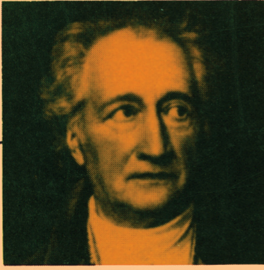

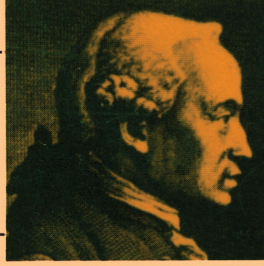

Goethe Kant and Hegel

Discovering the Mind

Volume One

Walter Kaufmann

With a new introduction by Ivan Soll

GOETHE, KANT, AND HEGEL

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Volume I *Goethe, Kant, and Hegel*

Volume II *Nietsche, Heidegger, and Buber*

Volume III *Freud* vs. *Adler and Jung*

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LONDON AND NEW YORK

Originally published in 1980 by McGraw-Hill Book Company

Published 1991 by Transaction Publishers

Published 2017 by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017, USA

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

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Library of Congress Catalog Number: 90-11108

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Kaufmann, Walter Arnold.
Goethe, Kant, and Hegel/by Kaufmann; with a new introduction by Ivan Soll.
p. cm.
Reprint. Originally published: New York: McGraw-Hill, 1980.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 0-88738-370-X (pbk.)
1. Philosophy of mind—History. 2. Self-knowledge, Theory of History. 3. Philosophy, German. I. Title.

[BD418.3.K38 1990]
193—dc20 90-11108
[B] CIP

ISBN 13: 978-0-88738-370-0 (pbk)

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Taylor & Francis Group
http://taylorandfrancis.com

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Introduction to the Transaction Edition

Ivan Soll

Toward the end of an unflaggingly vital and productive life that was to be tragically truncated in an abrupt and unanticipated way, Walter Kaufmann wrote *Discovering the Mind.* Erudite but animated, monumental but not at all ponderous, it is, among other things, Kaufmann's final reconsideration of an intellectual tradition that had been the abiding source and focus of his own prolific writing.

The subject of the work is explicitly defined, not in terms of a historical tradition, however, but of an enterprise, "discovering the mind," which Kaufmann conceives broadly, using "mind" as "an inclusive term for feeling and intelligence, reason and emotion, perception and will."[1] And Kaufmann's avowed "central aim throughout" is "to contribute to the discovery of the mind."[2] But he also claims that, "It should be one of the compensations of this study that it leads to a new and better understanding of a good deal of the intellectual history of the past two hundred years."[3]

What he in fact deals with historically is an intellectual tradition developed principally by thinkers who wrote in German. Since Kaufmann defines his subject matter in terms of its intellectual aim rather than its historical period, we are

confronted by his implicit suggestion that in the last two hundred years most of the interesting developments in the discovery of the mind have, in fact, taken place among those who have written in German. Given the list of thinkers who are included in his discussion, this provocative suggestion is not without some plausibility.

The work is divided into three volumes. Each deals with three major figures: the first with Goethe, Kant, and Hegel; the second with Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Buber; the third with Freud, Adler, and Jung. There are also a number of other figures, such as Lessing, Schiller, Kierkegaard, and Schopenhauer, who are treated far more briefly, often by way of illuminating the writers receiving fuller analysis.

Each volume has a hero. A case is made that Goethe, Nietzsche, and Freud were in significant ways admirable human beings who made important contributions to the discovery of the mind. The other six do not come off nearly as well. Hegel and Buber receive mixed reviews. The rest are severely criticized as being both of unadmirable character and as having contributed little to the discovery of the mind, indeed, as having seriously impeded it. We are presented with an intellectual landscape in which what is not a help is usually a hindrance, in which an author's character is usually relevant to his contribution, and in which intellectual interventions are rarely ever impersonal.

Kaufmann makes no attempt to depict this landscape in muted tones, as he allows both his enthusiasms and distastes full expression. Whether one always agrees with him is beside the point. His judgments are generally supported with cogent argumentation, and the passion with which he embraces and rejects thinkers and their thought seems appropriate to the importance of the issues at stake. Kaufmann's extremely frank and personal expression of his passions and preferences is unusual in academic writing. This should not be taken as a ground for criticism, but rather as an essential part of his unique contribution to the discussion of these matters.

