

Schleiermacher

Overview

Schleiermacher (1768-1834)

- Visit the Stanford Encyclopedia entry on Schleiermacher

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/schleiermacher/>

To whom is Schleiermacher writing?

- Title: *On Religion: Speeches to its cultured despisers*
- Artists, cultural elite

Why do they despise religion?

- Dislike of “dogmatic” aspects of the church
- Dislike of the actual dogma of the church
- Disgust of the hypocritical piety of religious people

Basic assumptions

- Two points of extremes
- Schleiermacher almost always assumes two opposing positions.
- Sometimes one extreme is accepted as best. Sometimes a midpoint is seen as best.

Basic assumptions

Two points of extremes

“...to fuse together each definite being only out of two opposing forces, and to realize each of its eternal thoughts in twin forms that are hostile to each other.” (*On Religion*, p. 5)

Basic assumptions

Two points of extremes

“Every life is only the result of a continuous appropriation and repulsion” (*On Religion*, p. 5)

Basic assumptions

Two points of extremes

“everything has its determinate being...by...the way...it uniquely combines and retains two primal forces of nature: the thirsty attraction and the expansion of the active and living self.”

(On Religion, p. 5)

Basic assumptions

- Reason vs Feeling

Schleiermacher rejects overly rationalist metaphysics and moralizing.

Basic assumptions

- Reason vs Feeling

The path to religion and genuine piety isn't found through "argument".

Basic assumptions

- Self and the Infinite

Schleiermacher takes the same view as James does: the core of religion and religious experience is to be found between the individual and the “Infinite”.

Schleiermacher's definition of religion

“Religion's essence is neither thinking nor acting, but intuition and feeling. It wishes to intuit the universe.” (*On Religion*, p. 22)

Definition of Religion

“Intuition is and always remains something individual, set apart, the immediate perception, nothing more.” (*On Religion*, p. 26)

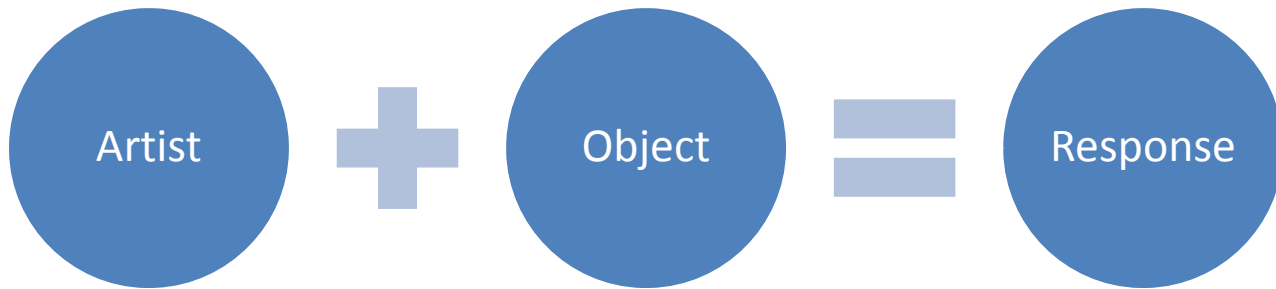
Artistic creativity

- The artist
- “Feeling” or inspiration
- Artistic expression (e.g., a painting, poetry, music)

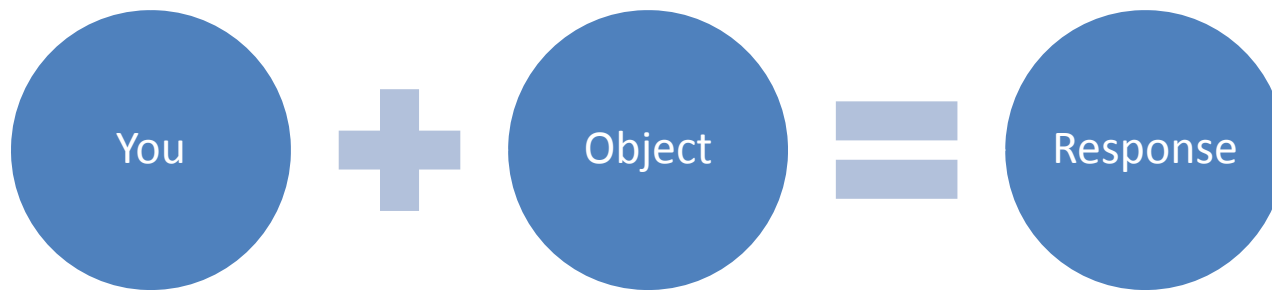
Artistic feeling

- The artist's feeling is within herself. It's the *artist's* feeling, not anyone else's
- The feeling is in response to *something*. (Muse, an object, nature, a memory.)

Artistic creativity



Religious feeling



Artistic & Religious feeling



The
Infinite



You

The Self and the Infinite

- The individual responds to an *object*, i.e., the Infinite.
- Religion (or genuine piety) becomes a *sense and taste for the Infinite*.

Who is “more” religious?

Rather than the traditional religious leaders (theologians, preachers, pious people), artists are much more accustomed to being open to the Infinite.

Who is “more” religious?

That’s why Schleiermacher believes that the artists actually are more religious than the religious leaders at the time.

Who is “more” religious?

Religion’s “cultured despisers”
hold the secret to the
essence of religious experience.