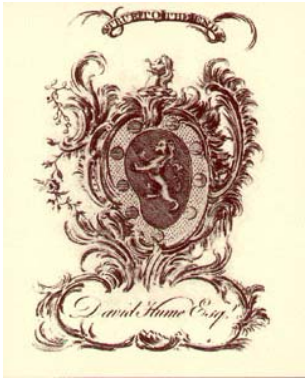

David Hume and Moses Mendelssohn

Manfred Kuehn

Hume Studies Volume XXI, Number 2 (November, 1995) 197-220.

HUME STUDIES
Volume XXI, Number 2, November 1995, pp. 197-220

David Hume and Moses Mendelssohn

MANFRED KUEHN

Moses Mendelssohn was one of the most important German philosophers of the late German enlightenment.[1] Indeed, it would be no exaggeration to say that he was one of the dominant forces on the German philosophical scene between 1755 and 1785. Especially his work in aesthetic theory and on the nature and role of sensibility was very influential, and it would be difficult to evaluate the development of German thought from Wolffian rationalism to Kantian idealism without paying close attention to Mendelssohn.

Mendelssohn's exposed position gives special significance to his view on David Hume's philosophical importance. His voice carried great weight. Accordingly, whatever he had to say about Hume would certainly not only have been heard by other German philosophers, but it would certainly also have been taken very seriously. If only for this reason, it would be rather odd if what has recently been argued by Lothar Kreimendahl and Günter Gawlick were true, namely that Mendelssohn's view of Hume was "one of the few exceptions" among the Germans. Whereas most others dismissed Hume as a philosopher, he was genuinely interested in Hume's philosophical views.[2] Yet, to say that Mendelssohn was an exception also means to say that his view on Hume was *not* influential. We would therefore need an explanation as to why he failed to have any effect in this particular case. Either his view of Hume's philosophy was rather different from the one assigned to him, or there must have been special circumstances that explain why his views on Hume's significance were not heard.

Manfred Kuehn is at the Department of Philosophy, Purdue University, West Lafayette IN 47907-1360 USA. e-mail: kuehn@mentor.cc.purdue.edu

I would like in this paper to investigate Mendelssohn's view of the nature of Hume's problem—at least in part—in order to show that Mendelssohn was not an exception in the way in which Kreimendahl and Gawlick view it. In particular, I shall argue that he did not take Hume seriously as a *philosopher.* Though his arguments are not without philosophical interest for a better understanding of Hume, they are entirely determined by his Leibniz-Wolffian background. It is true that Mendelssohn did not view Hume as an entirely negative skeptic and that he had a great deal of sympathy for Hume's analysis of causality. However, he appreciated Hume's view only in so far as he also thought that it was compatible with that of Leibniz. And he therefore also held that Hume had *nothing* to tell to the Germans that was both new and of *philosophical* significance. While Mendelssohn considered some of Hume's psychological investigations as important and interesting, he thought little of his philosophical theory. To show this, I shall first briefly characterize Mendelssohn's general philosophical intentions and the historical background against which his philosophy must be seen. Secondly, I shall discuss two of the most characteristic reactions Mendelssohn had to Hume, namely (i) a rather critical discussion of Hume's objections to induction in his paper "On Probability" and (ii) a rather uncritical use he makes of Hume's theory of association in attempting to refute Rousseau. Thirdly, I shall attempt to evaluate the significance Hume had for Mendelssohn, and finally I would like to raise the question as to whether Mendelssohn's view of the relationship between Leibnizian and Humean philosophy raises a real problem for Hume.

Why Was Hume Important to Mendelssohn?

It would be wrong to think that Mendelssohn was a radical innovator in philosophy. He was not important because he overturned traditional Wolffianism and revolutionized German philosophy. He was clearly not inclined to revolutionary activities of any kind. In fact, today he is often considered as one of the most important "neo-Wolffians." This group of philosophers represented perhaps the most conservative group of German philosophers during the period.[3] Like Wolff, they believed not only that reason was the most fundamental human faculty, but also that it was the expression of the structure of an essentially rational universe. They also believed that Leibniz's principles of contradiction, of sufficient reason, of the identity of indiscernibles, and of pre-established harmony were essentially correct, and that philosophy was well on its way to becoming an exact science by following the "mathematical model."[4] All of them were also theists, who were opposed to any kind of atheism or agnosticism, and especially to the kind of materialism that was put forward by their French contemporaries. In some ways they were clearly better Leibnizians than the earlier Wolffians, if only because they knew Leibniz's primary texts much better.

However, these Leibniz-Wolffians found themselves in a rather different situation than that encountered by their predecessors. Leibniz and Wolff were under serious attack by philosophers and scientists, especially in Berlin.[5] When Wolff died in 1754, his philosophy, having dominated German schools and universities for the preceding three decades, had already begun to decline in influence. Wolff no longer possessed the binding authority of his earlier years. But no new philosopher of similar stature or authority had arisen, and—at least to German philosophers who, just like most Germans, seemed to prefer "law and order"—the philosophical situation at the time seemed one of "general anarchy." Mendelssohn himself lamented that philosophy, "the poor matron," who according to Shaftesbury had been "banished from high society and put into the schools and colleges...had to leave even this dusty corner. Descartes expelled the scholastics, Wolff expelled Descartes, and the contempt for all philosophy finally also expelled Wolff; and it appears that Crusius will soon be the philosopher in fashion." Thus the Berlin academy, re-organized by Frederick the Great in 1744–46, took, for the most part, a definite anti-Wolffian stance. Its most important members, Pierre Louis Moreau Maupertuis and Leonhard Euler, were perhaps also its most important anti-Wolffians. As convinced Newtonians, they had very little sympathy for Leibnizian metaphysics. They missed hardly any opportunity to try and discredit the latter. Even the regular questions for the "Prize Essays" made this clear. The topics were usually designed so as to allow for ample criticism of the Leibniz-Wolffian position.[6] Mendelssohn and his friends could not have had an easy time in Berlin in defending what the members of the academy objected to. And elsewhere the situation was no better.[7] In Göttingen, for instance, the philosophers Johann Georg Heinrich Feder and Christian Meiners almost completely abandoned Wolffian principles and opted for a form of Lockean sensationalism. And at most other universities the situation was the same. Wolffian philosophy appeared to be on the retreat. That it was never completely supplanted by the British way of doing philosophy was—at least in part—due to Mendelssohn and his friends.

