

**Karl Friedrich Bahrdt (1740-92):
Pietism, Enlightenment, and the Autonomous Self
in Early Modern Germany**

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This study represents an early stage in my new research project on “Making the Modern Self, 1700 to 1790,” an attempt to integrate religious experience and autobiography with a discussion of the rise of modern individualism in the West. My plan is to examine hundreds of autobiographies composed by German Pietist and Enlightenment figures, considering the cultural conditions and experiences they embody and the mutual influences between these two traditions. The point of departure is the challenge posed by Jane Shaw: there is a need to consider the possibility that “religious practice and religious experience played a part in the formation of the rational self.”¹

The project will employ a cultural-historical approach, represented by scholars such as Jürgen Habermas, Roy Porter, Michel de Certeau, and Richard van Dülman. They point to the importance of cultural-historical considerations, setting literary forms in their cultural setting by searching for cultural conditions that make specific notions of individuality and specific forms of writing possible and plausible. Pietist and Enlightenment autobiographies express the kind of individual made possible by the cultural and social terms in which the authors lived and worked. A proper method must balance historical context and textual evidence.² This involves three steps: first, considering the socio-historical conditions of personal autonomy and autobiography. In what ways did German society provide individuals with resources and education; with opportunities for

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choice about occupation, spouse, and religious affiliation; and contexts in which critical reflection could take place? Second, one needs to examine Pietist and Enlightenment autobiographies, looking for “how early modern notions of the [autonomous] self appear in life-writing.”³ Third, one must compare Pietist and Enlightenment autobiographies in terms of the autonomous self and in terms of mutual influence. Was the earliest instance of inner freedom and autonomy found in religious forms of German autobiography?⁴

The present study will focus on Karl Friedrich Bahrdt (1740-1792), a Leipzig clergyman’s son, who, as a young man, identified with Lutheran Pietism. In the course of his life he experimented with a wide range of theological outlooks, eventually coming to doubt most of the tenets of Christianity, yet never leaving the Lutheran Church. Bahrdt attracted controversy throughout his life; he was a true outsider, the *enfant terrible* of the German Enlightenment. He was a man of contradictions: at once gifted, passionate, and prone to stirring up the passions of others, but also superficial, addicted to argument, and morally unstable.⁵ In Halle he was wildly popular as a docent in philosophy (1779-86), attracting up to 900 students to his lectures. Three times he lost university positions because of his shocking behaviour and views.⁶ Bahrdt published 140 works, including a *Life History of our Lord Jesus Christ* in 1772, a translation of the New Testament in 1774, and an eleven-volume *Explanation of the Plan and Aim of Jesus* (1784-92).⁷ Bahrdt presented Jesus as a member of the Essene community, commissioned by them to help rid the Jewish people of their literal understanding of a national Messiah. The miracles, death, and resurrection of Jesus were all clever theatrics to help lead the people to a higher spiritual understanding.⁸ Bahrdt’s *On Freedom of the Press and its Limits* (1787) was a founding document of the new liberal tradition of natural law and established him as a key figure in German liberalism.⁹ Günter Mühlhfordt, the leading scholar on Bahrdt, offered the following estimate of Bahrdt’s importance:

[Karl Friedrich Bahrdt] created the oldest adult education program, was the founder of higher education for women, an advocate of women’s emancipation, an engaged social-political thinker, father of social democratic programs, an early protector of the environment. Bahrdt was a German patriot . . . and champion of German unity, a proud European and world citizen, supporter of European cooperation and unity and defender of the brotherhood of all humanity . . . Bahrdt was the first to publish books that included in their titles the ideas of

“Enlightenment” and “Human rights.”¹⁰

In 1989 a German newspaper celebrated Bahrdt’s “astonishing life and thought,” referring to him as a “theologian, poet, cook, friend to women, and radical Democrat.”¹¹ The most successful and well-known figure of the eighteenth-century German Enlightenment, Bahrdt and his writings represent “an invaluable cultural-historical source.”¹² Yet he has been ignored almost entirely by English-language scholarship.¹³

This study first examines the work of Jürgen Habermas on the social-historical context of personal autonomy; it then considers Bahrdt’s family life, education, social setting, and religious practice and experience and the part they played in forming his rational, Enlightenment self; finally, it looks for ways in which Bahrdt’s autobiography expresses a growing sense of personal freedom and autonomy in his intellectual and religious life.

