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# Fichte and the German Idiom: the Metaphysics of the *Addresses* to the German Nation

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**ABSTRACT.** This article argues against the dominant Anglophone and Francophone interpretation of Fichte, which reads him as advancing either a form of ethnic or cultural nationalism. It claims that what is missing from the current reception of Fichte is the essentially philosophical and cosmopolitan character of his nationalism – the fact that the *Addresses to the German Nation* uses non-empirical and cosmopolitical concepts to develop and articulate its nationalistic viewpoint. It therefore claims that the notion of a national philosophical idiom that the *Addresses* present, far from being a screen for its nationalism, is its driving engine. It does this by considering the problems of translating the German locution *ist unsers Geschlechts*. Consequently, it is claimed that the cosmo-nationalism of Fichte is not reducible to a set of claims regarding ethnicity or even the empirical world, even if a discourse on the organismic, on what counts as life, irreducibly haunts the *Addresses*.

**KEYWORDS:** Fichte, German language, *Geschlecht* and Derrida

It is characteristic of the Germans that the question ‘what is German?’ never dies out with them. (Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, Section 244)

It has become commonplace to take J. G. Fichte as one of the prophets of nationalism. Indeed, the dominant tendency in nationalism studies is to view Fichte’s *Addresses to the German Nation*, delivered in 1807–08, as one of the founding documents of German nationalism. It is, moreover, taken as the primary example of a work declaring an *ethnic* nationalist viewpoint, something that not only defines the German nation in terms of an *Urvolk*, but which advances a notion of the nation defined in terms of a genealogical myth of common or shared descent. This view has become enshrined in nationalism studies, especially since Elie Kedourie and George Armstrong Kelly wrote on Fichte in the 1960s. This is despite the work of Hans Kohn, in the same decade, who at least acknowledged that if the German nation was sometimes treated as a concrete entity by Fichte and sometimes as an ideal entity, his guiding principle was nevertheless ‘not a historical and even less a biological reality, but a metaphysical idea’ (Kohn 1967: 241).

However, if Kohn underscores Fichte's guiding principle as a metaphysical idea, he also claims that Fichte simply made a mistake when he confused the ideal and the real and that he made this blunder because his philosophical reasoning was *overcome* with national fervour. As he puts it, '[U]nder the stress of the times and of his own emotions, the rational philosopher, the disciple of Kant, rejected the power of reasoned argument. The intensity of individual emotions seemed to him a sufficient foundation for truth' (*ibid.* 238). He thus dismisses Fichte's *Addresses* as merely confused; lacking a rigorous philosophical system, it does not stand for Kohn beside Fichte's earlier philosophical works. The danger of Fichte's work for Kohn is thus not ultimately its metaphysics, but its *lack* of a rigorous and systematic metaphysics. There has since been little work done on Fichte's *Reden an die deutsche Nation* in the Anglophone world, and the little that has been written tends to endorse Kedourie's belief that the text declares an ethnic nationalist viewpoint.

The reception of Fichte in France after the Second World War, in contrast, depicts Fichte as a leading democrat and cosmopolitan. Leading scholars and commentators such as Xavier Léon and Martial Guérault, or more recently, Alain Renaut and Luc Ferry, have argued that Fichte advocates not a form of ethnic nationalism, one dependant on some notion of race or ethnicity, but a cultural form of nationalism, one facilitated and promoted by means of *Bildung* and so *open in principle to anyone*. Both the dominant Anglophone and Francophone view of Fichte will be challenged in this article, not by denying or ignoring the cosmopolitan or national ambition of the *Addresses*, but by arguing that it is both nationalist *and* cosmopolitan in its outlook – that the national mission it outlines is one drawn in cosmopolitical terms.

