

“A Good, Honest Watchmaker”: J. C. F. Schulz’s Portrait of Kant from 1791

by Steve Naragon, North Manchester

Abstract: Kant’s body offered a constant target for his own remarks, both in correspondence and during his lunchtime conversations. Several good descriptions of Kant’s body have come down to us over the centuries, as well as a number of visual representations, but these are remarkably limited, given his stature in the world of ideas. A new description of Kant, written by a novelist who visited Kant while passing through Königsberg, has recently come to light. It is reproduced here – in English translation as well as the original German – and earlier descriptions of Kant are briefly recounted.

Keywords: biography, physical appearance, body, illustrations

Immanuel Kant was a very thin man, small-boned, a bit short, and with a noticeably crooked back. His frail body stood in striking contrast to the robust, graceful, and penetrating mind discoverable in his writings; and so it is remarkable how much he preferred discussing the former over the latter. Kant relished talking about his body. His former student and frequent dinner-guest Reinhold Bernhard Jachmann (1767–1843) recounts that “while Kant never chose, as a topic of discussion, his own mind – and purposely avoided any discussion of it – he spoke all the more of his body”¹.

We have a handful of contemporary reports of Kant’s physical appearance, primarily from the last two decades of his life. Most of these stem from acquaintances of many years, and typically were written down some years after the fact.²

¹ Jachmann, Reinhold Bernhard, *Immanuel Kant geschildert in Briefen an einen Freund* (Königsberg, 1804), as reprinted in Felix Groß, ed., *Immanuel Kant. Sein Leben in Darstellungen von Zeitgenossen. Die Biographien von L. E. Borowski, R. B. Jachmann und A. Ch. Wasianski* (Berlin 1912), 186. See also 194: “There has perhaps never lived a human being who attended more closely to his own body, and everything concerning it, than Kant.”

² For instance, *L. E. Borowski* was in Königsberg from 1755–1758, and then returned in 1782; he knew Kant during his earliest years as a magister, but presumably wrote his descriptions of Kant only near the very end of Kant’s life (they are not part of the material he wrote in 1792 and shared with Kant). *R. B. Jachmann* interacted with Kant primarily between 1783–1794, as a student and then (presumably) as his amanuensis, after which he left Königsberg and saw Kant only infrequently. *E. A. C. Wasianski* attended Kant’s lectures beginning in 1773/74, and then remained in Königsberg as a pastor, but apparently had little to do with Kant until 1790, when they renewed their acquaintance; Wasianski became a regular at Kant’s table and eventually something of a caretaker during his last years. *J. G. Hasse* arrived in Königsberg as a professor in 1787, but was a guest at Kant’s table only during the last three years. *F. T. Rink* arrived as a student in 1786, and remained as a lecturer and later professor. All of the above published their memoirs of Kant shortly after his death. *J. F. Reichardt* studied with Kant in the mid-1760s, and kept close ties with friends in Königsberg thereafter, but left for Berlin and elsewhere, and pre-

A few descriptions appear to have been written on the spot, however, usually by visitors to Königsberg: Bernoulli in 1778, Fichte in 1791, Purgstall in 1795.³ Another such report has recently surfaced, previously unknown in the Kant literature. This is a description written by Joachim Christian Friedrich Schulz (1762–1798), a novelist on his way to Mitau from Berlin, and who passed through Königsberg in early January 1791, when Kant would have been sixty-six. In what follows I summarize the available descriptions of Kant⁴ and then offer Schulz's description, in English translation followed by the original German.

Ludwig Ernst Borowski (1740–1831), a student during Kant's first years in the 1750s and who interacted with him socially after returning to Königsberg in 1782, described Kant as being...

of average height, finely built; otherwise without fault overall except that the right shoulder, already in his earlier years, was noticeably higher. Kant's eyes were not particularly large, but lively and at the same time gentle. Their color was blue; I don't know why, but he thought this significant, [...].

adding that Kant was, "for as long as I've known him, extremely thin; desiccated at the end, like a shard"⁵. This last feature is repeated by a Königsberg physician:

Kant was very small boned and thin, but in his last years lost a remarkable amount of weight in all parts of his body, other than his face. Almost every day he would point this out to his dinner guests, and each time would say that he now believed he had reached the minimum of

sumably saw Kant only infrequently; his account was published in 1822. *C. F. Reusch* studied under Kant beginning in 1794, remained in town and became a regular at Kant's table, publishing his account in 1848.

