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WHAT ENLIGHTENMENT WAS: HOW MOSES MENDELSSOHN AND IMMANUEL KANT ANSWERED THE *BERLINISCHE MONATSSCHRIFT**

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A Question and Some Answers

In December 1783 the *Berlinische Monatsschrift* published an article by the theologian and educational reformer Johann Friedrich Zöllner on the advisability of purely civil marriage ceremonies. Noting the journal's frequent use of the terms “*aufklären*”, “*aufgeklärte*” and “*Aufklärung*”, he asked in a footnote:

What is enlightenment? This question, which is almost as important as what is truth, should indeed be answered before one begins enlightening! And still have I never found it answered!¹

Few footnotes have made such a mark on the history of philosophy. For the next decade a discussion of the nature and limits of enlightenment filled the pages of German literary and scholarly journals.²

Immanuel Kant's response is by far the most famous. But, as Kant himself noted, the *Berlinische Monatsschrift* had already published Moses Mendelssohn's answer to the question before he had the chance to submit his response.³

I have not seen this journal, otherwise I should have held back the above reflections. I let them stand only as a means of finding out by comparison how far the thoughts of two individuals may coincide by chance.⁴

There is no record of what Kant thought of Mendelssohn's essay, nor — aside from a brief unpublished note⁵ — do we know much about Mendelssohn's response to Kant's answer. Subsequent discussions of the question paid little attention to these first two contributions and few scholars since have taken up Kant's suggestion and compared his response to Mendelssohn's.⁶ That rather simple assignment is the task of this paper, which will argue that the most significant point to emerge from the comparison is the remarkable *lack* of agreement between the two responses.

The Terms of the Debate

It is doubtful that Zöllner was as confused about the meaning of “*Aufklärung*” as his article implied. Like Mendelssohn, Zöllner was a member of the *Mittwochsgesellschaft*, a secret society of “Friends of the Enlightenment” closely linked to the *Berlinische Monatsschrift*.⁷ On December 17, 1783 — the month of Zöllner’s request for a definition — J. K. W. Möhsen read a paper to the society on the question “What is to be done towards the Enlightenment of Fellow Citizens?” which urged that members determine “what is Enlightenment?”⁸ Discussion of the topic continued through the next April, with Mendelssohn delivering a lecture — which formed the basis of his subsequent article in the *Berlinische Monatsschrift* — the next May.⁹ Zöllner’s footnote was thus less a testimony to his ignorance of the term than to the intense interest in the question within the *Mittwochsgesellschaft*.

Zöllner’s feigned confusion about the meaning of the word “*Aufklärung*” was largely a rhetorical gesture, but it did point to a peculiarity of linguistic usage which served as Mendelssohn’s point of departure:

The words “enlightenment”, “culture” [*Kultur*], and “education” [*Bildung*] are newcomers to our language. They currently belong only to literary discourse.

The masses scarcely understand them.¹⁰

While it was only in the decade preceding Mendelssohn’s essay that word “*Aufklärung*” entered into widespread usage in literary journals and moral weeklies, it had a lengthy and distinguished pedigree.¹¹ Metaphors of light and of illumination are, of course, ubiquitous in Western philosophy and theology, and had also played an important role in Pietism, where “*Erleuchtung*” was associated with process of conversion and spiritual rebirth.¹² The word “*Aufklärung*” itself, however, initially invoked rather different associations. In Kaspar Stieler’s *Teutscher Sprachschatz* (1691) it is synonymous with “*Ausklärung*”— a change of weather conditions — although Stieler subsequently used the word metaphorically as a “clearing of the understanding”, as well as a “clearing of the weather”.¹³ Use of the adjectival form “*aufgeklärt*” to describe a return to consciousness after sleep or illness had become widespread by the middle of the eighteenth century. In the first half of the eighteenth century “*aufklären*” along with “*ausklären*” and “*erleuchten*” was used to translate the English “enlighten” and French “*éclairer*”.¹⁴ By the 1760s reviews

of theological literature in Nicolai's *Allgemeine Deutsche Bibliothek* employed "Aufklärung" to refer to the clarification of concepts and axioms.¹⁵ As early as 1741, the Hamburg *Stats- und Gelehrte Zeitung* stated that efforts to make science more accessible meant that "our time could be called an enlightened time [*unsere Zeit aufgeklärte Zeiten nennen können*]", while in 1770 Wieland contrasted the "level of enlightenment [*Grade der Aufklärung*]" of the ancient Egyptians to subsequent peoples.¹⁶ By the 1780s, the term *Aufklärung* had thus come to be used as a way of characterizing a culture or an epoch, including, of course, the present one: in his writings prior to his 1784 essay in response to Zöllner's question, Kant described his own time as an "age of critique", "a thinking age", and an "enlightened age".¹⁷

Since clear conventions of usage have not been established for the terms "Aufklärung", "Kultur" and "Bildung", Mendelssohn felt free to propose his own.¹⁸ All three terms, he stated, denoted "modifications of social life, the consequences of the industry and the efforts of mankind to better its social conditions".¹⁹ Of the three the most fundamental was "Bildung" — a term which defies easy translation and can be rendered as "culture" or "education" — and *Aufklärung* can only be understood as one aspect of it.²⁰ *Aufklärung* is the "theoretical" side of the process of *Bildung*, involving a "rational reflection on the things of human life". *Kultur*, in contrast, is concerned with such "practical" matters as "goodness, refinement, and beauty in handmade arts and social mores".²¹ Summarizing the distinction for a friend, he wrote, "Enlightenment is concerned with the theoretical, with knowledge, with the elimination of prejudices; culture is concerned with morality, sociality, art, with doing and not doing".²²

Nothing assures that *Aufklärung* and *Kultur* will proceed apace and there is always a danger of a one-sided development of *Bildung*. Mendelssohn suggested that Nünbergers and Frenchmen are more "cultured" than "enlightened", while Berliners and Englishmen are more "enlightened" than "cultured". He could think of only one case where a harmony between *Aufklärung* and *Kultur* had been achieved: the ancient Greeks.²³ In those cases where there is an imbalance between *Aufklärung* and *Kultur*, they become susceptible to corruption and misuse. A one-sided development of *Kultur* produces "arrogance, hypocrisy, effeminacy, superstition, and slavery," while a dominance of *Aufklärung* results in a weakening of "moral sentiments" and a tendency towards "obtuseness, egoism, irreligion, and anarchy".²⁴ Thus, while enlightenment could remove prejudices, it could not create morality — that, in Mendelssohn's view, was the re-

sponsibility of culture. To pursue Enlightenment without considering its impact on culture was to fall into the error of the French *philosophes*, who engaged in witty chatter and a shallow civility, but failed to improve the well-being or the morality of their people.²⁵

The Destiny of Man

Near the start of the essay, Mendelssohn states, “I set, at all times, the destiny of man [*Bestimmung des Menschen*] as the measure and goal of all our striving and efforts, as a point on which we must set our eyes if we do not wish to lose ourselves”.²⁶ The more a people is brought, through art and industry, into harmony with this destiny, the more “*Bildung*” this people possesses.²⁷ It is the goal towards which culture and Enlightenment strive, and if it is ever forgotten, both will fall into corruption.

Mendelssohn had taken the term “destiny of man” from Johann Joachim Spalding’s 1748 book *Bestimmung des Menschen*.²⁸ Spalding was a noted theologian and a member of the *Mittwochsgesellschaft* and his book was one of the more successful products of Enlightenment theology.²⁹ Through a series of meditations on the questions “why do I exist” and “what should I do”, the book sought to frame a fundamental rule by which to guide one’s life. The first possibility considered was that of a life devoted to the satisfaction of physical drives, a possibility quickly dismissed as offering no permanent satisfaction. Spalding next weighed the possibility of a life devoted to a more refined desire, that associated with aesthetic experience. But such a life takes no consideration of my relationship to others, and it too is rejected. The first serious contender as a possible destiny for man is a life devoted to the pursuit of virtue, which Spalding saw as arising from man’s natural disposition to work for the common good. The pursuit of this end leads to the recognition that there is an even greater goal for which man is destined: immortality in the kingdom of God.³⁰ For Spalding our “natural” ability to judge matters of right and wrong is, in fact, the “voice of God, the voice of eternal truth, which speaks in me”.³¹ This voice impels us to act to bring about a state of happiness which, because of the contingencies of human existence, can never be achieved on Earth. But this very failure implies the promise of a future life wherein “my constrained and beclouded soul will be given so much more light and freedom that I will be assured of a complete Enlightenment of all the obscure parts of the plan by which the world is ruled”.³²

Much in Spalding's book appealed to Mendelssohn, and one of his favorite mottos was "Destiny of Man: To search for truth, to love the beautiful, to will the good, to do the best".³³ In January 1764, Mendelssohn's friend Thomas Abbt suggested that he and Mendelssohn debate the merits of Spalding's book, whose arguments remained for Abbt "shrouded in mystery".³⁴ Abbt, who had gained early fame with his patriotic treatise *On Death for the Fatherland*, had studied philosophy, mathematics, and theology at Halle and was influenced both by the prevailing currents in rationalist Biblical criticism and by the more historically-minded works of his friend Justus Möser. Abbt's objections to Spalding — which were published, along with Mendelssohn's defense, in Nicolai's *Briefe, die neueste Litteratur betreffend* in June and July of 1764³⁵ — were precisely the sort of questions one would expect a more empiricist and historicist reader to raise against Spalding's rationalist reconstruction of Christian faith. What sort of knowledge, he asked, would be necessary to cast light on the problem of human destiny? Spalding had undertaken an introspective approach, examining his own concepts, and seeking to clarify what they implied. Abbt, however, countered that what was necessary was an historical study of customs and mores, and argued that such a study would show that — far from being a universal "destiny" of mankind — the goals Spalding ascribed to the human race were the particular products of a refined, eighteenth-century intelligence.³⁶

These methodological objections were joined to a strange story — alleged by Abbt to have been taken from a sixteenth-century chronicle of a military expedition. A prince brings his troops into a foreign country for a purpose which remains obscure to all involved in the operation. The progress of the regiment is halted, temporary quarters are set up, and the men wait. Time passes and the soldiers amuse themselves with various frivolous pastimes. Some disappear in the middle of night, and discussion rages as to what might have happened to them. Were they called away as part of a secret plan? Had they finished their assignment? Was their release a reward for good conduct? Could those who claimed to have received letters from them be trusted? And what of the officers, who remained ever alert for orders but who never received any? Were they being punished for previous offenses? This, Abbt suggested, was the true destiny of man: an unhappy waiting, in "darkness and uncertainty", for commands which never come.³⁷

Abbt argued that the progress of Spalding's meditations from physical desire to a knowledge of God was driven, not by inclinations inherent in man, but rather by the force of Spalding's own rhetoric.

