
CHAPTER ONE

Kant's Problem

Schleiermacher Discovers Kant

Schleiermacher's discovery of Kant was momentous. As Wilhelm Dilthey has suggested, "in Kant Schleiermacher learned how to think."¹ Schleiermacher first read Kant as a seminary student at the Brethren theological school in Barby, a Prussian town on the left bank of the Elbe not far from where it meets the Saal.² He had entered this Moravian seminary at age sixteen, in 1785, four years after the publication of Kant's first *Critique*, the *Critique of Pure Reason*. At Barby, Schleiermacher and two friends secretly read Kant's *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, which had been published in 1783.³ Schleiermacher later reported to his father that Kant had brought back "reason from the desert wastes of metaphysics into its true appointed sphere."⁴

If Kant did indeed teach Schleiermacher how to think, the Moravian Brethren certainly can be said to have taught him how to feel. The Moravian pietistic emphasis on personal religious experience rather than doctrine and dogma had first rekindled the spiritual heart of Schleiermacher's father, Gottlieb Schleiermacher, an Enlightenment theologian who served as a Reformed chaplain in the King of Prussia's army.⁵ The father converted his wife, Katharina-Maria Stubenrauch, and their two sons Friedrich and Carl to the Brethren's faithfulness in Christ and then took his family to Gnadenfrei on April 5, 1783, to gain admission for his children into the Moravian schools. The family spent about eleven weeks in this community. During this period, Schleiermacher underwent his first

personal religious experience. He marked this experience as the birth date of his "higher life."⁶ Concerning this experience, he would remark years later in a letter to his friend and publisher Georg Reimer that

Here my awareness of our relation to a higher world began. . . . Here first developed that basic mystical tendency that saved me and supported me during all the storms of doubt. Then it only germinated, now it is full grown and I have again become a Moravian, only of a higher order.⁷

Schleiermacher's new spiritual awareness took root in the Moravian school in Niesky. Here, as Martin Redeker has suggested in his book *Schleiermacher: Life and Thought*, Schleiermacher became a Moravian outwardly and inwardly.⁸ Schleiermacher was now enraptured by the devotion to Jesus characteristic of the Moravian life and he was enthralled by its communal life of worship, which entailed four daily services, monthly confessions, and monthly communion.⁹ Schleiermacher also was given a strong humanistic education that included the study of Latin, Greek, English, mathematics, and botany. At Niesky, he and his classmates also had a great deal of time for private study. Here, Schleiermacher's mind and heart were given the grace to be one. This dramatically shifted when he transferred to the seminary at Barby.

At Barby, the unity between head and heart was sundered. Modern literature, philosophy, and all independent reading were forbidden. Schleiermacher, however, ate the forbidden fruit. Schleiermacher and his circle of friends, calling themselves "independent thinkers," smuggled in contemporary works such as Goethe's *Werther*. They also read Kant. Once discovered, they were severely disciplined.¹⁰ Schleiermacher eventually persuaded his father to let him transfer to the nearby University of Halle. If he had not left voluntarily, he would most certainly have been cast out of this secluded Moravian garden by his theology teachers and advisers whom he now referred to as "the plodders."¹¹ Schleiermacher, at age eighteen, had become a child of the German Enlightenment. He was now highly critical of his professors' doctrinaire explanations, which seemed counter to reason. He confessed this to his father, in a letter dated January 21, 1787.

I cannot believe [that Jesus] who named himself only the Son of Man was the eternal and true God; I cannot believe that his death was a substitutionary atonement, because he

never expressly said so himself, and because I cannot believe it was necessary. God, who has evidently created humankind not for perfection but only for the striving after perfection, cannot possibly wish to punish persons eternally because they have not become perfect.¹²

Schleiermacher's father replied,

O you foolish son, who has bewitched you, that you do not obey the truth? . . . Turn back! Oh my son, turn back!¹³

Schleiermacher didn't. His father eventually recommended Kant's first *Critique* as well as the *Prolegomena* to his son to check his "fatal curiosity," lest he go astray in "the boundless desert of transcendental ideas without a safe guide."¹⁴ Schleiermacher heeded his father's advice.

At Halle, Schleiermacher studied Kant with Johann August Eberhard, the university's most important teacher of philosophy.¹⁵ Eberhard believed that Kant's critical philosophy was, at its best, Leibniz, and at its worst, dangerous in its presumptions about human nature.¹⁶ Eberhard founded two journals, *Philosophisches Magazin* (1788) and *Philosophisches Archiv* (1791) to combat Kant's teaching.¹⁷ Schleiermacher, who by now had read Kant's first *Critique* on his own, formed his own independent assessment.¹⁸ Concerning this, Schleiermacher wrote to his lifelong friend Karl Gustav von Brinkmann that his "belief in this [Kant's] philosophy increases day by day, and this all the more, the more I compare it with that of Leibniz."¹⁹

Schleiermacher left Halle in 1787 and went to live with his uncle, Samuel Stubenrauch, an Enlightenment theologian who had taught at Halle and now had accepted a pastorate at Drossen, a country town not far from Frankfort on the Oder. At Drossen, Schleiermacher's father and uncle urged him to complete his studies and take his theology examinations.²⁰

Schleiermacher eventually took and passed his exams but not before writing his first philosophic treatise, "On the Highest Good" (1789),²¹ on Kant's second *Critique*, which had been published a year earlier, in 1788.²² In this work, Schleiermacher criticized Kant for violating a principle of his own first *Critique*.²³ Kant, Schleiermacher argued, had enmeshed his moral philosophy in the dialectic of pure speculative reason by making the concepts *the highest good*, *God*, and *immortality* constitutive rather than merely regulative principles of human behavior; that is to say, he presented these concepts as the

content rather than the forms or formal guidelines of moral behavior. By so doing, the goal of the moral cultivation and perfection of our will became not only possible but necessary. This part of Kant's moral philosophy, Schleiermacher concluded, at best is disjointed [*unzusammenhängend*]; at worst, it is incorrect [*unrichtig*].