³ These will be discussed briefly in what follows. In addition, the artist Veit Schnorr was in Königsberg in 1789 when he sketched Kant with pencil on parchment; Schnorr also left a brief written account of Kant, although this was not written until decades later (c.1831; rpt. Malter 1990, 344f.), and the drawing is clearly the more reliable and informative of the two. Kant's friend T. G. Hippel wrote on the back of the drawing: "Extraordinary likeness! ... Hippel, 13 May 89" – although another friend, Borowski, who had probably seen only Bause's 1791 engraving based on the drawing, did not think Schnorr captured Kant very well; cf. Ludwig Ernst Borowski, *Darstellung des Lebens und Charakters Immanuel Kants, Von Kant selbst genau revidirt und berichtigt* (Königsberg, 1804), as reprinted in Felix Groß (op. cit., 1912), 46.

⁴ Most of these have been reprinted in Rudolf Malter's indispensable collection: *Immanuel Kant in Rede und Gespräch* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1990). I have not included comments on Kant's clothing and sense of fashion; on this, see Borowski (1912, 56; rpt. Malter 1990, 34f.), Jachmann (1912, 166, 187; rpt. Malter 1990, 231), Christian Friedrich Reusch, *Kant und seine Tischgenossen* (Königsberg, 1848, 5; rpt. Malter 1990, 311), and Bagessen (rpt. Malter 1990, 371). See also the description by J. G. Hasse (1759–1806) from Kant's last few years (rpt. Malter 1990, 542–545).

Running parallel with these verbal descriptions are the various pictorial representations made of Kant; on this often bewildering collection of images, see especially Karl-Heinz Clasen, *Kant-Bildnisse* (Königsberg: Gräfe und Unzer 1924) and Volkmar Essers, "Kant-Bildnisse". In: *Immanuel Kant: Leben, Umwelt, Werk*. Ed. by Friedrich Benninghoven. Berlin-Dahlem: Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz 1974, 39–63. Many of the relevant images and these two essays are available on the Mainz Kant-Forschungsstelle website [<http://www.kant.uni-mainz.de>].

⁵ Borowski (1912), 52.

muscular substance. He often joked about his entire lack of a backside, and maintained that he had thoroughly lost all eminence on this point.⁶

Jachmann describes Kant's body as being...

[...] scarcely five feet tall; in relation to the rest of the body, the head was quite large; the chest was very flat, almost concave; the right shoulder bone pushed out a bit to the back. The remaining parts of his body were properly proportioned. His bones were extremely weak, but his muscles even weaker. The entire body was covered with so little flesh, that he could keep on his clothes only through artificial means.⁷ [...]

Kant's face had a very pleasant composition, and must have been quite handsome in earlier years. His hair was blond, his complexion fresh and his cheeks, even in old age, were a healthy red. But how do I find the words to describe to you his eye!⁸ Kant's eye was as though made of a heavenly aether from which the deep glance of his soul shone forth, its fiery beam slightly muted by a light cloud. It is impossible to describe the enchanting view, and the feeling this gave me, when Kant would sit across from me with his eyes cast down, and then suddenly raise them and look at me. It was always as if I was looking through this blue aetherial fire into Minerva's inner temple.⁹

And yet his hair-bag¹⁰ was in a state of perpetual disorder. While Kant sat at the dinner table, his old servant Lampe could not pass behind his chair without taking hold of Kant's hair-bag, which would always fall sideways across his bent back, and center it between his shoulders.¹¹ Kant's younger colleague and one time student, Christian Jakob Kraus (1753–1807),¹² would occasionally walk with Kant after lunch,

⁶ As reported to Jachmann and included as the “18th Letter” of his Kant biography (1912), 210. The physician was William Motherby (1776–1847), son of Kant's good friend, the English merchant Robert Motherby. William had studied at the university in the 1790s (tutored by Jachmann), received his medical degree from Edinburgh, and then returned to Königsberg where he initiated a smallpox vaccination program. In 1805 he founded the *Friends of Kant* society that met annually on Kant's birthday.

⁷ Jachmann may have in mind here a complicated device described by Wasianski and used by Kant for holding up his socks; see Ehregott Andreas Christoph Wasianski, *Immanuel Kant in seinen letzten Lebensjahren. Ein Beitrag zur Kenntnis seines Charakters und häuslichen Lebens aus dem täglichen Umgange mit ihm* (Königsberg, 1804), as reprinted in Felix Groß (op. cit., 1912), 228f.

