

sought to materialize what was in essence immaterial, to spatialize – i.e., locate in “outer sense” – what was accessible only in time – i.e., in “inner sense” (SOS, 12:32/CEAHE:223). Thus, Kant dismissed *any* “transcendental” aspect of Soemmerring’s project. Instead, he asserted the authority of the “critique of pure reason” to adjudicate the proper boundaries between empirical research and a priori knowledge (SOS, 12:31/CEAHE:222).

Then, however, Kant turned the tables, offering to supplement and confirm the strictly *physiological* elements in Soemmerring’s study. If the latter had no warrant to meddle in metaphysics, Kant presumed the warrant, as “someone not unacquainted with natural science,” to resolve the core issue that had led Soemmerring to his misguided appeal to “transcendental physiology,” namely, could a fluid be “organized” or “animated”? Kant proposed to offer a *natural-scientific hypothesis* (not an a priori metaphysical one) to answer this question. He proposed that the fluid in the cerebral cavity – which he took to be mere water – could not be in itself organized, because that required a stable purposive structure that was not consistent with the physics of liquids. However, he suggested that water need not be understood merely “mechanically” as extended mass, but that it could also be understood “dynamically” – in terms not only of recent “anti-phlogistic chemistry” that had analyzed it into its two component gases, but also of the various theories of ethereal forces (e.g., light, heat, electricity, etc.). Thus, the seeming homogeneity of the fluid could accommodate all sorts of alterations of *qualitative* state, i.e., could be transiently “organized” by the interjection of outside forces, yet retain its overall consistency on the whole, and return to its prior state when the stimulation dissipated. Were one to consider that these stimulations might be differentiated by the originating nerve-ending stimulus, then this fluid could harbor and transmit, and in this sense aggregate and integrate, nervous impulses and sense data, thus serving as a *sensorium commune* in a strictly material, physiological sense. It could then serve as a material substrate for the synthesis of intuitive consciousness. But this would not be a literal materialization or localization of the soul (*anima*), but only a *virtual* context for consideration by consciousness (*animus*), with no metaphysical stipulations about substance or interaction (SOS, 12:32–5/CEAHE:223–5).

Related terms: Matter, Metaphysics, Substance

John Zammito

“On a Recently Prominent Tone of Superiority in Philosophy” (RPT, Ak. 8:387–406 / Cambridge Edition, *Theoretical Philosophy after 1781*, pp. 425–45) (*Von einem neuerdings erhobenen vornehmen Ton in der Philosophie*) The late polemical essay “On a Recently Prominent Tone of Superiority in Philosophy” (RPT) was published in the *Berlinische Monatsschrift* of May 1796. It was, in the first instance, directed at J. G. Schlosser’s book, *Platos Briefe nebst einer historischen Einleitung und Anmerkungen* (Königsberg: Friedrich Nikolovius, 1795), in particular against some of the notes that the philosophical dilettante Schlosser appended to his translation of Plato’s apocryphal letters. Schlosser, a former civil servant, was someone who combined a renewed interest in Platonism, which was widespread at the time, with Christian-sentimentalist fanaticism (*Schwärmerei*) (see **Fanaticism**). For this he was not only held up to ridicule by prominent figures such as Schiller and Goethe, his own brother-in-law, but also criticized by Kant, who was not naturally inclined to become embroiled in public disputes or to react to minor critics’ work. In general loath to respond to published critiques of his own work – two well-known exceptions were his response to the charge of Berkeleianism, published in the *Prolegomena* (1783), and his response to Eberhard, published in 1790 as a separate essay (OD, 8:187–251 [1790]/CETP81:271–336) – Kant brought himself to

write a rather measured follow-up essay to Schlosser's prickly reply to RPT, in which the latter made his displeasure with Kant's tract amply clear. This follow-up piece is Kant's essay "Proclamation of the Imminent Conclusion of a Treaty of Perpetual Peace in Philosophy" (PP, 8:413–22 [1796]/CETP81:451–60).

With RPT, Kant takes the opportunity to stage the Critical philosophy as a bulwark against what he calls "philosophiz[ing] through feeling" (RPT, 8:401/CETP81:441) by elucidating its main planks in a (for him) uncommonly acerbic fashion. RPT is surely one of Kant's rhetorically sharpest pieces. It is an unjustly neglected metaphilosophical tract against amateur philosophy by commoners (*die Rotüre*; cf. Schiller's disparaging poem in the *Xenien*) in general and pseudophilosophical affectation in particular, while it expounds the focal points of both Kant's theoretical and practical philosophy in splendidly condensed form. Kant frames the central Critical tenets in terms of opposites, contrasting it with Schlosser's fanaticism, in particular, but generally differentiating the Critical philosophy from all types of pseudophilosophy and obscurantism. The Critical philosophy is *exoteric* versus the esotericism that Schlosser's pseudo-Platonism espouses, which restricts philosophical insight to initiates; it is *academic* (scholarly, *schulmäßig*) rather than oracular (*geniemäßig*), as is Schlosser's manner of thinking (RPT, 8:390/CETP81:432); it is based on *regressive analysis*, rather than proceeding on the assumption of direct insight into supersensible facts or grounds; the Critical philosophy is *methodical*, unlike the undisciplined, purely rhetorical style of Schlosser; and Kant's thought is *critical* precisely because it is self-reflexively *modest* in contrast to the unreflecting speculative and presumptuous grandstanding of pseudophilosophical fanaticism, which offends against common sense.

