degli "organi" che, tenendo conto del dibattito sulla possibilità di "perfezionamento" delle capacità degli "organi" dell'essere umano, si fonda su un modo di argomentare che fa uso della "analogia". Infine, in terzo luogo, il tentativo di Whistler è stato quello di leggere Hemsterhuis attraverso diverse lenti della temporalità per dare spazio anche al futuro e alla speranza. Certamente, l'interprete si rende conto che altre classificazioni sono possibili per decifrare le diverse strategie di scrittura di Hemsterhuis e il suo modo di filosofare socraticamente. Quello che risulta, infine, dal modo peculiare di Hemsterhuis di fare filosofia è quello di abitare quegli spazi intermedi tra «la Grecia classica e la modernità geometrica, tra Socrate e Newton, tra analisi e poesia» e tra «lo scientifico e il mitico» per dare luogo ad un pensiero che non si esprime attraverso dualismi divisivi ma sempre in una relazione critica tra i diversi ambiti che va, di volta in volta, specificata e analizzata. Il volume si completa con una bibliografia della letteratura secondaria utilizzata e da un prezioso indice dei nomi e dei concetti.

Tale monografia di Whistler, così ben scritta in un inglese letterariamente molto ricco e assai piacevole alla lettura, rappresenta un punto di vista finora poco frequentato dalla letteratura critica e soprattutto inglese. Sebbene sia, in qualche modo, sminuito l'aspetto scientifico del pensiero Hemsterhuis e sia stato dato maggior valore a quelle opere della maturità che assumono la forma del dialogo, Whistler ha saputo leggere tra le righe dei diversi testi del filosofo olandese dimostrando di possedere quelle capacità e quel talento che lo stesso Hemsterhuis aveva esortato ad avere per comprendere un ragionamento filosofico.

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Katerina Mihaylova, Anna Ezekiel (eds.), *Hope and the Kantian Legacy: New Contributions to the History of Optimism*, with a Foreword by George di Giovanni, London, Bloomsbury Academic, 2023, 312pp. ISBN: 978-1-3502-3808-4

This volume on *Hope and the Kantian Legacy* is an excellent addition to the series, Bloomsbury Studies in Modern German Philosophy. The editors Katerina Mihaylova and Anna Ezekiel have done a wonderful job in curating this collection of seventeen papers in English by some of the world's leading specialists of German classical philosophy. The book admirably succeeds in its announced aim (pp. 1-2) to philosophically conceptualize and contextualize Kant's own views on hope and then trace the impact and engagement

with this topic in the succeeding history of German philosophy. Especially noteworthy, and in line with the mission of this Bloomsbury Series, is the space given to figures that are often omitted in similar treatments of the period, with new pieces on Jacob Sigismund Beck (by Fiacha D. Heneghan), J.H. Tieftrunk (Ingomar Kloos) Friedrich Karl Forberg (Kevin Harrelson), J.C. Hoffbauer (Katerina Mihaylova), C.A. Eschenmayer (Cristiana Senigaglia), Karoline von Günderrode (Anna Ezekiel), and Jakob Friedrich Fries (Paul G. Ziche). This fact alone makes the volume a milestone in research on German idealism and romanticism, particularly in the Anglophone world.

Moreover, compared with the two other celebrated questions in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* of "what can I know?" and "what should I do?", the third question "what may I hope?" (A803 / B833), has surprisingly been rather neglected by scholars, despite its normative and existential dimensions, as George di Giovanni recalls in his Foreword (x-xiii). In their Introduction, the editors outline some of the central issues of the book. These include: distinctions between hope, expectation, and desire; the rational hope for results rooted in one's own ethical principles and actions; hope for societal, familial, and political improvement, or even hope for divine intervention; and the connections between hope and the faculties of the human mind, such as the imagination and understanding (15). The timespan covered by the volume ranges roughly from 1780 to 1850, with the first few essays devoted to Immanuel Kant (including a chapter by Andrew Chignell, former president of the North American Kant Society), and the volume finishes with papers on thinkers like Schleiermacher (Jörg Noller), Friedrich Creuzer (Allen Speight), and Kierkegaard (Esther Oluffa Pedersen).

This short review in *Symphilosophie* cannot discuss all seventeen papers but will try to delineate certain readings and themes relating to German romantic philosophy.

Günter Zöller's text, "Between Need and Permission: The Role of Hope in Kant's Critical Foundation of Moral Faith" (25-34), investigates the connection between rational cognition and the limiting of moral faith in the first *Critique*, followed by an analysis of how the theoretical and practical are intertwined when a person habours certain hopes for particular outcomes of their actions. Zöller helpfully reminds us that Kant's third question concerning hope is explicitly characterized as "simultaneously practical and theoretical", and subsequently argues that the third question is not so much a new type of question, but directly combines the theoretical and practical elements of the first two (27). Via a close textual examination, he then draws a number of epistemological consequences from this: "Thus in Kant's

analysis of the third type of question of interested human reason, hope functions in relation to an object that can be determined neither theoretically nor practically by the will. In such cases, the permission to hope concerns an object for which neither human knowledge nor human action is sufficient" (27-28); and proposes that the third question should be transcendentally and systematically read as "What do I need to hope?" (30).

