these *Geisteswissenschaften* is their insight into the historicity of the human being and its products, a historical being that is not the abstract subject of knowledge but a concrete, willing, feeling whole. The foundation of these sciences is thus to be discovered in a decisive account of the conditions of possibility for such historical knowledge. Already in his inaugural lecture at the University of Basel in 1867, Dilthey explicitly declares his allegiance to the principles of Kantian critique when he agrees that the main problem of philosophy is the possibility of knowledge and that the solution to this problem lies in limiting knowledge to experience. The task of philosophy, then, is to become a science *of* science.[108]

In Dilthey the main problematic of neo-Kantianism becomes a classic historicist one (viz. Ranke and Droysen), namely the (im)possibility of historical knowledge. As a result, a cross-pollination between historicism and neo-Kantianism takes place during the 1880s to the betterment of both movements, the former becoming more subtle in the analysis of its limits, the latter—which had hitherto focused mostly on the epistemological issues of the natural sciences—growing wider in scope. In Dilthey we find a scholar concerned with enacting a critique which is both internal and external in perspective and ambition, due at least in part to his complex intellectual development and changing positions. At a later stage of his career Dilthey comes to embrace the concept of *Leben* more and more fervently as allowing for both an internal and external viewpoint on the basis of which the critique of historical reason can perhaps be completed, but which also risks jeopardizing the project of grounding the human sciences.

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[105] Cf. *KSA* 12.350.

[106] Friedrich Nietzsche, *On The Genealogy of Morality*, 119; III 27.

[107] One might recognize the dawning of a certain degree of conscience in Quentin Meillassoux, *After Finitude: An Essay on the Necessity of Contingency*, trans. Ray Brassier (London: Continuum, 2008), and Ray Brassier, *Nihil Unbound: Enlightenment and Extinction* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); although one might very well argue that they too—in a manner very similar to nineteenth century thought—give expression to the nihilistic sentiment which Nietzsche precisely sought to expose.

[108] Beiser, *The German Historicist Tradition*, 322.

At the same time, for Dilthey, history forms both the means and object of criticism. The human being comes to knowledge of itself through history: likewise the history of efforts to attain knowledge of a distinctly *Geisteswissenschaftliche* form will lead us onto its epistemological foundation.[109] As such, Dilthey's project is also a *historical critique of reason.*[110] For him, a valid critical reason is a historical reason which does not seek to think away its *a priori* from its historical origins. Against positivism Dilthey posits the "purely empirical manner" in which the historical school ostensibly proceeds, according to a method which it has managed to capture for itself and on its own terms.[111] If there is a boundary separating the natural from the human sciences it would have to lie *within* the limits of experience.

In Dilthey's account of the distinction between the natural and human sciences we can again discern a properly transcendental and empirical level. Natural science concerns itself with the realm of outer experience, i.e. sense perception, while the human sciences are concerned with inner experience, i.e. reflection and self-awareness. The human sciences are related to a reality which man himself has produced, in which "whatever is-there-for-us exists by virtue of this inner experience".[112] Here we can regain knowledge of the origin insofar as the object of knowledge is produced by thought itself, for "whatever constitutes a value or purpose for us is so given to us only in the lived experience of our feeling and our will, as well as the principles of our action that explain the presence of purposes, highest goods, and values".[113] The entirety of this "special realm of experiences which has its independent origin and its own material in inner experience and which is, accordingly, the subject matter of a special science of experience," is at the same time the subject matter of the human sciences.[114] Thus the foundation of the *Geisteswissenschaften* becomes descriptive (as opposed to explanatory) psychology, to which all other human sciences must retrace their respective foundations; hence the significance of the term *Geist.*

The difference between the two types of experience is not a difference in degree but a difference in kind: there is an "incommensurability of these two realms of facts".[115] Crucial to Dilthey's account is the fact that it draws neither an ontological distinction (but an epistemological or phenomenological one), nor a methodological one, because Dilthey thinks that processes of abstraction and the search for general laws are common to both sciences. While the former line of argument is entirely in keeping with Kantian tradition, the latter point goes straight against the neo-Kantian position. Thus, in his Strasburg Rectoral Address in 1893, entitled "*Geschichte und Naturwissenschaft*", Wilhelm Windelband will criticize this move of Dilthey.[116] Because it attributes a founding role to psychology it also risks handing the human sciences over to the methods of the natural sciences. Instead, Windelband thinks that the human sciences do need a distinct methodology in order to avoid this error. Dilthey will respond to Windelband by arguing that the realm of inner experience is fully external to the realm of outer experience.[117] Though they might share the same objects, what separates the two is the perspective taken *towards* these objects: thus what changes with the perspective is the *content*. Inner experience, moreover, is a richer kind of experience beyond mere sense perception. In later writings such as the *Ideen über eine beschreibende und zergliedernde Psychologie*, Dilthey will even go as far as to argue for the greater epistemological certainty afforded by this type of experience, because it is not dependent on observation of the outside world. However, how far are we removed at this point in our critical search for the evidence of our beliefs from the supposedly external realms of society and history?

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[109] Wilhelm Dilthey, *Introduction to the Human Sciences. Selected Works Vol. I*, ed. Rudolf A. Makkreel and Frithjof Rodi (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 9.

[110] Cf. Wilhelm Dilthey, *Introduction to the Human Sciences*, xv.

[111] Ibid., xvi.

[112] Ibid., 9.

[113] Ibid., 9.

[114] Ibid., 9.

[115] Ibid., 9.

In the later part of his career, when the founding role attributed to psychology appears less feasible than during the 1870s and 1880s, Dilthey will begin to refer to the type of experience peculiar to the human sciences as lived experience, "*Erlebnis*". This all-encompassing concept is Dilthey's answer to the neo-Kantians, supposedly incorporating Windelband's demand for individuality but also Heinrich Rickert's demand for a separate realm of values.[118] Lived experience is characterized by its inherent temporality (*Zeitlichkeit*), which implies that all human sciences, insofar as they are based in lived experience (which is to say historical experience), require a historical foundation. By 1894, Dilthey seems again convinced that the *Geisteswissenschaften* must indeed secure their autonomy on the basis of method, namely in the opposition between the *Naturwissenschaftliche* method of *Erklären* and the *Geisteswissenschaftliche* method of *Verstehen*. But even at this point there still corresponds to each method a distinct kind of experience irreducible to the other, in keeping with Dilthey's earlier position. Nevertheless, *Verstehen* became—after its popularization through Dilthey—the methodological principle upon whose epistemological validity the legitimacy of all the human sciences depended.

Near the end of his scholarly career, Dilthey will also begin to develop what has often been viewed as a philosophy of life to complement his notion of lived experience. However, on the basis of his view that the limits of possible experience cannot be transcended, Dilthey will limit his conception of life to "life as lived by human beings".[119] In this way only, he argues, can misunderstandings as to the meaning of the concept be avoided, and the coherence of the subject matter of the human sciences be left unharmed. But life still fulfils a double role in Dilthey's late texts: not only is it representative of the unity of all human experience as lived throughout history, it is also the condition of possibility for this experience and for all reflection upon it. In this context Dilthey will read and criticize other *Lebensphilosophen* such as Nietzsche, in whom he recognizes a futile longing for an essential nature which can be abstracted away from history.[120] Despite the image that emerges in this utter misreading of Nietzsche, Dilthey in fact ventured much closer to his contemporary than he could know on the basis of his reading of Nietzsche's early *Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen*. In one of his last texts, reflecting on his own critical project, Dilthey will write: "An apparently irreconcilable antithesis arises when historical consciousness is followed to its last consequences."[121] The finitude of historical phenomena poses an absolute limit to the historical *Weltanschauung*, but at the same time thought and philosophy demand possession of knowledge with universal validity. While it has been able to free the "human spirit" from deterministic science, the pitfall of relativism seems to be the only alternative left. In Dilthey, too, the threat of nihilism looms.

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[116] Frederick C. Beiser, *The German Historicist Tradition*, 328.
[117] Ibid., 329.
[118] Ibid., 330.
[119] Ibid., 355.
[120] Ibid., 358.

At the close of this chapter, a few conclusions can be drawn. The function of critique, as determining the limits of knowledge, always involves a negotiation of the boundaries between the transcendental and the empirical, between what is given in experience and what must be exterior to it. While for Kant the transcendental is what made possible the apprehension of what is given in our experience, and thus necessarily precedes it, many nineteenth-century scholars—both within philosophy and history—will grant the epistemological primacy of the empirical over and above whatever transcendental apprehension may *follow* from it. With this reversal they did not, however, do away with the concept pair, nor did they distance themselves from critique. In fact, in this 'age of history' things were precisely the other way around. Although the roots of the historicism that came to dominate the age are undoubtedly located in the eighteenth century program of a 'science of man' as carried out by Chladenius, Herder, Möser, Kant and Humboldt,[122] it could not secure a theoretical and methodological foundation for history as a discipline. The instrument historians required in order to achieve their aim and successfully challenge the movements whose influence continued to blur the boundaries between history and the other scientific disciplines was Kantian critique. The resistance to naturalism on the one hand and the philosophy of history on the other by way of an adapted form of critique was the necessary condition for the emergence of history as an autonomous discipline.

That the historico-empirical search for origins is a rather different activity compared to the historico-critical search for conditions of possibility is proven by the fact that the former type of analysis—regarding the matter of history as independent faculty—arrives at the historical science of humanity as it was propagated by Herder, while the latter arrives at Kantian critique and its Enlightenment conception of history. While Frederick Beiser chooses the former route, he is very clear about the fact that "Humboldt, Ranke, Droysen, Rickert, Lazarus, Lask, Dilthey, Simmel and Weber all applied Kantian principles to historical knowledge itself."[123] As for Ranke, Droysen and Dilthey, they did so with a clear goal in mind: to legitimate history as a science and to secure its autonomy within the distribution of the various human sciences. Even if Nietzsche did not assent to this strategy he still joined Dilthey in their common project of a historical critique governed by the quasi-transcendental concept of life, a project ostensibly leading to an inevitable confrontation with the spectre of nihilism.

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[121] Wilhelm Dilthey, "Reminiscences on Historical Studies at the University of Berlin," in *Hermeneutics and the Study of History. Selected Works Vol. IV*, ed. Rudolf A. Makkreel and Frithjof Rodi (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 389.

[122] Frederick C. Beiser, *The German Historicist Tradition*, 4.

[123] Ibid., 17.

