The Topography of Modernity
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Published by Cornell University Press

Schreiber, Elliott.
The Topography of Modernity: Karl Philipp Moritz and the Space of Autonomy.

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In 1785, toward the end of his career as a schoolteacher and the year before his departure for Italy, Moritz published a two-tiered critique of Philanthropism. To begin with, his novel *Andreas Hartknopf: Eine Allegorie* extends the line of antiauthoritarian critique examined in chapter 3, applying it to the Philanthropist movement as a whole. In so doing, his novel targets not the Philanthropist principle of noncoercive education as such, but rather the hypocritical manner in which Philanthropists propagate this principle and translate it into practice.

While acute, this critique is limited, leaving open the possibility that teachers of good faith could actually translate Philanthropist educational theory into practice. But in the same year that *Andreas Hartknopf: Eine Allegorie* appeared, Moritz advanced a far more probing critique, though one that has hitherto gone unnoticed. His *Versuch einer kleinen praktischen Kinderlogik* (Attempt at a Small, Practical Children’s Logic) intervenes at the epistemological foundation of Philanthropist pedagogy, questioning the very existence of a natural order of cognition. From its incipience in childhood, Moritz shows, human cognition necessarily takes place within the parameters of prefabricated analytic spaces such as the *Naturalienkabinett*.

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1. Though the date 1786 appears on the title page of both *Andreas Hartknopf: Eine Allegorie* and *Versuch einer kleinen praktischen Kinderlogik*, scholars have dated their publication to the previous year. See the commentary by Heide Hollmer and Albert Meier in Moritz, *Werke*, 1:1114 and 2:1080.
Such spaces constitute the condition of possibility of cognition. Teachers cannot help but discipline children to think within their confines; the Philanthropist promise of a natural education free of coercion is illusory. We can only learn to think inside the box.

Moritz’s critique of Philanthropism at once supports and complicates Michel Foucault’s well-known claim in *Discipline and Punish* that just as corporal punishment was being restricted in institutions such as prisons and schools during the Enlightenment, more subtle disciplinary measures were being introduced. “In the first instance,” Foucault argues, “discipline proceeds from the distribution of individuals in space” (*Discipline and Punish*, 141). He shows how French educational institutions in the eighteenth century organized the classroom into just such an “analytical space” (143) supervised by the teacher. Moritz’s *Kinderlogik*, however, suggests a different disciplinary regime in late eighteenth-century Germany. Here, discipline consists less in organizing children into *tableaux vivants*, and more in instructing them to organize the world around them into such tables—to internalize the compartments of the natural history cabinet, as it were, under the illusion that they are creating this order themselves through independent analytic reasoning. Though it promotes itself as a noncoercive pedagogy, Moritz reveals Philanthropism to be all the more subtly disciplinary than the educational institutions described by Foucault.

In short, Moritz interrupts the narrative of the natural progress of cognition that Philanthropism unfolds, in accordance with Cartesian, Lockean, and Rousseauian epistemological principles, showing that learning can take place only within the confines of preconstructed analytic spaces. This does not, to be sure, keep the intellect from longing for liberation from these confines; as Moritz notes toward the end of the *Kinderlogik*, it desires free latitude, or *freien Spielraum* (*Werke*, 2:170). But such an emancipation of the mind ultimately constitutes for Moritz an aspiration rather than an attainable reality. What remains is a far more limited *Spielraum*, though one that offers a liberating potential of its own: the potential that the structures enclosing the intellect can, like houses of cards, be destroyed in the course of history and rebuilt in alternative configurations. We may not be able to think outside the confines of analytic spaces, but at least these spaces can be broken down and reassembled to structure thought in different ways.

**Moritz’s Critique of Philanthropist Practice in* Andreas Hartknopf: Eine Allegorie**

Like Christian Gotthilf Salzmann and Johann Stuve, Moritz was a member of the younger generation captivated by Johann Bernhard Basedow’s reforms. He interrupted his studies at the University of Wittenberg in the spring of 1778 to make a pilgrimage to the Philanthropin in Dessau, where he hoped to secure a teaching position. According to Karl Friedrich Klischnig, Basedow welcomed him with
Moritz began his career as a teacher at the lower school of the Gymnasium zum grauen Kloster and was quickly promoted to Konrektor. In 1782, he was promoted to cosupervising Konrektor at the Cöllnischen Schule. In 1784, he accepted the position of Außerordentlicher Professor in the upper division of the Gymnasium zum grauen Kloster. On Moritz’s teaching career, see the biographical studies by Eybisch, Boulby, Meier, and Winkler.

In 1781, Campe offered Moritz a position at his school in Hamburg (Eybisch, Anton Reiser, 102). Moritz spent several months in Halle with Bahrdt (117). See Eybisch, Anton Reiser, 85–86; Boulby, Karl Philipp Moritz, 62; Meier, Karl Philipp Moritz, 36 and 68.

However, five years later, in Andreas Hartknopf: Eine Allegorie, he takes sharp aim at Philanthropism, explicitly exposing an underlying hypocrisy in its practice. The book begins with Hartknopf, an itinerant iron smith and preacher, being pushed by a stranger into a ditch on a dark night while wandering toward his hometown of Gellenhausen. The man who pushes him is a teacher named Hagebuck, an alumnus of Basedow’s Philanthropin, who together with his fellow alumnus Küster has recently founded his own Philanthropist school in Gellenhausen. As these two educational reformers see it, before their arrival, the town’s school had been ruled by a harsh and pedantic discipline that they have completely eliminated: “There was much to clear away—here, the old drudgery still ruled in the school—here, the cane and the rod still governed—here vocabulary words were still memorized——But how quickly did all of this change completely! and it was as though the cane and rod were blown away!” (Moritz, Werke, 1:533).