Fourteen years later, in his *Outlines of a Critique of Ethics to the Present Time* (henceforth referred to as *Sittenlehre*),²⁴ Schleiermacher continued this critical assessment of Kant, now energetically dismantling the master's housing with his own tools. Someone doing a Kantian critique of Kant's second *Critique*, Schleiermacher argued, could very easily demonstrate the superfluous and faulty claim of Kant's use of the concepts freedom, immortality, and God in his ethics. Such a person would, with great justice, presume that such notions might have been produced upon speculative ground and therefore belong there (S22). Accordingly, for any critic who pays close attention to the structure of Kant's argument, Kant's building transforms itself into a child's game with vaporous [*luftigen*] building material [*Baustoff*], which is hit back and forth from one shore to the other.

Not once in Kant's theory, Schleiermacher argued, did one encounter a thought about a systematic tying together [*Verknüpfung*] of all human knowledge (S23). Rather than offering a systematic means of connecting the various sciences, Kant provides us with a description of that which keeps them apart (D20). Schleiermacher, in contrast, identified himself as a man looking for the foundation of all philosophic structures. To find this foundation, Schleiermacher believed that a standpoint higher than speculative reason was required. Kant's failure to be cognizant of such a 'higher standpoint', Schleiermacher concluded, made Kant's ethics a derivation of an idea, and precisely to this extent removed it as far from the theory of the soul as from that of the Supreme Being.

Schleiermacher, in his 1822 lectures on the *Dialektik*, argued that Kant (and Fichte) endeavored to ground transcendental consciousness sheerly on the agencies of human thinking (D428). Kant's work, Schleiermacher concluded, was incomplete because it was one-sided. Kant characterized human beings as coordinated acts of thinking without acknowledging that this coordinated activity takes place in our organic nature. Kant overlooked the fact that we are *beings* who think. The results were twofold: the failure either to ascertain the transcendent ground of being or to demonstrate that

this ground of being is identical to that of the transcendent ground of thinking.

Schleiermacher sought to rectify this twofold oversight by Kant (and Fichte) in his *Dialektik*. This rectification entailed a redefinition of Kant's ethical subject. As Albert L. Blackwell has aptly pointed out in his book *Schleiermacher's Early Philosophy of Life*, Schleiermacher did not take issue with Kant in believing that there is such a thing as moral experience. Rather, given that we do indeed have this experience as an ethical subject, Schleiermacher differed with Kant as to how it is to be understood.²⁵

Schleiermacher's separation of his own analysis of moral consciousness from that of Kant was precipitated by Kant's attempt to 'fill in' [*auszufüllen*] the place that he had emptied of speculative content. Kant then refurbished this room with the "practical data" of reason (Bxxi–xxii). The speculative ideas of immortality, freedom, and God gained credence in Kant's ethics by this process and it led Kant to his moral link to God. This is the link that Schleiermacher sought to challenge.

To understand the way in which Kant established this moral link to God, we now must turn to a discussion of Kant's second *Critique*, which is where Schleiermacher's formal criticism of Kant began. Here we find the roots of Schleiermacher's lifelong complaint against the "one-sidedness" of Kant's work. As we shall see, Schleiermacher believed that Kant, by relying on speculative reason to delineate moral consciousness, mistakenly filled in the place in knowledge he had originally cleared for faith. Schleiermacher believed that by so doing, Kant violated the principles of his own first *Critique*.

Kant's Moral Link to God

Kant, in his second *Critique*, transformed moral obligation into religious belief. This transformation made the link between practical reason and the will to action the ground of Kant's rational theology. According to Kant, in order to obey the precepts of moral law, we must believe in the objective reality of immortality, freedom, and God.

Kant summarized this process as follows. First, belief in immortality assures us that there is an adequate duration of time necessary for us to fulfill the precepts of the moral law. Second, belief in human freedom assures us that not only are we independent of the

world of sense, but we also have the capacity to have our will determined entirely by the intelligible world. Third, belief in God is the necessary condition of this intelligible world that assures us of our obedience to moral law as the highest good by sanctioning this good by the highest independent good, that is, the existence of God (CPrR132).

Kant used the experience of the ethical subject as a source to establish the following link between practical reason and the will to action. In Kant's deduction of the principles of pure practical reason in his second *Critique*, he claimed that anyone who pays even the "least attention" to oneself will recognize the necessity and universal validity of the claim that moral law is given as an apodictically certain fact. Through self-attention, we discover that the moral law is "a fact absolutely inexplicable from any data of the world of sense or from the whole compass of the theoretical use of reason" (CPrR44).

Kant used this ethical subject to affirm that which he could not otherwise prove, that is, that moral law has its source in reason rather than the world of sense. This claim is self-evident, Kant argues, to anyone who pays attention to one's own moral consciousness. This consciousness reveals that moral obligation is not derived from sensate circumstance and, further, it also self-evidently affirms that our awareness of the law has impact on our will. According to Kant, through self-attention we discover that "the moral law ideally transfers us into a nature in which reason would bring forth the highest good were it accompanied by sufficient physical capacities; and it determines our will to impart to the sensuous world the form of a system of rational beings (CPrR43)."