Jürgen Habermas on the Context of Personal Autonomy

Jürgen Habermas is a prominent scholar in the field of modern notions of personal freedom and autonomy; his groundbreaking study, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, first appeared in English in 1989.¹⁴ Habermas speaks of the social-historical development and context of personal autonomy: “autonomy emerges as a result of contingent historical processes, both within the life history of the individual and within the development of societies, in processes of modernization.” Personal autonomy is nurtured in a social setting, in interaction with others.¹⁵

Our ability to be personally autonomous, in Habermas’s sense, depends on how we are raised, on the culture that frames our choices, and the institutional guarantees that facilitate choosing and leading an autonomous life. These factors include opportunities for education and for critical reflection and self-determination. Authentic selfhood and autonomy have a performative dimension that involves “vouching for oneself,” demanding recognition from others, taking responsibility for one’s life, and justifying one’s choices to others.¹⁶ The Enlightenment freed autonomous individuals to undertake something “new, unique, and unpredictable.”¹⁷

Habermas describes the conditions in which individual freedom came about in the early European Enlightenment, beginning with the

family and moving out into circles of social discourse. A new, modern notion of family is evident from the layout of middle-class homes built in continental Europe in the eighteenth century:

In the newly built houses certain architectural innovations were undertaken . . . In modern, urban private homes all rooms intended to serve “the whole house” are reduced to the minimum . . . In these houses the “family room,” which serves as a common space for husband, wife, children, and servants, has become smaller or has disappeared altogether. On the other hand, the private rooms of individual family members become more numerous and distinctive in their furnishings. The isolation [*Vereinsamung*] of family members is a priority in the layout of the house.¹⁸

The notion of private autonomy becomes “self-conscious” within the family itself. The family was a kind of “training ground” for the growth of the private individual and his or her critical reflections. Personal autonomy was expressed in terms of freedom to act, think, and develop one’s mind and abilities in a setting of family love. In this setting, the individual “unfolded himself in his subjectivity” through letter writing.¹⁹ The eighteenth century has been called “the century of the letter.”²⁰ The highest density of correspondence networks was in northern Germany, in centres of the book trade, especially in Saxony.

The most important room in middle-class homes was allocated to a new kind of space: the salon. The salon did not really serve the family at all; it was a public space for entertaining “society.” Salons become a place where individuals gathered to discuss what they had been reading; they also provided opportunity for literary and political discussions and debates. Soon coffeehouses, book clubs, reading circles, letter writing, newspapers, journals, and subscription libraries supplemented the salon.²¹ This period of cultural life in Germany was “the sociable century,” as middle-class Germans participated in coffee shops, pubs, reading societies, and Masonic lodges.²² Late seventeenth and eighteenth-century Leipzig was the centre of this German Baroque culture. With its flourishing trade and manufacture, wealthy merchants and governing elites dominated Leipzig and it was known for its consumption, wealth, lavish homes, and architecture. Coffee and tobacco consumption were associated with social gatherings in homes and coffee houses.²³

The setting for realizing human autonomy was the free exchange of ideas in the public sphere. Habermas believes that “the public sphere can

be most effectively constituted and maintained through dialogue, acts of speech, through debate and discussion. Public debate can be animated by ‘opinion-forming associations’ – voluntary associations, social organizations, churches, sports clubs, groups of concerned citizens, grassroots movements, trade unions – to counter or refashion the messages of authority.”²⁴ Habermas distinguished between the *literary* public sphere and the *political* public sphere. Historians have yet to produce an alternative to Habermas’s master narrative.²⁵

Bahrtdt’s Context: Family Life, Education, Social Setting, and Opportunities for Choice

Karl Friedrich Bahrtdt’s family life and upbringing, his education at the University of Leipzig, and the forms of sociability in eighteenth-century Leipzig, provided him with resources and opportunities for personal autonomy and the freedom to act and think in matters of faith and life. Bahrtdt was the eldest son of Johann Friedrich Bahrtdt (1713-75), Lutheran Pastor, Superintendent, theology professor at the University of Leipzig, and one of the greatest preachers of his day.²⁶ Bahrtdt joined two other leading figures of the German Enlightenment who came from the homes of Leipzig professors, Christian Thomasius and Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz.²⁷

The young Karl was a precocious lad whose early education was neglected by his father. His tutors often suffered from his pranks and taunts. Bahrtdt began his studies at the University of Leipzig in 1756, at just fifteen years of age. He later recalled how he entered upon a “new and dangerous world.” “I was left completely to myself and was supported neither by my father, who was always overwhelmed by his work, nor by a wise friend.” Bahrtdt pursued his studies “without rule or plan.” Everything was left to his own resources: it all depended upon “my good head and my good will.”²⁸ He had great ambitions and intentions and vowed to be conscientious, but irresponsibility often won out. Bahrtdt reflected that the best thing his father did for him was to be miserly in the pocket money he gave him. “With regard to pocket money, I was perhaps the poorest student in all of Leipzig.”²⁹ His fantasies were as meager as his pocketbook. He had no choice but to refrain from the unwholesome activities of his friends.

