



Intellectual History Review

ISSN: 1749-6977 (Print) 1749-6985 (Online) Journal homepage: <https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rihr20>

Priestley in Germany

Paola Rumore

To cite this article: Paola Rumore (2020) Priestley in Germany, *Intellectual History Review*, 30:1, 145-166, DOI: [10.1080/17496977.2020.1687920](https://doi.org/10.1080/17496977.2020.1687920)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/17496977.2020.1687920>



Published online: 19 Dec 2019.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 13



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)



Priestley in Germany

Paola Rumore

Dipartimento di Filosofia e Scienze dell'educazione, Università degli Studi di Torino, Torino

ABSTRACT

The paper focuses on the reception of Priestley in Germany, which is remarkable for the huge and assiduous interest it raised in different philosophical milieus. Priestley's dynamical conception of matter, his explanation of the functioning of the brain, and of the production of material ideas are at the basis of the new form of materialism that develops in Germany in the late 1770s, and which differs completely from the model of mechanical materialism Germany was used to in earlier decades. Indeed, the German reception of Priestley's ideas begins surprisingly early, just one year after the publication of his edition of Hartley's *Observations on Man* (1775), and traverses the two final decades of the eighteenth century with a considerable number of reviews and references in the main philosophical journals and works of the time. In 1778, his introduction to the *Observations* was translated into German and presented in the form of a manifesto of a new materialistic philosophy compatible with the claims of morals and religion. Within a few years, Priestley became the unavoidable reference point for the most relevant theological and philosophical discussions concerning the nature of matter and spirits, the place of God, the possibility of human freedom, and the legitimacy of free thinking.

KEYWORDS

materialism; philosophical necessity; vindication of Christianity

Dealing with the presence of Joseph Priestley in eighteenth-century Germany can be a very challenging task. The broad spectrum of Priestley's intellectual engagement is mirrored in the variety of paths through which his ideas reached the German world. In the present paper, I will not take into account the reception of his scientific investigations, which was remarkable and influential.¹ I will focus instead on the disseminations of his philosophical and theological ideas, in order to better understand what it meant to refer to Priestley at the time. The question that has driven my investigation concerns the “image” of Priestley that became current in the German philosophical milieu during the eighteenth century, the “image” that, for instance, Kant and Tetens must have had in mind when they took him as a very precise reference point in the philosophical debate. As the transfer of ideas at that time was mainly dependent upon the abilities of translators and the choices of the reviews, I have preferred to focus on those sources in order to understand which features of Priestley's work were promoted or criticized, or simply judged relevant to the German debate of the time. Following this line, I have left aside the investigation of the more-or-less manifest presence of Priestley's ideas in the main philosophical

systems of the time, such as Kant's, Tetens', or of the German empiricists in Göttingen; an investigation at least partially undertaken by recent scholars,² in relation to which the present research aims at offering a sort of historical prolegomenon.

1. A retrospective look: Priestley between Germany and Britain

The massive presence of Joseph Priestley in the German cultural debate of the late eighteenth century can be easily perceived by leafing through one of the most successful *Geschichten der Philosophie* published in Göttingen in the very first years of the following century, in which the author devotes special attention to the role the British thinker played in the main philosophical disputes that were going on at the time inside and outside Germany. In the fifth volume of his monumental *Geschichte der neueren Philosophie seit der Epoche der Wiederherstellung der Wissenschaften* (1804),³ Johann Gottlieb Buhle – who can be legitimately considered the main representative of the philosophical historiography in Göttingen, in line with Johann Gottfried Eichorn's decision to put him at the head of the philosophical section of his ambitious project of an omnicomprehensive *Geschichte der Künste und Wissenschaften* in eleven volumes (1796) – places Priestley at the center of a more than 100-page-long presentation of the current British philosophical debate, the one on materialism and determinism, which plays a key role even within the national borders of the German world.⁴ In fact, according to Buhle's insightful presentation, British philosophy turns out to be doubly intertwined with German culture: on the one hand, it enabled a progression in the philosophical debate that Germany, still anchored to the old and dusty approach of Wolffian philosophy, was unable to carry on by itself; and, on the other, it raised new problems, the solution to which would only be found in the later "revolution in thinking" promoted by Immanuel Kant.⁵ Buhle's scheme belongs undoubtedly to the clear teleological orientation of his historiographical reconstruction; Buhle being in fact one of the "three Bs" of the Kantian front in Göttingen.⁶ The teleological approach, however, doesn't prevent him from identifying clearly the reasons and the outcome of the massive attention Germany devoted to Priestley in the last three decades of the eighteenth century.

Buhle sees precisely at the core of the philosophical debate of the modern era the issues of materialism and determinism, which involve in their development much broader philosophical questions. While, dealing with that debate, eighteenth-century German philosophy got stuck in the opposition between an irreligious and even atheistic fatalism and the defense of free will as the basis of any moral and religious concern, in Britain the discussion seemed to have moved a step further, by introducing an idea of materialism and philosophical necessity, which claimed to be compatible with the main issues of morals and Christianity. According to Buhle, this improvement had both a cultural and political origin; indeed, it was promoted by the firm demand for the freedom of thought (*Geistesfreiheit*) which Britain carried on through its internal political conflicts, and which, at the end, was officially acknowledged and legitimated by the public law. Differently from France, where the battle in favor of the freedom of thought was animated exclusively by a "vivid hatred against the despotism of the government and the spiritual authority", "passionately directed toward the opposite extreme", and reached its goal as a mere "fruit of mood, wit, and mischief" (*Frucht der Laune, des Witzes, des Muthwillens*), Britain was driven by a "cultural" ideal, that is by the "pure concern for truth" which should animate every philosophical inquiry.⁷

Those circumstances allowed British thinkers to develop a form of materialism and determinism which didn't lead necessarily to the "opposite extreme", i.e. to the highly feared form of fatalism that subverts the principles of morality and leads to reject both natural and revealed religion as such. Buhle assigns Joseph Priestley a key role in this process; indeed, by incarnating the very idea of a free thinker, he distanced himself from the British philosophical mainstreams of his time. He defended, on the one hand, "the rights of natural religion against Hume" and, on the other, "the rights of philosophical reason" against the Scottish supporters of common sense philosophy, namely Reid, Beattie, and Oswald.⁸

Following his conviction about Priestley's pivotal role in the discussion outside and inside Germany, Buhle introduces in his work a very detailed presentation of his materialism and necessitarianism, with the clear aim to pinpoint their compatibility with the claims of moral responsibility, with the rational proof of God's existence, and in general with the truths of Christianity. Actually, Buhle was not completely wrong in judging that the German Republic of Letters had been trapped for quite a long time in a still inadequate idea of materialism. The glorious season of the German struggle against materialism that moved uninterruptedly from the mid-1720s – the time of the conflict between Christian Wolff and the theologians in Halle and Jena⁹ – to the late 1750s – the time of the most massive French "hegemony" at the Prussian court – was entirely dominated by the same idea of materialism introduced in Germany by Leibniz through the mediation of Wolff, and immediately taken over and somehow "canonized" by the main philosophical lexica of the time.¹⁰ According to that idea, materialism was identified with that kind of monistic metaphysics supported by ancient atomists, like Democritus and Epicurus, and in modern times by Hobbes and even Spinoza.¹¹ It was in the end – at least in the very influential image Wolff had provided in his *German Metaphysics* – a kind of "mutilation" of Descartes' dualism, with which it shared the same notion of matter as a merely passive substance, ruled by mechanical laws. This short-sighted perspective helps to understand, for instance, the reason why German philosophy did not manage to grasp the peculiarity of the newest form of "non-mechanical" materialism – such as La Mettrie's – which relied on a different concept of matter, now endowed in its organization with immanent active forces.¹²

By the time Buhle was working on his historiographical overview the situation had changed and, primarily thanks to Priestley's work, Germany seemed to have abandoned the historical and theoretical bias toward materialism that for so many decades had worked as a distorting filter in the understanding of this philosophical issue. Indeed, Priestley had developed his philosophical system on the basis of a different idea of matter in order to pass safely between the Scylla and Charybdis of an atheistic materialism and a pious but inconsistent immaterialism. That is why, in the *Disquisitions relating to Matter and Spirit* (1777), he openly rejects what Buhle in 1803 still presents as "the common opinion about matter" – a solid, impenetrable, and inert substance – and replaces it with a notion that includes in it peculiar powers, such as "the reciprocal attraction and repulsion of all its parts".¹³ By showing that the organization of matter can produce sensation and thought by itself, without the intervention of any alleged spiritual being, Priestley argues for a new form of psychological materialism, by means of which he manages – at least in Buhle's view – to reach a twofold goal. Firstly, he develops an idea of human being as a "uniform composition"¹⁴ that eludes the many difficulties implied by every dualistic

conception of human nature, among which are of course the many artificial attempts philosophers have made in order to explain how those completely heterogeneous substances could reciprocally interact, and to make understandable the almost incomprehensible descriptions of the condition of the soul before the birth of the body or between the corporeal death and the final resurrection.¹⁵ By doing so, as Buhle promptly remarks, Priestley shows that materialism is the most “easy and suitable” way to understand human nature as we experience it.¹⁶ Secondly, he provides Christian religion with a metaphysical system that reinforces its fundamental truths and removes the doctrinal corruptions originated from its pagan contaminations, such as the belief in the immortality of the soul.¹⁷ In fact, this belief, which cannot be supported by rational proof and even less by means of empirical observation, finds reliable ground only in the teachings of Christian revelation, and in particular in the doctrine of resurrection.

