

INTRODUCTION: INSTANCES OF IMPARTIALITY

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Friedrich Nietzsche, reflecting on the ‘virtues of the bourgeois herd’, ranked impartiality among them. With beautiful paradoxicality he characterizes it as an activity of inertia, manifesting itself ‘in impartiality and coolness of judgement: one eschews the effort of emotion and rather remains aloof, “objective”’ (‘in der Unparteilichkeit und Kühle des Urtheils: man scheut die Anstrengung des Affekts und stellt sich lieber abseits, “objektiv”’).¹ With this denouncement of impartiality as essentially equivalent to laziness, Nietzsche appears to be inveighing against a moral concept that, alongside truth, trust, righteousness, and others he discusses, has been at the core of human society since time immemorial. It is, however, not an old or traditional notion Nietzsche is castigating; rather, ‘impartiality’ forcefully emerged in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The contributions in this volume illustrate the broad array of disciplines and fields which were affected by and at the same time helped shape this notion. In this introduction, we trace the beginnings, complexity, and contexts of this emergence in the early modern period.

1. *Usage*

The word itself was new; negative evidence suggests that the same is true of the concept, or at least its saliency in specifically early modern formulations. It is conspicuously absent in sources such as emblem books, which usually provide helpful illustrations of what early modern minds conceived as virtues, ideals, and abstract ideas, and how they were used to engage with the classical heritage or appropriated for contemporary ideological purposes. Among the many riddling images with witty inscriptions, or the array of allegorical personifications, there is none that we have found

¹ Nietzsche Friedrich, *Sämtliche Werke: Kritische Studienausgabe*, 15 vols., eds. G. Colli – M. Montinari (Munich: 1980–1999) vol. 12, NF–1886, 7 [6].

which addresses impartiality.² Closest is the anonymous author of a work published in 1616 who envisaged, but did not provide, such an emblematic depiction, and implied an ambivalence towards impartiality: 'Fortune is painted blinde, as if she saw not, where shee distributed her fauours, nor cared not to whom: and so shee shewes her impariallitie.'³

The absence of a convenient emblem of impartiality tells us something about the concept's status at the beginning of the seventeenth century: below the radar. It enters the stage forcibly, however, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. There is no classical Latin expression "imparialis", and the word does not begin appearing in the vernaculars, as far as we have found, until the sixteenth century. If "imparialis" does appear in Latin texts of the early modern period, as for example in the debates between Christian Wolff and his opponents, as Hanns-Peter Neumann shows in his contribution, it is a coinage following the vernacular. A quantitative observation of the historical sources suggests moreover that impartiality massively gains in currency in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Its use is sparse until the middle of the seventeenth century, when there is an upsurge in usage and particularly in titles of publications graced by the adjective "impartial". As an example, there are no titles in English which contain the word "impartial" before 1600; two before 1640; 114 before 1660; and 405 between 1660 and 1700.⁴ The situation in other vernaculars is (*mutatis mutandis*) very similar.

Handbooks, dictionaries, and encyclopaedias from the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries betray that they are chronicling a concept *in statu nascendi*, not a fixture among the basic methodological and epistemological tenets of the time. While the earliest record for the French word "impartialité" dates from 1576,⁵ Antoine Furetière's *Dictionnaire universel*, first published in 1690, struggles to include the term: the entry 'imparfaite-

² Cf. the rich collection in Henkel A. – Schöne A. (eds.), *Emblemata. Handbuch zur Sinnbildkunst des XVI. und XVII. Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart/Weimar: 1996).

³ *The rich cabinet furnished with varietie of excellent discriptions, exquisite charracters, witty discourses, and delightfull histories, deuine and morrall* (London, John Beale for Roger Jackson: 1616) fol. 46^v. This is one of the earliest sources in English for 'impartiality'; the earliest citation in the *OED* dates to 1611. *EEBO* reveals some earlier uses, of which the earliest is Robert Dallington's *The View of France* (London, by Symon Stafford: 1604) fol. H2^r. 'Unpartiality' appeared in 1579. See *OED*, s.vv. unpartiality, *n.* and impartiality, *n.*

⁴ This includes some frequently reprinted works – notably Allestree's *The Causes of the Decay of Christian Piety, or, An impartial survey of the ruines of the Christian religion* – but their very popularity is significant when considering the diffusion and valorization of impartiality.

⁵ See Scholar's contribution in this volume.

ment' is followed by 'impassibilité'. All Furetière offers is a series of contrary notions, from 'parti' to 'partialité', which might help to shed light on the semantic field *e contrario*. 'Parti' (party) alone is awarded eight entries, several of which are figurative or specialist usages which are not relevant here. Two major contexts stand out. The first is that of opposing political entities ('Les François & les Espagnols sont deux partis contraires'). The other is that of propounding contrasting opinions or belonging to rival schools of learning ('Il y a des Docteurs qui soutiennent l'un & l'autre party. Scot & Saint Thomas en Theologie sont des Chefs de *parti*.') With politics and scholarship established as the first two contexts, the adjective 'partial' supplies a third – the qualities of a judge:

PARTIAL, ALE. Celuy qui se declare ouvertement pour un parti. C'est une mauvaise qualité à un Juge que d'être trop *partial*.⁶

The early eighteenth century sees several new editions of the *Dictionnaire* before eventually, in 1727, impartiality makes an appearance, but with only the briefest of definitions, quoting a synonym also absent from the 1690 edition:

IMPARTIAL, ALE, adj. Desinteressé.
IMPARTIALITÉ, s.f. Desinterressement. Comme l'impartialité est une qualité fort rare, il n'arrive guere que ces Auteurs qui se veulent deguiser y reussissent. BAY.⁷

The quotation from Bayle apparently underlines both the inattainability of the ideal and the futility of attempts at feigning impartiality: 'Since impartiality is a very rare quality, it rarely happens that those authors who want to dissimulate are successful.' New though it be, the concept of impartiality is immediately branded as a coveted, yet unattainable ideal.

Another case in point is Johann Heinrich Zedler's *Universal-Lexicon*, published in 64 volumes and four supplementary volumes between 1731 and 1754. Zedler does include 'unpartheyisch' (impartial), yet he does not assign the term a definition of its own but refers the reader to 'neutral'. He then presents a series of composite entries, such as 'Unpartheyischer Bibliothecarius' ('Impartial Librarian', a journal), or 'impartial judge' from which the reader is again referred to 'rechtschaffener Richter' (righteous

⁶ Furetière Antoine, *Dictionnaire universel, contenant generalement tous les mots françois, Tant vieux que modernes, et les termes de toutes les sciences et des arts*, 3 vols. (The Hague – Rotterdam, Arnout and Reinier Leers: 1690) 49. '[...] he who declares himself openly for one party. It is a bad quality in a judge to be too partial'.

⁷ Furetière, *Dictionnaire universel* 49.

judge).⁸ What is particularly significant are the shifting definitions given for “partiality”: Zedler lists the entries ‘Parthey’ (party), ‘Partheyen’ (parties), ‘partheyisch’ (partial), and ‘Partheylichkeit’ (partiality). ‘Party’ is defined as a ‘Kriegswort’, a military term, while ‘parties’ are those who file lawsuits against each other in law courts. To be ‘partial’ is a vice of judges, while ‘partiality’ is equalled with Latin *studium* and defined as the quality of someone driven by affection for others in forming an opinion or judgement rather than love for truth.⁹ What is most impressive here is the definition’s shifts of context – from the military to the political to the juridical and then to the moral.

Impartiality, while connoting openness, un-biasedness, and coolness, thus has a certain enigmatic quality of its own, in response to problems of partiality that emerged from highly diverse traditions and discourses. What seems characteristic is that it oscillates semantically between a *refusal* to join or support one of two parties, or, figuratively, a suspension of judgement; and a certain *quality of judgement*, one that is informed by putting aside personal preferences and foregrounding the arguments at stake.