His father suggested that Karl concentrate upon philosophical studies and that he attend lectures by Leipzig professor of philosophy and

theology, Christian August Crusius (1712-75), an opponent of the Enlightenment thought of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz. Crusius defended freedom of the will against philosophical determinism. He taught that the highest goal of God's creation is the existence of beings that exercise free decision-making. Crusius argued for the compatibility of human freedom and divine providence in a way that reflected the influence of Calvin and the Pietist movement.³⁰

Thanks to Crusius' Leipzig lectures, Bahrdt gained a foundation in philosophical thought and argument. For Bahrdt, Crusius represented the embodiment of clear thinking and thorough analysis of terms and ideas. From his example, Bahrdt learned skills of analysis, logical proof, and proper arrangement of thoughts and arguments. Bahrdt also imbibed Crusius' Pietist theology, including his notions concerning the coming conversion of the Jews, the identity of the Pope in Rome as the Antichrist and ten-headed beast of Revelation, and the coming thousand-year kingdom of Christ. Crusius, Bahrdt later reflected, was the first instance he encountered of a man who combined a thorough philosophical mind with "the silliest notions in matters of religion."³¹ Thanks to him, Bahrdt's mind was a mixture of reason and unreason, of Enlightenment thought and radical religious ideas. When his father challenged some of Crusius' teachings, Bahrdt defended them with heated arguments.³² Crusius sought to infuse his "religiosity" into Bahrdt, admonishing him to keep God ever in his thoughts and to bring all his desires to God in prayer. As a young student, Bahrdt promised God that he would pray for a half hour every morning and evening. He was confident that, through prayer, he could rid himself of carelessness, become more disciplined in his work, and suppress his sexual appetites.³³ Bahrdt spent thirteen years in the university setting in Leipzig, from 1756 to 1768, as student and then as lecturer in philosophy and biblical languages.³⁴

Bahrdt was a social being of a high order. Conversation and correspondence were the key avenues of his self-expression. A contemporary described him as "a coffee animal" [*Caffetier*].³⁵ In Halle Bahrdt became an innkeeper and the centre of conversation among patrons, students, and admirers. In 1787 he established a Freemason Society known as the German Union [*Deutsche Union*], through which he promoted the free exchange of ideas in a network of correspondents.³⁶ At one point the Society included over 500 members, from all parts of Germany and from all social classes.³⁷

To sum up: Karl Friedrich Bahrdt was clearly the poster child of the

new literary public space and the new culture of personal autonomy. His family life and education nurtured both his self-confidence and aptitude for argument and self-display. He honed his argumentative mind in debates with his father and in university disputations, and he found an outlet in correspondence with members of the German Union. His religiosity in his university years was entirely subjective. Reliance on the Holy Spirit and prayer represented the “highest worship” and the extent of his duty before God.³⁸

Bahrtdt’s Autobiography: How a Modern Autonomous Self Appears in his Life-Writing

Bahrtdt published two autobiographical works near the end of his life: an account of his imprisonment in 1789 and a fuller autobiography in 1790-91, shortly before his death.³⁹ His *History of my Life, Opinions, and Destiny* appeared in four parts, totaling 1,460 pages. The first part of the autobiography is devoted to the growth of his character and the main influences in his early life. The second part describes his experiences in Erfurt, Gießen, and Graubünden. The third part includes his activities in the Palatinate, around the cities of Mannheim and Heidelberg, as well as his trip to England. Part four deals with his experiences in Halle after 1779, including publication of his satirical comedy *The Edict of Religion* in 1788 and resulting imprisonment for fifteen months in the fortress at Magdeburg.⁴⁰ Two main threads run through his life story: his encounters with a great variety of people over the course of his life – men, women, friends, enemies, scholars, and uneducated – and his intellectual development, including changes in his religious outlook.⁴¹