II – Heirs of a Modern *Aporia*

Reinvention

In part two of this study we turn to a more detailed analysis of three relatively recent heirs of the modern *aporia* that is the problem of the relation between the transcendental and the empirical. In Paris during the middle of the twentieth century, both Michel Foucault (1926–1984) and Gilles Deleuze (1925–1995) begin their careers as historians of philosophy, and both scholars' earliest engagements in the history of philosophy are with Kant and post-Kantian philosophy. At Heidelberg, around the same time, Reinhart Koselleck (1923–2006) emerges from the same general ('continental') philosophical background but turns to the study of conceptual history in order to apply his philosophical abilities to a field ostensibly in need of theoretical advancement. These three heirs share in common a becoming aware of the tradition of metacritique as the modern critique of critique which problematizes the relation between the transcendental and the empirical *ad infinitum*. As heirs, they inherit this tradition as a whole, establishing it as such in their thought and reflecting on it *as* a problem. From this relative distance with its own historicity a reinvention and renewal of metacritique becomes possible. Accordingly, they each seek an engagement with this modern problematic in their own way, but always with reference to a history of thought whose key movements and figures paved the way for their own metacritical labour. In short: with Deleuze, Foucault and Koselleck begins the simultaneous historicization and problematization of metacritique.

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Transcendental Empiricism: Deleuze for Historians

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Gilles Deleuze is usually characterized as a philosopher of immanence and of the non-transcendental, but it can in fact be observed from the very first works how Deleuze aims to develop a more sophisticated account of the transcendental *vis-à-vis* the empirical. Although his later work with Félix Guattari gives a rather different impression, Deleuze does not reject the transcendental at all in his early thinking. In fact, it could be argued that he takes the category further than any other post-Kantian philosopher by arguing that its content is only valid as non-subjective, and that precisely the constitution of its coordinates must be accounted for. The problems that gave rise to metacritique at the end of the eighteenth century resurface in the philosophy of Deleuze. That is to say, a questioning of reason as a matter of authority and a questioning of authority as a matter of reason. Moreover, Deleuze's effort to think a presuppositionless or pure thought continues the discussions that defined the period 1780-1800. After the 1840s, when the rule of German idealism came at an end, such thought was long considered untenable.

Deleuze consistently speaks of the same thing whenever he mentions a higher, superior, or transcendental empiricism. Only such a transcendental empiricism, he argues, is capable of tracing the conditions of emergence of an embodied, thinking subject from within a 'transcendental field.' This chapter will investigate Deleuze's earliest and often neglected formulation of this pedagogy as well as its mature elaboration in the key texts *Différence et repetition* (1968) and *Logique du sens* (1969), before concluding with a reflection on the use of Deleuze's theory of problems—the touchstones of the history of metacritique—for historians.

3.1 CRITIQUE OF EMPIRICISM

Already in 1953's *Empirisme et subjectivité. Essai sur la Nature Humaine selon Hume*, Deleuze's very first book-length study of a figure within the history of philosophy, can we discern two types of the transcendental; the first, a structure rejected by Deleuze; the second, a structure crucial to Hume's account of subjectivity. Further, Deleuze never opposes immanence to the transcendental but to transcendence and the transcendent, although in *Empirisme et subjectivité* the line separating these terms seems harder to draw than in the later writings. It might therefore be useful at this point to propose that Deleuze distinguishes between two types of the transcendental, a 'good' and a 'bad' type. The bad is the transcendental as illusion, namely that of representation, abstraction and conceptualization, while the good is the transcendental as exceeding the given and opening up the new and creative. One can take this quite literally in the Spinozist sense of either an increase or a decrease of the power to act. From Kant onwards, transcendental philosophy achieved but the latter by immediately circumscribing the transcendental realm it had opened up. The bad transcendental already contains within itself an assumed subjectivity fixed through innate *a priori* ideas. This primary subject comes to experience fully formed, operating on the world with an innate and systematic structure for ordering its experiences. In asking anew, 'what about the formation and orientation of the subject itself?', Deleuze wants to problematize all of these implicit notions, and in fact, he claims that this "critique of problems" is philosophy done right.[124] Theories in philosophy, he writes, are not "the resolution to a problem, but the elaboration, to the very end, of the necessary implications of a formulated question."[125] In *Empirisme et subjectivité* we thus already find, in embryonic form, a theory of problems that is still limited to the conditions and requirements of philosophical method, but will be expanded into the realm of subjectivity through Bergson, and finally achieve independent ontological—in fact, transcendental—status in Deleuze's mature work.

Deleuze's revaluation of empiricism involves, in keeping with the Nietzschean tradition, a radical critique of the values hitherto attached to the empirical endeavour and a strategic reversal of its meaning. This empiricism is opposed to the 'bad' transcendental insofar as it maintains that "nothing is ever transcendental", but to the extent that it claims that "it is human nature that, in its principles, transcends the mind", it has incorporated within itself the 'good' transcendental.[126] Its simultaneous turn to Hume and Kant can be conceived as an attempt to move away from the all-engulfing movement of Hegelian dialectics. Deleuze achieves this through a rebellious embrace and transformation of the two most despised methods in G.W.F. Hegel's philosophy: empiricism (incapable of examining the categories of thought *a priori*) and the transcendental method (incapable of analyzing being directly, that is, immanently without recourse through a mediating faculty). Inevitably, thought and being collapse into one another in the process of uncovering the trajectory of a single *Geist*, which is precisely the movement Deleuze seeks to break away from. He will uphold this tactic in all subsequent publications.

The kind of empiricism Deleuze locates in Hume does not satisfy Kant's description of this theory of knowledge as claiming that, beyond the fact that "all our cognition commences with experience", all our knowledge *arises* from experience.[127] While, for Hume, simple ideas may certainly derive from repetitions of sensible impressions, complex ideas must be considered effects of the association of ideas which cannot arise from the nature of ideas themselves. Only the principles of experience and habit can inspire such empirical beliefs. Furthermore, the traditional definition of empiricism as assigning to given experience the origin and only valid source of all knowledge is the worst possible definition because it has not even begun to consider the possibility of experience as *itself problematic*.[128] Deleuze's strategic reversal of the traditional meaning of empiricism thus consists in establishing as the criterion of a 'true' empiricism the idea that relations are never taken from the nature of things. The emphasis thus shifts towards the relations between what shapes experience, i.e. the transcendental activity of the faculties. Insofar as relations are external to their terms the relation between these faculties must also be characterized by a kind of independence. Through an 'untimely' rereading of Hume, Deleuze thus revises the Kantian thesis of a necessary unity or harmony between the faculties as a precondition of objective experience. Thereby the fundamental groundwork is laid for the later theory of discord of the faculties as outlined in *Différence et repetition*.

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[124] Gilles Deleuze, *Empiricism and Subjectivity. An Essay on Hume's Theory of Human Nature*, trans. Constantin V. Boundas (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 24.

[125] Gilles Deleuze, *Empiricism and Subjectivity*, 106.

[126] Ibid., 24.

Deleuze fights a dual battle, against the naïve empiricists one the one hand and against the naïve rationalists on the other. His answer to Kant is not a straightforward return to empiricism but involves, as we will see, taking on board certain distinctly (post-)Kantian insights. Hume's problem motivates much of Deleuze's own philosophy: 'How is the subject constituted within the given?' This is an empirical problem but one with immediate transcendental implications. That is why traditional conceptions of empiricism are insufficient to Deleuze, submitting their inquiry fully to the sovereign rule of a first principle, namely that of the sensible as the sole source of knowledge. Empiricists are guilty of the same crimes of which they accuse their rationalist, idealist adversaries: those advocates of non-empirical principles such as the 'I', 'Ego', 'Being', 'God'. To Deleuze the abstractions they all take to be necessary and given are *precisely* what is in need of explaining. What is required therefore is a superior or higher kind of empiricism which is capable of solving the riddle of subjectivity, and Deleuze's study of Hume is a first exploration of this uncharted territory. Ultimately, what is needed is a transcendental empiricism that is attuned to the mechanisms of the subject's formation, because for Deleuze's Hume, "to transcend is always to move from the known to the unknown."[129] The subject thus engages in a transcendental activity whenever it generates the new. Deleuze will continue to endorse this view throughout his later work, using similar terms in *Différence et repetition* to describe the movement of learning, but with a mature conception of the problem at its core.

3.2 (RE)DISCOVERY OF THE TRANSCENDENTAL

With Deleuze we always begin in the middle. But there we find that the core is absent: there is already a plurality. Perhaps we should thus rephrase the first sentence as follows: with Deleuze we have always already begun. No wonder, then, to encounter in the middle of *Différence et repetition* an exploration of the problem of beginning, in other words, of eliminating all presuppositions. Although the chapter would have made the perfect opening to the book, it purposely avoids this position. Instead, it builds its own path into the matter by exposing the fundamental presuppositions which have predetermined philosophy and by consequently naming them the natural "image of thought".[130] Before we talk about philosophy, we talk about thought. Philosophy is already an image of thought. This image is a product of history. The history of thought reveals a dogmatism consisting of a set of eight postulates (a concept Deleuze takes from Kant's *Critiques*, where they perform the same function) which have succeeded in trapping thought within the Same, Similar, Opposed and Analogous, incapable of thinking beyond itself and becoming truly transcendental.

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[127] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 1 ; 136.

[128] Gilles Deleuze, *Empiricism and Subjectivity*, 107.

[129] Ibid., 127.

The most profound moment in the history of the dogmatic image therefore occurs with Kant, "the one who discovers the prodigious domain of the transcendental" as "the analogue of a great explorer".[131] But Kant analyzes the transcendental in order to draw conclusive limits and to settle the boundaries of knowledge. For Deleuze, instead, the goal is precisely that of transcending limits and borders. For the very same reason his philosophy can never let go of the category of the 'transcendental.' Deleuze wants to take the modern philosophy Kant inaugurated to its limit and beyond. Accordingly, it must be explored further in three main directions: first, all subjective and empirical content must be removed from it, in a way Kantian critique was unable to; second, we must extend the category of conditions so as to take account of not just the possible but also of the conditioned 'real'; third, the 'real' has its condition of possibility in the concept of *difference*, a source which can no longer be conceived as purely empirical, as Kant did. The goal of Deleuze's *magnum opus* in its entirety is in fact to bring about "a Copernican revolution which opens up the possibility of difference having its own concept, rather than being maintained under the domination of a concept in general already understood as identical."[132] With this declaration Deleuze places himself firmly in the history of metacritique which originated from Kant's own claim to have realized a Copernican turn.

In order to achieve all this, the "discussion must be carried out on the level of principle itself," where we enter into a negotiation regarding the particular "distribution of the empirical and the transcendental".[133] At this point Deleuze declares his allegiance to the tradition of metacritique, where Deleuze engages in a dialogue with early commentators of Kant, the most important of which for him is Maimon: "It is Salomon Maimon who proposes a fundamental reformulation of the *Critique* and an overcoming of the Kantian duality between concept and intuition."[134] Transcendental idealism created a gap between being and thought which Deleuze sets out to resolve, neither through a straightforward embrace of empiricism, nor through a retreat in dogmatic philosophy and dialectics. The crucial question that motivates this project is: 'What transcendental conditions necessarily produce the real?' Deleuze understands the 'real' in a way that is similar to Kant, for whom it implies the "real of the sensation" as our subjective representation of spatio-temporal existence, "by which one can only be conscious that the subject is affected".[135] In other words, this real is only given in experience and unknowable through *a priori* concepts. In Deleuze's terms, it is that which can only be sensed:

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[130] Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 131.

