# The Fate of Reason

German Philosophy from Kant to Fichte

Frederick C. Beiser

# Contents

#### Introduction 1

- 1 · Kant, Hamann, and the Rise of the Sturm und Drang 16 Hamann's Historical and Philosophical Significance 16 The London Conversion and Its Philosophical Consequences 19 The Summer of 1759: The Stirrings of the Sturm und Drang 22 The Sokratische Denkwürdigkeiten 24 Kant, Hamann, and the Optimism Controversy 29 The Kinderphysik Fiasco 32 Aesthetica in nuce and Eighteenth-Century Aesthetics 33 The "Metakritik": Genesis, Contents, and Consequences 37
- 2 · Jacobi and the Pantheism Controversy 44

The Historical Significance of the Pantheism Controversy 44 The Rise of Spinozism in Germany, 1680–1786 48 The Dispute over Lessing's Spinozism 61 The Philosophical Significance of the Controversy 75 Jacobi's First Critique of Reason 83 Jacobi's Second Critique of Reason 85 Jacobi's Defense of Faith 89

- 3 Mendelssohn and the Pantheism Controversy 92
  Mendelssohn's Place in the History of Philosophy 92 In Defense of Reason 94 Mendelssohn's Nightmare, or, the Method of Orientation 98 The Critique of Spinozism and Purified Pantheism 102 Mendelssohn's Covert Critique of Kant 105
- 4 · Kant, Jacobi, and Wizenmann in Battle 109

  Thomas Wizenmann's Resultate 109 Kant's Contribution to the Pantheism Controversy 113 Wizenmann's Reply to Kant 118

  Jacobi's Attack on Kant 122

## 5 · Herder's Philosophy of Mind 127

Herder and the Eighteenth-Century Philosophy of Mind 127 Herder on the Origin of Language 130 Hamann and Herder's Debate over the Origin of Language 135 Herder's Genetic Method 141 The Principles of Herder's Vitalism 145 Kant's Quarrel with Herder 149 The Kant-Herder Controversy and the Origins of the Third Kritik 153 Herder and the Pantheism Controversy 158

#### 6 · The Attack of the Lockeans 165

Popularphilosophie: A Sketch of a Movement 165 Highlights of the Lockean Campaign against Kant 169 The Garve Affair 172 Two Early Critics: C. G. Selle and D. Tiedemann 177 The Lockean Ringleader, J. G. Feder 180 Feder's Circle: A. G. Tittel and A. Weishaupt 184 The Good Pastor Pistorius 188

## 7 · The Revenge of the Wolffians 193

Leitmotivs of the Wolffian Campaign 193 Revolution versus
Reaction 197 The Wolffian Defense of Metaphysics 199 The Thorn
in Kant's Side, J. A. Ulrich 203 The Scrooge of Tübingen, J. F.
Flatt 210 Platner's Meta-Critical Skepticism 214 The Eberhard
Controversy 217 The Consequences of the Wolffian Campaign 224

## 8 · Reinhold's Elementarphilosophie 226

Reinhold's Historical Significance 226 Reinhold's Early Quarrel with Kant 229 Reinhold's Briefe and Conversion to the Critical Philosophy 232 The Path toward the Elementarphilosophie 236 Reinhold's Critique of Kant and the Aims of the Elementarphilosophie 240 Reinhold's Methodology 244 Reinhold's Phenomenological Project 247 Reinhold's Proposition of Consciousness and the New Theory of Representation 252 The Crisis of the Elementarphilosophie 263

# 9 · Schulze's Skepticism 266

Schulze's Historical Significance and Influence 266 Schulze's Meta-Critical Skepticism 268 The Critique of Reinhold 272 The Meta-Critique of Kant 280 Strengths and Weaknesses of Schulze's Skepticism 282

## 10 · Maimon's Critical Philosophy 285

Maimon's Historical Significance and the Question of the Unity of His Thought 285 Maimon's Skepticism 288 The Idea of an Infinite Understanding 293 The Theory of Differentials 295 The New Theory of Space and Time 300 The Critical Middle Path 303
The Elimination of the Thing-in-itself 306 Maimon's Transcendental
Logic 309 The Principle of Determinability 311 Maimon's
Controversy with Reinhold 317 Maimon versus Schulze 320

Conclusion 324 Notes 329 Bibliography 375 Index 391