

practical freedom would require transcendental freedom only if it presupposes a libertarian conception of freedom of the will, which is controversial.

**Related terms:** *Critique of Practical Reason*, *Critique of Pure Reason*, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, *Metaphysics of Morals*, “A New Elucidation of the First Principles of Metaphysical Cognition,” *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, Antinomy, Autonomy, Categorical imperative, Causality, Humanity, Justice, Obligation, Practical reason, Rights, Transcendental idealism, Virtue, *Wille*, *Willkür* Paul Guyer

## G

**Generation** (*Erzeugung*, *Zeugung*, *Fortpflanzung*, *Involution*, *Epigenesis*, *Entwicklung*, *Auswicklung*) There is a collection of words Kant uses when discussing the various processes associated with the English word “generation.” The closest German word, *Erzeugung*, can be used either generically – to form an idea, to create an effect or event – or as part of a scientific theory. Kant used *Erzeugung* in both senses repeatedly (234 times) across his corpus, and referred from his earliest works to scientific theories regarding cosmological formation (e.g., *Universal Natural History and Theory of the Heavens*, nineteen times), the generation of earthquakes and volcanoes, and the production of biological life, all by way of *Erzeugung*. The constellation of theories revolving around questions of organic generation was of special interest to Kant, and he spent time throughout his career considering the various processes by which the generation (*Involution*, five times; *Epigenesis*, ten times; *Fortpflanzung*, twenty-three times; *Zeugung*, thirty-three times) and subsequent development (*Auswicklung*, nine times; *Entwicklung*, twenty-five times) of an individual might occur.

In 1802, Georg Mellin in his *Encyclopädisches Wörterbuch der Kritischen Philosophie* provided readers with only a short entry on *Erzeugung*, assigning the broad topic of organic generation instead to a lengthy discussion that was divided between his entries on “Evolutionary Theory” (*Evolutionstheorie*) and on “Educt” (*Educt*), with reference in the latter to Kant’s use of terms taken over from chemistry to draw the difference between an educt and a product when discussing organic life in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (CPJ, 5:423–4 [1790]/CECPJ:291–2; see Mellin, *Encyclopädisches Wörterbuch der Kritischen Philosophie*, vol. II.1, pp. 444, 462–5, and 185–7, respectively.) Rudolf Eisler in his 1930 *Kant-Lexikon* chose *Entwicklung* as the preferred term of reference for organic generation, spending four full pages on the topic, in contrast to the one-sentence definitions he provided for *Erzeugung*, *Evolutionstheorie*, and *Präformation* (pp. 119–22, 144, 150, 429).

Despite this array of terms, Kant’s approach to the problems facing theories of generation was fairly straightforward insofar as it was led by the following questions: Could nature on its own be responsible for all the processes associated with organic life, for its generation and development of new individuals, for its ability to resist the forces of entropy and maintain the identity of an individual over time? Or did all of this crucially rely, either only at the point of

creation or continuously, on the active agency of a supernatural figure like God? Without an *anima* to provide the form and force to matter, it was argued, only God's activity could make sense of the workings of an otherwise inert matter. And if God was not responsible, then what else could explain the persistent sense of some kind of *vis essentialis* or organic force at work in nature, and how was it possible, from the barest notion of such an inexplicable natural force, to explain not only the stable reproduction of forms within the species lines but also the selected inheritance of traits being forced on them at the hands of botanists and breeders?

One of the early theories to rely on God's agency was put forth by Malebranche, who proposed that God had in fact made all living individuals at the point of creation, with subsequent generations carrying untold numbers of these submicroscopic individuals forward until the time came for a given subject to be finally enlarged. Malebranche called this "encasement" (*embôitment*) theory, and both he and Leibniz after him used the verb *développer* to describe the change from submicroscopic to normally sized individuals (for Leibniz, *développer* stood in contrast to the *envelopper* of monads at death). In English, such a position was referred to as "preexistence" or "preformation" theory (emphasizing God's role in solving the problem of form), or sometimes as encapsulation or "Russian doll" theory (focusing, therefore, on the physical problem of storing future generations). When it came to describing the processes by which enlargement occurred, such theories appealed to either involution or evolution (with Darwin later acknowledging his difficulties in seeking to reappropriate "evolution" for a new theory of descent with modification).

In Kant's day, *développer* was translated into English as "expansion," "augmentation," "evolution," and "development"; in German it was translated as either *auswickeln* ("to unwind," "unwrap," or "unfold") or *entwickeln* ("to develop"). Interpretive challenges for Kant scholars have arisen mainly from the way in which the various stakeholders with whom Kant was most familiar either chose to redefine key terms (Buffon, for example, who is the most important theorist for understanding Kant's early views on this matter, chose to reappropriate *développer* for his own theory of generation, even though *développer* had by then – following Malebranche and Leibniz – been traditionally used when referring to a preexistence theory of creation, which Buffon rejected), or were indifferently translated into German, such that Buffon's German translators used *auswickeln* for *développer*, even though *auswickeln* was associated in German with preexistence theory, while Bonnet, who accepted a modified version of preexistence theory, had translators who chose *entwickeln* for *développer* even though *entwickeln* referred generically at that point (and still) to any kind of development. Kant's own usage can be seen to have shifted toward *entwickeln* and its cognates after reading Tetens's account of Bonnet and others on this issue in his *Philosophische Versuch über die menschliche Natur und ihre Entwicklung* (1777).