One prominent exception to Kedourie and Kohn's interpretation of Fichte is Arash Abizadeh. In his essay 'Was Fichte an Ethnic Nationalist? On Cultural Nationalism and its Double', he notes that for

those who wish to take Fichte's philosophy seriously, it [the *Reden*] is read in light of the fact that Fichte's nationalism is little to be seen in his earlier – or indeed, his later – works, thus inviting the easy dismissal of the text as inconsistent with these other, more 'serious' ethical and political writings, to which proper philosophical attention must be paid [. . . moreover] what is tacitly taken for granted by many Anglophone scholars is that the ethnic character of the *Reden's* nationalism is so obvious (and perhaps so obviously proto-racist) that the text's only interest is a historical footnote to one of human history's most shameful chapters. (Abizadeh 2005: 335)

However, if Abizadeh admirably scrutinises the *Addresses* in a manner not frequently witnessed in nationalism studies since Kohn and Kedourie, and does not take its ethnic point of view as a pre-established fact, he also never confronts the cosmopolitical ambition of Fichte, be it in texts like the *Dialogues on Patriotism and Its Opposite* from 1806 to 1807 or the *Addresses* itself. Moreover, he treats the philosophical dimension of the *Addresses* as merely a screen for what he thinks is the surreptitious deployment of the nation as a 'natural' community defined in terms of blood and descent.

Abizadeh thus believes that he can reassert the ethnic nature of the *Addresses* by reading it as a 'cryptic-ethnic' text, one that preserves its ethnic definition of the nation by initially conceiving the nation in terms other than ethnic, but which then advances surreptitiously towards the very ethnic definition it first seemed to avoid (*ibid.* 336). He therefore correctly notes, for example the importance of the word *Geschlecht* in the text, but presumes it to be a word that can be solely determined in natural and biological terms within Fichte's text. He thus takes the term to have no, or little, philosophical importance. He does not, for example consider how the meaning of *Geschlecht* is intertwined with the question of *mankind* for Fichte, of what humanity is taken to be in the *Addresses*.

This article thus compares Abizadeh's approach to Fichte with Jacques Derrida's, which does indeed focus on the philosophical dimension of the word *Geschlecht* and the metaphysical aspect of the *Addresses*. The article begins by focusing on whether Fichte was advancing an ethnic definition of the nation, cryptic or not.

### Fichte and the question what is German?

In the first address, Fichte declares that 'I speak for Germans only, and Germans simply [*schlechtweg*], without acknowledging, indeed leaving aside and rejecting, all the divisive distinctions that unhappy events have wrought for centuries in this one nation' (Fichte 2008: 10). The Holy Roman Empire, which had dissolved as a union of territories in the Napoleonic wars in 1806, will thus not, if it ever did, give the impetus to unite Germany for Fichte – it will not bring Germany, this *one* nation, together. As he states,

We shall show at the proper time that every other term of unity or national bond [*Nationalband*] either never possessed truth and meaning; or if they did, that these points of agreement were annihilated by our present situation [namely, the French occupation], have been torn from us and can never return; and that it is solely by means of the common trait [*der gemeinsame Grundzug*] of Germanness [*Deutschheit*] that we can avert the downfall of our nation threatened by its confluence with foreign peoples and once more win back a self that is self-supporting and incapable of any form of dependency. (*ibid.* 11)

The national unity that Fichte strives for is thus not something to be simply achieved by him, or others like him, for he takes it to be *already* instantiated: 'In the spirit whose emanation these addresses are, I behold the conresent unity [*durcheinander verwachsene Einheit*] in which no member [*Glied*] thinks the fate of another foreign to his own, a unity that shall and must arise if we are not to perish altogether – I behold this unity [*Einheit*] as already existing, perfected and present' (*ibid.*).

But what is this unity that bonds Germans together? As we will see, the entire *Addresses* are occupied with this question. They begin to answer this question by differentiating the Germans from what they take to be the rest of

Germanic Europe, even though, as Fichte declares, ‘the German is in the first instance a branch of the Teutons [*der Deutsche ist zuvörderst ein Stamm der Germanier*]’ (*ibid.* 47 – translation altered). The German is thus descended from the Germanic tribes, but he is not identical to them. In the fourth address, entitled, ‘The Principal Difference between the Germans [*Deutschen*] and Other Peoples of Teutonic Descent [*Völkern germanischer*]’, Fichte states that the latter group can be defined as those ‘whose task it was to unite the social order established in ancient Europe with the true religion preserved in ancient Asia [which is, for Fichte, Christianity]’ (*ibid.*). The Germanic tribes, the *Germanier* – e.g. the Franks, Goths, Burgundians, Langobardi – are therefore distinguished by the fact that they brought something foreign, that is to say, Asian, into the heart of Europe – they Christianised Europe.