Of course, issues of judicial bias, neutrality, and political partisanship were not alien before the early modern period, and the coining of a new term does not necessarily suggest a new concept. Several of the contributions in this volume evoke analogues and ancestors for impartiality; others discuss debates in which “impartiality” is at stake, without the word ‘impartiality’ even occurring. What they also show, however, in impartiality’s crucial involvement in debates over method in widely divergent fields – historiography, natural philosophy, moral philosophy, news publications, aesthetics, education, and religion among them – is the complexity of the early modern emergence of a newly articulated ideal.

2. *Impartiality and Objectivity*

While the history of the emergence of “impartiality” in these various fields is yet to be told, it has been discussed, in recent years, in connection with the history of objectivity. The emergence of objectivity is an important

⁸ Zedler Johann Heinrich, *Grosses vollständiges Universal-Lexicon aller Wissenschaften und Künste* (Halle – Leipzig, Johann Heinrich Zedler: 1732–1754, reprint Graz: 1993) vol. 49, 1915–1917.

⁹ Zedler, *Universal-Lexicon* vol. 26, 1049–1057.

parallel for our volume. The primary claim of Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison's book-length study is that '[s]cientific objectivity has a history': it is not a universal given, and it was constructed and changed over the course of centuries.¹⁰ This volume argues, similarly, that impartiality is a contested and shifting concept. In the history of objectivity, however, impartiality is relegated to a supporting role. An index entry in the first volume of Stephen Gaukroger's magisterial project *Science and the Shaping of Modernity*, which seeks to account for the 'fundamental transformation of intellectual values' constitutive of the modern era, testifies both to the relevance of impartiality to this transformation, and to its relative neglect: 'impartiality, *see* objectivity'.¹¹ Gaukroger elsewhere defines objectivity thus: 'Objectivity stands in contrast to subjectivity [...]. An objective account is, in this sense, impartial, one which could ideally be accepted by any subject, because it does not draw on any assumptions, prejudices, or values of particular subjects.'¹² Impartiality, here, is just a facet of objectivity. In this section and in the volume as a whole, we show the wider scope of impartiality and its distinctive seventeenth-century forms.

The impulses to a history of objectivity have been various. On the one hand, in the mid- to late twentieth century, various strands of criticism and theory, appalled by technologized warfare and observing the disintegration of the colonial world powers, attempted to undermine the discourses of the rise of the sciences and the rationality of the Enlightenment; objectivity and 'the impartiality of scientific language' were seen as a tool of oppression or exploitation.¹³ Post-structuralist, post-colonial, and feminist critics set out to establish the power structures underlying claims to "objectivity", and in the process, to render it historically contingent and ideologically motivated.¹⁴

¹⁰ Daston L. – Galison P., *Objectivity* (New York: 2007) 17; see also 27–35. This is also true of the *OED*: see *OED* s.v. "objectivity", *n*.

¹¹ Gaukroger S., *The Emergence of a Scientific Culture: Science and the Shaping of Modernity 1210–1685* (Oxford: 2006) 1, 557.

¹² Gaukroger S., "Objectivity, history of", in Smelser N.J. – Baltes P.B. (eds.), *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioural Sciences*, 26 vols. (Amsterdam – New York: 2001) XVI, 10785–10789, here 10785.

¹³ Quotation from Adorno T. – Horkheimer M., *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1947; London: 1997) 23. On objectivity, see also 37, and more generally 3–42.

¹⁴ For a summary of such discussions, see Solomon J.R., *Objectivity in the Making: Francis Bacon and the Politics of Inquiry* (Baltimore, MD: 1998) 1–8, and nn. 4, 7, 9–10, 20–22, on pp. 231–234. Work in this vein includes Haraway D., "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective", *Feminist Studies* 14 (1988) 575–600; Bordo S., *The Flight to Objectivity: Essays in Cartesianism and Culture* (Binghamton, NY: 1987); Deely J. "Postmodernity as the Unmasking of Objectivity: Identifying the

In these critiques, the impulse was not primarily historical; historicization rather aided in undermining discourses of objectivity and universality. The second, and for our volume more immediately germane, historiography of objectivity comes largely from the history of science. As part of a turn away from positivist approaches and towards a sociological or discursive investigation of scientific culture, objectivity ceased to be read as a universal given, and instead received attention as a cultural construct. In Steven Shapin and Simon Schaffer's *Leviathan and the Air-Pump*, an early and influential example of the turn, they emphasize that they will treat 'truth', 'adequacy', and 'objectivity' as 'accomplishments, as historical products, as actors' judgments and categories', rather than as definitional prerequisites of scientific endeavour.¹⁵

The 'emergence of a discourse of objectivity' is crucially bound up, in most of the literature, with the epistemological shifts and debates of the seventeenth century: the same period, of course, which we argue sees the rise of impartiality.¹⁶ '[O]ne of the distinctive features of early-modern natural philosophy', according to Gaukroger, is that 'questions that had earlier been seen in terms of truth are now discussed instead in terms of impartiality and objectivity';¹⁷ indeed, 'English natural philosophy, at least from the middle of the seventeenth century, is dominated, in the areas of natural history and matter theory, by the notion of objectivity'.¹⁸ The literature often links the birth of objectivity with a sibling, the concept of "fact".¹⁹ It is seen as a strategy of response to peculiarly early modern circumstances: a means of shoring up knowledge against sceptical challenges, and against the Reformation stress on the incapacity of the fallen human intellect, which rendered it necessary to find a basis for judgement

Positive Essence of Postmodernity as a Distinct New Era in the History of Philosophy", *Semiotica* 183 (2011) 31–57.

¹⁵ Shapin S. – Schaffer S., *Leviathan and the Air-Pump: Hobbes, Boyle, and the Experimental Life* (1985; Princeton, NJ: 2011) 13–14. Cf. also Shapin S., *A Social History of Truth: Civility and Science in Seventeenth-Century England* (Chicago: 1994).

¹⁶ See Solomon, *Objectivity in the Making* 1. See also Corneanu S., *Regimens of the Mind: Boyle, Locke, and the Early Modern Cultura Animi Tradition* (Chicago: 2011) 109–110.

¹⁷ Gaukroger, *Emergence of a Scientific Culture* 5.

¹⁸ Gaukroger S., "The Autonomy of Natural Philosophy: from Truth to Impartiality", in Anstey P.R. – Schuster J.A. (eds.), *The Science of Nature in the Seventeenth Century: Patterns of Change in Early Modern Natural Philosophy* (Dordrecht: 2005) 131–163, here 160.

¹⁹ See Shapin S., "Pump and Circumstance: Robert Boyle's Literary Technology", *Social Studies of Science* 14, 4 (1984) 481–520; Daston L., "Baconian Facts, Academic Civility, and the Prehistory of Objectivity", in Megill A. (ed.), *Rethinking Objectivity* (Durham – London: 1994) 37–63; Shapiro B.J., *A Culture of Fact: England, 1550–1720* (Ithaca, NY: 2000).

and interpretation of the natural world not vulnerable to charges of bias, relativity, hubris, or the inadequacy of the mind.²⁰

Objectivity in these accounts has several progenitors. Daston, caricaturing the existing literature, states that it 'has a birthday (usually a Cartesian one, either 1637 or 1644)'.²¹ The experimental culture surrounding the Royal Society, and especially Robert Boyle, is also frequently held up as the crucible of the modern notion.²² Perhaps most frequent, however, is an association with the 'patron saint of objectivity', Francis Bacon, and his account of the *idola mentis*.²³ The *Novum Organum*, the methodological foundation of Bacon's proposed renovation of natural philosophy, begins with an account of the 'four kinds of *Idols* which beset human minds', and act as obstacles to a true interpretation of nature. The categories are the Idols of the Tribe, which 'are rooted in human nature itself' and indicate the tendency to see everything from the perspective of man; Idols of the Cave, which represent idiosyncrasies of personality, contingencies of time and space, and whimsicalities of the passions, which bias men's judgements towards their own preoccupations; Idols of the Marketplace, in which 'shoddy and inept application of words lays siege to the intellect in wondrous ways'; and Idols of the Theatre, which represent the skewed judgement that comes from being *parti pris*: an *ipse dixit* style of philosophy, reliant on authority rather than on reason and experience.²⁴

Bacon's Idols are clearly intended to free the mind from bias and prejudice, and to establish a state of mind apt for the judgement of truth. But despite the insistent association of the origins of objectivity with seventeenth-century natural philosophers, and Bacon in particular, the

²⁰ See Harrison P., "Curiosity, Forbidden Knowledge, and the Reformation of Natural Philosophy in Early Modern England", *Isis* 92, 2 (2001) 265–290, esp. 289; idem, *The Fall of Man and the Foundations of Science* (Cambridge: 2007).

