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Stefan Lang  
(Hrsg.)

# Performativität in der Klassischen Deutschen Philosophie



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## 1.2 Performativity in Classical German Philosophy

*Performativity* is an important concept in many disciplines, including f.e. gender studies, German studies, cultural studies, philosophy, political science, sociology, theater studies, and theology. Within philosophy, this relevance increasingly applies to the field of the history of philosophy. Although the concept “performativity” was first coined by John Langshaw Austin towards the middle of the twentieth century on the basis of his study of performative utterances,<sup>23</sup> performativity was already significant *avant la lettre* within some philosophical traditions.<sup>24</sup> In classical German philosophy, for example, performative interpretations of the absolute, self-consciousness, the subject or even knowledge, among others, were developed. It is therefore not surprising that studies have been published in the recent past that discuss performativity in the works of, for example, Immanuel Kant, Johann Gottlieb Fichte or Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel.<sup>25</sup> These investigations are carried out by researchers from various disciplines. This anthology picks up on this development and uses interdisciplinary contributions to examine performativity in classical German philosophy. The questions addressed in the contributions herein include, among others, what is meant by performativity with regard to theories of classical German philosophy and what role performativity plays in these theories. Accordingly, this introduction first explains (to a certain extent) what is meant by

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<sup>23</sup>Austin uses the terms “performative utterance,” “performatory,” and “performatives.” Austin 1962, p. 6.

<sup>24</sup>Cp. f.e. Guidi/Rentsch 2020.

<sup>25</sup>Cp. f.e. Kinlaw 2014; Moser 2021; Stekeler-Weithofer 2008; Thomas-Fogiel 2010.

performativity. Subsequently, an example of performativity within classical German philosophy is presented. Finally, the contributions to the volume are briefly introduced.

### 1.2.1 The Concept of Performativity

As already mentioned, the concept “performativity” was coined by J.L. Austin. According to Austin, one type of *utterance* is performative. In simple terms, this type of utterance is characterized by the fact that (a) an action is performed with the utterance of a sentence, whereby (b) the action is expressed by an expression that this sentence contains—usually the verb—and (c) the action is to be distinguished from the act of uttering the sentence.<sup>26</sup> With the utterance of the sentence, therefore, a further action is performed in addition to the act of utterance. Performative utterances include, for example, “I promise to come to your party” or “I apologize for my inappropriate behavior.” With the (sincere) utterance of the first sentence, a promise is made. In the case of the second sentence, a person apologizes. The utterance of these sentences thus accomplishes actions that are expressed by the verb of the respective sentence. In his early studies of performative utterances, Austin distinguishes this type of utterance from constative utterances.<sup>27</sup> In contrast to performative utterances, constative utterances are characterized by the fact that they are utterances of sentences that are true or false and contain descriptions. For example, the utterance of the sentence “The sun is shining” is a constative utterance that is true or false and describes a fact (*Sachverhalt*).

In the further course of Austin’s investigation of utterances, the strict distinction between performative utterances and constative utterances became problematic for several reasons. When focusing on the properties of performative utterances, these reasons include, for example, the fact that it is questionable whether (at least some) performative utterances do not contain descriptions and are not true or false after all.<sup>28</sup> With this questioning of his strict distinction between constative and performative utterances, Austin initiated a debate about performative utterances that continues to this day.<sup>29</sup>

That said, the concept of performativity is not used exclusively within the philosophy of language. It has also been taken up by researchers from other

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<sup>26</sup>The characteristics of performative utterances are controversial. For an overview of different positions, see Harnish 2002, pp. 42–43.

<sup>27</sup>Austin 1962, pp. 3–5.

<sup>28</sup>Austin 1962, pp. 90–93. Cp. Bach 1975. In response to the fact that the distinction between constative and performative utterances became problematic, Austin sought a way out in investigating what it can mean that saying something means doing something. Austin 1962, p. 94.