⁸ It is striking that Jachmann writes here of a single eye. Kant lost the sight in his left eye sometime in the 1780s. See Jachmann (1912), 209; Hasse (1804; rpt. Malter 1990, 544); and Kant's own mention of this blindness in his *Conflict of the Faculties* (AA 07: 115–116).

⁹ Jachmann (1912), 185f.

¹⁰ German: *Haarbeutel*. The hair-bag was a common feature of wigs in that day; it hung down the back, usually with a ribbon tied near the neck, and is visible in most visual representations of Kant, although the wig is altogether omitted in the busts by Mattersberger (1795), Bardou (1798), Hagemann (1801), and Schadow (1808, based on Hagemann), and in one of the miniature paintings by Vernet (c.1792).

¹¹ Jachmann (1912), 187.

¹² Kraus was the son of a surgeon in Osterode and his mother was the mayor's daughter, but both parents died when he was seventeen, and the uncle who took him in died three years later, requiring Kraus to support himself by tutoring others while at the university. Kant described him as “one of my favorite and most capable students,” and Kraus returned to Königsberg as professor of practical philosophy, offering lectures on cameralistics and statistics. He became a regular at Kant's table and a constant companion before their break in 1789. Today he is remembered for having introduced Adam Smith's theory of liberal economics into Germany (with lectures in 1797, not long after publication of the Garve/Dörrien German translation of Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* in 1794–1796). His students included such future luminaries as President von Schön, Minister von Schrötter, and Graf Dohna-Wundlacken.

and although his pace was normally quick, “when accompanying Kant they both went very slowly, Kant with his head almost constantly bent toward the ground and hanging to one side, his hair-bag almost always in disarray and lying on one shoulder”¹³.

The above all come from Kant’s acquaintances of many years, but whose reports were often written down much later. From July 1778, on the other hand, we have an account from Johann Bernoulli (1744–1807) who visited Königsberg when Kant was fifty-four:

This famous philosopher is such a lively and pleasant man in conversation, and with such fine manners, that one would not easily suspect him of being a deep thinker, except that his eyes and facial features immediately betray a sharp wit, and the similarity of these with d’Alembert was for me especially striking.¹⁴

Seventeen years later when Kant was seventy-one, we have an account by Wenzel Johann Gottfried von Purgstall (1773–1812), an Austrian nobleman who visited Kant and attended his lectures, describing it all in a letter of 30 April 1795:

His face and person looks most like the picture at the front of the *Repertorium* of the *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung*¹⁵ and that hangs in Reinhold’s room.¹⁶ Only he has, around his

¹³ Voigt, Johannes: *Das Leben des Professor Christian Jacob Kraus, aus den Mitteilungen seiner Freunde und seinen Briefen*. Königsberg 1819, 128f. Reprinted in Malter (1990), 166.

¹⁴ Reprinted in Malter (1990), 146. Originally published in 1779. Jean le Rond d’Alembert (1717–1783) was a French mathematician, and co-editor (with Denis Diderot) of the *Encyclopédie*. La Tour has left a well-known pastel of d’Alembert.

¹⁵ The *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung* was founded by Christian Gottfried Schütz and Gottlieb Hufeland, a daily four-page journal devoted primarily to book reviews. It appeared from 1785 until 1803, after which Schütz moved it to Halle, where it continued until 1849. Kant published several reviews from its inception, and the journal quickly became an important organ for Kant’s new philosophy. They also published an extensive *Allgemeines Repertorium der Literatur*, organized by discipline, that was intended to be a universal bibliography of all publications of a certain period (volume one, published in 1793, covered publications appearing from 1785–1790).

