

SUNY Series in Philosophy  
George R. Lucas, Editor

# Figuring the Self

*Subject, Absolute, and Others  
in Classical German Philosophy*

*David E. Klemm and  
Günter Zöller, Editors*

*State University of New York Press*

Published by  
State University of New York Press, Albany

© 1997 State University of New York

All rights reserved

Printed in the United States of America

No part of this book may be used or reproduced  
in any manner whatsoever without written permission.  
No part of this book may be stored in a retrieval system  
or transmitted in any form or by any means including  
electronic, electrostatic, magnetic tape, mechanical,  
photocopying, recording, or otherwise without the  
prior permission in writing of the publisher.

For information, address State University of New York  
Press, State University Plaza, Albany, NY, 12246

Production by E. Moore  
Marketing by Fran Keneston

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Figuring the self : subject, absolute, and others in classical German  
philosophy / David E. Klemm and Günter Zöller, editors.

p. cm. — (SUNY series in philosophy)

Chiefly proceedings of a conference held Apr. 9–11, 1992, at the  
University of Iowa.

Includes index.

ISBN 0-7914-3199-1 (hc : alk. paper). — ISBN 0-7914-3200-9 (pbk.  
: alk. paper)

1. Self (Philosophy) 2. Absolute, The. 3. Philosophy,  
German—18th century. 4. Philosophy, German—19th century.

I. Klemm, David E., 1947– . II. Zöller, Günter, 1954–

III. Series.

B2748.S44F54 1996

193—dc20

96-12018

CIP

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

## Contents

Introduction <i>David E. Klemm and Günter Zöller</i>	vii
<i>Part 1</i> <i>Self and Subject</i>	
1. Subjectivity and Individuality: Survey of a Problem <i>Manfred Frank</i>	3
2. Self as Matter and Form: Some Reflections on Kant's View of the Soul <i>Richard E. Aquila</i>	31
3. Kant and the Self: A Retrospective <i>Karl Ameriks</i>	55
4. An Eye for an I: Fichte's Transcendental Experiment <i>Günter Zöller</i>	73
<i>Part 2</i> <i>Self and the Absolute</i>	
5. Self-Consciousness and Speculative Thinking <i>Dieter Henrich</i>	99
6. Romantic Conceptions of the Self in Hölderlin and Novalis <i>Jane E. Kneller</i>	134

7. Realizing Nature in the Self: Schelling on Art and Intellectual Intuition in the <i>System of Transcendental Idealism</i> <i>Richard L. Velkley</i>	149
8. Schleiermacher on the Self: Immediate Self-Consciousness as Feeling and as Thinking <i>David E. Klemm</i>	169
<i>Part 3</i> <i>Self and Others</i>	
9. Absolute Subject and Absolute Subjectivity in Hegel <i>Walter Jaeschke</i>	193
10. Appropriating Selfhood: Schleiermacher and Hegel on Subjectivity as Mediated Activity <i>Jeffrey L. Hoover</i>	206
11. "The Root of Humanity": Hegel on Communication and Language <i>John Durham Peters</i>	227
12. Heidegger and Wittgenstein on the Subject of Kantian Philosophy <i>David G. Stern</i>	245
Contributors	261
Subject Index	263
Author Index	267

## Introduction

*David E. Klemm and Günter Zöller*

The self is notoriously elusive. It is not something to be encountered like other things in the world. Rather, it provides the very perspective or standpoint from which any such encounter with other things can take place. Accordingly, our ordinary ways of thinking about the world and its objects are ill-suited to articulating the peculiar status and function of the self. Not surprisingly, then, philosophical elucidations of the self have been the point of origin for new ways of thinking not only about the self but also about all the other things from which the self is to be differentiated and to which it is yet intimately related. This holds equally for past attempts, such as Descartes' introduction of the *cogito* as the ultimate foundation of certainty in knowledge, and contemporary efforts in philosophy of mind, such as the semantics of indexical self-reference.

A particularly intriguing way of thinking about the self can be found in the work of Immanuel Kant and his successors, the German idealists. In the decades around 1800, these philosophers developed detailed and varied theories that place the self at the very center of philosophical reflection. The classical German way of thinking about the self is characterized by a decidedly idealist bent. The self is understood not only as the ground of all knowledge concerning the world, but also as the ground of the very reality of the world. The idealist extension of the self's original, epistemological function to a larger, metaphysical role made it imperative to develop a specific terminology that addressed the radical, world-constituting function of the self. The absolute-ness of the self as the universal condition of reality was expressed by such constructs as "subject," "subject-object," and "spirit."

Two hundred years after its inception, the German idealist thinking about the self is both a source of embarrassment and a challenge. The unabashed

idealist stance of the German idealists has found virtually no followers in contemporary philosophy, and even leads to revisionist, nonmetaphysical readings of the classical German authors themselves. And yet the sustained reflection on the structure of the self that is to be found in Kant and his successors remains an important point of orientation and inspiration for historically informed attempts at a theory of human selfhood.

Much of the recent attempts to retrieve classical German thinking about the self for contemporary philosophy of mind have originated in the work of the German philosopher Dieter Henrich and a number of his associates, most prominently among them Manfred Frank. In works like theirs, historical research into the exceedingly difficult central arguments of Kant and his idealist successors is carried out in a spirit at once critical and appreciative. Moreover, the reconstruction and assessment of classical German theories about the self has been increasingly informed by related discussions in analytic philosophy of mind, thus contributing to an emerging dialogue between different historical periods and philosophical traditions.

The essays in the present volume partake in this ongoing project of reintroducing classical German thinking about the self into contemporary philosophical discussion. They provide the English-speaking reader with a survey of the main issues and positions to be found in German thinking about the self around 1800, while also introducing a contemporary perspective on the historical material. The essays present, discuss, and assess accounts of the self in the main philosophical authors of the period. In addition to the primary figures—Kant, Schelling, and Hegel—some of the lesser-known participants in the debate on the self receive critical attention, among them the philosophical theologian Schleiermacher and the poets Hölderlin and Novalis. In disciplinary terms, the accounts of the self covered span a broad range of areas, from metaphysics and epistemology through ethics, political and social philosophy to aesthetics and philosophy of religion. The volume as a whole thus provides a detailed and comprehensive introduction to the philosophy of German idealism through the focus of the theory of the self.