This is one of the reasons why these Wolffians should still be of some, even if limited, philosophical interest today: they were not philosophical antiquarians, looking back to Wolff or just following the beaten track, but they were exploring new avenues for Wolffian philosophy and trying to open up new fields of inquiry for it. They were Wolffians that confronted new problems. In fact, they were attempting to achieve a synthesis of the rationalistic elements in Wolff with what they considered to be the valuable results of a more empiricist approach of British philosophers. And this is why Hume became important to them.[8]

Mendelssohn's Goals

All this is especially true of Mendelssohn. Though brought up on Wolffian logic and ontology, *rational* theology and *philosophia practica universalis*, he had early discovered that this way of philosophizing was exhaustive neither of the world nor even of philosophical discussion. He found that British philosophers also had something to offer. The works of Locke, Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, Hume, Smith, Ferguson, and almost every other British philosopher of note were full of problems that needed solution and observations that needed to be explained, if German philosophy of the traditional sort was to succeed, and most of these problems seemed to have to do with the analysis of sensation in theoretical, moral, and aesthetic contexts. Mendelssohn had formulated a new problem or task for himself (and the other Germans). This task was conceived by him—at least at first—as one of incorporating British "observations" in a comprehensive theory. As he noted at the occasion of a review of Edmund Burke's *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*:

> The theory of human sensations and passions has in more recent times made the greatest progress, since the other parts of philosophy no longer seem to advance very much. Our neighbors, and especially the English, precede us with philosophical observations of nature, and we follow them with our rational inferences; and if it were to go on like this, namely that our neighbors observe and we explain, we may hope that we will achieve in time a complete theory of sensation.[9]

What was needed, he thought, was a *Universal Theory of Thinking and Sensation*, and such a theory would cover sensation and thinking in theoretical, moral and aesthetic contexts.[10] It would use British "observations" and German (i.e., Wolffian) "explanations." Mendelssohn had also definite ideas about the general approach that had to be followed. It had to be shown that the phenomena observed by British philosophers and traced by them to a special sense are really rational. Thus it was wrong, he argued, to speak of a special "moral sense" or "common sense," for instance. Though both may appear to be independent faculties of the mind, they must be reduced to reason. This reduction to reason may appear difficult in the case of moral judgments, since our moral judgments "as they present themselves in the soul are completely different from the effects of distinct rational principles," but that does not mean that they could not be analyzed into rational and distinct principles.[11] Our moral sentiments are "phenomena which are related to rational principles in the same way as the colors are related to the angles of refraction of light. Apparently they are of completely different nature, yet they are basically one and the same."[12] Moral phenomena are phenomena in the Leibnizian sense,

but they are also *"phenomena bene fundata"* because they are ultimately founded in something rational. But he also set for himself and others a most important task, namely the task of explaining how the rational principles are related to what appear to be the completely different moral sentiments, for the color analogy, though very suggestive, does not explain anything about the actual relation between rational principles and moral judgments. It was precisely this task that defined one of the central concerns of German moral philosophers during the final third of the eighteenth century, namely to show how "sense" could be reduced to "rational principles." And it was for this reason that Hume's analysis of sentiment could be dismissed by Mendelssohn only at the peril of becoming irrelevant. It was for this reason also that he also had to confront head-on the "dangers" of Hume's position, namely its implicit skepticism. Because he had to explain the observations of somebody like Hume, he could not dismiss them, and because he wanted to hold onto an essentially rationalist position, he could not accept most of the implications they had for somebody like Hume.

The Philosophical Situation in Berlin

Many of the members of the Berlin academy appreciated Hume for the very reason that Mendelssohn would have been wary of him. Thus the translator of the *Oeuvres philosophiques* of Hume, which began to appear in 1758 with the first *Enquiry* as volume I, was the perpetual secretary of the Berlin Academy, J. B. Merian. The writer of the Preface was another prominent member of this institution, namely J. H. S. Formey, and the entire enterprise is said to go back to a suggestion by Maupertuis, the president of the Berlin Academy. Maupertuis was utilizing Hume for his own ends as well as for criticizing Wolffian philosophy at least since 1754 and perhaps even as early as 1746.[13] And Merian had already tried to refute Leibniz's principle of the indiscernibility of identicals by appealing to Hume's principles of association.[14] In general, the anti-Wolffian faction of the Berlin Academy found in Hume an important ally and helper in criticizing the kind of position that Mendelssohn himself advocated. While it is far from clear whether in doing so they understood Hume very well, it must be said that they played a most important role in the further spread of Humean ideas in Germany and France. Accordingly, there was every reason for Mendelssohn to deal with Hume and the interpretation of Hume in the Berlin Academy.[15]

However, it would be a mistake to view the Berlin Academy as being entirely in Hume's camp. There were also Wolffians.[16] Thus Johann Georg Sulzer, a prominent German-speaking member of the Berlin Academy, and then a well-known philosopher, was clearly rather more critical of Hume than some of his French colleagues.[17] Though he was a Wolffian, he thought that Hume was important for precisely the same reasons that Maupertuis, Merian

and Euler believed him to be important. He also thought that Hume's skepticism constituted a most significant objection to Leibnizian philosophy, and therefore considered the *refutation* of Hume as a most important task. Thus he became the editor of the German translation of the first *Enquiry*, and he took the occasion to provide this dangerous work with an introduction and a running commentary, designed to refute Hume's theories. Mendelssohn openly agreed with much of what Sulzer had said by way of criticizing Hume.[18] And he would tell his acquaintances that he was "very satisfied with the German translation of Hume's *Essays* in which Sulzer," he said, "had succeeded in resolving the skeptical doubts of the author."[19]

Mendelssohn and Sulzer knew each other personally, and it appears to have been through Sulzer that Mendelssohn also got to know personally other members of the Academy. In any case, it was Sulzer who first introduced Mendelssohn to Maupertuis. It appears that Mendelssohn thus came to know most of the members of the Academy who were in Berlin. The Academicians appear to have mingled freely with the other intellectuals in Berlin, and Mendelssohn thus appears to have had more or less regular contact with them. Since Berlin had no University at that time, much of its intellectual life centered around a number of private clubs. One of the most important, even if rather short-lived, of such literary societies was the so-called "Learned Coffee House" (*Gelehrtes Kaffeehaus*). It was founded in 1755, and had about 100 members. Some of its members were also members of the Academy, others were intellectuals without any official association.[20] Euler seems to have been its most prominent member. Mendelssohn, still relatively young and unknown, also belonged to this club or society.

The "Learned Coffee House" maintained two large rented rooms, where members could go every day. It subscribed to many different learned journals and periodicals. Most of the issues of the day appear to have been discussed there, with philosophical and scientific problems being most important. It should come as no surprise that when the German translation of the *Essays* appeared, it was soon "in everyone's hands," as Mendelssohn himself claims in the essay "On Probability."[21] Indeed, given the close connection of several of the prominent members of the Berlin academy to both the German and the French translations of Hume's work, this should come as no surprise.

To sum up then: there was a constant struggle in the Berlin Academy between the anti-Wolffians and the Wolffians, and while early on the anti-Wolffians had the upper hand, in the latter third of the century the Wolffians won out. In this struggle Hume clearly played an important, though still largely unexamined role. Hume's philosophy was also an important subject in the "Learned Coffee House." Especially his analysis of causality was taken very seriously by both friend and foe. Mendelssohn had accordingly every reason to pay attention to the threat that Hume represented to his way of philosophizing, and it should come as no surprise that he ultimately found it

necessary to have a fundamental *Auseinandersetzung* with Hume. Indeed, in order to understand Mendelssohn's position with regard to Hume, it is necessary to keep in mind both what his own philosophical intentions were, and what were the views on Hume's significance shared by the Wolffians and anti-Wolffians in Berlin.

Why Was Hume Not More Important to Mendelssohn?