Buhle considers this twofold goal Priestley’s most important contribution to the way out from a debate that had somehow paralyzed German philosophy. By unveiling the “ungrounded prejudice against materialism”¹⁸ that identifies it with atheism and irreligion, Priestley has promoted a new metaphysics capable of safeguarding the claims of Christianity. Indeed, by combining his psychological materialism with a sort of cautious and modest epistemic attitude that clearly derives from his Lockean background, Priestley rejects the analogy between human and divine nature in favor of the acceptance of a highest essential difference between them.¹⁹ The materialistic conception of human beings does not necessarily imply a form of “general” materialism that involves a materialistic idea of God. In Buhle’s words: “God is and always has to be *unconceivable (unbegreiflich)* to us”;

what we worship in God are the properties of the highest wisdom, the omnipotence, the infinite goodness, the prescience that dominates everything. Whatever the nature of the being with those properties might be, he must be equally worthy, we might call him material or immaterial.²⁰

According to Locke’s methodological caveat, Priestley argues that, even if one can provide a valid rational demonstration of God’s existence, his ultimate nature remains, like every real essence, beyond the boundaries of human knowledge.

The boundaries of human knowledge open the space for Revelation, which can teach what reason cannot reach by its own means, and this is precisely how it works with the second cornerstone of religion, usually considered under the menace of materialism; that is, the belief in the immortality of the soul. Such a belief, which Priestley considers as an important support for but not a necessary ground of moral agency, cannot be coherently proved either rationally or empirically; any attempt to preserve a special realm for the soul, the activity of which is clearly connected to the structure and disposition of our brain, cannot but fail. The soul ceases with the corruption of the physical body. But it is precisely in this very point that Priestley’s materialism reveals its unexpected potentiality, i.e. its perfect harmonization with Christian faith. By announcing the final resurrection, Revelation is therefore presented by Priestley as the only means in support of our hope for a future life, which prevents the contradictions of a dualistic metaphysics. That is why deists, like Priestley’s friend and political ally Thomas Paine, in their rejection of positive religion find themselves compelled to admit in a very inconsistent way the immortality of the soul; hence, they fail in their apology for religion and come close to atheism.²¹

In his appreciative presentation, Buhle cannot refrain from noting the philosophical weakness of Priestley's argument in favor of materialism, which paradoxically would be agreeable for Christians, but not for the supporters of natural religion.

[Priestley] unquestionably deserves credit for having better brought to light the connection between the Christian revealed doctrine of resurrection and the philosophical concepts of human immaterial souls [...]. Materialism seems to be better suited to the doctrine of resurrection than spiritualism, even if Priestley seems to go too far and to be run over by his own mistake when he considers the same (Christian) doctrine and the holy authors as materialists, interpreting any passage of the Bible that concerns the soul in favor of materialism. In fact, only by means of Christian positive theology materialism can be made more agreeable, that is insofar it grounds the doctrine of resurrection; [but] philosophers who rest their arguments on the sole basis of reason and experience won't benefit at all from that system.²²

2. Priestley's agreeable materialism

In fact, Buhle detects at the origin of Priestley's philosophical project a kind of "prejudice in favor of religion"; a prejudice that might have made him more warmly welcomed in late eighteenth-century Germany. This consideration weakens, on the one hand, Priestley's strictly philosophical coherence but reinforces, on the other, the image of Priestley as "apologist for Christianity", which today is overwhelmingly recognized as the fundamental feature of his intellectual engagement,²³ and which undoubtedly represents the dominant aspect in his reception on German soil.

In this context, there is at least a very interesting historical circumstance which deserves to be mentioned. It concerns the fate of a philosophical work strictly connected to Priestley's intellectual activity, namely David Hartley's *Observations on Man, his Frame, his Duty, and his Expectations* (1749), which is notoriously the work that awakened, in around 1770, Priestley's interest in the materialistic explanation of human nature, and the revised edition of which made him famous in the philosophical world. Hartley's *Observations* were promptly discussed and translated outside England, very early in France (1755),²⁴ and a bit later in Germany (1772–1773). The way the work was introduced into the two countries is extremely meaningful in order to understand the attitude of those respective cultures toward such a ground-breaking image of the working of the mind, and of human nature in general. In fact, the two heterogeneous parts of Hartley's work matched perfectly the theological and scientific inclinations of the German and French intellectual worlds, so that – as reported by Friedrich Lange in his influential *History of Materialism* – "the German [translator] holds the theological portion to be the most important, and gives only a concise sketch of the theory of associations, [while] the French translator confines himself to the physiological explanation, and leaves the theological out".²⁵ While the French *Explication physique des sens, des idées, et des mouvemens, tant volontaires qu'involontaires*, published by the abbot Henri Jurain, was dedicated to Buffon, the German translation was dedicated to Johann Joachim Spalding, whose *Bestimmung des Menschen* (1748) had formulated, in the very same years of Hartley's work, the new direction of the German trends in philosophy and theology, in particular against the materialistic position promoted by La Mettrie's *Homme-machine* just one year before.

In fact, Spalding was the one who had called the attention of his younger friend Hermann Andreas Pistorius (1730–1798) to Hartley’s work, promoting the idea of a German translation of the text. Pistorius – a rather obscure though interesting parish priest, well acquainted with English philosophy, and today merely known as an insightful opponent of Kantianism – committed the translation to a certain Magister von Spieren, a preacher in Samtens, keeping for himself the task to revise and integrate the text with annotations and additions.²⁶ The two-volume work came out in 1772–1773 with the title *David Hartleys Betrachtungen über den Menschen, seine Natur, seine Pflicht und Erwartungen*; Pistorius’ notes concern only the ethical and religious part of the work, while the mechanistically psychological part is reduced to a really basic presentation.²⁷ The importance of such a text was, in Pistorius’ eyes, the successful attempt “to put the doctrine of necessity – a high contested doctrine because of its alleged inconsistency with morality and religion – at the basis of theoretical and practical religion, and of human hopes”, providing a “new proof of the truth of Christian faith”.²⁸ Hartley, who Pistorius knew was suspected *malgré lui* to be a materialist and who was not always properly cautious in expressing his opinion, had to be made available to the German Republic of Letters.²⁹ The translation was very positively reviewed the year after in the *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek* by G.E. Schmidt, who didn’t hesitate to declare that the importance of the work for the German world had to be seen in Pistorius’ annotations, by means of which he managed to remove any suspicion of materialism and irreligion from Hartley’s theory of human nature.³⁰

Hartley might have been the first contact between Pistorius and Priestley, as Pistorius had probably been informed pretty early of the fact that the work he had just translated and accurately annotated had been reprinted in a very revised edition by someone who was stressing precisely those claims in the text that Pistorius had denounced as not sufficiently “cautious” in their winking at materialism. Priestley’s edition came out in England in 1775; in 1776 it was reviewed by the Göttingen professor Christoph Meiners (1747–1810) in the *Göttingische Anzeigen* and by an anonymous reviewer in the *Frankfurter gelehrte Anzeiger*.³¹ With this new edition, the focus on Hartley’s work changed radically; Priestley had notoriously included a very well-focused selection in the material he was editing, putting at the very center of his introductory essays Hartley’s mechanism of the soul and its physiological basis, and the theory of vibrations that allows a proper explanation of the transmission of sense data to the brain and their elaboration. Such a physiological materialism didn’t lack opponents, even from the side of the physicians, among which Johann Heinrich Albert Reimarus, the son of the famous theologian, raised his voice against Priestley’s claim of a “material faculty of representations” by recalling arguments already discussed in Tetens’ *Philosophische Versuche*.³² In contrast with such a critical approach, both reviewers of Priestley’s edition agree in moving into the foreground the image of Hartley as a “Newton in psychology”,³³ explicitly suggested in the first introductory essay. To stress the tight connection between Hartley and Newton represented a very efficacious strategic choice, which, in mid-1770s Germany, was clearly understandable as lining up with the new philosophical and scientific trend promoting empiricism instead of dogmatism, observation instead of deductive reason, and experimentalism instead of rational metaphysics. That was precisely the position of Meiners, whose programmatic *Revision der Philosophie*, published just a few years earlier (1772), represented in Germany the clearest *manifesto* for the campaign in favor of an empirical

approach in philosophy clearly inspired by Locke, and an attack against the claims of deductive metaphysics. Promoting Priestley's philosophical interpretation of Hartley's physiology meant explicitly to be positioned alongside Locke and Newton against the old guard of German philosophy in a struggle originated at the Prussian court in the early 1740s and never completely brought to an end.³⁴

This new approach in philosophy and science animates Meiners' investigations on human nature, according to him and to the cultural agenda of that time the main topic of any philosophical inquiry. By identifying logic and psychology, he describes the nature of the "soul" by means of the working of the "mind", and he praises Charles Bonnet for having introduced the physiological theory of nerve fibers in psychological investigations. Priestley's readaptation of Hartley's physiology perfectly fits his own aims, and he sees clearly the philosophical (and religious) implications of such an approach:

Through this theory [i.e. the theory of vibrations] the powers of the soul and their operations will all be transformed in mere properties and movements of matter: but this conclusion can be frightening only for those, who ground their hope for the immortality of the soul exclusively on its dubious immateriality. [On the contrary, Priestley] thinks it is more comprehensible to conceive humans as composite beings made of an homogeneous mass, that they cease to be right after death, with no other hope for a return to life except for the one offered by the Revelation.³⁵

Differently from Pistorius, in this review and in his general approach, Meiners doesn't need to find an excuse for such a materialistic psychology; he doesn't seem to regret the fact that this time, differently from what happened with Pistorius' annotations, Hartley's work hasn't ended up in "safe hands" capable of "domesticating" its dangerous contents for the German audience.³⁶ But this doesn't seem to frighten Meiners at all, who goes on in the description of the contents, without refraining from reproaching Priestley for his questionable acquaintance with the history of philosophy, and even with Locke's theory of ideas.³⁷ Meiners' conclusive consideration concerning Hartley's interesting remarks on human nature and the hope for a broader circulation of his ideas by means of the Priestley edition might be read as a suggestion to make the text available to the German world with a new updated translation, or at least with a translation of the introductory essays that are in fact at the very center of Meiners' discussion.

