

HOFMANN, MICHAEL / ZELLE, CARSTEN (Hrsg.), *Aufklärung und Religion. Neue Perspektiven*. Hannover: Wehrhahn Verlag (2010). 283 S.

The German tradition of Enlightenment's relationship to religion differs significantly from the corresponding traditions in Britain or France. Without mistaking religion for an affirmation of clericalism or theological orthodoxy, the German Enlightenment was able to produce new, rational theologies (e.g., Neologism) as well as transform Christian forms of spirituality into new manifestations, such as a Spinozist appreciation of nature or a worship of art and artistic genius. This anthology, having its origins in a 2008 colloquium at the University of Paderborn, offers a series of exemplary case studies that try to bring out the complexity of the various reconceptualizations of religion by different strands of the German Enlightenment. It is the express purpose of the collection to break up simplistic views of both the Enlightenment and religion, to argue against the thoughtless application of binary oppositions (e.g., atheism and libertinage or clericalism and orthodoxy), and to offer model scenarios to our present times (challenged anew by a resurgence of religion) for negotiating this treacherous terrain.

In a thorough overview of the reception of Bayle's *Dictionnaire*, Marie-Hélène Quéval shows the breadth and variety of responses to this work. Instrumentalized for each writer's polemical needs, Bayle was in turn vilified as an atheist, praised as a proponent of tolerance, and (among others by Pietists!) embraced as an enemy of orthodoxy or Catholicism. Katrin Bojarzin argues that Pietist autobiographies and the narratives that describe the different journeys toward the »Insel Felsenburg« in Schnabel's *Wunderliche Fata* are similarly formulaic: in their journey to spiritual or utopian paradise the characters all undergo a structurally comparable obstacle course of sin, temptation, or aberrancy. Carsten Zelle anchors Klopstock's new rhetoric of »erhabene Herzrührung« (80) in the new anthropological thought pioneered at the University of Halle around 1750 by Friedrich Hoffmann, Johann Gottlob Krüger, and Georg Friedrich Meier. Neo-stoic and Christian-Pietist opposition to emotions, associated with »the flesh«, are replaced by the imperative that emotions should be shaped into something useful. Using reflections on the nature of innovation and epochal shifts by Blumenberg and Luhmann, Stefan Elit tries to explain the difficulties literary history has encountered in its attempt to place Klopstock as a figure occupying a »Schwellenposition«, in which continuities and discontinuities with early Enlightenment paradigms intermingle. Michael Hofmann tries to recover the peculiar form of Lessing's religiosity, markedly interpreted as being pantheistic, by showing what it has to say about our society's current encounter with resurgent forms of religion. He calls for abandoning the dichotomy of Enlightenment tolerance and anti-religiosity vs. religious intolerance in favor of a spiritual thought that recognizes a transcendent being but is open to other forms of religious expression. Cornelia Ilbrig offers a concise and entertaining portrait of Johann Karl Wezel and his religious thought. In her account Wezel emerges as an opponent of what we would now call »organized« religion, as opposed to religious sentiment per se. Stefan Greif adumbrates how Herder's valorization of sensuality and empathy with fellow sentient beings, in fact his appreciation of diversity and pluralism, is rooted in a pantheism that is best exercised in an enjoyment of the world (i. e., the enjoyment of God). Leo Kreutzer offers a breezy introduction to the impact of Spinoza's formula *hen kai*

pan on the thought of the »Geschichtspantheist« Herder and the »Naturpantheist« Goethe. In close readings of characteristic passages, Charis Goer shows how Heinse, a child of the Enlightenment who was critical of its normative impulses, subverts Christian art works through distinctly secular or erotic readings. And in his *Ardinghella* he works through the »Pantheismustreit« by skeptically placing Jacobi's »salto mortale« and a Promethean pantheism in opposition to each other and arguing that they are both irreconcilable and irrefutable. Martina Mertens identifies moments of religious disillusionment in several texts by the early Schiller, who incisively asks, in Dostoevsky's phrasing, whether without God everything is permitted. According to Mertens, Schiller denies that the prospect of punishments and rewards in an afterlife will do much to increase a person's virtue, but instead opts for an ethics of enjoyment (»Genießen«) and universal love. Bernd Auerochs works through the history of the concept of »Kunstreligion«, noting its inconsistencies as well as its fundamental function as »Ersatzreligion«. He closely investigates Friedrich Schlegel's concept of the potentially infinite corpus of Romantic literature as the »Bibel« of a new religion and concludes that the conditions which made »Kunstreligion« look like a good idea at the same time negate its possibility. Stefanie Buchenau traces how Markus Herz, after having appropriated Kant's pre-critical philosophy before 1770, veers away from the anti-metaphysical turn of his master by continuing to insist on the possibility of a rational theology and metaphysics. Herz thus represents a variety of the Enlightenment that has a clear bent toward reconstructing Judaism as rationally defensible and that is rendered invisible if we see the mature Kantian position as the *telos* of the German Enlightenment. And finally, Rafael Arnold pioneers an illuminating way of looking at the identity politics of the Jewish Enlightenment (*Haskala*). Caught between their sense of loyalty to their ethnic and religious traditions on one hand and their desire to participate in the discourse of mainstream German culture on the other, they experiment with a variety of ways of communicating their ideas, writing in German, Hebrew, and even Jiddish, using both the German and Hebrew alphabets.

Given the breadth of authors covered, it would be unfair to point out that many important figures (one might think of Semler, Spalding, Eichhorn, Michaelis, Goethe, and Kant) are not examined in detail, particularly since the articles offer an instructive window into the state of current German 18th-century scholarship. The footnotes alone are truly valuable for anyone trying to delve deeper into any of the topics. I have one important remark, but it should be taken less as a criticism than as an observation about the current state of scholarship. While a number of the articles thematize, in one form or another, the »Pantheismustreit«, the issues that were at stake in this substantial tectonic shift in German intellectual history remain blurry. A look across the Atlantic to Frederick Beiser's *The Fate of Reason* could have sharpened the focus. It is worth pointing out that most modern introductions to Spinoza deny that he was a pantheist in the technical sense of the term. So in what sense are Herder, Goethe, and Hölderlin Spinozists – or pantheists? More conceptual and interpretive work needs to be done.

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