The essays are organized under three headings, each of them addressing a key concept for figuring the self in classical German philosophy. Part One examines the role of the self as the subject underlying our experience of the world. Manfred Frank carefully distinguishes between the fact that selves have consciousness of their very being (“subjectivity”) and the fact that selves are unique and not interchangeable (“individuality”). Frank places the Kantian and post-Kantian discussion of the self into the larger context of modern and contemporary thinking about mind and consciousness. Richard Aquila provides a detailed reading of Kant’s account of the subject of mental activity. Aquila stresses the proximity of Kant’s doctrine of inner sense to a nonmetaphysical theory of the soul. Karl Ameriks surveys the recent interpretations of

Kant’s theory of mind. Ameriks’s critical assessment focuses on readings of Kant that draw on the work of Fichte. Günter Zöller presents Fichte’s transcendental theory of consciousness and self-consciousness. Zöller’s emphasis is on the methodological requirements for an adequate account of the subjectivity of the I.

Part Two examines the dependence of the self on some ultimate, absolute ground. Dieter Henrich argues for the role of metaphysical thinking in our understanding of the self and its place in the world. He focuses on the close connection between the self-relation expressed in the first-person singular pronoun, “I,” and the pure self-relation of the absolute developed by Hegel. Jane Kneller examines the accounts of selfhood that can be found in the novels of Hölderlin and Novalis. In these literary conceptions of selfhood, Kneller detects a critique of Fichte’s theory of self-consciousness and a return to Kant’s agnosticism about the ultimate nature and origin of the self. Richard Velkley discusses the relation between self and nature in Schelling’s theory of art. His focus is on the philosophical potential of art and on the role of the self as artistic genius. David Klemm presents Schleiermacher’s theory of mind, according to which the unity of the thinking self and the willing self lies in immediate self-consciousness or feeling. Klemm concentrates on Schleiermacher’s theological interpretation of immediate self-consciousness as both an empirical feeling and a transcendental cognition of the utter dependence of the self-positing “I” on an absolute ground he calls “God.”

Part Three is concerned with the mutual dependence of self and others. Walter Jaeschke clarifies Hegel’s complex position on the nature and value of subjectivity. He argues that Hegel’s critique of the principle of subjectivity in modern philosophy and romantic thought is entirely compatible with Hegel’s own conception of the infinite subject as mediated with its own other. Jeffrey Hoover compares the accounts of ownership in Schleiermacher and Hegel. Hoover shows how social and economic relations with other selves are part of the concrete realization of the self. John Durham Peters examines Hegel’s account of symbolic interaction through language. Peters reads Hegel’s treatment of self-consciousness and spirit as providing a theory of communication between selves. David Stern traces the Kantian heritage of the accounts of selfhood in Heidegger and Wittgenstein. Stern diagnoses a continued presence of Kant’s emphasis on the active and structuring function of the self.

Earlier versions of ten of the twelve essays collected here were presented at a conference on the classical German theory of the self that was held at the University of Iowa under the title *Figuring the Self* on April 9–11, 1992. The conference was sponsored by the Department of Philosophy, the School of Religion, and the Project on Rhetoric of Inquiry at the University of Iowa, with additional support from the National Endowment for the Humanities. The

conference was in turn the culminating event of a semester-long Scholars Workshop, directed by the editors of the present volume, and supported by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities under the auspices of the Project on Rhetoric of Inquiry at the University of Iowa.

The two essays not originally presented at the Iowa conference, by Manfred Frank and Dieter Henrich, were included in order to provide some of the German context for the work of the American-based scholars represented in this volume. Frank's essay was published originally under the title "Subjektivität und Individualität: Überblick über eine Problemlage," in *Selbstbewußtsein und Selbsterkenntnis* (© 1991 Philipp Reclam jun. GmbH & Co., Stuttgart). Henrich's essay, originally entitled "Selbstbewußtsein und spekulatives Denken," was written for the French journal *Critique* and thus with a French audience in mind. It subsequently appeared in *Fluchtlinien: Philosophische Essays* (© Suhrkamp Verlag Frankfurt am Main 1982). The two essays were translated by Günter Zöllner and appear here with the kind cooperation of the authors and the permission of the publishers.

The pieces by Frank and Henrich exemplify two main positions in current German thinking about the self. Frank contrasts the semantic and epistemological orientation of the account of selfhood in analytic philosophy of mind with the constitutive role of understanding and interpretation in self-conscious individuals as emphasized by the hermeneutical tradition. By contrast, Henrich draws on the tradition of Hegelian metaphysics and portrays the self as transcending the natural world and its ontology of individuality altogether, relating it instead to the absolute conceived as mediated self-relation. While Frank suggests a complementary relation between Continental and analytic thinking on the mind, Henrich radically challenges the naturalism underlying virtually all current accounts of mind and self.

---

The editors wish to thank their colleagues in the Department of Philosophy, the School of Religion, and the Project on Rhetoric of Inquiry at the University of Iowa for supporting the Scholars Workshop and the conference that provided the basis for this collection of essays. Special thanks go to the executive director of the Project on Rhetoric of Inquiry, Kate Neckerman, and her staff, for their valuable help with all phases of the project, from the grant writing through the Workshop and conference organization. Valuable technical support in preparing the translation of Dieter Henrich's essay was provided by Maureen Morgan.

Following the lead of the Iowa conference, an international conference on the self in German philosophy was held at the University of Notre Dame in April 1994. A volume with papers from that gathering, edited by Karl Ameriks

and Dieter Sturma, has since appeared under the title *The Modern Subject: Conceptions of the Self in Classical German Philosophy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995). That volume contains two further pieces by Manfred Frank along with essays by German and American scholar-philosophers and includes a bibliography.