<sup>29</sup>Austin’s questioning of the distinction between constative and performative utterances has therefore not led to the assumption that performative utterances are also being abandoned. Harnish 2007, p. 5. Cp. Searle 1989.

disciplines. This has been accompanied by an expansion and sometimes redefinition of the features of this concept. The concept of performativity (performativa, performatives, etc.) no longer refers exclusively to one type of utterance. Rather, phenomena of consciousness, religious practices and rituals, the subject, theater performances, and much more are referred to as performative. In theology, for example, topics such as absolution and prayer have been interpreted performatively since around the 1960s.<sup>30</sup> In the philosophy of mind, self-awareness has been interpreted performatively, as has the (particularly intensively discussed) construction of gender identities in the field of gender studies.<sup>31</sup> The concept of performativity has also been applied in the history of philosophy. Jaako Hintikka, for example, interpreted the famous sentence “Cogito, ergo sum” performatively in the 1960s in relation to René Descartes. The expression “cogito” expresses the act of thinking through which the sentence “I exist” is self-verifying.<sup>32</sup> Subsequently, the concept of performativity has also been applied to the interpretation of theories within classical German philosophy. The underlying thesis of these interpretations is that only the word “performative” is new. However, performativity *avant la lettre* can already be found in classical German philosophy.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>Bayer<sup>2</sup>1989,<sup>2</sup>1990; Walser 2015; Wüst-Lückl 2007.

<sup>31</sup>Lang 2020; Butler 1997, 2002.

<sup>32</sup>Hintikka 1962, p. 17. Cp. Hintikka 1963.

### 1.2.3 The Contributions to the Volume<sup>42</sup>

The first two contributions in the volume examine the question of whether performativity *avant la lettre* can be found in Immanuel Kant's critical philosophy. *Anton Friedrich Koch* combines the investigation of the question of whether the "I think" of transcendental apperception is a performative act with systematic considerations, in which Koch confronts his original account, which he set out in *Versuch über Wahrheit und Zeit* (2006) and *Wahrheit, Zeit und Freiheit* (<sup>2</sup>2013), with the positions of Hans-Peter Falk, Irad Kimhi and Sebastian Rödl. First, Koch explains what is meant by performativity in his contribution. Koch distinguishes between language as communication and judgment—and distinguishes three types of acts in both cases. The first type are performative acts that make real what they express linguistically. An example of such acts is the utterance of the sentence "I promise to visit you". The second type of act confirms the truth of what is articulated linguistically, whereby the truth is not first and foremost brought about by the act of communicating. An example of this is the utterance "I can speak a little English". The third act does not in itself determine whether the "act" is true, as is the case, for example, with the judgment "Emma is sobbing" made by a person. In accordance with this classification of three acts, the main question of the essay is whether the "I think" of transcendental apperception is a performative act,

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<sup>40</sup>Cp. Richli 2000.

<sup>41</sup>According to Christoph Horn, a performative argument exists when the truth of the propositional content follows from the speech act, the speech act as such. Horn 1995, p. 84 [my translation, S.L.].

<sup>42</sup>The articles in this anthology have undergone an open peer review process. I would like to thank the authors/reviewers involved for their thorough examination and subsequent revision of the articles.

and more specifically, whether it can be assigned to the first type of act. Koch's answer to this question is that this is true in certain respects.

In justifying this thesis, Koch distinguishes an assertoric use from a problematic use of "I think" and differentiates transcendental apperception from other types of apperception. In the assertoric use, "I think" means as much as "I judge p", whereas in the problematic use the subject does not determine whether something is actually the case. The problematic use can therefore be expressed in the form "It seems to me that p". According to Koch, apperception means that a subject recognizes itself in relation to what it perceives. It is *transcendental* if it is pure, free of empirical stuff and is carried out logically. The "I" of the "I think" of transcendental apperception is not about a person, but about the pure self-consciousness of judgment. However, according to Koch, every meaningful use of 'I' is not only transcendental, but also referential-personal. With the help of his "theory of apriori presuppositions" of reference, Koch shows that every meaningful use of 'I' also includes, among other things, bodily individuated, albeit identification-free, self-consciousness. When a subject speaks of "I" in "I judge", there is always an identification-free reference (e-reference). Koch therefore distinguishes three levels in the use of 'I'. These are the non-referential transcendental usage, the personal identification-free e-reference and the identifying referential usage. With the latter, a misidentification is possible, as when a person mistakenly assumes that a foot she sees is her own.

