



Fordham intercampus <intercampus@fordham.edu>

---

## Journal Article Request -- LC

1 message

---

ILL Office <ill@smtp.fordham.edu>

Wed, Nov 29, 2017 at 11:57 AM

To: intercampus@fordham.edu

### FORDHAM LIBRARY JOURNAL ARTICLE REQUEST

Location: LINCOLNCTR QUINN\_X

Source: The Emergence of German Idealism: Studies in Philosophy and the History of Philosophy

Call Number: B2798 .E54 1999

Holdings:

Title: The Role of Skepticism in the Emergence of German Idealism

Author: Michael Baur

Volume: 34

Issue:

Month:

Year: 1999

Pages: 63-91

Name: Christopher Myers

Department: Philosophy

E-Mail: cmyers18@fordham.edu

Phone: 661-904-0352

Status: Graduate

Library:

Material located in stacks \_\_\_\_\_

Material NOT located in stacks \_\_\_\_\_

Article scanned \_\_\_\_\_

Patron e-mailed \_\_\_\_\_

Patron e-mailed \_\_\_\_\_

ILLiad TN: 622310

If unable to fill, please return to ILL..Charlotte

Either walk it in or forward to labbe@fordham.edu

## The Role of Skepticism in the Emergence of German Idealism

MICHAEL BAUR

### I. Introduction

According to Immanuel Kant's well-known account of his own intellectual development, it was the skeptic David Hume who roused him from his dogmatic slumber.<sup>1</sup> According to some popular accounts of post-Kantian philosophy, it was the soporific speculation of the idealists that quickly returned German philosophy to the Procrustean bed of unverifiable metaphysics, where it dogmatically slept for half of the nineteenth century. This popular picture of post-Kantian German philosophy receives some apparent support from the relevant evidence. After all, Kant had allegedly demonstrated the illegitimacy of all metaphysical speculation that transcends the bounds of experience, and the writings of the German idealists—filled as they are with references to what is putatively “absolute” and “unconditioned”—seem to violate Kant's strictures.

In place of this popular conception, I seek to sketch out a rather different picture of German idealism. The development of post-Kantian German idealism is best described, not as a turning away from skepticism, but rather as a *radicalization* of it. The radicalization of skepticism from Kant through Fichte to Hegel, however, does not lead away from systematic philosophy. The movement of thought from Kant to Hegel coincides with the gradual realization that skeptical thought is not external to systematic philosophy, but is in fact internal to, or even identical with, it.<sup>2</sup> This thesis concerning the progressive “radicalization” or “inter-

1. Immanuel Kant, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, trans. Paul Carus, rev. James W. Ellington (Indianapolis, Ind.: Hackett, 1977), p. 5.

2. Thus I believe that Michael Forster is correct to say that the German idealists were “distinguished by a shared recognition of the importance of skepticism and by a determined effort to answer it on behalf of their systems”; see Michael Forster, *Hegel and Skepticism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), p. 99. Nevertheless, I would contend that it is somewhat misleading to say, as Forster does, that the German idealists sought

nalization" of skepticism in German idealism receives some prima facie support from the relevant writings of Kant, Fichte, and Hegel.

In his *Critique of Pure Reason*, in the section on "The Antinomy of Pure Reason," Kant explains that the skeptical method, or the method of provoking "a conflict of assertions," is "essential" for the development of a genuinely scientific transcendental philosophy.<sup>3</sup> The skeptical method, however, cannot resolve the conflict of assertions that it reveals. At best, the skeptical method is "a means to awakening [reason] from its sweet dogmatic dreams, and of inducing it to enter upon a more careful examination of its own position" (*CPR*, A757/B785). Echoing Kant, Fichte also acknowledges the indispensability of the skeptical method in the development of systematic philosophy: "It is undeniable that philosophizing reason owes all the human progress which it has made so far to the observations of skepticism concerning the insecurity of every resting place yet obtained by reason."<sup>4</sup> But Fichte goes beyond Kant to suggest that the skeptical method is not merely a means to an external end, but that skepticism's own immanent *telos* is nothing other than systematic philosophy: "Nothing is more to be desired," writes Fichte, "than that skepticism might crown its [own] labors and drive inquiring reason on to the attainment of its lofty goal," namely, the transformation of philosophy into a science.<sup>5</sup> Going beyond both Kant and Fichte, Hegel suggests that skepticism and scientific philosophy (properly understood) amount to the same thing. In his 1802 essay on the "Relationship of Skepticism to Philosophy," Hegel claims that "skepticism itself is in its

---

to provide an "answer to" or a "defense against" skepticism (p. 117; emphasis added). This is misleading because (as I seek to show) the strategy of the German idealists was not merely to offer an externally related *alternative* to skepticism; instead, their strategy was to show that the dangers of skepticism could be avoided only if self-conscious skepticism and systematic philosophy were shown to be in some sense identical.

3. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (London: Macmillan, 1989), p. 395 (A423-24/B451-52). All subsequent references to Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* will be made parenthetically in the text, using the acronym CPR and the page numbers of the A and B editions.

4. Johann Gottlieb Fichte, "Review of Aenesidemus," in *Fichte: Early Philosophical Writings*, trans. Daniel Breazeale (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1988), p. 59.

5. *Ibid.* Following Fichte, Schelling also observes that transcendental philosophy necessarily begins with "general doubt as to the reality of the objective." For Schelling, this general doubt must be a kind of "absolute scepticism—not the half-scepticism which merely contends against the common prejudices of mankind, while never looking to fundamentals, but rather that thoroughgoing scepticism which is directed, not against individual prejudices, but against the basic preconception, whose rejection leads automatically to the collapse of everything else." See F.W.J. Schelling, *System of Transcendental Idealism*, trans. Peter Heath (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1978), pp. 7-8. Unlike Fichte and Hegel, Schelling allows his skepticism to be quickly overtaken by his nonskeptical, speculative impulses. As a result, the philosophy of Schelling will not figure prominently in my analysis of "the role of skepticism in the emergence of German idealism."

inmost heart at one with every true philosophy."<sup>6</sup> And in his *Phenomenology of Spirit* of 1807, Hegel argues that the doubting, despairing pathway toward scientific philosophy, a pathway that is itself already scientific, must be nothing other than the pathway of "self-fulfilling skepticism" (*dieser sich vollbringende Skeptizismus*).<sup>7</sup>

As I shall try to show, the development of German idealism can be understood as the gradual unfolding of the basic claim that skeptical thought, when properly radicalized and raised to the level of self-consciousness, amounts to systematic, scientific philosophy. If this thesis is correct, then German idealism can be understood as a reenactment of Socrates' fundamental insight: ignorance that has become self-conscious of itself as ignorance is not simply a blind, empty state of not-knowing, but is in fact a form of wisdom.<sup>8</sup>

## 2. Kant, Skeptics, and Supporters

Kant understands skepticism, or the skeptical method, as essentially external to genuine, systematic philosophy. More specifically, Kant sees skepticism as a midway stage in reason's ascent to self-knowledge. The first stage of reason, reason in its infancy, is the dogmatic stage; the second stage, the skeptical stage, subjects reason to doubt and thus induces reason to begin asking about its own powers and limits; the third stage, the criticism of reason (exemplified by Kant's own philosophy), undertakes "to subject to examination, not the facts of reason, but reason itself, in the whole extent of its powers, and as regards its aptitude for pure *apriori* modes of knowledge" (*CPR*, A761/B789). According to Kant, the stage of skepticism is only "a [temporary] resting place for human reason. . . . But it is no dwelling place for permanent settlement" (*CPR*, A761/B789). At most, the skeptical method "*prepares the way* [to systematic philosophy] by arousing reason to circumspection," but it "cannot of itself yield any *satisfying* answer to the questions of reason" (*CPR*, A769/B797). In order to satisfy the questions of reason and thus overcome the threat of skepticism, one must move to a third position that is external to and beyond both dogmatism and skepticism. That third position is constituted by adequate self-knowledge, provided by "transcendental philosophy."

6. G.W.F. Hegel, "Relationship of Skepticism to Philosophy, Exposition of Its Different Modifications and Comparison to the Latest Form with the Ancient One," trans. H. S. Harris, in *Between Kant and Hegel*, ed. George di Giovanni and H. S. Harris (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985), pp. 322-23.

7. *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977) p. 50.