Why are we "transported" by the demands of moral obligation? Why, as a being belonging both to the world of sense and the intelligible world (CPrR87), do we allow reason to rule the roost of our senses, emotions, and passions? Why do we pay tribute to this ruler in the form of a reverential respect that bows the human will to the legislation of moral law given to it by our own pure (practical) reason? What is entailed in the link between reason and will? Kant's answer is:

Duty! Thou sublime and mighty name that does embrace nothing charming or insinuating but requirest submission and yet seekest not to move the will by threatening aught that would arouse natural aversion or terror, but only holdest forth a law which of itself finds entrance into the mind

and yet gains reluctant reverence (though not always obedience)—a law before which all inclinations are dumb even though they secretly work against it. . . . (CPrR129)

What inclines our passions to become dumb in the face of the sublime and mighty ruler named Duty? Kant's answer, at its most basic level, is that the link between practical reason and the will to action is the *engagement* experienced by a person in response to the absolute, self-imposed demand of moral duty. This answer leads us to the religious element in Kant's use of the ethical subject as the link between reason and the will to action.

This religious element reveals the nature of the experience of engagement that allows moral duty to hold sway over our passions. This engagement is that of religious belief. We believe that 'Duty's' commands are the commands of God. This belief is the core of Kant's definition of religion. Writes Kant:

Religion is the recognition of all duties as divine commands, not as sanctions, i.e., arbitrary and contingent ordinances of a foreign will, but as essential laws of any free will as such. Even as such, they must be regarded as commands of the Supreme Being because we can hope for the highest good (to strive for which is our duty under the moral law) only from a morally perfect (holy and beneficent) and omnipotent will and, therefore, we can hope to attain it only through harmony with this will. (CPrR129)

The link that makes possible reason's direction of the will is a religious bond of engagement by the ethical subject. This link transforms moral awareness into religious belief. This transformation is the transition that links practical reason and the human will.

I am in agreement with Emil L. Fackenheim's suggestion in his essay "Immanuel Kant"²⁶ that the demand of absolute moral rectitude would have little affect if we experienced this demand in a disinterested way. We, however, are not disinterested but are engaged. Our experience of the absolute demand of our moral duty is the experience of engagement. Our "*engaged* standpoint of finite moral existence is *metaphysically ultimate for the philosopher no less than for the man in the street.*"²⁷

Caught in the crunch between our finite capacities and the absolute demand, we are driven to the belief that the dualisms we experience are not ultimate. This belief is expressed from our limited finite moral standpoint as "symbolic anthropomorphisms."²⁸ The

terms in which this belief is expressed must not be understood unequivocally, but only analogically. Simply stated, our notion of God is a concept we are driven to as a way out of a moral conundrum. The idea expresses our radical inability to understand our moral predicament, that is, that we, as finite moral agents, are expected to achieve that which can only be expected of God.²⁹ As Fackenheim suggests, Kant wants to prove that "belief in immortality and God is implicit in finite moral consciousness. He seeks to develop, not philosophical concepts of God and immortality, but the concepts of God and immortality which are implicit in finite moral consciousness."³⁰ Fackenheim believes that if these "religious" beliefs entailed in Kant's moral philosophy seem inadequate, the fault lies not in Kant but in ourselves—in certain characteristics of our finite moral consciousness.³¹

Schleiermacher, however, concluded that the unsatisfactory nature of Kant's theory lay not in ourselves but in Kant. Kant's division of philosophy into theoretical and practical reason, Schleiermacher argued, exacerbated rather than solved the problem. This division failed to identify the "common seed" out of which both theoretical reason and practical reason arise (S19). Kant failed to identify a transition by means of which the logical, the ethical, and the physical aspects of human experience could be understood as inter-related facts of human nature. To find such a transition, Schleiermacher concluded, a new paradigm for human nature must be developed (S19–21).

Schleiermacher knew that our idea of God is a creation of our finite standpoint as human beings. The idea of God, Schleiermacher argues in his *Dialektik*, is always inadequate and entails contradictions (D436). This, for Schleiermacher, was not the problem. Rather, the problem he found with Kant's rational theology is that the *idea of God* became associated with *that to which the idea refers* (D436). This ongoing conflation of the two is unfortunate and has the appearance of atheism (D436), he argued. Schleiermacher believed that "Kant's polemic" against religion was a case in point of this conflation. The "practical one-sidedness" of Kant's rational theology has its roots in this misunderstanding (D436).

Schleiermacher strove to separate himself from this "appearance of atheism." To do so, he had to complete the errant unity [*fehlenden Einheit*] of moral (religious) consciousness that Kant's depiction of the experience of engagement of the ethical subject entailed. In his *Sittenlehre*, Schleiermacher affirms that Kant is

indeed correct in seeking to establish a theology not founded on empirical knowledge. Rather, a "transcendental theology," the cornerstone in the foundation of all knowledge, is required (S23). But, Schleiermacher continues, let no one be deceived that Kant has actually discovered this foundation.

Schleiermacher believed that God is "ungiven." This ineffability, however, must not be confused with the 'God' of religious consciousness.³² The idea 'God' and that to which it refers must not be confused. Schleiermacher strove to identify a higher standpoint in human nature that could maintain this distinction. To describe this standpoint, he had to redefine Kant's link between reason, the will to action, and the actual accomplishment of this action in the world. Kant had made the link the engaged self, the ethical subject. So, too, did Schleiermacher, but now the link between reason, will, and action was the engagement of the self that remains after thinking has been canceled. This engaged self is noncognizable because thinking has ceased. Using an insight from the work of Rudolf Odebrecht, we could say that Schleiermacher's assessment of religious engagement entailed the *coincidentia oppositorum* in which everything is put in the Nothing [*alles in das Nichts gestellt ist*].³³ This 'Nothing', as we shall see, refers to the nullpoint of thinking aligned to its noncognizable self. Schleiermacher's delineation of the human structure entailed in this 'Nothing' led him to the discovery of a rupture [*Spaltung*] in human consciousness that is the symbolic indication of the hidden ground of our unity as a cognitive and organic being (D435). Schleiermacher reached into this rupture and described what he felt, but only after overcoming seemingly "unconquerable difficulties."