The identity of this engraving is still unclear, although it appears to be the same as the one favorably mentioned by Johann Friedrich Reichardt (1752–1814) in his 1822 memoir: “Kant was, both body and soul, an entirely dry man. There has perhaps never existed one so thin, so withered as his small body; never did a philosopher live so cold, pure, closed-up. A high, cheerful forehead, fine nose and bright clear eyes presented his face to advantage. The lower part of this, on the other hand, was the most perfect expression of coarse sensuality, which showed itself to excess especially when eating and drinking. The picture from the *Repertorium* of the *Allgemeinen Literatur-Zeitung* expresses these characteristics also well enough, and is the best resemblance that we have of him.” Malter (1990, 81, 442) identifies the Purgstall reference as Charles Townley’s 1789 engraving based on Loewe’s 1784 painting, but identifies the Reichardt reference as the engraving by Johann Heinrich Lips (1758–1817), based on a 1792 painting by Vernet, and published as a frontispiece in the first volume of the *Allgemeines Repertorium der Literatur für die Jahre 1785–1790* (Jena, 1793); here Malter is depending on David Minden, “Vortrag über Porträts und Abbildungen Kants”. In: *Schriften der physikalisch-ökonomischen Gesellschaft zu Königsberg*. Königsberg 1868, 9: 24–34. That the engraving is Townley’s is suggested by correspondence between Reinhold and Kant (April 9 and May 12, 1789) where we learn that Reinhold sent a copy of Townley’s engraving to Kant in honor of his birthday.

¹⁶ Karl Leonhard Reinhold (1758–1823) was a professor of philosophy at Jena from 1787–1794, after which he taught at Kiel. He had published (in 1786–1787) an important

mouth and his light blue eyes, something mobile, fine, friendly, that is missing in the hard engraving. He walks bent over, his hair-bag always falls forward because he is a little crooked, and this results in his always making this maneuver to push it back.

Purgstall then describes Kant in the lecture hall:

Imagine a little old man who sits there bent over, wearing a brown coat with yellow buttons, not to forget the wig and hair-bag; imagine also that this little man occasionally brings forth his hands from the buttoned coat where they were folded, and makes a small movement with them in front of his face, as one does when one wants to make something fully comprehensible – imagine all this and you will be seeing him to a hair. Even though he does not look all that great, even though his voice is unclear, yet, if I may say so, everything that his delivery lacks in *form* is richly replaced by the excellence of the *content*.¹⁷

Four years earlier, Joachim Christian Friedrich Schulz passed through Königsberg on the way to Mitau, where he had accepted a position as professor of history at the *Academia Petrina*. Schulz was a popular author of his day, publishing an astonishing quantity of novels, translations, and travelogues. Born in Magdeburg, his travels took him to Paris, northern Italy, Vienna, Dresden, Weimar, Berlin, Warsaw, Königsberg, and finally Mitau, the capital of Courland (now known as Jelgava, Latvia). He published valuable accounts of revolutionary Paris and of the political maneuverings in Warsaw leading up to the second partitioning of Poland.

In Schulz's obituary published in Friedrich Schlichtegroll's *Nekrolog auf das Jahr 1797*,¹⁸ we find on pp. 126–130 a long passage where the author quotes from an account of Schulz's travels from Berlin to Mitau. This account was given in a letter posted from Königsberg and claimed to have been from early 1791; from another source we know Schulz began teaching in January of that year. A selection of Schulz's letters have since been published¹⁹ that includes the relevant letter, dated 13 January 1791, and that was sent to a close friend of Schulz's living in Weimar, the musician and author J. J. C. Bode (1730–1793).

series of “letters” explaining Kant's new critical philosophy, and of which Kant was most appreciative.

¹⁷ Reprinted in Malter (1990), 418f.

¹⁸ Adolf Heinrich Friedrich Schlichtegroll (1765–1822) founded and edited the *Nekrolog der Deutschen* (34 vols., 1790–1806), perhaps the most important collection of obituaries – some short, others book-length – for the German speaking world of its day and often serving as the first available biography of its subjects; Mozart's obituary is perhaps the most famous from this series. The Schulz obituary begins with a footnote thanking “Herr D. E. R. Böttiger in Weimar” for the materials used in the essay. There are several compelling reasons to think this refers to Karl August Böttiger (1760–1835). First, he knew Schulz well. Second, he was actively seeking an outlet for an obituary of Schulz; in a letter of 7 December 1798 to Johann Friedrich Cotta, the publisher of a leading daily newspaper, the *Allgemeine Zeitung*, Böttiger wrote: “The [Schulz] obituary would surely become a thoroughly enticing article in your newspaper.” Third and finally, the relevant letter to Bode that is quoted in the obituary is part of Böttiger's *Nachlaß* (in the Sächsische Landesbibliothek – Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Dresden).

¹⁹ Friedrich Schulz, *Briefe*. Edited by Gerhard Kosellek. Aisthesis Verlag 2001, 123–125.