As the title intimates, "*Circulus Volitionis*: The Hope for Divine Aid in Kant's Religion", the essay by the late Lawrence Pasternack seeks to further solidify the Kantian metaphysical basis of the volume by uncovering the rational location of hope within Kant's philosophy of religion and doctrine of the highest good. Pasternack above all presents the primary functions of religious hope in the text *Religion within the Bounds of Mere Reason*, particularly the theological background of hope in calls for divine aid in parts one and three, and shows how they respectively involve commitments to moral development and ethical community (53-69). The Latin *Circulus Volitionis* in the title relates to the Kantian riddle of how it is possible for an evil human being to become a good person through their own force of will, and whether it eventually requires a hope for divine assistance: "The change of heart is aptly described by Kant as a moral 'revolution', a spontaneous transformation that is not gradual or emergent out of a pre-existing commitment to the good. … with our ability to discern the how, we are left instead with the hope that should our powers be inadequate, there will be some 'cooperation from above'" (58).

Rory Phillips, in his paper "Fichte on Optimism and Pessimism" (109-123), adopts a novel approach to the question of hope in the work of J.G. Fichte, setting up a thought experiment in which he asks how the author of the *Wissenschaftslehre*, who died in 1814, might have responded to the later *Pessimismusstreit*. Eduard von Hartmann was one of the protagonists in this latter controversy concerning the value of human life, and had contended Fichte was a pessimist at base. Phillips rejects *inter alia* on ethical grounds Hartmann's appropriation of Fichte for the pessimist cause, arguing instead that Fichte is more optimistic, underscoring that our "faith and hope in the moral world order is that the world becomes better, that we contribute in some way towards doing so by fulfilling our vocations, and that we can achieve justification and sanctification thereby." (119). While these relations between hope, pessimism, and optimism, are continued in Kevin Harrelson's welcome paper on the moral theory of F.K. Forberg (125-140), an almost forgotten thinker, who certainly deserves to be more known than simply for his role in sparking the Atheism Controversy, which embroiled Fichte and led to his dismissal from the University of Jena in 1798/99. Harrelson tackles

the presuppositions and findings of the question in Forberg: "Does moral action require optimism about morality?" (125).

Susan-Judith Hoffmann's study, "Humboldt, *Bildung*, Language, and Hope" (203-221), discusses the educational reformer, linguist, philosopher, and diplomat, Wilhelm von Humboldt, brother of the romantic scientist Alexander von Humboldt, and presents a passionate defence of the continuing actuality, relevance, and hopefulness of the ideals of Humboldtian *Bildung* (education / development / cultivation), exploring their relation to linguistic pluralism, freedom, diversity, decolonization, and the role of the state in education. For Hoffmann, Humboldt's texts on "*Bildung* and language articulate an idea of self-development through respectful interaction with others that presents hope for the flourishing of humanity … It is in this positive sense that Humboldt's own writings disclose hope for his own times and a hopeful vantage point from which we might think through our own social, cultural, and educational challenges." (203, 206).

The stimulating piece by the Schelling expert Daniel Whistler, "In the Hope of a Philosopher of Nature" (223-238), embeds the problem of hope in German idealism within a broader religious and eschatological framework. Taking his start from Jacobi's inspired remark that Fichte was the "true Messiah of speculative reason" (223), Whistler argues that Schelling's repeated proclamations in 1797 of a coming *Naturphilosophie* should be understood precisely within this same messianic transcendental tradition and structure. Somewhat intriguingly, however, he finishes by characterizing Schelling as a forerunner rather than the expected saviour, a Baptist-like figure "crying in the wilderness" (234), whereas the hope itself of the true philosopher of nature becomes fulfilled in another person: Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. "Here – perhaps – we can glimpse Schelling's earlier messianic hope for a philosophy of nature realized under a Goethean (rather than Fichtean) conception of *Philosophie überhaupt*." (235).