In the second *Critique*, Kant suspended the domain of the senses as a determining factor in moral and religious self-definition, in order to render the human being a free agent. Thus Kant made the concept of freedom the

keystone of the whole architecture of the system of pure reason and even of speculative reason. All other concepts (those of God and immortality) which, as mere ideas, are unsupported by anything in speculative reason now attach themselves to the concept of freedom and gain, with it and through it, stability and objective reality. (CPrR 3–4)

But what is actually entailed in the suspension of the sensible domain? What is the structure of this suspension? What formula is

given to express this suspension so that it can be grasped in human consciousness? Finally, is such a complete suspension necessary in order to ensure the freedom of the human will, and thus, of moral agency?

Schleiermacher's Existential Link to 'God'

Schleiermacher believed that Kant's suspension of the sensible domain in order to make room for faith had failed to answer these questions. Kant's formulation for belief in God was therefore incomplete. Accordingly, Schleiermacher sought to develop his own answers to these questions in his *Dialektik* by suspending thinking in order to discover what, from the standpoint of the human being as part of the natural world, is suspended in sentient being. Wanting to find in the self as an organic agent of the world, the counterpart to that which propels one into faith, Schleiermacher acknowledged that this task presented him with "unconquerable difficulties" so long as he began with thinking and its thoughts (D423). How can thinking formulate that which it cannot think? Obviously, it cannot. Schleiermacher's quest would thereby have reached its end if human beings were simply the being of thinking, or the Cartesian *cogito*. Human beings, however, are more than this. Simply stated, Descartes had made a basic mistake in his formulation of the thinking subject.

According to Schleiermacher, the meaning of Descartes's proposition *Cogito, ergo sum* is that the subject, with regard to thinking, is identical in all of the alterations of its individual moments of thinking (D529). The basic problem with this formulation is that so long as a different form of activity by the subject is not taken into account, there is no basis for the subject to think of its moments of thinking as differing one from the other. Without this *difference*, there is no way in which the identity of the subject can be affirmed [*behaupten*].

By contrast, Schleiermacher does not allow this separation of thinking and being to stand as a basis for self-consciousness. Rather, self-consciousness becomes, in Schleiermacher's work, the identity of the two (D529). Our being is not simply an expression of thinking; we are also the being that does the thinking. Our thinking, according to Schleiermacher, is an expression of our organic nature (D528n). The self, from this standpoint, is an organic agent that generates

thought. Our being is the power of life in existence. Thinking is an expression of this power. The two, however, are not the same.

Kant, as we have seen, elevated 'man' "above himself as a part of the world of sense" (CPrR 86). But Kant also knew that reason stretches its wings in vain when it attempts to soar above the world of sense by the mere power of speculation (A591; B619). Schleiermacher wished to bring man back to his senses.

An entry in Schleiermacher's journal in 1800 serves as graphic illustration of his intention to reunite the mind with its body. Here, he wrote that "The human being is an ellipse; one focus is the brain and the other the genitals."³⁴ This entry is in keeping with the bodily imagery found in his *On Religion*, first published in 1799.³⁵

In the first edition of *On Religion*, Schleiermacher uses the imagery of the body's sense organs and the metaphor of the bridal embrace to illustrate the original unity of mind and body, subject and object, thinking and being, percept and perceiver, which religious experience presupposes.

In describing the "first mysterious moment" in sense perception in which sense organ and its object "have so to speak, become one and have flowered into one another—before both return to their original place," Schleiermacher's description of this "indescribable" and "fleeting" moment deserves to be cited at length. Concerning this original unity, Schleiermacher writes:

It is as fleeting and transparent as the first scent with which the dew gently caresses the waking flowers, as modest and delicate as a maiden's kiss, as holy and fruitful as a nuptial embrace; indeed, not *like* these, but it *is itself* all of these. A manifestation, an event develops quickly and magically into an image of the universe. Even as the beloved and ever-sought-for form fashions itself, my soul flees toward it; I embrace it, not as a shadow, but as the holy essence itself. I lie on the bosom of the infinite world. At this moment I am its soul, for I feel all its powers and its infinite life as my own; at this moment it is my body, for I penetrate its muscles and its limbs as my own, and its innermost nerves move according to my sense and my presentiment as my own. With the slightest trembling the holy embrace is dispersed, and now for the first time the intuition stands before me as a separate form; I survey it, and it mirrors itself in my open soul like the image of the vanishing beloved in the awakened eye of a youth; now for the first

time the feeling works its way up from inside and diffuses itself like the blush of shame and desire on his cheek. This moment is the highest flowering of religion. If I could create it in you, I would be a god; may holy fate only forgive me that I have had to disclose more than the Eleusinian mysteries.

This is the natal hour of everything living in religion. But the same thing happens with it as with the first consciousness of human beings that retires into the darkness of an original and eternal creation and leaves behind for us only what it has produced. I can only make present to you the intuitions and feelings that develop out of such moments.³⁶

This is a far cry from the "sublime and mighty, moral duty" imagined by Kant, "that doeth embrace nothing charming or insinuating but requirest submission" (CPrR86).

In 1831, three years before his death, the mature Schleiermacher spoke with the restrained language of an elder statesman. Nevertheless, he reaffirmed his youthful affirmation of the unity of mind and body, by stating that "self-consciousness is consciousness of life" (D529). In self-consciousness, we are conscious of our own being and regard our being as part of the totality of being (D517n). This immediate awareness of being is not an abstraction. It is not a speculative awareness of the universal form of being (D529). It is not an awareness induced by the mind abstracted from life. That awareness is not the presence of life itself. That abstraction pertains to knowledge in and of itself, but not to the immediate experience of life.