Kaufmann closely links the process of discovering the

mind with the attainment of self-knowledge. He insists on this linkage not only in the unexceptionable but special case of our coming to know our own minds as individuals but also where it less obviously obtains, in the process of discovering the nature of the human mind in general. In closely connecting all knowledge of the mind with self-knowledge, Kaufmann is doing more than recalling Socrates's injunction, "Know thyself!," and allying this enterprise with it. He is calling attention to often overlooked or suppressed links between knowing one's own mind in particular and the human mind in general, between self-deception and the misunderstanding of others, between self-knowledge and the knowledge of selves. Kaufmann argues with reference to a number of thinkers, that flaws in one's understanding of oneself are usually obstacles to one's understanding of others, that the failure of a theory about the human mind often mirrors a failure of the theorist to come to terms with himself.

This consideration of theories about the human mind in conjunction with an examination of the mentality or character of the theorist constitutes another salient feature of Kaufmann's method, and one which again puts him at odds with standard academic practice. Kaufmann unabashedly breaches the prevalent prohibition against any *ad hominem* approach to philosophers, explicitly calling this taboo into question. Starting with the reasonable but rather general assumption that "the ideas of these men are not totally unrelated to their mentalities," he repeatedly offers evidence and hypotheses specifically linking their particular theories to their personalities. He thinks it imperative and enlightening to discover the minds of those who discovered the mind.

In entering upon this terrain, Kaufmann is careful and quick to distance himself from "reductionism," which he defines with admirable and delightful concision as "the claim that something is 'nothing but' something else."[4] In the context of exploring the relation between the personalities and theories of those who wrote about the mind, reductionism

consists in the claim that conceptions of the human mind are *nothing but* reflections of the personalities of their authors.

Although Kaufmann does not spell out the reasons for rejecting reductionism, they are not difficult to locate. The kind of reductionism here at issue is objectionable in that it tends to have disastrous methodological consequences. If this type of reductionism were accepted, tracing the way in which any conception of the human mind is anchored in the personality of its author would become the central or even the sole question to be investigated. And it would tend to be pursued to the neglect or even exclusion of other issues, particularly those concerning the intrinsic plausibility and merit of the conceptions under investigation. I think that the widespread and tenaciously rooted resistance to any analysis of conceptions and theories as reflections of the character of their authors stems from a fear that the legitimation of such investigations would undermine the traditional assessment of the intrinsic value of the ideas.

Kaufmann does not, however, intend his analyses of the relation between a writer's ideas and his personality as a replacement for traditional investigations of the intrinsic merit of the ideas, but as a supplement to them. Having explicitly rejected reductionism, he is not committed to replacing the assessment of the ideas themselves by accounts of their genesis out of the personalities of their authors. His program entails only enriching the accounts and assessments of the works themselves with considerations of the authors' personalities. And indeed, such considerations do sometimes help to explain cases of otherwise puzzling adherences to implausible ideas and unpromising intellectual practices, to account for opinions rigidly held and curiously impervious to the claims of competing views, and to illuminate strong intellectual commitments made in the absence of decisive evidence.

Discovering the Mind as a whole constitutes a plea as well as a paradigm for the introduction of such considerations into the standard repertoire of historians and interpreters of philosophical and psychological theories. This program is cer-

tainly not without precedents, but they are not usually to be found among professional philosophers, and even more rarely among those of repute, like Kaufmann.

The most notable exception and the principal inspiration of this and several other of the book's remarkable qualities is Friedrich Nietzsche. It was Nietzsche who argued that a philosophical theory was to be best understood as being primarily the expression of the philosopher's basic personality, rather than as the result of his impersonal consideration of data and arguments. Though Nietzsche was not as careful as Kaufmann to avoid the reefs of reductionism, his analyses of the relation between the character of various thinkers and their thought clearly constitute the model for Kaufmann's own excursions into this area. Kaufmann, in venturing hypotheses about various ideas and theories as *reflections of* as well as *reflections by* the minds that produced them, is reviving a promising type of Nietzschean analysis, generally neglected and taboo.

Nietzsche's influence can also be discerned in Kaufmann's masterfully rapid but penetrating approach, his refusal to get bogged down in the morass of his material, his deliberate decision not to attempt to offer an overly full account of the material in which his major theses and insights would lose a great deal of their force in a sea of related but not directly relevant detail. This is a quality that Nietzsche had himself displayed and singled out for discussion as the all-important "tempo" of a work. Though *Discovering the Mind*, like all of Kaufmann's work, is remarkably well informed and informative, it aspires neither to be complete nor compendious. In fact, it is one of Kaufmann's theses that the ideal of offering complete accounts of intellectual developments owes much of its influence to Hegel and has been in some ways an unfortunate development, an unrealizable goal and requirement that creates pressure to mask the inevitable incompleteness of the narratives of intellectual history by recourse to obscurity.