On Probability

Mendelssohn's most interesting and philosophically most important discussion of Hume can be found in his essay "On Probability."[22] The essay actually consists of three parts. In the first and introductory part, Mendelssohn summarizes briefly some of the general principles of probability as he sees them, in the second part he discusses Hume's objections to the principle of analogy, and in the third he addresses the Leibnizian problem of freedom and determinism.[23] It might seem peculiar at first that Mendelssohn discusses two such disparate issues as the Humean problem of analogy and the Leibnizian problem of freedom in one and the same paper. They appear to have nothing to do with each other. However, since these two problems were central in the discussion of the Wolffians and anti-Wolffians in Berlin, there is at the very least a psychological explanation for this peculiar connection. In fact, since the paper was written for presentation at a meeting in the "Learned Coffee House" during which at least some of the members of the Berlin Academy would have been present, it must be understood primarily as a contribution to the discussion of Leibniz and Hume at the Berlin Academy.

In any case, it would be wrong to see the paper as addressing the general problem of probabilistic knowledge. Mendelssohn explicitly points out in one of the later editions that his essay "On Probability" was

> not meant to develop a theory of probability, but to take the few known principles of probability as an occasion to clarify two important philosophical truths, namely (1) to defend the correctness of all experiential inferences against the objections of the English [*sic*] philosopher David Hume, and (2) to prove the Leibnizian claim that all free decisions can have an *a priori* certainty. I believe that I have explained this irrefutably and independently of all systems and opinions, merely in accordance with universally accepted principles.[24]

Yet, notwithstanding Mendelssohn's assertion that his discussion is based on universally accepted principles, it is closely bound up with the Leibnizian system. Therefore, to understand Mendelssohn's discussion of probability we must, for a moment, delve rather more deeply into the Leibniz-Wolffian

theory of judgment than one might expect in a paper on Hume.

One of the most central doctrines of Leibniz was the so-called "*in esse* principle." According to this principle, anything that can truly be predicated of any subject must already have been virtually contained "in" the subject, so that "one who understands perfectly the notion of the subject would also know that the predicate belongs to it."[25] While the Wolffians did not maintain the "*in esse* principle" *per se*, they did maintain a number of positions that directly follow from it.[26] One of these is an important aspect of their theory of judgment. They believed that the truth of any proposition, be it affirmative or negative, consists in the agreement of subject and predicate. In order to know whether a certain proposition is true or false, we must be able to show on the basis of the characteristics (or, in Wolffian terminology: "determinations") of the subject why it can have the qualities that are predicated of it, or why it cannot have them. Mendelssohn was a true Wolffian in his theory of judgment. With Wolff, he called the determinations of the subject from which the predicate is inferred the "grounds of truth," and, just like the other Wolffians, he argued that if we know all the determinations of the subject that are relevant for the truth of a proposition (or all the grounds of truth), and if we therefore can understand how the predicate follows with necessity from them, then we have certain knowledge. If we know only some of the determinations that are relevant for the truth of a proposition, we cannot be certain and therefore have only probable knowledge. Depending on how many of the relevant determinations of the subject we know, the proposition is more or less likely.

Mendelssohn uses the following example to make his view more specific and clearer. If we know that one of four people (let us call them A, B, C, and D) who have traveled through a dangerous area has lost his life, then, if we also know that neither A nor B nor C lost his life, we know with absolute certainty that it must have been D. Another way of putting this is to say that the proposition "D was killed" depends on four "grounds of truth," namely (i) Someone in a group of four was killed, (ii) A was not killed, (iii) B was not killed, and (iv) C was not killed.[27] These grounds of truth warrant the truth of "D was killed." However, if we only know that someone was killed, and are missing the other three grounds of truth, then we cannot say with certainty who was killed. In fact, Mendelssohn claims that the degree of certainty that we possess in this case is equivalent to the relation of 1 : 1+3, or 1/4. If two people had died, the degree of certainty, or the probability of the proposition's being true, would be 2 : 4, or 1/2, and if three had died, it would be 3 : 1+3, or 3/4. From this Mendelssohn concludes that the following general rule holds true: "The probability of any given outcome stands in the same relation as the number of given grounds of truths to the totality of the [relevant] grounds of truth." Thus, if a = the totality of grounds of truth, and b = the number of the given grounds of truth, then the probability will be b : a.

However, usually we cannot determine the exact relationship of a and b because we do not know all the possible grounds of truth *a priori*. Rather, Mendelssohn thinks that it is more common that we will have to find them by means of a probabilistic calculation. He calls this "compound probabilities." Using Gravesande's example of a container that contains both black and white balls, and wondering what the probability might be that the first ball we extract from it is either white or black, he argues that the probability is related to certainty as the number of black balls is related to the total number of balls. But since we usually do not even have any idea about the totality of relevant cases, matters are still more complicated. We usually have to work from an hypothesis. As Mendelssohn puts it, "if we cannot survey all the grounds of truth of a subject all at once, then we first assume some of the grounds of truth in order to see what would follow from them, if they were truly to exhaust the subject. The outcome which we reach in this way is called a hypothesis."[28] We then investigate further whether this hypothesis agrees with all other grounds of truth. If we can do so exhaustively, then we are certain. However, such a complete induction is very rare, and, according to Mendelssohn himself, probably restricted to algebra.[29]

It is at this point that Hume is introduced by Mendelssohn. Going on to claim that "all our judgments which are founded on experience, analogy, or induction have been disputed by the ingenious skeptic David Hume in his *Philosophical Essays*. The German translation is in everybody's hands, and we want to adduce from the fourth essay, which Hume called "Sceptical Doubts Concerning the Operation [*sic*] of the Understanding" the most important objections which have the appearance of undermining certainty in physics."[30] He then quotes the following passages from Hume in accordance with the German translation:

> We always presume, when we see like sensible qualities, that they have like secret powers, and expect, that effects, similar to those which we have experienced, will follow from them. If a body of like colour and consistence with that bread, which we have formerly eat, be presented to us, we make no scruple of repeating the experiment, and foresee, with certainty, like nourishment and support. Now this is a process of the mind or thought, of which I would willingly know the foundation. It is allowed on all hands, that there is no known connexion between the sensible qualities and the secret powers; and consequently, that the mind is not led to form such a conclusion concerning their constant and regular conjunction, by any thing which it knows of their nature. As to past Experience, it can be allowed to give direct and certain information of those precise objects only, and that precise period of time, which fell under its cognizance: But why this experience should be extended to future times, and to

> other objects, which for aught we know, may be only in appearance similar; this is the main question on which I would insist. (EHU 33–34)
>
> From causes, which appear similar, we expect similar effects. This is the sum of all our experimental conclusions. Now it seems evident, that, if this conclusion were formed by reason, it would be as perfect at first, and upon one instance, as after ever so long a course of experience.... Now where is that process of reasoning, which, from one instance, draws a conclusion, so different from that which it infers from a hundred instances, that are nowise different from that single one? (EHU 36)

The German translation of these passages is close enough to Hume's English—at least in spirit. However, it is interesting to note that Hume's claim: "the mind is not led to form such a conclusion concerning their constant and regular conjunction, by any thing which it knows of their nature" becomes in German: "*unsere Vernunft kann also den Schluß nicht a priori gemacht haben,*" which, retranslated into English, means "our reason can therefore not have made this inference *a priori*." This might seem like a distortion of what Hume says, and it clearly is a distortion. However, to a Leibniz-Wolffian it would have appeared as a matter of emphasis. Inferences *a priori* are just those kinds of mental operations that give us knowledge of the true nature of things. But however that may be, it is interesting that Hume, translated into the Wolffian idiom, sounds like Kant without any help from Kant himself.