As early as the mid 1780s, in the context of the Spinozism debate, Kant argued that if we abandon the maxim that "reason alone can command validity for everyone," and declare ourselves as it were liberated from the constraints of reason, "a confusion of language must soon arise," resulting in fanaticism (*Schwärmerei*) – where "each one ... follows his own inspiration" – and eventually "the complete subjection of reason to facts, i.e. *superstition*" (OOT, 8:145 [1786]/CERRT:17) (on fanaticism, see further OFBS, 2:251, especially 251n. [1764]/CEAHE:58; EMH, 2:267 [1764]/CEAHE:73; DSS, 2:348, 365 [1766]/CETP70:335–6, 351; CPJ, 5:275 [1790]/CECPJ:157). This is precisely the issue in RPT. Schlosser's spurious reasoning *against* the allegedly arbitrary formality of reason (RPT, 8:404/CETP81:443–4) is exposed by Kant, since such speculation presupposes the fanatic's own putative inspiration facilitated by what Kant calls an "intellectual intuition," which for human beings is however impossible. This latter form of cognition is to be contrasted with the only possible human form of cognition, which is strictly discursive and relies on intersubjectively available empirical evidence, and thus "command[s] validity for everyone." The necessary forms that characterize discursive cognition are therefore not pedantic or arbitrary at all, as Schlosser would have us believe (cf. RPT, 8:404/CETP81:443–4), for they stipulate the constraints of humanly *possible* knowledge. To argue otherwise is pure conjecture and obscurantism.

Kant associates human discursive knowledge with an academic, Aristotelian type of philosophy, which expends "much labor on analyzing and again compounding its concepts according to principles," which involves "toil[ing] up many steps to make advances in knowledge" (RPT, 8:389/CETP81:431). This contrasts with the type of philosophy that, like a *certain* Plato that motivated mystagogues like Schlosser – "Plato the letter-writer," rather than "Plato the academic" (RPT, 8:398/CETP81:438) – relies on intellectual

intuition, whereby “we can dispense with all experience” and instead directly “draw ... the harmony of things out of their supersensible principle” (CPJ, 5:363/CECPJ:236). Interestingly, to make the contrast even starker, Kant contemplates the possibility of seeing Plato *the academic* as rather espousing a proto-Critical conception of the synthetic a priori (RPT, 8:391/CETP81:432–3). Kant thus pits “the Herculean labor” of rigorous, academic philosophy against the immediate intuition of exalted or fanatical modes of thinking that purport to be exempt from labor in order to puff up their claims to any putative hidden knowledge (RPT, 8:390/CETP81:432).

Kant draws a parallel between this distinction and the respective tones of philosophical speech, thus explaining the title of the essay. The fanatic speaks exaltedly in “the tone of a commander who is exempt from the onus of proving his title to possession” of knowledge (RPT, 8:395/CETP81:436), and in this way actually “detun[es] ... heads into exaltation [*Schwärmerei*]” (RPT, 8:398/CETP81:438, translation emended). By contrast, a proper philosopher should rather moderate his voice and speak with a “measured and modest tone” (*Ton der Mäßigung und Bescheidenheit*) (A624/B652 [1781/7] = CECPR:580, translation emended; cf. RPT, 8:403/CETP81:443; A744/B772 = CECPR:646; A749/B777 = CECPR:648). It is Kant’s central claim that only discursive reason can satisfy this demand of proportionality; only what provably conforms to the form of reason as determinate ground, regardless of whether it concerns an act of cognition or a moral act, can be determined as objectively valid (in the practical as well as theoretical senses; cf. RPT, 8:403/CETP81:442–3). Crucially, this form of reason is directly proportional to the discursive nature of our intellect, a symmetry reflected in the moderate tone used to express it.

Related terms: “Proclamation of the Imminent Conclusion of a Treaty of Perpetual Peace in Philosophy,” Cognition, Common sense, Critique, Fanaticism, Feeling, Intuition, Knowledge, Reason
Dennis Schulting

“Proclamation of the Imminent Conclusion of a Treaty of Perpetual Peace in Philosophy” (PP, Ak. 8:411–22 / Cambridge Edition, *Theoretical Philosophy after 1781*, pp. 451–60) (*Verkündigung des nahen Abschlusses eines Tractats zum ewigen Frieden in der Philosophie*) Kant wrote the “Proclamation” to apply to philosophy the same question about the possibility of perpetual peace that he had applied to politics in his treatise from the year before, *Toward Perpetual Peace* (1795). “Proclamation” was published alongside “On a Recently Prominent Tone of Superiority in Philosophy” (1796); both essays register Kant’s opposition to Johann Georg Schlosser, who argued for a type of Christianized Neoplatonism that prioritized an elitist model of philosophically refined feeling and intuition over a more democratic reason as essential for understanding the highest realities.

Kant begins the “Proclamation” by analyzing “the Physical Causes of Man’s Philosophy,” describing the deep human “drive” to use the power of self-consciousness first to philosophize and then to engage one’s own philosophy in argument, even “open warfare,” with those of other philosophers. Such a drive Kant accepts as “one of the beneficent and wise arrangements of Nature” because it prevents the degeneration of life and has the effect of exercising and preserving “the health (*status salubritatis*) of reason” (PP, 8:414 [1796]/CETP81:453–4). Nevertheless, encroaching “quackery” could upset this health of reason, which is always delicately balanced; reason thus at times needs philosophy to be “therapeutically” administered