However, Hagebuck’s violent acts toward Hartknopf and others belie his noncoercive pedagogy. This is evident not merely in the novel’s opening scene, but even more blatantly in one that parodies the Philanthropist practice of liberating children from the confines of the classroom through experiential learning in the outdoors. The scene opens at daybreak with Hartknopf sitting on a hill directly beneath Gellenhausen’s gallows together with Elias, his former teacher and the rector emeritus of the town’s Latin school. Their conversation
is interrupted by Hagebuck, who leads his pupils up the hill to show them the majesty of sunrise:

Hagebuck had his pupils arrange themselves around him in a circle, and he showed them, from this height, all the majesty of the world—then he stood before them, and delivered an address to the whole globe, which he urged to willingly accept the light that was being so charitably set on high for its sake, and to let go of the night of prejudice—hereupon he addressed, from the mountain, the city of Gellenhausen, saying that it ought not disregard its true well-being and resist the charitable influence of the universally spreading enlightenment—then he addressed the Gellenhausen youth, saying that they should properly sense this sublime performance of the rising sun. (Werke, 1:557–58)

Hagebuck thus enacts the Philanthropist principle that learning should begin in a natural manner, through sense perception. Yet the natural act of sense perception in this scene is by no means uncoerced. Hagebuck makes a paradoxical demand: he urges (aufforderte) that the Earth “willingly” (willig) accept the light of the sun, and by analogy, that the town of Gellenhausen accept the positive influence of the Enlightenment. And when his plan encounters resistance, Hagebuck’s rhetorical coercion turns into physical violence: a mist rises and blocks the sunlight, and Hagebuck reacts by kicking (and thereby killing) an old, lame poodle that approaches him (558).

That Hagebuck’s violence lies not merely in his physical actions, but in the force of his words themselves, becomes particularly evident in his interactions with his colleague Küster: “When Hagebuck dictated, Küster’s quill captured his words like the words of a saint, and brought them with trembling hand to paper, so that not even a single syllable would get lost—…He was Hagebuck’s faithful echo—when Hagebuck dictated, he would write and read his words back to him; when Hagebuck ranted against the cane and the rod, Küster would rave against rote memorization and vocabulary words” (Werke, 1:536). The irony is that precisely in attacking the prevailing coercive pedagogy grounded in verbal cognition, Hagebuck exerts his authority over Küster, casting him into an entirely subordinate, passive role as faithful echo to his torrent of words. Moritz makes clear that this is not a role that comes naturally to Küster, who, before his education at the Philanthropin, was fired from his position as a sexton precisely because of his insubordination toward his pastor (532). 6 While the pastor, who tries explicitly to enforce

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6. “Because of his tumultuous character, however, he was dismissed from his position, for he did not want to conform to the customary order of things by walking behind his pastor, but rather wanted to walk beside him, and to regard his pastor as his friend and colleague—he thought they would act upon their era together in brotherly union and fight against the old prejudice.—The Herr Pastor, however, was not amused, and forbade himself such familiarity with his subordinate” (Werke, 1:532).
Küster’s subordination, fails to bring him into line, Hagebuck succeeds precisely by dictating to Küster a pedagogical doctrine of noncoercion. Hagebuck thus exerts his authority as a dictator in every sense of the word.

Moritz likely based his portrait of Hagebuck on his encounter with Basedow in Dessau seven years earlier, at the beginning of his teaching career. In his biography, Klischnig describes how, in his first encounter with Moritz, Basedow had praised his Philanthropin for turning out “independent people, educated without pedantic force” (*Mein Freund Anton Reiser*, 28). Yet Klischnig accounts for Moritz’s relatively quick departure from Dessau by pointing to “the suppression of the mind [*Geistesunterdrückung*] and tyranny with which this truly great man [Basedow] handled his subordinates” (35). Basedow’s tyranny toward Moritz and other subordinates, according to Klischnig, expressed itself especially in his endless lectures: “Often late into the night, he [Moritz] had to listen to his speeches and his own eulogies, without being able so much as to produce a single word. . . . It was probably natural that he became, as a result, ever more disheartened, and finally no longer ventured to speak a single word in Basedow’s presence, so that the latter began to take him for an imbecile” (35–36). With *Andreas Hartknopf: Eine Allegorie*, Moritz finally gets a word in edgewise. But it would be a mistake to view Hagebuck merely as a stand-in for Basedow.7 Though Hagebuck shares many of Basedow’s characteristics, Moritz emphasizes that Hagebuck is a product of Basedow’s Philanthropin, a member of the generation of Philanthropists who, like Moritz himself, became infatuated with Basedow and his pedagogical reform movement. In the character of Hagebuck, he satirizes Philanthropism as a whole.

While acute, Moritz’s satirical critique of Philanthropism in this novel goes only so far, in essence showing up what the narrator terms Hagebuck’s “hypocrisy and dissimulation” (*Werke*, 1:535). It leaves open the possibility that Philanthropists of good faith could indeed practice the noncoercive educational approach that they preach, and that they could promote their program in a less authoritarian manner. By comparison, Moritz’s second critique of Philanthropism, in his *Versuch einer kleinen praktischen Kinderlogik*, intervenes at the epistemological foundation of this movement’s pedagogy.

**Moritz’s Critique of Philanthropist Epistemology in *Versuch einer kleinen praktischen Kinderlogik***

Like Basedow’s *Elementarwerk*, Moritz’s *Kinderlogik* is a children’s primer organized around a series of copperplates engraved by Daniel Chodowiecki. It opens with a frame story that features a young tutor who, in a Philanthropist vein, advances a noncoercive teaching method. Indeed, his name, Stahlmann, may well
allude to Christian Gotthilf Salzmann, with whose work Moritz was familiar. As described by Salzmann in his *Reisen der Salzmannischen Zöglinge*, and as later advocated by Johann Stuve in his theoretical treatise, Stahlmann sets his pupil the task of collecting and classifying objects, including both botanical specimens and the objects represented in the copperplates. In its overall format, then, and specifically through its frame story, Moritz’s text would clearly seem to ally itself with the Philanthropist project.

