

# Idealism and freedom

Essays on Kant's theoretical  
and practical philosophy

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to the manifold of a given intuition in general" (B144-45). Only such an argument would suffice to eliminate the specter of the nonconformity of appearances to the categorical functions of the understanding, which is precisely what is required at this point.

Kant attempts to establish this result in two stages: first, in §24, he argues that the representations of space and time as unities require a transcendental synthesis of the imagination governed by the categories; then, in §26, he argues that the empirical synthesis of apprehension, which is constitutive of perception, is itself subject to the conditions of the transcendental synthesis. Together, they yield the conclusion that all of the manifold of human sensibility is subject to the categories, which completely eliminates the specter of nonconformity. As I argued in *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*, however, the key move, the very locus of syntheticity in the B-Deduction, occurs in §24 with the appeal to the transcendental synthesis of the imagination.<sup>36</sup>

This is not, of course, to say that this complex second part of Kant's argument, which involves, among other things, an explicit appeal to the results of the Transcendental Aesthetic, is entirely unproblematic. On the contrary, I have maintained that there are major gaps in the argument and that on even the most charitable interpretation (one which accepts as valid the results of the Aesthetic, the Metaphysical Deduction and the first part of the Transcendental Deduction), it falls far short of complete success.<sup>37</sup> Nevertheless, none of this need concern us here, for our present focus is on the proof-structure of the B-Deduction rather than on the validity or overall soundness of its argument. Moreover, to this end, it suffices to show that the analyticity of the principle of apperception is perfectly compatible with the goals and strategy of the Deduction as a whole. Indeed, it makes it much clearer than alternative readings just why Kant divided the proof into two parts.

## On naturalizing Kant's transcendental psychology

Even though Kant himself never used the term in that way, 'transcendental psychology' has attained wide prominence as a label for what is thought to be most objectionable in Kant's theoretical philosophy, namely, the account of the transcendental activities of the mind. This state of affairs is largely the work of P. F. Strawson, who in his enormously influential study, *The Bounds of Sense*, endeavored to separate what he took to be Kant's "analytic argument" from the concept of experience to "a certain objectivity and a certain unity" as conditions of the possibility of experience from the "imaginary subject of transcendental psychology."<sup>1</sup>

In spite of widespread disagreement regarding the nature and soundness of this analytic argument, the general Strawsonian approach to Kant, and particularly the curt dismissal of Kant's account of the mind and its activities, has been the hallmark of analytic Kant interpretation for approximately a quarter century. Recently, however, things have begun to change, as a new generation of analytical philosophers, trained in naturalized epistemology and cognitive science and distrustful of conceptual analysis, have turned their attention to Kant. Among the forefront of this new breed of Kantians is Patricia Kitcher, who in the very title of her recent book, *Kant's Transcendental Psychology*, issues a bold challenge to Strawson.<sup>2</sup> According to Kitcher, Kant's transcendental psychology, properly, that is, naturalistically, construed, contains an account of mental unity that is demonstrably superior to Hume's, combined with a functionalistic and, therefore, essentially causal account of the content of representations. Thus, far from being an unnecessary appendage that can easily be removed without substantial damage to the body of the work, Kant's transcendental psychology is now seen as the very heart of the enterprise. Indeed, it appears to contain virtually everything that is of interest in the *Critique*.

But herein lies the problem; for in its own way this new reading of Kant is as dismissive of central features of the *Critique* as the analytic reading which it replaces. Accordingly, my concern here is precisely with those aspects of Kant that are dismissed by Kitcher on the grounds that they do not fit into her naturalized picture. I shall argue that her version not only leaves a distorted view of the historical Kant, but also obscures some of his most important insights, specifically, those regarding self-consciousness and spontaneity. This