70. See, for example, Peirce, *Philosophical Writings*, pp. 247, 250, 39; Royce, *Problem*, vol. 2, passim.

71. See, Höhle, vol. 1, 8, and vol. 2, p. 384; Williams, *Recognition*, pp. 169, 199; and Williams, "Hegel's Concept," p. 18: "Perhaps no one has understood this [Hegel's theory of *Sittlichkeit*, with its central conception of *Geist* as social infinite] better than Josiah Royce in his book *The Problem of Christianity*."

72. See Royce's chapters on Kant, Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel in *The Spirit of Modern Philosophy* and *Lectures on Modern Idealism*. Royce is often called a Hegelian, but it was a label he resisted: see *Problem*, vol. 1, xi–xii.

73. Peirce, *Philosophical Writings*, p. 249.

74. Ibid.

75. Royce, *Problem*, vol. 2, p. 283.

76. Royce, *Problem*, vol. 2, p. 140ff.

77. Royce, *Problem*, vol. 2, p. 149.

78. Hegel, *Differenzschrift*, quoted in Plant, p. 90.

79. Royce, *Problem*, vol. 2, p. 160.

80. I am grateful to Marsha Paulsen Peters, Ben Peters, David J. Depew, Kenneth Cmiel, and Kate Neckerman for much-needed help and encouragement in the writing of this essay, and to all participants in the "Figuring the Self" Workshop for their learned and congenial company.

## Heidegger and Wittgenstein on the Subject of Kantian Philosophy

David G. Stern

### THE KANTIAN LEGACY

This essay explores some of the striking similarities between Heidegger's and Wittgenstein's criticisms of Kant's conception of the subject. Heidegger's interpretation of Kant's critical legacy, as set out in *Being and Time* and his lectures on Kant from the 1920s and 1930s, while Kantian in spirit, is deeply critical of the role Kant gave to the "transcendental subject," a world-constituting self outside the world. Similarly, Wittgenstein had the greatest respect for Kant's philosophical method and had accorded a crucial role to the transcendental subject in the *Tractatus*, yet entirely repudiated this conception of the self in his later work. Because the self, conceived of as the structure and subject of experience, plays such a crucial role in Kant's philosophy as a whole, these objections to Kant's conception of the subject also let us see how each of these philosophers continues the critical tradition that Kant began.

Before taking up Heidegger and Wittgenstein's appropriation and radical revision of Kant's conception of the subject, it will be helpful to indicate their historical context. Eighteen eighty-nine, the year in which Martin Heidegger and Ludwig Wittgenstein were born, in Germany and Austria respectively, lies midway between Kant's time and our own, precisely a hundred years after the French revolution and the decade in which Kant's three *Critiques* were published. Eighteen eighty-nine was also the year in which Adolf Hitler was born; all three were part of the generation that grew up immediately before World War I. There is no reason to think that either Heidegger or Wittgenstein influenced the other directly. However, in a discussion with Waismann and

Schlick, Wittgenstein did say that he could well understand what Heidegger meant by "Sein und Angst," explaining this by linking "Being and anxiety" with central themes in his own work:

Man feels the urge to run up against the limits of language. Think for example of the astonishment that anything at all exists. This astonishment cannot be expressed in the form of a question, and there is no answer whatever. Anything we might say is *a priori* bound to be mere nonsense.<sup>1</sup>

These commonalities can be traced to their shared debt to Kant and post-Kantian philosophy; to Kant, Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard, Frege, and Weininger in particular in the case of Wittgenstein, and a much wider range of figures in the nineteenth-century German tradition for Heidegger.<sup>2</sup> While this chapter stresses points of agreement between the two philosophers, there is no denying that there are enormous differences between the two: to mention only the most obvious, *Being and Time* is in the German tradition of systematic philosophical treatises, and employs an abstruse terminology; Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* avoids technical terminology and its style is highly unsystematic and untraditional. In fact, it is these very differences that makes the points of agreement I shall discuss all the more remarkable.<sup>3</sup>

The ambiguity in the use of the term "subject" in my title between subject as self or subjectivity, and subject as topic, or subject matter, is not just a play on words, for Kant's Copernican revolution gave the structure of the self an absolutely central and extremely paradoxical status. Kant held that we can have knowledge of the world we experience, a world of empirical phenomena, because it is a world that is, in part, a product of our own mental activity, a world we have constructed ourselves. At the same time, he denied that we can have any knowledge of a noumenal world, a world entirely independent of us. Copernicus's revolution put the sun at the center of the solar system, rather than the earth; Kant's revolution in philosophy puts the mind in the center, rather than the world. From a Kantian perspective, the Cartesian question of whether I really can know anything about the external world is fatally ambiguous. It is either the question of whether I can know about noumena, which are by nature unknowable, or it is the question of whether I can know about phenomena, which can be known. Kant's reply to skepticism about the external world is that the problem of how a mind can have knowledge of the external world depends on a misunderstanding, for mind and world are essentially interrelated. The same principles underlie both our mental lives and empirical knowledge. In the first chapter of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the "Analytic of Concepts," Kant argues that these unifying principles can be derived from the categories, the pure concepts of the understanding. This point, the crucial point of departure for all that follows, is summed up in the

final section of the introductory "Clue to the Discovery of All Pure Concepts of the Understanding."<sup>4</sup> In this passage, Kant emphasizes the common role of the categories in both judgment and experience:

The same function which gives unity to the various representations *in a judgement* also gives unity to the mere synthesis of representations *in an intuition*; and this unity, in its most general expression, we entitle the pure concept of the understanding. (A79/B104–05)<sup>5</sup>

In the next sentence, he restates this point, stressing the common role of the mind's activity in both cases:

The same understanding, through the same operations by which in concepts, by means of analytical unity, is produced the logical form of a judgement, also introduces a transcendental content into its representations, by means of the synthetic unity of the manifold in intuition in general. (A79/B104–05)

The structure of the self is also the structure of the not-self: both are constituted by the rule-governed activity of the transcendental subject. The transcendental subject is not an entity to be found or recognized within experience, but neither is it transcendent, altogether independent of experience; rather, it is like the vanishing point of a perspectival painting—a construction implied by the structure of what is pictured, but not present in it. But unlike such a focal point, or any other part of a painting, for that matter, its activity structures and constitutes the field of experience as a whole. As a result, the subject matter of philosophy becomes the uncovering of the structure of this philosophical conception of the subject of philosophy: as rule-governed transcendental activity.<sup>6</sup>

In doing this, Kant took the Cartesian conception of the self as a mental substance, a thinking thing, and split it into two: in addition to the empirical ego, the self we encounter in introspection, he also postulated the transcendental ego. This nonempirical subject underlies not only the empirical self but also empirical objects, structuring both mind and world. Its nonempirical, atemporal activity, governed by rational principles that can be deduced by philosophical reflection, thus became the principal subject matter for philosophical inquiry. This extraordinarily ambitious conception of the self, as not of this world yet nevertheless world-constituting, provided a radically new conception of philosophy, one that proved decisive not only for German idealism but also for much subsequent work in the phenomenological, hermeneutic, and analytic traditions.