²¹ Daston L., "Objectivity and the Escape from Perspective", *Social Studies of Science* 22/4 (1992) 597–618, here 598. On Descartes, see e.g. Harries K., "Descartes, Perspective, and the Angelic Eye", *Yale French Studies* 49 (1973) 28–42; Bordo, *Flight to Objectivity*.

²² On Boyle and the Royal Society, see e.g. Shapin – Schaffer, *Leviathan and the Air-Pump*; Markley R., "Objectivity as Ideology: Boyle, Newton, and the Languages of Science", *Genre* 16 (1983) 355–372.

²³ Daston, "Baconian Facts" 37; see also Solomon, *Objectivity in the Making*; Zagorin P., "Francis Bacon's Objectivity and the Idols of the Mind", *The British Journal for the History of Science* 34, 4 (2001) 379–393.

²⁴ Bacon Francis, *Novum Organum*, in *The Instauration magna Part II: Novum organum and Associated Texts*, ed. G. Rees with M. Wakely (Oxford: 2004) 79, 81; for more extended consideration of the Idols, 79–109. Sorana Corneanu's insightful account traces the development of Bacon's Idols in detail, maintaining a three- rather than four-fold categorization: see Corneanu, *Regimens of the Mind* 21–26.

most extended study of this history, Daston and Galison's *Objectivity*, argues that to discuss 'objectivity' in the seventeenth century is anachronistic and misleading, and misunderstands the ways in which obstacles to true knowledge were conceptualized: '[t]o prescribe this post-Kantian remedy – objectivity – for a Baconian ailment [...] is rather like taking an antibiotic for a sprained ankle'.²⁵ Instead, Daston and Galison date the origins of objectivity to the nineteenth century, on the grounds of semantics, and because objectivity requires a modern understanding of subjectivity.²⁶ Daston suggested that, though concern with some facets of objectivity existed in the earlier period – ontological objectivity, or the adequacy of any representation to how things really are in themselves; mechanical objectivity, which aims at avoiding 'the human propensity to judge and to aestheticize' – early modern versions lack the notion of 'aperspectival objectivity', in which 'individual (or occasionally group [...]) idiosyncrasies' are effaced. The early modern view, for Daston, was always a view from somewhere, and thus not objective.²⁷

Several scholars have countered that such caution is unnecessary: that historiography is capable of recognizing objectivity *avant la lettre*, that such retrojection of naming is sometimes necessary, and that, in any case, a notion of aperspectival objectivity was in fact available in earlier periods.²⁸ Certainly, Bacon's idols represent an attempt to erase both individual and group idiosyncrasy.²⁹ But caution on the grounds of anachronism is warranted, not least because seeing early modern accounts through the lens of scientific objectivity risks eliding two importantly distinctive facets, both of which can be recovered by focusing instead on impartiality.

The first is the relationship of this putative 'objectivity' to other disciplines. Though Bacon himself does not foreground the terms 'impartiality' or 'impartial', he expresses cognate ideas through language of equality and

²⁵ Daston – Galison, *Objectivity* 33.

²⁶ For the history of the semantic shifts in "objectivity" and "objective", see Daston L., "Objectivity and the Escape from Perspective" 600–603; Daston – Galison, *Objectivity* 29–31; Solomon, *Objectivity in the Making* 27–31.

²⁷ Daston, "Objectivity and the Escape from Perspective" 599, 597–598. On objectivity as a 'view from nowhere', see Thomas Nagel, *The View from Nowhere* (New York: 1986).

²⁸ See Zagorin, "Francis Bacon's Objectivity" esp. 381, and Solomon, *Objectivity in the Making* 9.

²⁹ Daston earlier recognized in Bacon and Boyle 'a close cousin if not an identical twin of our current notion': "Baconian Facts" 38.

equity borrowed from his training in law.³⁰ Later Baconians likewise associate impartiality with metaphors from judicial contexts. Walter Charleton, a physician and populariser of Epicureanism who would become an early member of the Royal Society, attributed intellectual error explicitly to an absence of judicial impartiality:

among the Causes of the Intellects erroneous judicature [...] the chiefest and most general is the *Impatience, Præcipitancy, or Inconsiderateness* of the Mind; [...] not enduring the serious, profound, and strict examen of the species, nor pondering all the moments of Reason [...] with that impartiality requisite to a right judgment[.]³¹

Thomas Sprat, meanwhile, an early apologist for the Royal Society, described its aim as ‘an universal, constant, and impartial survey of the whole *Creation*’. His commendation of ‘the impartiality of *Philosophical Inquisitions*’, describing experiments as ‘real, and impartial *Trials*’, makes clear the indebtedness of experimental philosophy to the language of the courts, and the embeddedness of emergent objectivity in practices from a wider scope of disciplines.³²

The second distinctive aspect of impartiality is its focus on ethos. Precipitated by work on credibility and civility in Robert Boyle’s experimental programme, a rich trend in the recent historiography of science has focused on natural philosophy and history as disciplines aimed not simply at increasing knowledge and the pursuit of truth, but also at cultivation of the persona and habitus of the natural philosopher.³³ That impartiality is central to this process is underscored by Gaukroger’s remark that the dominance of objectivity in the seventeenth century should be understood

³⁰ See e.g. a passage on avoiding the Idols of the Cave in which the investigator should strive, as the most recent English translation has it, ‘to keep his intellect impartial and pure’: Bacon’s Latin reads ‘vt Intellectus seruetur æquus & purus’. Bacon, *Novum Organum* 93, 92.

³¹ Charleton Walter, *Physiologia Epicuro-Gassendo-Charltoniana, or, A fabrick of science natural, upon the hypothesis of atoms founded by Epicurus* (London, by Thomas Newcomb: 1654) 7.

³² Sprat Thomas, *The History of the Royal-Society of London, for the Improving of Natural Knowledge* (London, for J. Martyn: 1667) 124, 215, 353. For further mentions of impartiality, see 43, 47, 102, 352. See further Shapiro, *Culture of Fact*, and Shapin, *Social History of Truth*.

³³ Significant publications include Shapin – Schaffer, *Leviathan and the Air-Pump*; Gaukroger S., *Francis Bacon and the Transformation of Early-Modern Philosophy* (Cambridge: 2001); Condren C. – Gaukroger S. – Hunter I. (eds.), *The Philosopher in Early Modern Europe: The Nature of a Contested Identity* (Cambridge: 2006); Corneanu, *Regimens of the Mind*.

‘not externally, in terms of truth, but internally, in terms of impartiality’.³⁴ Sorana Corneanu has argued that, in considering the ‘cluster of concepts’ which make up modern objectivity – ‘impartiality, disinterestedness, detachment’ – instead of reading their development in the early modern period as a striving to shed individuality, ‘we might consider putting the individual person back into the picture’, replacing readings of putative ‘objectivity’ with a notion of the curing of the mind and controlling the passions.³⁵

A particularly suggestive aspect of Daston and Galison’s account of objectivity is the recognition that ‘[e]pistemology can be reconceived as ethics has been in recent philosophical work: as the repository of multiple virtues and visions of the good, not all simultaneously tenable, [...] each originally the product of distinct historical circumstances’.³⁶ The prominence of impartiality confirms this model; moreover, if objectivity is clearly an epistemic virtue, impartiality is at once epistemic and moral, aimed at the good as well as at the true. We can find confirmation for the perceived novelty of this virtue as an internal and moral balance of mind in John Wilkins, another founding member of the Royal Society:

men should be careful to preserve their minds free from any wilful prejudice and partiality [...] For though it be true, that the judgments of men must by a natural necessity, preponderate on that side where the greatest Evidence lies; [...] yet must it withal be granted to be a particular virtue and felicity to keep the mind in such an equal frame of judging. [...] And though none of the Philosophers (that I know of) do reckon this kind of *Faith* (as it may be styled), this teachableness and equality of mind in considering and judging of matters of importance, amongst other *intellectual virtues*; yet to me it seems, that it may justly challenge a place amongst them.³⁷

Wilkins wants to add a sixth to Aristotle’s five intellectual virtues: *sophia*, *episteme*, *nous*, *phronesis*, and *techne* are to be joined by impartiality, ‘an

³⁴ Gaukroger, ‘The Autonomy of Natural Philosophy’ 160.