[131] Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 135.

[132] Ibid., 40-41.

[133] Ibid., 133.

[134] Ibid., 173 ; It is worth mentioning at this point that Deleuze has been singlehandedly responsible for the current revival of interest in Maimon, having led, *inter alia*, to the English translation of his *Versuch* used in the first chapter.

[135] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 208; 290.

> "Empiricism truly becomes transcendental, and aesthetics an apodictic discipline, only when we apprehend directly in the sensible that which can only be sensed, the very being *of* the sensible: difference, potential difference and difference in intensity as the reason behind qualitative diversity."[136]

Deleuze's major point of contention with Kant lies in his assumption of finitude with regard to our experience and his denial of our capacity to come to a full understanding of the world on the basis of this experience. Simply put, the realm of being does not belong to the thinking of a finite subject for Kant: his "science of the sensible" is a mere reflection on "what *can* be represented in the sensible".[137] The transcendental domain of a 'true' aesthetics, however, would be that of *real* being rather than possible being; it would be "the very being *of* the sensible".[138] Kant's system could never obtain the conditions of this real being because such conditions are no object of possible experience: the system closes off as soon as it faces the impenetrable noumenon or *Ding an sich*. Indeed, while representation can only conceive of conceptual difference, Deleuze claims to have grasped a fundamental insight into the thing in itself, a *non-conceptual* difference, or rather, *difference in itself*: "Difference is not phenomenon but the noumenon closest to the phenomenon."[139] It is true that possible being (of the sensible) can *only* be represented or recognized, but the real being of the sensible *can* be encountered. The object of this encounter is not susceptible to recognition, in other words, to an "empirical exercise of the senses".[140] Whenever sensibility encounters its own limit, therefore, it "raises itself to the level of a transcendental exercise".[141] Thought, now, must confront the complete necessity of its own act in the contingent encounter with what forces it to think:

> "The conditions of a true critique and a true creation are the same: the destruction of an image of thought which presupposes itself and the genesis of the act of thinking in thought itself."[142]

In order to answer the question of how thought is generated we must remove all the obstacles that thought naturally generates, all the illusions or postulates that philosophy has elevated to its image, but that prevent it from reaching its true potential. Only then will we see that thought really takes place as a result of or under the pressure of *problems* which demand *learning*. Deleuze writes, "it is apparent that acts of recognition exist and occupy a large part of our daily life: this is a table, this is an apple, this the piece of wax, Good morning Theaetetus. But who can believe that the destiny of thought is at stake in these acts, and that when we recognise, we are thinking?"[143] Philosophy hitherto has limited the question of the conditions of thought to the question of the possibility of thought without uncovering the true and real but never actual, i.e. the virtual or transcendental ground of thought: the problematic. Crucially, Deleuze writes:

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[136] Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 56-7.
[137] Ibid., 56.
[138] Ibid., 57.
[139] Ibid., 222.
[140] Ibid., 140.
[141] Ibid., 140.
[142] Ibid., 139.
[143] Ibid., 135.

> "The 'problematic' is a state of the world, a dimension of the system, and even its horizon or its home: it designates precisely the objectivity of Ideas, the reality of the virtual."[144]

Through the problem we escape from the purely internal necessity of thought by capturing the necessity of the real itself. Where Deleuze administers what appears to be an absolute limit, namely in the encounter with that which can only be sensed, this frontier is already mobile, always containing within itself the possibility for a shift towards a new limit. It is therefore a necessary (transcendental) limit which confronts us with the conditions of the real as opposed to the possible.

This shift begins with the appreciation of unconscious Ideas such as 'God,' 'Self' and 'World' as transcendental problems rather than transcendental givens, for the abstract is inherently problematic and the transcendental is never given. According to Deleuze, "Kant never ceased to remind us that Ideas are essentially 'problematic'. Conversely, problems are Ideas. Undoubtedly, he shows that Ideas lead us into false problems, but this is not their most profound characteristic: if, according to Kant, reason does pose false problems and therefore itself gives rise to illusion, this is because in the first place it is the faculty of posing problems in general."[145] But for Deleuze, false problems are best understood as a mixture of confused concepts that will generate false solutions even if they seem to be good. They have a finite solution which completely solves the problem and are thus defined by the solution. Kant's Ideas bring the transcendental and the empirical in complete resolution and thereby close off experience. Good problems, on the other hand, contain certain discontinuities which force thought onto new problems. They are significant, whereas bad problems are insignificant, i.e. nonsensical. The question of sense thus resides at the heart of the question of the problem. Transcendental empiricism is devoted to a problematics (as opposed to an axiomatics) but never as a knowledge-gathering methodology. The knowledge-method pair is a mere empirical figure, continuously falling back into experience, but the infinite task of learning is "the true transcendental structure" which, on the basis of the in-principle (as opposed to empirical) condition of pure time, provides the living passage from non-knowledge to knowledge.[146] Deleuze thus acknowledges time as necessary condition for the education of the senses. In opposition to the static Kantian model, time now becomes the form of change itself and the *necessary condition of a transformation of the individual.*

3.3 HISTORICAL PROBLEMATICS

Deleuze's project of thinking the new transcendental is taken even further in *Logique du sens* through the concept of a 'transcendental field', freed from all the anthropocentric characteristics which needed explaining in *Différence et repetition.* The aim of the logic of sense is to move from an ontology of essence to an ontology of sense: to account for the conditions of emergence and operation of sense, that is, to arrive at a transcendental genesis which in turn produces the true as empirical effect. Already in his remarkable 1954 review of Jean Hyppolite's *Logique et existence*, Deleuze announces this post-Kantian project and its ambition to move beyond anthropology as the empirical "discourse *on* humanity" which dichotomizes reflection and being, and assigns the movement of understanding to reflection only, in other words, to subjectivity.[147] In Kant, the critical consciousness is able to cognize but it can never reach the being of the noumenon. The synthesis of subject and object it achieves is located solely within the imagination and no part of being itself. If we are to get outside of the anthropological, therefore, we must achieve a non-subjective synthesis. Deleuze wants to go as far as to conceive of sense as an absolute, impenetrable neutrality, as unimpaired by the rational modes of good sense and common sense. Likewise, the transcendental must be freed from the constraints of consciousness, "not having the form of a synthetic personal consciousness or a subjective identity"; a criterion even Edmund Husserl's transcendental logic and Jean-Paul Sartre's 'original' transcendental field could not meet.[148]

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[144] Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 180.

[145] Ibid., 168.

[146] Ibid., 166.

The logic introduces the pair sense-nonsense and contrasts its *intrinsic* relation to the *exclusive* relation of the pair true-false. In locating sense within the proposition, the dogmatic image of thought took the transcendental from the empirical result on the basis of Aristotelian logic. For Deleuze, who finds inspiration in Stoic logic, nonsense is not opposed to sense as a 'no-sense' but expresses its own sense, a sense resisting all demands for dualities, for the either/or's of truth. In its engagement with good and bad problems, sense in fact produces the relation of true and false. Nonsense is associated simply with what lies beyond the boundaries of signification, i.e. the insignificant. In complete alterity to the pair, nonsense thus defines what cannot be either true or false. The logic of sense therefore demands a fundamental break with the principle of non-contradiction which only allows a relation of true and false. In the domain of sense this opposition is without any value: "it is futile to go from the conditioned to the condition in order to think of the conditioned in the image of the conditioned as the simple form of possibility."[149] In other words, we should seek to avoid arranging the conditioned according to the condition, or to fill in the content in agreement with the form. The discussion is again (as in *Différence et repetition*) carried out on the level of principle itself. An asymmetry of the relations must remain in order to prevent them from closing off.

Deleuze reworks the problem of sense by placing it on a different terrain where there is no longer a sense-bestowing 'I'. Here there are only singular points that are themselves ideal events, which generate something (i.e. differences), and are the real conditions for (actual) states of affairs. Deleuze bestows upon precisely the domain of the transcendental field the genetic power to produce sense. This non-empirical domain is, however, no undifferentiated depth, because it can be hypothesized that it consists of nomadically distributed, impersonal, pre-individual singularities. Distributed within a problematic field, a virtual horizon, they are the "true transcendental events" which produce individuals in realizing themselves.[150] It is in this way that Deleuze re-envisions transcendental philosophy, summarizing the new metacritical task of modern thought as follows:

> "An empty square for neither man nor God; singularities which are neither general nor individual, neither personal nor universal. All of this is traversed by circulations, echoes and events which produce more sense, more freedom, and more strength than man has ever dreamed of, or God ever conceived. Today's

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[147] Gilles Deleuze, "Jean Hyppolite. *Logic and Existence*," in *Desert Islands and Other Texts 1953–1974*, ed. David Lapoujade, trans. Michael Taormina (Los Angeles/New York: Semiotext(e), 2004), 15.

[148] Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*. ed. Constantin V. Boundas, trans. M. Lester and C. Stivale (London/New York: Bloomsbury, 2004), 112.

[149] Gilles Deleuze, The Logic of Sense, 80.

[150] Ibid., 118.

> task is to make the empty square circulate and to make pre-individual and nonpersonal singularities speak—in short, to produce sense."[151]

Deleuze's turn to the transcendental field is no simple, straightforward plea for a move *beyond* the human condition insofar as he finds in it a world precisely *prior* to that encased by human experience. In the transcendental empiricist answer to the problem of subjectivity it is not the constitutive activity of a transcendental subject itself but the emergence of an empirical subject from within a transcendental field. The individual as a circle of convergence in a world, selecting and enveloping a finite number of the singularities of the 'system,' combining with the singularities its own body incarnates, spreading out the singularities over its own ordinary lines, capable of reforming them on the membranes connecting 'inner' and 'outer,' derives entirely from the field.[152] Without this field there is no subjectivity, it is its necessary condition, its proper real (but not actual) transcendental. For that reason Deleuze's account of the transcendental can no longer simply be described as a naïve 'beyondism'—the shape we have seen the transcendental take many times throughout the modern history of thought—but first and foremost a 'beforeism.'

However, Deleuze's logic of sense and the event draws on research and theorization carried out within mathematics and quantum mechanics in order to determine its composition. This is problematic insofar as it can be maintained that both fields still remain within the bounds of the linguistic and the empirical, whereas the transcendental field Deleuze seeks to approximate through his logic achieves its status precisely by virtue of being prior to any anthropocentric rendering of it (cognitively and discursively, i.e. inseparable from human experience). In other words, for his metacritical logic to be epistemologically coherent Deleuze is forced to maintain that these fields are in fact beyond said limitations. The critical question evoked is thus: will his new cartography of the transcendental and empirical collapse as soon as one can convincingly argue otherwise? This chapter does not, however, intend to formulate a decisive answer to this pressing issue. Instead, it would like to end on a different, more productive note regarding Deleuze's relevance to the study of history—and, by extension, to the humanities as a whole.

