HEN KAI PAN: THE INFLUENCE OF SPINOZA ON GERMAN ROMANTICISM AT THE INTERSECTION OF THEOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY

Vehbi Metin Demir
Bursa Uludağ University, Bursa-Türkiye
vmetindemir@uludag.edu.tr
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4799-639X

Abstract

Spinoza was not merely one of the 18th century's pioneering thinkers who influenced German thought. He also played a pivotal role in shaping post-Kantian German philosophy in the 19th century. Having first entered the German intellectual scene through the pantheism debate at the intersection of theology and philosophy, Spinoza later spurred considerable upheaval in the intellectual climate. Over time, Spinoza's work has been continually reinterpreted. After the initial pantheism debate, he was reimagined as a serene monist sage who links everything to God-Nature. The early Romantics, in turn, portrayed him as a Protestant revolutionary figure who advocated for religious tolerance against established religious dogmas. Finally, Schelling presented a new synthesis by reconciling the seemingly incompatible ideas of anti-naturalist Kantian-Fichtean conceptions of freedom with naturalistic Spinozism. This study focuses on the particular influence of

Ilahiyat Studies
Volume 16 Number 2 Summer/Fall 2025
Article Type: Research Article

p-ISSN: 1309-1786 / e-ISSN: 1309-1719
DOI: 10.12730/is.1737120

Received: July 8, 2025 | *Accepted*: December 17, 2025 | *Published*: December 31, 2025

To cite this article: Demir, Vehbi Metin. "*Hen Kai Pan*: The Influence of Spinoza on German Romanticism at the Intersection of Theology and Philosophy". *Ilahiyat Studies* 16/2 (2025), 327-362. https://doi.org/10.12730/is.1737120

Spinoza on German Romanticism, rather than on Spinoza's own ideas or on the question of whether the German philosophers correctly appropriated Spinoza's ideas. This article proposes that the shifting Romantic receptions of Spinoza can be systematically understood as conceptual responses to three interlocking crises in late-eighteenth-century German thought –namely, the theological crisis of faith and reason, the philosophical crisis of the mechanistic paradigm, and the political crisis of authority and emancipation– illuminated through the heuristic function of the Spinozist motto *hen kai pan*. By showing the historical transformation of Spinoza at the intersection of theology, philosophy, and politics, this article offers a systematic review of German Romanticism.

Key Words: Pantheism debate, Naturalism, Rationalism, faith, German Romanticism, Spinoza

1. Many Faces of Spinoza in German Romanticism

There is a general tendency to consider German Romanticism in terms of either literary theory or the literary transformation of Kant and Fichte's philosophy. However, the influence of Spinoza on early Romantic thinkers cannot be overlooked. This paper will examine the influence of Spinoza in early German Romanticism, and the dimensions of this influence will be reviewed under the following four general headings:

1. The pantheism debate addressing the inconsistency between Spinozist, rationalist, holistic metaphysics and thoughts on freedom and religion (Lessing, Jacobi, Reinhold, Fichte);
2. The Spinozism perspective proposing the development of a new holistic, organic naturalist ontology without resorting to Cartesian dualism or reductionist materialism (Herder, Schelling, Goethe);
3. The Spinozism perspective supporting all forms of religious tolerance and challenging institutional religious structures (Novalis, Schlegel, and Schleiermacher); and
4. The Spinozism perspective proposing a holistic epistemology that resists attempts to reduce reason to the capacity of understanding (Goethe, Hölderlin, Schelling).

Under these four headings, I seek to demonstrate that some of the basic characteristics of Romanticism are consistently grounded in an alternative reading of Spinoza. In this way, the multifaceted influence of Spinoza on German Romanticism will be brought to light. It must be emphasized that this article does not consider Spinoza's philosophical positions, nor does it seek to evaluate whether German thinkers accurately interpreted his thought. Instead, it proposes a reconstruction of nineteenth-century philosophical history by examining the role of debates on Spinoza in the development of German Romanticism, particularly within the intersecting domains of theology, philosophy, and politics. In this article, I argue that these three distinct yet interrelated domains converge at a Spinozian intersection. Spinoza first appeared in German thought in the context of the pantheism controversy, a controversy that must first be understood as a theological issue. However, the pantheism controversy also arose in other major philosophical debates, such as those surrounding proper philosophical method, the relationship between nature and reason, the critique of rationalism or naturalism, and the problem of epistemological holism. These debates constitute the philosophical dimension of the controversy. Moreover, beginning with Jacobi, the Spinoza debate also became part of an ongoing political agenda. The fact that the young Romantic generation chose Spinozism in opposition to the established institutional theology indicates that the question of Spinoza was not merely theological or philosophical but also political. While the literature includes numerous studies on the relationship between Spinoza and German romanticism,[1] to date, there has been no comprehensive, systematic

[1] See Frederick C. Beiser, *German Idealism: The Struggle Against Subjectivism 1781-1801* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002); Yitzhak Y. Melamed - Eckart Förster (ed.), *Spinoza and German Idealism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Enver Erman Rutli - Arslan Topakkaya, *Kant'tan Hegel'e Alman İdealizmi* (Ankara: Fol Kitap, 2021); María Jimena Solé, "Spinoza in German Idealism: Rethinking Reception and Creation in Philosophy", *Comparative and Continental Philosophy* 13/1 (2021), 21-33; Musa Kazım Arıcan, "Panteizm ve Panenteizm Tartışmaları Arasında Spinoza", *Beytulhikme: An International Journal of Philosophy* 3/1 (2013), 17-32. (Although this study is the closest to my own topic, it focuses solely on the debate over pantheism and does not engage with the context of German Idealism at all).

review of this issue. Förster and Melamed gave the first detailed account of the unique influence of Spinoza on German Idealism; however, that seminal book compiles various dimensions of Spinoza's reception without providing any systematic account of these diverse conceptions. In his books *The Romantic Imperative* and *The Fate of Reason*, Frederick Beiser provided a skillfully written history of the development of German Romanticism, in which he clarified Spinoza's place in that evolution. However, those works do not provide a clear description of the systematic transformation of Spinoza's reception over time. Finally, a recent book, *Spinoza in Germany*, particularly focuses on the reception of Spinoza in the German context; however, that study addresses the reception of only Spinoza's political philosophy.[2]

When evaluating the influences that shaped German Romanticism, Isaiah Berlin cites the French Revolution, Fichte's philosophy, and the Goethean *Sturm und Drang* movement.[3] Rüdiger Safranski describes German Romanticism as an esthetical overcoming of the dualism between nature and freedom.[4] Similarly, Walter Benjamin interprets Romanticism as a literary transformation of Fichte's idea of freedom.[5] Similarly, Luc-Marion and Labarthe consider German Romanticism as a literary transformation of Fichte's concept of the Absolute Self. Nicolai Hartmann also regards Romanticists as poets more than philosophers.[6] Although these observations are valid, one of the crucial elements is always missing: Spinoza.[7]

---

2 Jason Maurice Yonover - Kristin Gjesdal (eds.), *Spinoza in Germany: Political and Religious Thought Across the Long Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2024).

3 Isaiah Berlin, *The Roots of Romanticism*, ed. Henry Hardy (Princeton: Princeton University Press), 1999.

4 Rüdiger Safranski, *Romanticism: A German Affair*, trans. Robert E. Goodwin (Chicago: Northwestern University Press, 2015).

5 Walter Benjamin, *Der Begriff der Kunstkritik in der deutschen Romantik* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2008).

6 Nicolai Hartmann, *Die Philosophie des Deutschen Idealismus. I. Teil: Fichte, Schelling und die Romantik. II. Teil: Hegel* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1960), 160-240.

7 Frederick C. Beiser, *The Romantic Imperative: The Concept of Early German Romanticism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 77. "By the late 1790s

The influence of Spinoza on German Romanticism has been documented in the literature from various perspectives. The framework I propose here –a rereading of nineteenth-century German Romanticism through the manifold ways in which Spinoza was received– reveals how Spinoza was transformed in accordance with the intellectual needs of the era. Spinoza was initially labeled a rationalist atheist during the pantheism controversy. He was then reinterpreted by Herder and Goethe as a philosopher of organic unity. Finally, Novalis and Schleiermacher rendered him as a saint of a new religious sensibility and a political figure. This transformation of Spinoza illustrates the gradual shift from Kant's more mechanical system toward Hegel's organic system. Reconstructing German Romanticism through Spinoza thus shows how Romanticism appropriated its intellectual past to realize a new theological, political, and philosophical transformation in accordance with the demands of the era. The aim, therefore, is not to produce another study *on* Spinoza but to illuminate the dynamic transformation of German Romanticism *through* Spinoza. This reading offers a distinctive and comprehensive perspective that is largely absent in the existing scholarship on German Romanticism.

Since this article examines the influence of Spinoza on German Romanticism at the intersection of philosophy, theology, and politics, it understands Romanticism as a response to three interlocking crises that shaped late eighteenth-century German thought: (1) the theological crisis of the Enlightenment concerning faith and reason, revolving around the debate between Spinozism and Fichte's conception of freedom; (2) the philosophical crisis of mechanistic conceptions of nature, centered on the Newtonian-Kantian model in contrast to Herder's and Goethe's organic and holistic understanding of nature; and (3) the political and cultural crisis of authority and emancipation in the post-Revolutionary German states. Each response is accompanied by a new figure of Spinoza, revealing that his reception

---

Schelling, Schlegel, Hölderlin, and Novalis had come to admire Spinoza, whose realism, they believed, should be the complement to the idealism of Kant and Fichte. This Spinozistic dimension of romantic aesthetics has often been overlooked; but it is explicit in no more central text than Schlegel's Athenäumsfragmente, where Schlegel not only defends Spinoza, but also regards a mystical feeling for his one and all as an essential element of aesthetics".

was continually shaped and transformed by the dynamic intellectual movement of German Romanticism. In what follows, I present four distinct receptions of Spinoza, each of which emerges as a conceptual response to these interlocking crises.