*Aloisia Moser* develops a performative interpretation of Kant's critical philosophy, explicitly following Austin and transferring speech act theory to the act of thinking in Kant's sense. According to Moser, performativity means that an action is carried out through thinking, which ensures its justification in its execution. For Moser, thinking is thus similar to a promise that is actually made with the (sincere) utterance of a sentence such as "I promise to give the tool back to you." Moser links her performative interpretation of thinking with the thesis that a thought is first and foremost true or false as a result of the performativity of thinking. However, not only thinking is performative. According to Moser, performativity can be found on "all levels" in Kant's theoretical philosophy. For example, transcendental apperception is just as performative as the categories or the spontaneity of reason. The focus of the article, however, is the analysis of Kant's theory of acts of thought, which Moser interprets in an independent way in confrontation with Thomas Khurana's reflections on Kant's philosophy. With regard to performativity, a central statement is that in the case of the judgment "I think," the ego is not the object of knowledge, neither in the sense of an appearance nor of a thing in itself. Nevertheless, the ego is given as factually existing. The ego is performative. A second central statement says that the power of judgment performs the forms of intuition, i.e. produces them in judgment itself. The power of judgment makes it possible for these forms to conform to the categories by making a judgment. On the basis of an analysis of the relationship between sensibility and understanding, or between intuition and concept, as well as the role of the imagination, the power

of judgment and the power of imagination in the cognition of objects of experience, Moser demonstrates the central and complex significance of performativity in Kant's *KrV*.

Jeffery Kinlaw examines Fichte's theory of self-consciousness in his Jena writings. Fichte distinguishes between two variants of self-consciousness, namely self-consciousness gained through reflection on the one hand, and immediate self-consciousness on the other. This immediate self-consciousness or intellectual intuition contains the conscious information *that* one is actively engaged and *what* one is doing. It is a case of *immediate* self-consciousness (self-acquaintance) because it is non-conceptual and non-perceptual. This type of self-consciousness is *performative*, as there is no separation between the activity of a subject and the awareness of being the actor of the action. According to Kinlaw, immediate self-consciousness thus exhibits significant similarities with performative utterances in Austin's sense, as expressed, for example, by the sentence "I congratulate you". Just as in the case of performative utterances an action is carried out on the basis of the utterance of a sentence, in the case of intellectual intuition the act with which self-consciousness exists in the first place is itself the consciousness of this act in an analogous way. According to Kinlaw, performative self-consciousness establishes reflective self-consciousness in that immediate self-consciousness captures, in addition to the activity of the subject, a rich body of conscious information that exists in relation to that activity. One example of such information that Kinlaw gives is being a determinable subject who chooses an action from an infinite number of possible courses of action. Since a subject has an awareness of this information thanks to immediate self-consciousness, it can be grasped in the course of the subject's reflection.

Kinlaw also clarifies the systematic significance of Fichte's performative interpretation of self-consciousness through a discussion of Dieter Henrich's critique of Fichte, Lucy O'Brien's interpretation of the self-consciousness of rationally acting subjects, and Stefan Lang's performative interpretation of self-consciousness. Kinlaw shows that Henrich's critique of Fichte presupposes that the activity that leads to self-consciousness and self-consciousness are to be distinguished. However, precisely this does not apply in the case of performative self-consciousness, so that Henrich's criticism does not do justice to Fichte. According to Kinlaw, Fichte's position is superior to Lucy O'Brien's point of view. According to O'Brien, non-intentional self-consciousness, which a subject possesses in actions, establishes the self-reference of a subject that exists in the use of the expression 'I'. According to O'Brien, however, non-intentional self-consciousness exists when a subject's action occurs as a result of a rational deliberative process in which options for action are examined. This process constitutes non-intentional self-consciousness. Non-intentional self-consciousness is therefore not performative, as it is not an intrinsic part of the action itself, but exists when the action occurs as a result of a rational, deliberative process. As a consequence, O'Brien must presuppose that self-blind actions are conceptually impossible. In contrast, for Fichte the possibility of self-blind actions is excluded, since an action itself includes self-consciousness. While Lang develops a performative interpretation that is limited to linguistic self-consciousness, Kinlaw shows that and how performative