The argument of *Die Bestimmung des Menschen* presupposed what it set out to prove. The “inclinations” which it alleged to uncover were not the natural foundations of morality and religion, but were rather the consequences of reflection and teaching. There is no reason why a primitive people could not find a life devoted to sensual pursuits completely satisfying, and no reason why an inclination to avoid harming other creatures should ever be broadened into a universal love of mankind. Nor, finally, was there any necessary development leading from rudimentary rules of morality to a vision of the place of man in a divine plan. Like the marching orders of the lost regiment, the beginning and end of life were “shrouded with clouds”. But — and this was consolation enough for Abbt — there was “just enough light” for men to walk the path in between.³⁸

Mendelssohn’s defense of Spalding’s book did little to answer these criticisms. He argued that the “destiny of man” is revealed both through “reason and experience” and that to learn his destiny man must ask both what he “should be” and what he “is”. One can consider the “the wild and the civilized, king, beggar, the worldly wise and the flunkey”, all will reveal the same destiny. All nature manifests God’s purpose, and all the things in the world are signs of the “thought of the Almighty” awaiting interpretation.³⁹ Against Abbt, Mendelssohn argued that the “destiny of man” is not the product of culture and education; education only determines whether an individual is able to articulate the destiny which, consciously or unconsciously, he fulfills in his life on earth.⁴⁰ Even a child who dies while still an infant has had the opportunity to develop its powers, and thus can be said to have fulfilled a destiny.⁴¹ It may appear that thousands of potentialities are cut short in their development, and are never fully realized; but this is only because we have not understood their role in the divine plan. The universe is like a watch whose different parts turn at different speeds — indeed, some turn so slowly that they seem not to move at all. But all are united by a single purpose.⁴²

While Mendelssohn’s response to Abbt betrays little doubt about the coherence of Spalding’s arguments, he did make one concession in a commentary on Abbt’s correspondence published after Abbt’s death. Here he noted an ambiguity in the German “*Bestimmung*”. The word connotes both “determination” (the “establishment of one predicate from among the many which could belong to a subject”) and “destination” (“the establishment of a goal, to which something serves as a means”).

Mendelssohn suggested that “*Bestimmung*” should be reserved for “determination”, while the sense of “destination” is better captured by the German “*Beruf*” — “calling” or “vocation”.⁴³ But this linguistic clarification only heightens the problem. It is central to Spalding’s account that a definition of what man *is* — or, in Mendelssohn’s terminology, a “determining” of what predicates attach to the subject “man” — necessarily involves knowledge of what *purposes* man fulfills — or, in Mendelssohn’s terminology, what his “destination” is. Through Wolff, Spalding had taken over enough of the Aristotelean edifice to make his concept of man, like Aristotle’s, a teleological one.⁴⁴ Saying what man “is” necessarily involves explaining what purposes or ends he fulfills. And it is this teleological conception which drives Spalding’s entire argument: I begin reflecting on what I am and I discover, within myself, a bundle of goals — each more universal than the one before — which constitute my destiny. To suggest, as Mendelssohn’s distinction between “destiny” and “determination” does, that it is possible to distinguish between what man “is” and what purposes man fulfills opens a gap which, as Kant would show in his ethical writings, cannot be bridged. It implies that a study of “the wild and the civilized, king, beggar, the worldly wise and the flunkey” may well tell us what these characters *are*, but not what *purposes* they ought to fulfill. And this, after all, had been precisely Abbt’s point: an historical study of customs and mores can tell us much about the different ways in which men live. But it leaves us in the dark as to what the “destiny of man” might be.

Man and Citizen

While Mendelssohn did not pursue this tension “determination” and “destiny”, he did devote considerable attention to a conflict within the “destiny of man” itself. Nothing, he argued, insures that the “destiny of man as *man*” will accord with the “destiny of man as *citizen* [*Bürger*]”. The problem does not arise for “culture”, since its goal can be nothing other than the cultivation of a *Bürger*, a member of political society, possessing certain rights and duties, equipped with the skills and abilities to perform a specific set of tasks. From the standpoint of “culture”, the “destiny of man” is simply membership in civil society.⁴⁵ But the possibility of a conflict between the “destiny of man as man” and the “destiny of man as citizen” does plague the process of enlightenment. “Civic enlightenment” [*Bürgeraufklärung*] must adjust itself according to the ranks of society it addresses, while “human enlightenment” [*Menschenaufklärung*]

— which knows no audience other than “man as man” — pays heed neither to social distinctions nor to the maintenance of social order. “Certain truths,” Mendelssohn noted, “which are useful to man, as man, can at times be harmful to him as citizen”.⁴⁶

So long as this “collision” between human enlightenment and civic enlightenment is confined to matters which do not directly address the “essential” destiny of man as man or man as citizen, and thus do not put into question either those aspects of man which distinguish him from animals or those dimensions of civic duties which are necessary for the preservation of public order, Mendelssohn sees little cause for concern and feels that rules can easily be drawn up to resolve potential conflicts.⁴⁷ A conflict between the “essential” destiny of man as citizen and either his “essential” or his “fortuitous” destiny as man is, however, a good deal more serious. “Without the essential destiny of man”, Mendelssohn explained, “man sinks to the level of the beast; without his fortuitous destiny, he is no longer a good and splendid creature.”⁴⁸ The most severe conflict occurs in those “unhappy” states when the essential destinies of man as man and man as citizen collide. In such cases that Enlightenment which “is indispensable for man cannot be disseminated through all classes of the realm without the constitution being in danger of perishing.”

Here philosophy lays its hand on its mouth! Necessity may here prescribe laws,
or forge fetters, which are applied to man, to force him down, and hold him under its yoke!⁴⁹

When the collision is between man’s “essential” destiny as a citizen and his “fortuitous” destiny as man, the consequences are less grim. Here it is not a question of a state reducing man to the level of an animal, but rather of a situation where “certain useful and — for mankind — adorning truths may not be disseminated without the current fundamental propositions of religion and morality being torn down”.⁵⁰ In such cases the “virtue-loving *Aufklärer* will... endure prejudice rather than drive it away with that truth which is intertwined so tightly with it”.⁵¹

Mendelssohn elaborated this point in a short article published in February of 1785 in the *Berlinische Monatsschrift* on the question of whether fanaticism could be successfully combatted through the use of satire.⁵² He noted that there had been a marked decline in the quality of humor and wit since the writings of Lord Shaftesbury, and suggested that, among today’s writers, mockery often produces no in-

sight. “Nothing is more opposed to the true good of mankind,” he argued, “than this sham enlightenment, where everyone mouths a hackneyed wisdom, from which the spirit has already long vanished; where everyone ridicules prejudices, without distinguishing what is true in them from what is false”.⁵³ Indeed, such a sham enlightenment may well lead to an increase in popular superstitions.

When shallow philosophy and immorality have barbarized the sentiments, mankind longs after childlike innocence, and falls again into childish foolishness. One would rather be surrounded by spirits than to live among talking corpses in a dead nature. One would rather live in Cockaigne than to live without God any longer.⁵⁴

Superstition and fanaticism are thus consequences of the sorry state of German philosophy and education. The Leibniz-Wolff philosophy had once had such a pervasive influence on German thought and indeed on the German language itself that fanatical and atheistic texts could scarcely be written, let alone acclaimed.⁵⁵ But now this had all changed and it was possible for “insipid twaddle” like the *System de la Nature* to find not only a translator, but also many readers. And with this change, there was a danger that it would be forgotten that “the destiny of man ... is not to suppress prejudices, but rather to illuminate them”.⁵⁶

Enlightenment as Exit, Immaturity as Guilt

Mendelssohn’s response to Zöllner’s question remained loyal to the conventions of Wolff’s philosophy and mirrored the convictions and reservations about Enlightenment which reigned within the *Mittwochsgesellschaft*. Kant’s definition of enlightenment broke with these conventions, but it is difficult for us — because his definition has become so familiar — to recognize how strange it was.

Enlightenment is man’s emergence from his self-incurred immaturity.