Though Mendelssohn tells us that Sulzer has thoroughly answered Hume's skepticism in his Notes to the German translation of the first *Enquiry*, he thinks more needs to be said. He wants to give a firmer foundation of experimental inferences. Rejecting as insufficient Gravesande's argument to the effect that regularity in nature has its foundation in God's will, he argues instead that the theory of probability gives us precisely what Hume was asking for, namely "that process of reasoning, which, from one instance, draws a conclusion, so different from that which it infers from a hundred instances, that are nowise different from that single one."

In trying to answer Hume, Mendelssohn starts from the following case: We experience once that two events A and B happen at the same time or immediately follow each other. In this case, the following three causal relations are possible. (i) A causes B, or (ii) B causes A, (iii) A and B are caused by some other cause C (be it remote or proximate), or (iv) A and B are caused by completely different causes. If (i), (ii), or (iii) is true, we can explain why A and B are simultaneous or immediately follow each other. However, if (iv) is true, then we cannot explain their temporal proximity because it is a mere accident—or so Mendelssohn claims. Therefore, the more often we experience A and B in temporal proximity, the less likely (iv) becomes, for "the probability

that the temporal proximity of A and B is merely accidental is equivalent to the relation of 1 to the number of observed cases + 1," i.e., in the first observation the probability was 1/2, in the second 1/3, in the third 1/4, and in the nth case, it is 1/n+1.[31] So, "the more often we have this experience, the closer to certainty our expectation becomes, and if n were infinite, we would be entirely certain."[32] Our experimental inferences are secure. We can be sure that two events cannot be accidentally related to each other, if we repeatedly experience them as closely related.

What has Mendelssohn done in his refutation, and what has he failed to do? Going back to the passages he quotes from Hume, we can (with Mendelssohn) see Hume making the following claims (or perhaps even argument):

1. "From causes, which appear similar, we expect similar effects."
2. We cannot know on the basis of experience "the connexion between the sensible qualities and the secret powers."

Therefore:

3. The mind is not led to form conclusions concerning the constant and regular conjunction of sensible qualities "by any thing which it knows of their nature."

Or, if we take the German version:

3'. Our reason cannot...have made this inference *a priori*.[33]

Mendelssohn does not dispute (1). It is obviously true, and it is what needs to be explained. Nor does he dispute (2). He agrees with Hume (and everybody else) that experience cannot afford us any insight into the true nature of things. Nor does experience afford us any insight into the true nature of causality. Therefore he must also accept (3) and, perhaps somewhat surprisingly: (3').

However, this is not all that Hume says. He also presents an argument that is meant to show that this process is essentially non-rational. He argues that

4. The fact that we expect similar effects from similar causes cannot be explained by reason.

Because:

5. If our expectation could be explained by reason, then we would not need repeated experience. (One experience would be enough.)

And

6. We do need repeated experience, as we can see (from 1, 2 and 3).

This is a valid argument. The conclusion (4) follows by Modus Tollens from the premises (5) and (6). However, Mendelssohn wants to show that it is not a sound argument. The premises do not prove the conclusion to be true because (5) is false, as any Leibnizian would argue. Indeed his entire argument may be seen as an attempt to show that the conditional "If our expectation can be explained by reason, then it is not the case that we need repeated experience" is false because its antecedent is true, while its consequent is false. We can explain the principle that we expect similar effects from similar causes rationally by appealing to probability theory. In fact, though the results that we predict are probable, the principles upon which we base our predictions are themselves just as certain as all other mathematical principles. This also shows why our expectation, though rational, needs repeated experience. Mendelssohn could thus think he had provided what Hume was asking for, namely the "process of reasoning, which from one instance, draws a conclusion, so different from that which it infers from a hundred, that are nowise different from that single one."

I believe that it would be a mistake to think that Mendelssohn took Hume as having tried to show that induction is altogether impossible, or that Hume was a skeptic about induction. Nor did he think that Hume was claiming that it would be irrational to rely on induction in our daily lives or even in scientific contexts. Though it is often claimed that this was Mendelssohn's aim, I think he viewed Hume primarily as denying that inductive inferences could be rationally *justified*. To use somewhat anachronistic terminology, he viewed Hume as a skeptic about philosophical justification. He never tried to show that induction is possible, but only how it can be explained by reason. For this reason criticisms that charge Mendelssohn with the failure of having shown against Hume that induction is possible miss the mark. However, it would be a serious mistake to go on to argue on the basis of this anachronistic description of Mendelssohn's enterprise that he was making a *merely* philosophical point, not one concerning scientific practice. For him, as for any Wolffian, true "science" implied philosophical justification. Only if we have also proved or deduced experiential claims from principles can we speak of science.[34] In so far as Hume denied the possibility of giving a rational justification of induction, he needed to be refuted. To be sure, Mendelssohn must admit that he did not raise all of physics in this way to a true science in the Wolffian sense, but he did believe that he made an important beginning.

Philosophical Consequences

Alexander Altmann has already pointed out how modern Mendelssohn's understanding of Hume is, and how different it seems from those misguided eighteenth and nineteenth century attempts at refuting Hume as somebody who denied causality altogether. Altmann has also pointed out some of the shortcomings in Mendelssohn's formulation of the formula that governs the

probability in the cases he discusses.[35] Accordingly I do not want to pursue such criticisms here. Rather, I would like to say a little more about the nature of Mendelssohn's response, and how it relates both to his own project and to the dispute in the Berlin academy.

As a Leibniz-Wolffian in Berlin, Mendelssohn was of course most interested in the question of what difference Hume's attack on the rationality of experiential inferences makes to the metaphysical issues connected with causality. Though he did not clearly and unambiguously state the conclusion implied by his argument in this context, it is obvious enough (and could not have escaped those who reflected on it). His answer, put bluntly, is: "Hume's analysis makes absolutely no difference to the deeper metaphysical issues." The problem remains just as it had been before Hume entered the scene. We cannot make out by experience how the "things" that form the "foundation" for the phenomena or appearances (or perhaps better, the substances) are related to each other. So, as far as experience is concerned, it makes no difference whether the theory of universal physical influx is true, whether occasionalism is true, or whether the system of pre-established harmony is true.[36] Hume's analysis of induction and causality cannot make a difference to these issues. His explanations make a great deal of sense at the phenomenological level, but nobody who really understands what is at issue between Leibniz, Malebranche, and Spinoza would be in the slightest perturbed by Hume's analysis.