But an unmistakable irony can also be discerned in the name that Moritz gives to the boy’s tutor. The name Stahlmann connotes a steely discipline that contrasts sharply with the “pleasant and playful manner” of his instruction (Moritz, *Werke*, 2:85). Indeed, although there is no indication that Stahlmann, in contrast to Hagebuck, is anything but sincere in his attempt to practice a pedagogy that is free of force, Moritz reveals that he nevertheless encloses his pupil within a strict analytic framework, an “iron cage” (stahlhartes Gehäuse), to borrow Max Weber’s well-known metaphor. Weber uses this expression to depict the highly rationalized economic order that determines modern life “with overwhelming force” (*Die protestantische Ethik*, 188). It proves to be an equally apt metaphor for the spaces within which Stahlmann’s pupil becomes disciplined to think rationally.

The frame story of the *Kinderlogik* opens with a description of the disorder suffered by this pupil, a fourteen-year-old boy named Fritz: “Fritz was a disorganized [unordentlicher] boy. When he undressed in the evening, he tossed one shoe under the oven, and placed the other shoe under his bed. One garter was in his jacket pocket, and the other one hung beneath the mirror. His jacket and vest lay above and his hat lay below” (*Werke*, 2:82). Fritz, then, does not suffer from any particular disorder, but from disorder as such. He separates sets of things that normally are placed together (his shoes), inverts the common order of sets (“His jacket and vest lay above and his hat lay below”), and creates unorthodox sets (placing his garter in his jacket pocket). Because of his disorder, he wakes up in the morning unable to find where he placed things the evening before, and sets off to school “wild and discontented,” seldom arriving on time (82).


9. On the Philanthropists’ promotion of playful instruction, see Overhoff, “…aber mit Lust!” For an alternative reading of the name Stahlmann, see Krupp, “Autonomy and Development,” 190.

10. Weber, *Die protestantische Ethik*, 188. The translation “iron cage” is by Talcott Parsons. Peter Baehr and Gordon C. Wells have rendered Weber’s original phrase more accurately, if less memorably, as “shell as hard as steel.”

11. See Polster, “Childhood, Autonomy, and Social Order.” While building on Polster’s claim that the *Kinderlogik* represents an “offense against Philanthropist theory” (233), my reading contests his assertion that the character of Stahlmann serves not a disciplinary function but “is provided merely to point the way to the internal principles of order” (238). If this were the case, Moritz’s text would precisely exemplify, rather than offend against, a principal tenet of Philanthropist pedagogy. Instead, Moritz mobilizes this character to precisely the opposite end: to show that, even while Stahlmann attempts to promote his pupil’s independent thinking, he cannot help but ensure that his pupil internalizes an established order.
The frame story presents two opposing pedagogical strategies for curing Fritz of his disorder. The first, initially pursued by Fritz’s parents, consists in the exercise of authority through the threat of force and is completely ineffective: “His mother scolded, his father threatened, but it was all for naught” (Werke, 2:83). Fritz’s newly hired tutor, on the other hand, uses a different strategy. Like the Philanthropists, Stahlmann takes a noncoercive approach, one that appeals to the child’s own powers of sense perception and reason. As Arnim Henry Polster observes, “He seeks to engage Fritz’s mind rather than compel it” (“Childhood, Autonomy, and Social Order,” 239). Unlike Fritz’s parents, he does not command that Fritz obey a given regime of order, but rather instructs him in the art of order, or “the great art of classifying and ordering, of comparing and differentiating, upon which the whole happiness of rational man is based” (Werke, 2:85; original emphasis). Stahlmann, then, teaches Fritz to think for himself according to a method closely resembling the Cartesian method, which also operates on the principle of “comparison by means of order,” as Foucault has shown (Order of Things, 53).

Stahlmann’s approach to teaching Fritz this art of order is deceptively simple: “From that moment on, Stahlmann began his lessons with Fritz by letting him place together what belonged together, and separate what did not belong together” (Werke, 2:83; original emphasis). This approach appears to bear fruit, strengthening Fritz’s self-reliance. As a result, his clothes seem to arrange themselves on their own (von selbst), just as Fritz himself now gets up early of his own accord: “His father threatened, his mother scolded no more, Fritz got up earlier on his own [von selber]” (84).

The difference between the pedagogy practiced by Fritz’s parents, on the one hand, and by his tutor, on the other, crystallizes around a particular object, namely a natural history cabinet. Given his marked progress toward order, his parents wish to reward him with a complete natural history collection (Werke, 2:84). Stahlmann, though, forbids their presenting Fritz with a preassembled Naturalienkabinet; rather, he charges his pupil with assembling a collection on his own (84). Like Salzmann and Stuve, Stahlmann thus emphasizes not conformity to a rational order, but rather the independent constitution of such an order, insisting “that Fritz must himself [sich selbst] gradually assemble a natural history cabinet in order to learn, in this manner, to place together what belongs together, and to order what is confused” (84; original emphasis). As recommended by Stuve, this active learning process involves forays with his tutor into the outdoors, to a field where they collect botanical specimens (84). In Stuve’s terms, then, Stahlmann seeks to give Fritz the requisite Spielraum in which to cultivate his independent activity, or Selbsttätigkeit (“Über die Notwendigkeit,” 234).