³⁵ Corneanu, *Regimens of the Mind* 109–110, and more generally 106–113. On Gaukroger and Harrison’s constructions of objectivity, see 15–18. On the passions, see esp. Tilmouth C., *Passion’s Triumph over Reason: A History of the Moral Imagination from Spenser to Rochester* (Oxford: 2007); Gaukroger S. (ed.), *The Soft Underbelly of Reason: The Passions in the Seventeenth Century* (London: 1998); James S., *Passion and Action: The Emotions in Seventeenth-Century Philosophy* (Oxford: 1997).

³⁶ Daston – Galison, *Objectivity* 33.

³⁷ Wilkins John, *Of the Principles and Duties of Natural Religion* (London, by A. Maxwell for T. Basset, H. Brome, R. Chiswell: 1675) 35–37; for more on Wilkins’s impartiality, see Lewis’s contribution in this volume.

equal frame of judging'.³⁸ Wilkins supplies clear evidence that impartiality was seen as a *new* phenomenon, not previously discussed by 'the Philosophers', and confirms an understanding of epistemology based on virtue ethics and the cultivation of the mind not only in experimental science, but in any sphere involving the exercise of judgement. As such, impartiality has as much purchase in religion, politics, philosophy, criticism, ethics, and aesthetics as in natural history and natural philosophy; it is an ideal for judges, kings, God, historians, publishers of news as much as for experimenters. Impartiality proves to be more than just a backdrop for discussions of objectivity in natural philosophy and natural history. Considering it is thus apt to shed light on the inter-implication of methodological changes in discourses such as law, ethics, natural philosophy, and politics in the early modern period.

3. *The Ambivalence of Impartiality*

As the notion of epistemology as a realm of competing virtues might suggest, impartiality could collide with other virtues that meant that it was not always or universally considered a good thing. To be impartial could, for example, be considered a failure of necessary engagement, particularly in times perceived as national emergencies. Thus Joseph Addison, who as Mr. Spectator cultivated a *persona* of detachment which 'never espoused any Party with Violence',³⁹ could argue vociferously against precisely such detachment when in fear of a Jacobite uprising:

Men who profess a State of Neutrality in Times of Publick Danger, desert the Common Interest of their Fellow-Subjects [...] when the whole Community is shaken, and the Safety of the Publick endanger'd, the Appearance of a Philosophical or an affected Indolence must arise either from Stupidity, or Perfidiousness. [...] Our Country is not now divided into two Parties, who propose the same End by different Means; but into such as would preserve, and such as would destroy it. [...] In such a Case, an avow'd Indifference is Treachery to our Fellow-Subjects[.]⁴⁰

³⁸ For the five intellectual virtues, see Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1139B 15.

³⁹ [Addison Joseph], *The Spectator* 1 (Thursday, 1 March 1711), in *The Spectator*, ed. D.F. Bond, 5 vols. (Oxford: 1965) vol. I, 4–5.

⁴⁰ [Addison Joseph], *The Freeholder* 13 (Friday, 3 February 1716), in *The Freeholder*, ed. J. Leheny (Oxford: 1979) 96–98.

What in times of peace is an appropriately moderate response, Addison asserts, is a crime in states of emergency and exception. As the articles in this volume by Joad Raymond, Nathan Stogdill, and Christine Gerrard suggest, it is precisely in periods of intense political, religious, and civil conflict, and thus of partisanship, that impartiality generates its most impassioned and frequent claims.⁴¹ What Addison's rejection of neutrality suggests is the irony that it is these times too which generate the most explicit critiques of impartiality.

Criticism of impartiality could also come, unexpectedly, from rival senses of justice. One can see this in a paradigmatic case of righteous judgement, represented on this volume's cover and discussed in Derek Dunne's contribution: the Judgement of Solomon. In a story told in 1 Kings 3.16–28, two harlots come to King Solomon for a judgement. One woman's child has died; the other's lives. Both lay claim to the living baby. Solomon demands that a sword be brought, and passes judgement that the baby be divided in two, and half given to each mother. One woman acquiesces; the other immediately claims that the child is not hers. Solomon therefore restores the child to the second woman, the true mother.

Though Solomon is frequently held up as the paradigmatic impartial judge, the judgement in fact drives a wedge between justice and impartiality. Solomon's initial judgement is the most superficially impartial: he suggests that the baby be partitioned equally. This decision elicits the true mother's partiality; it is the false mother who is indifferent. The true judgement thus rewards appropriate partiality. Read like this, the judgement of Solomon appears as an allegory of the necessity of both partiality and impartiality in justice. The distinction is similar to that in Aristotle's *Politics* between numerical and proportional justice: the first does not respect persons, and treats all equally; the second adjudges according to merit or desert.⁴²

Impartiality might thus imply two contradictory forms of justice. A further example of the criticism of impartiality provides a context in which it could be constructed as unjust. The earliest citations the *OED* supplies for "impartial" – not in fact the earliest uses of the word – are both from 1597, and both from Shakespeare. The first, from *Richard II*, is straightforward: Richard states, in hearing the dispute which opens the play,

⁴¹ The evidence gathered in these essays is supported by the admittedly imperfect statistical data supplied by searching for 'impartial' and 'impartiality' in EEBO keyword searches, and Google n-grams.

⁴² See Aristotle, *Politics* 5.1 (1302B 30).

‘impartial are our eyes and ears’.⁴³ He is disingenuous, as his subsequent judgements will reveal, but from the point of view of the positive sense of “impartial”, the usage is unproblematic. The second citation is however more troubling to the lexicographer. It appears in the first quarto of *Romeo and Juliet*, as the Capulets discover Juliet, apparently dead, on the morning of her planned wedding to Paris. Her father exclaims: ‘Cruel, unjust, impartial destinies, | Why to this day have you preserv’d my life?’. The lexicographer – supported by a recent editor – is forced to call this a ‘misuse’ of impartial for partial.⁴⁴ But this misses the sense of Capulet’s complaint against the ‘destinies’. In a play riven by faction and party – it is the implacable binary of factional hate between two families that causes the tragedy – the impartiality of fate is to Capulet unjust and cruel: like blind Fortune, the destinies cannot be moved by the special pleas of the wounded and afflicted, and are not open to emotional appeals or sympathy. The indiscriminate failure to recognize either Capulet’s self-believed righteousness or the claims of his own partiality for his daughter, is, to him, at once impartial and unjust.

4. Divine Impartiality

Such ambivalences are particularly problematic when considered in the context of divine judgement.⁴⁵ New Testament warrant makes God’s impartiality axiomatic.⁴⁶ In several places, Paul refers to God as showing no partiality – usually expressed as not taking ‘persons’ into account.⁴⁷ The most explicit is the letter to the Romans: ‘there is no respect of persons with God’.⁴⁸ The context establishes the rectitude of God’s judgement as

⁴³ Shakespeare William, *King Richard II*, ed. A. Gurr (Cambridge: 2003) 72 (l.i.115).

⁴⁴ Shakespeare William, *The First Quarto of Romeo and Juliet*, ed. L. Erne (Cambridge: 2007) 137 (17.85–86), and note *ad loc.*

⁴⁵ On divine impartiality generally, see Bassler J.M., “Divine Impartiality in Paul’s Letter to the Romans”, *Novum Testamentum* 26 (1984) 43–58; eadem, *Divine Impartiality: Paul and a Theological Axiom* (Chico: 1982); Roetzel C.J. – Foster R.L. (eds.), *The Impartial God: Essays in Biblical Studies in Honour of Jouette M. Bassler* (Sheffield: 2007).