By the middle of the eighteenth century, preexistence theory was under pressure to make sense of experimental results concerning the regeneration of zoophytes, the selective work being done by breeders, and insurmountable evidence of joint inheritance. Important rival theories were advanced by Maupertuis and Buffon, both of whom Kant read with care. While Kant remained skeptical of both of these new theories, he was sympathetic to their desire for something with greater explanatory appeal than a simple recourse to God. Deciding that "it would be absurd to regard the initial generation [*Erzeugung*] of a plant or animal as a mechanical effect," Kant asked his readers in 1763 whether it made sense to say that each plant and animal was "directly formed [*gebauet*] by God, and thus of supernatural origin, with only propagation [*Fortpflanzung*], that is to say, only their periodic transition [*Übergang*] for the purposes of

expansion [*Auswicklung*] being entrusted to a natural law,” or if it was rather the case that while the plant and animal kingdoms were themselves created by God, individual members “possess the capacity, which we cannot understand, actually to generate [*erzeugen*] their own kind in accordance with a regular law of nature, and not merely to unfold [*auszuwickeln*] them?” (OPA, 2:114 [1763]/CETP70:156). In this essay, Kant was clear that preexistence theory, as invoking a “natural order of unfolding” (*Auswicklung*), offered no “rule of the fruitfulness of nature, only a futile method of evading the issue,” and thus could not challenge a rival sense that “there must be granted to the initial divine organization of plants and animals a capacity, not merely to develop [*entwickeln*] their kind thereafter in accordance with a natural law, but truly to generate [*erzeugen*] their kind” (OPA, 2:115/CETP70:157). Kant continued this line of thought in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, resolving there that the “initial divine organization” described in 1763 be best understood as a “generic preformation,” after which nature became responsible, in ways that remain inscrutable, for the actual generation (*Erzeugung*) of new individuals (CPJ, 5:422–4/CECPJ:290–3). Kant’s discussion of things viewed as natural purposes (*Endzwecke*) further adds to this account of the generative capacity of organic life (CPJ, 5:370–6/CECPJ:242–7).

**Related terms:** Epigenesis, Hylozoism, Life, Organism

Jennifer Mensch

**Genius (Genie)** Kant’s views on genius are developed in his theory of fine art in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* and, to a lesser extent, in related passages in his anthropological works and lectures. Genius is “the exemplary originality of the natural endowment of a subject for the *free* use of his cognitive faculties” (CPJ, 5:318 [1790]/CECPJ:195). The relevant mental powers are imagination and understanding (CPJ, 5:316/CECPJ:194). Genius is significant as a necessary condition for the production of fine art (literally, “beautiful art,” *schönen Kunst*), which “must necessarily be considered as arts of genius” (CPJ, 5:307/CECPJ:186). Kant does not mean that each work of art must individually reflect the degree of freedom and originality that constitutes genius; rather, he appears to mean that a world without genius would be a world without fine art. Although a passing remark identifies a poem or piece of music that lacks genius as a “would-be work” of art (CPJ, 5:313/CECPJ:191), he recognizes that genius is “a rare phenomenon” from which whole schools of fine art derive, imitating the example of a genius (CPJ, 5:318/CECPJ:196).

Genius is essential to fine art’s status as a special form of communication, animating a representation with spirit (*Geist*) (CPJ, 5:313/CECPJ:192), as an “inborn predisposition” or natural talent (CPJ, 5:307/CECPJ:186) for generating aesthetic ideas (CPJ, 5:314/CECPJ:192). As such, genius is an operation of imagination that provides a concept with “a representation . . . that belongs to its presentation, but which by itself stimulates so much thinking that it can never be grasped in a determinate concept, hence which aesthetically enlarges the concept itself in an unbounded way” (CPJ, 5:315/CECPJ:193). Neither natural ingenuity nor a talent for spirited conversation rises to the “extraordinary” creativity of genius (AF, 25:557 [1775–6]/CELA:115). Genius cannot be exercised at will (CPJ, 5:308/CECPJ:187).

Revising early remarks that do not distinguish genius from taste (OFBS, 2:244 [1764]/CEAHE:52–3), Kant’s mature aesthetic theory treats genius and taste as competing principles of fine art production. Because genius also produces original nonsense (CPJ, 5:308/CECPJ:186), fine art also requires taste. Although taste is a power of judgment, rather than a productive talent, a successful artwork requires taste to curtail imagination’s “lawless