Stahlmann similarly sees the Kinderlogik’s seven copperplates as a kind of field on which Fritz can practice the art of order. These plates appear to group objects in a wholly arbitrary manner: “These small copper plates depicted all kinds of objects that were completely different from one another and that one glimpsed here close together despite their great differences” (Werke, 2:85). But the plates’ arbitrary
juxtaposition of different objects is precisely the reason why Stahlmann finds them to be of pedagogical value: they present an occasion for Fritz to exercise his sense perception and his reason so as to arrange the randomly grouped representations into a well-ordered collection.

In appropriating the copperplates as teaching aids in this manner, Stahlmann redefines their educational purpose. As a cursory glance reveals, they were originally designed for a completely different end, namely as illustrations for a children’s Latin primer. According to Klischnig, when this primer sold poorly, the publisher removed the expensive engravings from the remaining copies and commissioned from Moritz a new children’s book to recycle them (*Mein Freund Anton Reiser*, 166). Six of the seven plates arrange the objects they represent according to linguistic categories: plates I–IV according to grammatical gender, plates V and VI according to singular and plural, while plate VII likely illustrated transitivity and intransitivity. Midway through the *Kinderlogik*, Moritz explicitly addresses the copperplates’ original purpose: “Thus, when teaching Latin, one seeks especially to impress *recht einzuschärfen* the difference between masculine and feminine nouns—And this was also one of the aims of these copperplates” (*Werke*, 2:133). The copperplates, then, originally functioned to impress or, literally, “sharpen in” linguistic distinctions. In keeping with Philanthropist principles, Stahlmann transforms their instructional use. Rather than using them to engrave linguistic distinctions in Fritz’s mind, he attempts to employ them in a noncoercive way to teach Fritz to rely on his sense perception and reason in order to draw his own rational distinctions between those things that belong together, and those that do not.

The main body of the *Kinderlogik* opens with an analysis of the first copperplate, which demonstrates how Fritz applies Stahlmann’s art of order (see fig. 5). He draws a series of elementary distinctions: between animate and inanimate, between human and animal, and between art and nature. But while seeming to showcase this method of independent perception and thought, Moritz questions it in a subtle, but incisive way. Indeed, the distinctions that Fritz appears to make independently are already inscribed in the world through a variety of instruments, and re-inscribed in the copperplate. The natural progress of cognition that Stahlmann’s method promotes thus proves to be caught in a vicious circle: the order that reason apparently first supposes (recall Descartes’s method of “supposing an order”) turns out to be already instrumentally presupposed.13

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13. Albert Meier has pointed out how later sections of the *Kinderlogik* expose a circularity inherent in the operation of formal logic. (See Meier, “Sprachphilosophie in religionskritischer Absicht,” 264.) He suggests that Fritz, by practicing the art of order promoted by Stahlmann, avoids such a circle, progressing instead on a path of cognition that begins with sense perception and proceeds toward ever greater rationality (255–56, 262). But as I hope to show, already Fritz’s first, elementary application of the art of order operates within a vicious circle. For an excellent analysis of Moritz’s critique of the circularity of syllogistic logic, see also Krupp, “Autonomy and Development,” 193–98.
Figure 5. First copperplate in the Kinderlogik. Princeton University Library.
In his analysis of the first copperplate, Fritz begins by distinguishing between animate and inanimate. Referring to the plate’s images of the farmer, the writer, and the fisherman, Moritz walks the reader through the process of reasoning that leads Fritz to draw this first distinction:

The farmer acts upon the horses and drives them, the horses act upon the plow, and pull it, the plow acts upon the earth, and dissects [zerschneidet] it.

The hand of the man acts upon the quill and guides it, the quill acts upon the paper and paints it with letters.

The hand of the fisher sinks the net in, and the net catches the fish up [faßt die Fische auf]—

Thus the action of the animate upon the inanimate and of this in turn upon the animate is reproduced.

Fritz must, therefore, first draw a great line [großen Strich] between animate and inanimate

Everything that he has until now seen in the world, and will see in the future, he must bring under one of these denominations—He can, therefore, appropriately [füglich] divide the world into the animate and the inanimate world—(Werke, 2:87)

At first glance, Fritz might appear to arrive at this primary distinction by resorting solely to his own independent powers of perception and reason. In fact, however, Moritz’s description suggests that the “great line” (großen Strich) that he draws between animate and inanimate has already been drawn. The activities of farming, writing, and fishing as described here each entail the act of drawing a line with a particular instrument. Thus, farming “dissects” (zerschneidet) the earth with a plow, thereby drawing furrows: “To push the plow into the earth in order to draw furrows” (92). Writing similarly produces lines of text by drawing letters on paper with a quill. While the passage does not explicitly mention such lines in the context of fishing, they are nonetheless made visible in the engraving to which it refers (the water streaming down in straight lines from the net), as well as suggested typographically by the long dash (or Gedankenstrich) that concludes the sentence “The hand of the fisher sinks the net in, and the net catches the fish up—.” Plowing, writing, and fishing all comprehend the world (auffassen in its figurative sense) by drawing lines, making Striche.

Conspicuously absent from this passage is the one remaining human activity depicted in the first copperplate, namely reading. But it, too, is silently present, both in the act that the reader of the Kinderlogik is engaged in, as well as in Fritz’s unconscious act of “reading” the lines made in the copperplate illustrations by the farmer’s plow, the writer’s quill, and the fisherman’s net. When Fritz draws a line between animate and inanimate, then, he does so not by employing an independent, rational method of perception and thought, but rather by redrawing lines that have already been inscribed in the world by a variety of instruments, and engraved by the stencil.
in the copperplate. The art of order that Fritz learns from Stahlmann disregards the linguistic distinctions around which the copperplates are organized, focusing attention instead on the objects represented, in order to distinguish between them on a rational basis. In so doing, though, it merely deflects Fritz’s attention away from one set of signs (those constituting language) and onto another set (the lines comprising the engravings) that becomes “sharpened” into his mind.