⁴⁶ The Old Testament also repeatedly stresses God’s impartiality: see 2 Chronicles 19.7; Deuteronomy 10.17; Job 34.19, and Bassler, *Divine Impartiality* 7–27. More general injunctions against the partiality of judges, or commending impartiality in everyday action, appear at e.g. Exodus 23.6–8; Leviticus 19.15; Deuteronomy 1.17, 16.19; Psalms 82.1–4; Proverbs 28.21.

⁴⁷ See e.g. Acts 10.34–35 and 1 Peter 1.17, Galatians 2.6.

⁴⁸ The Greek reads ‘οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν προσωποληψία παρὰ τῷ θεῷ’. See also Acts 10.34–35.

opposed to the corruption of human justice, and rejects the notion of a chosen people, insisting that God does not distinguish between Jew and Gentile. Three kinds of impartiality are at stake: a judicial impartiality, in which God ‘will render to every man according to his deeds’, without regard to person or ethnic origin;⁴⁹ an impartiality of negative judgement, on the grounds of universal sin (‘for there is no difference: For all have sinned’);⁵⁰ and an impartiality with regard to the proffer of grace and justification by faith, not works.⁵¹

As modern theologians have observed, Pauline divine impartiality thus rests on an apparent incompatibility: ‘impartiality in judgment according to works and impartiality in justification through faith’.⁵² While it may be possible to resolve this paradox by appeal to Paul’s consistent insistence on impartiality itself, the polemical charge in the early modern period is obvious. Both Erasmus and Luther wrote commentaries on Romans; indeed, it is through engagement with the difficulties of exegesis of the first four chapters that Luther formed his doctrine of *sola fides* and justification through faith. The issue of how to interpret divine impartiality sits at the centre of the contention between Lutheran, Calvinist, Arminian, and Roman Catholic interpretations of the doctrine of salvation and soteriology.

God however is not only described as impartial by Paul, but also as faithful; God sides with the faithful and does not abandon his chosen people.⁵³ This notion of chosenness was a powerful figure of thought in the early modern period, when groups as diverse as German Protestants, the Catholic Kingdom of France, and England, which saw itself as showered with ‘divine Anglophilia’, claimed to be the new nation of Israel.⁵⁴ Where religion was entangled with politics, God’s partiality was taken for granted, and acted as the anvil on which factions and nations forged their identities.

⁴⁹ Romans 2.6 (‘ὁσ ἀποδώσει ἐκάστῳ κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ’).

⁵⁰ Romans 3.22–23 (‘οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν διαστολή· πάντες γὰρ ἡμαρτον’).

⁵¹ Romans 3.24, 27–30.

⁵² Bassler, “Divine Impartiality” 58, and *Divine Impartiality* 165–166.

⁵³ 1 *Corinthians* 10.13 (‘fidelis autem Deus’); Romans 9–11.

⁵⁴ Dixon C.S., *Protestants: A History from Wittenberg to Pennsylvania 1517–1740* (Malden, MA – Oxford: 2010) 60–92, esp. 87–88; Walsham A., *Providence in Early Modern England* (Oxford: 1999) 281–325, esp. 287–290 (quotation from 289). For a general discussion with a view to emerging nation states see Smith A.D., *Chosen Peoples: Sacred Sources of National Identity* (Oxford: 2003).

5. *Summary of Contributions*

That impartiality emerged in the early modern period demands a consideration of its forebears, and our volume begins with a section on “Prehistories”. Anita Traninger’s contribution asks whether – and if so, how – early modern scholarly practices that were first conceived in antiquity and put a premium on the ability of taking sides in argumentation relate to new notions of impartiality. The practice of taking sides or *in utramque partem disserere*, equally anchored in the arts of rhetoric and dialectics, was a schooling in partiality. Rhetorical and dialectical education in antiquity, as in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, valorized the moulding of versatility in pro and con discourse, not with the objective of reaching consensus or compromise, but of forging a winning argument. Being able to argue both sides of a question with equal force as the rationale of training in the trivium made the technique prone to accusations of sceptical indecision, both by contemporaries and in modern scholarship. Indeed, as Traninger shows, it has been often identified with the teachings of the Academy under the leadership of Carneades. Yet the practice of arguing against a position was a mainstay of intellectual exchange in general, and thus taking sides informed a highly diverse range of schools and traditions, from Platonic dialogue to Ciceronian rhetoric, from scholastic disputation to humanist declamation, and indeed from sophistic performance to sceptical anti-dogmatism. As a consequence, even though taking sides had been coupled with detachment between personal opinion and a defended thesis, the emergence of impartiality caused a complex and convoluted process of methodological transformation.

Richard Scholar’s contribution considers Montaigne, whose engagement with the sceptical tradition, and especially the notion of the suspension of judgement, makes him central to impartiality – even though, as Scholar observes, he nowhere uses the words ‘impartialité’ or ‘impartial’. In Scholar’s account, Montaigne strives to develop an impartiality of judgement which is intimately bound up with his notion of free-thinking and *libertas philosophandi*. Born as much out of the intense pressures towards partisanship of the French wars of religion, as out of scepticism, Montaigne’s impartiality is, according to Scholar, a resistance to dogma. Scholar stresses that this is not, however, equivalent to neutrality, or to a refusal of judgement, but a resistance to the co-opting of one’s judgement by political expediency or circumstance. Montaigne’s example also demonstrates ways in which literary style can be used to render impartiality:

in the freedom of movement of his prose, and in the inclusion of readers in the ideals of freedom, judiciousness, and impartiality it espouses.

The association between impartiality and *libertas philosophandi* points to the wider fields of anti-dogmatism – a major consequence of the early modern fascination with Pyrrhonian scepticism – and the promotion of a methodological eclecticism in scholarly contexts.⁵⁵ In England, inspired in part by Bacon's *Idols of the Theatre*, anti-dogmatism became crucial to impartiality: the Royal Society's motto, famously, was – and still is – *nullius in verba*, or on no man's word.⁵⁶ Eclecticism not only evolved from selective thinking to the imperative of thinking on one's own;⁵⁷ it was also strongly linked to a new emphasis on courteous manners.⁵⁸ Just as, in the natural philosophical realm, impartiality was bound up with ethos and moral virtue, here too there are structural links between method and conduct, scholarship and ethics: questions that are also taken up by Rainer Godel's contribution on Thomasius, below.

The next section brings together two considerations of a field in which impartiality is especially prominent: periodical news publications in the middle of the seventeenth century. Jörg Jochen Berns's now classic essay on partiality and the press is here translated into English for the first time,

⁵⁵ See Popkin R., *The History of Scepticism. From Savonarola to Bayle*, rev. ed. (1960; Oxford: 2003); Mulrow M., "Eclecticism or Skepticism? A Problem of the Early Enlightenment", *Journal of the History of Ideas* 58, 3 (1997) 465–477. On the role of *libertas philosophandi* in the Enlightenment see Zenker K., *Denkfreiheit. Libertas philosophandi in der deutschen Aufklärung* (Hamburg: 2012).

⁵⁶ A partial quotation from Horace, *Epistles* 1.1, ll. 13–14: 'ac ne forte roges quo me duce, quo lare tute, | nullius addictus iurare in verba magistri' (And so that you will not ask to which leader or to which household gods I entrust myself: I am not obliged to swear by the words of any master).

⁵⁷ Albrecht M., *Eklektik. Eine Begriffsgeschichte mit Hinweisen auf die Philosophie- und Wissenschaftsgeschichte* (Stuttgart – Bad Canstatt: 1994); Schneider U.J., "Eclecticism and the History of Philosophy", in Kelley D.R. (ed.), *History and the Disciplines: The Reclassification of Knowledge in Early Modern Europe* (Rochester: 1997) 83–101; Schmidt-Biggemann W., *Topica universalis: Eine Modellgeschichte humanistischer und barocker Wissenschaft* (Hamburg: 1983) 272–288.