self-consciousness also forms the core of Fichte's interpretation of free, self-determined actions and practical-moral philosophy. An important idea of Kinlaw's explanations is that the activity and freedom of the subject also represent a performative unity, in that the productive activity itself is the freedom that is captured in self-consciousness.

In her contribution, *Isabelle Thomas-Fogiel* justifies central theses of this anthology with regard to Fichte. Performativity is contained in Fichte's philosophy, even if Fichte does not use the word 'performative'. A performative interpretation of Fichte's philosophy is of immense hermeneutical importance, since performativity is the most important principle of Fichte's scientific doctrines as a whole. Fichte's performative philosophical theory is of systematic importance, as Fichte develops an original performative concept of truth. At the center of Thomas-Fogiel's considerations are the concepts of "performative contradiction" and "performative identity". A performative contradiction consists in the fact that the content of the utterance of a sentence contradicts the action that a subject performs with or during this utterance. For Fichte, according to Thomas-Fogiel, the avoidance of performative contradictions is the supreme law of philosophical reflection. However, according to Thomas-Fogiel, Fichte's philosophy as a whole is dependent on the existence of performative identity, i.e. a congruence between the content of a proposition of the *WL* and the act that takes place with the utterance of the proposition. Only propositions that correspond to this performative identity can be propositions of the system of the *WL*. A performative identity does not only exist in the case of the highest principle of Fichte's early *WL*, the absolute subject. Rather, performative identity is the basis of Fichte's entire philosophy and the principle of all principles. Thomas-Fogiel therefore rejects the widespread division of Fichte's work into different creative periods in Fichte research. In all his expositions of the *WL*, Fichte endeavors to avoid performative contradictions and to establish a performative identity. The numerous versions of the *WL* differ in that Fichte's endeavor is applied to different subject areas in each case—representation in the *Eigene Meditationen* (1793/94), the finite in the *Grundlage der gesamten Wissenschaftslehre* (1794/95), the infinite in the presentation of the *Wissenschaftslehre Nova Methodo* (1798), the absolute in the *Wissenschaftslehre 1804*, and so on.

Thomas-Fogiel clarifies the systematic significance of Fichte's performative standpoint by demonstrating that Fichte defines an original concept of truth and thus does not support relativism, which many performative theories that have been developed in recent decades exhibit. According to Fichte's concept of truth, truth consists in the performative identity of sentence meaning and activity that takes place when the sentence is uttered or thought. The criterion by which the truth or falsity of a philosophical proposition can be recognized therefore consists in the correspondence between the content of a proposition and the act in which it is uttered. Fichte thus develops an alternative to a theory of correspondence, a theory of coherence and a pragmatic theory of truth, according to which truth consists in usefulness. According to Thomas-Fogiel, Fichte's systematic contribution to the theory of performativity lies in the establishment of a performative concept of truth.

*Jindřich Karásek* opens his contribution with a definition of performative self-consciousness. Self-consciousness is performative if self-consciousness comes about when and only when the subject performs an act in which it refers to itself. Self-consciousness therefore does not exist before this act. According to Karásek, the ego is also performative for Fichte. Not only self-consciousness but also the ego exists first and foremost with the act of self-relation or self-positing. From a metaphysical point of view, Fichte thus rejects the substance model of the ego. According to the latter model, the ego exists independently of the act of self-relation, so that this act is the accident of the ego as a substance to be distinguished from it. Karásek examines the question of whether a performative interpretation of self-consciousness and the ego can be reconciled with a substance theory of the absolute. He examines this question in a discussion of Schelling's theory of identity in the "Würzburger System." The basic concept of Schelling's theory is the concept of substance, and Karásek addresses the question of whether Schelling does justice to the performativity of human subjectivity. According to Karásek, this is the case. He justifies this by examining three further questions: (a) whether Schelling develops a "reflection model" of subjectivity; (b) whether Schelling was aware of the problem that a "reflection model" leads to a vicious infinite regress; and (c) whether Schelling's explanation of the production of self-consciousness and ego actually leads to an infinite regress. According to the reflection model of self-consciousness, every case of knowledge includes a knowledge of knowledge and thus self-consciousness. Every instance of knowledge is in turn an object of knowledge, so that this model leads to an infinite regress.