That Mendelssohn himself drew this conclusion can be seen from a letter to his friend Lessing, which is far less guarded than his public pronouncements. Talking about Sulzer, he complains:

> Just this Professor makes such great claims about David Hume's very new skepticism, since he denies that we could not prove that any event in the world has an effective cause. I do not at all consider this doubt as new. Rather, I believe that it is the system of universal harmony. Nay, the Cartesians insist even on the impossibility of any kind of *influxus*, be it *idealis* or *realis*. The universal harmonists assume an *influxus idealis*, but they deny an *influxus realis*. And what more does Hume achieve with his cavils than proving that we can never obtain in this world any idea of the *influxus reali*? The universal harmonists will say "Who has ever maintained this?" For did they want to explain how it took place? Certainly not! Rather, they will adhere to their presupposition until somebody shows them that this is impossible.[37]

Mendelssohn's conclusion was that Hume's problem is, metaphysically speaking, irrelevant. It is compatible with Leibniz's view.

In fact, Mendelssohn believed that Hume's view of causality follows

directly from the Leibnizian position.[38] Leibniz also argued that efficient causality did not obtain at the level of substances. Monads cannot be causally related in the way phenomena are. Only phenomena are causally related in this way. Efficient causality is strictly an experiential concept, and it is based on constant conjunction. Thus Leibniz's metaphysical position requires a Humean analysis at the phenomenal level. Hume's view is already contained in that of Leibniz.

More recently, Hidé Ishiguro has argued for a similar view. She also tried to show that Leibniz and Hume are much closer on causality than has traditionally been assumed. For her, the theory of causality implied by pre-established harmony is quite similar to Hume's theory of causality as "constant conjunction," and "the experiential evidence for pre-established harmony is not different from the experiential evidence for constant conjunction."[39] Mendelssohn would have agreed with most of what she says.[40]

Accordingly, Mendelssohn was more critical of Hume than most of his friends and acquaintances in Berlin.[41] He could not regard Hume as a truly great philosopher. Indeed, he said as much in a letter to Lessing, dated February 27, 1758, in which he pointed out that among the British philosophers he recognized only Locke, Clarke and Shaftesbury as true philosophers and specifically excluded Hutcheson, Burke and Hume.[42] The essay "On Probability" explains why Mendelssohn could not consider Hume as an important metaphysician. In fact, this is perhaps its most important point—at least as far as Mendelssohn is concerned. Arguing against both the Wolffian and the anti-Wolffian factions in Berlin, he tried to show to them that Hume, whatever other merits he might or might not have, did not—and could not possibly—make a difference to Wolffian metaphysics. Therefore he should not be used in refuting Wolff. In so far as Hume's observations and analysis was interesting and important, it could be fully integrated into the Leibniz-Wolffian position. Insofar as he seemed to be opposed to it, his position was irrelevant. For this reason, it is just wrong and seriously misleading to say Mendelssohn was one of the few exceptions among thinkers in Germany who took Hume serious *philosophically*. If Hume was taken seriously as a philosopher in Germany, it was over the very objections of Mendelssohn.[43]

What Was Hume's True Significance for Mendelssohn?

Mendelssohn was most impressed by Hume's style of writing, and he openly tried to emulate it in his own works. In his anonymous "Letter of a Young Scholar in B." he speaks of "the beautiful philosophical writers, those who have noticed that the systematic way of representation is not always the best, those like Leibniz, Shaftesbury, Hume or the author of the *Letters on Sensation*, who often digress, but who always get back to the point."[44] Since

Mendelssohn himself is the author of the *Letters on Sensation*, he explicitly identifies himself as belonging to a tradition of writing in which Hume excelled. This is not surprising. There were other Germans who tried to accomplish the same thing. Christian Garve, for instance, thought that Hume's style should be emulated by every responsible philosopher. And according to most Germans of the period, Mendelssohn succeeded admirably. Thus he praised the elegance and thoroughness of his writings—comparing them explicitly with those of Hume.

But Hume's positive influences on Mendelssohn are not exhausted by matters of style. In an early essay (1756) entitled "Open Letter to Magister Lessing," in which he argues against *Discourse on the Origin and Foundation of Inequality among Men* of 1755, and in which he also first begins his investigations into the nature of sensation, he is clearly taking his point of departure from Hume. After arguing that we cannot possibly have a concept that would be completely isolated from other concepts because all concepts have associations, and that there will always be one concept that is most closely associated with any given concept, he argues that association is the only kind of connecting link in the soul. If this sounds rather Humean, what follows might appear to be just lifted from Hume. He argues that

> How many kinds of association are possible by means of which the soul can be guided in the series of their thoughts is difficult to determine. However, it is certain that the objects of these thoughts can be connected through (i) time, (ii) space, (iii) cause and effect, or finally through a certain similarity which they might have with one another. However, when the objects are not at all connected in nature, then, for us to see them as connected even after a long time, we only need to have had their concepts in our thoughts either (iv) at the same time or (v) immediately following each other.[45]

Mendelssohn follows this with a number of illustrations that are his own, but which are in the spirit of Hume.

One of the things that makes these passages interesting is that Mendelssohn uses in them a bit of Humean associationist doctrine in order to argue against Rousseau's view of the social origin of language as put forward in the *Discourse*. Mendelssohn argues that language is not a product of social relations. It is, he argues, based on the relations of ideas or on principles of association as they have been described by Hume. Even men in the state of nature must have had such associations, or, as he puts it: "These transitions from one concept to another must also take place in primitive people; for we also encounter the most distinct traces of them in animals."[46] Accordingly, all we need in order to explain the origin of language are the principles of the imagination, like those identified by Hume, and a faculty of perfectibility, as

postulated by Wolff and admitted by Rousseau.[47] To assume social relations as necessary for this is not only unnecessary, but even contradictory. Mendelssohn appears to accept a naturalistic or Humean account of the origin of language. This means that, by extension, that we must also be able to give such an account of the origin of reason itself, and that even our highest mental faculties must allow in some sense of an account that shows how they are based on sensation.

Of course, this does *not* mean that for him reason was itself ultimately founded on sensation. In accordance with the real nature of things, sensation had to be, for Mendelssohn, secondary. It was only in the realm of the phenomena, or the world of experience, that sensations could come first. Another way of putting this is to say that in *psychological* contexts, Mendelssohn could admit a certain kind of priority of sensation. Accordingly, he could use Hume's psychological theories and explanations to his own end. But, just as he argued with regard to causality, these psychological observations, interesting as they might be in themselves, do not decide anything about the metaphysical or philosophical issues. These passages thus clearly show how Mendelssohn could utilize British (and even Humean) observations, while at the same time holding on to an essentially Leibnizian and Wolffian metaphysics. Hume was an interesting psychological and aesthetic thinker. There could be for Mendelssohn new and interesting things in Hume, and he could therefore also take Hume seriously as a *psychologist*, or as an observer of mental phenomena. No more, no less. Hume's so-called skepticism appeared to be ultimately harmless to him. Hume's conclusions did not and could not make any difference to the deeper issues of how things really are. Hume's view did not for Mendelssohn have any ontological "bite."

What are the Merits of Mendelssohn's View?