⁵⁸ Gierl M., *Pietismus und Aufklärung. Theologische Polemik und die Kommunikationsreform der Wissenschaft am Ende des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Göttingen: 1997) 555. On politeness in general see Goldgar A., *Impolite Learning: Conduct and Community in the Republic of Letters, 1680–1750* (New Haven – London: 1995). On its intrinsic aporiae and inevitable gaps between ideal and practice see Jaumann H., "Respublica litteraria/Republic of letters – Concept and Perspectives of Research" in idem (ed.), *Die europäische Gelehrtenrepublik im Zeitalter des Konfessionalismus* (Wiesbaden: 2001) 11–19, and Hirschi C., "Piraten der Gelehrtenrepublik. Die Norm des sachlichen Streits und ihre polemische Funktion", in Bremer K. – Spoerhase C. (eds.), *Gelehrte Polemik. Intellektuelle Konfliktverschärfungen um 1700* (Frankfurt a.M.: 2011) 176–213.

together with a more recent reflection on the theme in the form of ten theses. Berns demonstrates how ‘newsmen’ in the German lands, who were at once the publishers, editors, and printers of periodical news publications, negotiated partiality. Bound to a territory and its political interests, they accepted allegiance to their prince, but at the same time presented news that reached them from all over Europe. To avoid being held responsible for unfavourable or politically sensitive items, they created the authorless newspaper, abstaining from comment on news received from more or less trustworthy sources. Berns also shows how the mechanisms of the news business, reading habits, and the distribution of printed sheets disprove some of Jürgen Habermas’s core theses on the emergence of the public sphere.

Joad Raymond considers similar issues in the English context, using evidence from the transmission of European news, the newsbooks of the fraught 1640s and 1650s, and the presentation of historical documents from that period in the later seventeenth century. These texts offer contested notions of impartiality, and Raymond uses them to expose faultlines in claims to impartial status: between judicious editorial intervention, and the mere presentation of unedited documents; between ‘impartial’ material laid open to the readers’ judgement, and ‘impartial’ material in the service of partisan interests.

The subsequent section, “Poetry, Politics, and the Law”, continues to explore the role of impartiality in relation to political party, but pays sustained attention to particular case studies of the presentation of impartiality in literary texts. Derek Dunne’s contribution, on English revenge tragedy, exposes the ways in which literary genre can provide a crucible in which the nature of justice and impartiality can be probed. Comparing the impartiality demanded of judges in legal theory with the egregious partiality of legislators represented on the stage, Dunne opens up the connections between constructions of impartiality in the law and other fields, and exposes the critique of partial judges in the theatre.

Nathan Stogdill’s article presents further examples, complementary to Raymond’s, of the construction of impartiality in the ephemeral press of the 1640s, and in connection with the Royal Society in the 1660s. Like Raymond and Scholar, Stogdill observes that impartiality could mean not neutrality, but a critically engaged judiciousness, which may even declare partisan allegiances. He brings this insight to bear on Abraham Cowley, who developed a stance of flexibility and retreat both in his life and his poetry to respond to the dogmas and partisanship of his period. Christine Gerrard’s essay takes the focus into the early eighteenth-century, and the

beginnings of political party in England. The first part of her contribution exposes the connection between periods of intense political partisanship and claims of impartiality in print, before attending to the differing definitions of impartiality represented by two poems – “The Impartial” and “A Poet’s Impartial Reply, To a Poem, entitled The Impartial”. Like the examples gathered by Raymond and Stogdill, these expose the contestation of notions of impartiality between judicious engagement in controversy, and the refusal to engage at all.

Such contestations are the subject of the articles gathered in the next section, “Impartiality in Controversy”. Rhodri Lewis studies claims of impartiality in the context of religious debates of the 1660s and 1670s in England. After the intense conflicts of the 1640s and 1650s, writers on religion, politics, and natural philosophy tried to establish a more rational discursive mode, based on common understanding of virtue and morality, and on the avoidance of passionate style and enthusiastic zeal. Focusing on two examples – John Wilkins’s *Of the Principles and Duties of Natural Religion*, and a sermon preached by Seth Ward in 1673 – Lewis exposes a conflict between modes of argumentation in religious contexts. While Wilkins relies on universal reason and common notions, Ward foregrounds the necessity of scriptural revelation, and thereby implicitly critiques Wilkins’s claim that impartiality might act as a foundation for Christian morality. In the process, Lewis reveals how Wilkins’s claims to impartiality are disingenuous and tendentious, exposing the controversial basis of the apparently impartial claims of Restoration divines.

Rainer Godel focuses on Christian Thomasius’s *Monatsgespräche* (1688 ff.), which has been described as the first German-language journal dedicated to literary criticism. Godel argues that the generic shift from academic treatise to public “journal”, and with it the opening up of debates to a larger audience, generated a new type of controversy. The new format involved the reader as an arbitrator external to the academic realm and thus “naturally” impartial. This scenario was so powerful that, when Thomasius took up the task of reviewing his academic career and especially the disputes in which he had participated, he decided to re-publish and comment on a good portion of them in an eight-volume collection of *Händel* (1720 ff.) so that an impartial judge – the reader – could revisit these past contentions. In this re-issuing of previously published material, Thomasius fashioned himself as having argued impartially, but at the same time left it to the impartial audience to judge not only his merit, but the opposing arguments laid out before them. Godel’s contribution thus shows in an exemplary manner how “impartiality” was paradoxically

deployed as a polemical device intended to hold polemic and emotional confrontation at bay. These rhetorical strategies set the stage for the particular take on public debate characteristic of the Enlightenment.

Hanns-Peter Neumann investigates the functions of the term “impartiality” in debates that took place between 1720 and 1750 between followers of Christian Wolff and Isaac Newton, and between Wolffians and Pietist and Lutheran theologians. Neumann shows how, in Wolff’s system, impartiality equals rationality, while partiality stems from unreflected reliance on authorities. In the second part of his article, Neumann demonstrates that the concept of impartiality was deeply embedded in Wolffian notions of objective and subjective reason, and that the notion was closely tied to a ‘rationalistic optimism’. Nonetheless, Wolff, at the same time, employed appeals to impartiality as a strategic device in controversies he entered throughout his life. Neumann’s reconstruction of a disagreement between Wolff and Johann Franz Budde shows how Wolff’s metaphysical grounding of impartiality was easily brushed aside when he urged his readers to side with him rather than rely on their own impartial judgement.

The contributions in this section, while approaching the topic from diverse angles and different national contexts, all seem to illustrate a quip from Georg Christoph Lichtenberg’s *Sudelbücher* (*Scrapbooks*): ‘Alle Unparteilichkeit ist artifizuell. Der Mensch ist immer parteiisch und tut sehr recht daran. Selbst Unparteilichkeit ist parteiisch. Er war von der Partei der Unparteiischen’ (‘All impartiality is artificial. Man is always partial and rightly so. Even impartiality is partial. He was of the party of impartial’).⁵⁹

From a focus on the mechanics of controversy in various fields of public discourse, we move on to impartiality as a feature of scholarly practice in the next section. Nick Hardy’s essay addresses the first major controversy in vernacular scholarship in England: the response to John Selden’s *History of Tithes* (1618). Hardy exposes how the grounds of the debate rested on disagreement about the proper use of historical sources, and shows a further discursive context in which impartiality of method is established as equivalent to freedom of judgement, opposed to dogmatism. The debates adduced by Hardy show how ecclesiastical criticisms of Selden’s secular and philological method complained of the dangers of such claims to disinterestedness: the ways in which assertions of impartiality could in fact

⁵⁹ Georg Christoph Lichtenberg, *Sudelbücher*, ed. W. Promies, 2 vols. (Munich: 2005) vol. 1, Heft F, 578.

be used, disingenuously, to forward ideological and *parti pris* positions. Hardy also reveals how the philologist's central methodological tools – especially conjectural emendation – could be made vulnerable, in their departure from documentary sources, to further accusations of partiality.