8. See Plato, *Apology* 21c-e.

Early in his *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant tells us: "I entitle *transcendental* all knowledge which is occupied not so much with objects as with our way of knowing objects [*unsere Erkenntnisart von Gegenständen*] insofar as this way of knowing is to be possible *apriori*" (*CPR*, A11-12).<sup>9</sup> Transcendental philosophy thus entails a kind of "return to the subject," or "call to self-knowledge" (*CPR*, Axi). Through transcendental philosophy, one attains knowledge of one's own knowing insofar as such knowing is possible a priori. That which is a priori in our knowing is "indispensable for the possibility of experience itself" (*CPR*, B5), and thus what is a priori in our knowing is itself a condition of the possibility of our having experience at all. Accordingly, the aim of transcendental philosophy is to effect a "return to the subject" in order to grasp our way of knowing insofar as this is not conditioned by, but is rather a condition of, experience.

With his return to the subject and his articulation of the a priori conditions of our knowledge of objects within experience, Kant claims to have set philosophy in general and metaphysics in particular onto the sure path of a science. Since all that is a priori in our knowledge has its own systematic unity (*CPR*, Axiii; A67/B92; A474/B502; A845/B873), and since it is just such unity that raises a mere aggregate of knowledge to the rank of science (*CPR*, A832/B860), it follows that transcendental philosophy can be assured of its unity and completeness and thus can claim the status of a "science." In virtue of its scientificity, Kant argues, transcendental philosophy can also show the way by which metaphysics can become scientific. The metaphysics that is scientifically grounded through transcendental philosophy would be immune to any further revision or elaboration, save in the manner by which it might be expressed or taught (*CPR*, Axx; Bxxiv; Bxxxviii). Metaphysics, once it has been placed upon the sure path of science, will no longer have to retrace its steps, or attempt any new lines of approach (*CPR*, Bvii); the sure path of science, "once it has been trodden, can never be overgrown, and permits of no wandering" (*CPR*, A850/B878).

With his transcendental philosophy, Kant thought that he had cleared the path by which genuine philosophy could leave skeptical doubts behind once and for all. However, critics began planting new seeds of doubt upon Kant's "sure path of science" almost as soon as the path had been cleared. From the point of view of the later German idealists, Kant's "sure path of science" remained vulnerable to such doubts, precisely because Kant regarded the activity of skeptical questioning as something essentially *other* than the activity of systematic philosophizing. Kant's strategy of exclusion ultimately doomed his project to failure, because any system

9. Here I have modified Kemp Smith's translation slightly.

of philosophy that tries to leave skeptical questioning behind as something external to itself automatically renders itself partial and less than comprehensive through that very act of exclusion. In turn, a system of philosophy that is not comprehensive cannot be fully systematic, and thus cannot adequately stand up to the attacks of skepticism. In order to address skepticism adequately, systematic philosophy must learn to see the doubting, questioning activity of the skeptic as nothing other than the not-yet-self-conscious activity of systematic philosophy itself.<sup>10</sup>

This basic failing, as seen by the German idealists, can be expressed in slightly different terms. Kant erroneously regarded skepticism as a temporary stage that could eventually be left behind, to be replaced by true self-knowledge. Accordingly, Kant believed that the content of genuine self-knowledge must be derived from some principle or source that is essentially *other* than skeptical doubting. As a result, genuine self-knowledge for Kant must present itself as external to skeptical doubt, as an alternative to such doubt. However, the essence of *radical* skepticism is to question the validity of *any* claim that presents itself as an alternative to doubt. Thus any putative claim to self-knowledge that appears as external to skeptical doubt will be vulnerable to further attack.<sup>11</sup> If one is to address the challenge of *radical* skepticism, then self-knowledge must be regarded not as external to skepticism, but as the same as skeptical questioning, only raised to the level of self-consciousness. In order to prevent a perpetual oscillation between epistemic claims and skeptical attacks, one must learn to see how skepticism and systematic philosophy are actually identical, in spite of their immediate opposition.

For the post-Kantian idealists, then, there is an essential identity-in-difference between skeptical questioning and systematic philosophy. However, this identity-in-difference remained hidden from Kant and his immediate critics.<sup>12</sup> As a result, the early skeptical concerns about the Kantian system at first appeared to spring from sources entirely *external*

10. Similarly, Socrates realized that the threat of skepticism is not to be met by leaving skepticism behind and seeking refuge in some principle or source that is allegedly available to us in a realm beyond, and immune from, such skeptical questioning. An answer to skepticism can be achieved only by entering into dialogue with the skeptic and by demonstrating how a certain kind of knowledge is implicit in the skeptic's own questioning. In short, one can philosophize in a manner that is immune to skeptical questioning only by radicalizing the skeptic's own questioning and showing how that questioning is not ultimately different from systematic philosophy.