German Romanticism can be described as a tense, vivid, and grand paradigm formed by attempts to reconcile Fichte's uncompromising idea of freedom with Spinoza's idea of the peaceful, holistic God-nature. This daunting description renders German Romanticism nearly impossible to frame, since it attempts to bring together two great ideas that are intrinsically inconsistent. Perhaps for this reason, Romanticism can be perceived as grotesque, fragmentary, and ironic. The chaos and richness of Romanticism are derived from the courage to conceive of Fichte and Spinoza, freedom and nature, and the infinite and the finite within the same whole, or at least the willingness to view these irreconcilable dualities through the principle of *hen kai pan* (one and all). Throughout the paper, the Spinozist motto *hen kai pan* (*eins und alles*) functions as a heuristic device that illuminates how different Romantic figures reimagined the unity of God, nature, and human freedom. This unity correlates with how the motto *hen kai pan* is appropriated in various ways in accordance with theological, scientific, and political concerns. The subsequent section of the article explores the historical background of this conceptualization along the axes of the four dimensions mentioned above.

2. Was Spinoza an Atheist?: Spinoza's Impressive Introduction into the German Thought

In 1785, the publication of a short pamphlet titled *Uber die Lehre des Spinoza in Briefen an den Herrn Moses Mendelssohn* sparked one of the most heated debates in the history of German philosophy. The discussion centered on the relationship between reason and faith, and was summarized by the following question: "Is Spinozism atheism?" In those years, the contradiction between reason and faith emerged as the central problem organizing all other issues in German thought. The tension between reason and faith was also the focal point of the sociopolitical struggles between the past and modernity and between the Enlightenment and religious belief. Spinoza was at the heart of this conflict. German thought was preparing to confront its own identity by

considering the question of what we should *do with Spinoza?*.[8] The fate of reason and the Enlightenment was conditional upon this debate.

Moses Mendelssohn, the great thinker of the Jewish Enlightenment who was regarded in his time as the "Socrates of Germany", sought to prove the immortality of the soul through rational arguments in his work *Phädon oder über die Unsterblichkeit der Seele* (Phaedo or On the Immortality of the Soul).[9] He quickly gained popularity because he had written an ideal book for rational psychology in the modern era.[10] He went on to attempt to demonstrate that the existence of God could be proven through pure reason. In his book *Jerusalem*, he advocated for religious tolerance and sought to theorize a faith based on both reason and a liberal social order. For Mendelssohn, the immortality of the soul and the existence of God could be proven through reason. He asserted that there was no tension between reason and religion; the only task was to spread reason throughout society and its values.

Mendelssohn's contributions to Enlightenment thought aligned him with the great writer Lessing, who was the central representative of the Enlightenment in Germany.[11] Philosophers such as Nicolai, Mendelssohn, and Lessing organized a team known as the Berliner Enlightenment.

However, in 1785, this powerful rise of Enlightenment thought was starkly challenged by Jacobi's brief pamphlet *Briefe über die Lehre des Spinoza*. Strong competition began between Enlightenment rationalists and anti-Enlightenment fideists. Goethe would later portray this debate, which profoundly shocked the German imagination, as

---

8 Willi Goetschel, *Spinoza's Modernity: Mendelssohn, Lessing, and Heine* (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004).

9 Mosses Mendelssohn, *Phädon, or on the Immortality of the Soul*, trans. Patricia Noble (New York: Peter Lang, 2006).

10 For a brief summary of his works, see Daniel Dahlstrom, "Moses Mendelssohn", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Accessed December 26, 2025).

11 According to Lukacs, "the only figure in whom the spirit of the German Enlightenment is purely embodied is Lessing". Georg Lukacs, *Goethe and His Age*, trans. Robert Anchor (London: The Merlin Press, 1968), 20. For more detail see Toshimasa Yasukata, *Lessing's Philosophy of Religion and the German Enlightenment* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 117-139.

"an explosion", whereas Hegel likened it to "a thunderbolt out of the blue".[12]

The essence of the impact of Jacobi's *On the Doctrine of Spinoza* can be summarized as follows: Jacobi had planned to write a book about Lessing after the death of that great thinker. When he shared his intention with a mutual friend, Jacobi asserted, "Lessing was a Spinozist (*Lessing sei ein Spinozist gewesen*)".[13] Why was this so significant? According to Jacobi, Spinozism was a declaration of distancing oneself from orthodox piety. In a conversation with Lessing in July 1783 in Berlin, Lessing revealed his views to Jacobi, admitting that he had severed all ties with ordinary belief. Jacobi publicly disclosed this confession from Lessing: "The orthodox concepts of the Divinity are no longer for me; I cannot stomach them. Ἓν καὶ Πᾶν! I know of nothing else…"[14] Several people also testified that Lessing often emphatically referred to the motto *hen kai pan* as the sum-concept of his theology and philosophy.[15]

For German Enlightenment thinkers, there was no longer a relevant path to the Protestant faith; Lessing and his friends had found a belief that was compatible with the mechanical science and rationalist philosophy of their time: *Spinozist pantheism.* If Spinoza proposed a religion that was in harmony with reason and science, what could possibly be wrong with that? Although Jacobi acknowledged that there could be no other possible consistent rational philosophy than Spinoza's, he identified three possible pitfalls of that line of thought: *deism, fatalism, and nihilism.*[16]

---

[12] Frederick C. Beiser, "The Enlightenment and Idealism", *The Cambridge Companion to German Idealism*, ed. Karl Ameriks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017) 21-43, 26.

[13] Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi, *The Main Philosophical Writings and the Novel Allwill,* trans. George di Giovanni (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995), 171-251.

[14] "Die orthodoxen Begriffe von der Gottheit sind nicht mehr für mich; ich kann sie nicht geniessen. Ἓν καὶ Πᾶν! Ich weiss nichts anders". Jacobi, *The Main Philosophical Writings*, 187. Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi, *Über die Lehre des Spinoza in Briefen an den Herrn Moses Mendelssohn* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 2004), 4.

[15] Jacobi, *The Main Philosophical Writings*, 199.

[16] Jacobi, *The Main Philosophical Writings*, 187.

According to Jacobi's reading, Spinoza's doctrine views all reality as contained within a single substance, Nature or God; therefore, it rejects the notion of a God separate from nature. It equates the finite with the infinite, merging the eternal divine being and mortal beings into an all-encompassing (*pan*) single substance (*hen*), thus culminating in pantheism. In this naturalistic, immanent pantheistic doctrine, there is no God separate from nature who has free will or creates something *ex nihilo*. Consequently, Spinozism can be considered atheistic.[17] Moreover, the essence of Spinozist rationalism lies in the principle of sufficient reason.[18] If everything that exists has a reason, then everything can be explained by an infinite chain of causality. Consequently, human actions also lack a voluntary source. This doctrine leaves no room for human freedom. Reason can only follow unchangeable causes. Therefore, Spinozism is fatalism. Even worse, if neither God nor humans have the power to change anything within this vast network of causality, this rationalist system ultimately leads individuals to hopelessness, despair, and nihilism.[19]

What Jacobi was telling Germany is this: The Enlightenment thinkers promise us a free and hopeful future by replacing faith with reason and science. However, the doctrine they admire is that of Spinoza. Moreover, the destinations to which Spinozism leads us are not freedom and hope but rather godlessness, desperate fatalism, and hopelessness. The principle of sufficient reason in the rationalist system attempts to explain everything in an eternally deterministic manner, causing the ground of our existence to slip away beneath us. For this reason, he added the following motto to the cover of his book: δος μοι που στω ("Tell me where to stand!"). According to Jacobi, the all-encompassing network of causes in the Spinozist rationalist system does not offer any means by which to hold onto life. In the conscribed Spinozian system, there is no possibility of proceeding from the finite to the infinite, from the conditional to the unconditional. Thus, what is the alternative? The *salto mortale*, the leap of faith. For Jacobi,

---

17 Jacobi, *The Main Philosophical Writings*, 233.

18 Michael Della Rocca, "Rationalism, Idealism, Monism, and Beyond", *Spinoza and German Idealism*, ed. Eckart Förster - Yitzhak Melamed (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 8.

19 Jacobi, *The Main Philosophical Writings*, 234.

rationalist-discursive reason is incapable of providing any ground for either the world or its own existence.[20] The only escape route out of this rationalist system that reduces everything to a single substance like the dark of night, where no individual being is indiscernible, is faith – a leap beyond reason. Faith does not need to be proven by reason; rather, it is the foundation of all reason. The pathway to liberation out of the quagmire of atheism, fatalism, and nihilism embraced by Spinozist Enlightenment thinkers was to, once again, cling to belief.[21]

When this dispute, known as the *Panteismusstreit* (pantheism controversy), reached a climax, German thinkers were divided into two factions: the fideists (Hamann, Jacobi) on one side, and the rationalists on the other (Wolff, Mendelssohn, Lessing). This conflict between reason and faith brought a new philosopher to the forefront: Immanuel Kant. In his 1786 book *Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie*, which was a compilation of his newspaper articles, Karl Leonard Reinhold asserted that Kant had already provided an answer to this issue, thereby offering a resolution to the problem. Reinhold's assertions rendered Kant Germany's most renowned philosopher.[22]

---

[20] "My dear Mendelssohn, we are all born in the faith, and we must remain in the faith, just as we are all born in society, and must remain in society. *Totum parte prius esse necesse est* (has its ground within itself)"; Jacobi, *The Main Philosophical Writings*, 230.