Anne Eusterschulte then turns to a milestone in the history of criticism, Pierre Bayle's *Dictionnaire historique et critique*. With Herbert Jaumann, Eusterschulte characterizes Bayle's monumental endeavour as a 'functional equivalent' of Cartesian doubt, as a method that yields certain results. Bayle's notion of impartiality not only referred to requirements for the critic, but implied an active involvement of the reader. The concept is applied in a range of different senses within the *Dictionnaire*, a list which Eusterschulte calls Bayle's 'toolbox of historical criticism': impartiality figures as a moral issue, an epistemological problem, an anthropological approach, a theory and practice of critique, and an educational principle. Eusterschulte argues that the question of natural morality is at the heart of Bayle's methodological critique of historiography and goes on to show how Bayle, in typically scattered manner, expounds his idea of impartial judgement in articles on the Stoic philosopher Chrysippus, the historian Pierre-Jean Capriata, and the town of Usson.

Hardy's and Eusterschulte's articles document a turning point in the organization of scholarship. While critique as public assessment of current literature did not figure in the ensemble of early modern learned practices, it moved to the centre of intellectual attention in the early Enlightenment and beyond. It depended on a *libertas philosophandi* which itself presupposed and, at the same time, helped promote, the notion of an impartial, disinterested mind.⁶⁰

Following the emphasis on natural morality Eusterschulte identified in Bayle's *Dictionnaire*, the contributions in the next section are dedicated to moral philosophy. Tamás Demeter argues that objectivity in the modern sense – a detachment from all bias and the presumption of a view from nowhere – was alien to David Hume. Hume did, however, seek to explore the human point of view in relation to moral judgements. He did so by distinguishing between moral cognition and moral philosophy: the for-

⁶⁰ Jaumann H., *Critica. Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Literaturkritik zwischen Quintilian und Thomasius* (Leiden – New York – Cologne: 1995) esp. 14, 213, 225. On the eighteenth century, when 'impartiality' was widely accepted as a precondition for critical assessment, and debates emerged about its extent, see Napierala M., "Unparteilichkeit und Polemik. Kritik am Rezensionswesen und die Ordnung der Gelehrtenrepublik", in Matuschek S. (ed.), *Organisation der Kritik. Die Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung in Jena 1785–1803* (Heidelberg: 2004) 77–112.

mer the process of making moral judgements, the latter a descriptive and explanatory undertaking that provides a theory of moral cognition. Taking up key notions from Daston and Galison's *Objectivity*, Demeter describes moral cognition and moral philosophy as informed by different epistemic ideals: while moral philosophy is guided by *truth-to-human-nature*, moral cognition is based on a type of *aperspectival objectivity*. The latter thus depends, Demeter argues, on a particular type of impartiality, one that seeks to dispense with individual idiosyncrasies by substituting biased and situated personal sentiments with 'the common point of view'.

While Hume's theory can thus be aligned with and explained through notions of impartiality, Adam Smith actually developed the idea of an impartial spectator in moral philosophy. Scholars of Smith agree that the impartial spectator is a metaphor for an internalized authority that vouches for accurate moral judgements, yet there has been disagreement about the point of view this observer represents. Does he stand for society's norms and conventions, or for some transcendental authority? Bastian Ronge argues for both, and suggests that Smith's spectator is modelled on Montesquieu's *Persian Letters* or, indeed, Addison and Steele's *Spectator*, as an aloof stranger who judges the society he observes with indifference. Against the background of Smith's deep familiarity with Stoic philosophy, Ronge concludes that Smith's impartial spectator marks the return of a figure common in ancient philosophy, the parrhesiast, who advises through outspoken and fearless intervention. Both contributions in this section thus show how techniques of alienation inform the conceptualization of moral judgement, whether through the replacement of personal moral sentiment by a common point of view, or through conceiving of a moral authority modelled on both the stranger and the parrhesiast. Both Hume's and Smith's approaches, like the natural philosophical insistence on impartiality as prerequisite for true judgement, testify to the internalization of a notion of impartiality.

The contributions in the concluding section converge in a focus on observation, yet in two very different spheres: biological classification and aesthetics. Bernd Roling traces Carl von Linné's handling of those cases where received wisdom and the findings of the scientific observer could not be brought into agreement. Linné insisted on an empiricist approach that privileged observation in order to let things speak for themselves. But he also took into account a host of sources that were so far removed from the scientific realm that others would not even consider them: myths, tales, local customs, curses, love spells, and other lore natives would communicate to him on his travels. Linné collected these materials and

refused to pass judgement if a clear-cut decision could not be made: in cases where phenomena could not be classified positively, they were nevertheless integrated in the system as *obiecta non confirmata*, assessment pending. Roling demonstrates that Linné's willingness to listen to spirit healers and to contemplate omens stems from the same disinterested empirical attitude that guided his observations of plants and animals, and that his outlook was in fact more modern than critics of his relaxed attitude towards superstition would have it.

Anja Zimmermann's contribution points towards another emerging field in which impartiality would take on a major role, that of aesthetics, where it is generally, following Kant, discussed under the label of 'disinterestedness'. Zimmermann presents the case of Alexander Cozens's *Principles of Beauty Relative to the Human Head* (1778), a work that holds a special place in eighteenth-century debates about beauty. At a time when attempts at the normative description of beauty began to erode, Cozens set out to provide just such a norm, devising principles of beauty that strictly conformed to the ideals of classical antiquity. As Zimmermann argues, these nonetheless accorded with the endeavours of his contemporaries, as in general there was a shift from a focus on the inherent qualities of objects to the response of the beholder. Here, the observer is again conceived as an impartial, 'uncharactered and unimpassioned' spectator, whose impartiality Cozens, rather paradoxically, seeks to secure by supplying a formula for beauty. The figure of the impartial spectator, whom we have already encountered in moral philosophy and satirical periodical literature of the eighteenth century, was thus so powerful that it was used even in a context that explicitly sought to provide aesthetic directives.

6. *Further Directions*

In addition to the perspectives on impartiality covered by our introduction and contributors, there are two fields that particularly warrant investigation but which are not addressed more fully within this volume. One is history, or rather, early modern and modern historiography; the other religious conflict and eirenicism.

In religious history, the notion of party was applied in the high and late Middle Ages to schisms, but interestingly did not generally figure in the early vocabulary of the German Reformation. Only at the end of the sixteenth century did the term take root north of the Alps, when it had become clear to members of the various confessions that the process of

factionalization was irreversible.⁶¹ Still, early usages of 'impartiality' are connected with the development of religious factions in the Reformation, and indeed the earliest occurrence of "impartiality" in a vernacular we were able to glean stems from this context. The radical Sebastian Franck (1499–1542) is counted among the first who argued for impartiality in the face of ever more acrimonious dispute not only between Protestants and Catholics, but also among the orthodox and radical currents within protestantism. Franck claimed that the true church was not to be found on earth and he thus called for a 'frei/ onsectisch/ onparteiisch Christenthum' ('a free, non-sectarian, impartial Christendom') under an impartial God, within which differences would pertain only to superficial matters which did not jeopardize unity of belief.⁶²

This vision of overcoming sectarianism by impartially assessing the teachings of religious sects, born of the firm conviction that they all spoke of the one God and essentially conveyed one true belief, spawned a series of irenic projects. Associates of Samuel Hartlib agreed that the religious sects of protestantism should aim at reunification, but disagreed about method. John Moriaen, a contact of Hartlib's based in Amsterdam, voiced his disapproval of sectarianism by commending those he considered impartial: "[u]nparteiisch" was one of Moriaen's highest commendations of a group or an individual, and its opposite, "parteiisch", [...] one of his sternest criticisms'.⁶³ Moriaen's recipe for religious peace left leeway for all sorts of beliefs, as long as impartiality was secured by neglecting details (and thus the prime source of disagreement): 'My advice, in my simplicity, would be that, given such diversity of sects and opinions, one should keep oneself disinterested and impartial as far and for as long as possible, keeping to generalities and not entering into particulars.'⁶⁴

⁶¹ Brunner O. – Conze W. – Koselleck R. (eds.), *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland*, 8 vols. (Stuttgart: 1974–2004), Art. "Partei, Faktion", vol. IV, 677–716, here 683.

⁶² Franck Sebastian, *Paradoxa Ducenta octoginta* (Ulm, Hans Varnier: s.a. [1534]) Vorred fol. 4^v; see on Franck's notion of an invisible church Barbers M., *Toleranz bei Sebastian Franck* (Bonn: 1964) 140–144; on God's impartiality *ibid.* 113–114.