11. Hegel alludes to this problem when he addresses the question of *how* genuine philosophy is to make its appearance in the midst of skeptical concerns: "But Science, just because it comes on the scene, is itself an appearance: in coming on the scene it is not yet Science in its developed and unfolded truth. . . . *One* bare assurance is worth just as much as another." See *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, pp. 48-49.

12. Among the early critics, it seems that only Maimon had an implicit sense of the necessary identity-in-difference of skepticism and systematic philosophy.

to the Kantian system, rather than from the *internal* failings of the Kantian system itself. In order to address the skepticism adequately, Kant would have to make his philosophy more systematic by making it more skeptical. That task, however, was left to the later German idealists.

The early skeptical attacks upon Kant took on many forms, but the most powerful and important early criticisms centered around the basic conviction that Kant had failed to respond adequately to the skeptical challenge of Hume. Kant's alleged failure to meet the Humean challenge can be expressed in three fundamental claims: (1) Kant's notion of the thing-in-itself is riddled with inconsistencies; (2) Kant's metaphysical deduction is only inductively valid and thus lacks the necessity and completeness that are proper to science; and (3) Kant's transcendental deduction is essentially circular and thus question-begging.<sup>13</sup>

Perhaps the most famous critique of Kant's notion of the thing-in-itself was articulated by F. H. Jacobi. Jacobi's critique focuses on the notion of "transcendental objects," or objects beyond consciousness that allegedly cause representations within consciousness. In the "Appendix" to a book appropriately entitled *David Hume*, Jacobi argues that Kant's appeal to transcendental objects is a necessary feature of the Kantian system, but also inconsistent with the system. For Jacobi, the notion of a transcendental object is necessary to the Kantian system, since Kant starts by assuming that human sensibility is purely passive. As a necessary correlate to this assumption, Kant must posit the existence of some external object or objects that act upon sensibility and with respect to which human sensibility is passive. Within the same system, however, Kant also argued that human knowledge cannot transcend the bounds of possible experience; thus we cannot have knowledge of anything that lies beyond experience. Accordingly, we cannot have any knowledge about the alleged existence or activity of those transcendental objects with respect to which sensibility is said to be passive. Thus the notion of a transcendental object (or thing-in-itself) is both mandated and outlawed by the Kantian system: "I need the assumption of things-in-themselves to enter the Kantian system; but with this assumption it is not possible for me to remain inside it."<sup>14</sup>

Skeptics like Platner, Schulze, and Maimon articulated similar arguments against Kant's notion of the thing-in-itself. In his *Philosophische*

13. The self that provides the basis for self-knowledge in Kant is not the self that is simply the activity of radical, self-conscious questioning (as in Socrates); rather, it is the ready-made self that finds itself endowed with categories, full-blown from the head of Aristotle.

14. See F. H. Jacobi, "Beylage," to *David Hume über den Glauben, oder Idealismus und Realismus, ein Gespräch*, in *Werke*, 6 vols., ed. F. H. Jacobi and F. Köppen (Leipzig: Fleischer, 1812), 2.304. See also Jacobi's *Werke*, 6 vols. (Leipzig: Fleischer, 1815), 3.304.

*Aphorismen*, Platner argues that even Kant's denial that we can have knowledge of the thing-in-itself is insufficiently skeptical. If we really could have no knowledge of the thing-in-itself, Platner argues, then we would not even know whether the thing-in-itself is unknowable. For Platner, then, genuine skepticism requires that we remain open to the possibility that the thing-in-itself might actually be knowable to us as something existing in space and time.<sup>15</sup> Schulze argues that any belief in a transcendental object beyond consciousness is inconsistent with Kant's own restriction of human knowledge to the objects of possible experience, regardless of whether the transcendental object is conceived as a thing-in-itself, a noumenon, or a transcendental idea.<sup>16</sup> Maimon's critique of Kant's thing-in-itself is perhaps the most penetrating of all. According to Maimon, if Kant were true to his own skepticism regarding the thing-in-itself, then there would be no purpose in postulating the existence of the thing-in-itself; for if the thing-in-itself were genuinely unknowable, then it would be empty of all explanatory content. The notion of the thing-in-itself is not only inconsistent with the Kantian system as a whole, it is superfluous.<sup>17</sup>