The significance of Deleuze lies in this, that he seeks to set in motion a shift from an empirical focus on solutions to a transcendental focus on problems. This move is crucial because history, above all else, is full of problems—thoughts and events *experienced* as problematic—but overwhelmingly devoid of solutions. History is not in itself problematic: it is composed of problems only insofar as these are problems *for us*. This is also a valuable reminder within the context of current discussions about memory, trauma, and forgetting.[153] The politics of reconciliation that characterizes much of the historical research carried out today is based on a fundamentally flawed premise: that history can be brought to a state of harmony or original tranquillity; that there is a final cure to historical indigestion; that history offers solutions to the problems of today. Indeed, that the adaptation of our historical records to meet today's needs will make things better, will make *us* feel better, a little bit more alleviated and content, a little less offended. We demand of history that it be the way *we* want to be; that it makes us feel the way we want to feel. We appropriate history by swallowing it whole, lacking however the proper techniques designed to cope with this knowledge; that is, lacking the training or education needed in order to digest such a heavy meal. After all, history is a heavy meal, for sure.

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[151] Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, 84.

[152] Ibid., 118.

[153] Cf. Levi van den Bogaard, "Grip op de Tijd. Over herinneringspolitiek, geheugen en modern ascetisme," in Marli Huijer (ed.), *In de versnelling. 18 jonge wetenschappers over tijd* (Amsterdam: Boom, 2014), 102-110.

But the past cannot in and of itself solve a problem, historians can merely re-describe it, rearrange it, resituate it; in other words, show things in a new light. What the many champions of historical injustice and reparation fail to realize is that history is at bottom a '*problematics*' and not an '*axiomatics*': that is to say, they confuse problems with solutions like mathematicians do. It is not the task of the past to solve for us the issues we face in the present. All problem-solving is empirical science: that is why the sciences are so very obsessed with discovering solutions. Instead, the historian must embrace the transcendental component of her practice, which demands of her an *art of problematics*. History as a discipline can devise criteria, models, and value standards as reference points against which not solutions but precisely the problems themselves can be compared and tested, in order to decide whether they are well-posed or ill-posed. Accordingly, the materials that are given to it empirically—the texts, facts, people, relics and monuments of the past—become like touchstones capable of rendering other, new worlds. That history is an art at the heart of its practice does not make it any less scientific, as Ranke already knew. For art is *precisely* abstraction, simplification, limiting, i.e. all those powers Deleuze ascribes to the transcendental. Outside the circularity of the purely empirical sciences, the humanities therefore discover *their own ground* in the transcendental, traversing the individual as historical being.

If we are to learn how to partake in this art of problematics we could look to Deleuze's pedagogy of transcendental empiricism for some crucial insight. But there are also other places to look within the history of metacritique. Let us now turn to another one of those cultivating sites.

-4-

Thinking Otherwise: Foucault as Historian

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The problem of the relation between the transcendental and the empirical is with Michel Foucault from the very beginning, prompting much of the historical and philosophical research he undertook throughout his career. As early as 1952-3, Foucault teaches a course at the Faculty of Letters in Lille entitled "*Connaissance de l'homme et réflexion transcendantale*", about the destiny of the anthropological theme in the nineteenth century through Kant, Hegel, Feuerbach, Marx, Dilthey, and Nietzsche.[154] The theme is picked up again a few years later during a lecture course at the Ecole Normale Supérieure under the title "*Problèmes de l'anthropologie*". Foucault's early interest in the possibility of a philosophical anthropology would feed into his work on the primary dissertation and complementary thesis, both of which were submitted and defended in 1961. From a discussion of these early texts we will move on to what has often been considered Foucault's *magnum opus*,[155] even though it is (as with Deleuze's *Différence et repetition*) still a fairly early text in Foucault's career: *Les mots et les choses*. In this way we will offer some insight into the development of Foucault's thought as it seeks to mount a veritable critique of critique. The aim of this chapter, moreover, is to read Foucault *as* a historian, which is to say as a scholar whose primary concern is the study of the past in light of the present (as has been the goal of historians since the nineteenth century inception of the modern discipline). The field of cultural history, whose rise began during the 1980s and is still ongoing, has done much in terms of demonstrating the falsity of the traditional prejudice against philosopher-historians such as Nietzsche and Foucault, according to which their historical contributions can be nothing but a perversion and hollowing out of historical method and a subversive act which undermines the historical discipline.[156] It has done so mostly by adopting their methods and testing their hypotheses: this chapter continues this trend, but with the addition that the analysis of its theoretical preconditions is as much part of historical research as is the study of archival records (and that without this antecedent layer of theory there cannot even be such an applied study)—which is not to say that Foucault himself did not engage in the latter activity; he has been called "a new archivist" with good reason.[157]

4.1 THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL ILLUSION

During 1960-1 Foucault composes a lengthy introduction to accompany his translation into French of Kant's *Anthropologie in pragmatischer hinsicht* (1798), a text to which he attributes considerable historical and philosophical importance. A full translation of the end result, entitled *Introduction à l' "Anthropologie" de Kant*, has only recently become available and therefore merits our renewed attention.[158] As with Deleuze and Koselleck, it shows how the early Foucault considered Kant as both an important historical figure as well as a significant influence upon his own methodology. Its meticulous and comprehensive treatment of Kant's critical work is reminiscent of the early metacritical texts, but with the addition of an indelible twentieth century neo-Nietzschean perspective from which it must resort to removing, painstakingly, all the layers of "sedimentation" that have "closed over the past" in which the *Anthropologie* originally took shape.[159] Thus, while Foucault's methodology borrows certain aspects from Hyppolite's dual genetic and structural mode of analysis, and this debt to Foucault's supervisor is also made explicit, there is also already an implicit proto-archaeological method at work in the text, in which Kant's reflections on topics such as health and (mental) illness or table manners are as important as anything else. Regardless, the central question and main proposition of the text is a thoroughly contemporary one, namely:

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[154] Roberto Nigro and Kate Briggs, "Introduction," in Michel Foucault, *Introduction to Kant's Anthropology*, ed. Roberto Nigro, trans. Roberto Nigro and Kate Briggs (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2008), 10.

[155] Cf. Hugh J. Silverman, "French structuralism and after: de Saussure, Lévi-Strauss, Barthes, Lacan, Foucault," in *Routledge History of Philosophy Volume VIII. Continental Philosophy in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Richard Kearney (London: Routledge, 2005), 330.

[156] Cf. Victoria E. Bonnell and Lynn Hunt, "Introduction," in *Beyond The Cultural Turn. New Directions in the Study of Society and Culture*, ed. Victoria E. Bonnell and Lynn Hunt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 3-4, 9-10.

[157] Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*, trans. Seán Hand (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 1.

> "if an archaeology of the text were possible, would it not reveal the genesis of a "*homo criticus*," the structure of which would be essentially different from the image of man that went before? Which is to say that, in addition to its particular role as a "propaedeutics" to philosophy, the *Critique* would have also played a constitutive part in the birth and the development of the concrete forms of human existence. Hence there would be a certain *critical* truth to man, a truth born of the critique of the conditions of truth."[160]

Near the end of the *Introduction* Foucault will answer this question affirmatively, but in order to get there he must first address a number of key issues that could potentially impair this project. To begin with the most obvious one: there is no point at which the *Anthropologie* assumes the existence of the *Kritik*. In fact, it is not even in need of a critique because the field of anthropology is presumably concerned solely with the analysis of man as *homo natura*, i.e. with empirical knowledge which falls outside of the bounds of the transcendental philosophy developed in the *Kritik*.

Foucault notes a crucial divergence between the earlier definition of anthropology in Kant's lectures as the study not of what man is but of what he can make of himself (a definition to which Foucault himself will arguably subscribe), and the 1798 definition of anthropology as the study of "what can be expected" of man, that is, of what he "can and should" make of himself.[161] One task of Kant's *Anthropologie* is to solve the problem of what the *homo natura* is once man is defined as a free subject. In this context, Foucault also notes a reciprocity between the anthropological field of research and Kantian thought, in which texts such as Christoph Wilhelm Hufeland's *Makrobiotik oder die Kunst das menschliche Leben zu verlängern* (1796) not only derive insights from Kantian thought but also supply Kant with empirical evidence to match his own *Anthropologie* with and raise it to the scientific standards of his time. As a result of its 'pragmatic' status, the object of study in the *Anthropologie* is neither man as *homo natura* nor man as a fully free subject, for "he is caught by the syntheses already operated by his relationship to the world."[162] Foucault finds evidence of an almost Maimonian line of thought in which the diversity of the given is

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[158] A translation, it must be said, unfortunately hampered by many misspellings and mistranslations.

[159] Michel Foucault, *Introduction to Kant's Anthropology*, 19.

[160] Ibid., 19-20.

[161] Michel Foucault, *Introduction to Kant's Anthropology*, 52.

[162] Ibid., 55.

"secretly dominated by a whole variety of syntheses operated outside of the visible work of consciousness: it is the unconscious syntheses of the elements of perception and obscure representations that even the light of our understanding is not always capable of dissociating; these are the schemas of exploration that trace, in space, little islands of synthesis".[163] While in the *Kritik* the synthetic activity of the 'I' is not itself temporal precisely because it is constitutive, the *Anthropologie* reveals an origin which is always already temporal, as "the point where, in time, truth and freedom are bonded."[164] This bond thus takes the necessary form of finitude. If critical thought investigates "that which is *conditioned* in the *founding* activity," then anthropology sheds light on "what is *un-founded* in the *conditioned*."[165] The second element in this equation is that of language, because for Foucault "the real ground of the anthropological experience is far more linguistic than it is psychological."[166] The *Anthropologie* is a repetition of the *Kritik* on the level of popular knowledge (of man and the world) through a shared language which is based in itself.[167] It elucidates this language which already exists and enables individuals to engage with things and with each other in an implicit form of understanding. The 'Man' of anthropology is a *Weltbürger* first and foremost because he speaks and joins in the exchange of this language which realizes his universal truth.