The translation and the edition of Priestley's essays was completed just a couple of years later by Meiners' young colleague at the Georgia Augusta, Michael Hißmann (1752–1784), who published it as "supplements to the German Hartley" in the first issue of the philosophical journal he had just founded, the *Magazin für Philosophie und ihre Geschichte*.³⁸ The importance of Priestley's materialistic approach for Hißmann's inquiry on human nature can hardly be overstated, and seems to be the most investigated episode of Priestley's reception in Germany. His major work, the *Psychologische Versuche* – published anonymously in 1777, while he was probably already working at the Priestley translation – and the *Briefe über Gegenstände der Philosophie* from 1778, present clear traces of Priestley's presence and reveal in general a very close acquaintance with different models of theories of the brain and of the physiological process at the basis of mental phenomena.³⁹ Hißmann discusses extensively the opposition between Hartley's theory of nerve vibration, the "Newtonsche oder Hartleysche Hypothese", and Albrecht von Haller's theory of nerve

spirits.⁴⁰ The name of Priestley appears only twice in the *Psychologische Versuche*; in the first occurrence, he is mentioned in connection with Hartley, of course, but also with Condillac, Helvetius, Bonnet, Search, Robinet, and the German Lossius, as those “physiological and anatomical psychologists” (*physiologische und anatomische Psycholog[en]*) who are able to provide a theory of the soul suitable to its material nature.⁴¹ In the second, Priestley finally reaches the top step of the podium. Leaving aside the opposition between the dusty scene of German philosophy with its metaphysical psychologies, and the British avant-garde of the mild or wild supporters of thinking matter, Priestley managed to bring materialism to its highest form: “what *Hartley* was not willing to say out loud, even if it was fully implicated in his system, was taught explicitly by *Priestley* in his new edition of *Hartley’s work*.”⁴² Well before Buhle, Hißmann assigns Priestley a key role in providing a way out from a paralyzed philosophical debate.

Like Priestley, Hißmann grounds the materialistic conclusion of his *Versuche* on the idea that our mental capacities are tightly connected to the physical organization of the brain, so that it is incoherent and in contrast to every empirical evidence to conceive the soul as a simple, immaterial being. Nevertheless, neither for Priestley nor for Hißmann does this assumption necessarily lead to irreligion or atheism, even though for very different theoretical grounds. In fact, differently from Priestley, who claimed that the soul is properly mortal in the sense that every mental activity ceases with the death of the body, Hißmann argues that not all matter is necessarily destructible, and God’s omnipotence might have endowed that very peculiar portion of matter both with the capacity of thinking *and* with indestructibility. The soul might then be material and still not die with the body.⁴³ Even the subversion of morality, which was, beside atheism, the second accusation materialism had been charged with at the time, was prevented by Hißmann’s very refined analysis of inner sense, that is in the distinction between the feeling of our existence and the feeling of personal identity, which shows a clear Priestleyan echo.⁴⁴ The “peculiar combination of faith and Materialism”, which, according to Lange, “has kept its grounds in England down to our own days”,⁴⁵ doesn’t seem to be a British monopoly.

With Meiners and Hißmann, Göttingen unquestionably became the epicentre of the dissemination of Priestley’s philosophical work in Germany. This fact was surely encouraged by the political situation of the Electorate of Hannover (since 1714 under the crown of the United Kingdom), which had enabled a much more prolific exchange with British trends in philosophy and science than in other parts of Germany, but first and foremost by the progressive emergence of a firm opposition against the fruitless wandering of metaphysics in favor of a naturalistic, empirical approach.⁴⁶ The interest in British philosophy had prepared the ground for the very precocious reception of Priestley, whose *Examination of Dr. Reid’s Inquiry into the Human Mind, Dr. Beattie’s Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth, and Dr. Oswald’s Appeal to Common Sense* (1775) had been very positively reviewed in the very same year of its publication by one of the leading figures of the empirical orientation of the Georgia Augusta, Johann Georg Heinrich Feder (1740–1821).⁴⁷ Feder was not as radical as Meiners and Hißmann in metaphysics, but he was a strong supporter of Locke’s philosophy; Priestley didn’t represent for him the audacious inventor of a new viable materialistic path, as he did for his two colleagues, but rather the one who finally raised his voice against Reid and the Scottish detractors of

Locke's philosophy, denouncing the dangerous inclination toward scepticism of their appeal to common sense.⁴⁸

The promotion of Priestley's ideas continued even after the premature death of Hißmann, his main "intellectual heir" on the German soil. Between 1799 and 1780, Meiners engaged in a very prolific discussion of Priestley's work on materialism and determinism, which he conducted in a remarkable number of reviews in the *Göttingische Anzeiger*. Between February and May 1779, he published an extensive discussion of the *Disquisitions relating to Matter and Spirit* and of the *Doctrine of Philosophical Necessity*,⁴⁹ followed one year later by the review of *A Free Discussion of the Doctrine of Materialism, and Philosophical Necessity in a correspondence between Price and Priestley*.⁵⁰ Meiners' reviews represent once again the sole access to Priestley's work for non-English speaking Germans, as an *Auszug aus des Doktor Priestleys Abhandlung von der philosophischen Nothwendigkeit* would only be available for the German reader more than a decade later.⁵¹

The common denominator among Meiners' detailed reviews is the serious consideration given to Priestley's frank declaration of materialism and fatalism, definitely not something German philosophy was used to.⁵² Meiners' attitude toward Priestley rests primarily on the undeniable originality of some philosophical claims, among which he mentions of course the idea of active matter, the successful effort to explain thought and sensations as results of a certain physical organization, the general benefit of materialism in removing the contradictions of a dualistic conception of human nature, but also and primarily Priestley's insistence on the heterogeneity between human and divine nature, and his more-or-less successful efforts to show that materialism, far from being a threat for religion, provides a solid metaphysical support to the teachings of Revelation. Meiners praises above all Priestley's "well-intentioned efforts" (*gutgemeinte Bemühungen*)⁵³ in removing or mitigating the negative implications commonly ascribed to such a philosophical orientation. Priestley proves in a persuasive way that materialism doesn't lead necessarily and straight to atheism and to the denial of any hope in the after-life, as much as fatalistic determinism doesn't lead necessarily and straight to the denial of any moral responsibility in actions, of the coercive power of future rewards and punishments, and above all of divine providence. As Meiners synthesizes in his review of the (partial) correspondence between Priestley and Price on materialism and philosophical necessity, *fatalism* means nothing but the belief in the fact that "in the most perfect totality all is well; [we] live in the house of God where the supremely good being acts in us, through us and for us".⁵⁴ Even in Meiners' discussion, Priestley's "main concern to show the accordance of his opinion with the Holy Scriptures"⁵⁵ turns out to be the "added value" of his philosophical system. The (unusual) defense of natural and revealed religion turns out to be, once again, Priestley's access key to the German world.

3. A tolerant vindication: Priestley's defence of religion

The doctrine of philosophical necessity and its compatibility with morals and divine providence is at the center of another group of writings Meiners promptly discusses in the *Göttingische Anzeigen*. Between August 1780 and June 1781, he wrote extensive reviews of Priestley's second *Letter to Palmer in defence of the Illustrations of Philosophical Necessity*, and of a couple of polemical writings that allow him to take Priestley's side – sometimes in a quite aggressive way – against his opponents: the *Observations in Defence of the*

Liberty of Man as a Moral Agent, by John Palmer, and *An Address to Dr. Priestley upon his doctrine of Philosophical Necessity* by Jacob Bryant.⁵⁶

Meiners' timely and sympathetic reviews of Priestley's works – sometimes genuinely dense and detailed philosophical essays – might have been at the origin of the intense translation initiatives that took place between the 1780s and the 1790s, by means of which Germany came into direct contact with Priestley's ideas; or at least that is what might have happened in the case of his very positive review of the *Letters to a Philosophical Unbeliever*, which he published in the *Göttingische Anzeigen* in 1781, just one year after the original publication of Priestley's work.⁵⁷ Starting from the following year, two different translations came out in Germany: the first one was published in Leipzig in 1782 with the title *Joseph Priestley's Briefe an einen philosophischen Zweifler in Beziehung auf Hume's Gespräche, das System der Natur, und ähnliche Schriften*; the second one came out – together with a remarkable set of annotations – between 1785 and 1787 in three different issues of the *Beyträge zur Beförderung des vernünftigen Denkens in der Religion* with the title *Joseph Priestleys Briefe an einen philosophischen Ungläubigen, enthaltend eine Prüfung der wichtigsten Einwürfe gegen die Lehren der natürlichen Religion, insonderheit derjenigen, die in Humes Schriften enthalten sind*. The divergence in the German versions of Priestley's term “unbeliever” suggests the different approach of the translators; and, in fact, the first one stresses the philosophical nuance of the *unbeliever* as a *skeptic*, while the second one focuses on its religious implications, so that Priestley's polemical goal becomes the *Ungläubiger*, the enemy of natural and revealed religion. It is not an accident that the *Beyträge zur Beförderung des vernünftigen Denkens in der Religion* were edited by Johann Heinrich Corrodi (1752–1793), a major representative of reformed theology in Zürich.