The Nietzschean influence is also clear in Kaufmann's deliberate rejection of a dispassionate tone. Nietzsche was not

only the subject of Kaufmann's first book, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist* (1950), the philosopher much of whose work Kaufmann translated into English, and one of the three acknowledged heroes of *Discovering the Mind.* He was also the major influence on Walter Kaufmann's philosophic work, and his imprint on the conception and style of Kaufmann's last book is unmistakable.

The tradition that Kaufmann reconsiders, that of "discovering the mind" in German letters of the last two hundred years, clearly crosses or ignores the boundaries among the disciplines as they have come to be defined and established in the academy. Some of the figures he discusses, such as Kant, Hegel, and Heidegger, have been clearly defined, by themselves as well as the tradition, as philosophers. Others, such as Goethe and Schiller, despite their historically influential and intrinsically valuable theoretical writings, have been usually categorized as being essentially writers of "literature," that is, of "imaginative literature," whose works are studied primarily in departments of literature and written about by people who consider themselves literary critics and historians. Others, such as Freud, Adler, and Jung, find their niche in our established order of the disciplines among the "psychologists," even though not all of their neighbors in this edifice are particularly happy about the proximity.

Still others, like Nietzsche and Buber, have been harder to place. Nietzsche, who preferred to identify himself as a "good European" rather than as a German, led a life in which he had no fixed abode in any one country (or academic discipline)—a life in which he continually moved across borders, both geographical and intellectual. His work has suffered and enjoyed a similar fate. Because of its highly literary, metaphorical, and aphoristic style, its lack or avoidance of fully spelled-out argumentation for its positions, its vehement and personal tone, its unorthodox set of concerns; it was long rejected by a majority of the philosophical establishment in the English-speaking world—not as being bad philosophy, but as not being philosophy at all. And not even Nietzsche's

recent prominence has dissolved the problem of his marginality. In the English-speaking world, his new popularity finds its center of gravity somehow still on the periphery of the discipline of philosophy or in other disciplines, in those, for example, that concern themselves with the theory of literature and art.

Buber's position in the world of academic philosophy is surely even more marginal and obscure than Nietzsche's. As in the case of Kierkegaard (who is also discussed, albeit briefly), there remains uncertainty as to whether he belongs to philosophy or theology.

Walter Kaufmann's *Discovering the Mind* speaks in an important way to these issues of disciplinary identity. As is usually the case in Kaufmann's work, the discussion has both a historical and a philosophical dimension. The historical dimension concerns the two-hundred-year tradition of German letters taken up for consideration in this book. The interdependence of philosophy, literature, and psychology in this tradition is so obvious and well documented, that one is tempted to say that it cannot be ignored, except that it has been ignored, particularly, though not exclusively, in the English-speaking world.

In this German tradition, those who produced literary works and those who produced philosophical works regularly read each other and drew inspiration for their own work from this cross-disciplinary reading. (Kant is perhaps the one notable exception: Though he was widely read by literary figures in the tradition, he did not read them.) Some of the central figures in the tradition, notably Goethe, Schiller, and Nietzsche, produced both significant theoretical and literary work. The literary work of Goethe and Schiller, as well as their theoretical work, importantly influenced the development of German philosophy. Most importantly, there was a strongly sensed community of purpose that transcended the barriers of genre and discipline. "Discovering the mind," Kaufmann argues, was an important aspect of what was viewed as a common enterprise, to which literature, philosophy, and psychology

all contributed. We should not forget that psychology only gradually emerged as a separate discipline in the course of this period.

Though there has been some awareness and acknowledgment of the organic cohesiveness and interdependence of literature, philosophy, and psychology in this tradition, the awareness remains for the most part superficial, undetailed, and without consequence in our approach to the period. Professional philosophers still tend to study the philosophical texts in abstraction from those literary works, which often inspired them or to which they are a response. Although some literary critics do acknowledge the influence of philosophical works upon literary ones, they rarely analyze the philosophic texts in sufficient detail and almost never incorporate careful *philosophic* assessment of these texts into their accounts. Among psychologists, who are typically concerned with the legitimation of their discipline as a "science" on the basis of its similarities with the paradigmatic physical sciences, psychology's common origin with philosophy and literature and its long intermingling with them tend to be deemphasized, depreciated, and suppressed. Their enduring and intimate association tends to be viewed as a primitive and unproductive confusion, which we have fortunately now overcome by finally separating out what are essentially distinct enterprises.