Immaturity is man’s inability to use one’s own understanding without the guidance of another. This immaturity is *self-incurred* if its cause is not lack of understanding, but lack of resolution and courage to use it without the guidance of

another. The motto of enlightenment is therefore: *Sapere aude!* “Have courage to use your *own* understanding!”⁵⁷

These now familiar words would have struck a contemporary reader as peculiar on at least two counts. First, while Mendelssohn had defined enlightenment with reference to the goal it fosters — “destiny of man” — Kant defines enlightenment not in terms of what it *achieves*, but rather in terms of what it *escapes*.⁵⁸ While readers of the *Critique of Pure Reason* might well conclude that Kant in effect posits autonomy as the ultimate goal of the process of Enlightenment, Kant himself was curiously reluctant to formulate his definition of Enlightenment in this way. Indeed, in the brief discussion of Enlightenment in the *Critique of Judgment*, he stressed its “merely negative” character.⁵⁹ Second, Kant’s definition is couched in a bizarre set of legal metaphors, beginning with the paradoxical notion of an “immaturity” for which one is somehow to blame [*selbst verschuldeten Unmündigkeit*] and continuing through a sarcastic discussion of “guardians” [*Vormünder*] whose main concern is to make sure that none of their wards attain maturity.⁶⁰ The use of these terms in jurisprudence is clear enough: “*Unmündigkeit*” can mean both an “minority of age” [*Minderjährigkeit*] and “legal or civil immaturity”.⁶¹ Those who are legally immature — a group which includes children, so long as they remain “naturally immature”, and women, no matter what age — must be represented in legal proceedings by a “curator” [*Kurator*], a “proxy” [*Stellvertreter*], or a “guardian” [*Vormund*].⁶² But what is more difficult to understand — and indeed what Kant’s friend and critic Johann Georg Hamann regard as the “*proton Pseudos* [fundamental error]” of the entire essay — is how one could possibly be *responsible* for one’s own immaturity.⁶³

Release from “natural” immaturity — which, needless to say, could hardly be “self-incurred” — comes about simply as a consequence of coming of age. But release from that immaturity which arises not from a “lack of understanding” but rather as a consequence of a moral failure — a “lack of resolution and courage” to use one’s understanding “without the guidance of another” — is a good deal more difficult.⁶⁴ One who has been made immature soon becomes fond of this state, has no inclination to leave it, and — since his self-appointed guardians have never allowed him to try to use his own reason — has little ability to think for himself. “Dogmas and formulas” become the “ball and chain of his permanent immaturity”, and even those who somehow manage to free themselves from these “mechanical instruments” of thought

find themselves so unaccustomed to thinking freely that they are “uncertain about jumping over even the narrowest of trenches”.⁶⁵

While it is next to impossible for individuals to tear themselves out of this self-imposed immaturity, the prospect of “an entire public enlightening itself” is considerably brighter. Indeed, for Kant, such enlightenment is inevitable, “if only the public is left in freedom”. Even among the established guardians, there will be a few individuals who have learned to “think for themselves”, and, having “thrown off the yoke of immaturity”, they will “disseminate the spirit of rational respect for personal value and for the vocation of every man to think for himself”.⁶⁶

“Sapere Aude!”: Defining — and Transforming — Enlightenment

While Kant devotes a good deal of attention to the origins of “*Unmündigkeit*”, he has less to say about what actually constitutes “maturity”. *Mündigkeit* is the courage to make use of one’s own reason, the ability to use one’s own understanding without the direction of others and “The motto of enlightenment is therefore: *Sapere aude!*”.⁶⁷ The “motto” invoked here comes from Horace — one of Kant’s favorite classical authors — although Kant could also have known it from Wichman’s German translation of Shaftesbury’s *Characteristics*, where it appeared on the frontispiece.⁶⁸ But, as Franco Venturi has noted, there was another use of the motto, a use which was intimately tied to the Berlin enlightenment.⁶⁹ The words “*Sapere Aude*” had appeared on a medal struck in Berlin in 1736 under the direction of Ernst Christoph von Manteuffel, an advisor to the young Frederick the Great and a friend of Christian Wolff.⁷⁰ His Berlin residence was frequented by state officials, scholars, and literati and he was the main force behind the “*Société des Aléthophiles*” — “The Society of the Friends of Truth” — a group of clergy, lawyers, and civil servants dedicated to the spreading of truth in general, and the Leibniz-Wolff philosophy in particular.⁷¹ The society’s medal showed an armed Minerva, with the heads of Leibniz and Wolff among the plumes on her helmet. Written around the medal were the words “*Sapere Aude*”.

But the way the motto *Sapere Aude* was understood by the *Aléthophiles* differed markedly from the way Kant, drawing out the implications of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, reinterpreted it. For the

Aléthophiles the motto translated rather easily into the language of Wolff's philosophy: "Hold nothing as true, hold nothing as false," read one of the rules of the society, "so long as you have been convinced of it by no sufficient reason [*zureichenden Grund*]"⁷² Wolff and Baumgarten derived the "Principle of Sufficient Reason" from the "Principle of Contradiction", arguing that just as it is impossible for something "to be and at the same time not be", so too "nothing is without a sufficient reason why it is rather than is not".⁷³ They saw the task of philosophy to be that of offering a rigorous set of deductions — starting with the most general notions of being in ontology, proceeding onward through more specific disciplines such as cosmology, psychology, and theology — which show the reasons why things are as they are and not otherwise.

The services rendered by the "Principle of Sufficient Reason" to the Berlin *Aufklärung* were considerable. It ensured that their arguments would not only be internally consistent but would also offer a valid account of the nature of reality. To show why certain predicates are contained in certain subjects is to show the reason why something exists or occurs. Thus Wolff, for example, starting from premises about the relationship of study and exercise in human life, deduced the grounds on which coffee houses rested.⁷⁴ The thought that everything in the world, from the most general moral principles to the most specific political, social, and economic arrangements, rested on good reasons offered a comforting argument in favor of the coherence and rationality of the existing order.⁷⁵

Kant, however, was acutely aware that Wolff's use of the principle of sufficient reason promised far more than it could possibly deliver.⁷⁶ Nothing was easier, as Kant demonstrated in the "Transcendental Dialectic", than the positing of arguments which were logically consistent but which could not possibly refer to actual objects. There is, he wrote, "a *natural* and inevitable *illusion*, which rests on subjective principles, and foists them upon us as objective".⁷⁷ This, indeed, was the most important sense in which the Leibniz-Wolff philosophy could be described as dogmatic: because it had never attempted a critique of the limits of reason, it routinely extended *a priori* judgments — whose proper function is to express the possibility of objects which must subsequently be confirmed in actual experience — beyond the field of any possible experience.⁷⁸

The peculiar difficulty of enlightenment, as Kant would note in the *Critique of Judgment*, lay in its “merely negative” character. The demand that one “think for oneself” was understood by Kant as a “liberation from prejudices” in general, and a “liberation from superstition” in particular.⁷⁹ Reason must never be merely “passive”; it must instead be actively “self-legislative”. Such an attitude is relatively easy so long as one “does not demand to know anything that is beyond his own understanding”. But it is difficult to resist the temptation to strive for such knowledge and even more difficult, once one gives in to the temptation, to avoid a surrender of one’s autonomy to those “who promise us with much assurance that they can satisfy our desire for it”.⁸⁰ *Sapere Aude!* — but, Kant would add, also recognize when knowing had reached its limits. Beyond these limits lies “the lure of an imagined felicity” which “keeps so many in bondage to theories and systems”. “Have courage to use your *own* understanding!” — but do not be so foolhardy as to pass beyond “those Pillars of Hercules which nature herself has erected in order that the voyage of our reason may be extended no further than the continuous coastline of experience”. Once reasoning has lost contact with experience it embarks on a voyage across “a shoreless ocean which, after alluring us with ever-deceptive prospects, compels us in the end to abandon as hopeless all this vexatious and tedious endeavour.”⁸¹ Thus, oddly enough, one of the things from which enlightenment — as Kant understood it — frees us is a belief in enlightenment — as Mendelssohn and the *Mittwochsgesellschaft* understood it.

Public Argument and Private Obedience

For enlightenment to prosper “all that is needed is freedom”. The freedom Kant had in mind is “the most innocuous form of all — freedom to make *public use* of one’s reason in all matters”.⁸² By “public” use, Kant meant that “use which anyone may make of it as a man of learning addressing the entire reading public [*ganzen Publikum der Leserwelt*]”. It is contrasted to that “private” use “which a person may make of it in a particular *civil* post or office which he is entrusted”.⁸³ In one’s private use of reason, one behaves “passively”, bound by an “artificial accord” to advance or to defend certain “public ends”. One functions as “part of a machine”, and here it is “impermissible to argue”. In contrast, in one’s public use of reason, one acts as “a member of the complete commonwealth [*ganzes gemeinen Wesen*] or even of

a cosmopolitan society [*Weltbürgergesellschaft*]”. Here an individual “may indeed argue without harming the affairs in which he is employed in part in a private capacity”. Restrictions on the private use of reason in no way contradict the goal of enlightenment, but the public use of reason must remain free, since “it alone can bring about enlightenment among men”.⁸⁴

Kant’s distinction between public and private uses of reason has struck a number of commentators — beginning Mendelssohn himself — as quite peculiar.⁸⁵ While Mendelssohn had argued against limiting “human enlightenment”, Kant saw a need to restrict the “private” use of reason. And while Mendelssohn had argued that “civic enlightenment” needed to be adjusted to different stations and circumstances, Kant opposed any restriction on the “public use” of reason. The confusion can be mitigated once it is recognized that Kant does not associate the “private sphere” with “the merely individual or personal”.⁸⁶ Private uses of reason take place in a sphere of contractual agreements where individuals alienate their talents to others for the purpose of advancing common goals. Thus, to invoke Kant’s examples, an army officer has agreed to carry out the commands given by superiors, citizens have agreed to pay the taxes a state has imposed, and a clergyman has agreed to deliver sermons to pupils in catechism or to his congregation which conform to the guidelines established by his faith.⁸⁷ In none of these cases are we dealing with Mendelssohn’s “man as man”. In all of them a “man” functions as part of civil society, a civil society peopled by individuals who have entered into contracts which bind them to others.