At the center of Karásek's justification of the thesis that Schelling's theory does justice to the performativity of human subjectivity is Schelling's conception of the absolute as an entity characterized by an identity of subject and object, and Schelling's interpretation of the relationship between concepts and their objects. Since identity as the structure of the absolute is the structure of all being, it is also true with regard to self-consciousness and the ego that they are characterized by an identity of subject and object. For the absolute substance, it is true that concepts are generated simultaneously with their objective correlates. Consequently, this also applies to the ego and self-consciousness, so that the concept of knowledge is a constitutive component of finite knowledge. The ego thus exists only with the existence of the concept of "ego-hood." According to Karásek, Schelling succeeds in avoiding the problem of an infinite regress and in uniting the performative model with a substance model of the absolute.

At the beginning of his contribution, *Pirmin Stekeler-Weithofer* explains what generally needs to be taken into account when reconstructing theories, especially in the field of the history of philosophy, and interpreting them using terms not used in these theories—such as the concept of performativity in this anthology. It should be noted, for example, that even if two forms of expression are equivalent in their extensional meaning at a certain level of generality, the context determining the respective topic must be taken into account when translating expressions. One of several examples that Stekeler-Weithofer cites for such a translation

of expressions is Gilbert Ryle's distinction between *Knowing How* and *Knowing That* on the one hand and mastered forms of being and execution (Seins- und Vollzugsformen) as well as their descriptions on the other. In his contribution, Stekeler-Weithofer makes it clear that it is possible to establish important connections between theories from different traditions thanks to such translations. For example, "Seyn" in Martin Heidegger's sense corresponds to "Subjekt-sein" in Hegel's.

Stekeler-Weithofer deals with performativity in a discussion primarily with Hegel and Heidegger. Following Heidegger, Stekeler-Weithofer interprets (with regard to inner-wordly things) the being of something for itself in time as an (also) performative being. With recourse to Hegel, according to Stekeler-Weithofer, instantiations or manifestations of a concept per se (Begriff an sich) are just as performative as the finite, living subject as a temporal being of performance (Vollzugswesen). The situation is different, however, with Hegel's talk of God. Even if God is by no means just a fictional object, but is necessarily to be understood as substance or nature and as spirit and thus also as a multi-layered historical development in the world, this talk of God is metaphorical. God's existence is therefore not to be defined as a performative being. In contrast, performativity is also important in judgment. According to Stekeler-Weithofer, Hegel already recognizes that in a judgment of the form "this is milk", the content must be distinguished from the performative, expressive-declaratory character of the judgment. The performative aspect includes the speaker, so that a subject in a judgment of the form "this is milk" "refers" empractically to itself as the speaker. This identification therefore does not occur by virtue of the content of the word 'I', for example, in the event that this word is a component of the content of the asserted statement "I assert that this is milk". However, as Stekeler-Weithofer explains in a discussion of Hegel's remarks on habit (Gewohnheit), soul and corporeality, this does not mean that there is a performative being of a thinking spirit soul (Geistseele) that is detached from corporeal life. It is also important to note that a judgment is declared to be true as a result of the performative aspect of a judgment. But this does not mean, as Stekeler-Weithofer explains with regard to Hegel's critique of Kant and Fichte, that a judgment is actually true.