This tendency toward fragmentation is the reflection of a general trend toward deeper and more numerous institutional divisions among the disciplines. Without taking a stand on the purported advantages and inevitability of this intellectual Balkanization, one cannot help but see how our present state of academic and disciplinary division tends to warp our understanding of a tradition in which what is now dispersed among different disciplines existed as an intermingled whole.

Kaufmann's *Discovering the Mind* has the merit of refocussing our attention upon the remarkable integration of philosophical, literary, and psychological work in the tradition of German letters from the Enlightenment to the Second World War. In our recent treatment of this period, we have

tended to overlook or ignore its remarkably high degree of organic unity, in part because this sort of integration has been lost in our own literary culture. *Discovering the Mind* should make it harder for us to continue approaching with good conscience this literary-philosophical-psychological tradition from the exclusive perspective of a particular discipline. It impedes the facility and narrowness of approach that is the consequence of our own cultural fragmentation. Kaufmann has achieved with respect to our study of this period in German intellectual history what Kierkegaard wanted to achieve with respect to our embracing religious faith: He has made things more difficult for us—but also more rewarding. And we are in his debt for this difficulty.

The philosophical dimension of Kaufmann's emphasis on the integration of philosophy, literature, and psychology transcends the question of the interpretation of a particular period of intellectual history, or that of the appropriate methodology for intellectual history in general. It also consists in the implicit thesis, that this former integration of what is currently separated furnishes the most fruitful context for discovering the mind. It suggests that it is in the interplay of literature, philosophy and psychology that the best insights concerning mind have been, and will likely be, obtained. His historical interpretation, in as much as the period interpreted is presented as exemplary, also furnishes the basis of an intellectual program.

Discovering the mind is too important and central a human concern, Kaufmann implies, to be left exclusively to the "psychologists," that is, to those who have come to carry this institutionally and narrowly defined title of relatively recent origin, the professional psychologists. The major insights into the nature of the mind have often come, he argues, from thinkers who were not psychologists so defined, and the greatest of the professional psychologists have drawn heavily on the insights of those who were not in the profession.

The refusal to abandon the discovery of the mind to the guild of professional psychologists is not just an insistence on

the rights of writers and philosophers to address themselves to this task, justified by their traditional presence on this turf and their considerable contributions. It is also a reminder to philosophers and writers that involvement in this enterprise has been and should remain a central aspect of their vocation—a duty as well as a right. The lamentable tendency to relinquish psychology to the psychologists is not just the result of their presumptuous and aggressive appropriation of what is by nature an intellectual and existential concern common to all human beings. There has been complicity on the part of philosophers and writers who wanted to rid themselves of the burden of having to work at discovering the mind. In addition to the effective pursuit of prerogatives by a guild, there has been an all too willing retreat from this former common ground by those who found it easier not to maintain a presence there. We should chastise and lament the retreat as well as the aggression.

In this first of three volumes, Kaufmann provides a bold historical hypothesis about the last two centuries of intellectual life in the German speaking world: the development of theories and conceptions of the mind and of philosophy in general is presented as having taken place in an intellectual space defined overwhelmingly by those two giants of German letters, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832) and Immanuel Kant (1724–1804). Other figures of the period are discussed and, in some cases, even allowed to have had considerable influence and intellectual virtue—Lessing, Schiller, and Hegel, for example. But Kaufmann is unwavering in his insistence that no other figure of the period even remotely compares in influence to Kant or Goethe. Some who have been put forward as major influences, like Herder, are argued to have had less influence than has been supposed. Still others, like Schiller and Hegel, are presented as themselves recipients and transmitters of the two major influences.