Just as it is clear that Mendelssohn thought that Hume's philosophical (or better: psychological) arguments did not and could not have any ontological bite, it is clear that Hume believed that they did. He clearly did not just see himself as a psychologist, but as a metaphysician. And he clearly also believed that his account did make a difference to the very metaphysical issues raised by Mendelssohn. He clearly also would have argued against Ishiguro and the claim that the evidence that supports his view also supports pre-established harmony. If Hume was the great philosopher he is considered to be by many today, he must have been aware of objections of the Mendelssohnian kind. His philosophical writings should therefore contain an answer to Mendelssohn's charges of metaphysical irrelevance.

It appears to me that one Humean answer to such charges could consist in pointing out the systematic connection of the different parts of Hume's argument. Thus the Leibnizians, while agreeing with Hume that effective

causality reduces in the end to succession and thus does not amount to the assertion of any really "efficacious principle," also believe they have some kind of access to some other (more fundamental) kind of causality that is based on the very essence of things. Whatever this notion of true causality in Leibniz may amount to, Hume would point out that, as a matter of fact, we do not have access to it.

For instance, whatever Leibniz believed about true causality, it was certainly connected to his theory that individual substances contain all that can ever happen to them (one of the aspects of the *in esse* principle). Again, it is very difficult to determine what this principle actually amounts to and on what evidence precisely Leibniz is founding his conception of an individual substance. However, this much is certain, Leibniz does think that one of the ways in which we find support for his view is by looking at ourselves, and that, "in order to determine the notion of an individual substance it is good to consult the one I have of myself."[48] As is well known, Hume presents a number of arguments in his *Treatise* to show that we do not have any good evidence for assuming such a substantial self. In doing so, he not only appears to have relied on arguments given by Malebranche, but he also attacked some of Leibniz's most fundamental intuitions as mistaken.[49]

I suspect that a large part of Hume's work may be viewed as turning the arguments of the three parties identified by Mendelssohn, i.e., the occasionalists, the harmonists, and the influxionists, against each other's positions. His program was to show that none of them could possibly be acquainted with that reality on which their arguments were presumably based.[50] Indeed, his arguments, taken in their entirety, were meant to show that we cannot possibly have any clear and distinct ideas about anything that would go beyond experience, that therefore phenomenal knowledge is the only kind of knowledge we can possibly obtain, and that therefore the arguments of occasionalists, Leibnizians and influxionists (or anybody else) that are intended to go beyond the phenomena to some more fundamental reality all sooner or later will land us in "fairy land." Mendelssohn did not appear to be able to see Hume's program in its entirety. Looking at one isolated part, he thought he could dispose of it easily on the basis of Leibniz-Wolffian philosophy.[51] However, he did not realize that Hume also had attacked other parts of this system, and that his point of view was not as secure as he suspected it was. He thought that the true problems were deeper than Hume ever dreamt possible, while Hume accused philosophers like him of living in a dream world. Though Mendelssohn may perhaps be excused because he did not know the *Treatise*, it must be said that he did not recognize the true philosophical threat that Hume's thought represented (at least historically) to his way of philosophizing.

Conclusion

There was, of course, another Prussian thinker, far away in Königsberg, who, at least partially as a result of Mendelssohn's arguments, came to see that it was he himself who was dreaming. He saw that while the Germans all still believed that there could be a way—a non-experiential one, to be sure, but nevertheless a way—that would lead them to the knowledge of substances or things in themselves, Hume's real goal was to show that there could only be the experiential way. However, while Mendelssohn, perhaps because he was so sure he had access to certainty in non-experiential metaphysics, admitted that our knowledge of the spatio-temporal world is largely probabilistic in nature, Kant thought he could show that experience itself could give rise to a kind of metaphysical necessity and thus continued the Mendelssohnian enterprise in a different way.[52]

NOTES

1 For Mendelssohn's biography, see especially Alexander Altmann, *Moses Mendelssohn: A Biographical Study* (Tuskaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1973). See also his *Moses Mendelssohns Frühschriften zur Metaphysik* (Tübingen, 1969). Mendelssohn lived from 1729 to 1786. Though not born in Berlin, he lived most of his life there. Starting from relatively humble beginnings, he became the most prominent member of the Jewish community in that city. He was one of the closest friends of Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, who portrayed him in one of his plays as "Nathan, the Wise." Advocating the cultural assimilation of the Jewish community into German society, he became not only famous as "the Jewish Socrates" for his philosophical thought, but also the target of attack by fundamentalist Christians who challenged him to explain why—given the enlightened beliefs he held—he had not yet converted to Christianity. He defended his cause admirably. Georg Christoph Lichtenberg, who came to his defense in a satirical attack on the fundamentalists summed up their fears saying:

> A Jew who was a natural honest man would be regarded as a fellow human being and might even be preferred to a Christian. The very idea makes one shudder.

Most enlightened Germans took Mendelssohn to be the very model of an enlightened person. He was important not just for his thought, but because he became an icon for their most deeply held beliefs.

One of the philosophers who thought most highly of him was Immanuel Kant, who appears to have felt a certain philosophical kinship with him. When Mendelssohn visited him in Königsberg in the summer of 1777, Kant wrote to a friend in Berlin: "Today Mr. Mendelssohn, your worthy friend and mine (for so I flatter myself), is departing. To have a man like him in Königsberg on a permanent basis, as an intimate acquaintance, a man of such gentle temperament, good spirits, and enlightenment—how that would give my soul the nourishment it has lacked so completely here, a nourishment I miss more and more as I grow older!" (Arnulf Zweig, ed., *Kant, Philosophical*

Correspondence, 1759–99 [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967], 87). One may well wonder what difference such a Mendelssohnian influence might have made to Kant's critical enterprise. Would the *Critique of Pure Reason*—on which Kant was busily writing at that time—have looked any different? And what about the *Critique of Practical Reason*, or the *Critique of Judgment*? We will, of course, never know the answer to such questions.

2 Günter Gawlick and Lothar Kreimendahl, *Hume in der deutschen Aufklärung: Umrisse einer Rezeptionsgeschichte* (Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog, 1987), 84; see also 103f.

3 However, the label "neo-Wolffian," as applied to Mendelssohn and those close to him, is misleading because it suggests that these thinkers were concerned with reviving Wolffianism. But this is clearly false. Wolffian philosophy did not need to be revived. These philosophers represent just the last generation of Wolffians.

4 It should be said that most of them did not accept Leibniz's theory of pre-established harmony as being capable of strict proof. Like Wolff, they thought it was a reasonable hypothesis.

5 This is not to say, of course, that Wolffian philosophy did not have its detractors before. However, the earlier critics were motivated mainly by theological concerns. The most important of the earlier critics were the so-called "Thomasians." For a more thorough discussion, see Manfred Kuehn, *Scottish Common Sense in Germany, 1768–1800: A Contribution to the History of Critical Philosophy*, with a Preface by Lewis White Beck (Kingston/Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1987), 251–74.