[21] As Frank puts it "Jacobi was taken to be an irrationalist. I will argue, however, that his project was intended to rescue reason from rationalism. Quite uncommonly Jacobi defended that the ground of reason is belief or faith, by considering Hume's idea that the ground of causality is a kind of habit or expectation, thus is a kind of belief (Galuben)". For more details see Paul Franks, "All or Nothing: Systematicity and Nihilism in Jacobi, Reinhold and Maimon", *The Cambridge Companion to German Idealism*, ed. Karl Ameriks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 128-154; Terry Pinkard, *German Philosophy 1760-1860: The Legacy of Idealism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 91. Jacobi defend himself as follows: "far from wanting to injure the dignity of reason, the only purpose of the new doctrine was the restoration of reason in its full measure". Jacobi, *The Main Philosophical Writings*, 537-590, 541.

[22] The lectures Reinhold gave at the University of Jena on Kant's philosophy made Jena the center of post-Kantian philosophy. His lectures in Jena attracted enormous interest. Almost all of the famous figures in the romantic circle were part of his lectures including Novalis, Hölderlin, and Hegel's close friend Niethammer; moreover, "the entire student body of six hundred students attended his last

Reinhold summarized the pantheism controversy as follows: "while some claim the impossibility of proving God's existence from reason, others claim its indispensability".[23] Whereas the fideists accused the rationalists of placing too much belief in reason, the rationalists, in turn, accused the fideists of believing in reason too little. The two camps basically accused each other of not comprehending the genuine nature of reason.[24]

According to Reinhold, Immanuel Kant had formulated the appropriate response to this controversy. Kant argued that it is impossible to prove the existence of God through pure reason and that the fideists were thus correct in this regard. However, he went on to argue that faith in God is not merely a matter of personal feeling and must be grounded in reason; thus, according to Kant, the rationalists were also correct. Kant contended that while God cannot be proven through theoretical reason, He must necessarily be accepted as a postulate of practical reason.[25] Therefore, Kant did not advocate for either reason or faith alone but instead defended the idea of the faith of reason (*Vernuftsglaube*). Kant's book, which satisfied both the heart and the mind while dispelling doubts, was the *Kritik der Reinen Vernunft*. According to Reinhold, that work served as *das Evangelium der reinen Vernunft* (the Gospel of Pure Reason) and effectively addressed contemporary skepticism.[26]

With these claims, Reinhold placed both himself and Kant's philosophy at the center of intellectual debate in Germany. From this period onward, Reinhold reinterpreted Kant's philosophy and

---

lectures and presented him with a gold medal". Dieter Heinrich, *Betweeen Kant and Hegel: Lectures on German Idealism*, ed. David S. Pacini (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 123.

23 K. L. Reinhold, *Letters on the Kantian Philosophy*, trans. James Hebbeler, ed. Karl Ameriks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 12.

24 Frederick C. Beiser, *The Fate of Reason: German Philosophy from Kant to Fichte* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987), 233.

25 "Now, it was a duty for us to further the highest good; … which, since it has [its] place only under the condition of the existence of God, links the presupposition of God inseparably with duty; i.e., *it is morally necessary to assume the existence of God*." Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason,* trans. Werner S. Pluhar (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2002), 136.

26 Reinhold, *Letters on the Kantian Philosophy*, 49.

transformed the University of Jena into a hub for Kantian philosophy. Ultimately, Reinhold identified some gaps in Kant's philosophy and later developed a theory of representation.[27] However, Reinhold's interpretation of Kant was subject to critiques from Schulze and Maimon, and Fichte emerged on the scene to defend Kant once again. Fichte attempted to salvage Reinhold's philosophy of representation by introducing the idea of a self-positing of 'I' (or absolute 'I') that makes all representations possible but can never itself be represented.[28] Fichte developed this concept of the self-positing absolute 'I' as the foundation for the possibility of all scientific knowledge.[29]

Indeed, what prompted Fichte to develop his theory of absolute subjectivity was, in essence, the pantheism controversy, which centered on Spinoza. According to Fichte, the only way to defend the Kantian idea of freedom was through a deep understanding of the free activity of the 'I'. Whereas Spinozist naturalism posits only one substance, namely, nature, Fichte asserted that the only substance is the subject. In fact, Jacobi would go so far as to describe Fichte's philosophy as an inverted Spinozism and to even accuse him of atheism.

In reaction to the pantheism debate, Fichte raised the banner of rebellion with his philosophy of freedom against Spinoza, whom he regarded as the pinnacle philosopher of rationalist fatalistic dogmatism.[30] He invited all of humanity to choose a camp between

---

27 K. L. Reinhold, *Essay on a New Theory of the Human Capacity for Representation*, trans. Tim Mehigan - Barry Empson (New York: De Gruyter, 2011). For details see Vehbi Metin Demir, "Fundamental Epistemoloji: Reinhold'un Sistem Felsefesi", *Kutadgu Bilig Felsefe-Bilim Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 29 (2016), 163-185.

28 Elise Frketich, "The First Principle of Philosophy in Fichte's 1794 Aenesidemus Review", *Fichte-Studien* 49/1 (2021), 59-76.

29 J. G. Fichte, "Review of Aenesidemus", trans. George di Giovanni - H. S. Harris, *Between Kant and Hegel: Texts in Development of Post-Kantian Philosophy*, ed. George di Giovanni (Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2000), 136-158.

30 "If we go beyond the I am, we necessarily arrive at Spinosizm and that there are only two completely consistent systems: the critical which recognize this boundary, and the Spinozistic, which oversteps it (Ich bemerke noch, dass man, wenn man das Ich bin überschreitet, nothwendig auf den Spinozismus kommen muss! ... und dass es nur zwei völlig consequente Systeme giebt; das *kritische*,

either Spinozist naturalism or Kantian freedom: "The dispute between the idealist and the dogmatist is, in reality, whether the independence of the thing should be sacrificed to the independence of the self or to that of the thing. What is it, then, that motivates a reasonable man to declare his preference for one over the other?"[31]

Fichte transformed the entire landscape of philosophy into a battleground for a final confrontation. In one camp of this battle were the realists, who began with things, represented by Spinoza, who insisted on the necessity of unifying all things within a single substance. In the other camp were critical thinkers who began with the subject, led by Fichte, who grounded everything in the freedom of the subject.[32] By the dawn of 1795, Spinozism had been doubly condemned. In the previous decade, Jacobi had accused it of embracing an atheistic nihilism, ten years after Fichte had condemned it as the pinnacle of mechanistic dogmatic systems that opposed freedom.[33]

This early configuration of Spinoza can be understood as a conceptual response to the theological crisis of the Enlightenment. For Jacobi, Reinhold, and Fichte, the specter of Spinozism condensed anxieties about the collapse of personal theism, the threat of fatalistic determinism, and the loss of moral agency under the rule of sufficient reason. In this context, *hen kai pan* signifies neither a divine nor organic unity but a mechanistic absorption of individuality into an

---

welches diese Grenze anerkennt, und das *spinozische*, welches sie überspringt)". J. G. Fichte, *The Science of Knowledge with First and Second Introductions*, trans. Peter Heath - John Lachs (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 102.

31 Fichte, *The Science of Knowledge,* 14.

32 "In the critical system, a thing is what is posited in the self; in the dogmatic, it is that wherein the self is itself posited: critical philosophy is thus immanent, since it posits everything in the self; dogmatism is transcendent, since it goes on beyond the self. So far as dogmatism can be consistent, Spinozism is its most logical outcome (Im kritischen Systeme ist das Ding das im Ich gesetzte; im dogmatischen dasjenige, worin das Ich selbst gesetzt ist: der Kriticism ist darum immanent, weil er alles in das Ich setzt; der Dogmatism transcendent, weil er noch über das Ich hinausgeht. Insofern der Dogmatism consequent seyn kann, ist der Spinozism das consequenteste Product desselben)". Fichte, *The Science of Knowledge*, 117.

33 Frederick Neuhouser, *Fichte's Theory of Subjectivity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 56.

unbroken causal nexus. The negative reception of Spinoza during this period thus reflects a deeper struggle to preserve freedom, religious meaning, and moral responsibility within the emerging landscape of modern rationality.

In 1795, a younger generation enthusiastically followed Fichte's lectures in Jena. Figures such as Schlegel, Novalis, Schelling, Hölderlin, Tieck, and Hoffmann attended these classes. This young generation sought a new synthesis between naturalist Spinozism and Fichtean freedom, laying the metaphysical foundations of German Romanticism through the synthesis of Fichte and Spinoza. Fichte's students, shaken by the Jacobi earthquake, were preparing to create a new Spinoza that Fichte had never imagined.

3. A God-Intoxicated Man: The Creation of a New Spinozism that Teaches the Essence of Religion

In the "Athenaeum Fragments", Schlegel identifies three foundational elements that contributed to the emergence of German Romanticism: "Fichte's philosophy, the French Revolution, and Goethe".[34] This genealogy, articulated as a first-hand narrative, inadvertently led prominent thinkers such as Isaiah Berlin and Walter Benjamin to perceive Romanticism primarily as a reconfiguration of Fichte's ideas. However, the figure of Goethe cited here is not the classical Goethe but rather the innovative genius associated with the *Sturm und Drang* movement. Ultimately, the true cornerstone of German Romanticism lies in this movement, which was established by key figures such as Hamann, Jacobi, and Herder and further popularized by Goethe and Schiller. This nuanced understanding highlights the significant influence of *Sturm und Drang* on the Romantic tradition, necessitating a reevaluation of its foundational inspirations.