⁶³ Young J.T., *Faith, Medical Alchemy and Natural Philosophy: Johann Moriaen, Reformed Intelligencer, and the Hartlib Circle* (Aldershot: 1998) 83.

⁶⁴ Moriaen to Hartlib, 31 March 1639, trans. in Young, *Faith, Medical Alchemy and Natural Philosophy* 84. Young comments that 'Moriaen's eschewal of comment on potentially divisive "incidentals" [was so thorough] that it is virtually impossible to deduce what he did regard as fundamental, beyond the idea that there is one Supreme Being whose will is discernible in the Bible and the natural world, and that it behooves mankind to acquiesce unreservedly in that will'.

Interestingly, one result of these objectives was a search for a new logic that would provide certain and incontestable decisions on controversial issues, thus disburdening believers from choosing the right side.⁶⁵ Such a technically-ensured impartiality is in stark contrast to ideas about free-thinking that emerged in other realms at the same time. The relations between these endeavours towards new methodological fingerposts and the prescriptions for impartial debate formulated in the context of criticism, for example, have not yet been described in terms of the impartiality that both pursue.

Method is also at the heart of historiography. One work in particular embodies religious controversy and historiographical innovation while being inextricably linked with the notion of impartiality: Gottfried Arnold's *Unparteyische Kirchen- und Ketzer-Historie* (*Impartial History of the Church and Heretics*, 1699/1700). Arnold set out to write the history of the Church as a chain of controversies that have their root in dogmatism's tendency to denounce dissenters as heretics. To do that, he assumed a point of view that was supposedly above and beyond the denominations. Yet his professed impartiality is coupled with a highly partial criticism of the antagonistic sects that obstruct true piety.⁶⁶ While Arnold could draw on lines of thought that conceived of religious history as a history of decline,⁶⁷ he demanded the impartial evaluation of sources, thus proposing a methodological innovation in church history in the form of polemic that was, paradoxically, geared against theological polemic.⁶⁸

Arnold's impartial approach is widely acknowledged to have been a novelty, yet at the same time, impartiality is said to have been a core value in reflections on historiography since antiquity. History apparently subscribed to the Tacitean ideal 'sine ira et studio', commonly translated as 'without anger and partiality'. The task of the historian has been described as depicting the whole historical truth, without omissions or

⁶⁵ See Lécho P.-O., *Un christianisme 'sans partialité'. Irénisme et méthode chez John Dury (v. 1600–1680)* (Paris: 2011) 97–180; see also Clucas S., "In Search of 'The True Logick': Methodological Eclecticism among the 'Baconian Reformers'", in Greengrass M. – Leslie M. – Raylor T. (eds.), *Samuel Hartlib and Universal Reform: Studies in Intellectual Communication* (Cambridge: 1994) 51–74.

⁶⁶ Schneider H., "Der radikale Pietismus im 17. Jahrhundert" in Brecht M. (ed.), *Geschichte des Pietismus*, vol. 1. *Der Pietismus vom siebzehnten bis zum frühen achtzehnten Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: 1993) 391–437, esp. 410–416.

⁶⁷ Dixon C.S., "Faith and History on the Eve of Enlightenment: Ernst Salomon Cyprian, Gottfried Arnold, and the *History of Heretics*", *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 57, 1 (2006) 33–54, here 41.

⁶⁸ Gierl, *Pietismus und Aufklärung* 320 ('Streitschrift gegen theologisches Streiten').

embellishments, and Tacitus's maxim taken to express a claim to and call for 'impartial or non-party' representation that was supposedly widely accepted until the eighteenth century. Only then, apparently, was the relativity of all historical assessment recognized.⁶⁹

Tacitus's phrase, however, voiced at the beginning of the *Annals* and ever since taken as a claim to freedom from bias, does not fit our modern notions of impartiality or objectivity as snugly as one might think. As T.J. Luce and other students of Tacitus and ancient historical practice have stressed, Tacitus and his fellow historians 'took a narrower and more particularized view of the problem'. Partiality was instead understood as a direct consequence of benefits gained or injustice suffered. In Roman culture, *iniuria* were identified as the cause of *ira*, *beneficia* as the cause of *studium*.⁷⁰ In turn, a good historian was defined by the absence of certain (understandable) inclinations, but not by a general, philosophically-motivated impartiality. This kind of bias moreover could only befall those who wrote about the recent past, and could themselves have suffered a slight or received a reward. A general notion of impartiality is conspicuously absent here, and it has been argued that Tacitus's phrase has been contaminated with modern ideas.⁷¹

If this is so, then the same can be said of humanist notions of historiography. Discussions about the historian's commitment to truth that abound in the sixteenth century's flourishing historiographical literature have been paraphrased as calls for impartiality or even objectivity.⁷² As the modern ideals of objectivity and impartiality were as such unknown in the pre-modern era, we might ask whether the modern claim to impartiality that informs history as a discipline is not also a product of the seventeenth century when the notion was forged. More research would reveal whether, and if so, how the general fascination with impartiality in

⁶⁹ Koselleck R., "Standortbindung und Zeitlichkeit. Ein Beitrag zur historiographischen Erschließung der geschichtlichen Welt", in Koselleck R. – Mommsen W.J. – Rüsen J. (eds.), *Objektivität und Parteilichkeit in der Geschichtswissenschaft* (Munich: 1977) 17–46, here 20 f.

⁷⁰ Luce T.J., "Ancient Views on the Causes of Bias in Historical Writing", *Classical Philology* 84, 1 (1989) 16–31, here 17–18.

⁷¹ See Heldmann K., *Sine ira et studio. Das Subjektivitätsprinzip der römischen Geschichtsschreibung und das Selbstverständnis antiker Historiker* (Munich: 2011) 14–15.

⁷² See e.g. the discussion in Landfester R., *Historia magistra vitae. Untersuchungen zur humanistischen Geschichtstheorie des 14. bis 16. Jahrhunderts* (Geneva: 1972) 96–100. Cf. the nuanced discussion in Keßler E., "Geschichte: Menschliche Praxis oder kritische Wissenschaft? Zur Theorie humanistischer Geschichtsschreibung", in idem (ed.), *Theoretiker humanistischer Geschichtsschreibung. Nachdruck exemplarischer Texte aus dem 16. Jahrhundert* (Munich: 1971) 7–47.

the seventeenth and eighteenth century informed debates about historiography. This might suggest that history was not, after all, an avantgarde discourse in which impartiality was a core value long before other fields of cultural and intellectual production recognized its importance, but that it too was transformed by the force of the early modern emergence of impartiality.

The contributions in this volume thus approach impartiality from a variety of perspectives. Gathering examples from a broad range of disciplines, they suggest not only that a concept of impartiality emerged with new saliency in the seventeenth century – evident both from the coining and spread of the term and its equivalents in European vernaculars, and from the various disputes and disciplinary discussions which the idea of impartial or indifferent judgement prompted – but also show some of the faultlines which made the concept so contested. Early modern writers were often conscious of impartiality as a novelty, as suggested by the examples of Wilkins, Franck, Arnold, and the writers around the Royal Society, among others. Nonetheless, its definition, and its incorporation as a methodological or disciplinary ideal, was fraught: it could be interpreted, variously, both as a retreat from partisanship and a refusal to adhere to any party, or an exercise in judicious judgement; it could be both a quality of mind, and a characteristic of a debate; it could be dissimulated, or paradoxically partisan; it could be criticized as disingenuous, inequitable, dangerous, or lazy. Associated closely with the emergence of objectivity and thus what is often called ‘the rise of science’, the contributions gathered here suggest that forging a new ideal of impartiality was also crucial in epochal shifts in religious and political discourse, print culture, and historiography and scholarly practices more generally. With such an extraordinary range of contexts and significance, we can in this volume only open the ground, rather than cover all of it. As such, however, we hope the work represented here suggests new avenues for considering the relationships between such diverse disciplinary developments, and will encourage more attention to and investigation of the emergence of impartiality.

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