Furthermore, the art of order that Fritz learns does not entirely succeed in circumventing language. Language is not merely present in the lines written by the man and read by the boy; it is also present in the categories, “animate and inanimate,” that help determine the manner in which Fritz classifies everything he has seen, and everything he has yet to see: “Everything that he has until now seen in the world, and will see in the future, he must bring under one of these denominations—.” These denominations serve as established rubrics that make it possible for Fritz to draw a distinction between things. As Moritz argues in “Auch eine Hypothese über die Schöpfungsgeschichte Mosis” (Yet Another Hypothesis Concerning Moses’s Creation Story, 1784), an essay on language published the year before the Kinderlogik, “Differentiating and naming appear, therefore, to be indivisibly connected with one another” (Werke, 2:192; original emphasis).

Words, then, comprise another key instrument, or Werkzeug, for thought, as Moritz remarks in his Deutsche Sprachlehre für die Damen (13; German Doctrine of Language for Women, 1782). But it is not an instrument that functions in the manner conceived by Descartes, Locke, Rousseau, or the Philanthropists—that is, as a means of representing distinctions made independently by reason. Rather, it is an instrument that helps make reason’s distinctions possible in the first place. “But what would all objects outside us be,” asks Moritz, “without the thoughts within us? And what, in turn, would all thoughts be without the words through which we differentiate them?” (Deutsche Sprachlehre, 15). The instrument of words enables us to distinguish between thoughts, and thereby arrange them into order.14

Like the reading boy depicted in the first copperplate, Fritz’s cognition thus does not culminate in the application of signs to rationally ordered concepts but instead begins with signs, both verbal (“denominations”) and visual (the lines engraved in the copperplates). Moritz’s description of Fritz’s analysis consequently intervenes in the Philanthropist doctrine of the natural progression of cognition. Fritz learns not by advancing from sense perception to rational organization to designation, but rather by participating in a circular process that begins with signs that establish the very order that rational thought seems first to suppose. Moritz portrays this process as coercive: Fritz must draw a great line; likewise, he must arrange everything he sees, and everything he has yet to see, under a particular denomination. Having

14. Moritz thus certainly does not view language as “the product of the natural categorizing activity of human reason,” as Ludwig M. Eichinger maintains in “Grammatik als Ordnungsprinzip,” 52. For a brief but balanced overview of Moritz’s reflections on language, see Knobloch, “Karl Philipp Moritz als Grammatiker.”
thereby been made compliant (or fügsam), he now can divide the world “appropriately” (füglichs).

The second analysis described in the Kinderlogik is similarly deduced via a form of circular reasoning and displays even more pointedly the coercion inherent therein. It draws a line between rational and irrational, human and animal. Moritz returns here to the illustration that depicts plowing:

The horse walks forward and pulls the plow, because it is driven by the whip.

The farmer, however, is not driven forward by anything behind him; he is driven solely by his thoughts, which are in him—

The earth must first be cut open by the plow, if it is to receive the seeds that are strewn in it and yield fruit.

“If I did not cut the earth open now, it would not yield fruit for me, and I would not be able to satisfy my hunger in the future.”

This is the inner thought that drives the farmer to arduously push the plow into the earth with the one hand, while he drives the horses forward with the whip in his other hand—that is how far he thinks into the future, while the horses feel merely the present coercion, and fear the present pain that they would have had to endure from the whip if they did not walk forward.

There is thus a great difference in the animate world between rational and irrational between human and animal (Werke, 2:88; original emphasis)

The distinction between rational and irrational, human and animal, seems to derive from the observation that the farmer, unlike the horses, is capable of independent thought, or what Raimund Bezold, in his reading of this passage, terms “the auto-causality [Selbstursächlichkeit] and freedom of thought” (Popularphilosophie und Erfahrungsseelenkunde, 24). This capacity for independent reasoning is the basis for his progress: his own internal thought guides him to think ahead, and to move the horses and the plow forward. The horses, by contrast, are motivated to move forward not by voluntary reflection about the future, but rather by the sensation of present coercion and the fear of present pain.

Moritz’s description, however, simultaneously undermines the basis of this distinction between farmer and horse. On the one hand, his description questions the purported independence of the farmer’s thinking. The farmer’s internal thought (“If I did not cut the earth open now …”) merely reformulates the claim that precedes it: “The earth must first be cut open by the plow.” That is, his supposedly independent thought follows a prior line of reasoning. By the same token, Moritz’s description also questions the horses’ apparent inability to consider the future: they move forward precisely because they anticipate the pain that would be caused if they were lashed by the whip. In this respect, they are not so different from the farmer himself, who anticipates the possibility of hunger if he does not plow the earth.
Given these apparent similarities between farmer and horse, how is the distinction between rational and irrational, human and animal, made? Just as the plow incises the first distinction (animate—inanimate), so the whip draws the second. Like the plow, the quill, and the net, this instrument also draws lines, as suggested by the *Gedankenstrich* drawn after the clause “while he drives the horses forward with the whip in his other hand—.” The whip’s lashes mark the horse as animal, as irrational. The analysis described in the *Kinderlogik* follows this prior distinction. Like the farmer himself, it follows a line of reasoning that has already been established. It thereby, once again, participates in a vicious circle: the distinction it apparently makes on a rational basis is already inscribed in the horse’s body. Reason is not the first to draw the distinction between human and animal, rational and irrational; rather, its analysis is itself contingent on the whip’s prior analytic act.