In the third edition of *On Religion*, the mature Schleiermacher revised the passage cited above, but continued to affirm the importance of the unity of body and mind in "every religious stirring." Concerning this moment of unity, Schleiermacher now wrote:

It is the holy wedlock of the universe with incarnate reason, direct, superseding all error and misunderstanding, consummated in a creative embrace. When this happens to you, you lie, as it were, on the bosom of the infinite world. In that instant you are its soul, because you feel, if only through one part of you, all its powers and its unending life as your very own; it is your body, because you penetrate its muscles and members as if they were your own, and our

senses and expectations set its inmost nerves in motion. This is how the initial conception of every vital and original moment of your life is made. This is how each new moment comes to belong within your life's domain. Out of such a beginning, moreover, arises every religious stirring.³⁷

Schleiermacher sought a formula for self-consciousness that pertained to the presence of actual, organic life. This immediate presence of organic life was not taken into account in Kant's rational theology. (Gordon Michalson's claim that "Kant's deep suspicion of our bodies" helps account for Kant's explanation of the universality of radical evil certainly is sound.³⁸) As we can see in the quotes above, Schleiermacher, in stark contrast to Kant, celebrated the body as part of the human link to God.

As was suggested at the beginning of this chapter, Kant taught Schleiermacher how to think. Schleiermacher subsequently turned his enlightened, critically trained mind to the master's own work and found it one-sided. To rectify this imbalance, Schleiermacher had to devise a way of talking about the noncognizable self of human experience. Schleiermacher knew that this organic agency of the self is the site of the gap in Kant's critical philosophy. His task was to devise a new vocabulary that would allow him to grasp this self. To understand Schleiermacher's new lexicon, we must first understand the language he had to overcome. Kant's language, as we shall now see, prevented him from knowing that the organic self—the embodied self—was missing in his critical philosophy. Our discussion now turns to Kant's discovery of the gap in his work and the aporia in Kant's first *Critique* that kept this discovery so long from view.

Kant Discovers the Gap in His Critical Philosophy

In 1798, ten years after the publication of his second *Critique* and seventeen years after the publication of his first *Critique*, Kant came face to face with the gap in his critical system.³⁹ He realized that he had failed to disclose a necessary connection between the self's inner world and outer world. He had not established a necessary transition between the way in which the self thinks about nature as an a priori science (that is, metaphysics) and the way in which the various processes of nature empirically disclose themselves to us (that is, physics).⁴⁰ Bereft of this link to the world, the self lost its connection to its own body as part of the empirical world.

Eckart Förster has traced the way in which Kant discovered the gap in his critical philosophy. Kant's discovery, Förster argues, is directly related to the function Kant assigned to the *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science* in his critical philosophy.⁴¹ In the *Metaphysical Foundations*, Kant delineated the principles of external intuition in their entirety in order to prevent his *Critique* from "groping among meaningless concepts."⁴²

Kant intended his *Metaphysical Foundations* to demonstrate that the categories and principles of the understanding have real applicability and objective reality. Förster contends that this intended use by Kant of his *Metaphysical Foundations* can be adequately understood only if it is placed within the context of a shift that took place between the first and second editions of his first *Critique*.⁴³

In the first edition, Kant wished to demonstrate the objective validity of the pure categories of rational thought. According to Kant, these pure categories pertain only to appearances, to phenomena, not to noumena. Without this restriction to the phenomenal realm, Kant claims, "all meaning, that is, relation to the object, falls away" (A241). Transcendental philosophy specified not only the rule that is given in the pure concept of the understanding but could "also specify a priori the instance to which the rule is to be applied" (A135). In his first edition, Kant specified this a priori instance by means of *inner* intuition (in the Schematism chapter).

In the second edition, "a subtle shift" in Kant's position took place.⁴⁴ Kant now specified precisely which intuitions concerned him—*outer* intuitions. Henceforth, he must show that his transcendental principles apply a priori to instances of external, corporeal nature, that is, to empirical bodies. Accordingly, Kant now required the form and principles of *external* intuition—a general doctrine of body (B288–91). Without outer intuitions, Kant now argued in his *Critique*, metaphysics "gropes, uncertain and trembling among mere meaningless concepts." Kant intended his *Metaphysical Foundations* to delineate this general doctrine of body to which the transcendental principles of his critical philosophy apply a priori. Thus, in 1798, when Kant realized that his *Metaphysical Foundations* had not fulfilled its assigned role in his critical philosophy, a gap "suddenly" appeared before him.⁴⁵ Kant now realized that he had not yet demonstrated a necessary bond between the a priori principles of understanding and the external objects to which they apply. The ground of his claim that the 'I think' is a perception, or an indetermi-

nate empirical intuition, had not yet been demonstrated (B424). Simply stated, Kant now realized that he had lost the self's body.

Kant had lost the self's body by not explaining how the 'I think' can be an empirical proposition even though the 'I' in this proposition is not an empirical representation but is purely intellectual (B423). He had not demonstrated the interconnection between the thinking-self and the self as a corporeal being. As Förster notes, the question that now arose for Kant was how does the I "proceed from the 'I think' and determine the given manifold in such a way as to yield empirical knowledge of myself as an existing, corporeal being in space and time."⁴⁶

Kant's answer was the ether, which he conceived of as the collective totality of all possible experiences. He wanted to delineate an a priori system of corporeal nature, that is, the moving forces of matter, as a further elaboration of the "material" supplied to thought.⁴⁷ As Kant had suggested in his first *Critique*, experience is impossible without material (B430). Without this material, Kant believed that the *actus* 'I think' would not take place (B423). Kant was now confident that his present work on the ether would fill in the gap between thinking mind and physical body, and thereby complete "the task of the critical philosophy."⁴⁸

The ether might also be conceived of as the self in Kant's system. The self, Kant claimed, is at one and the same time both subject and object in respect of existence, in so far as the proposition 'I think' asserts 'I exist thinking' (B429). In other words, the self as *subject* is that which is aware of its existence, and the self as *object* is that of which the subject is aware. The collective totality of the self as object is therefore the very possibility of all of the subject's experience. This collective totality of the self coincides with Kant's description of the ether as the object of thought, the dynamic continuum of the agitating forces of matter.