Bahrtdt’s tendency to “psychological self-investigation” [*einer psychologischen Ich-Erforschung*] calls to mind the *Confessions* of Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1782), published less than ten years earlier. Bahrtdt wrote in his Preface:

If you dear readers would like to know my story in precise detail and to look into the most secret recesses of my heart and the smallest circumstances of my dealings and experiences, then be assured that here you will find me in my pure, natural self . . . I am taking up the pen in order to present to you dear readers a proper portrait of my famous or, as some will rather say, my notorious person.⁴²

Katrin Löffler suggests that Rousseau’s influence upon Bahrtdt is evident

in three ways: in Bahrdt's self-analysis of his temperament and character, in the tone of self-justification before a critical world, and in the explicit description of his sexual experiences.⁴³ Of special interest to this study are Bahrdt's references to his intellectual development, including changes in his religious outlook and his self-analysis of his temperament and character and what they reveal about his growing sense of personal autonomy in his intellectual and religious life.

Bahrdt's autobiography describes in detail how he moved away from the Pietist inclinations of his youth, how his soul "was healed of the *Schwärmerei* [radical religious ideas] with which Crusius had so completely infected [him]," and how he eventually became a true child of the Enlightenment.⁴⁴ He likened this change to the breakthrough and conversion of which the Pietists spoke:

Many Pietists maintain that a person should be able to state the hour and moment of their conversion . . . when, after a long battle, finally the light of grace suddenly breaks through. I can also state the moment of my "conversion," according to my own meaning of the term. For I know precisely the hour when the light of my reason tore open the hard crust of my rigid faith . . . so that the new-born child of the Enlightenment could grow little by little and gradually become a mature man.⁴⁵

A Leipzig schoolteacher by the name of Topf persuaded Bahrdt to attend the lectures of Professor Fischer on Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians, chapters two and three. Bahrdt was astounded by how different Fischer's approach to scripture was from that of Crusius: "It was not the diet to which I was accustomed." Fischer lectured on grammar and the use of language and customs in contemporary authors, and explained the apostle's meaning against this background and context. In explaining what it meant to be of one mind, he made reference to the unity of the godhead in I John 5:7, with the passing remark, "if the text is even genuine."⁴⁶ The comment hit Bahrdt like a thunderbolt. It was his introduction to Biblical criticism. The result for Bahrdt was a loss of confidence in the biblical text as a basis for theological argument and a loss of confidence in the deity of Christ. From this point on he said goodbye to Crusius and devoted himself to studying history and the biblical languages, determined to base his theology upon the best linguistic evidence available.⁴⁷ At this point, writes Bahrdt, his conversion was complete:

Once a person has decided to test the Church's theology against the touchstone of reason and philology, he can no longer hold on to his faith, but is already on the path to unbelief. But my way was long and tiresome. Only in my fortieth year did it reach completion.⁴⁸

Bahrtdt gained a sense of autonomy and empowerment that freed him to question and critique articles of the Lutheran faith.

While in Erfurt (1769-71), Bahrtdt conceived the idea of writing a new, purely biblical *Dogmatics* that would supersede all previous Protestant theologies. He would provide new German translations for his proof texts, dispense with traditional terminology, and interpret Scripture correctly.⁴⁹ During his years in Gießen (1771-75), when Bahrtdt had more time for writing and study, his "progress in Enlightenment" gained momentum. He became convinced that the Protestant confessions contained teachings that had no basis in Scripture or in reason, including the Lutheran doctrines concerning original sin – God's imputation of Adam's sin to all humankind; the need for satisfaction and a human sacrifice for sin; the work of the Holy Spirit as the only cause in bringing people to conversion; the justification of the sinner before God without regard for moral improvement; the divinity of Christ and the Holy Spirit as taught by Athanasius; and the doctrine of everlasting punishment in Hell. Bahrtdt thought it unreasonable and inhumane that non-Christians throughout the world should be judged for not believing in Jesus Christ. Such beliefs were responsible for the fact that thousands of Germans lived in unbelief.⁵⁰