We shall see that Wittgenstein and Heidegger formulated far-reaching critiques of the Kantian conception of the self. But this criticism is so radical

that, half a century later, despite the fact that they have become canonical figures in the history of philosophy, few philosophers have appreciated the true nature of their positive views about the nature of experience. For instance, Dieter Henrich, a leading Kant scholar and the author of an almost encyclopedic review of the intellectual context of Heidegger's Kant book and its reception,<sup>7</sup> touches on his treatment of self-consciousness in a single dismissive sentence:

Heidegger did, indeed, manage to slip past the philosophy of self-consciousness, but only at the price of simply leaving aside the real question with which it is preoccupied.<sup>8</sup>

Similarly, Ernst Tugendhat, another leading German philosopher who has been in the forefront of attempts to foster a dialogue between German and Anglo-American philosophy, rejects Heidegger's central term for his positive conception of human existence, *Dasein*, without any reservations at all. In a book that claims to make use of Heidegger's insights in order to situate the self within a social and practical context, while drawing on a supposedly Wittgensteinian logicolinguistic methodology, he writes:

I cannot see how the introduction of the term *Dasein* has had any positive sense. It is only a stylistic device that has unfortunate consequences, and we can better appropriate Heidegger's contribution to our complex of problems if we refrain as far as possible from the use of this term.<sup>9</sup>

With friends like that, who needs enemies? Wittgenstein's expositors have also proven to be his own worst enemies; despite his repeated explicit repudiation of behaviorism and solipsism in his own later writings, such blatant misreadings are still extremely popular, mainly, I think, because this enables philosophers to make superficial sense of his position and so dismiss it as a familiar error. As an emblematic example, I would offer the fact that the last chapter of Kripke's widely read book on Wittgenstein on rule-following, a case of just such a dismissive reading of Wittgenstein, has attracted none of the critical attention that has surrounded the first two chapters of that book.<sup>10</sup>

In Heidegger's case, the importance of Kant's work for his own is extensively documented. Kant is one of the most frequently cited authors in *Being and Time* (the other is Aristotle); one of the projected but unpublished Divisions of *Being and Time* was to have been devoted to Kant.<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, we can presume that most of what he would have said can be found either in his book *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, published in 1929, or the five sets of (published) lectures in which he discussed Kant extensively, given between 1925 and 1936.<sup>12</sup> They clarify Heidegger's conception of the relationship

between his own work and the history of philosophy, offer a powerful and original reading of Kant's philosophy, and also provide a commentary on every major portion of the text of Kant's first *Critique*.<sup>13</sup>

While Wittgenstein never engaged in this kind of extended exegesis, he too considered the *Critique of Pure Reason* "a work of the first rank."<sup>14</sup> We know that he read the first *Critique* out loud and discussed it with a friend while in a prisoner-of-war camp after the ending of World War I.<sup>15</sup> In the early 1930s, Wittgenstein explicitly acknowledged the Kantian character of his own concern with showing the limits of language, limits that are determined by the common but inexpressible structure of language and world:

The limit of language shows itself in the impossibility of describing the fact which corresponds to a sentence (is its translation) without repeating that very sentence.

(What we are dealing with here is the Kantian solution to the problem of philosophy.)<sup>16</sup>

In a lecture given at about the same time, Wittgenstein even described the transcendental method—"Kant's critical method without the peculiar applications Kant made of it"—as "the right sort of approach":

Descartes and others had tried to start with one proposition such as "Cogito, ergo sum" and work from it to others. Kant disagreed and started with what we know to be so and so, and went on to examine the validity of what we suppose we know.<sup>17</sup>

## HEIDEGGER ON "THE SCANDAL OF PHILOSOPHY"

While both Heidegger and Wittgenstein were deeply influenced by what Wittgenstein calls the "Kantian solution of the problem of philosophy," neither showed much sympathy for Kant's detailed execution of his solution. Kant had regarded the common structure of judgment and intuition as only the clue to an enormously complex web of argument that would establish our right to employ the categories and so provide a refutation of idealism, skepticism, and dogmatism. Instead, they saw this shared structure as itself containing the answer to problems about the existence of the external world, and Kant's lengthy arguments as betraying his inability to get beyond the fundamental dualism of subject and object that prevented him from articulating the positive insights he had achieved. This rejection of the Kantian problematic is particularly clear if we turn from the intricacies of the Transcendental Deduction to the much more clear-cut argument that Kant presented in the "Refutation of Ideal-

ism,"<sup>18</sup> first published in the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. There, Kant endeavors to resolve the "scandal of philosophy" that there had been no "satisfactory proof" of "the existence of things outside us."<sup>19</sup> Heidegger begins his reply by stating that:

The "scandal of philosophy" is not that this proof has yet to be given, but that *such proofs are expected and attempted again and again.*<sup>20</sup>

Heidegger's reason for his position, which follows immediately in the text, is that Kant's demand for such a proof stems from a misunderstanding of our existence that splits it into an independent subject and object:

Such expectations, aims, and demands arise from an ontologically inadequate way of starting with *something* of such a character that independently *of it* and "outside" *of it* a "world" is to be proved as present-at-hand. It is not that the proofs are inadequate, but that the kind of Being of the entity which does the proving and makes requests for proofs has *not been made definite enough*. . . . If *Dasein* is understood correctly, it defies such proofs, because, in its Being, it already *is* what subsequent proofs deem necessary to demonstrate for it.<sup>21</sup>

Like Kant, Heidegger rejects the Cartesian conception of the self as a "thinking thing," arguing that it reifies the structure of our experience, turning an activity into a fictitious object. But he contends that since Western philosophy took the Cartesian turn there has been an almost unavoidable pressure toward conceiving of ourselves as things, whether or not this is modified by the qualification that we are distinctively mental things. The grammar of subject and predicate, inherited by Descartes from the scholastics and taken over in turn by Kant, provided a conceptual scheme of substance and accident, within which it was impossible to articulate a genuine alternative.<sup>22</sup> According to Heidegger (and also Wittgenstein<sup>23</sup>), this prephilosophical conception of what there is has shaped the form of our reflective conception of ourselves; for all Kant's post-Cartesian concern with the nature of thought, the structure of the alternatives that were open to him was determined by an ontology that had become so accepted that he was never able to fully work his way out of it.<sup>24</sup> As a result, Heidegger contends that Kant's conception of the subject of experience is much closer to Descartes than might appear at first sight. Kant, he alleges, never positively clarified the ontological status of the subject, and so was unable to avoid slipping back into thinking of the self as substance. Heidegger's thoroughgoing rejection of traditional questions about the nature of the subject and its relation to the world requires a radical reconstrual of the traditional philosophical vocabulary.

*Ontologically*, every idea of a "subject"—unless refined by a previous ontological determination of its basic character—still posits the subjectum (*hypokeimenon*) along with it, no matter how vigorous one's ontical protestations against the "soul substance" or the "reification of consciousness." The thinghood itself which such reification implies must have its ontological origin demonstrated if we are to be in a position to ask what we understand *positively* when we think of the unreified *Being* of the subject, the soul, the consciousness, the spirit, the person.<sup>25</sup>

Another guiding insight that Heidegger and Wittgenstein take from Kant is that the central task of philosophy is the investigation of the conditions of possibility for our lives to have the structure that they do. Where they part company is in their respective conceptions of the structure of our lives. For Kant, these are conditions for the possibility of experience, to be found in the categorial structure of the understanding, that activity by which the transcendental subject structures the data which are given to sensibility. For Heidegger, they are constitutive characteristics of *Dasein*, to be found in the existential analytic of *Dasein*. The later Wittgenstein, however, is deeply suspicious of the very idea that the structure of our lives lends itself to systematic formulation; much of the secondary literature on "forms of life" is best understood as attempting to find ways of reappropriating his antisystematic ideas within a recognizable philosophical system.

However much Kant endeavored to correct Descartes' conception of the self as a thinking thing, he still agrees with him in thinking that philosophy must start out from a conception of the experience of an isolated individual and ask how that individual can have knowledge of an external world. Like Descartes, he conceives of that experience as a mental representation which may or may not be of anything beyond that representation. Thus, one can give a characterization of any given experience which leaves it quite open whether there is anything nonmental that it is an experience of. Heidegger contends that it is these more fundamental Cartesian presuppositions that must be given up if we are to avoid slipping back into a dualistic ontology: the subject of philosophy is not a worldless "I," but rather *Dasein*, which is essentially worldly. Philosophy has no privileged starting point in reflection on the nature of the mental of the kind that both Descartes and Kant unquestioningly take for granted. Like Wittgenstein in his treatment of the private object of experience, Heidegger questions whether the notion of such a worldless something or the subject that is correlated with it is really intelligible:

Even the "I think something" is not definite enough ontologically as a starting point, because the "something" remains indefinite. If by this "something" we understand an entity *within-the-world*, then it tacitly

implies that the *world* has been presupposed; and this very phenomenon of the world co-determines the state of being of the "I," if indeed it is to be possible for the "I" to be something like "I think something." In saying "I," I have in view the entity which in each case I am as an "I-am-in-a-world." Kant did not see the phenomenon of the world . . . as a consequence the "I" was again forced back to an *isolated* subject, accompanying representations in a way which is ontologically quite indefinite.<sup>26</sup>

In short, because Kant lacks an alternative ontology with which he can replace the traditional one he was ineluctably forced back into the embrace of the traditional conception.

### OUT OF THE FLY-BOTTLE

In place of the Cartesian dualities of thinking things and extended things, and of thoughts and their thinker, Heidegger and Wittgenstein offer us conceptions of ourselves as unitary, essentially worldly beings. In a sense, Heidegger's use of the term *Dasein* is intended as a successor concept for traditional notions of the subject (the person, the consciousness, the thing that thinks). But at the same time it is also presented as a central term in a system that aims to undermine such conceptions altogether. Consequently, *Dasein* must have a different grammar from its predecessors: it must be impossible to speak of *Dasein* as a thing, or as having properties. Here, it might seem, we are running up against the limits of language: How are we to speak of ourselves, then? Heidegger's answer is that *Dasein* does not have the same kind of Being as things such as furniture or trees. Things and *Dasein* are both beings, but they "are" in different ways. Things, such as the Cartesian's thinking thing or physical objects, are present-at-hand (*vorhanden*); *Dasein*, on the other hand, is an existent (has *Existenz*). Put in a more linguistic mode, we might say that the grammar of talk about *Dasein* must be different from the grammar of talk about things. For things present-at-hand around us, Heidegger retains the traditional grammar of subject and predicate, of things and their properties. *Dasein* (and any other existent, for that matter) has certain essential structural features—Heidegger calls them "existentialia"—and other nonessential aspects, "characteristics," which may or may not be instantiated by a given *Dasein*. Unlike "person" or "subject," there is no plural form of the word. Nor is *Dasein* to be understood as a property that each of us has or is. Nevertheless, *Dasein* is most intimately related to particular, individuable, countable creatures: ourselves. Indeed, Heidegger insists *Dasein* has *Jemeinigkeit*, or "individual mine-ness."<sup>27</sup> The root of this difficulty lies in Heidegger's irreducibly social account of the nature of human beings: that we can think of certain human beings as

subjects is a consequence of our socialization into certain practices.<sup>28</sup> *Dasein* is Heidegger's term for the whole interrelated nexus of roles, practices, norms, customs, institutions, and so forth which constitute human society. People *are Dasein*, not in the sense that they are literally identical with the whole social nexus, but because they manifest all the essential structural aspects—existentialia—of *Dasein*.