The self as its own object became an object constituted by moving forces. Kant now attempted to discover the agitating forces of matter within the self that are the ground for the self's awareness of exterior matter. Not surprisingly, Kant wavered in the way in which he thought of the extensive continuum of matter known a priori by the self. This continuum is the "stuff" of thought but is it mental or physical? Both perspectives are implicit in Kant's position.⁴⁹ Förster believes that Kant finally affirmed that the ether was an ideal of reason. The ether was the way in which the mind must think about things.⁵⁰

Burkhard Tuschling, on the other hand, in his essay "Apperception and Ether: On the Idea of a Transcendental Deduction of Matter in Kant's *Opus postumum*"⁵¹ disagrees with Förster's conclusion. Tuschling believes that Kant's new principle blurred the distinction between mind and matter, and that this led to an "absolute idealism." Tuschling believes that primary matter is at the root of Kant's new deduction. All experience is united in an absolute totality, that is, in the concept of an object. This object is now the only object of possible experience. From Tuschling's perspective, Kant attempted to establish, a priori, "the absolute totality of the synthetic unity of perception," or "the material principle of the unity of possible experience"⁵²

Kant sought to demonstrate how this totality could be deduced from the self because the self as its own object is the collective totality of material without which experience would be impossible.⁵³ The object of understanding was no longer a posteriori but a priori to empirical, sensible data. According to Tuschling, "the borderlines between intuition, concept of the understanding, and concept of reason, or, respectively, between Aesthetic, Analytic, and Dialectic [were blurred]."

Tuschling concluded that Kant, in taking this step, never made it to the other side of the gap.⁵⁴ He never found the "missing link" between apperception and the ether. Kant had wanted to maintain his realist postulate, but he could not rectify the standpoint of his absolute idealism with his claim that there is indeed a world ontologically distinct from us but nevertheless necessarily aligned to our pure categories of thought.

Förster disagrees with Tuschling's conclusion and argues that Kant wavered. Förster believes, however, that Kant finally reaffirmed the basic tenets of his critical system by making the unique object of experience an ideal.⁵⁵

I shall not attempt to arbitrate this dispute between Förster and Tuschling. Rather, I follow the lead of Jules Vuillemin, who, in his formal response to both positions, set aside these differences as merely technical in the light of a far "more questionable" assumption by Kant in his theoretical deduction.⁵⁶ Kant assumed that the concept—"the very possibility of experience"—has meaning. This concept, Vuillemin suggests, "is probably the most elusive concept in transcendental philosophy."⁵⁷ It is elusive, Vuillemin suggested, because it is illusionary: "Kant's struggle . . . was a struggle after a chimera."

Vuillemin's criticism questions the very heart of Kant's Copernican revolution. Kant sought to determine an a priori condition of the self that makes determinate experience possible. This is the purpose of his transcendental deduction in the first *Critique*. Kant's critical philosophy is not solely concerned with the rules and principles of knowledge of the phenomenal world. He believed that the foundation of knowledge must be sought within the self. He also believed that this foundation was not something subjective, which is simply linked to the inner state of the individual subject. Rather, this experience pertains to consciousness in general. Kant referred to this state as transcendental apperception in 1781 but retreated from this term because of the charge of idealism. Experience, however, subsequently presupposed for Kant "the sensible percept outside the individual and subjective frame of the subject of perception and this gave to it its character of objectivity and its own validity."⁵⁸ This is the heart of Kant's realist postulate, which he never purposely sought to abandon.

Schleiermacher never challenged Kant's realist postulate. Nor did Schleiermacher question the legitimacy of establishing the unity of the self as the link between thinking mind and organic matter. Schleiermacher simply questioned the soundness of Kant's own explanation of this link. Wilhelm Dilthey believes that Kant's influence on Schleiermacher's *Dialektik* rests upon the fundamental Kantian idea of the link between our (inner) concepts and the (outer) world. Kant, Dilthey argues, demonstrated that there is no metaphysics exceeding the world of experience of science. Rather, "where any actual thinking is, it is there linked with the matter [*Materie*] of our experience."⁵⁹ It is this link that led Schleiermacher to proclaim that Kant had brought "back reason from the desert wastes of metaphysics into its true appointed sphere."⁶⁰

Kant's a priori Aporia: The Two Selves in Kant's First *Critique*

The gap in Kant's system could be kept from view by a basic equivocation in Kant's first *Critique*: Kant's doctrine of the self was ambiguous—or to use Michalson's term, it "wobbled."⁶¹ The same term [*Selbst*] referred both to thinking as an original, spontaneous act (B130) and to self-consciousness as the 'I think', the *representation* of this spontaneous act (B132).

The original act is unmediated and generative. It generates thought and is that which is required if we are to attain consciousness. In other words, if thinking about something entails the production of mental representations, we must first have the very capacity to generate these representations. This capacity is the actual generating of representations. This generating activity is thinking, which is an original, spontaneous act of understanding.

Kant called this fundamental human capacity to generate thought so as to be able to think about things the "faculty of understanding" (B130). The spontaneous act to which Kant referred in Proposition fifteen of his "Transcendental Deduction of the Pure Concepts of the Understanding" is thus not a determinate or determinable thing, but rather an act—an act of understanding. It is that which makes our awareness of things possible. This spontaneous act of understanding is the first referent for the *I* in Kant's theory of the self. This self is the pure, unmediated activity of thinking. Here, there is no distinction between subject and object; the one *is* the other. This act of generating thought is preconscious.

The representation of this act, on the other hand, refers to a conscious self rather than to a preconscious activity of the self. According to Kant, the original spontaneous act of understanding generates the representation 'I think'. This 'I think' representation is "empty" of sensible content (B132). Kant refers to this representation as the first and original consciousness of the subject. This consciousness is self-consciousness, the awareness of the self as thinking in general. This is what Kant means by the term pure or original apperception.⁶² The subject self is aware of itself as its own object. This thinking is first and foremost thinking about itself.