While in Gießen, Bahrtdt spent two years studying the Bible in hopes of finding support for the Lutheran doctrine of Christ's substitutionary death as the basis of humanity's reconciliation and redemption from sin.⁵¹ He examined the "proof texts," using his newly acquired grammatical-historical method of interpretation. But as text after text proved inadequate and unconvincing, his anxiety increased. Nowhere could Bahrtdt find a passage that clearly stated that Christ bore the guilt and penalty of sin for humanity, that his suffering and death were imputed to believers along with his life of perfect obedience, as the Lutheran system taught. Bahrtdt struggled with pangs of conscience over his doubts as he recalled his father's instruction on the matter and his first communion. The doctrine had long been for Lutherans a source of great assurance and comfort. When an old friend arrived in Gießen, a man with a sharp mind and a reputation as a freethinker, Bahrtdt took the opportunity to discuss the matter with him. The friend suggested that it was foolish for Bahrtdt to

worry about anything beyond two fundamental questions: the existence of God and the immortality of the soul. The only law that relates to salvation is the law of love. Reconciliation with God comes through moral improvement. The only essential dogma is the eternal love of God.⁵²

Bahrdt continued to write critically concerning the Lutheran symbol books, challenging arbitrary theological notions and weak dogmatic proofs. In his 1779 *Confession of Faith*, Bahrdt declared: “As far as my faith is concerned, I am bound by no man’s authority, but have the right to test all things and to hold only to what I feel convinced of from the word of God.”⁵³ As a theology professor, said Bahrdt, he was obligated to test and question all of the Lutheran church’s teachings and to communicate the result of that examination for the good of Christian believers.

In terms of his temperament and character, Bahrdt reflected on his time as a student living at home in Leipzig. He observed in himself “a fiery and enterprising spirit” and a passion for freedom and independence. He saved up his small allowance for months until he had enough to rent a horse and head out with friends on a journey.⁵⁴ Three other features marked Bahrdt as a young man: vanity about his appearance, a quick temper, which he attributed to his father, and a boldness and self-confidence verging on impudence. His autobiography supplies a picture of him as an outgoing, talkative, and dominant personality in social gatherings:

In social settings I was the loudest and had a dogmatic opinion on every matter under discussion, whether I knew much about it or not. When I lacked evidence for my point of view, I would overwhelm my opponents with my wit.⁵⁵

Fluent and persuasive in speech, Bahrdt proved formidable in Latin disputations at the university with his combination of “wit and sophistry.” He gained renown as the most fearsome disputer in Leipzig and was feared by the other students. His skill served him well in completing his Master’s degree and in achieving his Habilitation – the right to give university lectures in philosophy.⁵⁶ Bahrdt recognized in himself the makings of an individual who had the talent and inclination to go his own way in the world.

Conclusion: Bahrdt’s Development of an Autonomous Self

Bahrdt’s family life and education nurtured both his self-confidence

and his literary aptitude for argument and self-display. He honed his argumentative mind in debates with his father, in disputations at the university, and in correspondence. Bahrtdt was clearly the poster child of the new literary public space and the new culture of personal autonomy. His religiosity during his university years was entirely subjective, a precursor to the autonomous reason of his later rational self. Bahrtdt admitted that he never read orthodox Lutheran theologians, even when he was giving lectures in theology.⁵⁷ The autobiography reveals how he gradually gained a sense of empowerment that freed him to use his reason to question and critique articles of the Lutheran faith. It seems that Bahrtdt provides an instance where “religious practice and religious experience played a part in the formation of the rational self.”

Endnotes

1. Jane Shaw, “Religious Experience and the Formation of the Early Enlightenment Self,” in *Rewriting the Self: Histories from the Renaissance to the Present*, ed. Roy Porter (London: Routledge, 1997), 62f.
2. Roy Porter, ed., *Rewriting the Self: Histories from the Renaissance to the Present* (London: Routledge, 1997); and Richard van Dülmen, *Die Entdeckung des Individuums 1500-1800*, 2. Auflage (Frankfurt: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 2002). They argue that autobiographies reveal new ways of constructing selfhood in response to cultural pressures.
3. Patrick Coleman, “Introduction,” in *Representations of the Self from the Renaissance to Romanticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2000).
4. Ralph-Rainer Wuthenow, *Das erinnerte Ich. Europäische Autobiographie und Selbstdarstellung im 18. Jahrhundert* (München: Verlag C.H. Beck, 1974), 212.
5. “Introduction to Carl Friedrich Bahrtdt’s *On Freedom of the Press and its Limits (1787)*,” in *Early French and German Defenses of Freedom of the Press. Elie Luzac’s Essay on Freedom of Expression (1749) and Carl Friedrich Bahrtdt’s On Freedom of the Press and its Limits (1787) in English Translation*, ed. John Christian Laursen and Johan van der Zande (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 92. Also see Bruno Sauer, “Bahrtdt, Carl Friedrich,” *Neue Deutsche Biographie* 1 (1953): 542f.
6. Bahrtdt divorced his wife in 1780 and began living with a servant girl. He bought a vineyard and the two of them ran an inn in Halle.