While individuals must fulfill the terms of the contracts into which they have entered regarding the private use of their reason, they nevertheless retain full control over their “public use of reason”. Kant’s notion of the “public sphere” is every bit as peculiar as his discussion of the private sphere. The meaning of the term in jurisprudence was straightforward enough: “public” meant simply “pertaining to the state”. But while Kant had followed Roman Law conventions in viewing the private sphere as a sphere of contracts, his treatment of the public sphere as a “world of readers” or “cosmopolitan society” eschewed prevailing conventions in jurisprudence and embraced a rival conception held by writers and publicists who published in journals like the *Berlinische Monatsschrift* and scholars and men of letters who gathered in societies like the *Mittwochsgesellschaft*. In this upstart tradition, “the public” was a *reading* public, those residents of cities with the inclination, the time, and the taste to read, discuss, and criticize the stream of

books and journals which flooded the literary marketplace in the last half of the eighteenth century.⁸⁸ Thus, as “men of learning [*Gelehrte*]” who address a reading public, Kant’s soldiers, citizens, and clergymen retain the right to criticize those commands which they have been faithfully executing with the private use of their reason.⁸⁹

Of the three cases Kant discussed, the greatest attention was devoted to the question of the responsibilities of the clergy. While a clergyman may write whatever he pleases in books and articles addressed to the reading public, when he is directly addressing his pupils or his congregation, he is bound to adhere to his church’s “symbols” — those basic doctrines of the faith to which clergymen and teachers were required to swear allegiance before taking up their posts.⁹⁰ In Kant’s day the legitimacy of such oaths had become a matter of heated discussion: in 1773 Nicolai had written a satirical novel about a Lutheran minister dismissed for deviating from his oath and Mendelssohn, in his recently published *Jerusalem*, had argued that such oaths were either pointless or improper.⁹¹ The basic principles shared by all religions cannot be confirmed by oaths since, Mendelssohn argued, the very institution of oath swearing is itself dependent on these same basic principles. An oath would remain “an empty sound” unless one already believed the veracity of the person who swears it — in which case the administration of the oath would be pointless.⁹² Nor can the *particular* articles which distinguish one faith from another be the object of oaths. The state has no right “to pry into men’s souls and force them to make avowals which can bring neither comfort nor profit to society”.⁹³ Mendelssohn rejected even a limited use of oaths for those offices entrusted to individuals “on the condition of conformity”, arguing that such procedures, by forcing individuals to swear an unyielding allegiance to propositions which they might come to doubt at some point after they assumed office, were an invitation to hypocrisy.⁹⁴

Mendelssohn’s argument had been criticized by both Johann David Michaelis — an Orientalist who had earlier argued against the extension of civil rights to Jews on the grounds that any oaths they might swear could not be taken seriously — and by Johann Friedrich Zöllner.⁹⁵ Mendelssohn dispensed with Michaelis’ personal — and anti-Semitic — attack in an essay published in the January 1784 issue of the *Berlinische Monatsschrift*.⁹⁶ But Zöllner’s criticisms were a more serious matter. Zöllner argued that Mendelssohn’s indifference to the distinction between “religion” and “church” led him to overlook the fact

that, as a community of individuals devoted to the cause of advancing a religion, a church — like other societies — is free to demand that its members affirm their allegiance to its general principles.⁹⁷ While Mendelssohn was justified in arguing that the vocabulary of “rights” and “duties” was inappropriate in discussions of the relationships between God and the faithful which constitute *religion*, this did not mean that *churches*, as institutions, cannot impose duties on their members.⁹⁸

The question of the limits of those duties which bound an official of a church stood at the center of Kant’s discussion. With Zöllner — and implicitly against Mendelssohn — Kant argued that, insofar as they were fulfilling their responsibilities to the church as an institution, clergymen must adhere to the teachings of the church, even in those cases where they might have reservations as to their truth. Kant insisted that “There is nothing in this which need trouble the conscience.” What an individual taught as an officer of the church “is presented by him as something which he is not empowered to teach at his own discretion, but which he is employed to expound in a prescribed manner and in someone else’s name.”

He will say: Our church teaches this or that, and these are the arguments it uses.

He then extracts as much practical value as possible for his congregation from precepts to which he would not himself subscribe with full conviction, but which he can nevertheless undertake to expound, since it is not entirely impossible that they may contain truth.”⁹⁹

The interest of Kant’s clergyman — like the *Critique of Pure Reason* — is in the practical, not the dogmatic, dimension of religion. It is “not entirely impossible” that the doctrines of the church are true — but, in any case, religion is a matter of practical faith, not of theoretical certainty. There is, however, a limit to how far a clergyman may go in maintaining this separation between official dogma and personal conviction: “nothing contrary to the essence of religion” must be present in the teachings of the church, for if this were the case the clergyman “would not be able to carry out his official duties in good conscience, and would have to resign”.¹⁰⁰

In much of this Kant was simply articulating the existing Prussian policy.¹⁰¹ In cases brought before the “Spiritual Department” in 1776 and again in 1783, Baron von Zedlitz — the head of the department — ruled that while clergy may write whatever they please in theological or philosophical articles ad-

dressed to the reading public, they must be careful to distinguish these scholarly opinions from their responsibilities as representatives of the church in their parishes.¹⁰² Kant was undoubtedly familiar with these decisions: the 1776 case involved the Königsberg clergyman Johann August Starck, and the 1783 case involved Johann Heinrich Schulz's *Versuch einer Anleitung zur Sittenlehre für alle Menschen, ohne Unterschied der Religion*, a work which Kant reviewed shortly after its publication.¹⁰³

When Kant described “the age of enlightenment” as “the century of Frederick”, he must have been thinking of policies such as these. Under Frederick's “enlightened” rule, he wrote, “venerable clergy, without offense to their official duties, may in their capacity as scholars [*Gelehrten*] freely and publicly submit to the judgment of the world their verdicts and opinions, even if they deviate here and there from orthodox doctrine [*angenommenen Symbol*].”¹⁰⁴ While Mendelssohn saw the possibility of a conflict between the “enlightenment of man” and the “enlightenment of the citizen” which would force philosophy into silence, Kant saw little need for concern. The “enlightenment of man” was carried out by scholars addressing the reading public; what Mendelssohn had called the “enlightenment of the citizen” was a matter for the “private” use of reason. There was no need for a collision between the two spheres, so long as they remain rigorously distinguished from one another. Scholarly reflections must not be allowed to disturb the functioning of the private sphere, just as nothing in the private sphere can be allowed to restrict the free discourse of the public sphere. The compromise by which Kant sought to avoid those consequences of enlightenment which so troubled Mendelssohn found a pithy summary in the maxim he credited to Frederick: “*Argue as much as you like and about what you like, but obey!*”¹⁰⁵

The private sphere could remain undisturbed by the “innocuous” freedom of an unrestricted public use of reason because of a “strange and unexpected pattern in human affairs”:

A high degree of civil freedom seems advantageous to a people's intellectual freedom, yet it also sets up insuperable barriers to it. Conversely, a lesser degree of civil freedom gives intellectual freedom enough room to expand its fullest extent.¹⁰⁶

Frederick could afford to let citizens argue as much as they liked because he had at hand “a well-disciplined and numerous army to guarantee the public security”. A ruler of a “republic” [*Freistaat*] could

not risk allowing the same freedom of public discussion — in the absence of a large army, the free public use of reason might have less innocuous consequences.¹⁰⁷

While Kant felt that the critique of arms was more than enough to protect the private sphere from the arms of critique, a different mechanism protected the public sphere from the intrusions of the private sphere. The danger here was that the restrictions on argument necessary for the maintenance of the contractual arrangements of the private sphere might overstep their legitimate area of application and restrict the public use of reason. Again, it is the example of religious freedom that best illustrates the problem. Like Zöllner, Kant saw nothing objectionable in a church requiring its representatives to teach the doctrines of their religion according to certain established conventions. But both Zöllner and Kant agreed with Mendelssohn — implicitly opposing Michaelis — that no church was free to “commit itself by oath to an unalterable set of doctrines”.¹⁰⁸

One age cannot enter into alliance on oath to put the next age in a position where it would be impossible for it to extend and correct its knowledge ... or to make any progress whatsoever in enlightenment. This would be a crime against human nature, whose original destiny [*Bestimmung*] lies in precisely such progress.¹⁰⁹

Kant proposed a simple test to determine whether any particular measure could be adopted as a law: “we need only ask whether a people could impose such a law upon itself”.¹¹⁰ While it might be necessary, for short periods of time, to impose a particular set of political and social arrangements, pending a better solution, even during such periods Kant insists that “each citizen, particularly the clergyman, would be given a free hand as a scholar to comment publicly, i.e., in his writings, on the inadequacies of current institutions”.¹¹¹ But to agree — “even for a single lifetime” — upon a permanent, unquestionable religious constitution, would be to adopt a law which would “virtually nullify a phase of man’s progress”. The renunciation of enlightenment — whether by a people, a monarch or even an individual — “means violating and trampling underfoot the sacred rights of mankind”.¹¹²

Conclusion: What Kant Expected and What he Accomplished

We can now understand why Kant submitted his article with the thought that readers might see “how far the thoughts of two individuals may coincide by chance”. It is not simply that he knew that both he and Mendelssohn were responding to the same question. It is also quite likely, as Eberhard Günter Schulz has suggested, that Kant assumed that Mendelssohn would be dealing with the problems which Zöllner had raised in his critique of Mendelssohn’s *Jerusalem*, problems that Kant’s distinction between public and private uses of reason also addressed.¹¹³

As it turned out, Kant was wrong. Mendelssohn left Zöllner’s critique unanswered, and devoted the last two years of his life to an increasingly bitter controversy with a far less friendly critic: Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi. A little over a year before Zöllner requested a definition of enlightenment, Jacobi had posed a more troubling question to Mendelssohn: whether he was aware that “Lessing in his last days was a decided Spinozist”.¹¹⁴ The charge of Spinozism was tantamount to atheism, and the suggestion that Lessing, the pride of the enlightenment, had been led to embrace what Jacobi characterized as a godless fatalism struck at everything that Mendelssohn and his colleagues in Berlin *Aufklärung* — dubbed the “*Morgue Berlinoise*” by Jacobi — held dear.¹¹⁵ Mendelssohn’s essay on question “What is Enlightenment?” was thus a last testament of faith in a position already under serious attack.