The first translation had the broader circulation. The anonymous translator presents Priestley in the foreword as a real apologist for natural religion and equates him with Hermann Samuel Reimarus and Johann Friedrich Wilhelm Jerusalem, at the time the main advocates of natural religion in Germany.⁵⁸ According to their aim, “the letters do not present general explanations of the truths of natural religion, but their defence against the objections and the difficulties, which in the present situation are really urgent, or which are raised at most by their opponents”.⁵⁹ The anonymous translator agrees with Meiners' opinion in the review of the original English text, in which he claimed that, because of the closeness to Locke's methodological caveat, Priestley prefers to avoid the vain pursuit of irrefutable demonstrations in case the subject of the investigation doesn't allow that kind of *certainty*; in accordance with the acceptance of the boundaries of human insight, he rather suggests to settle for the highest degree of *probability*. Such a methodological claim drives Priestley's investigation of the truths of natural religion, such as the proof of God's existence, and our hope for a future life.⁶⁰ According to the translator, Priestley's ability to develop his inquiry by showing the likeliness of his statements and the unlikeliness of the related criticisms was a very successful way to drive the reader to his conclusions through a free examination. And here lies the ground of the urgency of a German translation: the way Priestley deals with topics that were commonly considered incompatible with his fundamental materialism and determinism shows that the freedom of thought cannot be dangerous by itself.⁶¹ His work is “an illuminating proof of the advantages of the undisturbed freedom of thought, and an instructive caveat against the zeal of a most fearful concern about the influence of some particular speculative doctrines”.⁶² Focusing on Priestley's methodological approach – a

successful combination of epistemic modesty (priority of probability on certainty in religious claims) and a concrete exercise of the freedom of thought (according to the idea that “free discussion must always be favourable to the cause of truth”⁶³) – the translator presents to the German world the basis of an apologetic program of rational Christianity that properly fits the attempts of a religious reform undertaken during the late German Enlightenment. For obvious reasons, Priestley’s apologetic claim found very warm approval within the milieu of the promoters of any form of natural religion – from the more-or-less radically oriented “deists” in Berlin to “new” Kantian supporters of a “pure rational faith” – all unanimously against the claims of an omnipersuasive deductive reason, able to grasp by its own means the deepest truths of revelation. Priestley was perceived as the successful opponent of what Kant in those same years was (half) praising as the German *Geist der Gründlichkeit*; a topic mentioned in the preface to Priestley’s translation,⁶⁴ which suddenly became central in the first reception of the work.

This translation was promptly reviewed in Germany and mentioned in the canonical histories of philosophy such as Wilhelm Gottlieb Tennemann’s *Geschichte der Philosophie*.⁶⁵ In 1784, it was reviewed by J.C.F. Baumann, together with the German translation of Priestley’s *Institutes of Natural and Revealed Religion*, in the *Kurze Nachrichten der Allgemeinen Deutschen Bibliothek*.⁶⁶ The reviewer of course praises “the brilliance of the author and his warm zeal for the venerable and most beneficent truths on which are based human rest, happiness and hope”;⁶⁷ but, in addition, he complains bitterly about Priestley’s renouncing the possibility of reaching a high degree of certainty in theological and metaphysical speculations, and remaining at the level of mere probability. The reason for such a complaint reveals the closeness of the reviewer to the conservative national front of German philosophy: Priestley’s approach is judged to be too weak to provide an efficacious antidote against Hume’s skepticism or against the immoral and atheistic *Système de la nature*, which Priestley himself had named the “Bible of atheism”. Too weak because of its lack of thoroughness. The proper cure for those who suffer from such a philosophical perversion can only be found in the purest German tradition, in “German philosophy and especially in the acquaintance with the Leibnizian school. Platner and Eberhard, for instance, will illuminate them where Priestley abandoned them”.⁶⁸ This is the “benefit of the German philosophical thoroughness”.⁶⁹ Priestley embodies the limits of the naturalistic, observative approach, which needs to be integrated by a higher deductive knowledge in conformity with the teachings of the noblest “national” philosophical tradition, i.e. with the *connubium rationis et experientiae* of the (Leibnizo-)Wolffian school. The progressive empiricist wave of Göttingen and its distrustful look at metaphysics didn’t spread across all of Germany.

But even in his more conservative milieu, in the strongholds of the national philosophical spirit, the reviewer was well disposed to recognize Priestley’s talent in presenting religious doctrines in an easy and complete way and with a noble warm tone; a talent almost unknown to most German theologians.⁷⁰ Instead of the fearful concern about the potential danger of the opinions of the unbelievers, the advocates of religion should take advantage from them in order to reach a better, rational justification of the truths usually accepted on the basis of “faithfulness and faith” (*Treue und Glaube*).⁷¹ This is exactly the way that led to the birth of Christian religion from pagan worship, and that should drive its purification from the current corruptions. Insisting on a topic that was at the center of the then-current

discussion on the “pluralistic” nature of every pursuit of truth,⁷² the reviewer notes the positive role of the unbelievers who allow religion to follow the same path of natural sciences toward reliable knowledge:

Thus it seems that the writings and speeches of the unbelievers of our age will undermine the foundations of the papal falsifications of Christianity, and will pave the way for the establishment of pure religion. [...] [Christianity] will reach such a fixed immutable character of truth, which it could never have reached without the opposition it has found. This was the fate of every part of true philosophy, of the Copernican system, of the Newtonian theory of light and color, and of Franklin’s theory of electricity!⁷³

The corruptions of Christianity were a typical Priestleyan topic. In 1782, Priestley had published a *History of the Corruptions of Christianity*, which became a highly controversial book for its attacks on the key teachings of the Christian doctrine, among which the Trinity, predestination, original sin, and atonement. The long, difficult personal process that brought him from Calvinism to Unitarianism⁷⁴ led him to see in the doctrine of the Trinity the greatest corruption of the original message; a corruption that he explained on the basis of his materialistic and deterministic orientation in philosophy. According to Priestley, in fact, the Holy Scriptures do not present a single element which could prove the divine nature of Christ, or the belief that the immateriality of the soul has to be essential to the belief in the afterlife. Those doctrines are, rather, the outcome of some ancient pagan influence that falsified the original message of Christianity.⁷⁵ As philosophy supports natural and revealed religion, rational Christianity – i.e. Christianity purified from its falsifications – is in accordance with the doctrines of philosophical necessity and materialism.⁷⁶

Key to his advocacy of these last, however, is the removal of false views and ancient prejudices: the association with ancient fatalism and modern Calvinism in the case of the former, and the deeply held view that matter of its nature is passive, inert, and impenetrable in the case of the latter. Matter’s supposed possession of these properties rendered it ineligible as a subject that could think or perceive.⁷⁷

The German reaction toward Priestley’s radical attack on some of the cornerstones of Revealed religion was prompt, but not univocal. German theologians had already discussed extensively some of Priestley’s early works, as well as his project of a *Theological Repository*.⁷⁸ In 1785, Johann Christoph Rudolph Eckermann, an evangelical theologian who had been a student of Feder in Göttingen, published a two-volume translation of Priestley’s controversial book with the title *Geschichte der Verfälschungen des Christenthums*.⁷⁹ The very flattering comparison with Reimarus and Jerusalem introduced by the translator of the *Letters to a Philosophical Unbeliever* is now repeated by Eckermann with the very polemical goal of putting Priestley in the same corner as the German apologists for reason.⁸⁰ By using similar “false grounds and artificial reasoning”,⁸¹ Priestley shares the same ideas of the German “enemies of the evangetic doctrine”,⁸² who – according to Eckermann – are at the end deists, Socinians, and antitrinitarians. The same negative judgment on Priestley’s *Geschichte* was expressed in the review of the work that appeared in the same year in the *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung*, in which the reviewer reproaches Priestley for his *Ungründlichkeit und Leichtigkeit*, which could be tolerated among the French, but not among the British.⁸³