The *Sturm und Drang* movement, in response to the rationalism of the Enlightenment, emphasized individual belief and personal experience. It envisioned the universe not as God's geometric design

[34] "The French Revolution, Fichte's philosophy and Goethe's Meister are the greatest tendencies of the age". Fredrick Schlegel, "Athenaeum Fragments (1798)", *Classic and Romantic German Aesthetics*, ed. J. M. Bernstein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 251.

but as His poetry.[35] In this context, the task of thought was defined as to feel this poetry, aesthetically appreciate it, and convey the aesthetic sensibility of the universe (*expressivism*). This can be seen as "a kind of mystical vitalism which perceives in nature and history the voice of God".[36] Hamann's theories in his work *Aesthetica in Nuce* also later influenced Jacobi's critique of Spinoza.[37]

Although Hamann was a precursor of the *Sturm und Drang* movement, it was Herder –one of Kant's favorite students and an extraordinary figure in German philosophy– who played the central role in shaping the theoretical foundations of German romanticism. Over time, Herder distanced himself from Kant's precritical rationalism and came under the influence of Hamann. In his 1770 work *Abhandlung über den Ursprung der Sprache* (Treatise on the Origin of Language), Herder rejected the Cartesian rationalist tradition's dualism between nature and reason and began to develop a form of naturalism that integrated human thought into natural life by viewing language, thought, and nature as a continuum.[38]

In *Ideen*, Herder subsequently synthesized his naturalist views with an original philosophy of history, establishing a continuity between nature and thought, which would later be characterized as "Herderian naturalist vitalism". In 1787, with the publication of *Gott. Einige Gespräche* provided a new interpretation of Spinoza's work, immediately following Jacobi's discussions on pantheism and portraying Spinoza as the one who discovered the true essence of the Christian faith. According to Herder, Spinozism was not opposed to morality and religion; rather, it revealed their foundations. He argued that Spinozism was not synonymous with fatalism or atheism but offered the only philosophy that could uphold the concepts of God

---

35 For the details see Isaiah Berlin, *The Magus of the North: J. G. Hamann and the Origins of Modern Irrationalism*, ed. Henry Hardy (London: John Murray Publication, 1994).

36 Berlin, *The Roots of Romanticism*, 49.

37 Kenneth Haynes, "Aesthetica in Nuce (1762)", *Hamann: Writings on Philosophy and Language*, ed. Kenneth Haynes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 60-96.

38 Johann Gottfried von Herder, *Philosophical Writings*, ed. Michael N. Forster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

and freedom.[39] This highly unconventional book presented an approach that turned prevalent readings of Spinoza and Protestant theology upside down.

Since the 1770s, Herder had already been engaging with Spinoza by incorporating the themes of Spinozist monism, immanent causality, and naturalism into his works.[40] However, with the publication of *Gott. Einige Gespräche* in 1787, Herder dared to rescue Spinoza from Jacobi's interpretation and opened a path to resynthesizing Spinoza with the Christian faith. He wrote, "Spinoza was neither an atheist nor a pantheist; for me, there has always been a third, profound connection in him".[41] According to Herder, Spinoza was indeed correct: there is only one substance, God is not separate from the world but immanent in nature, and there is an immanent causality in everything. However, the way to defend Spinoza's system from the accusations of atheism and pantheism was to infuse it with life. Instead of the rationalist mechanism, Herder chose a dynamic living interpretation of Spinoza. With a subtle touch, he transformed the nature of the entire Spinozist system: instead of mechanical causality, he introduced the concept of organic force (*organische Kräfte*). "I know of no concept like that of organic force. With it, I believe I have given Spinoza's system a more beautiful coherence".[42]

For Herder, God is not separate from the universe, but this does not negate God's role as creator. Herder asserts that God is the creative, active essence of the universe; He is the substance that expresses itself in every living being. The universe is not a machine governed by lifeless, mechanical laws without will, but a living, evolving whole that expresses itself in every living being. "In all the worlds, God manifests

---

39 Beiser, *The Fate of Reason*, 159.

40 Beth Lord, *Kant and Spinozism: Transcendental Idealism and Immanence from Jacobi to Deleuze* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 57.

41 "Gnug indessen, daß Spinoza weder ein Atheist noch Pantheist ist; ein dritter harter Knoten in ihm bleibt mir noch übrig". Johann Gottfried von Herder, *Gott: einige Gespräche über Spinoza's System; nebst Shaftesburi's Naturhymnus* (Gotha: Ettinger, 1800), 98; Johann Gottfried von Herder, *God: Some Conversations*, trans. Frederick H. Burkhardt (New York: Bobbs-Merrill 1940), 113.

42 "Ich wüßte keins als *organische Kräfte*. Dadurch, dünkt mich, bekäme Spinoza's System selbst eine schönere Einheit". Herder, *God: Some Conversations*, 102; Herder, *Gott: einige Gespräche über Spinoza's System*, 75.

Himself [through] *organically* interacting *forces*".[43] Herder sought to align his views with the Christian faith by referencing Paul's statement, "In Him we live, move, and have our being; we are His offspring",[44] thereby demonstrating the compatibility of his ideas with Christian belief. If the entire universe is the expression of God, the examination of nature and living beings could be seen as a way of knowing God, and modern empirical science, philosophy, and theology would thereby be synthesized in a unity.[45]

Herder thus exonerated Spinoza from the accusation of nihilistic atheism. Moreover, Herder provided a compatible and revitalizing relationship between Protestant theology and modern science. Herder reimagined Spinoza's substance as an active force, integrating it with a teleology that evolves and develops, unfolding in history (eventually becoming *Geist*). He replaced Spinoza's dual-attribute theory of mind and matter with the idea of infinitely evolving forces and expression.[46]

Herder's neo-Spinozism became a significant source of inspiration for the Romantic generation. Initially, this new interpretation of Spinoza had a profound impact on Goethe, who was a friend of Jacobi. Subsequently, it influenced the entire young Romantic generation, including figures such as Schelling, Hegel, Schleiermacher, Hölderlin, Novalis, and Schlegel. It can even be argued that Kant, while writing his third critique in 1790, was influenced by Herder's naturalism and, consequently, the new Spinozist claims.[47] Herder's interpretation of Spinoza marked one of the most critical moments in the history of the

---

[43] "In allen Welten offenbart sich die Gottheit *organisch*, d.i. durchwirkende *Kräfte*". Herder, *God: Some Conversations*, 109; Herder, *Gott: einige Gespräche über Spinoza's System*, 62.

[44] "For in him we live and move and exist. As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring'". *The Holy Bible* (Tennessee: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), Acts. 17:28.

[45] Lord, *Kant and Spinozism*, 61.

[46] Michael Forster, "Johann Gottfried von Herder", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Accessed December 26, 2025).

[47] See John H. Zammito, *The Genesis of Kant's Critique of Judgment* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), particularly chapter 2.

reception of Spinoza within German thought.[48]

At the heart of Goethe's deep engagement with Spinoza lay his friendship with Herder. It was through Herder's influence that Goethe came to appreciate and integrate Spinozist ideas into his own worldview, further establishing Spinoza's enduring impact on German Romanticism and philosophy. Goethe's first engagement with Spinoza likely began with the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* in Strassburg in 1771.[49] In fact, during that period, the only book written in Latin Goethe read was Spinoza's.[50] Goethe was deeply influenced by Herder's new Spinozist interpretation and, in a letter to his friend Jacobi, outlined how Jacobi misinterpreted Spinoza's most subtle ideas.[51] Although it is not easy to determine to what extent Goethe was influenced by Spinoza, in his autobiographical work, *Dictung und Wahrheit*, he stated that he was profoundly influenced by Spinoza.

This mind, which had worked upon me thus decisively, and which was destined to affect so deeply my whole mode of thinking, was Spinoza. After looking through the world in vain, to find a means of development for my strange nature, I at last fell upon the *Ethics* of this philosopher. Of what I read out of the work, and of what I read into it, I can give no account. Enough that I found in it a sedative for my passions, and that a free, wide view over the sensible and moral world, seemed to open before me…. The all-composing calmness of Spinoza was in striking contrast with my all-disturbing activity; his mathematical method was the direct opposite of my poetic humour and my way of writing, and that very precision which was thought ill-

---

[48] Bell also considers Herder to be a turning point in the history of Spinoza's reception in German thought. See David Bell, *Spinoza in Germany from 1670 to the Age of Goethe* (England: Institute of Germanic Studies, 1984).

[49] Michael N. Forster, "Herder and Spinoza", *Spinoza and German Idealism*, ed. Echart Förster - Yitzhak Y. Melamed (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 60.

[50] "It was a frequent joke of Herder at my expense, that I had learned all my Latin from Spinoza, for he had noticed that this was the only Latin work I have ever read..." J. W. von Goethe, *Goethe's Travel in Italy* (London: George Bell and Sons, 1885), 87.

[51] Eckart Förster, "Goethe's Spinozism", *Spinoza and German Idealism*, ed. Eckart Förster - Yitzhak Melamed (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 86.

adapted to moral subjects, made me his enthusiastic disciple, his most decided worshipper.[52]

In contrast to the passionate emotions of *Sturm und Drang*, what Goethe derived from Spinoza was a tranquil pantheistic monism. Unlike Herder, Goethe's interpretation of Spinozist God-Nature was one of peacefulness and harmony. His philosophy of nature, particularly evident in his optical and botanical studies, was grounded in a serene Spinozist understanding of nature.[53] Goethe, who identified himself as "a polytheist poet and artist, as well as a pantheist natural researcher",[54] sought to grasp a divine unity in his natural studies. According to Spinoza, *perfection* was God, and all mortal beings existed within that perfect whole.[55] Therefore, observing and contemplating (*Betrachtung*) the structures and transformations of plants would ultimately lead us to Nature-God as the perfect unity.[56] Heine stated, "Goethe was the Spinoza of poetry. All of Goethe's poems are suffused by the same spirit which stirs us in Spinoza's writings. There is no doubt that Goethe paid tribute without reservation to the doctrine of Spinoza".[57] Heine further claimed that this pantheism led Goethe to pacifism; he wrote, "No, God does not manifest Himself equally in all things as Wolfgang Goethe believed, an opinion which made of him an indifferentist occupied only with the

---

52 Johan Wolfgang von Goethe, *The Autobiography of Goethe: Truth and Poetry: From My Own Life*, trans. John Oxenford (London: George Bell and Sons, 1897), 547.