Finally, Foucault brings in material from the *Logik* (1800) and the *Opus Postumum* (1804) in order to arrive at what he calls the "structural foundation of the *anthropologico-critical repetition*."[168] The *Opus Postumum* asserted that "[*d*]*er Begriff der Welt ist der Inbegriff des Daseins*", that the concept of the world is the inclusion or embodiment of existence, forming its *source*, *domain* and *limit*.[169] There is thus a deep correlation between Man and Nature, or knowledge of the world (*Weltkenntniss*) and knowledge of man (*Menschenkenntniss*), insofar as the three famous questions put forward in the *Logik* ('What can I know?'; 'What should I do?'; 'What may I hope for?'), to which each of the critical works respond with an answer, concern themselves with, respectively, the source (of human knowledge), domain (of the possible and nature use of knowledge) and limit (of reason). Together, then, they answer the exhaustive question of *Was ist der Mensch?*, which again refers back to the foundational structure of the '*Inbegriff des Daseins*'; the world. On this deeply cohesive level—the level of transcendental philosophy—the essential insight dawns that "[t]he *Anthropology* says nothing *other* than what is said in the *Critique*": it is a complete repetition on the empirical level of the three questions of the *Logik* that are given their answers through the tripartite critical project, but with an important difference.[170] Now the nuclei are no longer the faculties (*Vermögen*), it is "the play of the three notions that cover the whole field of connections between man and the world": sensibility is replaced by "the transcendental correlation of passivity-spontaneity", understanding by "the transcendental correlation necessity-liberty", and reason by "the transcendental correlation reason-mind".[171]

All this, however, does nothing to resolve the problem of 'empiricity' which affects the 'anthropologico-critical repetition' Foucault has proceeded to unearth during the

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[163] Ibid., 67-8.
[164] Ibid., 92.
[165] Ibid., 70.
[166] Ibid., 100.
[167] Ibid., 102
[168] Ibid., 83.
[169] Michel Foucault, *Introduction to Kant's Anthropology*, 80.
[170] Ibid., 83.
[171] Ibid., 86.

Introduction. If anything, it worsens this fundamental issue, which amounts to the following state of affairs. As an inquiry into the possibility of having empirical knowledge of finitude, anthropology is both the science in which all knowledge of man is based—thus comprising all the human sciences—as well as the science of what founds and limits man's knowledge for himself. It is thus the knowledge of man and the knowledge *of* the knowledge of man, serving "as the explicit or implicit horizon if everything that man can know of himself."[172] On the one hand, by way of analyzing the possibilities and limits of knowledge, anthropology thus becomes critique. On the other hand, the anthropology thus shows that there is an empirical and historical knowledge lying at the basis of Kantian critique. This reciprocity brings to light another issue common to both facets of Kantian thought. While anthropology aims to arrive at a liberated and grounded knowledge which is able to think its finitude in itself "as a form of positivity", it can, in actuality, only think in terms of limits and negativity, it only shows finitude.[173]

What Foucault calls the "anthropological illusion" shows itself clearly in all attempts since Kant to achieve the very same goal through anthropological reflection on man (the 'for-me'), or to lay claim to a "natural access to the fundamental" (the 'in-itself').[174] All these attempts present the truth of man as the very "soul of truth" thanks to which a preliminary critique becomes unnecessary.[175] Foucault's rejoinder to this Kantian heritage consists of a repetition of his own question: to what does knowledge owe its legitimacy? That is to say, a "veritable critique of the anthropological illusion"—of finitude—must now take place, for which the model has already been put forward half a century ago; the "Nietzschean enterprise" shows us how the reality of the death of God—knowledge's withdrawal from the infinite—at the same time causes the death of man as the negation of this infinite, and offers a response to the questioning of man through its proposal of the *Übermensch.*[176] It is no exaggeration to state that these final sentences contain, *in nuce*, the goal to which Foucault's entire metacritical project aspires.

4.2 THE CRITIQUE OF FINITUDE

From the *Introduction* to 1966's *Les mots et les choses. une archéologie des sciences humaines*, we witness a further deepening of a set of insights Foucault had already developed. Whereas in 1961, Foucault's concerns seem to lie solely with the fate of modern philosophy, in 1966 these seems to have expanded so as to include a full survey of the human sciences from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century. The goal of the book is to problematize this knowledge of the human sciences so as to open up a space in which other configurations of knowledge become possible. Here, to analyze a given historical period on the archaeological level means to look at "the level of what made it possible", were a necessity encircles and enfolds its configuration of knowledge.[177] The method of archaeology thus becomes Foucault's new negotiation of the relation between the transcendental and the empirical.

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[172] Ibid., 115.

[173] Ibid., 118.

[174] Ibid., 122.

[175] Ibid., 124.

[176] Michel Foucault, *Introduction to Kant's Anthropology*, 124.

[177] Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things. An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, trans. Alan Sheridan (London, New York: Tavistock/Routledge, 1989), 31.

Essentially, archaeology is not concerned with the things themselves but the way in which things are related to each other: in other words, with the relations between things. For a science to emerge these relations must conform to a kind of discipline or code of conduct: they must assume a distinct order. To each epoch under analysis in *Les mots et les choses* corresponds a dominant ordering principle: in the case of the Renaissance period the principle is that of resemblance, whereas in the Classical age it is the principles of identity and difference. The formation of knowledge entails a practice of formulating truths through the interpretation of signs, most important of which are linguistic signs. Around 1800, then, a shift from the classical to the modern episteme takes place within the context of an 'analytic of finitude', in the wake of which the figure of 'Man' (*l'Homme*) is discovered as a transcendental subject that can also be the object of empirical knowledge. In this move from a (static) taxonomic to a historical order of things, a new discourse of historicity and individuality emerges. Foucault speaks of a sudden "mobility of epistemological arrangement" as a radical event that redistributes knowledge across its visible surface.[178] What is taking place here—in contrast to Koselleck's account—is "not so much a new sensitivity to time, to its past, to the density of history, as a way of introducing into the language already imprinted on things, and into the traces it has left, an order of the same type as that which was being established between living creatures."[179]

Arguably, Kant is more important than any other figure appearing in the book, because "the Kantian critique, on the other hand, marks the threshold of our modernity"; by questioning the power of representation to provide its own foundation, origin, and rightful limits, it succeeds in bringing about "the withdrawal of knowledge and thought outside the space of representation."[180] Together with the movement of Criticism, as the nineteenth century will prove, the possibility of another metaphysics is opened up, which will question the source and limit of foundation from the point of view of 'Life,' the 'Will' or the 'Word'—found in the very philosophies that were under consideration in the second chapter of this study (e.g. Nietzsche, Dilthey). Thus, after Kantian critique, there are "metaphysics of that never objectifiable depth from which objects rise up towards our superficial knowledge; and, on the other hand, there are philosophies that set themselves no other task than the observation of precisely that which is given to positive knowledge."[181] Kantian critique thus maps the finitude of the human being as a knowing subject. Beginning with Kant, the infinite is no longer given, and knowledge of the infinite has become impossible: the regulative ideas of 'God,' 'World' and 'Soul' offer some direction to knowledge but are themselves no longer composed of any positive, constitutive knowledge. Whatever knowledge men may now gain about their bodies, labour or language, will confront them solely with their own finitude. This finitude, in turn, generates a new understanding of time, now thinkable as developmental (linear, progressive) history; a new condition of possibility for the existence of progress or degeneration. Against this backdrop, then, modern Man comes to know himself. He now becomes the exclusive object of knowledge, a knowledge that can never be grounded in the idea of God. This is what Nietzsche describes through his concept of the 'death of God': all truth inquiries are directed back to human existence. The figure of Man thus becomes both object and subject of knowledge, i.e. the condition of possibility for this knowledge; he is a "strange empirico-transcendental doublet" in whom knowledge which makes possible all knowledge is gained.

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[178] Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*, 217.

[179] Ibid., 132.

[180] Ibid., 242.

[181] Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*, 245.

Through Kant, then, arises "the problem of the relations between the domain of empiricity and the transcendental foundation of knowledge", sought to be resolved (in Fichte) through a pure, self-grounding reflection or (in Hegel) through the act of revealing.[182] But it continues to subsist in twentieth century thought through, for instance, Husserlian phenomenology. Foucault then notes, in an almost casual turn of phrase, the following:

> "It is probably impossible to give empirical contents transcendental value, or to displace them in the direction of a constituent subjectivity, without giving rise, at least silently, to an anthropology—that is, a mode of thought in which the rightful limitations of acquired knowledge (and consequently of all empirical knowledge) are at the same time the concrete forms of existence, precisely as they are given in that same empirical knowledge."[183]

It is this insight which lies at the heart of the book, whose internal structure is such that the analytic of finitude describes the formal arrangement of this problem, while the figure of Man describes the empirical content of the problem, filling in the empty form of the analytic of finitude with Man's life, labour and language. Foucault has often been reproached for failing to dissolve the anthropological illusion, that is, to find a solution to overcoming the problem in his work,[184] but it is my contention that this criticism is wrong because it is not without reason that *Les mots et les choses* distinguishes between these two concepts. Already in the *Introduction*, Foucault wrote that the aim of the critique of finitude is to demonstrate that "finitude is not an end but rather that camber and knot in time when the end is in fact a beginning".[185] This is, of course, a reference to Nietzsche, signifying the extent to which, according to both thinkers, 'Man' must be removed from the center of the circular structure of knowledge which characterizes the modern age. Accordingly, if the *Übermensch* is that which overcomes itself in a perpetual cycle of the *Ewige Wiederkehr*, then it will always stand as the symbol of the de-centering circle of knowledge to which Foucault aspires.

4.3 THINKING OTHERWISE

As for the formal side of the problematic divide, the analytic of finitude, Foucault seems to admit that there is no way of stepping outside of this circularity except by entering the realm of unreason. This brings us to the major thesis which Foucault defended in 1961 alongside the translation of Kant: *Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique*. In the original Preface to the 1961 edition of this study of madness, Foucault still subscribed to the idea of trying to recapture a "degree zero of the history of madness, when it was undifferentiated experience," but already in the 1964 reprint he suppresses this allusion to a supposedly true origin and original experience.[186] Here unreason turns out be the condition of possibility of reasonable discourse itself, "the possibility of history" itself. Yet this means that madness itself can be "nothing other than *the absence of an oeuvre*."[187] Outside of the circularity of knowledge a silence remains. In the original Preface, Foucault still claimed to have tried to approximate what lies *beneath* the history of the scientific language—or rather the monologue of reason about madness—which has sealed itself off from a shared language with madness itself that once existed: the archaeology of a silence.[188] This statement, too, will be removed from later editions because it contradicts Foucault's later position that archaeology is only done on the basis of what has actually been stated. We are now in a position to grasp why the critical statement that did remain in the Preface was a definition of Foucault's study of madness as "a history of the conditions of possibility of psychology".[189] Foucault wants to speak, and he thus turns the weapon of critique against itself and makes it denounce the figure of Man through the analysis of the 'historical *a priori*' of historical periods. So too, in *Naissance de la clinique. une archéologie du regard médical*, Foucault will write that it is "deliberately both historical and critical, in that it is concerned—outside all prescriptive intent—with determining the conditions of possibility of medical experience in modern times."[190]

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[182] Ibid., 247.

[183] Ibid., 248.

[184] Cf. Béatrice Han, *Foucault's Critical Project. Between the Transcendental and the Historical*, trans. Edward Pile (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 12 ; Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, trans. Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1987), 270.

[185] Michel Foucault, *Introduction to Kant's Anthropology*, 124.

[186] Michel Foucault, *History of Madness*, ed. Jean Khalfa, transl. Jonathan Murphy and Jean Khalfa (London/New York: Routledge, 2006), xxvii.