Beside these harsh attacks – dissonant voices in the chorus of appreciations for Priestley’s attitude toward religion – the more moderate wing of German theology encouraged the circulation of Priestley’s work in order to promote the defense of natural religion that still, in the mid-1780s, was perceived as an urgent goal against the threat of atheism and heresy. In 1786, the Lutheran pastor Hermann Andreas Pistorius – who, as mentioned above, had already promoted and annotated the translation of Hartley’s *Betrachtungen über den Menschen* more than a decade earlier – wrote a preface to Priestley’s *Liturgie und Gebetsformeln zum öffentlichen Gottesdienst für Christen von allen Confessionen*, the German translation of the *Forms of Prayer and Other Offices* of 1783. Priestley’s work – originally meant for the use of Unitarian societies, and therefore slightly modified in the translation – is here presented as a useful example of a common liturgy for every Christian church, and most and foremost as an antidote to the unbelief that made Berlin most notorious inside and outside Germany.⁸⁴ According to Pistorius, the defense of religion can be carried on even looking at those authors such as Priestley, and Hartley beside him, who show that England does not produce only deism and free thinking, but also pure Christian apologists, animated by the sole pursuit of truth. In Pistorius’ preface, Priestley’s attempt to provide a common subset of rituals in the public worship of Christianity is welcomed as a successful means to preserving the integrity of Christianity and its fundamental truths against its enemies.⁸⁵ Such an attempt would bring undeniable advantages for religion, among which Pistorius mentions in the first place one of the *Kampffideen* of that time, i.e. the idea of tolerance; an idea that was very familiar to Priestley from the times of his education in the dissenting Academy in Daventry, and later developed, with some Lockean echoes, in his *Essay on the First Principles of Government* (1768). Priestley’s *Liturgie* becomes, in Pistorius’ eyes, the occasion to promote the same ideal of a “Reasonable tolerance and true compatibility” (*vernünftige Toleranz und wahre Verträglichkeit*)⁸⁶ among the different churches and doctrines. This kind of tolerance shouldn’t be pursued by the governors as a mere instrument of their political projects, for it is grounded in the unquestionable right of every human being; the

reasonable compatibility among the dissenters should be based only upon the mutual conviction that religious faith is an inalienable property of each human being, over which only his own conscience and God can exercise some right [...] faith and theoretical opinions in religion concern the state and the authorities only in so far as those beliefs and theories of religion could turn their supporters into bad citizens.⁸⁷

By stressing both the cultural and civil implications of Priestley’s program of a “tolerant vindication” of religious dissent, Pistorius was in fact insisting on the importance of such an “enlightened” approach in religious and philosophical matters for the political situation in Germany. The imminent death of Frederick the Great (August 1786) would have made such a teaching even more urgent.

What comes out, almost unexpected, in the German reception of Priestley is the positive aura that surrounds his name both in the philosophical and in the theological milieu. Of course, Priestley also finds critics and opponents in Germany, who attack some core theses of his philosophical system (his moral determinism, like Kant, his physiology of representation, like Tetens; just to mention two famous episodes) and his theological inquiries (*in primis*, his denial of the divine nature of Christ). However, differently than

elsewhere and differently from many other “materialists” that were recognized as such (La Mettrie, Holbach, Helvetius), Germany never seemed to have looked at him as at “the devil incarnate”.⁸⁸ On the contrary, both his philosophical and theological works seem to have played a very pivotal role in the promotion of some central ideas of the German Enlightenment. Priestley managed to defend with solid rational arguments the perfect compatibility between the methods of natural science and the investigation of human nature. By means of his “agreeable materialism” and the related doctrine of moral necessity – both of which he “rehabilitated” as dignified philosophical opinions – he proved and presented in the most intelligible way, he managed to revitalize a debate which, at least in Germany, had reached a dead end. He brought to light the contradictions involved in dualistic metaphysics and the illusory theory of free will, without denying the validity of religion, both in its natural and revealed components. In Germany, Priestley was not simply considered a model in the clarity of the exposition, but also a remarkable example of cultural and religious tolerance. His campaign for the freedom of thought and the senselessness of fearful prejudiced opinions in speculative and religious matter represent his main contribution to the German intellectual world, even beyond the single episodes of contaminations strictly connected to the transmission of particular ideas or speculative items.

Notes

1. Priestley’s scientific works had a broad circulation in Germany, first and foremost through an intensive activity of translation that includes, among others, the *Geschichte und gegenwärtiger Zustand der Optik* by the mathematician Georg Simon Klügel (1775–1776); the *Versuche und Beobachtungen über verschiedene Gattungen der Luft* (1778–1780); and the *Geschichte und gegenwärtiger Zustand der Electricität* by Johann Georg Krünitz (1772). Very often, the methodological introductory essays, in particular the one prefaced to the *Geschichte und gegenwärtiger Zustand der Electricität*, include important philosophical considerations.
2. Cf. Thiel, “Kant und der Materialismus des 18. Jahrhunderts”; Thiel, “Varieties of Inner Sense”; Thiel, “Hißmann und der Materialismus”; Wunderlich, “Assoziation der Ideen und denkende Materie”. Still useful is Zart, *Einfluss der englischen Philosophen seit Bacon*.
3. On Buhle’s idea of the history of philosophy and the reception of his work, cf. Piaia and Santinello, *Models of the History of Philosophy*, 787–838.
4. Cf. Buhle, *Geschichte der neueren Philosophie*, vol. V, 369–481.
5. Alluding to the problems raised by Priestley and solved by Kant, Buhle has in mind the Kantian attempt to reconcile the doctrine of philosophical necessity with the realm of freedom by recognizing the two-sided character – empirical and intelligible – of every natural existence (KrV A 538–541/B 566–569; the explicit reference to Priestley concerning this topic is in KrV A 745/ B 773).
6. The “three Bs” were Bouterwek, Buhle, Bürger; cf. Marino, *Praeceptores Germaniae*, 187. The expression goes back to Feder’s autobiography (*Leben, Natur und Grundsätze*, 129). It is interesting to see how Buhle interprets Priestley’s compatibilism between fatalism of the will and moral responsibility on the basis of Kant’s distinction between the causal series that go on in the realms of phenomena and noumena; cf. Buhle, *Geschichte der neueren Philosophie*, vol. V, 446.
7. Cf. Buhle, *Geschichte der neueren Philosophie*, vol. V, 372–373.
8. Cf. Buhle, *Geschichte der neueren Philosophie*, vol. V, 375.
9. On the dispute, cf. the standard work by Bianco, *Fede e sapere*. More recently, with a special focus on the relevance of the charge of materialism, Favaretti Camposampiero, “La chaîne des causes naturelles”; Rumore, “Between Spinozism and Materialism”.

10. For the central role played by Wolff in the introduction of the term “materialism” in German philosophy, cf. Rumore, *Materia cogitans*, ch. 1; Rumore, “Mechanism and Materialism in Early Modern German Philosophy”.
11. As a representative entry defining the meaning of materialism, one can consider the article *Materialisten* written in 1739 by the historian of Wolffianism Carl Günther Ludovici for the monumental *Universal-lexicon* published by Zedler: “Materialists [*Materialisten, materialistae*] are a wicked sect among the philosophers. They do not admit anything but bodies, and deny both that spirits exist and that human soul is different from body. They also consider the so-called spirits and souls a mere physical power (*cörperliche Krafft*), and not a self-subsisting being. Since they cannot deny that human beings have the power of understanding and a will, they ascribe them to the body rather than to the soul, as a spiritual being; or they claim that thoughts are produced by bodies by means of a mere physical power and that, on this basis, even a subtle matter, or a mere machine could think and want, and thus the body can move itself thanks to its mere mechanic structure [...]. Doing so, they do not only extinguish the idea of freedom and immortality of the soul; but from these premises derive many further detrimental consequences for religion and virtue” (Zedler, *Grosses vollständiges Universal-Lexicon*, vol. XIX).
12. On the distance between La Mettrie’s position and the Cartesian model of mechanism, cf. Vartanian, *La Mettrie’s l’Homme Machine*, 18–24; Thomson, *Materialism and Society in the mid-eighteenth Century*, 40–6; Thomson, *Bodies of Thought*, ch. 6. On Wolff’s misunderstanding of La Mettrie’s materialism and on the influence of his misinterpretation in Germany, cf. Rumore, “In Wolff’s footsteps”.
13. Buhle, *Geschichte der neueren Philosophie*, vol. V, 373. In the present context, we shall not go further into the main lines of Priestley’s materialism; for a very clear and precise presentation, cf. Yolton, *Thinking Matter*, 107–26.
14. Cf. Buhle, *Geschichte der neueren Philosophie*, vol. V, 376.
15. For solutions provided by the so-called British mortalists, Priestley was well acquainted with, cf. Thomson, “Matérialisme et mortalisme”, and also Thomson, *Bodies of Thought*, ch. 4.
16. Cf. Buhle, *Geschichte der neueren Philosophie*, vol. V, 383.
17. *Ibid.*
18. *Ibid.*, vol. V, 381.
19. *Ibid.*, vol. V, 394.
20. *Ibid.*, vol. V, 395.
21. On the topic, cf. Thomson, “Priestley, Paine et les *Philosophical Unbelievers*”.
22. Buhle, *Geschichte der neueren Philosophie*, vol. V, 404–5.
23. Cf. Rivers and Wykes, *Joseph Priestley, Scientist, Philosopher, and Theologian*; in particular, the contribution by Dybikowski, “Joseph Priestley, Metaphysician and Philosopher of Religion”. Cf. McEvoy, “Joseph Priestley, Scientist, Philosopher and Divine”.
24. The translation was published in Reims in 1755, and not in 1775 or 1785 as erroneously stated in Lange’s *Geschichte des Materialismus* and in its English translation, in which even the title of the translation is wrong.
25. Lange, *The History of Materialism*, 4th section, 6.
26. This information can be found in Pistorius’ Preface to Hartley, *Betrachtungen über den Menschen*, 1*–2*, 7*. Pistorius’ annotations were considered extremely important for a better insight in Hartley’s work and were therefore also translated into English; cf. the very interesting paper by Fairchild, “Hartley, Pistorius, and Coleridge”.
27. Ivi, 7*–8*: “I found, that of the two volumes of Dr. Hartley’s work in English, [...] the second only was properly fit for my purpose [...]. I therefore contented myself with giving a short though sufficient abstract of the first volume, which contains the association of ideas; but the second volume I have thought necessary to divide into two, and amplify it with my own observations”.
28. Pistorius, *Preface to Hartley, Betrachtungen über den Menschen*, 6*, 5*.
29. Pistorius, *Preface to Hartley, Betrachtungen über den Menschen*, 5*, 8*.
30. Schmidt, “Review of David Hartleys *Betrachtungen über den Menschen*”, 92.