6 See Adolf von Harnack, *Geschichte der Königlich-Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin* (Berlin, 1900), 4 vols., and Cornelia Buschmann, "Philosophische Preisfragen und Preisschriften der Berliner Akademie, 1747–1768. Ein Beitrag zur Leibniz-Rezeption im 18. Jahrhundert," *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophy* 35 (1987): 779–89

7 For a more detailed account see Kuehn, *Scottish Common Sense in Germany*, 36–51.

8 Actually, Wolff himself already tried to achieve a "connubium" of "ratio" and "experientia." See Jean Ecole, "En quel sens peut-on dire que Wolff est rationalist?" *Studia Leibnitiana* 11 (1979): 45–61; see also Hans Werner Arndt, "Rationalismus und Empirismus in der Erkenntnislehre Christian Wolffs," *Christian Wolff, 1679–1754*, 2nd ed., Werner Schneiders (Hamburg: Meiners, 1986), 31–47. Mendelssohn and his friends followed not just the letter, but the spirit of Wolffian philosophy.

9 *Bibliothek der schönen Wissenschaften und der freyen Künste* II, 2 (1759), I quote from the 2nd. ed. (1762), 290f.

10 This is the title of a book by his friend Johann August Eberhard (Berlin, 1776). The book was a response to a question by the Prussian Academy, asking for a more precise theory of thinking and sensation. Eberhard reports that the question specifically demanded that "(i) one precisely develop the original conditions of this twofold power of the soul as well as its general laws; thoroughly investigate how these two powers of the soul are dependent on

each other, and how they influence each other, and (iii) indicate the principles according to which we can judge how far the intellectual ability (genius) and the moral character of man depend upon the degree of the force and liveliness as well as on the increase of those two mental faculties..." (14f).

11 Moses Mendelssohn, *Gesammelte Schriften, Jubiläumsausgabe*, edited by F. Bamberger et al (Stuttgart: Bad Canstatt, 1931), 2, 183 (subsequently referred to as "JubA").

12 Ibid., 184.

13 L. Gossman, "Berkeley, Hume and Maupertuis," *French Studies* 14 (1960): 304–24, see especially 315. See also E. Cassirer, *Das Erkenntnisproblem in der Philosophie und Wissenschaft der neueren Zeit*, vol. 2 (Berlin 1907), 687–88. But compare with Giorgio Tonelli, *La pensee philosophique de Maupertuis, son milieu et ses sources*, edited by C. Cesa (Hildesheim: Olms, 1987), 141.

14 J.B. Merian, "Sur le principe des indiscernables," *Histoire de l'Academie Royale des Sciences et Belles Lettres, Anée 1754* (Berlin, 1756). See also his "Réflexions Philosophiques sur la Ressemblance," *Histoire de l'Academie Royale des Sciences et Belles Lettres, Anée 1751* (Berlin, 1752). Both are discussed by Altmann in *Frühschriften*, 70ff. Merian's interest in Hume did not decline. Thus on December 16, 1763, Mr. Merian read "une Piece traduite de Hume," "Sur l'Eloquence," *Die Registres der Berliner Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1746–1766; Dokumente für das Wirken Leonhard Eulers in Berlin*, edited by Eduard Winter (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1957), 282. And in the nineties he published a long essay, "Sur le phénomisme de David Hume." Gawlick and Kreimendahl only seem to know the last article. As a result, they seriously misconstrue Merian's position.

15 It is known that Mendelssohn reacted vehemently against Merian, for instance. See Altmann, *Frühschriften*, 68–72.

16 It appears to have been Frederick's aim to have a certain balance between Wolffians and Newtonians in the Academy, though he himself sided with the Newtonians and Lockeans. However, he succeeded only in creating different factions within the institution. The importance of this struggle between the Wolffians and Newtonians in Berlin for understanding the developments in the rest of Germany still has not been sufficiently appreciated.

17 There were also Wolffians among the French members. Samuel Formey was a supporter of Wolff, for instance. See Ronald S. Calinger, "The Newtonian-Wolffian Controversy (1740–1759)," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 30 (1969): 319–30.

18 Still other friends of Mendelssohn translated other works of Hume into German. Thus F. G. Resewitz, translated the *Four Dissertations*, which appeared in 1759. He also found it necessary to include a commentary or refutation with the text, but he also pointed out that it was important.

19 This is what he told Hennings when visited him while traveling through Dresden in 1776. However, as we shall see, this is not the entire story. Mendelssohn also believed that Sulzer's interpretation of Hume's problem was seriously deficient, and that for this reason he also found it necessary to criticize his friend and ally in this regard. Hennings also tells us that when they

"discussed Hume, whom I dislike on account of his coldness, he mentioned an idea of his [Hume] that had particularly pleased him: to wit, that despite all the varieties in the religions there was one principle of virtue in which all nations agreed. I asked him to name it to me but he refused to tell me and suggested that I read this idea in its context." Altmann thinks that Mendelssohn must be alluding to the *Natural History of Religion*, and specifically to the following passage: "The only point of theology in which we shall find a consent of mankind which is almost universal, is, that there is invisible, intelligent power in the world." But what does that have to do with virtue?

20 There are other accounts that estimate the number of members to be more like forty.

21 This essay was first read in a meeting of the "Learned Coffee House" (see also below). The "everyone" must therefore be taken to refer primarily to the members of the society. Gawlick and Kreimendahl argue (84n.) that this phrase refers to Germany as a whole, and therefore argue that it should not be taken seriously. Hume's works could not have been so quickly disseminated all throughout Germany. However, they are mistaken. First of all, there is good evidence for Hume's popularity in Berlin. It was not just Mendelssohn's perception that Hume was important there. This can be seen from a letter by Euler written on January 24/February 4, 1755, in which he notes that he has included in a package of books "two copies of Hums [sic] *Political Essays*, a book which finds a great deal of approval..." in *Die Berliner und die Petersburger Akademie der Wissenschaften im Briefwechsel Leonard Eulers*, vol. 2, edited by A. P. Juskevic and E. Winter (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1961), 374 (letter 298). Secondly, since Mendelssohn left the phrase in the published version that would be read in all of Germany, he must have thought it was not inappropriate in that context either (even if it was a little later).

22 The "Thoughts on Probability" were first published anonymously in *Vermischte Abhandlungen und Urtheile Über das Neueste der Gelehrsamkeit* 3 (1756), 3–26, reprinted as "On Probability" in Mendelssohn's *Philosophische Schriften* 2 (Berlin, 1761, 1771, 1777); now in Mendelssohn, *Gesammelte Schriften*, 7 vols., edited by G. B. Mendelssohn (Leipzig, 1843–45), vol. 1:349–69; JubA 1, 147–64; 495–515. I quote in accordance with JubA 1, 1.

23 I shall not here discuss the third part in any detail.

24 JubA I, 230f. from the Preface of the *Philosophische Schriften* of 1771.

25 G. W. Leibniz, *Philosophical Essays*, edited by Roger Ariew and Daniel Garber (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1989), 41. The quotation is from the *Discourse on Metaphysics*, which was not known to Mendelssohn, of course.