7. Karl Friedrich Bahrdt, *Die ganze Lebensgeschichte unseres Herrn Jesu Christi nach der Zeitordnung und einer ungezwungenen Harmonie aller vier Evangelien entworfen* (Leipzig, 1772); Karl Friedrich Bahrdt, *Ausführung des Plans und Zwecks Jesu in Briefen an wahrheitssuchende Leser* (Berlin: August Mylius, 1784-92). On Bahrdt and the historical Jesus, see Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, ed. John Bowden (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 37-42. For a bibliography of Bahrdt's writings and Bahrdt scholarship, see Otto Jacob and Ingrid Majewski, *Karl Friedrich Bahrdt, radikaler deutscher Aufklärer: Bibliographie* (Halle: Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Sachsen-Anhalt, 1992).
8. Arthur Drews, "Die Leugnung der Geschichtlichkeit Jesu in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart" (Karlsruhe 1926), at <http://www.radikalkritik.de/leugnung.htm#Die%20deutsche%20Leben-Jesu-Forschung%20vor%20Strau%DF>
9. "Introduction to Carl Friedrich Bahrdt's *On freedom of the press and its limits*," 95. Bahrdt was influenced by John Milton's *Areopagitica* (1644) and Spinoza's *Theological-Political Treatise* (1670).
10. Otto Jacob, "Karl Friedrich Bahrdt im Wandel des Urteils," in *Europa in der Frühen Neuzeit: Festschrift für Günter Mühlhölzer*, Bd. 2 *Frühmoderne*, ed. Erich Donnert (Weimar: Böhlau Verlag, 1997), 428f. In Halle Bahrdt ran a *Volkshochschule*, or adult education program, in the inn that he purchased. "1787 zog er sich auf ein kleines Weingut vor den Toren Halles zurück und betätigte sich als Berufsschriftsteller und Inhaber eines Kaffeehauses, das er zugleich als Stätte des freien Meinungs-austauschs u. Volks-hochschule nutzte." Michael Heymel, "Der Pfarrer als Komödiant," *Theologia Practica* 25 (1990): 98.
11. Ludger Lütkehaus, "Der konspirative Weinberg: Theologe und Dichter, Koch aus Leidenschaft, Freund der Frauen, radikaler Demokrat—das erstaunliche Leben und Denken des deutschen Aufklärers Carl Friedrich Bahrdt," *Die Zeit* 5 (27 January 1989): 52.
12. Hans-Ulrich Delius, "Der Prozeß gegen Dr. Karl Friedrich Bahrdt: aus einem bisher unbekanntem Aktenstück," *Jahrbuch für Berlin-Brandenburgische Kirchengeschichte* 55 (1985): 181.
13. John Christian Laursen and Johan van der Zande, "Introduction," in *The Edict of Religion. A Comedy and The Story and Diary of My Imprisonment*, ed. John Christian Laursen and Johan van der Zande (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2000), 9. For English scholarship on Bahrdt see Jonathan Sheehan, *The Enlightenment Bible* (Princeton: Princeton University, 2005), 139-47; and Sten Gunnar Flygt, *The Notorious Dr. Bahrdt* (Nashville: Vanderbilt