In the controversy between Jacobi and Mendelssohn, Kant occupied a curious position: both sides assumed that Kant would soon cast his lot with them.¹¹⁶ But when “What is Orientation in Thinking?” — Kant’s long-awaited contribution to the dispute — finally appeared in the *Berlinische Monatsschrift*, Kant set himself apart from both parties. Against Jacobi, Kant argued that in seeking “orientation” in speculative thinking, there is no need to appeal to “some alleged truth-sense, nor a transcendent intuition dubbed faith”; here, as elsewhere, “reason alone” suffices.¹¹⁷ But he also stressed that reason could not provide the sort of proofs of God’s existence that Mendelssohn had offered in his *Morgenstunden*. The proper function of reason was to free concepts from contradictions and to defend the “maxims of sound reason” from the “sophistical attacks of speculations.”¹¹⁸

Kant answered the question “What is Enlightenment?” by reinterpreting the meaning of Enlightenment along the lines of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. His contribution to the Pantheism Controversy established his critical philosophy as alternative to both the Jacobi’s “irrationalism” and to Mendelssohn’s “dogmatism”. Warning of the dangers of appeals to faith and of unfettered speculation, he was thus able to claim the mantle of Enlightenment for himself.

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Notes

* An earlier version of this essay was discussed with members of my 1989 NEH Summer Seminar for College Teachers. I profited enormously from these discussions and am also indebted to Frederick C. Beiser for his insightful comments on a later draft.

¹ Johann Friedrich Zöllner, “Ist es rathsam, das Ehebündniß nicht ferner durch die Religion zu sanciren?”, *Berlinische Monatsschrift* II (1783) p. 516 [Reprinted in *Was ist Aufklärung? Beiträge aus der Berlinischen Monatsschrift*, 2nd. Edition, ed. Norbert Hinske (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1977) p. 115]. For a discussion of the genesis of Zöllner’s question and its immediate impact, see my article “The Question of Enlightenment: Kant, Mendelssohn , and the *Mittwochsgesellschaft*”, *Journal of the History of Ideas* 50:2 (1989) pp. 269-291.

² See H.B. Nisbet, ““Was ist Aufklärung?”: The Concept of Enlightenment in Eighteenth-Century Germany”, *Journal of European Studies* xii (1982) pp. 77-95. For collections of the eighteenth-century essays see Hinske, *Was ist Aufklärung?* and *Aufklärung und Gedankenfreiheit*, ed. Zwi Batscha (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1977).

³ Moses Mendelssohn, “Über die Frage: was heisst aufklären?”, *Berlinische Monatsschrift* IV (1784) pp. 193-200 [Reprinted in Mendelssohn, *Gesammelte Schriften*

Jubiläumsausgabe Vol. 6/1 (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1981) pp. 115-119]. For discussions of Mendelssohn's essay see Alexander Altmann, *Moses Mendelssohn: A Biographical Study* (University Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1973) pp. 660-666; Werner Schneiders, *Die wahre Aufklärung* (Freiburg: Alber 1974) pp. 43-51. ; and Norbert Hinske, "Mendelssohns Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung? oder Über die Aktualität Mendelssohns" in Norbert Hinske, ed., *Ich handle mit Vernunft ... : Moses Mendelssohn und die europäische Aufklärung* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1981), pp. 85-117.

⁴ Immanuel Kant, "Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung?", *Berlinische Monatsschrift* IV (1784) p. 494 [Reprinted in AA VIII:42 (trans. by H.B. Nisbet in *Kant's Political Writings*, ed. H. Reiss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970) p. 60)].

⁵ See Mendelssohn, *Gesammelte Schriften* 8:227–228.

⁶ For previous attempts to compare the essays see Frieder Löttsch, "Moses Mendelssohn und Immanuel Kant im Gespräch über die Aufklärung", in *Wolfenbüttele Studien zur Aufklärung* IV (1977) pp. 163-186 and Nathan Rotenstreich, *Jews and German Philosophy: The Polemics of Emancipation* (New York: Schocken, 1984) pp. 37-59. For a general discussion of the relationship between the two men, see Walter Kinkel, "Moses Mendelssohn und Immanuel Kant", *Kant-Studien* 34 (1929) pp. 391-409.

⁷ For discussions of the *Mittwochsgesellschaft* and the *Berlinische Monatsschrift*; see Schmidt, "The Question of Enlightenment", pp. 270-275, Günter Birtsch, "Die Berliner Mittwochsgesellschaft" in H. E. Bödeker and U. Herrmann, eds., *Über den Prozess der Aufklärung in Deutschland im 18. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen, 1987) pp. 94-112; Eckhart Hellmuth, "Aufklärung und Pressefreiheit: Zur Debatte der Berliner Mittwochsgesellschaft während der Jahre 1783 und 1784", *Zeitschrift für historisches*

Forschung 9 (1982), pp. 315-345; Ludwig Keller, "Die Berliner Mittwochsgesellschaft", *Monatshefte der Comenius-Gesellschaft* V:3-4 (1896), pp. 70-73, 88-91; Heinrich Meisner, "Die Freunde der Aufklärung. Geschichte der Berliner Mittwochsgesellschaft" in *Festschrift zur 50jährigen Doktorjubelfeier Karl Weinholds* (Strasburg: Trübner, 1896), pp. 43-54; Hinske, *Was ist Aufklärung?*, pp. xxiv-xxxi, and Alexander Altmann, *Moses Mendelssohn: A Biographical Study* (University of Alabama Press, 1973) pp. 654-5.

⁸ Möhsen was a prominent Berlin physician with an interest in the history of science. He also served as Frederick the Great's personal doctor. For the text of the lecture, see Keller, pp. 73-77; the request for a consideration of the question, "What is Enlightenment?" occurs on p. 74.

⁹ Norbert Hinske, "Mendelssohns Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung?", pp. 87-8.

¹⁰ Mendelssohn, *Gesammelte Schriften* 6/1: 115

¹¹ For discussions of the history of the word see Peter Putz, *Die Deutsche Aufklärung* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1978), pp. 12-15 and Horst Stuke, "Aufklärung" in *Geschichtlich Grundbegriffe*, ed. Otto Brunner, Werner Conze, and Reinhart Koselleck, (Stuttgart: Klett, 1972) Vol. 1, pp. 243-342. For a brief discussion of the importance of newspapers in the promulgation of both the idea and the term "enlightenment", see Paul Raabe, "Die Zeitschrift als Medium der Aufklärung", *Wolfenbütteler Studien zur Aufklärung* I (1974) pp. 99-111.

¹² For a brief sketch of the impact of the image of light in German philosophy, see Klaus Hedwig, "German Idealism in the Context of Light Metaphysics", *Idealistic Studies* 2:1 (1972) pp. 16-38. For Pietist usage, see Stuke, p. 249

¹³ Kasper Stieler, *Der Teutschen Sprache Stammbaum und Fortwachs oder Teutscher Sprachschatz* (Nürnberg: Johann Hoffmann, 1691 [Reprint: München: Kösel, 1968]) Vol. I, p. 969. Both words are used as translations of the Latin *serenitas* (literally, “clear, fair, or serene weather”, figuratively, “fairness or serenity of fortune or disposition”). For discussions, see Putz, p. 12, Stuke, p. 247. This association of a clearing of the weather and a clearing of consciousness is exploited in the frontispieces of several of Christian Wolff’s works — most notably his *Vernünfftige Gedancken von der Thun und Lassen* (Frankfurt and Leipzig, 1733 [Reprint: Hildesheim: George Olms, 1976]) — which employ the image of the sun breaking through dark clouds to illuminate the earth below, symbolizing the light of reason illuminating the world.

¹⁴ Putz notes a use of “*aufgeklärt*” by the Johann Jakob Bodmer and Johann Jakob Breitinger’s *Discourse der Mahlern* (Zurich: Lindinner, 1721 [Reprint: Hildesheim: George Olms, 1969]), p. A3, in a discussion of a passage in *The Spectator* — the famous English moral weekly — which had spoken of conditions “before the World was enlightened by Learning and Philosophy”. Likewise, a German translation of Leibniz’s *Theodicee* employed “*ausgeklärt*” to translate “*éclairer*”. See Putz, p. 13.

¹⁵ See, for example, a review of recently published hymnals which refers to the abundance, in recent years, “of aids in the enlightenment of our religious concepts [*Hilfsmittel zur Aufklärung unserer Religionsbegriffe*]”, *Allgemeine Deutsche Bibliothek* V:1 (1767) p. 182.

¹⁶ *Stats- u. Gelehrte Zeitung Des Hamburgischen unpartheyischen Correspondenten* Nr. 71, LXXXI. Stück (May 5, 1741), 4a, cited by Putz, p. 14. Christoph Martin Wieland, “Die Bekenntnisse des Abulfauaris” *Sämmtliche Werke* (Leipzig: G. J. Goschen’sche Verlagshandlung, 1857) Vol. 29, p. 264.