53 A more detailed study on the influence of Spinoza on Goethe's botanical works see Michail Vlasopoulos, "Spinoza's God in Goethe's Leaf: The Spinozist Foundation of Goethean Morphology", *Arc: The Journal of the School of Religious Studies McGill University* 44 (2016), 91-118.

54 "als Dichter und Kunstler ich bin Polytheist, Pantheist hingegen als naturforscher". Letter to Jacobi (January 6, 1813). Jacobi, *The Main Philosophical Writings*, 11.

55 "By reality and perfection, I understand the same thing". Bedenict de Spinoza, *Ethics Proved in Geometrical Order*, trans. Michael Silverthorne - Matthew J. Kisner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 124.

56 "Alle beschränkte Existenzen sind im Unendlichen". J. W. von Goethe, *Naturwissenschaftliche Schriften I*(München: Verlag C. H. Beck, 2002), 7.

57 Heinrich Heine, *On the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany*, trans. Howard Pollack-Milgate, ed. Terry Pinkard (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 99.

toys of art, anatomy, the theory of colors, botany, and observations of clouds, instead of with the loftiest concerns of mankind".[58]

Goethe extracted three key elements from Spinoza's God-Nature doctrine. First, in the study of nature, it was essential to examine nature as a unified whole that encompasses all beings and their metamorphoses. Natural science should not be limited to mere observation or causal relationships but should ascend to the third kind of knowledge (*scientia intuitiva*), which grasps the whole.[59] Thus, the aim of research was to reach the universal by examining the particular. Second, Goethe moved away from viewing artistic creativity as the unrestrained expression of subjective emotions and instead developed the image of the creative genius expressed through nature itself. The poet would increasingly be seen as a medium capturing and expressing the unity of nature (the tranquil perfection of God). Third, both the natural researcher and the poet, through the observation, study, and articulation of nature, would come to better understand God and love Him more. Goethe's natural science and poetic sensibility ultimately took on a Spinozist but humanized form of *amor intellectualis Dei* (intellectual love of God).[60] To know nature intellectually was the way to understand, love, and attain happiness with God.[61] In his letter to Jacobi on June 9, 1785, he wrote the following:

> Forgive me for being so reserved when it comes to speaking about the divine being, which I only know within the realm of *rebus singularibus* (particular things). No one could be more passionate than Spinoza in the close and profound study of the divine being...

---

58 Heinrich Heine, *The Romantic School and Other Essays*, ed. Jost Hermand - Robert C. Holub (New York: Continuum Press,1986), 35.

59 Spinoza, *Ethics Proved in Geometrical Order*, 171.

60 Lukacs, *Goethe and His Age*, 54.

61 "In the course of this biography, we have circumstantially exhibited the child, the boy, the youth, seeking by different ways to approach to the Suprasensible first, looking with strong inclination to a religion of nature; then, clinging with love to a positive one; and, finally, concentrating himself in the trial of his own powers, and joyfully giving himself up to the general faith". Goethe, *The Autobiography of Goethe,* 677.

> Here, in the mountains and their foothills, among *herbis et lapidus* (plants and stones), I seek the divine.[62]

As a poet and natural philosopher, Goethe adopted from Spinoza the idea of attaining happiness through knowing and loving nature-God. Throughout his life, he remained faithful to the Spinozist motto of *hen kai pan* (one and all), and his poem "Eins und Alles" (One and All), written in 1821 during his mature period, proves that loyalty.

Herder's and Goethe's neo-Spinozism responded to a different set of philosophical pressures – above all, the crisis of the mechanistic nature that marked the late Enlightenment. By reconceiving Spinoza's substance through the lens of organic force, development, and metamorphosis, they transformed *hen kai pan* from a sign of causal determinism into a principle of living immanence. Spinoza thus served as a resource for articulating a nonreductive naturalism capable of reconciling empirical science with a revitalized sense of divine presence within nature. Herder's and Goethe's syntheses demonstrate how Spinoza could be reappropriated not as a threat to freedom or religion but as the architect of a new ontology of life.

Apart from Goethe, the profound influence of Herder's neo-Spinozist interpretation is evident in Schleiermacher. The most striking convergence of theology and Spinozism in German Romanticism coalesces in the work of Schleiermacher, who is regarded as the founder of modern theology, particularly in his book *Über Religion* (On Religion). Written in 1799, that work represents the nexus between the neo-Spinozist interpretation of German Romanticism and theology.

According to Schleiermacher, religion is neither a matter of reason and ethics (Kant-Fichte) nor a question of a dogmatic metaphysical system (Wolff-Mendelssohn); rather, it is about the individual's feeling of the infinite (*Gefühl*). "The essence of religion lies not in thought and action, but in feeling and intuition".[63] Religion is the experience of the whole in the feeling of the individual (*hen kai pan*). He asserts that

---

[62] Horst Lange, "Goethe and Spinoza: A Reconsideration", *Goethe YearBook 18*, ed. Daniel Purdy (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer 2011), 20.

[63] "Ihr Wesen ist weder Denken noch Handeln, sondern Anschauung und Gefühl". F. Schleiermacher, *On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured Despisers*, trans. John Oman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 42.

"true religion is sense and taste for the Infinite".[64] We find the most explicit expressions of the new Spinozistic theology in the following sentences.

> Offer with me reverently a tribute to the manes of the holy, rejected Spinoza. The high World-Spirit pervaded him; the Infinite was his beginning and his end; the Universe was his only and his everlasting love. In holy innocence and in deep humility, he beheld himself mirrored in the eternal world, and perceived how he also was its most worthy mirror. He was full of religion, full of the Holy Spirit. Wherefore, he stands there alone and unequalled; master in his art, yet without disciples and without citizenship, sublime above the profane tribe.[65]

At this point, it becomes evident that the atheist Spinoza transformed into a new devout Spinoza. He was no longer seen as a dangerous atheist but began to be referred to as a "God-intoxicated man" (*Der Gottbetrunkene Mensch*).[66] Clearly, this new form of religion left no room for dogma, clergy, or religious institutions. According to Schleiermacher, everyone can experience the infinite in different ways, and throughout history, that experience has indeed been subject to a wide range of expression. The idea of connecting with God through personal feeling was a form of reformism that rejected all established authority and called on individuals to find God within themselves. This was precisely why people felt fear when it came to Spinoza: the interpretation of Spinoza that promoted religious tolerance represented an extreme form of liberalism, reminding us that in German Romanticism, Spinoza was not just a matter of theology but also an issue of rebellion.

4. Spinozist Pantheism as a Form of Rebellion

Unfortunately, it is true –we must admit it– that pantheism has not rarely turned people into indifferentists. They thought if everything is

---

64 "Religion ist Sinn und Geschmack fürs Unendliche". Schleiermacher, *On Religion,* 39.

65 Schleiermacher, *On Religion,* 41.

66 "Der Gottbetrunkene Mensch". Richard Samuel - Hans-Joachim Mähl - Gerhard Schulz (ed.), *Novalis Schriften: Die Werke Friedrich von Hardenbergs* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer Verlag, 1960), 562, 651.

God, it does not matter what we concern ourselves with. But herein lies the fallacy; everything is not God, but God is everything… God manifests Himself in things to a greater or lesser degree; He exists in this continual manifestation; God is to be found in movement, in action, in time; His sacred breath wafts through the pages of history, and history is the real book of God... Friedrich Schiller sensed this.[67]

In contrast to Goethe's serene Spinoza, by the late 18th century, Spinoza had been transformed into a figure of rebellion, a rule-breaking, libertarian icon for those who defied the established order. In the interpretation of the *Frühromantik* generation, including Schlegel, Novalis, and Hölderlin, the new Spinoza emerged as a spokesperson for cultural revolution. "For the restless radicals and reformers, Spinoza embodied the very spirit of insurrection".[68] Parts of the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*–which criticized holy scripture, the separation of church and state, the idea of religious tolerance, and the notion of freedom of expression– encouraged the radical ideas of the young romantics of this tumultuous era. Behind the passionate artistic theories of the Romantics lay political ideals, with the ultimate aim being the advancement of humanity. The ideals of freedom and progress could be realized only in a free *poetical state* (both individual and universal).[69] For this reason, the romantics' interest in Spinoza was not merely epistemological but also deeply political. Their affinity for pantheism led them to invent a form of Lutheranism that elided the Bible, that is, a free milieu in which all believers could attain divinity without being bound to an authority. For this reason, despite constant persecution, the flame of religious radicalism in Germany never died out, and clandestine editions of *Ethics* and the *Tractatus* were never out of circulation.[70] As a radical romantic, Heinrich Heine wrote, "If there were to be a political revolution in [Germany], freedom would be spoken of everywhere, and its language would be biblical".[71] The path of science and freedom forged by Kant and Fichte had to be expressed in a new religious language, and Spinoza, *the God-intoxicated*

---

67 Heine, *The Romantic School and Other Essays*, 35.

68 Beiser, *The Fate of Reason*, 52.

69 "Der poetische Staat ist der wahrhafte volkommene Staat". Novalis, *Briefe und Werke, Dritter Band: Die Fragmente* (Berlin: Verlag Lambert Schneider, 1943), 84.