In his contribution, *Bart Philipsen* shows that several meanings of performativity play a role in Hölderlin's work. These include linguistic performativity, performative cultural and political practices and institutions as well as performativity in the sense of aesthetic performance. According to Philipsen, to do justice to the peculiarity of Hölderlin's oeuvre as a whole, these different meanings of performativity should not be interpreted in the sense of strictly delimited types of performativity, but rather in their context and in their interaction. As a result of considering this connection and interaction, the distinction between Hölderlin as a theorist and as a poet becomes fragile. An important performative phenomenon in Hölderlin's work is creative reflection, which is based neither on the intentions of a given subject nor on a given world. Rather, this reflection produces these poles and their relationship in the first place in order to articulate their change at the same time. Language as creative reflection is characterized by time, the coming into being and

passing away, just like “Seyn” as the “all in all (Alles in Allem),” which only articulates and reflects itself in time and by means of time in an “ächttragische” language. This Seyn, which Philippsen identifies with the Seyn in Hölderlin’s much-discussed early work “Seyn, Urtheil, Modalität,” is itself performative, even if it is only perceptible through the poetic-performative speech act. Other examples that Philippsen mentions and which illustrate the continuity and further development of Hölderlin’s (performative) reflections from his early writings to his later works include Hölderlin’s reflections on remembering and giving thanks (Danken), which Philippsen identifies with creative reflection, the “ächttragische language” that gives reflected expression to becoming in passing, poetic individuality, which is defined as plural individuality and includes non-human actors, or the songs from Hölderlin’s later creative phase, in which choral performance is important.

While Philippsen’s essay uses several examples from different creative phases to illuminate facets of the performative in Hölderlin, *Violetta L. Waibel*’s contribution focuses on the analysis of an example of performative writing by Hölderlin. The work in question is “Friedensschrift.” Waibel’s analysis thus follows on seamlessly from Philippsen’s contribution, in that Philippsen also proposes a performative reading of this writing. According to Waibel—as I [S.L.] would like to summarize her reflections—in this text Hölderlin combines features of the concept of performativity following Austin with features of the concept of performativity in the sense of a performance. “Friedensfeier” is not just a statement, a poetic declaration of peace, but a performance of a celebration of peace, in the form of a “Sangart” of and about peace. The title alone expresses the celebration that is carried out with this poetic writing. Just as in the case of performative utterances, the linguistic meaning of an uttered sentence sometimes thematizes the facts that are brought forth by the utterance, “Friedensfeier” is characterized by a comparable self-referentiality. Waibel analyzes the way in which Hölderlin brings about these performative aspects in this writing. This includes, among other things, that the poem evokes a festive setting in the minds of the readers or, for example, that present, past and future (beautiful) humanity is invited to the celebration just as much as past, present and future readers. Waibel therefore emphasizes that “Friedensfeier” represents and is a celebration that is not limited to the time and occasion when Hölderlin began work on the poem, i.e. on the occasion of the peace treaty of 9 February 1801 in Lunéville between France and the Holy Roman Empire. Rather, the celebration may have taken place in the past as well as in the present or even the future.

In connection with the presentation of her performative reading of Hölderlin’s “Friedensfeier”, Waibel presents a reconstruction of this writing in which she addresses central questions of the research literature on Hölderlin. These include the questions of who the prince of the celebration is or who the narrator-I is who appears in this writing. Waibel combines her analysis of the text with an account of Hölderlin’s political convictions, such as his anti-monarchist attitude, and their relationship to philosophical-metaphysical considerations. Among other things, Waibel emphasizes Hölderlin’s idea of a philosophical-political education and his concern to combine the philosophy of his time, which focused on the inwardness

of the subject, with a transformative potential for society. Waibel's comments find a point in her remark that "celebrating peace" is not only a celebration of the end of a war, but also speaks of social peace and equality.