26 There is some discussion about how Wolff's theory of judgment is related to Leibniz's. See Winfried Lenders, "The Analytic Logic of G. W. Leibniz and Chr. Wolff: A Problem in Kant Research," *Synthese* 23 (1971): 147–53. He argues that there exists a fundamental difference. Others argue that there is no such difference. See Hans Werner Arndt, "'Einführung' zu Wolff's German Logic," in *Christian Wolff: Vernünftige Gedanken von den Kräften des menschlichen Verstandes und Ihrem richtigen Gebrauche in Erkenntnis der Wahrheit*, edited by Hans Werner Arndt (Hildesheim: Olms, 1965), 7–102; his "Rationalismus und Empirismus in der Erkenntnislehre Christian Wolffs," *Christian Wolff*,

1679–1754, 31-47, and his "Die Logik von Reimarus im Verhältnis zum Rationalismus der Aufklärungsphilosophie," in *Logik im Zeitalter der Aufklärung. Studien zur Vernunftlehre' von Hermann Samuel Reimarus*, edited by W. Walter and L. Borinski (Göttingen: Vandenhoek and Ruprecht, 1980), 59–74. See also Hans-Jürgen Engfer, "Die Urteilstheorie von H. S. Reimarus und die Stellung seiner 'Vernunftlehre' zwischen Wolff and Kant," *Logik im Zeitalter der Aufklärung*, 33–58. I agree with Arndt and Engfer that Lenders exaggerates the differences.

27 It might be objected here that Mendelssohn is not really talking about grounds of truth *internal* to one subject. However, it should be remembered that for a Leibniz-Wolffian the distinction between internal and external relations is not as important as it would be to most of those who object.

28 JubA 156.

29 Mendelssohn also wants to have the "*principle rationis*" excluded "through which we often can find certain truths demonstratively, as it were, and without any probable hypothesis" (JubA 156).

30 JubA 157.

31 JubA 158.

32 JubA 160.

33 It is interesting that Kant also emphasizes this Humean conclusion. See Immanuel Kant, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, edited by Lewis White Beck (Indianapolis/New York: Bobbs Merrill, 1950), 5: [Hume] "demonstrated irrefutably that it was perfectly impossible for reason to think a priori and by means of concepts such a combination." However, it appears that they mean quite different things. Whereas Mendelssohn seems to think of particular causal relations, Kant has in mind the causal principle in general. The reason that both Mendelssohn and Kant emphasize this conclusion (which Hume himself does not explicitly draw) is, of course, the German translation.

34 See Christian Wolff, *Preliminary Discourse on Philosophy in General*, translated by Richard J. Blackwell (Indianapolis: Bobbs Merrill, 1963), 17: "Philosophy is the science of the possibles insofar as they can be"; and "By science...I mean the habit of demonstrating propositions, i.e., the habit of inferring conclusions by legitimate sequence from certain and immutable principles"; and "philosophy must give a reason why the possibles can actually occur." This is precisely what Mendelssohn is trying to do in this paper, viz. to show why induction, which is possible, can actually occur. It can occur because the (rational) laws of probability are already at work in sensation.

35 Actually, Mendelssohn's account is not as modern as it seems. See note 34.

36 These seem to be the only relevant theories Mendelssohn recognizes. See JubA 1, 160: "For this reason we can never determine by experience which of the three systems that explain the effect one substance has on another is true; namely whether

> (1) the change in substance B is sufficiently and immediately founded in another substance A, which is maintained by the universal influxionists (*systema influxis phisici*)

(2) the change in substance B and the change in substance A are both immediately subordinated to the highest being? This is assumed by the Cartesians and the universal occasionalists (*systema causorum occasionalium universalium*)

(3) or finally whether they are mediately subordinated to the highest being by two harmonic series of changes, which Baumgarten calls the system of the universal harmonists (*systema hormoniae praestablitae universalis*)."

For this reason Hume is not important to the dispute in the Berlin Academy.

37 JubA 11, 21.

38 It also follows from the occasionalist position. In fact, it has been argued that it is even historically indebted to Malebranche. See C. W. Doxee, "Hume's Relation to Malebranche," *Philosophical Review* 25 (1916): 692–710, R. W. Church, "Malebranche and Hume," *Revue Internationale de Philosophie* I (1938–39): 143–61, and John P. Wright, "Hume's Criticism of Malebranche's Theory of Causation: A Lesson in the Historiography of Philosophy," *Nicolas Malebranche: His Philosophical Critics and Successors*, edited by Stuart Brown (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1991), 116–130.

39 Hidé Ishiguro "Pre-established Harmony versus Constant Conjunction: A Reconsideration of the Distinction Between Rationalism and Empiricism," *Rationalism, Empiricism, and Idealism, British Academy Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, edited by A. Kenny (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 61–85.

40 However, he would have argued against her that it is not so much that, as she says, "the experiential evidence for pre-established harmony is not different from the experiential evidence for constant conjunction," as that the experiential evidence for constant conjunction is *explained* by the theory of pre-established harmony. Experience can be better understood, if we assume this theory.

41 Lambert was also very critical of Hume. See Gawlick and Kreimendahl, 50f. Eberhard called Hume "the most shallow head." See *Philosophisches Magazin* I, 249.

42 But he considered Burke's division of passions as defensible. See Altmann, *Moses Mendelssohn*, 353. Late in his life, he vehemently rejected Hume's *Dialogues*. See his "Anmerkungen zu Abbts freundschaftlicher Korrespondenz" (GS V, 337).

43 See note 3.

44 JubA 1, 524f. On page 525 he wonders whether Shakespeare and Hume followed "a single line of inferences," but he declines to answer the question because this exegetical question can only be answered by a closer study of the actual texts.

45 Moses Mendelssohn, *Schriften über Religion und Aufklärung*, edited by Martina Thom (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1989), 98: "Wie vielerlei Arten von Verknüpfungen möglich sind, dadurch die Seele in der Reihe ihrer Gedanken geleitet werden könne, ist schwer zu bestimmen. Indessen ist gewiß, daß die Gegenstände dieser Begriffe vermittelst der Zeit (1),

des Raumes (2), als Wirkung und Ursache (3) oder endlich durch eine gewisse Aehnlichkeit, die sie miteinander haben (4), verbunden sein können; wenn die Gegenstände aber in der Natur gar nicht verknüpft sind, so brauchen wir die Begriffe davon nur in unseren Gedanken entweder (5) zugleich oder unmittelbar aufeinander (6) gehabt zu haben, um sie eine lange Zeit hernach miteinander verknüpft zu sehen."

46 *Mendelssohn Schriften*, edited by Thom, 99.

47 "Oh! Was für siegreiche Waffen hat er durch dieses Eingeständnis seinen Gegnern in die Hände gegeben" (*Mendelssohn Schriften*, edited by Thom, 82).

48 Leibniz, *Philosophical Essays*, 75, for instance.

49 See note 38.

50 Wright (121–22) works out very nicely how this works with regard to the Cartesians and Malebranche, but I think it could be extended to Leibniz as well.

51 Perhaps better: integrate it into Leibniz-Wolffian philosophy.

52 For recent discussions of Kant's relation to Mendelssohn, see Lorne Falkenstein, "Kant, Mendelssohn, Lambert, and the Subjectivity of Time," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 29 (1991): 227–51, and especially Paul Guyer, "Mendelssohn and Kant: One Source of the Critical Philosophy," *Philosophical Topics* 19 (1991): 119–52.