Moritz’s description of the third principal distinction drawn by Fritz, between nature and art (or *Kunst*, understood not simply in aesthetic terms, but as the sum process and product of human activity), similarly reveals the circular structure of human progress. The *Kinderlogik* relates how, in the animal world, everything remains as it was disposed by nature: the bees have been building their cells for centuries, just as the swallows have been building their nests, and continue to build them, “without regressing or progressing in their art” (*Werke*, 2:89). Humanity appears to be different. Not satisfied with the perfection of nature, man has built his own new creation within the old:

The perfection of nature thus did not satisfy man; he wanted to make it even more perfect, and to produce afresh, so to speak, a new creation within creation.

And in this he is successful, and from this an abundance of things have arisen in the world that nature would never have produced for itself, such as houses, clocks, mills, statues, paintings, etc.

All these things, it is said, were produced not by nature, but by man’s industry, or his *art*.

Once again, therefore, Fritz had to draw a great line: between

*nature* and *art*

for everything that he sees before him can always be brought under one of these two denominations—(89–90; original emphasis)

As opposed to the activity of animals, which consists in repetition, human art would seem to involve continual perfection. Yet, as with Fritz’s previous distinctions, Moritz’s text also undermines the rational basis for this one. Indeed, it documents how Fritz arrives at his analysis not through independent reasoning, but rather by repeating hearsay: “All these things, it is said, were produced not by nature, but by man’s industry, or his *art*.” On this basis, he “had to” (mußte) draw a great line between nature and art.

Fritz’s act of repetition is not a personal failing that could be remedied by practicing more rigorously independent thinking. Rather, Moritz shows this repetition
to be built into the very structure of art, as evident in the prime example he gives, namely the construction of houses: “People force the forest with the axe to yield for them both housing and heat, in that they use felled tree-trunks to build houses, which they then heat with other tree-trunks” \((\textit{Werke}, 2:89)\). Like the plow, the axe is another sharp, steel instrument that severs things. It thereby produces the component parts of the house, which incorporates in its structure the sum of the distinctions made by the axe. The house, in turn, requires that we continue cutting down trees, continue making the same incisions in the world around us to keep the house warm. Through the axe, we force the forest into giving us shelter; and in doing so, we construct for ourselves a space that compels the repetition of our manner of analyzing the world. In other words, we thereby construct an “iron cage” or \textit{stahlhartes Gehäuse} that determines the way in which we comprehend the world.

Stahlmann might seem to offer a way out of this coercive structure. As noted above, he refuses to allow Fritz’s learning to be confined within a preassembled natural history cabinet but takes him out into the field, encouraging him to practice the art of order independently. The \textit{Kinderlogik} refers to this art—that one place together what belongs together, and separate what does not—as “the whole secret” (das ganze Geheimnis) of Stahlmann’s pedagogy \((\textit{Werke}, 2:83)\). However, the frame story suggests that Stahlmann’s method bears within it a further secret, one that belies the noncoercive principle of his instruction. Consider the two parallel passages that Moritz positions immediately before the discussion of the natural history cabinet, the first concerning the arrangement of reading and writing instruments, and the second concerning that of botanical specimens:

He [Fritz] came to school on time. For his Latin grammar book was no longer in his boot, his notebook no longer lay in his bed, and his quills no longer lay on the stovetop; rather, the grammar book, quills, and notebook had, as things that belong together, their place in Fritz’s small desk, where they also belonged…. 

If they [Fritz and Stahlmann] went for a walk in the field, they searched for all kinds of herbs and plants, which they took with them back home, and selected those that were similar to each other out of the confused pile and lay them together, until everything finally had its assigned place. (84)

In both instances, confusion is resolved into order. And in each instance, the act of ordering occurs in a precise spatial framework: in the desk and in the house, respectively. It is within these spatial structures that each of the reading and writing articles, or each of the botanical specimens, is assigned its proper place (\textit{seinen angewiesenen Platz}). To the extent, then, that things belong to such a spatial framework, they belong together as an ordered set. These spaces constitute the condition of possibility for the art of order. In other words, rationally determined relations of belonging do not precede and guide the order in which we place things; rather, prefabricated spatial frameworks first establish those rational relations of belonging.
The second of these instances in particular intimates that Stahlmann’s art of order, the secret of his instructional success, bears within it a further secret, or Geheimnis. That secret is the Heim, the home or house that functions as the space that makes possible the activity of ordering, and that is positioned centrally in the fourth copperplate (see fig. 6). In his discussion of this copperplate, Moritz describes the house as a “well-ordered whole” divided into compartments that are in turn subdivided: “The house is divided, through the door, into two identical halves, and each half has its own further subdivisions—” (Werke, 2:112). Stahlmann can with good reason dispense with a prefabricated natural history cabinet, because the structure of the house already embodies an analytic space in which the constitution of order can take place; in short, the house already functions as a kind of natural history cabinet.15 To order nature within this analytic space means, literally, to domesticate it (from the Latin domus); as Moritz states near the end of his text, “He [man] makes himself in his four walls into a master of the surrounding nature” (171). And by domesticating nature, we domesticate ourselves: it is thus that Fritz is transformed from a wild child (“wild and discontented” [82]) into “an orderly boy,” one who behaves “more rationally and better” (83).