Another essential aspect of *Dasein*'s Being is that to be *Dasein* is to be an interpreting being. In other words, to be a case of *Dasein* is to be a being which has a certain understanding of what it is, or as Heidegger puts it, "takes a stand on its own being." This "preunderstanding" is not to be conceived of on the model of an explicit self-conception, for Heidegger does not only want to avoid the subject-object dichotomy but also the consequent representation of *Dasein*'s self-understanding as a purely conceptual matter. Partly this is because such a way of conceiving of matters is unfair to the phenomena in being overly theoretical: we do not (usually and for the most part) think of ourselves as taking a stand on all of the various issues that continually arise for us. Rather, we simply find that we have ways of dealing with them which embody a particular stand on the matter in hand. Heidegger maintains that if we look carefully, we will see that the Kantian dualism of subject and object, like the Cartesian dichotomy of mind and matter:

splits the phenomena asunder, and that there is no prospect of putting it together again from the fragments . . . What is decisive for ontology is to prevent the splitting of the phenomenon—in other words, to hold its positive phenomenal content secure.<sup>29</sup>

In place of talking of the stand we take on our Being in terms of behavior or self-representation, Heidegger talks of ways of being *Dasein*, ways of instantiating particular aspects of the overall nexus of socially determined roles and ways of acting that are available to us.

Thus Heidegger's strategy in *Being and Time* depends on the constructive project of giving a positive characterization of the everyday world in which we live and move. He argues that philosophical reflection arises out of this "hermeneutic of everydayness," and is to be understood as an impoverished offshoot of our ordinary activity. This leads him to the conclusion that the foundationalist project of "grounding" our everyday knowledge on the basis of a distinctively philosophical account of ourselves and our place in the world tacitly presupposes the very knowledge it is supposed to vindicate. In its place, Heidegger offers us an intricate interpretation of our prephilosophical understanding of our everyday world, and argues that it is only on the basis of this account that one can see the errors of the tradition. To the philosopher who wants to know how an isolated subject can come to have knowledge of objects in the

external world, or other minds, Heidegger replies that these "problems" rest on a completely mistaken understanding of what it is to be a person, to be in the world, and so forth.

In other words, the only way out of such a problem is to avoid getting in: these problems are set up in such a way that they cannot be solved; one can only dissolve them by recognizing the presuppositions that give rise to them. Wittgenstein once compared a philosopher struggling with a philosophical problem to someone who tries to open a closed but unlocked door by pulling on it in the wrong direction. But instead of advocating a systematic alternative to traditional conceptions of human existence, as Heidegger did, he held that the task of philosophy should be to return us to the concepts that are present in our ordinary language. Instead of advocating yet another technical vocabulary designed to free us from our philosophical preconceptions, he presented a variety of devices that are intended to free us from the desire to formulate such vocabularies.<sup>30</sup> In the *Philosophical Investigations*, he says that his aim in philosophy is to "show the fly the way out of the fly-bottle."<sup>31</sup> A fly-bottle is a glass bottle containing sugar-water with an entrance at the bottom, which flies never escape because they always fly upward, hitting the glass and ultimately drowning in the water. A fly, unlike a person tugging at a door, is unable to learn from its mistakes; it remains to be seen which is the apter analogy.

Wittgenstein's notes from the mid-1930s make it clear that he conceived of the solipsist as the archetypal fly in the fly-bottle,<sup>32</sup> but in the *Investigations* the image of the fly-bottle provides a coda to a passage in which Wittgenstein explains why his criticism of a conventional conception of the mental does not commit him to denying the existence of minds or mental processes. Like Heidegger, Wittgenstein is criticizing ways of talking about experience that can mislead us into thinking we are describing how things must be when we are only articulating an unrecognized presupposition. In #299, he writes:

Being unable—when we surrender ourselves to philosophical thought—to help saying such-and-such; being irresistably inclined to say it—does not mean being forced into an *assumption*, or having an immediate perception or knowledge of a state of affairs.

There is an excellent, if inadvertent, example of this error a few paragraphs later, in a passage where he is discussing the relation between the expression of pain and the person who is in pain, stressing the primacy of the suffering *person* as against a shadowy conception of the sufferer as a primarily mental entity. Anscombe translates Wittgenstein's German "die leidende Person ist die, welche Schmerz äußert" as "the subject of pain is the person who gives it expression," reintroducing the very term "subject" that Wittgenstein took care to avoid. A more natural translation would read: "The suffering person is the one who expresses pain."

In his preceding treatment of the notion of a private language, Wittgenstein has tried to show that *if* one conceives of the mind as consisting of private mental states, *then* one will be unable to talk of it all. So at this point in the *Investigations*, Wittgenstein faces the task of denying the conception of the mental as an inner process, while reassuring his interlocutor, the voice of his alter ego, that he is not denying the existence of the mind altogether. Thus his interlocutor objects: "And yet you again and again reach the conclusion that the sensation itself is a *nothing*."<sup>33</sup> Wittgenstein replies: "Not at all. It is not a *something*, but not a *nothing* either! The conclusion was only that a *nothing* would serve just as well as a *something* about which *nothing* could be said. . . . The impression that we want to deny *something* arises from our turning away from the picture of the 'inner' process."<sup>34</sup> Wittgenstein's explanation of this predicament, like Heidegger's treatment of the Kantian subject, turns on the thesis that the philosopher has been trapped by an unnoticed presupposition concealed in the grammar of our language. He asks himself "How does the philosophical problem about mental processes and states and about behaviourism arise?" and replies:

The first step is the one that altogether escapes notice. We talk of processes and states and leave their nature undecided. Sometime perhaps we shall know more about them—we think. But that is just what commits us to a particular way of looking at the matter. For we have a definite concept of what it means to know a process better. (The decisive movement in the conjuring trick has been made, and it was the very one we thought quite innocent).<sup>35</sup>

Any conjuring trick depends on focusing the audience's attention on something unimportant so that the decisive move can be made without their suspecting anything. And this, as Heidegger and Wittgenstein can help us see, is precisely what happens in the case of the Kantian subject.