Despite its enormous length, difficulty and argumentative flaws, Foucault's first historical work received a lot of praise for its boldness and originality. Even Fernand Braudel, leading scholar of the second generation Annales school, gave Foucault's *Histoire* his blessing, complimenting him on his capacity to approach a problem from multiple sides, to continuously operate at the limit of things, and to be many things at the same time (historian, philosopher, psychologist, sociologist, etc.).[191] In one particularly insightful interview dating from this time (entitled "On the Ways of Writing History"), Foucault returned the favour by including the historical research of Braudel among "the works that are making possible a new adventure in knowledge", united by their common engagement with the "problem of periodization".[192] Outlining the set of conditions which have made it possible for him to carry out his own particular line of inquiry, Foucault names periodization first, for having made possible the redistribution of old boundaries—along the lines of political revolutions—and for having introduced a *methodology of discontinuity* to history. By this, Foucault does not mean the analysis of break and ruptures in history but the introduction of a layeredness to the events of the past, in which each level of events calls for a new periodization and *vice versa*. In addition, change can now become the object of a structural analysis, and different types of relations and modes of connection beyond universal causation have become conceivable.

When Foucault provides an outline of the recent set of conditions which enable him to carry out his own particular historical labour he is in effect giving an outline of what Koselleck will consider to be the conditions of possibility of modern history in general. Foucault's reference to twentieth century historians, then, amounts to a repetition of the original conditions which set off modernity between 1750-1850. What is new is that this heritage has now been taken as a whole and become self-aware, which has become possible especially after the ruptural events that occur during the first half of the twentieth century; the first and second World War.

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[187] Michel Foucault, *History of Madness*, xxxi.

[188] Ibid., xxviii.

[189] Ibid., xxxiv.

[190] Michel Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic. An Archaeology of Medical Perception*, trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Vintage Books, 1975), xix.

[191] Didier Eribon, *Michel Foucault* (Amsterdam: Van Gennep, 1989), 141-2.

[192] Michel Foucault, "On the Ways of Writing History," in *Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984. Volume II. Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*, ed. Paul Rabinow and James D. Faubion, trans. Robert Hurley et al (New York: The New Press, 1998), 279-280.

In order not to explicitly commit himself to the transcendental, with all its connotations of being 'pure,' 'above,' 'higher,' 'beyond,'—all these moral and hierarchical qualifications Foucault wants at all times to avoid—Foucault turns instead to an analysis of 'depth,' of an 'archaeology' of the 'sediments' of the past; and later to 'genealogy'. Does this amount to a mere figure of speech or are there methodological implications? What justifies the sedimentary notion in his methodology is Foucault's layered conception of experience, to which the delineation in time of his objects of study corresponds; the layeredness of experience explains the periodisation adopted. From these conditions it becomes possible for individuals to recognize a subject as mentally ill or as a delinquent (*Surveiller et punir. Naissance de la Prison*), according to a set of rules about true and false statements forming discourses about mental illness, delinquency, sexuality (*Histoire de la sexualité*), and so on. These discourses do not place the subject in an environment in which it is already structurally determined, but open onto a "field of experience in which the subject and the object are both constituted only under certain simultaneous conditions, but in which they are constantly modified in relation to each other, and so they modify this field of experience itself."[193]

To conclude: a central theme of Deleuze's *Foucault*, published two years after Foucault's untimely death in 1984, is that of 'thinking otherwise'. As far as Deleuze is concerned, Foucault's task was to show that in the mass of past events there always lies the possibility for seeing, thinking and feeling differently. This was a task appointed to him not in his status as historian or philosopher but as a conglomerate of all the types of scholars operating within the human sciences. Each time, Foucault's writings make possible a reconfiguration of the relations between past, present and future:

> "To think means to be embedded in the present-time stratum that serves as a limit: what can I see and what can I say today? But this involves thinking of the past as it is condensed in the inside, in the relation to oneself (there is a Greek in me, or a Christian, and so on). We will then think the past against the present and resist the latter, not in favour of a return but 'in favour, I hope, of a time to come' (Nietzsche), that is, by making the past active and present to the outside so that something new will finally come about, so that thinking, always, may reach thought. Thought thinks its own history (the past), but in order to free itself from what it thinks (the present) and be able finally to 'think otherwise' (the future)."[194]

One might misread this statement as yielding to the prophetic sense of time (as does Paul Bové in the Introduction), but that would simply obscure what Deleuze is trying to convey here. Namely that, in a relation of oneself with (the past of) oneself—thinking one's own history—one will be able to discern the conditions for thinking otherwise, that is, of thinking the new.

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[193] Michel Foucault, "Foucault," in *Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984. Volume II. Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*, 462.

[194] Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*, 119.

-5-

Temporalizing History: Koselleck, a Timely Historian

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What are the problems that set in motion the work of Reinhart Koselleck and to what extent can his solutions be considered metacritical? As Koselleck explains in the seminal paper "*Über die Theoriebedürftigkeit der Geschichtswissenschaft*" (1972), history has become an "isolated" discipline within the increasingly dehistoricized social sciences and humanities.[195] These have grown overly concerned with the structural and systemic, while the natural sciences have at the same time become more "relativized" and therefore "historical".[196] History thus needs to redefine itself *in relation to* the other disciplines if it is to maintain a place among the academic disciplines at all. But this does not mean that a simple borrowing of methods and practices from sociology would do the trick, as Koselleck's close colleagues at the Bielefelder Schule hold. Koselleck does not just write a social history of political concepts. In spite of the general image of Koselleck's research as an extension of the sociological methods of his colleagues, this crucial point of contrast must be emphasized. The content of history is not sufficient to offer a validation of its existence and specificity. This, after all, historical science shares with all of the other disciplines within the humanities and social sciences. There is really only one crucial subject which can be said to be genuinely inherent to the discipline of history: historical time. To date, however, it has forsaken a proper theorization of this subject. If not the first historian to have understood the centrality of time in the historian's practice, Koselleck certainly was the first to have grasped the necessity of a *theorization* of such a historical time. Paradoxically, this implies that history needs to undertake a double process of formalization—along the lines of the social sciences—and historicization—following the example of the natural sciences—in order for it to secure disciplinary autonomy. How Koselleck comes to this formulate this goal of his research and how he would continue throughout his career to try to achieve it will be the subject matter of this chapter.

5.1 FROM HERMENEUTIC ONTOLOGY TO HISTORICAL EPISTEMOLOGY

Of those that have been of noteworthy influence on Koselleck's thought, his own teachers are the ones usually most emphasized. These include such figures as Martin Heidegger, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Carl Schmitt and Karl Löwith, all regularly included in the traditions of *Historik* and *Hermeneutik* in which Koselleck also consciously situates himself. When he takes Heidegger as a starting point for his argumentation in the well-known essay 'On the Need for Theory in the Discipline of History', this should therefore not come as a surprise. Heidegger's existential analysis of human beings in terms of their possibilities and futures, combined with his conception of "historicity" (*Geschichtlichkeit*) as the ontological precondition of histories, is crucial to Koselleck's own understanding of the hermeneutics of existence.[197] But there are several ways in which he revises these largely self-contained philosophical ideas. Rejecting the eschatological history of Being expounded by Heidegger, Koselleck in fact historicizes his existential anthropology by showing its grounding in a modern historical consciousness. At the same time, he also insists on the insufficiency of the purely ontological category of historicity; a transcendental epistemic category is needed as well. In other words, we need to reflect on the transcendental conditions of possibility for historical accounts; that is, the *trans*-historical or 'universal' conditions of historicity, *not* the *a*-historical.

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[195] Reinhart Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History. Timing History, Spacing Concepts*, trans. T.S. Presner (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 1.

[196] It could certainly be doubted whether this account of the relation between the humanities, social sciences and natural sciences, which was part of a presentation given in 1969 and first published in *Theorie der Geschichtswissenschaft und Praxis des Geschichtsunterrichts* (Stuttgart, 1972), still holds today.

His universalization of the categories is no odd exception within the hermeneutic tradition, as both Heidegger and Gadamer have made maintained similar positions regarding the universality of their existential claims. Thus we can see many aspects of Gadamer's philosophy recur in Koselleck's work, both with approval and with disapproval. Most important of these are the Gadamerian notion of language as the universal horizon of our way of being in the world, as the medium of our engagement with the world through hermeneutic experience; of language itself understood as dialogue and communication; and of practical wisdom or understanding (corresponding to the Aristotelian concept of *phronesis*) on the basis of tradition as central to this dialogic search for meaning. Koselleck too acknowledges the paramount importance of language to us historical beings, and in his work too we can perceive a dependence on notions of dialogue, communication and consensus in this understanding of language. He also takes from him the phenomenological concept of 'horizon' ('*Horizont*'), which denotes both the limitedness and situatedness of hermeneutic understanding as well as the possibilities it brings for moving beyond these limitations (the prospect of a '*Horizontverschmelzung*'), but then precisely to find a way to manage the perspectivism it entails. [198] Regardless of the importance of (political) language and concepts in his research, he is also skeptical of attempts to elevate the linguistics of understanding to such all-pervasive proportions as Gadamer does. In addition, Koselleck was a close reader of Eugenio Coseriu's *Sincronía, diachronía e historia* (1973), which outlines a linguistic theory modeled on de Saussure's synchrony-diachrony distinction. With reference to Aristotle, von Humboldt and Hegel, it adds to this a subjective and historical component, emphasizing linguistic activity (and its historical development) as a creative process participated in by individuals within a specific linguistic community. We can spot clear traces of all of these notions in Koselleck's own writings as well as in the general approach taken by *Begriffsgeschichte* (with colleagues Werner Conze and Otto Brunner). Finally, a sustained and serious engagement with Greek philosophy on the part of both Heidegger and Gadamer, most notably with Plato and Aristotle, may have also contributed to *Begriffsgeschichte*'s interest in the thoughts and ideas of the ancients; an interest lacking in the Cambridge School.

If we, in order not to overstretch the boundaries of this chapter, limit ourselves to the domain of historiography without including the general Continental discourse, any effort to contextualize *Begriffsgeschichte* soon leads us to this influential school, associated with J.G.A. Pocock, Quentin Skinner and John Dunn. Their distinctive brand of political and intellectual history, fixated at early-modern ('classical') republicanism and liberalism (generally including the likes of Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Gibbon), offers a methodological variety of contextualism and historicism whose mode of interpretation aims at the avoidance of anachronism and universalism.[199] It does so by emphasizing social, intellectual and biographical context in its linguistic analyses. Comparisons between the Cambridge School and *Begriffsgeschichte* are not difficult to make: both are principally concerned with the *use* of political language in history.[200] But, as Helge Jordheim notes in a 2012 article entitled "Against Periodization: Koselleck's Theory of Multiple Temporalities", conceptual history complements the synchronic analysis of the concept offered by the Cambridge contextualists with a "diachronic principle" in order to trace its dynamics of meaning across extended stretches of time.[201] Because of this (inevitable) detachment of the concept from its synchronic socio-political context, Skinner has criticized *Begriffsgeschichte* as a "mere history of words" lacking said context.[202] Such criticisms lack all insight into the methodology underlying conceptual history. For what really is Koselleck's concept of the concept? The difference between the word and the concept, he argues, is that the former only contains "potentialities for meaning", leaving signifier and signified separated, but the latter a whole "plenitude of meaning".[203] Within the concept signifier and signified are merged to the extent that 'the diversity of historical reality and historical experience enter a word such that they can receive their meaning only in this one word, or can be grasped only by this word.'[204] Thus, Koselleck might be able to argue against Skinner that invoking a concept inevitably means conjuring up the rich context it is implicated in and which it has taken up within itself. However pragmatic this conception of the concept may be in light of post-structuralist criticism of structural linguistics, it does offer great potential for practitioners of the history of concepts.