The trip to Mitau first brought Schulz to Königsberg, a six day journey from Berlin that required him to travel by night as well, and through territory he often found unsettling – thick forests infested with hungry wolves and questionable humans.

While in Königsberg (January 8–14), Schulz visited Kant, Hippel, Kraus, and others. Kant was almost sixty-seven at the time. The *Critique of Judgment* had been published the previous spring, and Kant was currently lecturing on metaphysics and anthropology to overflowing classrooms (and would continue to teach another five years). Johann Gottlieb Fichte would meet Kant for the first time the following summer and remark in his diary that “he seems sleepy.” What follows is the selection from Schulz’s letter (in English translation, followed by the original German):²⁰

Kant, the matador of heads here and elsewhere, drew my greatest attention, as you might well imagine, and I am happy to be able to assure you that my expectations of him as a person were exceeded.²¹ His exterior presents the image of a good, honest watchmaker, who has retired. A small, flat wig with a very small, three-cornered toupee, that looks like the small gable of a little house, with three curls set in a triangle, and a flat hair-bag that is too large for the little wig, covers this great head. In spite of his age, his eyes are still quite lively. His color is somewhat of a forced red, and his nose somewhat artificially blue-red with little copper dots. The hair peeking out from under the wig in back is snow white,²² likewise his narrow eyebrows. He is small from nature, withered, hunched, with his head bent forward. He mumbles²³ through his teeth when he speaks. But what he says is thought out. I have never met a man who could speak about so much, and with such precision, and be able to say something new. Thus he speaks about matters of poetry as about philosophy, about politics as about economics, with the craftsman as with the scholar – it is all the same for him. This is why he is so sought after in society here, or rather used to be sought, for he has lately drawn back a bit, as he is beginning to feel his age. But he is still generally treasured and loved, and this circumstance is all the more praiseworthy for him since he is a native of Königsberg and, according to the rule, should be treated indifferently as a prophet in his own land, especially since one knows that he is the son of very poor parents, and had been able to study only with the financial help of an honorable shoemaker.²⁴ Other than that, he lives in his small house

²⁰ I follow the new transcription provided in Kosellek (2001), but also note any significant deviations from the Schlichtegroll transcription. Words written in Latin characters in the original are here *italicized*, words underlined in the original are here underlined, too. Text omitted from the Schlichtegroll obituary from near the end of the descriptions of Hippel and Kraus is enclosed in square brackets. I thank Ingrid Rogers for her many helpful comments and suggestions with the English translation here and elsewhere in this essay.

²¹ Schulz expressed a similar sentiment in a letter to the publisher Johann Friedrich Vieweg sent on January 8: “Kant exceeded my expectations, and these were already as great as one might possibly have” (Kosellek 2001, 118).

²² German: *schloßweiß*: The *Brockhaus Wabrig* dictionary treats ‘*schloßweiß*’ as an antiquated form of ‘*schlohweiß*’, which it defines as “completely white” or “snow white” (especially regarding the hair of older people). Karl Vorländer reports that the lock of Kant’s hair given to Wasianski was still blonde (*Immanuel Kant: Der Mann und das Werk*, 2 vols., Leipzig, 1924, vol. 2, 127); Jachmann refers to Kant’s hair as silver (1912, 199).

²³ German: *nüsselt*.

²⁴ This “honorable shoemaker” was a man by the name of Richter, a master shoemaker and uncle to Kant’s mother. Kant’s mother had died on 18 December 1737 and his father died

on a side street.²⁵ Inwardly and outwardly he displays the highest philosophical frugality, and there is no sign of painted walls, of busts, and the like.²⁶ He is not married, and lives out his quiet life with an old man-servant and a female cook who is just as old.²⁷ His coat is of a light brown color,²⁸ with very small mother-of-pearl buttons²⁹ that button all the way down. His boots, from which he does not part, are so-called lace-up boots,³⁰ with flaps that he pulls up over his knees. There you have him, in the flesh. I spent the largest part of my stay here with him, and it was very pleasant and informative. The entire turn of his mind is to electrify others, even in casual conversation. One cannot talk to him about the least thing without him pointing out some new side or view of the matter. He is one of the people I would like to have sit for a portrait of honesty, were I ever to have one painted. I could find not the slightest trace of pretension within him, but instead he seemed wholly unaware of a great many of his advantages and characteristics.

on 24 March 1746, when Kant's youngest sibling, Johann, was only eleven. The brother, and possibly a younger sister as well, moved in with Richter, and Kant left Königsberg to work as a private tutor. Borowski claims that Richter also helped with the publishing costs of Kant's first book, *Living Forces* (1749; reprinted at AA 01: 3–181) and Heilsberg recounts that he paid the fee (50 rthl.) for Kant's magister degree. Cf. Borowski (1912), 23f.; Friedrich Theodor Rink: *Ansichten aus Immanuel Kant's Leben*. Königsberg 1805, 31; Rudolf Reicke: *Kantiana. Beiträge zu Immanuel Kants Leben und Schriften*. Königsberg 1860, 48; and Vorländer (1924), vol. 1, 61–65.