Like Fritz’s house, the copperplates of the Kinderlogik, too, form a stahlhartes Gehäuse. As we have seen, from Stahlmann’s perspective, these copperplates—like the field where he and Fritz collect botanical specimens—present an ideal site to practice the art of order. The objects represented therein have yet to be organized according to a rational method; befitting their original function as illustrations for a Latin primer, they have been grouped according to linguistic distinctions alone. They thus present an opportunity for Fritz to exercise his own faculties of perception and reason to draw distinctions, and thereby to arrange the objects in a rational order. But the order he seems to rationally suppose has already been presupposed; the distinctions he draws retrace the lines etched into the copperplates by Chodowiecki’s stencil, which in turn reinscribe lines already drawn by a number of other instruments. These distinctions also reinforce those that are inscribed in language through a series of binary denominations: “animate and inanimate,” “rational and irrational,” and “nature and art.” In attempting to circumvent the merely linguistic distinctions underlying the copperplates, Stahlmann and Fritz inadvertently fall back on distinctions drawn in language. What Moritz terms “the edifice of language” (Werke, 2:133; [den] Bau der Sprache) comprises a further stahlhartes Gehäuse that structures Fritz’s thought.16 In sum, then, the Kinderlogik illuminates three analytic spaces within which Fritz learns to draw distinctions: the house, the copperplates, and the edifice of language.

15. For a rich description of the house as a “materialized system of classification,” see Bourdieu, Logic of Practice, 76.
16. In his Deutsche Sprachlehre für die Damen, he similarly refers to “das Gebäude unsrer Sprache” (8).
Figure 6. Fourth copperplate in the *Kinderlogik*, Princeton University Library.
My reading of Moritz’s *Kinderlogik* both supports and complicates Foucault’s argument in *Discipline and Punish*. Foucault claims that the eighteenth century marked a shift away from the public spectacle of corporal punishment and toward a more subtle regime of discipline that exacted “uninterrupted, constant coercion” on the body (*Discipline and Punish*, 137). He argues that, first and foremost, this new regime of discipline exerted itself spatially, distributing individuals across a tabular space: “The first of the great operations of discipline is . . . the constitution of ‘tableaux vivants’, which transform the confused, useless or dangerous multitudes into ordered multiplicities” (148). Together with military camps, hospitals, factories, and prisons, elementary and secondary schools play a crucial role in Foucault’s account of the establishment of disciplinary space. According to Foucault, the French educator Jean-Baptiste de La Salle, founder of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, thus envisaged the classroom as “a single great table, with many different entries, under the scrupulously ‘classificatory’ eye of the master” (147). The kind of disciplinary space exposed by Moritz differs from that described by Foucault in that it is not a great tableau in which the child is arranged, like an object; rather, it is a tableau in which the child arranges the objects of the world around him. The child accomplishes this under the illusion that he is relying on his own independent cognitive faculties, when in fact he is internalizing a predetermined system of classification. In this manner, he unwittingly participates in disciplining, or domesticating, his own mind. The *Kinderlogik* thereby reveals the operation of a more concealed, and hence potentially more powerful, disciplinary space than that detailed by Foucault in the French context.

**Prospects for the Emancipation of the Intellect in the *Kinderlogik* and Anton Reiser**

Like *Andreas Hartknoepf: Eine Allegorie*, the *Kinderlogik* brings to light the coerciveness that underlies a pedagogical reform movement whose express mission is to liberate children’s cognitive faculties from external force. Moritz’s novel focuses on the contradiction between Philanthropist theory and practice; its target is hypocrisy, not the emancipatory potential of Philanthropist pedagogy as such. His primer’s critique, I have argued, is more penetrating: it questions the very possibility of liberating the mind from instrumentally fabricated analytic spaces. These spaces function as templates that enable the mind to draw distinctions, but they also function as “iron cages” that lock it into these distinctions. Consequently, Fritz

17. Foucault quotes from La Salle’s *Conduite des écoles chrétiennes* (1720): “In every class there will be places assigned for all the pupils of all the lessons, so that all those attending the same lesson will always occupy the same place. Pupils attending the highest lessons will be placed in the benches closest to the wall, followed by the others according to the order of the lessons moving towards the middle of the classroom. . . . Each of the pupils will have his place assigned to him and none of them will leave it or change it except on the order or with the consent of the school inspector” (147).
not only can divide the world according to the very first distinction he makes in the Kinderlogik; he must use this distinction to classify everything he has ever seen in the world, and everything he has yet to see (Werke, 2:87).

Yet, according to Moritz, the mind’s enclosure within the confines of analytic spaces does not keep it from desiring freedom. Toward the end of the text, he asserts, “a force desires free scope” (Werke, 2:170 [original emphasis]; eine Kraft will freien Spielraum haben). The sentence immediately following this claim makes it clear that the force in question is that of the intellect, or Denkkraft, and goes on to suggest that the intellect will one day in fact attain the unrestricted Spielraum that it desires:

Moritz here envisions the mind, or Geist, attaining freien Spielraum through a higher flight—perhaps an allusion to the eagle depicted in the fourth copperplate, whose wings extend beyond the confines of the copperplate’s grid, as though it were flying free of it (see fig. 6). Despite his critique of Philanthropism, does Moritz not thereby reaffirm its primary goal, the emancipation of the mind from constraint?

Yet there are crucial differences between how Moritz and the Philanthropists conceive of this emancipation. As noted in the previous chapter, Stuve holds that the principal task of educators is to provide pupils with Spielraum for the independent activity of their minds. Stuve presents this as an achievable goal and suggests that educators begin by releasing children from the confines of indoor spaces and allowing them the freedom to play outdoors, in what he fittingly calls der freie Luft (“Über die Notwendigkeit,” 210). While Moritz, too, conceives of the mind’s emancipation, his conception contrasts with Stuve’s in three significant ways. First, he depicts not human educators, but rather nature as ultimately responsible for preparing the mind for its eventual liberation. Second, he does not depict this liberation as pertaining to the individual child. Instead, it is man (der Mensch) who is the subject of his reflections, raising the possibility that the mind’s flight will occur not ontogenetically, in the course of the individual’s development, but rather phylogenetically, in the course of the development of humankind as a whole. Third, he views the mind’s higher flight not as imminent but instead situates it sometime in the future (dereinst). In sum, Moritz regards this goal as removed from the purview

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18. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the idiomatic counterpart to this German expression is “the open air.” Literally, it means “the free air.”
of pedagogy, potentially beyond the reach of the individual learner, and positioned at an unknown point in the future.