31. *Hartley's Theory of the Human mind; with essays relating to the subject of it* by J. Priestley, 1775: reviewed in the *Göttingische Anzeigen*, 29–30 (7–9 March 1776): 249–53; in the *Frankfurter gelehrte Anzeige* 1776/5: 390–1. An anonymous review of Priestley's *Examination* announced that magister Hißmann in Göttingen was translating Priestley: *Frankfurter gelehrte Anzeige* (1776): 611–13.
32. Reimarus, "Betrachtung der Unmöglichkeit körperlicher Gedächtniss-Eindrücke". Cf. Tetens, *Philosophische Versuche*, preface and the first essay.
33. *Göttingische Anzeigen* 29–30 (7–9 March 1776): 250; *Frankfurter gelehrte Anzeige* (1776/5): 391.
34. On the topic, cf. Casini, "Newton in Prussia"; Casini, "Newton e la *philosophia naturalis* nel Settecento"; Stan, "Newton and Wolff".
35. *Göttingische Anzeigen* 29–30 (7–9 March 1776): 249–53: 252.
36. This was the opinion of Schmid in the review in the *Allgemeine Deutsche Bibliothek* mentioned above (1774/2: 104).
37. Meiners, review of Hartley's *Theory of the Human mind* in the *Göttingische Anzeigen* 29–30 (7–9 March 1776): 249–53: 252–253.
38. *Magazin für Philosophie und ihre Geschichte* 1 (1778): 5 (*Vorbericht*). Priestley's essays were published with the following titles: *Erster Versuch. Allgemeiner Abriß der Lehre von den Schwingungen*; *Zweyter Versuch. Allgemeine Schilderung der Lehre von der Assoziation der Ideen*; *Dritter Versuch. Von zusammengesetzten und abgezogenen Begriffen*.
39. Cf. Hißmann, *Psychologische Versuche* (in particular the first one: "Über die äußere Empfindung"); Hißmann. *Briefe über Gegenstände der Philosophie, an Leserinnen und Leser*.
40. Hißmann, *Psychologische Versuche*, I, 60.
41. Hißmann, *Psychologische Versuche*, Vorbericht, 47. The *Auszüge aus Dr. Priestley's Schriften über die Nothwendigkeit des Willens und über die Vibrationen der Gehirnnerven als die materiellen Ursachen des Empfindens und Denkens, nebst Betrachtungen über diese Gegenstände und einer Vergleichung der Vibrationshypothese mit Dr. Gall's Schädellehre* were only published in German in 1806.
42. Hißmann, *Psychologische Versuche*, V, 133. On Hißmann's and Meiners' polemical campaign against German metaphysicians, cf. Rumore, "Im Kampf gegen die Metaphysik".
43. Hißmann, *Psychologische Versuche*, V, 129. Hißmann's source for this claim is Bonnet, *Essai analytique sur les facultés de l'âme* (1760), cf. *ibid.*, 128.
44. Thiel, "Varieties of Inner Sense".
45. Lange, *The History of Materialism*, 4th section, 3.
46. On the role of Göttingen as "eine Art englischem Keil innerhalb der politischen und kulturellen Welt Deutschlands", cf. Marino, *Praeceptores Germaniae*, 14–17. On the circulation of the ideas of British philosophers in Hannover, beside Zart, *Einfluss der englischen Philosophen*, cf. F. Wunderlich, "Empirismus und Materialismus an der Göttinger Georgia Augusta". Manfred Kuehn comments on the importance of Johann Christian Lossius in the elaboration of a materialistic program in Göttingen, as he considers him "the German philosopher who went farthest in the acceptance of physiological explanations of the workings of the human mind [...]. He is considered as the most radical materialist philosopher of the German enlightenment, and his most significant work, *Die physischen Ursachen des Wahren* of 1774, is often taken as the example of a materialistic philosophy in eighteenth-century Germany" (Kuehn, *Scottish Common Sense in Germany*, 86–7).
47. *Göttingische Anzeigen* 92 (August 1775): 777–83.
48. Feder, review of Priestley's *Examination of Dr. Reid's Inquiry into the Human Mind, Dr. Beattie's Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth, and Dr. Oswald's Appeal to Common Sense* (1775). *Göttingische Anzeigen* 92 (August 1775): 777–83: 778.
49. Respectively, in the *Zugabe zu den Göttingischen Anzeigen* 7 (Feb. 1779): 97–108, and 19 (May 1779): 289–97.
50. *Zugabe zu den Göttingischen Anzeigen* 27 (July 1780): 425–8.
51. Priestley, *Auszug aus des Doktor Priestleys Abhandlung von der philosophischen Nothwendigkeit, und aus seinen mit dem Doktor Price über diese Lehre gewechselten Schriften*. The

- translator praises Priestley's clarity and is presented as an "exemple of how one can think profoundly using the ordinary language, and without introducing an artificial terminology" (St. 6, 1087). The polemical target is clearly the notorious jargon of Kantian philosophy.
52. *Zugabe zu den Göttingischen Anzeigen* 19 (May 1779): 289.
 53. *Ibid.*
 54. Review of *A Free Discussion of the doctrine of Materialism, and Philosophical Necessity, in a correspondence between Dr. Price and Dr. Priestley. Zugabe zu den Göttingischen Anzeigen* 27 (July 1780): 425–8: 428.
 55. *Zugabe zu den Göttingischen Anzeigen* 19 (May 1779): 297.
 56. Review of *Letter to Palmer in defence of the Illustrations of Philosophical Necessity by J. Priestley, a second letter. Göttingische Anzeigen* 5 (Jan. 1781): 36–7; *Observations in Defence of the Liberty of Man as a Moral Agent, in answer to Dr. Priestley's Illustrations of Philosophical Necessity, by J. Palmer. Göttingische Anzeigen* 99 (Aug. 1780): 805–8; *An Address to Dr. Priestley upon his doctrine of Philosophical Necessity illustrated by J. Bryant. Zugabe zu den Göttingische Anzeigen* 26 (June 1781): 414–15. On the context of those debates, cf. Schofield, *The Enlightened Joseph Priestley. A Study of His Life and Work from 1773 to 1804*, 86 f.
 57. Review of *Letters to a philosophical Unbeliever. Zugabe zu den Göttingischen Anzeigen* 26 (June 1781): 406–14.
 58. *Joseph Priestley's Briefe an einen philosophischen Zweifler in Beziehung auf Hume's Gespräche, das System der Natur, und ähnliche Schriften.* Leipzig 1782, Vorbericht, 3.
 59. *Ibid.*, 5.
 60. Meiners, review of Priestley's *Letters to a Philosophical Unbeliever. Göttingische Anzeigen* 26 (June 1781), 406–14: 407.
 61. *Joseph Priestley's Briefe an einen philosophischen Zweifler in Beziehung auf Hume's Gespräche, das System der Natur, und ähnliche Schriften.* Leipzig 1782, Vorbericht, 10.
 62. *Ibid.*, 11.
 63. Priestley, *The Doctrine of Phlogiston Established*, 2–3.
 64. *Ibid.*, 13.
 65. Cf. Tennemann, *Geschichte der Philosophie*, vol XI, 486–516: 489.
 66. Baumann, Review of *Joseph Priestley's Briefe an einen philosophischen Zweifler in Beziehung auf Hume's Gespräche das system der Natur, und ähnliche Schriften, aus dem Englischen, Leipzig, Weygand, 1782, and Joseph Priestley's Anleitung zur Religion nach Vernunft und Schrift – aus dem Englischen mit Anmerkungen. Erster und zweiter Band, Frankfurt-Leipzig, Garbe, 1782. Kurze Nachrichten der Allgemeinen Deutschen Bibliothek* 58 (1784): 38–41.
 67. *Ibid.*, 40.
 68. *Ibid.*, 41.
 69. *Ibid.*
 70. "Möchten auch doch unsre angehenden Theologen ihm etwas von seiner herrlichen Gabe, die Religionslehren leich und lichtvoll darzustellen, und von dem edeln warmen Ton seines Vortrags ablernen!" (*ibid.*, 39).
 71. *Ibid.*
 72. By using the expression "pluralism", I refer to one of the leading ideas of the *Aufklärung*, clearly formulated in Kant's *Anthropology*: "the opposite of egoism can only be *pluralism*, that is, the way of thinking in which one is not concerned with oneself as the whole world, but rather regards and conducts oneself as a mere citizen of the world" (Ak, VII, 130). Cf. Hinske, "Die tragenden Grundideen der deutschen Aufklärung", 436 ff.
 73. Baumann, Review of *Joseph Priestley's Briefe an einen philosophischen Zweifler in Beziehung auf Hume's Gespräche das system der Natur, und ähnliche Schriften, aus dem Englischen, Leipzig, Weygand, 1782, and Joseph Priestley's Anleitung zur Religion nach Vernunft und Schrift – aus dem Englischen mit Anmerkungen. Erster und zweiter Band, Frankfurt-Leipzig, Garbe, 1782. Kurze Nachrichten der Allgemeinen Deutschen Bibliothek* 58 (1784): 38–41: 39–40.