## NOTES

1. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Ludwig Wittgenstein and the Vienna Circle: Conversations Recorded by Friedrich Waismann*, p. 68. First published as *Ludwig Wittgenstein und der Wiener Kreis: Gespräche aufgezeichnet von Friedrich Waismann*, German text only, ed. B. F. McGuinness (Blackwell, Oxford, 1967), tr. B. F. McGuinness and J. Schulte, same pagination (Blackwell, Oxford, 1979).

2. In the passage just quoted, Wittgenstein goes on to explicitly refer to the parallels with Kierkegaard: "Kierkegaard too saw that there is this running up against something and he referred to it in a fairly similar way (as running up against paradox.)"

Ibid. In a note written in 1931, Wittgenstein included Schopenhauer, Frege and Weininger on a list of those figures who had influenced him (in Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, ed. G. H. von Wright, 2nd ed., tr. P. Winch, Oxford: Blackwell, 1980), p. 19.

3. Two valuable studies that set both Wittgenstein and Heidegger in a wider historical context are Robert Solomon, *Continental Philosophy Since 1750: The Rise and Fall of the Self* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1988), which develops an interpretation of the role of the self in post-Kantian philosophy congruent with the one advocated here, and Rüdiger Bubner, *Modern German Philosophy*, a wide-ranging overview of major trends in recent German philosophy, tr. E. Matthews from the author's unpublished manuscript (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1981).

4. Heidegger emphasizes the importance of this part of the first *Critique* in his 1927–28 lectures and his Kant book. See: Martin Heidegger, *Phänomenologische Interpretation von Kants Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, Winter 1927/28; *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 25, ed. I. Görland (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1977), pp. 263–92. *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik*, 4th ed., enlarged (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1973), pp. 13–14, 55–62, tr. R. Taft as *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, Ind.: Indiana Univ. Press, 1990), pp. 39–44.

Wilfrid Sellars, in his lecture course on Kant at the University of Pittsburgh in the summer of 1980, placed great stress on these sentences, characterizing them as a “compressed outline” of the argument of the Transcendental Deduction as a whole. The first three chapters of Jay Rosenberg's *The Thinking Self* (Philadelphia: Temple Univ. Press, 1986) provide a systematic exposition of the central themes in Sellars' reading of this argument.

5. Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1956). Translations are from *Immanuel Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, tr. N. Kemp Smith (London: Macmillan, 1933). References to the first *Critique* in parentheses following the quoted passages, and are to the pagination in the 1781 ‘A’ edition and the 1787 ‘B’ edition.

6. These issues are discussed at greater length in my article, “‘What is the ground of the relationship of that in us which we call ‘representation’ to the object?’ Reflections on the Kantian legacy in the philosophy of mind,” in *Doing Philosophy Historically*, ed. P. Hare (Buffalo, N.Y.: Prometheus Press, 1988), pp. 216–30.

7. Dieter Henrich, originally published in *Philosophische Rundschau* (1956), tr. G. Zöllner as “On the Unity of Subjectivity,” in *The Unity of Reason: Essays on Kant's Philosophy by Dieter Henrich*, ed. Richard Velkley (Cambridge, Mass.: 1994), pp. 17–54.

8. Dieter Henrich, “Fichte's Original Insight,” tr. David R. Lachterman in *Contemporary German Philosophy*, vol. 1 (University Park: Pennsylvania State Univ. Press, 1982), pp. 15–53. Originally published as “Fichte's ursprüngliche Einsicht,” in *Subjektivität und Metaphysik*, ed. D. Henrich and H. Wagner (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1966), pp. 188–232.

9. Ernst Tugendhat, *Self-Consciousness and Self-Determination* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1986), p. 152. Translation of *Selbstbewußtsein und Selbstbestimmung* by P. Stern.

Tugendhat's principal objection to the use of the term *Dasein* is as follows: In contrast to the substantive predicates “human being” or “person” it has no plural, and therefore it seems absurd when Heidegger says that he wants to designate this entity, man, as *Dasein*. One cannot adopt a different expression for a word when it has a different grammar (ibid.) I will turn to this objection shortly.

10. Saul Kripke, *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982.) An early and influential example of such a misreading is Chihara and Fodor's “Operationalism and Ordinary Language,” *American Philosophical Quarterly* 2 (1965):281–95, reprinted in *Wittgenstein: The “Philosophical Investigations,”* ed. G. Pitcher (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966), pp. 384–419. For further discussion of this issue, see my “Recent Work on Wittgenstein: 1980–1990,” *Synthese* 98 (1994):415–58.

11. Heidegger characterized Part Two, Division One, of *Being and Time*, as follows: “Kant's doctrine of schematism and time, as a preliminary stage in a problematic of Temporality.” See *Being and Time*, tr. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York and Evanston, Ill.: Harper and Row, 1969), p. 64. Translation of *Sein und Zeit*, 7th ed. (Tübingen: Neomarius Verlag).

12. Martin Heidegger, *Logik. Die Frage nach der Wahrheit*, Winter 1925/26; *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 21, ed. W. Biemel (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1976); Martin Heidegger, *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*, Summer 1927, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 24, ed. F.-W. von Herrmann (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1975), tr. A. Hofstadter as *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (Bloomington, Indiana Univ. Press, 1982); Martin Heidegger, *Phänomenologische Interpretation von Kants Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, Winter 1927/28, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 25, ed. I. Görland (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1977); Martin Heidegger, *Vom Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit: Einleitung in die Philosophie*, Summer 1930; *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 31, ed. H. Tietjen (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1982); Martin Heidegger, *Die Frage nach dem Ding: Zu Kants Lehre von den transzendentalen Grundsätzen*, Winter 1935/36, *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 41, ed. P. Jaeger (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1984).