²⁵ This was Kant's first and only house (Address: 87–88 Prinzessinstraße), purchased near the end of 1783 and occupied no later than May 1784. The previous occupant was the widow of Johann Gottlieb Becker, who painted the portrait (1768) of Kant that hung in Kanter's book shop.

²⁶ Schulz may not have noticed the engraving of Rousseau that hung above Kant's writing desk in his study, or perhaps he never entered the study.

²⁷ The servant, Martin Lampe (1734–1806), was a retired soldier from Würzburg, and had been employed by Kant since 1762 (thus, quite early in Kant's career as a lecturer, and well before he owned his own home); he was dismissed in 1802 because of his excessive drinking. The cook (Louise Nitzchen) had an apartment on the first floor, opposite the lecture hall and next to the kitchen.

²⁸ The phrase in Schlichtegroll is “*von heller Karmelitfarbe*”. Zedler's *Universal-Lexicon* (1732–50) notes, in the entry on the ‘Carmeliter-Orden’, that the Carmelite monks had begun with white habits, but later adopted the brown habit of the Franciscans. It is perhaps this brown – or rather a lighter version of it – that Schulz has in mind, and is a color that Kant is often depicted and reported as wearing (see also Döbler's painting of 1791). Kosellek reads “*von heller Karmesinfarbe*,” or light carmine red – a less obscure color reference, and characteristic of Kant's coat as shown in the paintings by Becker (1768) and Loewe (1784).

²⁹ All known paintings of Kant show a coat with cloth buttons, although the Häbler silhouette of 1788 depicts a row of very small buttons down the front of the coat.

³⁰ German: *Schnierstiefel*, or *Schnürstiefel*, readily understood to be boots that one laced-up, rather than merely pulled on (Grimms *Wörterbuch*: “kurzer Stiefel, der geschnürt wird”). The description is puzzling insofar as these boots would not be so high that one could pull their flaps over the knee, nor is there any other indication of Kant wearing boots. Only two contemporary visual representations include his feet: the drawings by Johann Gottlieb Puttrich (1793) and Carl Gottfried Hagemann (1801). The latter drawing is unclear, but the former clearly depicts shoes with buckles.

The privy councillor von *Hippel*³¹ betrays what he is almost from the first glance: a *capable man*.³² He started out quite small and, after this beginning, became quite large. He combines three very profitable positions³³ in one person and maintains, after the local fashion, a good house, is a splendid host, and a fine man. He is tall and has strong, masculine features that betray a certain firmness and steadfastness, but also an openness – which however, everything considered, is not at all open, for which reason it is all the more effective. He also is not married, and therefore gets by, [as best he can, with mistresses in and out of the house, for which they are also said to steal diligently from him, and of which, even as chief of police, he must remain quiet – as is natural and proper. He does not give his children over to the foundling house because – there isn't one here. One eats well at his house, but one drinks even better.]

Professor *Kraus* is a very excellent mind, but known only here and in the *Literature* at Jena. For the latter he writes splendid reviews, which you have certainly already seen in the *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung*, in the area of statistics.³⁴ He also seems to have little sense of his good mind, studies himself hypochondriacally and studies everything, like *Kant*, and is also nearly as learned and entertaining. He is a sworn enemy of all affectation and puffery [and therefore cannot stand, e.g., philosophers like Herder³⁵ or the natives of Courland. He gave quite apt descriptions of the former as well as the latter, of which, however, the first was not new for me, and the latter may not be so bad. On this point, I told him, his philosophical head was deserting him, for in the end one is forced to put up with all that there is in the world, to the extent one lives in it].