As stated above, Kant's first self is an original act, the second is a derivative of this original act. The second is generated by the original act and as such is a product of the original act. The first self refers to thinking in general. The second refers to (possible) consciousness of thinking, that is, to self-consciousness. This second self is actual deliberation [*Überlegung*], which Kant identifies as reflection (*reflexio*). It is deliberate thinking about thinking. It is consciousness of thinking as the awareness of thinking's relationship to itself. It is reflection on the *relationship* of thinking to the thinking entailed in thinking about something.

Dieter Henrich, in his essay "Kant's Notion of a Deduction," uses transcripts of Kant's lectures to clarify Kant's theory of reflection. Henrich divides Kant's theory into four steps,⁶³ which can be

summarized as follows: (1) Our cognitive capacities entail numerous operations; they are a "mingled web." (2) Each of these capacities has its own domain and is spontaneous in its operation. (3) These operations must be controlled and stabilized so as to keep them in the limits of their proper domain. This controlling and stabilizing process is the activity of reflection. Writes Henrich, "Without [reflection] we would, for example, confuse counting with calculating, analysis with composition, and so forth. Kant says explicitly that without reflection we would only utter meaningless sequences of words."⁶⁴ (4) Reflection is therefore our spontaneous awareness of our cognitive activities and of the principles and rules upon which they depend. Reflection, as such, is the precondition of rationality.

Reflection, accordingly, is not something that is achieved by conscious, deliberate philosophic investigation. Rather, it is the source of philosophic insight. The original unity of apperception is this process of "reflected control."⁶⁵ It is neither a concept nor a sensible intuition and is prior to all theorizing. This original unity of apperception has two tasks. First, it accompanies any reflectively accessible knowledge. Second, it is the origin of the system of the categories and the point of departure for the deduction of the legitimacy of their usage. The system of the categories implies that "reflection is omnipresent because reason is one."⁶⁶ According to Henrich, "The unity of reason, as far as the systematic structure of its principles is concerned, is represented in the most fundamental way by the implications of the thought "I think," the system of the categories."⁶⁷

The unity of reason, as Henrich rightly notes, is implied. It is not immediately given. As such, Henrich's explanation does not resolve the problem of the two selves in Kant's theory of the self. Neither Henrich's explanation of Kant's theory of reflection (and concomitantly of the unity of apperception) nor Kant himself makes adequate note of the distinction between the unity of reason and the reflection process that accompanies knowledge of it and is in fact the source of our knowledge of it.

Henrich concludes that Kant's theory is "conceived and designed in a perfectly consistent way."⁶⁸ Henrich, like Kant, has failed to adequately explain how the distinction between the actual activity of reason unifying itself, and the 'I think', which is the representation that *implies* this unifying activity in consciousness, is achieved. As Henrich rightly notes in his essay, "Fichte's Original Insight," Kant, like Descartes and Leibniz, did not think it philoso-

phy's purpose to examine the structure of self-consciousness. Exploration of the self was not deemed to be philosophy's task.⁶⁹ Self-consciousness simply played the role of a "grounding-principle."⁷⁰ Accordingly, the ground of this grounding principle remained in the shadows.

Herman-J. de Vleeschauwer suggests in the third volume of *La Deduction Transcendentale dans L'Oeuvre de Kant*⁷¹ that this gap was initially kept from view by Kant's equivocal use of the term 'the synthetic unity of apperception'. "In synthesis," Vleeschauwer states, "the whole mystery of the mechanism of objectification is to be found."⁷² But Kant leaves this mechanism in the dark. True synthesis, Vleeschauwer argues, is an act. It is a doing. It is a function. The synthetic unity of consciousness in Kant, on the other hand, is the form in which we are aware of the act. Kant, by making the act a presupposition of consciousness, treats this 'doing' as something that is done (in consciousness).⁷³ The synthetic unity of consciousness thus becomes both: the awareness of the act and the final referent for the act itself. The difference between the actual act and the awareness of the act is obscured by making the synthetic unity of consciousness the final reference for both. This difference obscured, the structure of their identity remains hidden. The 'wobbling' in Kant's theory of the self had received its final scaffold.

The imprecision in Kant's principle with regard to the identity and difference of the act and the form in which it is known results in an inadequate demarcation of the differences between synthetic unity, the analytic unity of judgment, and the actual act of synthesis. This imprecision and ambiguity can be traced back to the equivocal nature of Kant's theory of self, which, when all is said and done, is his highest epistemological reference.⁷⁴ Because the unity of the self in Kant's theory is never firmly established, the foundation upon which his entire philosophy rests remains unclear. Vleeschauwer suggests that we have only to remove the complex and intricate scaffolding of Kant's critical theory in order to discover that virtually nothing has been explained.⁷⁵

The gap in Kant's theory, once discovered, loomed too large to be ignored—even by Kant. Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel sought to solve the problem. So, too, did Schleiermacher. Schleiermacher dismissed Fichte's solution. He also rejected Schelling's and Hegel's solutions. Schleiermacher believed that none of these solutions actually retrieved the body that Kant had lost because of the one-sidedness of the idealism that each propounded.

Idealism's One-sidedness

Schleiermacher considered Fichte and Schelling the chief proponents of the two major schools in German Idealism of his generation.⁷⁶ Schleiermacher shared with Fichte and Schelling the Kantian-inspired goal of a philosophically demonstrated transcendent ground of all knowledge situated in the unity of the self. But he spurned the "one-sidedness" of both their philosophies.