The second skeptical charge against Kant alleges that the metaphysical deduction, or Kant's derivation of the categories of the understanding from the forms of judgment, has only empirical or inductive validity. Gottlob August Tittel, for example, argues that Kant's derivation and organization of the categories is merely "rhapsodic."<sup>18</sup> According to Tittel, Kant arrived at his table of categories by observing and abstracting from the kinds of judgments that we actually make about objects within our experience. Since the categories are inductively derived, there can be no guarantee that the table of categories is complete. And because Kant has not shown that the table of categories is comprehensive, he cannot justifiably claim that his critical philosophy has really achieved the status of a science.<sup>19</sup> In short, the doubts that Hume had articulated concerning induction in general can apply equally to Kant's derivation of the categories: the same lack of necessity and universality that Hume had

15. See E. Platner, *Philosophische Aphorismen* (Leipzig: Sigwart, 1784), pp. viii ff.

16. G. E. Schulze, *Aenesidemus oder über die Fundamente der von dem Herrn Professor Reinhold in Jena gelieferten Elementarphilosophie*, ed. A. Liebert (Berlin: Reuther und Reichard, 1912), pp. 116-30.

17. S. Maimon, *Gesammelte Werke*, 7 vols., ed. V. Verra (Hildesheim: Olms, 1965), 2:372; 4:415; 5:404-6, 412-13.

18. Gottlob August Tittel, *Kantische Denkformen oder Kategorien* (Frankfurt: Gebhardt, 1787), pp. 44, 94.

19. Similar criticisms of Kant are expressed by Garve and Weishaupt. See Garve, "Kritik der reinen Vernunft," *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek*, supp. to 37-52 (1783), 842 ff.; and Weishaupt, *Gründe und Gewissheit des menschlichen Erkennens: Zur Prüfung der kantischen Critic der reinen Vernunft* (Nuremberg: Gratenau, 1788), pp. 48-49.



demonstrated with regard to our knowledge of objects also affects Kant's derivation of the categories. Of course, Kant would argue that the categories are not merely derived from experience, but constitute the a priori conditions of experience itself. But the objection cannot be so easily dismissed; for even if the categories themselves do not have their source in experience, the fact remains that Kant's own "hitting upon" these particular categories (and no others) has taken place within experience, and thus (in the absence of any further justification) Kant's derivation of the categories is vulnerable to doubt.

The third skeptical charge against the Kantian system alleges that the transcendental deduction is viciously circular and thus question-begging. The purpose of Kant's transcendental deduction is to demonstrate how the categories of the understanding can relate a priori to the objects of our possible experience; Kant's demonstration of the validity of the categories consists in showing that the objects of possible experience would not be constituted as objects if it were not for the a priori categories of the understanding. This demonstration, however, entails a fundamental circularity. In effect, Kant tried to demonstrate the validity of the categories by referring them to our regular and orderly experience; but conversely, he tried to demonstrate the orderliness and regularity of experience by referring experience back to the categories. If asked how we can know that the objects of our experience really do exhibit the necessary and universal structures that we attribute to them, Kant would have to appeal to the a priori structures that we bring to experience. But then, if asked how we can know whether these a priori structures actually do underlie our experience, Kant would have to appeal to experience itself. Thus a vicious circularity infects the transcendental deduction. Because of this circularity, the transcendental deduction can only be question-begging in the face of Humean doubt. As Platner argues: Kant has only shown that, *if* we have regular and orderly experience, then such experience will necessarily conform to the a priori structures of our knowing. Of course, it is the necessity of such regularity and orderliness that skeptics like Hume question in the first place.<sup>20</sup>

These three skeptical criticisms aimed at Kant are interrelated, since the fundamental failings in Kant that make him vulnerable to such criticisms are themselves interrelated. For example, Kant finds it necessary

20. Platner, *Philosophische Aphorismen*, § 699. Reinhold also acknowledges that Kant's very notion of experience implies that there is a necessary and lawlike connection among perceptions. As a result, any antiskeptical argument that *begins* with Kant's notion of experience will be circular. See Karl Leonhard Reinhold, "Über das Verhältnis der Theorie des Vorstellungsvermögens zur Kritik der reinen Vernunft," in *Beyträge zur Berichtigung bisheriger Mißverständnisse der Philosophen* (Jena: Johann Michael Mauke, 1790), 1.281.

to appeal to a reality outside of consciousness as that in relation to which sensibility is passive, since Kant simply assumed that there is an absolute dichotomy between receptivity and spontaneity. Once he accepted this dichotomy as given, Kant was forced to appeal to something outside of the spontaneous activity of the knowing self (the thing-in-itself) as the ground of the self's receptivity. Kant's acceptance of the dichotomy between receptivity and spontaneity also explains the inductive or rhapsodic character of his derivation of the categories in the metaphysical deduction. Because Kant simply accepts the dichotomy of sensibility and understanding as given, he is forced to regard sensibility and understanding as two different faculties that are simply found alongside one another. Because these two faculties remain only contingently related, Kant is unable to find anything other than a contingent unity among the various acts of judgment (i.e., the acts within which the heterogeneous contributions of sensibility and understanding are combined). Since the unity of the table of judgments is empirically based, Kant's derivation of the categories from the table of judgments can have only inductive validity.