74. Cf., besides the classic monograph by Schofield, *The Enlightened Joseph Priestley. A Study of His Life and Work from 1733 to 1773*, Wykes, “Joseph Priestley, Minister and Teacher”.
75. In his review of Priestley’s *Disquisitions*, Meiners criticizes the idea that the doctrine of the separate soul has a pagan origin, and that, before Descartes, spirit and matter were not considered heterogeneous beings (Meiners, review of Priestley’s *Disquisitions*, *Zugabe zu den Göttingischen Anzeigen* 7 (Feb. 1779): 97–108: 106). This is only one of the many criticisms Meiners addresses to Priestley’s attempt to sketch historical reconstructions on the basis of very vague acquaintance with the history of philosophy.
76. On Priestley’s idea of rational Christianity, cf. McEvoy and McGuire, “God and Nature”.
77. Dybikowski, “Joseph Priestley, Metaphysician and Philosopher of Religion”.
78. *The Theological Repository* (1769–1771) was discussed by the Lutheran theologian Gottfried Less, a representative of the *Aufklärungstheologie*, in the *Göttingische Anzeigen* between 1771 and 1774 (May 1771): 460.462; 71 (June 1772): 602–6; 44 (April 1744): 372–6). Less is also the author of the reviews of Priestley’s *A free Address to Protestant Dissenters on the Subject of the Lord’s Supper* (1768), *Göttingische Anzeigen* 133 (1769): 1203–5, and of the second edition of *A view of the principles and conduct of the Protestant-Dissenters with respect to the civil and ecclesiastic Constitution of England* (1769), *Göttingische Anzeigen* 142 (1770): 1244–7. A very enthusiastic discussion of Priestley’s *An Appeal to the Serious and Candid Professors of Christianity* was published by Johann D. Michaelis in 1772 in the *Göttingische Anzeigen* 69 (June 1772): 587–91).
79. Priestley, *Geschichte der Verfälschungen des Christenthums* was published in the same year in Hamburg-Kiel (Bohn) and in Berlin (Siegismund Friedrich Hesse).
80. *Ibid.*, V–VI. Eckermann’s reference to the *Apologie der Vernunft* might be to Carl Friedrich Bahrdt, who had published a book with that title in 1781, but also to Reimarus’ *Apologie oder Schutzschrift für die vernünftigen Verehrer Gottes*, published by Lessing with the title *Fragmente eines Ungenannten* (1774–1778), and to Jerusalem’s *Vornehmsten Wahrheiten der Christlichen Religion* (1776³, 1768). Cf. Pockrandt, *Biblische Aufklärung*, 222. On Bahrdt, 447–59.
81. *Ibid.*, XXVI.
82. *Ibid.*, VI.
83. Cf. *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung* 194 (August 1785): 189–92, and 210 (Sept. 1785): 271.
84. Pistorius, preface to Priestley’s *Liturgie und Gebetsformeln zum öffentlichen Gottesdienst für Christen von allen Confessionen*, the German translation of the *Forms of Prayer and Other Offices*, XLIII.
85. *Ibid.*, XXVII.
86. *Ibid.*, XXXI.
87. *Ibid.*, XXXI–XXXII.
88. This expression is used by David L. Wykes in a useful description of the reactions to Priestley’s *History of Corruptions*: “In 1782 Priestley published his *History of the Corruptions of Christianity*. It was perhaps his most controversial and influential book. Priestley attacked the principal elements of the Christian doctrine: the Trinity, predestination, and atonement, which in his opinion were at odds with the views of the early Christians. According to Priestley the greatest corruption was the doctrine of the Trinity. Understandably such a bold and direct attack on one of the principal doctrines of the Church and orthodox Christianity as a whole did not go unanswered. In Holland in 1785 the book was banned. [...] His attack on the Trinity and his rejection of original sin and atonement provoked anger, but it was the way in which he applied Hartley’s materialist psychology that particularly disturbed the orthodox. His argument in *Disquisitions relating to Matter and Spirit* (1777) that the mind did not exist separate from the body and that Christ was human like us led to charges that he encouraged the growth of scepticism and atheism. For most orthodox Christians belief in the immateriality of the soul was essential to belief in the afterlife. By 1790 Priestley had become such an irritant to the orthodox that they almost came to see him as the devil incarnate” (Wykes, *Joseph Priestley, Minister and Teacher*, 41–2).

Notes on contributor

Paola Rumore is Associate Professor for the History of Modern Philosophy at the University of Turin. She works primarily in the history of 18th-century German philosophy, with a special focus on the Kantian and pre-Kantian debate on metaphysics, psychology, and materialism. She is the author of *L'ordine delle idee. La genesi del concetto di 'rappresentazione' in Kant attraverso le sue fonti wolffiane (1747-1787)*, Firenze 2007; *Materia cogitans. L'Aufklärung di fronte al materialismo*, Hildesheim 2013; *Idea*, «Lessico della filosofia», Bologna 2017. She has published the critical edition and the Italian translation of Georg Friedrich Meier's *Beyträge zu der Lehre von den Vorurtheilen des menschlichen Geschlechts*, Pisa 2005 (with N. Hinske and H.P. Delfosse), the volume *Kant und die Aufklärung*, Hildesheim 2011 (with L. Cataldi Madonna), and the special issue of the international Journal «Quaestio», *Another 18th-century German Philosophy? Rethinking German Enlightenment*, (XVI, 2016, with E. Pasini). She is currently working on a monograph on the debate concerning the immortality of the soul in 18th-century Germany.

Bibliography

- Anon. "Auszug aus des Doktor Priestleys Abhandlung von der philosophischen Nothwendigkeit, und aus seinen mit dem Doktor Price über diese Lehre gewechselten Schriften." *Deutsches Magazin* 6 (1793): 1086–1105; 7 (1794): 99–144.
- Anon. *Auszüge aus Dr. Priestley's Schriften über die Nothwendigkeit des Willens und über die Vibrationen der Gehirnnerven als die materiellen Ursachen des Empfindens und Denkens, nebst Betrachtungen über diese Gegenstände und einer Vergleichung der Vibrationshypothese mit Dr. Gall's Schädellehre*. Altona, 1806.
- Baumann, J.C.F. Review of Joseph Priestley's *Briefe an einen philosophischen Zweifler in Beziehung auf Hume's Gespräche das system der Natur, und ähnliche Schriften, aus dem Englischen*, Leipzig, Weygand, 1782, and *Joseph Priestley's Anleitung zur Religion nach Vernunft und Schrift - aus dem Englischen mit Anmerkungen. Erster und zweiter Band, Frankfurt-Leipzig, Garbe, 1782*. *Kurze Nachrichten der Allgemeinen Deutschen Bibliothek* 58 (1784): 38–41.
- Bianco, Bruno. *Fede e sapere. La parabola dell'«Aufklärung» tra pietismo e idealismo*. Napoli: Morano, 1992.
- Buhle, Johann Gottlieb. *Geschichte der neueren Philosophie seit der Epoche der Wiederherstellung der Wissenschaften*. Göttingen: Röwer, 1800–1804.
- Casini, Paolo. "Newton e la *philosophia naturalis* nel Settecento." In *Il libro della natura*, edited by Paolo Pecere, vol. I, 127–135. Roma: Carocci, 2015.
- Casini, Paolo. "Newton in Prussia." *Rivista di filosofia* 91 (2000): 251–282.
- Dybikowski, James. "Joseph Priestley, Metaphysician and Philosopher of Religion." In *Joseph Priestley, Scientist, Philosopher, and Theologian*, edited by Isabel Rivers, and David L. Wykes, 80–112. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Fairchild, Hoxie N. "Hartley, Pistorius, and Coleridge." *PMLA* 62 (1947): 1010–1021.
- Favaretti Camposampiero, Matteo. "La chaîne des causes naturelles. Matérialisme et fatalisme chez Leibniz, Wolff et leurs adversaires." *Dix-huitième siècle* 46 (2014): 381–398.
- Feder, Johann Georg Heinrich. *Leben, Natur und Grundsätze*. Leipzig, 1825.
- Feder, Johann Georg Heinrich. Review of Priestley's *Examination of Dr. Reid's Inquiry into the Human Mind, Dr. Beattie's Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth, and Dr. Oswald's Appeal to Common Sense (1775)*. *Göttingische Anzeigen* 92 (August 1775): 777–83.
- Hartley, David. *Betrachtungen über den Menschen, seine Natur, seine Pflicht und Erwartungen, aus dem Englischen übersetzt und mit Anmerkungen und Zusätzen begleitet*. Rostock-Leipzig: Koppe, 1772–73.
- Hißmann, Michael. *Briefe über Gegenstände der Philosophie, an Leserinnen und Leser*. Gotha, 1778 (some excerpts are now available in *Ausgewählte Schriften*, edited by Udo Roth et al., 25–43. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2013).