It is indeed a striking case of parallel lives – the similar destinies of Friedrich von Hardenberg (Novalis) and Karoline von Günderrode. Both highly gifted poets and thinkers, both longing for the life beyond, both dying young and mythologized after their deaths by their friends. In her chapter, "Knowledge, Faith, and Ambiguity: Hope in the Work of Novalis and Karoline von Günderrode" (239-254), Anna Ezekiel discusses many of these parallels, furnishing an innovative piece of scholarship on the philosophies of these two major romantic figures by revealing the underlying strands of hope and optimism in their oeuvres. Specifically, she looks at five key manifestations of hope, with a focus more on the lesser-known Günderrode. First, the form of hope most associated with these romantics: "hope for union with

loved ones after death", in which the two poets express in "oceanic imagery" a longing for the divine in the after world where an eternal merger with our loved ones is to occur (241). Second, a form of hope embodied in knowing the rational limits of cognition and yet seeking to overcome its discursivity by deploying expanded types of comprehension, similar to Hemsterhuis's idea of a "moral organ", a mode of knowledge that Ezekiel appropriately designates as grounded in "epistemological hope" (242-244). Third, the idea of "moral hope" in Günderrode's concern with "spiritual communities" compared to Kant's moral system (245-246). Fourth, the hopes we harbour for our natural and cultural environment and world, i.e. the "ontological hope" present in Novalis's declared mission to cultivate the earth. Here we find the reason for the word "ambiguity" in the title of Ezekiel's chapter, because although Novalis thought it possible to improve the world by *romanticizing* it, Günderrode believed this goal to be largely outside of our human powers despite it being obviously desirable (240). Therefore, Günderrode "differs from Novalis both in decentering human activity from this process and in her emphasis on the uncertainty of the achievability of this outcome" (247). Lastly, the "political hope" expressed in Novalis's essay *Christianity or Europe* versus Günderrode's *Letters* (248-250), where Ezekiel again underlines a contrast between the two thinkers: "Unlike Novalis, however, Günderrode does not advocate a revitalization of Christianity that can spread across and unify the world; … Instead she emphasizes the value of expanding one's creative and spiritual life by absorbing or assimilating ideas from outside one's own culture." (249).

These thoughts on the role of hope in writings preoccupied with questions of death and the afterlife find a natural continuation in the theories of one particular German philosopher, who completely upends, however, the traditional Kantian conception of hope in relation to optimism. This philosopher is Arthur Schopenhauer, who held the radical view that hope is essentially a worthless distortion of the mind that needs to be eradicated. In a highly engaging piece entitled "'When my Heart Says So …' Hope as Delusion in Schopenhauer's Philosophy", Marie-Michèle Blondin explains the origin of the human phenomenon of hope according to Schopenhauer: "For the most part, hope is an illusion that results from an unconscious but embodied will that causes the intellectual faculties to deviate from their usual function of cognition and representation. Therefore, having hope means being fooled by our deep and unconscious inclinations and desires." (269). Thus, our intellect is deceived by hope and we should obey the advice to employ our will in rooting out this delusion. This might initially sound paradoxical, since we are now to hope for an outcome that is bound up with

hope: "our only hope is to no longer give into the illusion of hope, to free ourselves from the will by negation of the will." (274) Nevertheless, though Schopenhauer calls for the abandonment of all hope, like the terrifying words above the gates to Dante's hell (which the romantic August Wilhelm Schlegel had connected with the famous inscription at the temple of Isis[1]), this view ultimately remains tempered in his metaphysics. For hope may alleviate certain sorrows of the human heart, it can play the role of a "consoler", and it "calms the will" (276). In terms of religious hope, Schopenhauer's philosophy rejects the position of a person who clings to hope of a belief in some kind of life after death. Yet the later system of Schopenhauer still makes room for the doctrine of palingenesis or the rebirth of our eternal inner core, a doctrine also present in Lessing, Novalis, Fichte, and Goethe. Hope for an afterlife is replaced in Schopenhauer by the ceaseless will to live, in which the "concept of metempsychosis only reinforces the argument that our essence is imperishable" (271). A Schopenhauerian philosophical life demands that we become conscious of all these aspects of hope and not fall prey to its illusions. In short: we should continue to remain hopeful at least about the astonishingly transformative power of our will.

This rich and comprehensive collection of papers has now radically changed the landscape of the metaphysical discussion of hope in studies of German philosophy. It is a stated wish of the editors in their Introduction that this book help to generate more scholarship in the future on Kantian and post-Kantian conceptions of hope and optimism (15). May this prove to be true, for the topic of hope clearly remains a fertile philosophical field.

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Oliver Simons, *Literary Conclusions. The Poetics of Ending in Lessing, Goethe, and Kleist*, Northwestern University Press, Evanston, Illinois, 2022, 230 pp., ISBN 978081044898

«Chi compie un'analisi dovrebbe indagare o meglio chiedersi se ha a che fare con una sintesi misteriosa (*geheimnisvoll*), oppure se ciò di cui si occupa è soltanto un aggregato (*Aggregation*), una contiguità (*Nebeneinander*), […], o come tutto ciò potrebbe essere modificato» (Goethe, *Analyse und Synthese*, in *Werke*, Weimar, 1887-1914, sez. II, vol. 11, p. 72). Queste parole dal saggio di Goethe *Analisi e sintesi* vengono poste da Walter Benjamin in esergo alla

[1] See A. W. Schlegel's translation of Dante's *Inferno* 3: "Dantes Hölle", *Die Horen* 1, 3 (1795): 27-28.