He also qualifies this higher flight in one further, decisive way. In the very next sentence of the text, he observes: “Through this whole book, the ideas have been placed in motion in manifold ways, merely to be placed in motion—what this thereby \( \text{dadurch} \) occasions in the mind is: a play of ideas—” (Werke, 2:171). Among the ideas set in motion merely for the sake of being set in motion is the idea of the higher flight of the mind. Specifically, it has been set in motion through this book, the *Kinderlogik*; it is only in a mediated fashion, through this book (\( \text{dadurch} \)), that the play of ideas can also take place in the mind. Philanthropist pedagogy, we recall, inherited from Locke, Descartes, and Rousseau the goal of liberating the mind from book learning. For Moritz, by contrast, the very idea of such a liberation is made possible through a book. Paradoxically, books are necessary to be able to conceive of the possibility of freeing ourselves from them.

Moritz underscores this paradox in a text published a year after the *Kinderlogik*, namely part 3 of *Anton Reiser* (1786). At age sixteen—two years Fritz’s senior—Anton engages in a summer of solitary philosophical study. However, the “bliss of thought” (Werke, 1:300) that Anton thereby tastes for the first time is interrupted by the sudden recognition of the limits of thought:

> Yet even then, after losing himself in reflection for a while, he would often feel as though he had suddenly run into something that *hemmed* him in, and obstructed his view, like a wall made of boards or an impenetrable ceiling—he would then feel as though he had been thinking nothing—but *words*—

> Here he ran up against the impenetrable partition which divides human thinking from the thinking of higher beings, against the necessity of language, without which the human intellect can develop no momentum of its own—and which, so to speak, is only an artificial makeshift through which \( \text{wodurch} \) something similar to the actual, *pure* thought is produced, which we may perhaps eventually \( \text{dereinst} \) attain.—

Language seemed to stand in his way while he was thinking, and yet he could not think without language.—(301; original emphasis)

Anton perceives his thought to be enclosed in language, whose confines he experiences as being like a wooden wall or an impenetrable ceiling. As with Fritz, the edifice of language at once enables and constrains his thought: it seems to stand in his way, and yet he can’t think without it. Anton’s predicament, the narrator comments, is a universally human one: paradoxically, without the artificial makeshift of language, human thought would have no momentum of its own. The narrator goes on to develop his observations a step further beyond Anton’s. While Anton regards the edifice of language as closing off his view, the narrator opens up a prospect that gives the reader a glimpse beyond the walls of this edifice, of a realm of higher beings capable of “actual, *pure* thought.” He furthermore claims that we might
one day (dereinst) move beyond the edifice of language to attain this pure thought. However, pure thought is conceivable only in a mediated fashion through language (wodurch). Indeed, the narrator’s reflections at this point highlight the fact that his own claim regarding the potential of attaining pure thought is itself expressed through language, through the novel’s text. Just as the passage toward the end of the Kinderlogik suggests that books are necessary to conceive of the mind’s liberation from books, so this passage in Anton Reiser shows language to be indispensable in conceiving of the mind’s liberation from language.¹⁹

Put in a more general way, the mind can conceive of a freien Spielraum only from within the parameters of limited Spielräume—“within the small compass of a book” (Werke, 2:105), for instance, or within the edifice of language. Moritz visualizes such spaces in the passage toward the end of the Kinderlogik as “houses of cards that are blown over by a breath,” fragile structures that are limited in both extent and duration. While the mind may never be able to move entirely beyond the limits of such Spielräume, these very limits bear within themselves the potential for a kind of intellectual mobility that breaks, however momentarily, the circularity of thought discussed above. They suggest that the “iron cage” that encloses the intellect is not, after all, as impenetrable as it appears to be. As Moritz notes early in the Kinderlogik, “But strike the plow and the table and chair into pieces, and nothing remains except stone and iron” (92). Even the most durable of human instruments and constructs, then, can be broken apart. Their destruction opens the way for the movement of the mind beyond the circularity in which it finds itself as it thinks in the confines of any given analytic space. Indeed, having destroyed the spaces that confine the intellect, we can move on to devise new instruments with which to build new spaces, just as houses of cards can be demolished and reconstructed in new configurations. We thereby exercise our intellect, in order that it might one day, through a higher flight, transcend the spaces that enclose it. As it is only within such spaces that this emancipation can be conceived, the history of the human mind would take place as a perpetual “forming” (Bildung): the building up, tearing down, and building up once more of limited Spielräume, in pursuit of a freien Spielraum, a boundless latitude for the intellect that forever recedes into the distance.

Despite his thoroughgoing critique of Philanthropist theory and practice, Moritz nevertheless keeps in his sights its principal goal, the liberation of the mind from coercion. In conceiving of the mind’s higher flight, he underscores an aspiration that runs through the entire line of epistemological and pedagogical thought we traced in the previous chapter, from Descartes to the Philanthropist thinkers. But insofar as he reveals the conditions of possibility for conceiving of the mind’s
emancipation to lie within the very analytic spaces that these thinkers wish to overcome, Moritz shows this aspiration to be perpetually beyond their reach. Indeed, in purporting to promote this liberation, Philanthropist pedagogy effectively disguises its reliance on these spaces and thus helps ensure their perpetuation. Moritz, by contrast, exposes how indispensable they are for thought. But he further exposes the potential for change that inheres in them: as Spielräume, they can be broken down and reassembled in variations that have the potential to shape thought in radically different ways.