70 Beiser, *The Romantic Imperative*, 176.

71 Heine, *On the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany*, 68.

philosopher, provided the conceptual foundations for such a language. When vitality, love, and freedom were added to Spinoza, who synthesized science with reason and reason with religion, the political ideal was then complete, and the *new myth of reason*[72] needed for revolution could begin to facilitate the work of establishing a new religion. Since the Romantics reinterpreted Spinoza through the lens of Kant and Fichte's notion of freedom, which led them to understand his system as one of organic vitality along the lines of Herder, and read him in light of Schleiermacher's new Lutheran theology, they then elevated Spinoza as a new saint of liberation – who called for tolerance, emancipation, and personal, direct communion with God in opposition to established religious authorities.

After expressing his democratic ideals in his 1796 book *Versuch über den Begriff des Republikanismus*, in his *Athenaeum Fragments*, which is considered to be the manifesto of Romanticism, Schlegel declared that there is no need for institutional authorities. Neither the state nor the church is necessary for teaching people about God; religion is about individual feeling, which can manifest and be expressed in countless ways. He wrote, "It is very one-sided and presumptuous to say that there should be only one mediator. For the perfect Christian, whom in this respect the peerless Spinoza comes closest to, everything must be a mediator".[73] According to Schlegel, if philosophy is to seek to capture the unconditional, it must not advocate Fichte's idea of a free, unconditional self in opposition to Spinoza but rather find the signs that will lead to the absolute within nature and history. For Schlegel, irony is precisely this unity of the finite and the unconditional. It is not Fichte's demonstrative, systematic philosophy but poetry and irony that bring us closest to comprehending the absolute. The most ideal mediator leading us to

---

[72] Daniel Fidel Ferrer, *Oldest Systematic Program of German Idealism: Translation and Notes* (Verden: Kuhn von Verden Verlag, 2021), 23.

[73] "Es ist sehr einseitig und anmaßend, daß es grade nur Einen Mittler geben soll. Für den vollkommnen Christen, dem sich in dieser Rücksicht der einzige Spinosa am meisten nähern dürfte, müßte wohl alles Mittler sein". Schlegel, *Anthenaeum Fragments*, 252.

God is the mediation embodied in the artist.[74] Schlegel writes, "where philosophy ends, poetry must begin".[75] In another fragment, he writes, The philosopher's prayer is theory, the pure vision of divinity... Spinoza is the ideal of this. The poet's religious state is more passionate and communicative. Its origin is enthusiasm, and in the end, mythology remains".[76] According to Schlegel, the mission of philosophy is to poeticize Spinoza.

Indeed I barely comprehend how one can be a poet, without admiring Spinoza, loving him, and becoming entirely his. In the invention of details your own imagination is rich enough… In Spinoza however, you will find the beginning and end of all imagination, the general basis on which all individual creation rests; and especially the separation of original, the eternal aspect of imagination from the individual and typical must be very welcome to you. Seize the community and observe. You are granted a penetrating glance into the innermost workshop of poetry. And as with his imagination, so is it also with Spinoza's affectivity.[77]

Like Schlegel, for Novalis, through fantasy and poetry, religion should be reinterpreted as the poetry of Nature, the eternal unfolding of the Spirit. "Together with Novalis, Schlegel planned to write a new bible (an absolute book) for their new aesthetic religion".[78] Expressing poetically, through the power of fantasy, a singularity that embodies

---

[74] Philippe Lacaue Labarthe - Jean Luc Nancy, *The Literary Absolute: The Theory of Literature in German Romanticism*, trans. Philip Barnard - Cheryl Lester (New York: State University of New York Press, 1988), 117.

[75] "Wo die Philosophie aufhört, muß die Poesie anfangen". F. Schlegel, *Philosophical Fragments*, trans. Peter Firchow (Minneapolis - London: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 98.

[76] "Die Andacht der Philosophen ist Theorie, reine Anschauung des Göttlichen, … Spinosa ist das Ideal dafür. Der religiöse Zustand des Poeten ist leidenschaftlicher und mitteilender. Das Ursprüngliche ist Enthusiasmus, am Ende bleibt Mythologie". Lacaue-Labarthe - Nancy, *The Literary Absolute*, 128.

[77] Friedrich Schlegel, *Gespräch Über Die Poesie* (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzlersche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1968), 317; Friedrich Schlegel, *Dialogue on Poetry and Literary Aphorism*, trans. Ernst Behler - Roman Struc (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1968), 85.

[78] Asko Nivala, "Friedrich Schlegel's Early Romantic Notion of Religion in Relation to Two Presuppositions of the Enlightenment", *Approaching Religion* 1/2 (2011), 38.

the absolute in everything and everywhere and uniting Fichte's creative imagination with Spinoza's realist monism formed the essence of their poetic metaphysics. The path to synthesizing the self and nature, the ideal and the real, freedom and wholeness, lay in art grounded in fantasy and poetry.[79] As Schlegel put it, "Just as Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre* is the universal schema of infinity for all sciences, as well as Spinoza is the foundation and support for all individual styles of mysticism".[80] As it can be understood, Romantic poetry "was truly revolutionary: it demanded that we transform not only literature and criticism but all the arts and sciences.[81] Schlegel also frequently repeated the new Spinozist motto, *Ein und Alles* (One and All). In 1799, he wrote, "The idea of the universe and its harmony is, for me, the One and All (*das Eins und Alles*)".[82]

The new mythology or poetry should emerge from the creative depths of the spirit, expressing the eternal unity of nature or God from a singular perspective. According to the romantic ideal, poetry should capture the infinite within the finite, the divine within the singular. Thus, what was needed for a new order was a kind of poetic Spinozism.

Novalis also viewed an updated Spinozism as the ideal of thought concerning the ideal of freedom. He did not hesitate to write, "True philosophy is entirely realistic idealism – thus, Spinozism". What is Novalis's "realistic idealism"? It is a kind of pantheism. In this pantheism, everything can serve as a mediator for the divine and can be "an organ of divinity" (*Organ der Gottheit*); thus, everything can be elevated to divinity through the artist's free creative imagination. "I do not take pantheism in the usual sense; by this, I mean that everything can be an organ of divinity through my elevating them to this level".[83] This idea precisely explains the fundamental program and the classic definition of Romanticism:

---

79 Beiser, *German Idealism: The Struggle against Subjectivism,* 441.

80 "auch Spinosa auf ähnliche Weise der allgemeine Grund und Halt für jede individuelle Art von Mystizismus". Schlegel, *Gespräch Über Die Poesie*, 321.

81 Beiser, *The Romantic Imperative,* 8.

82 Lacaue-Labarthe - Nancy, *The Literary Absolute*, 130.

83 "Ich Pantheism nicht im gewöhnlichen Sinn nehme, sondern darunter die Idee verstehe, daß alles Organ der Gottheit, Mittler seyn könne, indem ich es dazu erhebe". Novalis, *Briefe und Werke*, 73.

The world must be made Romantic. In that way, one can find the original meaning (Sinn) again. To make Romantic is nothing but a qualitative raising to a higher power… By endowing the commonplace with a higher meaning, the ordinary with mysterious respect, the known with the dignity of the unknown, the finite with the appearance of the infinite, I am making it Romantic.[84]

With this succinct definition, Novalis summarizes the union of Fichte and Spinoza, a kind of marriage born out of an impossible love – namely, realistic idealism. "Nothing less than marriage would do because, in their view, each had captured but one half of the truth. Just like ideal wedding partners, Fichte and Spinoza were perfect complements in an indissoluble whole".[85] The Romantic plan was this: Spinoza provided the idea of *hen kai pan* (realism), and poetry was to liberate it (idealism). "Poetry is the hero of philosophy … Philosophy is the theory of poetry. It shows us what poetry is, that it is one and all (Eins und Alles)".[86] Novalis embraces Fichte's idealist project, which injects the activity of the self into everything, thereby granting freedom to the world; however, he reverses Fichte's confident, self-certain march toward the world. The new Spinozist Romanticism ascends from the world to freedom, turning things –such as *Sophia*, the blue flower, etc.– into a focal point, a center where a living unity manifests itself. Thus, everything, from mineralogy to mythology, regains a new meaning through these poetic lenses. The poet, through the idea of *Bildung* (self-cultivation), will be a guiding pioneer in liberating the entire world from its conditional bonds and making it an instrument of universality and divinity. Thus, with the motto of *hen kai pan*, the Spinozist poet guides the construction of a new order based on

---

[84] "Die Welt muss romantisiert werden. So findet man den ur[sprünglichen] Sinn wieder. Romantisieren ist nichts anderes als eine qualit[ative] Potenzierung. [...] Indem ich dem Gemeinen einen hohen Sinn, dem Gewöhnlichen ein geheimnisvolles Ansehn, dem Bekannten die Würde des Unbekannten, dem Endlichen einen unendlichen Schein gebe, so romantisiere ich es". Novalis, *Philosophical Writings*, trans. Margaret Mahony Stoljar (New York: State University of New York Press, 1997), 60.

[85] Beiser, *The Romantic Imperative,* 131.

[86] "Die Poesie ist der Held der Philosophie. … Die Philosophie ist die Theorie der Poesie. Sie zeigt uns was Poesie sei, dass sie eins und alles ist". Novalis, *Philosophical Writings*, 79.

freedom in Germany. If a new order is to be established, it will come through a free and creative Spinozism.