Finally, the question-begging nature of Kant's transcendental deduction is related to the problems outlined above. The purpose of the transcendental deduction was to demonstrate how the categories of the understanding can relate a priori to the objects of possible experience. Unfortunately, Kant cannot demonstrate this in a non-question-begging way, since he starts by presupposing the heterogeneity of sensibility and understanding. Because Kant takes sensibility and understanding to be heterogeneous as matter of fact, he cannot demonstrate noncircularly how the categories of the understanding relate a priori to what is given a posteriori through the intuitions of sensibility. Kant's acceptance of the dichotomy between sensibility and understanding *as given* makes it impossible for him to demonstrate that there exists anything but an a posteriori, contingent relation between the two. Once again, Maimon seems to offer the most penetrating analysis of the problem. Maimon notes that the transcendental deduction becomes necessary within the Kantian system because Kant presupposes a dualism between sensibility and understanding; if receptivity and spontaneity in human knowing were not assumed to be heterogeneous in the first place, then there would be no need to demonstrate how the concepts of the understanding could relate a priori to the objects given within experience. On the other hand, the Kantian dualism between sensibility and understanding also prevents the transcendental deduction from being anything but circular and question-begging. Taken together, this means: the assumption that makes the transcendental deduction necessary for Kant (i.e., the assumption of the fundamental heterogeneity of receptivity and spontaneity)

ity) also makes the transcendental deduction impossible. In short, there is a fundamental tension in Kant's understanding of the aims and limits of his own transcendental project.<sup>21</sup>

In the wake of these and other skeptical attacks, Karl Leonhard Reinhold came to the defense of the Kantian system. Through the publication of his "Letters Concerning the Kantian Philosophy" (1786-1787), Reinhold had already earned public recognition, as well as the approval of Kant himself. While still a committed Kantian, Reinhold gradually came to believe that the Kantian system could not claim the status of a science, and thus could not successfully withstand the attacks of skepticism, unless it were reformed and revised. Reinhold does not question the truth of the propositions that make up the Kantian system; he does, however, argue that Kant had not properly demonstrated the scientific character of his own system. Kant had presupposed the validity of several claims and distinctions that constitute his system, but he did not show how these various claims and distinctions could be derived formally and rigorously from a single, self-evident first principle. Reinhold's proposal for systematic reform takes its inspiration from Kant himself. Kant had argued that the scientific character of philosophy is guaranteed by its systematic unity and completeness (*CPR*, A832/B860). In order to demonstrate the unity and completeness of the Kantian system, Reinhold argues, one must not simply accept Kant's various claims and distinctions as given; rather, one must show how these claims and distinctions can be derived from a single, self-evident, first principle. For Reinhold, the requisite derivation is only implicit in the Kantian system,<sup>22</sup> and must be made explicit.

The single, self-evident first principle that provides the basis for Reinhold's reformulation of the Kantian system is called the "principle of consciousness" (*Satz des Bewußtseins*). For Reinhold, the most general concept within consciousness and the concept that is presupposed by all other possible contents of consciousness, is the concept of "representation" (*Vorstellung*). The principle of consciousness declares: "In consciousness the subject distinguishes the representation from the subject and the object and relates [the representation] to both [subject and object]."<sup>23</sup> According to Reinhold, all conscious states exhibit the same basic structure, the structure of representation, or *Vorstellung*; thus all consciousness involves not only a subject and an object, but also a distinguishing

21. See S. Maimon, *Werke*, 2.62-65, 182-83, 362-64.

22. E.g., Kant suggests that sensibility and understanding might have a single "common root" (*CPR*, A15/B29).

23. Reinhold, "Neue Darstellung der Hauptmomente der Elementarphilosophie," in *Beyträge zur Berichtigung bisheriger Missverständnisse der Philosophen*, 1.167.