It is to be predicted that such a stark structuring of a complex subject will generate the protest that these matters cannot not be so simply viewed. No doubt the proponents of

various figures in this tradition (particularly those scholars who have written about other figures) will feel that the importance of these figures has not been fully appreciated. Confronted with these misgivings, one should not forget that Kaufmann's picture of Goethe and Kant as by far the two most important influences on subsequent intellectual life in Germany is not created by presenting the other leading contenders as pygmies. We should also keep in mind that the thesis concerns subsequent influence, not intrinsic merit. Lessing, Schiller, and Hegel are all treated with enormous respect. And Kant, despite and because of his great influence, is severely criticized and viewed as the source of much that went wrong in German philosophy and intellectual life.

We should also not forget that the thesis is clearly offered as a hypothesis, as an interesting proposal of considerable plausibility, to be pushed as far as it will go. It is a hypothesis of considerable synthetic power, supplying a well-defined perspective from which a bewildering amount of historical material can be systematically viewed. Whatever one decides about its ultimate adequacy, it furnishes a valuable focus for the further study and debate of this rich chapter of intellectual history. The thesis is certainly both arguable and debatable. That it has been so forcefully argued by Kaufmann and will be heatedly debated by others is all to the good.

To put Kaufmann's historical interpretations in this book in perspective, we should consider some of his previous contributions to the subject matter. For example, in *Hegel: Reinterpretation, Texts and Commentary* (1965), he argued for Hegel's philosophical merit and historical importance to an audience that needed some convincing. With this in mind, his insistence that Kant and Goethe were still more influential than Hegel is less likely to be seen as an advocacy that springs from a failure to consider the alternatives seriously. In general, it would be well to remember that this eagle's-eye view of an extensive period in intellectual history was preceded by two substantial studies of major figures in the period (Hegel and Nietzsche) and a number of essays on related topics, partic-

ularly some of those in *From Shakespeare to Existentialism* (1959). Only one acquainted with these earlier contributions will fully appreciate the effort and power of synthesis, the admirable abbreviation, the simplicity and austerity of presentation arising from what had to be complex considerations and hard choices. Kaufmann's last, long-ranging look at his cultural heritage is a masterful distillation of an extensive erudition, effectively brought to bear upon specific and important issues, but never flaunted.

Kaufmann's conception of the place of Kant and Goethe in German culture is remarkable and provocative, not only because of the extraordinary influence he attributes to them, but also because of his evaluation of their respective influences. That Goethe is praised, not only as an enormous, but also as an enormously positive influence, is not at all unusual. But that a substantial part of Goethe's importance and merit is located in his having developed an alternative model for science in his *Theory of Colors*, written as a critique of Newton, is a significant hypothesis.

Unlike the Newtonian conception of science, in which quantification and measurement occupy a central position, Goethe offers us an alternative model for "science" in which these are not essential, and which Kaufmann finds to be preferable in some contexts of inquiry, like that of discovering the mind. Kaufmann is using the term "science" in the broad German sense of "*Wissenschaft*," which includes humanistic disciplines as well as the natural and social sciences, and which applies to anything that is a *rational inquiry*. The crucial issue raised by Kaufmann's championing of a Goethean model of science is not, however, whether one should or should not extend the word "science" to these other disciplines and inquiries. It is rather whether or not the discovery of the mind (and by extension—the discovery of other human truths) is best pursued by adhering to quantitative methods.

Kaufmann's dismissal of the results of quantitative methodology in psychology as insignificant is simply stated, not argued. This dismissal and the accompanying lack of argument

are sure to raise the hackles and voices of the proponents of quantitative methods in psychology. Of course, the bold claim that quantitative studies have not substantially contributed to the discovery of the mind calls for a lot of further consideration and argument. Kaufmann does not make any pretense of argument; he advances this as a radical hypothesis, worthy of further consideration and argument, and worthy of enunciating because it calls into question prevalent and largely unquestioned beliefs. He devotes his energies rather to arguing for the correlative thesis, that some of the greatest contributions to the discovery of the mind have come from thinkers, like Goethe, Nietzsche and Freud, who did not use quantitative methods.

The convincingly argued claim, that Goethe's importance and influence flowed as much from his person as from his works, is put forward as being generally instructive. Kaufmann, citing other examples in the history of philosophy, such as Socrates, J. L. Austin, and Ludwig Wittgenstein, plausibly makes the case that it is not uncommon in the history of philosophy that one's influence often depends upon personal charisma or in conveying the impression that one is in some way an exemplary human being. Using the model of the exemplary Goethe, Kaufmann wants to move us away from the prevalent idea that the history of ideas is only the history of ideas. It is also the history of individuals, whose manner of living or being, at least as it is publicly perceived, is to a great extent responsible for their influence.