¹⁷ Kant employed the first characterization in a footnote to the Preface of the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* [A xii]. The 1783 *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics* speaks of “*unsere denkenden Zeitalter*” [AA IV:380] and “*einem aufgeklärten Zeitalter*” [AA IV:383] — Beck’s revision of Carus’ translation (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1950) translates the latter passage as “a rationalistic age”. Kant’s 1784 response to Zöllner described the present not as an “enlightened age” but rather as an “age of enlightenment” [*einem Zeitalter der Aufklärung*]; see AA VII:40 [*Political Writings*, p. 58].

¹⁸ In a letter to a friendly critic, he conceded that his distinctions — especially his treatment of *Kultur* — did not rest on established conventions; see his letter to August Hennings of November 27, 1784 in Mendelssohn, *Gesammelte Schriften* 13:234.

¹⁹ Mendelssohn, *Gesammelte Schriften* 6/1:115.

²⁰ For a general discussion of Mendelssohn's concept of *Bildung*, see Alexander Altmann, “Das Menschenbild und die Bildung des Menschen nach Moses Mendelssohn”, *Mendelssohn-Studien* I, 1972, pp. 11-28.

²¹ Mendelssohn, *Gesammelte Schriften* 6/1:115

²² Letter to August v. Hennings of November 27, 1784 in Mendelssohn, *Gesammelte Schriften* 13:237. It is worth noting that the term *Kultur* was so new that even the spelling of the word remained subject to fluctuation. In the article in the *Berlinische Monatsschrift* Mendelssohn’s “*Cultur*” was consistently rendered, as was the style at the journal, as “*Kultur*”; in the correspondence with Hennings, both Mendelssohn and Hennings employ “*Cultur*”.

²³ Mendelssohn, *Gesammelte Schriften* 6/1:116; Hennings found all of these characterizations questionable, and suggested that while the French had “polish,

politeness, and elegance” — marks of “external” culture in Mendelssohn’s eyes — no people in the world was more truly cultured than the English; see Hennings’ letter of October 21, 1784 in Mendelssohn, *Gesammelte Schriften* 13:228.

²⁴ Mendelssohn, *Gesammelte Schriften* 6/1:118.

²⁵ See his evaluation of different national styles of philosophy in his 1757 review of Burke’s *Ideas on the Sublime and the Beautiful* : “the French philosophize with wit, the English with sentiment, and the Germans alone are sufficiently sober to philosophize with the intellect”, Altmann, *Moses Mendelssohn* p. 31.

²⁶ Mendelssohn, *Gesammelte Schriften* 6/1:115-116. For a discussion of the centrality of this notion in Mendelssohn’s work, see Norbert Hinske, "Mendelssohns Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung? oder Über die Aktualität Mendelssohns" in Hinske, ed., *Ich handle mit Vernunft... : Moses Mendelssohn und die europäische Aufklärung* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1981) pp. 94-99.

²⁷ Mendelssohn, *Gesammelte Schriften* 6/1:115

²⁸ Horst Stephan, ed., *Spaldings Bestimmung des Menschen (1748) und Wert der Andacht* [*Studien zur Geschichte des neueren Protestantismus; 1 Quellenheft*] (Giessen: Töpelmann, 1908). Mendelssohn employed the term in passing in as early as his 1763 essay *Über die Evidenz in Metaphysischen Wissenschaften* [*Gesammelte Schriften* 2:316-317].

²⁹ For brief discussions of the book, see Joseph Schollmeier, *Johann Joachim Spalding: Ein Beitrag zur Theologie der Aufklärung* (Gütersloher: Gerd Mohn, 1967) pp. 56-65 and Altmann, *Moses Mendelssohn* pp. 131-132. Like Mendelssohn, Kant was familiar with Spalding’s arguments; see Kurt Beckmann, *Berührungen Johann Joachim Spaldings mit Immanuel Kant* (Göttingen: Huth, 1913). Spalding’s standing as a major figure within Enlightenment persisted at least into the next century; see the

prominent place he occupies in Bruno Bauer's *Geschichte der Politik, Kultur, und Aufklärung des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Charlottenburg: Bauer, 1843) Vol. I § 15.

³⁰ For the argument thus far, see *Bestimmung des Menschen* pp. 16-24.

³¹ *Ibid.* p. 25

³² *Ibid.* p. 28.

³³ For examples from entries in autograph books and family albums, see Mendelssohn, *Gesammelte Schriften* 13:192-3, 195. See also its use in his discussion with Abbt in Mendelssohn, *Gesammelte Schriften* 6/1:48.

³⁴ Letter from Thomas Abbt of January 11, 1764 in Mendelssohn, *Gesammelte Schriften*; for a discussion of Abbt and of his relationship with Mendelssohn, see Altmann, *Moses Mendelssohn* pp. 100-112.

³⁵ Abbt's "Zweifel über die Bestimmung des Menschen" and Mendelssohn's "Orakel, die Bestimmung des Menschen betreffend" were published under the Greek pseudonyms Euphranor and Theodul, with the fictitious place and date of publication "Schinzach, 1763" and an introduction by Nicolai. I have used the version published in Mendelssohn, *Gesammelte Schriften* 6/1: pp. 7-25. The essays were reprinted in 1782, now attributed to Abbt and Mendelssohn, along with other letters from Abbt and with additional comments by Mendelssohn. For these comments, see Mendelssohn, *Gesammelte Schriften* 6/1: 26-65. For a discussion of the essays and of Mendelssohn's subsequent comments on the exchange, see Altmann, *Moses Mendelssohn* pp. 130-140.

³⁶ Mendelssohn, *Gesammelte Schriften* 6/1:10

³⁷ Mendelssohn, *Gesammelte Schriften* 6/1:11-12.

³⁸ Mendelssohn, *Gesammelte Schriften* 6/1:15. Mendelssohn took up this image in his *Jerusalem*. The likely inspiration for both of them was the similar formulation in Locke's *Essay*, which both men read and admired: "How short soever their

knowledge may come of an universal or perfect comprehension of whatsoever is, it yet secures their great contentments, that they have light enough to lead them to knowledge of their Maker, and the sight of their own duties.” *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* Introduction, §5.

³⁹ Mendelssohn, *Gesammelte Schriften* 6/1:19

⁴⁰ Mendelssohn, *Gesammelte Schriften* 6/1:21-22, 23-24.

⁴¹ Mendelssohn, *Gesammelte Schriften* 6/1:26. Mendelssohn apparently wrote this shortly after his first child died April of 1764 at the age of eleven months. Two weeks after her death, which he said had “shattered” him, he wrote to Abbt, “The innocent did not live these eleven months in vain. In this short time, her spirit made astonishing progress. She progressed from a tiny animal that merely cried and slept into a small rational being. ... She showed compassion, hatred, love, and curiosity, she understood what was said to her, and tried to make her thoughts known to others.” Admitting that he might well be ridiculed for the “naïveté” and his “rationalizations” looked upon as a weakness, he nevertheless maintained, “I cannot believe that God has put us here on earth like some foam upon a wave. Indeed, I must embrace the opposite view simply because it seems less absurd, and promises me more consolation.” Letter to Abbt of May 1, 1764 in Mendelssohn, *Gesammelte Schriften* 12/1:43. Abbt tactfully responded “I regret that thinking about this matter arouses distressing sentiments in you, However, when you are again able to rise from the individual case to the general aspect of it, you will probably see my point. It is precisely the denial of full development to this progress that feeds my doubt: not whether men have a destiny, but what that destiny is.” Letter to Mendelssohn of May 21, 1764, in Mendelssohn, *Gesammelte Schriften* 12/1:48; see also Altmann, *Moses Mendelssohn* p. 137.

⁴² Mendelssohn, *Gesammelte Schriften* 6/1:24

- ⁴³ See Mendelssohn, *Gesammelte Schriften* 6/1:35
- ⁴⁴ For a discussion of the implications of such a conception of man, see Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (Notre Dame, Ill.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981) pp. 52-56
- ⁴⁵ Mendelssohn, *Gesammelte Schriften* 6/1: 116.
- ⁴⁶ Mendelssohn, *Gesammelte Schriften* 6/1:117.
- ⁴⁷ Mendelssohn, *Gesammelte Schriften* 6/1:117
- ⁴⁸ Mendelssohn, *Gesammelte Schriften* 6/1: 117
- ⁴⁹ Mendelssohn, *Gesammelte Schriften* 6/1: 117.
- ⁵⁰ Mendelssohn, *Gesammelte Schriften* 6/1:118.
- ⁵¹ Mendelssohn, *Gesammelte Schriften* 6/1: 118. This position had been taken by a number of members of the *Mittwochsgesellschaft* in arguing in support of censorship laws. See my discussion in “The Question of Enlightenment” pp. 282-284 and Trier, “Aufklärung und Pressefreiheit”.
- ⁵² Mendelssohn, “Soll man der einreissenden Schwärmerey durch Satyre oder durch äussere Verbindung entgegenarbeiten?”, *Gesammelte Schriften* 6/1:139-141.
- ⁵³ Mendelssohn, *Gesammelte Schriften* 6/1:139.
- ⁵⁴ Mendelssohn, *Gesammelte Schriften* 6/1:140.
- ⁵⁵ Mendelssohn, *Gesammelte Schriften* 6/1:140-141.
- ⁵⁶ Mendelssohn, *Gesammelte Schriften* 6/1:141.
- ⁵⁷ AA VIII:35 [*Kant’s Political Writings*, p. 54].
- ⁵⁸ Kant did make use of the concept of a “*Bestimmung des Menschen*” in other writings. See, most notably, *Religion Innerhalb der Grenzen der Blossen Vernunft*, AA VI:26 [*Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, trans. by T.M. Greene and H. H. Hudson (New York: Harper, 1960) p. 21] and Kant’s *Lectures on Ethics* trans. L. Infield

(London: Methuen, 1979) pp. 252-253. The predominantly negative character of Kant's definition of Enlightenment has been noted by Michel Foucault in his otherwise rather idiosyncratic discussion of Kant's essay; see Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?" in Paul Rabinow, ed., *The Foucault Reader* (New York: Pantheon, 1984) p. 34.