- Hißmann, Michael. *Psychologische Versuche, ein Beytrag zur esoterischen Logik*. Frankfurt-Leipzig, 1777; Hannover-Göttingen, Helwing, 1788², now in *Ausgewählte Schriften*, edited by Udo Roth et al., 45–137. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2013.
- Hinske, Norbert. “Die tragenden Grundideen der deutschen Aufklärung. Versuch einer Typologie.” In *Die Philosophie der deutschen Aufklärung*, edited by Raffaele Ciafardone, 407–458. Stuttgart: Reclam, 1990.
- Kant, Immanuel. *Kant’s gesammelte Schriften*, ed. by the Königlich Preußische Akademie der Wissenschaften (and successors). Berlin / Leipzig: 1900 ff., Berlin: Reimer 1910 ff. (Ak).
- Kant, Immanuel. *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (KrV – A 1781, B 1787), in Ak IV and Ak III.
- Kuehn, Manfred. *Scottish Common Sense in Germany, 1768–1800. A Contribution to the History of Critical Philosophy*. Kingston-Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1987.
- Lange, Friedrich Albert. *The History of Materialism and Criticism of its Present Importance* (1865; 2nd edition 1873–75). London-New York: Kegan Paul-Harcourt Brace, 1925.
- Marino, Luigi. *Praeceptores Germaniae. Göttingen 1770–1820*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995.
- McEvoy, John G. “Joseph Priestley, Scientist, Philosopher and Divine.” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 128 (1984): 193–199.
- McEvoy, John G., and J. E. McGuire. “God and Nature: Priestley’s Way of Rational Dissent.” *Historical Studies in the Physical Sciences* 6 (1975): 325–404.
- Meiners, Christoph. Review of *Hartley’s Theory of the Human mind; with essays relating to the subject of it by J. Priestley, 1775*. *Göttingische Anzeigen*, 29–30 (7–9 March 1776): 249–53.
- Meiners, Christoph. Review of *Priestley’s Letters to a Philosophical Unbeliever*. *Göttingische Anzeigen* 26 (June 1781), 406–14.
- Piaia, Gregorio, and Giovanni Santinello, eds. *Models of the History of Philosophy*, vol. III: *The Second Enlightenment and the Kantian Age*. Dordrecht: Springer, 2015.
- Pockrandt, Mark. *Biblische Aufklärung: Biographie und Theologie der Berliner Hofprediger August Friedrich Wilhelm Sack (1703–1786) und Friedrich Samuel Gottfried Sack (1738–1817)*. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2014.
- Priestley, Joseph. “Erster Versuch. Allgemeiner Abriß der Lehre von den Schwingungen; Zweyter Versuch. Allgemeine Schilderung der Lehre von der Assoziation der Ideen; Dritter Versuch. Von zusammengesetzten und abgezogenen Begriffen.” *Magazin für Philosophie und ihre Geschichte* 1 (1778): 9–60. In *Hißmann, Michael. Ausgewählte Schriften*, edited by Udo Roth et al., 263–281. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2013.
- Priestley, Joseph. “Briefe an einen philosophische Ungläubigen, enthaltend eine Prüfung der wichtigsten Einwürfe gegen die Lehren der natürlichen Religion, insonderheit derjenigen, die in Humes Schriften enthalten sind, aus dem Englischen.” *Beyträge zur Beförderung des vernünftigen denkens in der Religion* 8 (1785): 25–57; 9 (1786): 110–184; 10 (1787): 42–82.
- Priestley, Joseph. *Briefe an einen philosophischen Zweifler in Beziehung auf Hume’s Gespräche, das System der Natur, und ähnliche Schriften, aus dem Englischen*. Leipzig: Weygand, 1782.
- Priestley, Joseph. *Geschichte der Verfälschungen des Christenthums in zween Bänden. Aus dem Englischen übersetzt mit Anmerkungen*. Hamburg-Kiel, 1785; Berlin, 1785.
- Priestley, Joseph. *Geschichte und gegenwärtiger Zustand der Electricität*. Berlin and Stralsund, 1772.
- Priestley, Joseph. *Geschichte und gegenwärtiger Zustand der Optik*. Leipzig, 1775–76.
- Priestley, Joseph. *Liturgie und Gebetsformeln zum öffentlichen Gottesdienst für Christen von allen Confessionen*. Berlin-Stettin, 1786.
- Priestley, Joseph. *The Doctrine of Phlogiston Established*. Northumberland: Kennedy, 1800.
- Priestley, Joseph. *Versuche und Beobachtungen über verschiedene Gattungen der Luft*. Wien and Leipzig, 1778–1780.
- Reimarus, Johann Heinrich Albert. “Betrachtung der Unmöglichkeit körperlicher gedächtniss-Eindrücke und eines materiellen Vorstellungs-Vermögens.” *Göttingisches Magazin der Wissenschaften und Litteratur* 4 (1780): 27–66; 351–386.
- Rivers, Isabel, and David L. Wykes, eds. *Joseph Priestley, Scientist, Philosopher, and Theologian*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

- Rumore, Paola. "Between Spinozism and Materialism. Johann Franz Budde and the Early German Enlightenment." *Archivio di filosofia* 87 (2019): 39–56.
- Rumore, Paola. "Im Kampf gegen die Metaphysik. Hißmanns Verständnis der Philosophie." In *Michael Hißmann (1752–1784). Ein materialistischer Philosoph der deutschen Aufklärung*, edited by Heiner Klemme, Gideon Stiening, and Falk Wunderlich, 43–62. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2013.
- Rumore, Paola. "In Wolff's Footsteps. The Early German Reception of La Mettrie's *L'Homme machine*." In *Another 18th-century German Philosophy? Rethinking German Enlightenment*, edited by Enrico Pasini, and Paola Rumore. *Quaestio* 16 (2016): 95–118.
- Rumore, Paola. "Mechanism and Materialism in Early Modern German Philosophy." *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 24 (2016): 917–939.
- Rumore, Paola. *Materia cogitans. L' "Aufklärung" di fronte al materialismo*. Hildesheim: Olms, 2013.
- Schmidt, G. E. "Review of David Hartleys Betrachtungen über den Menschen." *Allgemeine Deutsche Bibliothek* 22 (1774): 92–104.
- Schofield, Robert E. *The Enlightened Joseph Priestley. A Study of His Life and Work from 1733 to 1773*. University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997.
- Schofield, Robert E. *The Enlightened Joseph Priestley. A Study of His Life and Work from 1773 to 1804*. University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004.
- Stan, Marius. "Newton and Wolff: The Leibnizian Reaction to the *Principia*, 1716–1763." *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 50 (2012): 459–481.
- Tennemann, Wilhelm Gottlieb. *Geschichte der Philosophie*, vol. XI. Leipzig: Barth, 1819.
- Tetens, Johann Nikolaus. *Philosophische Versuche über die menschliche Natur und ihre Entwicklung* (1777). Berlin: de Gruyter, 2014.
- Thiel, Udo. "Hißmann und der Materialismus." In *Michael Hißmann (1752–1784). Ein materialistischer Philosoph der deutschen Aufklärung*, edited by Heiner Klemme, Gideon Stiening, and Falk Wunderlich, 25–41. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2013.
- Thiel, Udo. "Kant und der Materialismus des 18. Jahrhunderts." In *Natur und Freiheit: Akten des XII. Internationalen Kant-Kongresses*, edited by Violetta Weibel, Margit Ruffing, and David Wagner. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2019: 595–614.
- Thiel, Udo. "Varieties of Inner Sense." *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 79 (1997): 58–79.
- Thomson, Ann. "Matérialisme et mortalisme." In *Materia actiosa. Antiquité, âge classique, lumières. Mélanges en l'honneur d'Olivier Bloch*, edited by Antony Mckenna, Miguel Benítez, Gianni Paganini, and Jean Salem, 409–426. Paris: Champion, 2000.
- Thomson, Ann. "Priestley, Paine et les Philosophical Unbelievers." In *Formen der Aufklärung und ihrer Rezeption / Expressions des Lumières et de leur réception. Festschrift zum 70. Geburtstag von Ulrich Ricken*, edited by Reinhard Bachmann, Roland Desne, and Rene Pomeau, 609–618. Tübingen: Stauffenburg Verlag, 1999.
- Thomson, Ann. *Bodies of Thought. Science, Religion, and the Soul in the Early Enlightenment*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Thomson, Ann. *Materialism and Society in the Mid-Eighteenth Century: La Mettrie's "Discours préliminaire"*. Geneva: Droz, 1981.
- Vartanian, Aram. *La Mettrie's L'Homme Machine: A Study in the Origins of an Idea*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960.
- Wunderlich, Falk. "Assoziation der Ideen und denkende Materie. Zum Verhältnis von Assoziationstheorie und Materialismus bei Michael Hißmann, David Hartley und Joseph Priestley." In *Michael Hißmann (1752–1784). Ein materialistischer Philosoph der deutschen Aufklärung*, edited by Heiner Klemme, Gideon Stiening, and Falk Wunderlich, 63–84. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2013.
- Wunderlich, Falk. "Empirismus und Materialismus an der Göttinger Georgia Augusta – Radikalaufklärung im Hörsaal?" *Aufklärung* 24 (2012): 65–90.
- Wykes, David L. "Joseph Priestley, Minister and Teacher." In *Joseph Priestley, Scientist, Philosopher, and Theologian*, edited by Isabel Rivers, and David L. Wykes, 20–48. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

- Yolton, John W. *Thinking Matter. Materialism in Eighteenth Century Britain*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1982.
- Zart, Gustav. *Einfluss der englischen Philosophen seit Bacon auf die deutsche Philosophie des 18. Jahrhunderts*. Berlin: Dummler, 1881.
- Zedler, Johann Heinrich, ed. *Grosses vollständiges Universal-Lexicon aller Wissenschaften und Künste*. Halle-Leipzig, 1732–1750 (Reprint Graz: Akademischen Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1961–64).