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[197] Reinhart Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History*, 2.

[198] Cf. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Mars (London: Continuum, 2004), 305.

5.2 THEORY OF MODERNITY

Koselleck's theories of modernity and of historical time have been fashioned to accommodate a historical legitimation for the existence of history as a distinctive discipline. Perhaps the most important argument John Zammito wants to make in his 2004 review article of Koselleck's *Zeitschichten* is that careful readers of Koselleck 's essays can find in them a new and legitimating narrative of the birth of the historical discipline from the encounter with a new time, a *Neuzeit*. It was this actual discovery of a distinctly *historical* time during the *Sattelzeit* (1750-1850) which paved the way for a philosophy of history and discipline of history (embodied by Chladenius, Gatterer and Herder). During this period, the old *Historie*, with its faith in Cicero's famous expression '*historia magistra vitae*', was replaced with a new faith in *Geschichte*, signifying both reality and representation (thus 'swallowing up' the meaning of the outdated word *Historie*).[205] This fundamental reorientation towards time (*including* past, present and future) occurred on the basis of an unprecedented divergence between expectations and experience. As semantic evidence

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[199] Quentin Skinner, 'Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas', *History and Theory* 8:1 (1969) 3-53.

[200] Keith Tribe, 'Introduction', in: Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past. On the Semantics of Historical Time*, trans. Keith Tribe (Columbia: Columbia University Press, 2004), vii.

[201] Helge Jordheim, 'Against Periodization: Koselleck's Theory of Multiple Temporalities', *History and Theory* 51 (May 2012), 167-168.

[202] As paraphrased by Helge Jordheim, 'Against Periodization: Koselleck's Theory of Multiple Temporalities', 168.

[203] Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past*, 85.

[204] Ibid., 85.

[205] John H. Zammito, "Koselleck's Philosophy of Historical Time(s) and the Practice of History," *History and Theory* 43 (February 2004), 126.

Koselleck cites the heavy increase of compound words relating to time near the end of the eighteenth century, first appearing in an elite context, then slowly but surely disseminating throughout European societies. In order to solve the crisis that had been the direct consequence of what was perceived as the acceleration of time, Enlightenment historians invented the concepts of progress and decline. With these instruments at hand, 19th century *Historismus* could establish the qualitative separation between a past divided into unique epochs and a teleologized present. As a result, truth was made historical, and "history was temporalized".[206] This struggle with the articulation of historical time, the enduring struggle of coming to terms with the tension between experience and expectation in the *Neuzeit*, is precisely what has constituted and continues to define the discipline of history.

Koselleck's response to this thesis of modernity as a "transformation in temporal experience" is aimed at reinstating the *metahistorical* (or transcendental) within the field of history.[207] In demanding a persistent, changeless category within the historical discipline's theoretical realm, he seeks to alleviate the seemingly boundless relativity plaguing the modern historical consciousness. The past requires "rational controls" in order to be dealt with.[208] For this he finds recourse in the well-known anthropological constants of *Erfahrungsraum* and *Erwartungshorizont*. It is precisely through these enduring and interrelated categories that time itself can be "temporalized", thus in another sense continuing the modern project of historicization.[209] But this project is now directed towards uncovering the temporal structures of past, present and future that characterize a "general human condition": a past future, a present past, a future present, etc.[210] According to Zammito, Koselleck makes this move in defiance of a radical perspectivism haunting the disciplinary integrity of history, surrendered to either "claims of rhetoric" (White) or "textual hermeneutics" (Gadamer).[211] History is not merely *Historie*, i.e. the processing of past history through a linguistic reproduction of it. It also refers to *Geschichte*, i.e. the reality and materiality of a history in motion, and the linguistic possibility thereof. The historian's concern should be with both of these activities.

What Koselleck decides to call *Zeitgeschichte*—a term not to be confused with what generally stands for contemporary history in German—can be done in an empirical manner, as the metahistorical structures are at play in each event and in every attempt to account for it. They are the "anthropological preconditions of possible experience", which to him is commensurate with "possible histories": it is only within the active human agent that they are experienced as in tension and thereby generate historical time.[212] Accordingly, history as empirical research could only be a "science of experience", always asking about the "what" and "how" of the *event*; precisely as Foucault also conceives of history, but without the phenomenological perspective on the constitution of experience.[213] As far as identifying the "what" of the event goes, this always occurs—in the words of Zammito—on the basis of "surprising novelty" or, after Thomas Kuhn, "anomaly".[214] Here we find difference and repetition—those indispensable concepts for Deleuze—wrapped into a single movement: the event differs from previous expectations, but only insofar as its repetition is presupposed. After all, we give shape to our *Erfahrungsraum* by sifting events "into patterns of recurrence and repetition".[215] And as a disrupted pattern or *break*, novelty then evokes the question of the 'how' of an event, or, of its conditions of possibility ('how *could* ...?'). Taken together, we thus encounter in these questions the basic structure "of all historical paths of inquiry", effectively ensuring the unity of history as a discipline (and science of experience).[216] The building blocks of our experience of the modern are defined by the acceleration of time. Breaks in experience succeed one another at an ever-increasing rate, imposing on us with ever-more force what Koselleck describes as our defining task: to recognize the "*völlige Andersartigkeit der Vergangenheit*".[217] In keeping with this commitment he designates the activity of periodization as the final objective of historical practice. Theorizing a multilayered historical time will help to identify the metahistorical and historical categories as well as bring them into agreement on the precise content and limits of different epochs and doctrines (as Koselleck has done regarding his careful delineation of a *Neuzeit*).

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[206] Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past*, 250.

[207] John H. Zammito, "Koselleck's Philosophy of Historical Time(s) and the Practice of History", 124.

[208] Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past*, 155.

[209] John H. Zammito, "Koselleck's Philosophy of Historical Time(s) and the Practice of History", 128.

[210] Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past*, 270.

[211] John H. Zammito, "Koselleck's Philosophy of Historical Time(s) and the Practice of History", 132.

[212] Reinhart Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History*, 47.

[213] Ibid., 47.

[214] John H. Zammito, "Koselleck's Philosophy of Historical Time(s) and the Practice of History", 129.

5.3 KOSELLECK'S METACRITIQUE

If we remain faithful to the original structure and aims of Koselleck's deeply interconnected theories of modernity and of historical time, we will find that his *meta*historical approach can be located in a historical tradition that finds its inception in Kant and his early commentators. As with Deleuze and Foucault, Kant also serves a double purpose in the writings of Koselleck. Firstly, he counts as one of the most important historical agents within the theory of modernity, if not *the* crucial subject. To sum up this role we can cite the following section from "Historia Magistra Vitae: The Dissolution of the Topos into the Perspective of a Modernized Historical Process", in which Koselleck writes:

> "After 1789 a new space of expectation was constituted whose perspective was traced out by points referring back to different phases of the past revolution. Kant was the first to foresee this modern system of historical experience when he established a temporally indeterminate, but nevertheless ultimate, goal for the repetition of revolutionary attempts. "Instruction through frequent experience" of failed projects perfects the course of the Revolution."[218]

By setting the *Erwartungshorizont* on an ethical course towards a yet to be designed future, and envisioning history as a "temporalized house of correction for morality", Kant was the pivotal author of the transformation of experience that took place during the *Sattelzeit*.[219] But it would be too easy to argue that Kant simply *has* to be included in any theory of modernity or historical time. He clearly bears a deeper significance for Koselleck's ideas. Even his language is, in a lot of ways, Kantian as well.

Regarding the intellectual significance of Kant, we can find several clues throughout the writings pointing towards such an influence. Koselleck traces the conditions of possibility for history in its modern form back to the end of the eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century, when for the first time, "a demand for historically immanent temporal criteria" was introduced by Kant (a demand Koselleck repeats), followed by the insight into the temporal structure of historical processes themselves.[220] At this point Koselleck inserts a direct quotation from Herder's *Metakritik*:

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[215] Ibid., 129.

[216] Reinhart Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History*, 60-61.

[217] John H. Zammito, "Koselleck's Philosophy of Historical Time(s) and the Practice of History", 133.

[218] Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past*, 41.

[219] Ibid., 198.

> "The uncovering or discovery of such subjective historical times is itself a product of modernity. In Germany, Herder was the first to define this, in his metacritique of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. Instead of seeing time only as a formal, a priori condition of all phenomena, a condition of inner intuition. Herder pointed toward the plurality of concrete carriers of action. "Properly speaking, any changeable object contains the measure of its time within itself; it exists even if there were no other one; no two things in the world share the same measure of time . . . . At one time, there exist (one can say it truly and boldly) countlessly many times in the universe." "[221]

Koselleck recognizes in Herder's *Metakritik* of Kant the condition of possibility of an investigation of historical events on the basis of their own measure of time: "the unique point of time, for a specific temporal period, or for periods of different duration."[222] He thus essentially recognizes in him a precursor of his own historical labour. From this serious engagement with both Kant and Herder, Koselleck takes up many of his own notions about historical time, which could be characterized as another chapter in the long tradition of metacritique since Herder. In fact, it is precisely the attempt to combine the thinking of both philosophers which seems to characterize Koselleck's own efforts as historian and theoretician. All chapters that together make up the history of metacritique are in a profound sense engaged in a conversation with or critical interrogation of the Kantian model, and therefore also indebted to its reconfiguration of the relation between the transcendental and the empirical as achieving a synthesis in the historical subject, that is, the subject with a history. The relationships among the universal and the particular make up one element of this problematic: others are the one and the many, the sensible and the conceptual, and essence and existences; in other words, the whole of metaphysics.