For Novalis and Schlegel, *hen kai pan* expresses a serene and intellectual unity of the individual and the divine but the experiential immediacy of the divine within the self and the world – a unity that makes institutional mediation unnecessary. Their appropriation of Spinoza thus becomes a tool for reimagining religion and culture as inwardness, creativity, and freedom while simultaneously grounding new forms of ethical and social critique (*die Bildung*). Here, the Spinozist unity of "One and All" is mobilized to envision both a liberated religious sensibility and an alternative cultural order.

5. Nature is the Absolute: Schelling's Spinozist Synthesis

Schelling, who is referred to the "Prince of Romantics",[87] brings an end to all these fragmentary, poetic considerations with his project of building a philosophical system that synthesizes Fichte and Spinoza. Deeply influenced by Fichte's philosophy, in a letter to Hegel in 1795, he declared, "Meanwhile, I have become a Spinozist".[88] From that date until the 1800s, he embarked on an intensive effort to develop a new philosophy of nature that combines Fichtean free idealism with Spinozist naturalism.[89] He strived to complete his project with successive new books. In his 1797 work, *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature*, he formulated this synthesis program with the following statement: "Nature must be visible Spirit, and Spirit must be invisible Nature".[90] He sought to design a new system that combined the Kantian idea of the autonomy of reason with Spinoza's concept of nature, demonstrating "the absolute unity of the Reason within us and the Nature outside of us".[91] Two years later, in his 1799 book *First Outline of a System of the Philosophy of Nature*, he attempted to replace

---

87 Pinkard, *German Philosophy 1760-1860*, 172.

88 "Ich bin inzwischen Spinozist geworden!" 4 Feb.1795. Johannes Hoffmeister (ed.), *Briefe von und an Hegel* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1952), 22.

89 Alexandre Guilherme, "Schelling's *Naturphilosophie* Project: Towards a Spinozian Conception of Nature", *South African Journal of Philosophy* 29/4 (2010), 373-390.

90 F. W. J. Schelling, *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature: as Introduction to the Study of this Science,* trans. E. E. Harris - P. Heath (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) 42.

91 Schelling, *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature*, 42.

Fichte's notion of the absolute self with nature. Like Spinoza, he viewed nature as absolute creative activity, the active force within every natural product. Nature is not merely an aggregate of substances; rather, it is an activity, a principle, and according to Schelling, Nature, as the inexhaustible activity upon which everything visible in nature relies, is unconditional.

Therefore, we assert: every individual (in Nature) is only a form of being itself; *being itself* however absolute activity. For, if being itself is to activity, then the individual being cannot be an absolute *negation* of activity. Nevertheless, we must think the natural product itself under the predicate of being. However, viewed from a higher standpoint, this being itself is nothing other *than a continually operative natural activity* (*Tätigkeit*) that is extinguished in its product.[92]

Nature, as a continuous principle of activity, is unconditional. Inorganic objects, on the other hand, are conditional entities, representing moments where activity pauses. Nature is an ever-dynamic totality that cannot be confined to any single natural being; it is not a thing (*ein Ding*) but rather an unconditioned, free activity that does not become a thing (*un-be-dingt*).[93] It is evident that Schelling embraced a romantic neo-Spinozist interpretation by reinterpreting Spinoza's pantheistic naturalism through the lens of transcendental philosophy and Herderian vitalism. By 1800, in his *System des transcendentalen Idealismus*, he had completed the project of explaining Spinoza and Fichte in a single system by showing that behind Fichte's idea of the I, there was absolute nature, in which cognitive capacities such as sensation, reason and will gradually emerged. In this way, he provided a genetic explanation of the formation process behind Fichte's unconditioned 'I'. This system of unity, which is based on the unity of self and nature, subject and object, can be reached only through intellectual intuition.[94] There was no

---

92 F. W. J. Schelling, *First Outline of a System of the Philosophy of Nature,* trans. Keith R. Peterson (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004), 14.

93 Andrew Bowie, *Schelling and Modern European Philosophy: An Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 20.

94 F. W. J. Schelling, *System of Transcendental Identity*, trans. Peter Heath (Charlottsville: University Press of Virginia, 2001), particularly chapter 6.

sharp difference between subject and nature, as Fichte puts it, but only differences in degrees.[95]

In 1809, Schelling intensively revisited the discussion of pantheism and Spinoza in his essay *über das Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit*, in which he sought to show how (Spinozian) pantheism could be synthesized with (Fichte's) freedom. According to him, the problem arose from a misunderstanding of pantheism. For Schelling, pantheism had been misunderstood in two ways: either the singular existence of things was denied by saying that there is nothing but God or that God is nothing but the sum of things and God is dissolved in singular things.[96] Both of these conceptions of pantheism are erroneous; even Spinoza, who thought within the Cartesian rationalist tradition, could not grasp the essence of pantheism and produced fatalism instead of pantheism.[97] According to Schelling, the problem with Spinoza was not in his pantheistic belief but in his abstract, dead mechanical thought. Thus, Schelling's new project reinterpreted pantheism by including and transcending Spinoza.

> What, then, does one understand by Spinozism?... Then the mechanistic way of thinking, which reached the summit of its infamy in French atheism, had captured almost all minds; in Germany as well one began to take this manner of seeing and explaining for the genuine and sole philosophy … One wanted to declare these consequences, and since the German mind could only take hold of the mechanistic philosophy from its (supposedly) highest expression, the terrible truth was declared in this way: all philosophy –absolutely all– that is purely rational is or becomes Spinozism! Everyone now was warned about the abyss; it was laid bare before all; the only remedy which still seemed possible was lead back to the heart, to inner feeling and belief… And here then, once and for all, our definite opinion about Spinozism! … Spinoza therefore must be a fatalist for a completely different reason, one independent of pantheism.[98]

---

[95] F. W. J. Schelling, *Presentation of My System of Philosophy*, trans. Michael Vater, *The Philosophical Forum* 32/4 (2001), 342.

[96] F. W. J. Schelling, *Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom*, trans. Jeff Love - Johannes Schmidt (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), 12.

[97] Schelling, *Philosophical Investigations*, 20.

[98] Schelling, *Philosophical Investigations*, 19-20.

Thus, Schelling rekindled the debate that had divided Germany twenty years ago. According to Schelling, Spinozism had to be reinterpreted in terms of concepts such as organism, life, freedom, and love. Instead of Spinozian mechanism, he had to substitute a dynamic conception of nature. Just as an organism is an independent and free being, as a being (Dasein) even though it is in nature in terms of the ground of its formation, in the same way all beings are in such a relationship with God. All beings are both in the whole and singular. If one grasps the pantheist idea of identity from an organismic perspective instead of an abstract and mechanical perspective, this organic conception of pantheism could allow one to synthesize the dynamic singular (beings)-universal (God-Nature) relationship or personal freedom and its dependence on God. Eventually, on the basis of his romantic new interpretation of Spinoza, Schelling produced a very unusual solution to the problem of evil and freedom. Schelling, like all other romantics, adopted Spinoza's pantheism by embellishing it with romantic motifs such as individuality, vitality, action, creativity, genius expression, and historical development.

By addressing all three crises simultaneously, Schelling's mature engagement with Spinoza synthesized the preceding appropriations. His reconfiguration of Spinoza aimed to reconcile freedom with natural necessity, to overcome the mechanistic-static model of substance through an ontology of dynamic productivity and to provide a philosophical foundation for a renewed cultural and religious unity in the post-revolutionary age. For Schelling, *hen kai pan* becomes the metaphysical key to a system in which nature and spirit are two expressions of a single living absolute.

Conclusion

Throughout the turbulent history of German Romanticism, Spinoza initially appeared as an atheist but gradually transformed into a figure akin to a "God-intoxicated man". He was first viewed as the ideal representative of rigid, mechanical, rationalist thought and was accused by Jacobi of being a paragon of modern fatalism and nihilism. However, through the interpretations of Herder, Goethe, and Schleiermacher, Spinoza evolved into a distinctly different figure – a thinker infused with spirituality and faith, revealing the infinity of God within all individuals. Schlegel and Novalis took this new image of a

devout and free-spirited Spinoza, one that eliminated intermediaries, and reinterpreted it. The idea of elevating all singular beings to the realm of divinity through imagination was established as the mission of Romantic poetry, with Spinoza chosen as its pioneer. Finally, Schelling synthesized the concept of freedom from critical philosophy with Spinozist naturalism, producing the ultimate outcomes of this entire process. In the literature, German Romanticism is typically examined either as a literary movement or as the literary transformation of Kantian-Fichtean Idealism. Although Spinoza's influence is often acknowledged, it has rarely been explored in depth. This article provides a comprehensive and systematic account of Spinoza's impact and transformation within German Romanticism. By reconstructing these transformations as historically situated strategies for negotiating the intertwined theological, philosophical, and political tensions of the period, the article demonstrates that the Romantic reinventions of Spinoza form a coherent pattern rather than a mere plurality of isolated interpretations, thereby revealing the systematic character of his German reception. It demonstrates how the early modern rationalist philosopher Spinoza was reinterpreted through multiple "faces" within Romantic thought, resulting in a rich and multifaceted reception.

.

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

FUNDING

The author received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Arıcan, Musa Kazım. "Panteizm ve Panenteizm Tartışmaları Arasında Spinoza". *Beytulhikme: An International Journal of Philosophy* 3/1 (2013), 17-32.

Beiser, C. Frederick. *German Idealism: The Struggle against Subjectivism, 1781-1801.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008.

Beiser, C. Frederick. "The Enlightenment and Idealism". *The Cambridge Companion to German Idealism.* ed. Karl Ameriks. 21-43. 2. edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017.