Schleiermacher rejected Fichte's assertion of the absolute incompatibility of idealism and realism. Fichte claimed that idealism and realism could not be reconciled.⁷⁷ In the *Dialektik*, Schleiermacher sought to demonstrate the common ground of these two philosophic systems. To do this, he argued that freedom and necessity, like intellect and matter, are polar perspectives of the same empirical experience. Fichte's failure to understand this, Schleiermacher concluded, made his philosophy "one-sided" because of its over-emphasis on intellection (D428).

Schleiermacher believed that Schelling's error was the opposite of Fichte's error. Schelling's system was also one-sided, but here it was the intellect rather than nature that was not adequately addressed. According to Schleiermacher, Schelling had overlooked the efficacy of the *I* as a moral agent determining the world.⁷⁸ Concerning this, Schleiermacher stated in his *Drittes Tagebuch* that Schelling had intended his transcendental philosophy and his natural philosophy to be eternally opposing, but nevertheless equally corresponding, points of view. Accordingly, Schelling's transcendental philosophy ought to clarify the exterior world for the *I*, and his natural philosophy ought to clarify the *I* for the exterior world.

Schelling's speculative physics, which gives the principles of his natural philosophy, ought, thereby, to have as its corresponding equivalent a speculative doctrine of mind [*Geistlehre*], which is an outgrowth and further development of the principles of idealism. Schleiermacher believed that no such system was found in Schelling's work.⁷⁹

This negative assessment of the work of both Fichte and Schelling served as an important benchmark in the development of Schleiermacher's own work. The *Dialektik* is, in part, an attempt by Schleiermacher to establish the philosophic foundation for an adequate theory of ethics and physics by using principles that he felt both Fichte and Schelling had inadequately developed.

Dilthey judged Schleiermacher alone among Kant's successors to have held fast to the analytical method of Kant; he offered "not

metaphysics, but phenomenology of consciousness."⁸⁰ Michael Ermarth, in his book *Wilhelm Dilthey: The Critique of Historical Reason*, cogently summarizes Dilthey's assessment of Schleiermacher. Dilthey thought that Schleiermacher avoided the dualism of Kant, the extremely subjectivist, even solipsistic idealism of Fichte, and the rationalist monism of Hegel by propounding a continuously creative interaction between thought and being, mind and nature, self and world. Contending that Kant and Fichte had given only *formal* autonomy to the subject, Schleiermacher aspired to put the full content of experience in the place of Fichte's "empty" transcendental ego. He rebuked existing forms of idealism for portraying *Geist* as active but essentially "empty."⁸¹ Schleiermacher knew that only a model that held identity and difference to be codeterminate factors in thinking could solve the problem of the gap in Kant's critical philosophy.

When Kant made thought an essentially a priori constructive activity in the second edition of his first *Critique*, he left no room for realism, that is, for an ontologically independent reality as a determining factor in this construction.⁸² Vleeschauer contends that this is the way in which "the Critical philosophy of 1787 [became] a reinforced idealism."⁸³ Vleeschauer acknowledges that this charge against Kant of a reinforced idealism in the second edition of his *Critique* goes against the "whole tradition of past Kantian scholarship [which] sees there a more powerful realism."

Wolfgang Carl, writing half a century after Vleeschauer, reaches a similar conclusion. Kant, Carl argues, assumed rather than proved that the rules that govern the self's unity actually correspond to the content of its objects of thought. Writes Carl,

The error is that one takes a unity that consists in representations, belonging to a unitary subject, to be a unity exhibited by the representations themselves. Whereas the first unity is based on the unity of the thinking subject, the second unity concerns the representation's interconnectedness, which must be specified by reference not to the subject but to the content of the representations. The first kind of unity can be realized without the second one.⁸⁴

Carl, like Vleeschauer, also takes the received tradition of Kantian scholarship to task. Carl notes that "[m]odern commentators have referred to Kant's deduction of the categories as 'the mystery' or as 'the jungle'."⁸⁵ This is problematic because the "cornerstone" of Kant's reasoning—his notion of apperception—is

revealed therein.⁸⁶ This cornerstone refers to the self's awareness of itself, unmediated by sensible intuitions, as the same unity of consciousness. This self-awareness is pure thinking. It is thinking aware of itself solely by means of thinking. This "cornerstone" of Kant's reasoning, as such, is the apperceived unity of the self (subject) as the act of thinking—as that which combines the objects of thought. This manner of relating all of the self's representations to itself generates the representation 'I think' in the subject. This designation represents the subject's "perception" of itself as thinking.⁸⁷

Kant refers to this ongoing unity of the selfsame consciousness as "one universal self-consciousness." Writes Kant,

For the manifold representations, which are given in an intuition, would not be one and all *my* representations, if they did not all belong to one self-consciousness. As *my* representations (even if I am not conscious of them as such) they must conform to the condition under which alone they *can* stand together in one universal self-consciousness, because otherwise they would not all without exception belong to me. (B132–33)

This "one universal self-consciousness" is the foundation of Kant's theory of the objectivity of the pure categories of the understanding. All representations must conform to the conditions entailed in the self's constant unity as the selfsame consciousness. Self-consciousness is an ongoing unity that does not shift with its empirical circumstance. This is the universal that remains constant in all actual knowledge.

As we have seen, Kant's delineation of this one universal self-consciousness was problematic. His discussion entailed a basic ambiguity in his reference to the self. Kant's theory did not acknowledge the difference between the self's actual act of combining disparate elements of thinking (that is, synthesis) and the self's awareness of this unity of thinking, which has been brought about through its own synthesizing activity.

Schleiermacher rejected all delineations of this pure act of the self as sheerly a mental activity. He sought to demonstrate this in his *Dialektik* by delineating the actual nature of the pure act of the self. To do this, he had to establish a standpoint by means of which the pure act of the self could be grasped. Fichte (and J. S. Beck) attempted to establish that same position. While Fichte asked us to "see" it, Schleiermacher expected us to "feel" it.