This insistence upon the importance of the stature and personal force of the writer, as perceived through and apart from his writings, for determining his influence upon the history of thought contributes to a larger and more important issue. It opens the way to a discussion of what constitutes not just the influence of a thinker but his actual merit, contribution, and greatness. It opens the way, moreover, to a discussion liberated from the narrowing constraints of the prevalent notion that philosophical excellence is primarily, or even exclusively, a matter of the excellence of the argumentation,

of impeccable logic, and the marshalling of all the relevant evidence.

By pointing out that Socrates and Wittgenstein do not offer complete and rigorous demonstrations for their views, Kaufmann is not suggesting that their reputation for greatness is undeserved, but rather that excellence and greatness in philosophy (and in discovering the mind) does not depend exclusively upon the definitiveness of the demonstrations for one's views. But neither is he suggesting that rigor and adequacy of argumentation are irrelevant considerations. In calling attention to what he argues to be an astounding lack of rigor in both Kant and Hegel, he not only tries to correct common misconceptions about them, but also to suggest that they were great philosophers *despite* this lack of rigor, which he clearly considers a serious flaw, though one not incompatible with philosophic greatness. Kaufmann does not attempt to develop a positive and systematic account of what constitutes excellence or greatness in philosophy, but by rejecting an overly narrow conception of the matter that enjoys some currency, he implicitly encourages his readers to explore the question from a richer and more varied perspective than they might have otherwise adopted.

Kaufmann's treatment of Kant is far more startling than his treatment of Goethe. Kant, who has enjoyed respect and praise almost universally, and from the most diverse philosophical directions, is here astonishingly and unqualifiedly branded as a disastrous influence upon the subsequent development of German thought. Though it has been common enough to call attention to some of the obvious failings of Kant's writing style and even, to some extent, the content of his philosophy, this has generally occurred as a series of marginal comments in the context of an overwhelming reverence for his achievement, in an atmosphere of overall admiration that remains in no way challenged by the critical marginalia. Kaufmann makes no bones about his opinion of Kant as having been on the whole a catastrophe for German philosophy. His critique of Kant is radical and unorthodox, yet another philo-

sophical heresy from the author of *The Faith of a Heretic* (1961), a book in which he locates the central virtue of our philosophical tradition in its ever renewed criticism of whatever has become generally accepted as true, authoritative, and canonical.

His case against Kant involves not so much new revelations of hidden flaws, but a clear-eyed assessment of fairly obvious failings and unfortunate influences, relatively unburdened and unblurred by the conventional pieties concerning Kant's unquestionable overall greatness and positive contribution to philosophy. Once again the value of Kaufmann's thesis lies primarily in the raising of an important issue that that has rarely, if ever, been raised, in the consideration of a plausible hypothesis that has rarely, if ever, been seriously considered.

Kant is blamed for a being *the major source* of at least two disastrous traditions in German philosophy. First, he is seen as the source of a continuing tradition of obscurity and obscurantism. He is also faulted as the fountainhead of an inappropriate insistence on certainty and necessity in our investigations and theories and, correspondingly, of unfounded claims to have achieved such rigor. One of Kaufmann's most intriguing ideas is that the two tendencies are actually connected. Having accepted the unrealizable requirement of certainty and necessity, one naturally resorts to obscurity to conceal from oneself and others that one has failed to fulfill it.

Kant is blamed for yet another misguided requirement: that philosophy should endeavor to attain completeness. The requirement of completeness, like the demand for certainty and necessity, it is suggested, being gratuitous and unattainable, naturally produces a tradition characterized by the pretentious counterfeit of the misguided ideal and the attempt to conceal the failure and fakery by willful, though not necessarily conscious, obscurantism.

Some will no doubt want to question whether Kant is really the primary source of all these subsequent ills of German intellectual life. The quest for certainty can be easily

traced back to Descartes and to Newton, and, despite some foreshadowings in Kant, the ideal of completeness seems to have emerged in full force only with Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*. But such disputes about the exact origins of these false ideals for philosophy are much less important than the crucial thesis that they have indeed proven to be counter-productive requirements, that they have become pernicious and enduring afflictions of our intellectual life.