Beiser, C. Frederick. *The Fate of Reason: German Philosophy from Kant to Fichte.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987.

Beiser, C. Frederick. *The Romantic Imperative: The Concept of Early German Romanticism.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006.

Bell, David. *Spinoza in Germany from 1670 to the Age of Goethe.* England: Institute of Germanic Studies, 1984.

Benjamin, Walter. *Der Begriff der Kunstkritik in der deutschen Romantik.* Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2008.

Berlin, Isaiah. *The Magus of the North: J. G. Hamann and the Origins of Modern Irrationalism.* ed. Henry Hardy. London: John Murray Publication, 1994.

Berlin, Isaiah. *The Roots of Romanticism.* ed. Henry Hardy. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999.

Bowie, Andrew. *Schelling and Modern European Philosophy: An Introduction.* New York: Routledge, 1993.

Dahlstrom, Daniel, "Moses Mendelssohn". *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2008 Edition).* ed. Edward N. Zalta. Accessed December 6, 2025. https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2008/entries/mendelssohn/

Della Rocca, Michael. "Rationalism, Idealism, Monism, and Beyond". *Spinoza and German Idealism.* ed. Eckart Förster - Yitzhak Melamed. 7-26. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Demir, V. Metin . "Fundamental Epistemoloji: Reinhold'un Sistem Felsefesi". *Kutadgu Bilig Felsefe-Bilim Araştırmaları Dergisi* 29 (2016), 163-185.

Förster, Eckart. "Goethe's Spinozism". *Spinoza and German Idealism.* ed. Eckart Förster - Yitzhak Melamed. 85-100. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Ferrer, Daniel Fidel. *Oldest Systematic Program of German Idealism: Translation and Notes.* Verden: Kuhn von Verden Verlag, 2021.

Fichte, Johann G. "Review of Aenesidemus". trans. George di Giovanni - H. S. Harris. *Between Kant and Hegel: Texts in Development of Post-Kantian Philosophy.* ed. George di Giovanni. 136-158. Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2000.

Fichte, Johann G. *The Science of Knowledge with First and Second Introductions.* trans. Peter Heath - John Lachs. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Forster, Michael N. "Herder and Spinoza". *Spinoza and German Idealism.* ed. Eckart Förster - Yitzhak Melamed. 59- 84. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Forster, Michael. "Johann Gottfried von Herder". *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Summer 2019 Edition).* ed. Edward N. Zalta. Accessed December 26, 2025. https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2019/

Franks, Paul. "All or Nothing: Systematicity and Nihilism in Jacobi, Reinhold, and Maimon". *The Cambridge Companion to German Idealism*. ed. Karl Ameriks. 95-116. New York: Cambridge University Press. 2000.

Frketich, Elise. "The First Principle of Philosophy in Fichte's 1794 Aenesidemus Review" *Fichte-Studien* 49/1 (2021), 59-76.

Goethe, Johan Wolfgang von. *Goethe's Travel in Italy*. London: George Bell and Sons, 1885.

Goethe, Johan Wolfgang von. *Naturwissenschaftliche Schriften I*. München: Verlag C. H. Beck, 2002.

Goethe, Johan Wolfgang von. *The Autobiography of Goethe. Truth And Poetry: From My Own Life*. trans. John Oxenford. London George Bell and Sons 1897.

Goetschel, Willi. *Spinoza's Modernity: Mendelssohn, Lessing, and Heine*. Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004.

Guilherme, Alexandre. "Schelling's Naturphilosophie Project: Towards a Spinozian Conception of Nature". *South African Journal of Philosophy* 29/4 (2010), 373-390. https://doi.org/10.4314/sajpem.v29i4.61774

Hartmann, Nicolai. *Die Philosophie des Deutschen Idealismus. I. Teil: Fichte, Schelling und die Romantik. II. Teil: Hegel*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1960.

Haynes, Kenneth (ed.). *Hamann: Writings on Philosophy and Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Haynes, Kenneth. "Aesthetica in Nuce (1762)". *Hamann: Writings on Philosophy and Language*. ed. Kenneth Hayness. 60-96. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Heine, Heinrich. *On the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany*. trans. Howard Pollack-Milgate. ed. Terry Pinkard. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Heine, Heinrich. *The Romantic School and Other Essays*. ed. Jost Hermand - Robert C. Holub. New York: Continuum Press, 1986.

Heinrich, Dieter. *Betweeen Kant and Hegel: Lectures on German Idealism*. ed. David S. Pacini. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003.

Herder, G. J. *God: Some Conversations*. trans. Frederick H. Burkhardt. New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1940.

Herder, G. J. *Gott: einige Gespräche über Spinoza's System; nebst Shaftesburi's Naturhymnus*. Gotha: Ettinger, 1800.

Herder, G. J. *Philosophical Writings*. ed. Michael N. Forster. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Hoffmeister, Johannes (ed.). *Briefe von und an Hegel*. Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1952.

Jacobi, H. Friedrich. *The Main Philosophical Writings and The Novel Allwill*. trans. George di Giovanni. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995.

Jacobi, H. Friedrich. *Über die Lehre des Spinoza in Briefen an den Herrn Moses Mendelssohn*. Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 2004.

Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of Practical Reason*. trans. Werner S. Pluhar. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2002.

Lacaue-Labarthe Philippe - Nancy, Jean Luc. *The Literary Absolute: The Theory of Literature in German Romanticism*. trans. Philip Barnard - Cherly Lester. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988.

Lange, Horst. "Goethe and Spinoza: A Reconsideration". *Goethe YearBook 18*. ed. Daniel Purdy. Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2011.

Lord, Beth. *Kant and Spinozism: Transcendental Idealism and Immanence from Jacobi to Deleuze*. London: Palgrave Macmillian, 2011.

Lukacs, Georg. *Goethe and His Age*. trans. Robert Anchor. London: Merlin Press, 1968.

Mendelssohn, Mosses. *Phädon, or on the Immortality of the Soul*. trans. Patricia Noble. New York: Peter Lang, 2006.

Neuhouser, Frederick. *Fichte's Theory of Subjectivity*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Nivala, Asko. "Friedrich Schlegel's Early Romantic Notion of Religion in Relation to Two Presuppositions of the Enlightenment". *Approaching Religion* 1/2 (2011), 33-45.

Novalis. *Briefe und Werke, Dritter Band: Die Fragmente*. Berlin: Verlag Lambert Schneider, 1943.

Novalis. *Fragmente und Studien*. Stuttgart: Reclam, 1984.

Novalis. *Philosophical Writings*. trans. Margaret Mahony Stoljar. New York: State University of New York Press, 1997.

Pinkard, Terry. *German Philosophy 1760-1860: The Legacy of Idealism*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Reinhold, K. L. *Essay on A New Theory of the Human Capacity for Representation*. trans. Tim Mehigan - Barry Empson. New York: De Gruyter, 2011.

Reinhold, K. L. *Letters on the Kantian Philosophy*. ed. Karl Ameriks. trans. James Hebbeler. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Safranski, Rüdiger. *Romanticism: A German Affair*. trans. Robert E. Goodwin. Chicago: Northwestern University Press, 2015.

Samuel, Richard - Mähl, Hans Joachim - Schulz, Gerhard (eds.) *Novalis Schriften: Die Werke Friedrich von Hardenbergs*. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer Verlag, 1960.

Schelling, F. W. J. *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature: as Introduction to the Study of this Science*. trans. E. E. Harris - P. Heath. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

Schelling, F. W. J. *Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom*. trans. Jeff Love - Johannes Schmidt. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006.

Schelling, F. W. J. *First Outline of a System of the Philosophy of Nature*. trans. Keith R. Peterson. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004.

Schelling, F. W. J. *System of Transcendental Identity*. trans. Peter Heath. Charlottsville: University Press of Virginia, 2001.

Schelling, F. W. J. *Presentation of My System of Philosophy*. trans. Michael Vater. *The Philosophical Forum* 32/4 (2001), 339-371.

Schlegel, Fredrick. "Athenaeum Fragments (1798)". *Classic and Romantic German Aesthetics*. ed. J. M. Bernstein. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Schlegel, Friedrich. *Philosophical Fragments*. trans. Peter Firchow. Minneapolis - London: University of Minnesota Press, 1991.

Schlegel, Friedrich. *Dialogue on Poetry and Literary Aphorism*. trans. Ernst Behler - Roman Struc. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1968.

Schlegel, Friedrich. *Gespräch Über die Poesie*. Stuttgart: J. B. Metzlersche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1968.

Schleiermacher, F. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*. trans. John Oman. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Solé, María Jimena. "Spinoza in German Idealism: Rethinking Reception and Creation in Philosophy". *Comparative and Continental Philosophy* 13/1 (2021), 21-33. https://doi.org/10.1080/17570638.2021.1897181

Spinoza, Bedenict de. *Ethics Proved in Geometrical Order*. trans. Michael Silverthorne - Matthew J. Kisner. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018.

The Holy Bible. Tennessee: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017.

Topakkaya, Arslan - Rutli, E. Erman. *Kant'tan Hegel'e Alman İdealizmi*. Ankara: Fol Kitap, 2021.

Toshimasa, Yasukata. *Lessing's Philosophy of Religion and the German Enlightenment*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Vlasopoulos, Michail. "Spinoza's God in Goethe's Leaf: The Spinozist Foundation of Goethean Morphology". *Arc: The Journal of the School of Religious Studies McGill University* 44 (2016) 91-118. https://doi.org/10.26443/arc.v44i.357

Yonover, Jason Maurice - Gjesdal, Kristin (eds.). *Spinoza in Germany: Political and Religious Thought Across the Long Nineteenth Century*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2024.

Zammito, John H. *The Genesis of Kant's Critique of Judgment*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.