

Prof. Dr. George Di Giovanni (Montreal)

**“*Wie die Triebe, so der Sinn; und wie der Sinn, so die Triebe*”:
Jacobi on Reason as a Form of Life.**

Up to 1800, before Jacobi was diverted into a simplistic distinction between understanding and reason, he had what amounted to the sketch of a potentially interesting theory of experience. The theory had its source in the *Herzensmensch* side of Jacobi's persona. It was summed up in a formula “*Wie die Triebe, so der Sinn; und wie der Sinn, so die Triebe*,” which Jacobi used first to confront Lessing, and then Mendelssohn. In the dialogue *David Hume*, he further argued that Kant's categories can be derived *a posteriori* on the basis of a feeling of resistance which Hume had also recognized. Reason is but a form of life. However, without an adequate concept of precisely this very reason, such as Jacobi obviously lacked, the theory was vulnerable to the danger of both historicizing and naturalizing truth. These were consequences that Jacobi could not accept. It is no surprise that the original sketch of a theory went nowhere.