- University, 1963).
14. Jürgen Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit. Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerliche Gesellschaft* (Darmstadt/Neuwied: Hermann Luchterhand Verlag, 1962); Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989).
 15. Joel Anderson, "Autonomy, agency and the self," in *Jürgen Habermas: Key Concepts*, ed. Barbara Fultner (Durham, UK: Acumen, 2011), 102f; and Maeve Cooke, "Habermas, autonomy and the identity of the self," *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 18 (1992): 288.
 16. Anderson, "Autonomy, Agency and the Self," 104f, 109.
 17. Patchen Markell, "Contesting Consensus: Rereading Habermas on the Public Sphere," *Constellations* 3, no. 3 (1997): 377-400, especially 383.
 18. Jürgen Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit. Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerliche Gesellschaft, 15. Auflage* (Darmstadt: Hermann Luchterhand Verlag, 1984), 61f.
 19. Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*, 64-66.
 20. Helga Schultz, "Networks of Correspondence in the German Enlightenment," *Transactions of the Ninth International Congress on the Enlightenment* (1996): 420.
 21. Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*, 63-69.
 22. Laursen and van der Zande, "Introduction," 5, 7.
 23. By the 1680s Leipzig had regained its position as a major trade and distribution centre, second only to Hamburg. Its fairs, held three times a year, were larger and more successful than Frankfurt's and it became the leading German city for book publishing. See Tanya Kevorkian, *Baroque Piety: Religion, Society, and Music in Leipzig, 1650-1750* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2007), 16, 18-24; Reinhard Wittmann, *Geschichte des deutschen Buchhandels: ein Überblick*, (München: Beck, 1991); and Martin Gierl, *Pietismus und Aufklärung. Theologische Polemik und die Kommunikationsreform der Wissenschaft am Ende des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997), 358.
 24. Marshall Soules, "Jürgen Habermas and the Public Sphere" (2008): <http://records.viu.ca/~soules/media301/habermas.htm>

25. Andreas Gestrich, "The Public Sphere and the Habermas Debate," *German History* 24, no. 3 (2006): 413-30, especially 416 and 429f. Gestrich observes that "Since its first American edition in 1989, Jürgen Habermas's 1960 classic *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* has made a remarkable come-back and influenced both academic and political discussion of the topic worldwide. Historians, however, have been and still are skeptical about the validity of Habermas's master narrative on the causes of the transformation of the public sphere." To this point, "no convincing alternative to this master narrative has been found by historians, and many critics seem to be satisfied with the basic line of his argument."
26. Baldur Schyra, "Das Elternhaus Carl Friedrich Bahrds," in *Carl Friedrich Bahrdt (1740-1792)*, ed. Gerhard Sauder, Christoph Weiß (St. Ingbert: Werner J. Röhrig, 1992), 313; Günter Mühlpfordt, "1740, nicht 1741. Zu Bahrds Geburtsjahr," in *ibid.*, 291. For a recent Bahrdt biography, see Thomas K. Kuhn, "Carl Friedrich Bahrdt, Provokativer Aufklärer und philanthropischer Pädagoge," in *Theologen des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts: konfessionelles Zeitalter - Pietismus - Aufklärung*, ed. Peter Walter and Martin Jung (Darmstadt: Wiss. Buchgesellschaft, 2003), 204-25.
27. Günter Mühlpfordt, "Karl Friedrich Bahrdt und die Radikale Aufklärung," *Jahrbuch des Instituts für Deutsche Geschichte* 5 (1976): 53.
28. *Carl Friedrich Bahrds Geschichte seines Lebens, seiner Meinungen und Schicksale. Von ihm selbst geschrieben, Erster Theil* (1790) in *Als Studiosus in Pleiß-Athen. Autobiographische Erinnerungen von Leipziger Studenten des 18. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Katrin Löffler (Leipzig: Lehmanns Verlag, 2009), 94.
29. "Ich behaupte, daß Eltern und Erzieher, was die Sache auch für kleine Unbequemlichkeiten haben mag, allemal größere Vortheile davon einnerndten würden, wenn sie ihre Zöglinge unter guter Aufsicht hielten, und ihnen dasjenige Geld, was man Taschengeld nennt, auf das alleräußerste einschränkten [parents would find it advantageous if they . . . restricted their children's pocket money in the extreme]." *Carl Friedrich Bahrds Geschichte seines Lebens*, 102f.
30. Ulrich L. Lehner, *Kants Vorsehungskonzept auf dem Hintergrund der deutschen Schulphilosophie und -theologie* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 102, 105.
31. *Dr. Carl Friedrich Bahrds Geschichte seines Lebens, Erster Theil*, 119.
32. *Carl Friedrich Bahrds Geschichte seines Lebens*, 95-98.
33. *Carl Friedrich Bahrds Geschichte seines Lebens*, 134.
34. Mühlpfordt, "Karl Friedrich Bahrdt und die Radikale Aufklärung," 52.