13. For a valuable discussion of the relationship between Heidegger's discussion of Kant and the original text see: Daniel Dahlstrom, “Heidegger's Kantian Turn: Notes to His Commentary on the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*,” *Review of Metaphysics* 45 (1991):329–61.

14. Brian McGuinness, cited in Garth Hallett, *A Companion to Wittgenstein's “Philosophical Investigations”* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Univ. Press, 1977), p. 768. Cf. McGuinness *Wittgenstein: A Life*, vol. 1 (London: Duckworth, 1988), p. 253.

15. Unpublished biographical notes of F. A. von Hayek, cited by Newton Garver in “Neither knowing nor not knowing,” *Philosophical Investigations* 7 (1984):223, n. 16.

16. *Culture and Value*, p. 10 (translation modified). This remark was written in 1931. For further discussion of the issues raised by this passage, see my *Wittgenstein on Mind and Language* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press), 1995.

17. King and Lee, *Wittgenstein's Lectures, Cambridge 1930–1932, 1931–32*, pp. 73–74. Most discussions of Wittgenstein's relationship to Kant either overemphasize their affinities, yielding a reading of Wittgenstein's work as a form of idealism (see, for example, Bernard Williams, "Wittgenstein and Idealism," in *Understanding Wittgenstein*, ed. G. Vesey [London: Macmillan, 1974]) or overemphasize their differences, yielding a reading that fails to recognize the extent to which Wittgenstein's critique is a continuation of a specifically Kantian tradition. There is a judicious discussion of this issue in Newton Garver, "Wittgenstein and the Critical Tradition," *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 7 (1990):227–40.

18. B274 ff.

19. B xxxix; other quotes in this sentence are from the same source.

20. *Being and Time*, p. 249.

21. *Ibid.* On the next page, Heidegger states his conception of his own contribution as follows: "Our task is not to prove that an 'external world' is present-at-hand or show how it is present-at-hand, but to point out why *Dasein*, as Being-in-the-world, has the tendency to bury the 'external world' in nullity 'epistemologically' before going on to prove it" (250).

22. While Heidegger only intimates this claim in *Being and Time*, he does provide an extended defence of this contention throughout Part 1 of *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*.

23. See, for example, Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Remarks*, 2nd ed., tr. R. Hargraves and R. White (Oxford, Blackwell, 1975), 57 ff. First published as *Philosophische Bemerkungen*, ed. R. Rhees (Oxford: Blackwell, 1964).

24. It is symptomatic of the depth of this dispute that there are no neutral terms one can appeal to in order to characterize that which is at the focus of the debate: On the one hand, to talk of the "subject" or the "philosophical self" is already to be employing a loaded Cartesian vocabulary. On the other hand, to avoid using these terms, and speak of "human beings" or "people" in this context is to use terms that are no less question-begging. For further discussion of this issue, see Robert Brandom, "Heidegger's categories in *Being and Time*," *The Monist* 66 (1983):387–409 and John Haugeland, "Heidegger on being a person," *Nous* 16 (1982):15–26.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 72. The following two quotations from *Being and Time* sum up Heidegger's debt to Kant and also the extent of his break with the Kantian tradition. Heidegger holds that Kant saw that "the 'I think' is not something represented, but the formal structure of representing as such, and this formal structure alone makes it possible for anything to have been represented" (*ibid.*, p. 367) and also "makes a more rigorous attempt than his predecessors to keep hold of the phenomenal content of say-

ing 'I'; yet even though in theory he has denied that the ontical foundations of the ontology of the substantial apply to the 'I,' he still slips back into *this same* inappropriate ontology. . . . The Being of the 'I' is understood as the reality of the *res cogitans*" (*ibid.*, pp. 366, 367).

26. *Ibid.*, p. 368.

27. Macquarrie and Robinson translate this term using "in each case," a construction I shall discuss shortly. See *Being and Time*, p. 42.

28. This construal of Heidegger, which stresses the social and pragmatic dimension of his conception of the everyday in *Being and Time*, is in broad agreement with recent work along these lines by Brandom, Dreyfus, Haugeland, Okrent, Richardson, Rorty, and others. See Robert Brandom, "Heidegger's categories in *Being and Time*"; Hubert Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World: A commentary on Heidegger's Being and Time, Division I* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991); John Haugeland, "Heidegger on Being a Person"; Mark Okrent, *Heidegger's Pragmatism: Understanding, Being, and the Critique of Metaphysics* (Ithaca, N.Y. and London: Cornell Univ. Press, 1988); John Richardson, *Existential Epistemology* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1986); Richard Rorty, "Heidegger, contingency and pragmatism," in *Essays on Heidegger and Others* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1991), pp. 27–49.

29. *Being and Time*, p. 72.

30. For further discussion of Wittgenstein and Heidegger and their respective conceptions of the "end of philosophy," see Stanley Cavell, *This New Yet Unapproachable America: Lectures after Emerson after Wittgenstein* (Albuquerque: Living Batch Press, 1989) and Richard Rorty, "Wittgenstein, Heidegger and the Reification of Language," in *Essays on Heidegger and Others*, pp. 50–65.

31. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, ed. G. E. M. Anscombe and R. Rhees, tr. G. E. M. Anscombe (Oxford: Blackwell, 3rd ed., 1973), 309.

32. "But what I now see, this view of my room, plays a unique role, it is the visual world! [...] (The solipsist flutters and flutters in the flyglass, strikes against the walls, flutters further. How can he be brought to rest?)"

The above parenthetical sentence, unlike the one that precedes it, was originally written in German. L. Wittgenstein, "Notes for Lectures on 'Private Experience' and 'Sense-Data,'" p. 300. First published in an abridged form in the *Philosophical Review*, 77:275–320. A complete edition of this text that I have edited is in Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Occasions: 1912–1951*, ed. J. Klagge and A. Nordmann (Indianapolis, Ind.: Hackett, 1993), p. 258.

33. *Philosophical Investigations*, 304.

34. *Philosophical Investigations*, 304–05.

35. *Philosophical Investigations*, 308.