

enthusiasm in the Kantian corpus, for the spectators' affective response acts as a sign of moral progress. The feeling is disinterested and universal, meaning that all informed, cultured observers, Kant thinks, should respond to the establishment of a republic in France with such "zeal and grandeur of soul" or enthusiasm (CF, 7:85–6/CERRT:302–3). The spectators are responding with genuine enthusiasm, which (as cited in this entry's second sentence) is disinterested and moves only toward what is ideal and toward moral concepts such as the concept of right (CF, 7:86–7n./CERRT:303n.), and he calls the onlookers' response an enthusiasm "for upholding justice for the human race." The *Anthropology* states that just as the concept of freedom under moral laws arouses enthusiasm, so even a merely sensible representation of outer freedom, by analogy with the concept of right, heightens the inclination to persist in it or to extend it into a violent passion (A, 7:269/CEAHE:370). In this work published a few years after the Reign of Terror, we read that an "infectious spirit of freedom" likely pulls reason into that spirit's play, thus causing in political relations "an enthusiasm that shakes everything and goes beyond all bounds" (A, 7:313–14/CEAHE:409). One can conclude that throughout the Kantian corpus, enthusiasm remains deeply ambiguous (though not vague) and dual-natured – qua affect, worthy of censure, yet as an imaginative response to ideas of the moral or political good, possessing some positive features (even in one instance acting as a sign of moral progress in history) that make it far preferable to fanaticism.

Related terms: Affect, Fanaticism, History, Image, Sublime

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Epigenesis (*Epigenesis*) Kant uses the term "epigenesis" as early as 1769–70 (R4104, 17:416) – in his teaching notes for §770 of Baumgarten's textbook on metaphysics, *Metaphysica*, a section devoted to the origin of humankind – and as late as the 1790s, both in his *Lectures on Metaphysics* (MD, 28:684 [1792–3]/CELM:385–6) and in his preparatory work on *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* (Rel draft, 23:106–7 [1793]). The term itself was taken over from ongoing debates in the life sciences regarding organic generation and the subsequent processes by which embryogenesis occurred. Kant seems to have been fully aware of these debates as early as 1763, given his lengthy consideration of the various viewpoints in his essay *The Only Possible Argument in Support of a Demonstration of the Existence of God* (OPA, 2:113–16 [1763]/CETP70:155–7). Within the biological debates, epigenesis was promoted by opponents of "preformation" or "preexistence" theory, according to which God had not only fixed all existing species lines at the point of creation, but had indeed created every possible individual at this point as well. These submicroscopic, fully formed individuals were carried forward by generations until the point at which they would begin to grow via the expansion of their preformed parts. Although epigenesis had been used by the physician William Harvey in 1651 to describe the progressive development of a chicken embryo from homogeneous mass to heterogeneously structured organism, he had refrained from any speculation regarding the basis, mechanical or otherwise, of this organizational drive. By the time Kant was writing in the 1760s, the term conveyed also the capacity on nature's part for its self-organization and thus stood for those opposed to preexistence theory.

Kant's use of the term "epigenesis" differed according to the context within which his remarks were made and can be seen as falling within three main types of consideration. The first of these considered epigenesis as a theory of biological generation, and wondered what it would mean for a theory of "blended" inheritance (R4104, 17:416), whether it would require a strict distinction between the organic and the mechanical-chemical formation of an individual (R4552, 17:591 [1772–5/6]), and finally, whether epigenesis could explain the stable

reproduction of like from like without any inherent principle of lawfulness (R6302, 18:574 [1783–4]; RHe, 8:50 [1785]/CEAHE:129). These sorts of considerations culminated in Kant's endorsement of Blumenbach's *Bildungstrieb* or "formative drive" in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (CPJ, 5:424 [1790]/CECPJ:292), with Kant now identifying the formative capacity of nature with epigenesis, and emending Blumenbach's drive to the extent that it is explicitly said to convey the stability of form to a given species line, such that epigenesis should now also be called the system of generic preformation (CPJ, 5:423/CECPJ:291).

A second group of related uses of "epigenesis" considers whether the biological account impacts discussions of the transference of soul from parent to child. Kant takes this worry to be "absurd" given not just the lack of interaction between material substance and immaterial soul, but the notion that parents are responsible for the generation of souls at all (R4684, 17:672 [1776]; R5462, 18:190 [1776–8]; MD, 28:684/CELM:385–6. Kant also rejects any specific worries regarding the capacity of transferring a good or evil character according to one or another biological theory of generation (Rel draft, 23:106–7).

The third type of consideration stems from Kant's efforts, primarily in the 1770s, to use epigenesis as a model for understanding the generation of ideas, with reason posed thereby as a self-formative capacity (R4275, 17:492 [1770–1]/CENF:124; R4446, 17:554 [1772? 1769–70?]; R4851, 18:8 [1776–8]/CENF:194; R4859, 18:12 [1776–8]; R5637, 18:273–5 [1780–3? 1788–9?]/CENF:262–4). This work to distinguish Kant's epigenetic approach from either the preformationism of the rationalists' reliance on innate ideas or the "*influxo physico*" advanced by the empiricists, leads him to conclude the B-Deduction of the *Critique of Pure Reason* with the sense that, given the alternatives, the system "of the epigenesis of pure reason" was the best approach to take (B167 [1787]/CECPR:265).

Related terms: Generation, Organism

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Essence (*Wesen*) In the Preface to the *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*, Kant writes, "Essence is the first inner principle of all that belongs to the possibility of a thing" (MNS, 4:468 [1786]/CETP81:183). This definition is echoed throughout his lectures on metaphysics (MH, 28:49 [1762–4]/CELM:12; MVo, 28:411 [1784–5]; MvS, 28:492 [1785–9]; MD, 28:629 [1792–3]), though the explicit reference to possibility is sometimes dropped (ML2, 28:553 [1790–1]/CELM:318–19). Given the crucial Kantian distinction between logical and real possibility, this generates a distinction between logical essence (the first inner principle of all that belongs to the logical possibility of a thing) and real essence (the first inner principle of all that belongs to the real possibility of a thing). Kant frequently discusses this distinction in his metaphysics lectures:

Essence is either a logical essence or a real essence. A logical essence is the first ground of all logical predicates of a thing . . . We posit a logical essence through the analysis of the concept. The first ground of all predicates thus lies in a concept; but that is not yet a real essence. E.g., that bodies attract belongs to the essence of things, although it does not lie in the concept of the body. Accordingly, the logical essence is the first inner ground of all that which is contained in the concept. (ML2, 28:553/CELM:318–19)

For instance, the logical essence of <body> is what makes the concept logically possible, i.e., the marks that constitute the concept, provided they are logically consistent. The real essence of