With respect to these flaws, so fateful for the subsequent course of German philosophy, Goethe is presented as Kant's antipode. If Kant began the process of teaching the German language to speak philosophically (his notable German predecessors had used Latin and French), he taught it to speak badly—that is, obscurely. Goethe, on the contrary, used, and indeed himself developed, a German in which one could express one's ideas clearly. While Kant carried on the unfortunate tradition of Descartes, misguidedly seeking an absolutely certain foundation for our knowledge, Goethe emphasized that the true mark of a fruitful scientific procedure was the formulation and testing of hypotheses that always remain open to further questioning.

The subsequent development of German philosophy can be viewed, argues Kaufmann, as largely determined by these polar opposites and the tension between them. Hegel can be understood as having acquired his notoriously obscure style and his false claims to having achieved necessity and completeness in his "dialectical demonstrations" in imitation of Kant. Hegel's developmental approach, which so influenced the intellectual methodology of the nineteenth century, is argued to have derived from Goethe. Heidegger's obscurity and apodictic tone are also seen as part of the unfortunate legacy of Kant. The admirable writing styles of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, as well as the latter's experimental spirit and constant questioning of everything, is attributed to Goethe's influence. Even if one finds this somewhat Manichean conception of the development German thought problematic or simplistic, it is an original and not implausible hypothesis,

which, like a number of Kaufmann's central claims in this work, is fruitful in the crucial sense, that critically considering it, independently of whether we ultimately accept, reject, or modify it, will deepen our understanding of the subject matter to which it pertains.

Although Kaufmann presents Kant as the primary source of major ills in German thought, he constantly maintains that, despite Kant's bad qualities and his disasterous influence on subsequent philosophy, he was a great philosopher. Kaufmann does not himself make the case for Kant's greatness or for the significance of his positive contributions. No doubt he thought it unnecessary to convince our philosophical culture of what it already believes—almost without question. But after his devastating criticism and his rejection, not only of some of Kant's ideas but of the whole manner in which Kant philosophized, some of us will be curious as to what Kaufmann took to be Kant's redeeming virtues.

He does make some scattered remarks, admiring Kant's crushing criticisms of the proofs for God's existence and the unsurpassed philosophic drama of Kant's "antinomies," a presentation on facing pages of what he claimed were perfectly valid arguments for each of two opposing positions ("theses" and "antitheses") on four classical problems in philosophy. But these few and fragmentary admirations do not constitute a counterpoise to the sweeping criticisms. How can Kant have had those particularly general vices, with which he is here convincingly charged, and still have been a great philosopher? Is he really the dark angel of German philosophy or simply its devil?

Usually it is easier for us to explain and defend our negative judgments than our enthusiasms. But this does not seem to be Kaufmann's problem. With respect to those figures he thinks made major contributions to the discovery of the mind—Goethe, Hegel, Nietzsche, and Freud (and obviously not Kant)—he sticks his neck out, listing with admirable concision, clarity, and intellectual courage, point by point, what he takes to be those contributions. These unusually unam-

biguous *prises de position*, like much else in this work, will form ideal foci for further discussion and debate.

Considerable space is devoted to a recounting of the story of the composition and publication of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* and Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Here, as elsewhere in Kaufmann's work, the erudition and information is not an end in itself. Although his account of these matters appears at first to be overly detailed and even gratuitous (even considering the fact that we are dealing with what is arguably each philosopher's most important work), it actually turns out to serve an important purpose. He presents ample evidence that Kant's *Critique* and Hegel's *Phenomenology* were both, though the products of long reflection, written in extreme haste and published pretty much without revision. Kaufmann thinks it important to emphasize that these works were hurriedly produced and never carefully vetted or reworked, for he wants to overcome the awe in which these texts have traditionally been treated. He wants to prepare us to accept his appraisal of them as severely flawed masterpieces, rich in ideas but very badly written and organized, and remarkably lacking in rigor.

This is meant to be a liberating corrective to the prevalent practice of approaching these (and other philosophical masterpieces) as if the failure to find an interpretation that reveals the rigor of the argumentation, the deep aptness of the organization, and truth in the conclusions, or at least an impressive plausibility in these matters, must be a failure of the reader and not of the text. It is an attempt to free us from the oppressive tradition of having to treat what are admitted to be great philosophical works as *authoritative texts*, that is, as texts which, despite appearances to the contrary, are always able to yield, given the appropriate interpretation, coherence, significance, and truth.

It is meant to relieve us of the obligation to undertake prodigious hermeneutic exertions, even when they promise to be futile. These obligatory and often interminable efforts at interpretation are aimed at revealing supposedly hidden