In his article, *Manuel Bauer* examines structural performativity in the literary theory of early Romanticism, specifically in Schlegel, Novalis, and Schleiermacher. Structural performativity is the property of a text that is characterized by the fact that it expresses how the text does what it is about—or does something other than what it claims in the sense of a performative contradiction. In more detail, structural performativity is the property of a text that draws attention to the narrative, i.e. to the mediation between the text and the reader, and makes clear (a) how, i.e. as a result of which structure, the text does what it thematizes, or (b) how the text leads to a performative contradiction. Drawing on Bernd Häsner, Bauer distinguishes the concept of structural performativity from the concept of functional performativity. The latter concept refers to what a text triggers and thus is the concept of the act of reception. Structural performativity is of significance for art-philosophical, literary-critical, and linguistic-theoretical texts in that these texts are (often) less constative and do not describe theories that exist independently of linguistic representation. Rather, theory is an ongoing practice that is realized through its written representation.

Bauer explains structural performativity using selected writings by Novalis, Schlegel, and Schleiermacher as examples. In Novalis, Bauer emphasizes the significance of performative contradictions for an adequate understanding of the *Monologue*, the "most important early Romantic document of structural performativity." With reference to Schlegel's *On Incomprehensibility* (*Über die Unverständlichkeit*) among other things, Bauer demonstrates the ingenious way in which Schlegel combines performativity and performative contradictions. A point of his remarks is the indication that Schlegel succeeds in this writing in generally achieving an affirmation of what is presented through intentionally constructed performative contradictions, although this affirmation is subsequently also called into question. As to Schleiermacher's early reviews, different variants of the performative are presented, in which performative and constative elements merge.

Finally, *Martijn Boven* illustrates the hermeneutic potential of performative interpretations by analyzing Søren Kierkegaard's review of the performance of a play called *Mr. Phister as Captain Scipio*.<sup>43</sup> First, Boven distinguishes between linguistic and dramatic performativity. Linguistic performativity corresponds to Austin's talk of "doing things with words," while dramatic performativity is the creation of meaning by means of an embodied performance in front of an audience. According

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<sup>43</sup> It may seem questionable that a contribution on Kierkegaard should appear in a volume on performativity in classical German philosophy. However, in the conception of this anthology, at least one contribution was planned from the outset that takes a look at performativity in philosophical theories that were developed after classical German philosophy on the one hand and were influenced by classical German philosophy on the other. It was therefore obvious to consider Kierkegaard, who was influenced by Hegel and, as Martijn Boven explains in his contribution, developed far-reaching performative considerations.

to Boven, Kierkegaard asymptotically combines both types of performativity: Kierkegaard's texts are linguistically performative because he conceives his works as performances in the sense of dramatic performativity. Boven's key hermeneutic thesis is that considering the asymptotic convergence of linguistic and dramatic performativity opens up an insightful perspective on Kierkegaard's work and his philosophical standpoint.

The starting point of Boven's justification of his hermeneutic thesis is his explanation of the meaning of the expression "disclosure of concealment," which he carries out using an example from Kierkegaard's theater review. In the play, an actor named Phister plays a policeman, and the actor reveals that the policeman is deliberately hiding the fact that he is drunk. However, the revelation is only implied by showing signs of contradiction between the actual state of the policeman and the state he pretends to be in, namely not being drunk. One of Boven's central theses is that a comparable revelation of the hidden is a fundamental feature of Kierkegaard's œuvre and thus provides a key to understanding his work. Boven justifies this thesis with the help of an analogy between three levels of theatrical performativity and the performativity that characterizes the author, Kierkegaard. A point of these explanations is that Kierkegaard conceals his true view of things by using a pseudonym, Procul, and yet at the same time he offers hints by means of signs of contradictory statements. It is up to the reader to discover Kierkegaard's actual point of view for themselves. According to Boven, this approach corresponds to Kierkegaard's conviction that his interpretation of existential categories must be deciphered by his audience through independent effort in an examination of his work. Only in this way is it possible to solve a problem with which Kierkegaard sees his philosophy confronted, namely that the existential categories that Kierkegaard thematizes in his writings cannot be adequately communicated directly on the basis of his explanations but are only accessible to the reader on the basis of their independent exploration. The meaning of Kierkegaard's central theses is thus revealed by means of "indirect communication," which is provided by his performative approach.<sup>44</sup>

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