³¹ Theodor Gottlieb von Hippel (1741–1796) was, according to Wannowski, Kant's "most grateful student, and later his closest friend" (as qtd. in Reicke 1860, 40). Born in Gerdauen, Hippel spent most of his adult life in Königsberg, where he entered the university (27 June 1756) with the intention of studying theology, changing later to law, and attended Kant's lectures during the summer semester 1758 and winter semester 1758/59. After university he worked as a private tutor, including in the home of Baron von Schrötter, traveled to St. Petersburg, returned to Königsberg to study law (1762–1765), and then worked there as a lawyer and in various governmental capacities, eventually serving as mayor (1786–1796). Hippel's life was filled with many secrets, including a great many anonymously published works of fiction. Best known is his play *Der Mann nach der Uhr, oder der ordentliche Mann* (Königsberg: Kanter, 1765). His four-volume *Lebensläufe nach aufsteigender Linie nebst Beylagen A, B, C* (1778–1781) contains passages that seem to come straight out of Kant's lectures; his book on marriage (1774) also bore a Kantian cast, and rumors spread that Kant was actually the author of these works, leading him eventually to publish a disclaimer (6 Dec 1796). Hippel had died earlier that year (23 April 1796) at the age of fifty-five, a day after his friend Kant's 72nd birthday.

³² French: *homme habile*.

³³ Hippel was at that time one of the most politically influential men in Königsberg. The 1784 *Address-Calender vom Königreich Preussen* lists him as the acting mayor (*Oberbürgermeister*), becoming officially the mayor in 1786 and retaining that office for life, as well as being the director of police (*Policy- und Criminal-Director*), a *Kriegsrath*, a judge (*Hof-Halsrichter*), and now also a privy councillor (*Geheimrath*).

³⁴ The author of the *Nekrolog* adds a footnote questioning this point, suggesting that what is meant here is philosophy, since Kraus was the full professor of practical philosophy; but Kraus lectured regularly on statistics, beginning with his second semester (winter semester 1781/82). See also note 12, above.

³⁵ Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803), a former student of Kant's and a native of nearby Mohrungen, was pastor of the city church in Weimar and a figure of considerable consequence.

German:³⁶

Kant, der Matador der hiesigen und vieler andern Köpfe, zog, wie Sie denken können, meine größte Aufmerksamkeit auf sich und ich freue mich, Ihnen versichern zu können, daß meine Erwartungen von ihm, als Mensch [127] übertroffen worden sind. Sein Aeußeres giebt den Anblick eines guten ehrlichen Uhrmachers, der sich zur Ruhe gesetzt hat. Eine kleine kahle Perücke mit einem ganz kleinen dreyeckigten Toupet, das wie der kleine Giebel an einem kleinen Hause aussieht, mit drey Lokken, in einen Triangle gestellt, und einem platten, aber größern Haarbeutel, als er eigentlich zu der kleinen Perücke paßt, bedeckt diesen großen Kopf. Seine Augen sind, seines Alters ungeachtet, noch ziemlich munter. Seine Farbe ist etwas gezwungen roth, und seine Nase etwas künstlich-blauroth, mit kleinen Kupferpünktchen. Sein Haar, das unter der Perücke hinten herausieht, ist schloßenweis, und eben so seine dünnen Augen Brauen. Von Natur ist er klein, dünne, gekrümmt, mit vorgesenktem Halse. Beym Sprechen nüsselt er über die Zähne. Aber was er spricht, ist gedacht. Mir ist nie ein Mann vorgekommen, der so über Alles sprechen, und mit soviel Präzision und so neu, sprechen könnte. So spricht er über Gegenstände der Dichtkunst wie über Philosophie, über Politik, wie über Oekonomie, mit dem Handwerker wie mit dem Gelehrten, alles ist ihm gleich. Daher kommt, daß er von [128] den hiesigen Societäten sehr gesucht wird, oder vielmehr gesucht *wurde*, denn seit einiger Zeit, wo er das Alter immer schwerer zu fühlen anfängt, hat er sich mehr zurück gezogen. Aber er ist immer noch allgemein geschätzt und geliebt,³⁷ und dieser Umstand ist für ihn um so rühmlicher, da³⁸ er ein geborener Königsberger ist, und, nach der Regel, als Prophet in seinem Vaterlande gleichgültig behandelt werden sollte, zumal da man weiß, daß er der Sohn sehr armer Aeltern ist und von einem ehrlichem Schuhmacher soviel bekommen hat, daß er studiren konnte.