The way in which Koselleck rephrases Kant's famous declaration in the *Kritik der Reinen Vernunft* attests to the double role he performs in his work, as it is as much a definition of the project of Enlightenment historiography as of Koselleck's own distinctive undertaking: "so far history had followed chronology: and now it was necessary that chronology should follow history."[223] In other words, Koselleck sees his own work as an essential continuation of the modern emancipatory project of critique.[224] Accordingly, he aligns his conception of historical science with Kant's concept of *Erfahrungswissenschaft*, or the empirico-psychological 'science of experience' that was named earlier. This science builds upon the crucial hypothesis that according to the transcendental logic (with which it is synonymous), forms of experiential or empirical thought actually constitute the epistemological conditions of possibility for experience. Moreover, its corresponding categories ('experience', i.e. *Erfahrungsraum*; and 'expectation', i.e. *Erwartungshorizont*) are aligned with Kant's *a priori* categories: they possess at one and the same time the "highest degree of generality" as well as an "indispensable application" by the active human agent. Thus, "they resemble, as historical categories, those of time and space", obeying the Kantian demand for "historically immanent temporal criteria" based on experience and derived from a historicized transcendental logic.[225]

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[220] Ibid., 236.

[221] Reinhart Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History*, 111.

[222] Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past*, 237.

[223] Reinhart Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History*, 199.

[224] It is worth noting that Koselleck wrote extensively about the concept of emancipation, recognizing its historical value as well as future potential precisely because of its temporal ambiguity or multilayeredness, in the essay "The Limits of Emancipation: A Conceptual-Historical Sketch", where he writes: "In other words, the equal rights of all humans on this earth are more than a theoretical pregiven or a utopian goal: they are the minimum that must be preserved from the traditional concept of emancipation in order to make it possible to remain politically and rationally capable of acting." ; Reinhart Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History*, 264.

In a paper entitled "The Unknown Future and the Art of Prognosis", Koselleck will write that "[e]ven if concrete history remains unique in each case, there are different layers of the tempos of change that we must theoretically distinguish in order to be able to measure uniqueness and persistence with regard to each other."[226] Koselleck thus points out, in metacritical fashion, that some important distinctions *must* be made: first, between history as consisting of singular, unique events ("history is always new and replete with surprise"), and history as obeying to certain enduring conditions and persistent structures ("history is never entirely new").[227] In other words, we need to separate 'concrete' history from its conditions of possibility, those anthropological constants, in order to become aware of differences in tempo of change. Second, it follows from these differences that historical change consists of multiple layers which need to be isolated and then reassembled in order to be made calculable.

Here Koselleck ventures close to Annales historian Fernand Braudel, but while the content of Braudel's famous layered historical structure is determined beforehand (going from the geographical *longue durée* to the economical conjuncture to the socio-political event), Koselleck wants to give his theory of historical time a much more *formal* or nomothetic character. Given that concrete histories are unique, the making of prognoses can only be done on the basis of there being formal structures present in history, and it is these formalities which Koselleck seeks to establish. In doing so, he continues on the critical Kantian path towards final limits and essential anthropology, precisely the path which Deleuze and Foucault sought to depart from in their metacritique: "the emphasis on the human agent makes available anthropological and, to this extent, metahistorical categories that define the conditions of possibility for history."[228] In this way only, Koselleck manages to return the nomothetic to history whilst preserving the idiographic concerns of the historian.

The art of predicting future events by historical agents (the prospect of success or loss, for instance) depends on the multilayeredness of historical experience. Koselleck insists that investigating such *geschichtliche Zeitschichten* will enable us "to bring prognostics out of the frame of reference of pure anthropology or even beyond the psychology of particular agents. (...) The objectivizable criteria are contained in the vertical temporal gradation that was invoked as an argument for the prognosis."[229] He continues to distinguish between three temporal layers, namely 1) the plane of 'short-term succession' (of the personal and everyday action), 2) the plane of 'middle-term trends' (of the transpersonal constraint), and 3) the plane of 'metahistorical duration' (of the near-timeless anthropological constant).[230] Thus emerges again a close proximity to Braudel.

Koselleck, in short, seeks to separate from the contingent flux of our present its enduring conditions of possibility. For him this present may be, ontologically speaking, but a moment in time, but on a transcendental level it takes up within itself the space of experience and horizon of expectation, and is therefore always diachronically connected to a multiplicity of other moments in historical time which are beyond its borders. Each investigation of past language necessarily leads back to the present: thus dictates the coming to signification of meaning in history. While the value of Koselleck's work for the future study of historical methods and practices and their persistent engagement with time is obvious, we must, however, end this chapter on a critical note concerning the danger of anthropocentrism. In Koselleck we are able to observe a self-grounding movement. The historical categories must show their own ground in the history they simultaneously enable, i.e. the theoretical foundation of the historical is itself already fully historicized. Koselleck's model thus offers a circular structure, it is in essence an *anthropology* in the way Kant and Foucault understand it to be (not the sense in which Koselleck himself makes use of the term). Insofar as it is grounded in and directed towards a human condition it therefore appears untenable on the basis of our reading of Foucault's theme of the anthropological illusion.

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[225] Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past*, 269, 236.

[226] Reinhart Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History*, 135.

[227] Ibid., 135.

[228] Ibid., 133.

[229] Reinhart Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History*, 143.

[230] Ibid., 144.

The main ambition of this study was to show that, on a meta-level, history and philosophy in the modern era actually deal with the same fundamental problematic, namely that of the status of the transcendental and the empirical and their interrelation. The thoughts and events whose emergence and development have been traced in this study were divided into two main parts. The first of these parts related the rise of Kantian critique and its creation of the concept pair transcendental-empirical, followed by the response to this problematic in Kant's contemporaries. The effects of this initial period—1780-1800—are then pursued throughout nineteenth and twentieth century discourses limited to the disciplines of history and philosophy. It would be wrong, however, to speak in this respect of successive phases. In line with the kinds of concepts encountered in the recent scholars under analysis (e.g. layers, folds, doubling, strata), a much better way of speaking about the history of metacritique would be to refer to its core sections as moments of doubling or folding. During the first part, then, following Kant's initial 'unfolding,' a *first folding* occurs with Hamann, Maimon, Herder and Jacobi, in light of which the nineteenth century can be regarded as an adaptation of the argumentative lines elaborated in the grounding period 1780-1800. During the second part a *second folding* of metacritique takes place when, in Deleuze, Foucault and Koselleck, the becoming aware of a whole tradition and its consequent historicization and problematization effectively takes place. We know that the nineteenth century, for all its creative spirit and diversity, could never lay claim to this honour because it still belongs to that history which during the twentieth century will be taken in its entirety and be made a problematic object of study. This century, too, currently lies behind us. The task that awaits us now, is to draw out the various consequences of the work of the twentieth century's pivotal scholars and to seek a creative and critical engagement with it. After having succeeded in carrying out the preliminary work of description and elaboration to the very end—which would require the inclusion of the 1900–1950 period that had to be omitted in this study, leaving an odd gap in its genealogy of problematics—a *third* folding will perhaps be made possible. The answer to that strange third question posed during the introduction, then, was always already present in this history as the potential difference within its ever-ongoing movement of repetition.

As this genealogy has shown, however, such historical change will not take place unless it becomes necessary within the context of disciplinary struggle. From a long-term perspective it seems clear that, until the 1790s, the overriding concern with the religious and societal implications of scientific discovery constituted the driving force behind the history of the humanities and the natural sciences. During the nineteenth century, however, new problems overtake this age-old concern as the struggle for existence, for the right to exist and persist as a discipline amongst a multitude of other disciplines, and as a science next to a host of other sciences, becomes the new driving force behind the history of the humanities. Perhaps the current state of affairs in the human sciences is not so far removed from what we have been able to observe during the nineteenth century. Naturalism and positivism have permeated the human sciences so deeply they are hardly capable anymore of thinking on their own terms. Their new question has become one of fundamental doubt: If such terms exist at all, then what are they? If the natural sciences are the empirical sciences *par excellence*, then the human sciences might well lay claim to being the *transcendental sciences*, provided we no longer grasp the sense of this term in the original Kantian sense, but seek to endow it with a newfound significance brought to light in the modern heirs to that age old *aporia*, who have succeeded in revivifying the concept according to the new conditions and problems facing their type of science today. Only then can we avoid having to answer the second question posed during the introduction with a resounding '*no*.' For, if not 'Man,'—what matters is the avoidance of anthropocentrism—a subject will always remain part of the epistemological arrangement. All knowledge involves a relation between subject and object, but the challenge, perhaps, is to consider knowledge from the point of view of relationality rather than the end points of the relationship. Locating the ground in either subject or object, one risks totalizing a single side of the equation. Rather, *the relation itself* must ground the activity of knowledge as emergent process, as a dynamic and complex movement of learning. Thus we are reminded of the first principle of a new empiricism as introduced by Deleuze in *Empirisme et subjectivité*, namely that 'relations are external to their terms.' Hence why, in the exploration of this field, a transcendental empiricism is needed. That is perhaps why the work of Deleuze currently appears to hold the most promise for the future of the humanities. Deleuze offers us a *non-methodological ground* of the human sciences—the prey Dilthey had spent his career pursuing—through his elaboration of the transcendental structure of learning which, in its scholarly alliance with the art of problematics, recognizes a self-renewing engagement with the problem as itself the 'solution.' If the holistic movement of learning is indeed what separates the human sciences (with their overriding concern for 'becoming') from the natural sciences (with their overriding concern for 'being'), further theorization of this pedagogical structure is needed.

To that end, however, we must end on a final critical note. A shared discourse across the various disciplines of the arts and humanities nowadays concerns the value and durability of the method of critique. A growing number of humanities scholars have expressed their discontent with the overall dependence on and pervasiveness of the critical approaches taken towards virtually all subject matters.[231] Now, there is a certain truth to this proposition. For example, when a denunciation of Ranke's famous quote suffices to not have to question the extent to which the structure of the current historical discipline still resembles that of his age; or when an outright rejection of Nietzsche's more provocative statements is enough not to have to face the deep and disturbing problems his philosophy raises. Of course there are more pertinent examples to give. But does all this half-witted criticism not amount to a certain betrayal of the spirit of critique, for doing a lousy job at it? Therefore, however admirable such a call for a renewal of the creative and dedicated spirit may be, the generalized weariness of critical methods to which it gives expression actually poses a considerable threat to the future existence of the humanities insofar as it leans towards a kind of nihilistic ethos that had already found expression in (the formulation of) Jacobi and (the adaptation of) Nietzsche; e.g. from now on, all is permitted. If anything is guaranteed to shatter the already weakening position of the field in the face of the overwhelming self-confidence of the natural sciences—as practically synonymous with science as such, both in the public and governmental eye—this certainly has the potential to do so. However, a historian could also remind these scholars of their lineage, and the extent to which their fatigue, as a reflexive yet unreflective critique *of* critique, is simply the annunciation of another chapter in the two-hundred year old history of metacritique.

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[231] Cf. Bruno Latour, "Why Has Critique Run out of Steam? From Matters of Fact to Matters of Concern," *Critical Inquiry* 30 (2004) 225-248 ; "Interview with Karen Barad," in: Rick Dolphijn and Iris van der Tuin, *New Materialism: Interviews & Cartographies* (Ann Arbor: Open Humanities Press, 2012), 49-53.

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