⁵⁹ AA V:294-295 [*Critique of Judgment* trans. Werner S. Pluhar (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987) p. 161]

⁶⁰ Only Beck's translation of the essay [in Kant, *On History* (Indianapolis: Bobbs Merrill, 1963)] is sensitive to the legal sense of *Unmündigkeit* which he translates as "tutelage". Humphrey [Kant, *Perpetual Peace and Other Essays* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1983)], like Nisbet, opts for "immaturity". A. F. M. Willich's eighteenth century translation [*Kant's Essays and Treatises on Moral Subjects* (London, 1798)] made use of the now archaic term "nonage", whose meaning is quite close to *Unmündigkeit*.

⁶¹ AA VII:208-209 [*Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, trans. Mary J. Gregor (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974) pp. 79-80]. See also the brief discussion of legal maturity as "the capacity for self-sufficiency, that is, to be one's own master" in the *Rechtslehre, Metaphysik der Sitten* §30, AA VI:282. In an essay on freedom of thought and freedom of the press which appeared in the *Berlinische Monatsschrift* a few months before Kant's essay, Ernst Ferdinand Klein (a member of the *Mittwochsgesellschaft* who, like others in the society, served in Frederick the Great's department of justice) made use of the same terminology, calling upon those kings and princes who had taken on the role of *Vormündern* over their *unmündigen Kinder* to give their peoples the same rights of freedom of expression as Frederick had. See "Über Denk- und Druckfreiheit", *Berlinische Monatsschrift* (1784) III:323 [Hinske pp. 400].

⁶² Kant employs the terms *Kurator* and *Stellvertreter* in his lectures on anthropology; *Vormund* is the preferred term in the essay on Enlightenment. All of these designations have their origins in Roman Law and were given a characteristically exhaustive definition in Wolff's *Grundsätze des Natur- und Vöckerrechts* §§ 898-912.

⁶³ *Verschuldeten* carries implications of guilt and blame which are difficult to convey in translation. For Hamann's critique of Kant's use of the adjective "selbstverschuldet" see his letter to Christian Jakob Kraus of December 18, 1784 [Hamann, *Briefwechsel* Vol. 5 pp. 289-292]. For a discussion of Hamann's letter, see E. Büchsel, "Aufklärung und christliche Freiheit: J.G. Hamann contra I. Kant" in *Neue Zeitschrift für systematische Theologie* 4 (1962) pp. 137-157, esp. 149-150. Even commentators sympathetic to Kant's argument have voiced misgivings about the notion: Onora O'Neill writes "...the claim that the unenlightened are afflicted by a self-incurred immaturity may seem a questionable exaggeration. Those whose reasoning capacities are incomplete have not chosen that they be so and must lack insight into this incompleteness. What is 'self-incurred' (if anything) is only complacent acquiescence with the capacities possessed at a given moment" ("The Public Use of Reason", *Political Theory* 14:4 (1986) pp. 536-537).

⁶⁴ AA VIII:35 [*Political Writings*, p. 54].

⁶⁵ AA VIII:36 [*Political Writings*, pp. 54-55]. See also the discussion in the lectures on anthropology, AA VII: [trans. pp. 105-106].

⁶⁶ AA VIII:36 [*Political Writings*, p. 55]. The phrase "vocation of every man" translates Kant's "*Berufs jedes Menschen*" — not "*Bestimmung des Menschen*".

⁶⁷ AA VIII:35 [*Political Writings*, p. 54].

⁶⁸ Anton Ashley Cooper, Grafens von Shaftesbury, *Characteristics oder Schilderung von Menschen, Sitten, Meynung und Zeiten*, translated by Christian August

Wichmann (Leipzig: Heinsiusischen Buchhandlung, 1768); the motto appears on a small emblem, showing a helmeted Minerva. See also Franco Venturi, *Utopia and Reform in the Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971) p. 8. Shaftesbury's work figures prominently in Kant's pre-critical lectures on ethics; see Schilpp, pp. 8, 32, 60, 103-104. For other appeals to Horace see AA VI:19, 32, 42 [*Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, trans. T.M. Greene and H.H. Hudson (New York: Harper & Row, 1960), pp. 15, 27, 37].

⁶⁹ See Venturi, "Was ist Aufklärung? Sapere Aude!" reprinted in Venturi, *Europe des lumières* (Paris: Mouton, 1971) pp. 39-42 and Venturi, *Utopia and Reform in the Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971) p. 7.

⁷⁰ For a biography, see Thea von Seydewitz, *Ernst Christoph Graf Manteuffel* (Dresden: Wilhelm und Bertha Baensch Stiftung, 1926). The Wichmann translation of Shaftesbury carries a slightly different emblem.

⁷¹ Wolff was given the title of *Chef* of the Society, but he was so uncertain as to what the Society was trying to achieve that, upon receiving news of the forthcoming minting of the medal, he wrote a letter to Manteuffel asking him to explain the intent of the society, so that he could have an answer ready, should anyone ask. The group took its name from the numbingly long-winded title of Wolff's German Metaphysics, *Vernünfftige Gedanken von Gott, der Welt, und der Seele des Menschen, auch allen Dingen überhaupt, den Liebhabern der Wahrheit mitgeteilt* [Rational Thoughts on God, the World, and the Soul of Men, also Things in General Communicated to the Lovers of Truth]. A "Liebhabern der Wahrheit" is an "Aléthophile". On the society and its membership see Uta Janssens-Knorsch, "Jean Deschamps, Wolff-Übersetzer und 'Aléthophile français' am Hofe Friedrichs des Großen", in Werner Schneiders, ed. *Christian Wolff 1679-1754* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1983) pp. 259-263.

⁷² Janssens-Knorsch p. 259.

⁷³ Wolff, *Philosophia prima, sive Ontologica* (Frankfurt: Libraria Rengeriana, 1736) §§ 27-29, 56-78; A.G. Baumgarten, *Metaphysica* (Halle, 1739 [Reprint: Hildesheim: George Olms, 1963]) §20. J.A. Eberhard, a member of the *Mittwochsgesellschaft* who argued that Kant only repeated long-established distinctions from Leibniz and Wolff, elaborated these arguments, with modifications, in the attack on the *Critique of Pure Reason* in his *Philosophisches Magazin* I:1 (1788 [Reprint: *Aetas Kantiana* #63, Bruxelles: Culture et civilisation, 1968]) pp. 163-164. For a discussion of Wolff's use of the "principle of sufficient reason" and its subsequent employment by his disciples, including Mendelssohn, see Lewis White Beck, *Early German Philosophy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969) pp. 263-266, 280, 334-335. For the origins of the notion in Leibniz and Wolff, and the different ways each understood it, see John Edwin Gurr, S.J. *The Principle of Sufficient Reason in Some Scholastic Systems 1750-1900* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1959) pp. 11-49. esp. pp. 36-39. For Eberhard's use of the principle against Kant, see Henry E. Allison, *The Kant-Eberhard Controversy* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973) pp. 17-21 and Beiser, pp. 194-197, 217-224.

⁷⁴ Wolff, *Vernünfftige Gedanken von dem gesellschaftlichen Leben der Menschen und insonderheit dem gemeinen Wesen* § 297. For a discussion of this and other examples, see Beck, *Early German Philosophy* p. 262

⁷⁵ Drawing out the political implications of this view of the world, Beiser (pp. 197-198) has described Wolff's followers as "the aging sentinels of the old order, the Europe of the ancien régime where monarch, clergy, and aristocracy still held sway."

⁷⁶ As early as his 1763 *Attempt to Introduce Negative Quantities into Philosophy*, Kant had rejected the equation of "logical grounds" and "real grounds" on

which Wolff's deduction of the principle rested; see AA II:202-203. For a discussion of the significance of this passage in Kant's critique of Wolff, see Paul Guyer, *Kant and the Claims of Knowledge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987) pp. 251-252. The distinction was further elaborated in the critique of Leibniz in Kant's discussion of the "Amphiboly of the Concepts of Reflection" in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. (A270-280, B326—336).

⁷⁷ *Critique of Pure Reason*, A298; B354.

⁷⁸ See especially the characterization of Wolff in the "Preface to the Second Edition" of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, B xxxv-Bxxxvii. See also Kant's response to Eberhard, AA VIII:193-198, 226-228 [*The Kant-Eberhard Controversy* pp. 112-116, 139-140].

⁷⁹ AA V:294-295 [*Critique of Judgment* p. 161]

⁸⁰ AA V:294-295 [*Critique of Judgment* pp. 160-161]

⁸¹ *Critique of Pure Reason* A 395-396.

⁸² AA VIII:36 [*Political Writings*, p. 55]

⁸³ AA VIII:37 [*Political Writings*, p. 55].

⁸⁴ AA VIII:37 [*Political Writings*, p. 56]

⁸⁵ Mendelssohn described the distinction as "somewhat strange" in his notes for a discussion of Kant's essay within the *Mittwochsgesellschaft*, and rephrased it as a contrast between "vocational" and "extravocational" uses of reason; see Mendelssohn, *Gesammelte Schriften* 8:227—228. Rotenstreich (p. 47) observes that Kant "interprets the concept of 'private' in a sense which differs from the common usage of the term" — although he gives little indication of what he takes the "common" eighteenth century usage to be. Susan Shell finds it strange that Kant would treat "the discourse of a public official" as a "private" use of reason, but does not pursue the issue; see *The Rights of*

Reason: A Study of Kant's Philosophy and Politics (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980). Ronald Beiner writes that the precedence Kant accords to the public use of reason over the private use “may appear as something of an inversion of traditional liberal priorities on the part of one of the leading fountain heads of liberal thought”, see “Hannah Arendt on Judging” in Hannah Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982) p. 123. The difference between Kant's argument for toleration and the typical liberal defense is discussed at length in Onora O'Neill, “The Public Use of Reason”.