Uebrigens wohnt er in seinem kleinen Hause in einer abgelegenen Straße. Inwendig und auswendig³⁹ zeigt sich allerhöchste philosophische Frugalität, und an gemalte Wände, an Büsten u. dgl. ist nicht gedacht. Er ist nicht verheyrathet, und lebt mit einem alten Bedienten und einer eben so alten Köchin sein stilles Leben fort. Sein Leibrock ist von heller Karmesin-farbe,⁴⁰ mit ganz kleinen Perlemutterknöpfen, den er bis nach unten zuknöpft. Seine Stiefeln, von denen er sich nicht trennt, sind sogenannte Schnierstiefeln, mit Laschen, die er bis über die Knie heraufzieht. So haben Sie ihn, wie er leibt und lebt. Ich habe [129] den größten Theil meines hiesigen Aufenthaltes bey ihm zugebracht, und sehr angenehm und lehrreich. Die ganze Wendung seines Geistes ist dazu gemacht, andere, selbst im Umgange, zu elektrisieren. Man kann mit ihm nicht über den geringsten Gegenstand sprechen, ohne daß sich nicht daraus neue Seiten und Aussichten hervorthäten. Auch ist er einer von den Menschen, die ich zu einem Bilde der Ehrlichkeit sitzen lassen würde, wenn ich sie einmal gemahlt haben wollte. Von Präntension habe ich nicht die mindeste Spur bey ihm gefunden, aber wohl, daß er von einer Menge seiner Vorzüge und Eigenthümlichkeiten gar nichts weis.

Der Geh. Rath v. *Hippel* verräth, fast auf den ersten Blick, was er ist: einen *homme habile*. Er hat sehr klein angefangen und ist, nach diesem Anfange, sehr groß geworden. Er verbindet drey sehr einträgliche Stellen in Einer Person, macht ein, nach hiesiger Art, gutes Haus, ist ein splendorer Wirth, und ein feiner Mann. Er ist groß und hat starke, männliche Züge, die eine gewisse Festigkeit und Beharrlichkeit, auch eine Offenheit, verrathen, die aber, alles zusammengekommen, so gar offen nicht ist, aber darum destoweniger ihrer Wir-[130] kung verfehlt. Er ist auch nicht verheyrathet und behilft sich [also, wie er kann, mit Mätressen innen und außer dem Hause, wofür sie ihn auch fleißig bestehlen sollen, wozu er aber, selbst als Chef der Polizey, schweigen muß – wie natürlich und billig. Seine Kinder

³⁶ From the obituary of J. C. F. Schulz in Friedrich Schlichtegroll: *Nekrolog auf das Jahr 1797*. Gotha 1801, vol. 8, pt. 2, 115–144, and amended by Kosellek (2001). I have retained Schlichtegroll's pagination.

³⁷ Schlichtegroll: *beliebt*.

³⁸ Schlichtegroll: *als*.

³⁹ Schlichtegroll: *Auswendig und inwendig*.

⁴⁰ Schlichtegroll: *Karmelitfarbe*. See note 28, above.

giebt er indessen nicht ins Findelhaus, weil – keins hier ist. Man ißt gut bey ihm, trinkt aber noch besser.]

Der Prof. *Krause* ist ein sehr ausgezeichnete Kopf, aber nur hier und in der *Literatur* zu Jena bekannt. Denn für diese macht er die trefflichen Recensionen, die Sie gewiß zuweilen im Fache der Statistik in der *Literatur-Zeitung* ausgezeichnet haben werden. Auch er scheint von seinem guten Kopfe wenig zu wissen, studirt sich hypochondrisch und studirt Alles, wie *Kant*, ist auch fast eben so lehrreich und unterhaltend. Er ist ein geschworener Feind all Ziererey und Windbeuteley [und kann deßhalb z.B. Philosophen wie Herder und die Kurländer nicht leiden. Von Jenem wie von diesen hat er mir sehr treffende Schilderung gemacht, wovon aber die erste mir nicht neu war und die letzte so schlimm nicht seyn wird. In diesem Punkt, habe ich ihm gesagt, verliefse ihn sein philosophischer Kopf, denn man sey doch gezwungen Ein: für Allemal Alles in der Welt zu leiden, was darin wäre, sobald man mit ihr lebt.]⁴¹

⁴¹ I thank the Fulbright-Kommission for partial funding while preparing this account, and I thank Werner Stark and Anke Lindemann-Stark for their many helpful suggestions.