35. Thomas Hoeren, "Präjakobiner in Deutschland. Carl Friedrich Bahrdt (1741-1792)," *Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte* 47 (1995): 55-72, especially 55.
36. See Günter Mühlhfordt, "Kulturbriefe, Briefschriften, Briefbund," in *Briefe und Briefwechsel in Mittel- und Osteuropa im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert*, ed. Alexandru Dutu, Edgar Hösch and Norbert Oeller (Essen: Hobbing, 1989), 53-136.
37. Hoeren, "Präjakobiner in Deutschland," 65.
38. *Carl Friedrich Bahrdts Geschichte seines Lebens*, 134.
39. See Carl Friedrich Bahrdt, *The Edict of Religion: a Comedy and the Story and Diary of My Imprisonment (1789)*, trans. and ed. John Christian Laursen, Johan van der Zande (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2000); and Karl Friedrich Bahrdt, *Geschichte seines Lebens, seiner Meinungen und Schicksale*, 2 Bde., hrsg. v. Günter Mühlhfordt (Berlin 1790-91) (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: 1983).
40. The play was written to be read aloud in salons, reading circles, and inns. See Laursen and van der Zande, "Introduction," 5.
41. Hans-Werner Engels, "Beiträge und Bemerkungen zu Bahrdts Lebensbeschreibung," in *Carl Friedrich Bahrdt (1740-1792)*, 275, 279. Compared to other Enlightenment autobiographies such as those by Ulrich Bräker and Karl Philipp Moritz, Bahrdt's is relatively unknown.
42. Engels, "Beiträge und Bemerkungen zu Bahrdts Lebensbeschreibung," 279. See *Dr. Carl Friedrich Bahrdts Geschichte seines Lebens, Erster Theil*, 3f, 8.
43. Katrin Löffler, "Einleitung," in *Als Studiosus in Pleiß-Athen. Autobiographische Erinnerungen von Leipziger Studenten des 18. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Katrin Löffler (Leipzig: Lehmanns Verlag, 2009), 33f.
44. Karl Friedrich Bahrdt, *Dr. Carl Friedrich Bahrdts Geschichte seines Lebens, Erster Theil* (Frankfurt: Barrentrapp und Wenner, 1790), 188. Gert Röwenstrunk spoke of Karl Friedrich Bahrdt's "orthodoxe und pietistische Phase." See Gert Röwenstrunk, *Anfangsschwierigkeiten eines Rationalisten. Carl Friedrich Bahrdts orthodoxe und pietistische Phase* (Diss. theol., Heidelberg, 1977).
45. *Dr. Carl Friedrich Bahrdts Geschichte seines Lebens, Erster Theil*, 256f.
46. *Dr. Carl Friedrich Bahrdts Geschichte seines Lebens, Erster Theil*, 260-62.
47. *Dr. Carl Friedrich Bahrdts Geschichte seines Lebens, Erster Theil*, 268-79.

48. *Dr. Carl Friedrich Bahrdts Geschichte seines Lebens, Erster Theil*, 279f.
49. *Dr. Carl Friedrich Bahrdts Geschichte seines Lebens, Zweiter Theil*, 58f. See Karl Friedrich Bahrdt, *Vorschläge zur Aufklärung und Berichtigung des Lehrbegriffs unserer Kirche* (Riga, 1771).
50. Karl Friedrich Bahrdt, *Glaubensbekenntnis, veranlaßt durch ein kaiserliches Reichshofratsconclusum* (Halle, 1779), 9f, 20; and *Dr. Carl Friedrich Bahrdts Geschichte seines Lebens, Zweiter Theil*, 58-74.
51. *Dr. Carl Friedrich Bahrdts Geschichte seines Lebens, Zweiter Theil*, 199-222.
52. *Dr. Carl Friedrich Bahrdts Geschichte seines Lebens, Zweiter Theil*, 205-7, 221f.
53. Bahrdt, *Glaubensbekenntnis*, article 10.
54. *Dr. Carl Friedrich Bahrdts Geschichte seines Lebens, Erster Theil*, 159. "The perpetual monotony in my father's house, no matter how good I had it, left me discontented. My inner desire for freedom was too keen. The forced comforts of home left me dissatisfied. Only pleasures I chose for myself were appealing."
55. *Carl Friedrich Bahrdts Geschichte seines Lebens*, 108-12, 135.
56. *Carl Friedrich Bahrdts Geschichte seines Lebens*, 140f.
57. *Dr. Carl Friedrich Bahrdts Geschichte seines Lebens, Erster Theil*, 252. "I admit that in my whole life, I never read a work of systematic theology . . . Indeed, I have never had in my house a work by Chemnitz, Buddäus, Holmann, or any other orthodox systematician."