⁸⁶ O'Neill, p. 530; see also Thomas Auxter, “Kant's Conception of the Private Sphere”, *The Philosophical Forum* (1981) pp. 295-310.

⁸⁷ AA VIII:37-38 [*Political Writings*, p. 56]. In his discussion of freedom of expression, Klein had used the examples of military officers and of writers addressing religious issues; “Über Denk- und Drukfreiheit”, *Berlinische Monatsschrift* III:327-328 [Hinske pp. 404-405].

⁸⁸ For a discussion of the changing conception of the “public” in eighteenth-century Germany, see John Christian Laursen, “The Subversive Kant: The Vocabulary of ‘Public’ and ‘Publicity’”, *Political Theory* 14:4 (1986) pp. 584-588. For an analysis of the composition of the new reading public, see Horst Müller, *Vernunft und Kritik* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1986), pp. 268-280).

⁸⁹ AA VIII:37-38 [*Political Writings*, pp. 56-7].

⁹⁰ AA VIII:38 [*Political Writings*, p. 56]. In an explanatory footnote in his translation of the essay, Ted Humphrey — apparently unfamiliar with the dispute on the “symbolic books” — assumes that Kant is invoking the distinction between “schematized” and “symbolized” concepts from the *Critique of Judgment* (see *Perpetual Peace and Other Essays* p.47, fn. 8).

⁹¹ For Mendelssohn's critique, see *Gesammelte Schriften* 8:131-142 [*Jerusalem* trans. by Allan Arkush (Hanover: Brandeis University Press, 1983) pp. 63-75]. For a discussion of the Lutheran symbolic books and of Nicolai's novel, see Altmann's commentary in the translation of *Jerusalem* p. 192.

⁹² Mendelssohn, *Gesammelte Schriften* 8:131-132 [translation pp. 63-64]

⁹³ Mendelssohn, *Gesammelte Schriften* 8:132-133 [translation pp. 64-65].

⁹⁴ Mendelssohn, *Gesammelte Schriften* 8:135-136 [translation pp. 68].

⁹⁵ Johann David Michaelis, review of *Jerusalem* in *Orientalische und Exegetische Bibliothek* (1783) 22:326 pp. 59-99 and 22:332 pp. 165-170. J.F. Zöllner, *Über Moses Mendelssohns Jerusalem* (Berlin, 1784).

⁹⁶ "Über die 39 Artikel der englischen Kirche und deren Beschwörung" in *Berlinische Monatsschrift* III (1784) pp. 24-41 [Mendelssohn, *Gesammelte Schriften* 8:213-224]. Mendelssohn's criticism of the Anglican equivalent of the symbolic books — the "Thirty-Nine Articles" — had prompted Michaelis to argue that Mendelssohn had slandered the English clergy and to solicit a letter from England critical of Mendelssohn's discussion of the Thirty-Nine Articles. The relevant parts of Michaelis' review are reprinted in Mendelssohn, *Gesammelte Schriften* 8:207-213; for a discussion of the affair, see Altmann, *Moses Mendelssohn* pp. 530-531 and "Kant und die Berliner Aufklärung" in *Akten des 4. Internationalen Kant-Kongresses, Mainz 1974*, Teil II, 1: Sektionen, ed. Gerhard Funke (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1974), pp. 61-64.

⁹⁷ Zöllner, pp. 58-59. As Eberhard Günter Schulz notes ["Kant und die Berliner Aufklärung", pp. 64-65], Zöllner's distinction between church and religion was later employed by Kant in his *Rechtslehre* [AA VI:327].

⁹⁸ In Mendelssohn's defense, it should be noted that *Jerusalem* was not completely indifferent to the distinction between religion — as a set of beliefs — and the

church — as an institution. See Mendelssohn, *Gesammelte Schriften* 8:110 [*Jerusalem* p. 41] and Altmann's commentary to the translation, pp. 143, 168

⁹⁹ AA VIII:38 [*Political Writings*, p. 56]

¹⁰⁰ AA VIII:38 [*Political Writings*, pp. 56-57]. Kant does not discuss whether an officer would have the right to resign his commission rather than carry out an order, nor does he indicate what course of action would be open to a citizen whose tax money supports causes which the citizen finds morally objectionable. This may indicate that, as we shall see below, the essay was initially provoked by Zöllner's critique of Mendelssohn and that Kant did not work out the implications of his argument beyond this particular issue.

¹⁰¹ This was first pointed out by Gisbert Beyerhaus' 1921 *Kant-Studien* article "Kants 'Program' der Aufklärung aus dem Jahre 1784" now reprinted in *Materialien zu Kants Rechtsphilosophie*, ed. Zwi Batscha (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1976) pp. 151-166

¹⁰² Beyerhaus reproduces the relevant documents on pp. 161-164.

¹⁰³ Beyerhaus, pp. 158-159 and Schulz p. 69; for Kant's review see AA VIII:9-14 and the brief discussion in Michel Despland, *Kant on History and Religion* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1973) pp. 21-22. It should also be noted that the *Critique of Pure Reason* was dedicated to von Zedlitz.

¹⁰⁴ AA VIII:40-41 [*Political Writings*, pp. 58-59].

¹⁰⁵ AA VIII:37 [*Political Writings*, p. 55].

¹⁰⁶ AA VIII:41 [*Political Writings*, p. 59].

¹⁰⁷ AA VIII:41 [*Political Writings*, p. 59].

¹⁰⁸ AA VIII:38-39 [*Political Writings*, p. 57]. Zöllner (p. 146) agreed with Mendelssohn that in deciding whether clergy had violated previously-agreed upon doctrines "everything depends on the time, the circumstances, and the state in which he

finds himself” (Zöllner is quoting here from Mendelssohn, *Gesammelte Schriften* 8:151 [*Jerusalem* p.83]). Requiring that clergy remain loyal to an unalterable set of doctrines would have horrendous consequences (Zöllner p. 84).

¹⁰⁹ AA VIII:39 [*Political Writings*, p. 57].

¹¹⁰ AA VIII:39 [*Political Writings*, p. 57]. This is Kant’s reformulation of the social contract; see “On the Common Saying: ‘This May be True in Theory, but it does not Apply in Practice’” (AA VIII:304 [*Political Writings*, p. 85]).

¹¹¹ AA VIII:39 [*Political Writings*, p. 57].

¹¹² AA VIII:39-40 [*Political Writings*, p. 58].

¹¹³ See Schulz, “Kant und die Berliner Aufklärung” pp. 60-80. For this reason I think that the otherwise exemplary article by John Christian Laursen is wrong in suggesting that Kant focused on the clergy and matters of religion because “he probably felt that this would meet the least opposition from Frederick the Great’s censors” (p. 589). If Schulz is correct, the issues of the clergy and religion loom so large in Kant’s essay because he assumed that Mendelssohn’s response to Zöllner’s question would deal with Zöllner’s virtually simultaneous critique of *Jerusalem*.

¹¹⁴ See Elise Reimarus’ letter to Mendelssohn of August 4, 1783, which includes the relevant fragment of Jacobi’s letter to her: Mendelssohn, *Gesammelte Schriften* 13:120-123. For a brief discussion of her father’s writings, which were entrusted to Lessing and published anonymously by Lessing after Reimarus’ death, see Henry E. Allison, *Lessing and the Enlightenment* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1966) pp.42-49.

¹¹⁵ For discussions of the dispute, see Frederick Beiser, *The Fate of Reason: German Philosophy from Kant to Fichte* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987) pp. 44-126; Beck, *Early German Philosophy* pp. 352-74; and Heinrich Scholz, ed.,

Die Hauptschriften zum Pantheismusstreit zwischen Jacobi und Mendelssohn (Berlin: Reuther & Reichard, 1916), pp. lix-lxxvii.

¹¹⁶ Throughout the fall of 1785, Hamann sent encouraging reports to Jacobi telling of Kant's satisfaction with Jacobi's presentation of Spinoza's system and of Kant's intention to write an essay which would "contest Mendelssohn's views in the coolest fashion" Johann Georg Hamann, *Briefswechsel* (Frankfurt: Insel, 1975) VI:77, 107, 119, 161. From the other camp, Johann Erich Biester urged Kant, in November of 1785, to speak out against Jacobi's "philosophical fanaticism" (Johann Erich Biester, letter to Kant of November 8, 1785 [AA X:417-8]) and Marcus Herz, Mendelssohn's friend and Kant's former student, wrote at the end of February 1786 to inform Kant that rumors were circulating throughout Berlin that "you are going to publish a short essay against Jacobi's book" Marcus Herz, letter to Kant of February 27, 1786 (AA X:431-433 [*Philosophical Correspondence* p. 121]). For a discussion of Kant's position in the "Pantheism Controversy", see A. Philonenko's introduction to Kant, *Qu'est-ce que s'orienter dans la pensée*, translation, commentary and notes by A. Philonenko (Paris: J. Vrin, 1959) pp. 15-27.

¹¹⁷ AA VIII:134 ["What is Orientation in Thinking?" translated by Lewis White Beck in Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason and Other Writings in Moral Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949) p. 294]

¹¹⁸ AA VIII:134 ["What is Orientation in Thinking?" p. 294]