But in spite of their shared Christian heritage, there are major differences that Fichte notes between the Germans and the Germanic tribes, for ‘the former remained in the original homelands of the ancestral race [the original place of residence of the ancestral people or principal stock: *in den ursprünglichen Wohnsitzen des Stammvolks*], whereas the latter migrated to other territories; the former retained and developed the original language of the ancestral race [*die ursprüngliche Sprache des Stammvolks behielten und fortbildeten*], whereas the latter adapted to a foreign language [*fremde Sprache*] and gradually modified it after their own fashion’ (*ibid.* 48). The difference between the German and the Germanic tribes – which were originally ‘one stem [*Grundstamm*]’ – is thus essentially one of language (*Sprache*), but this in turn has a relation to migration, the movement of peoples across Europe (*ibid.* 47). The fact that the Germans remained where they were thus ensured, according to Fichte, that the original language (*ursprüngliche Sprache*) that all Germanic tribes once shared is now possessed *only* by the Germans. But there is a further troubling aspect, namely that Fichte’s account at this point invokes the very thing that the citizens of Athens had to do to ensure that the autochthony of their first ancestor continued, namely to *stay in the same place*, to reside on the soil of their ancestors. But things are not so simple.

Fichte immediately goes on to declare that this change, namely, ‘the change of soil, is quite insignificant. Man makes his home [*Heimat*] without difficulty in every region of the earth, and national character [the proper character of a people: *Volkseigentümlichkeit*], far from being greatly altered by habitat [*Wohnort*], instead prevails over and alters the latter after its own image’ (*ibid.* 49). Fichte therefore seems to discount on the whole the importance of soil and geography on national character. Moreover, he declares that such intermingling of peoples due to migration or war has taken place in none other than the ‘mother-country [*im Mutterlande*]’ – i.e. Germany – due to, for example Slavs, and that this has meant that it is ‘no simple task for any of the peoples who trace back to the Teutons to prove a greater purity of descent than the others [*eine grössere Reinheit seiner Abstammung vor den übrigen darzutun*]’ (*ibid.*). The privilege of the German is therefore not one of simple purity of descent

(*Reinheit seiner Abstammung*). Whatever this privilege amounts to, Fichte accepts that there is no such thing as purity when it comes to lineage and descent. The unity of the Germans is not, in other words, simply a genealogical matter.

What is more important, Fichte claims, is language (*Sprache*).<sup>1</sup> Indeed, he states that the German *Sprache* ‘establishes a complete contrast between the Germans [*Deutschen*] and the other peoples of Teutonic descent [*Völkern germanischer*]’ (*ibid.*). But this difference, according to him, emerged in time, it was not innate. He does not, in other words, claim that the German language has some special quality (*Beschaffenheit*) that other languages do not have; rather, he claims that in the case of the German:

[S]omething peculiar to them has been retained [something of their *own* has been properly retained: *dass dort Eigenes behalten*] and in the latter [i.e. the Germanic tribes] something foreign adopted [*hier Fremdes angenommen wird*]; nor is the issue the prior ancestry [*die vorige Abstammung*] of those who continue to speak an original language [*derer, die eine ursprüngliche Sprache fortsprechen*], but only the fact that this language continues to be spoken without interruption [*dass diese Sprache ohne Unterbrechung fortgesprochen werde*], for men are formed by language far more than language is by men [*indem weit mehr die Menschen von der Sprache gebildet werden, denn die Sprache von den Menschen*]. (*ibid.*)

Fichte thus opposes a historical link between linguistic continuity and biological continuity. It is merely the fact that the German language has been *continuously* spoken that is supposed to single it out. The privilege bestowed upon the German language is therefore not given due to any intrinsic value – e.g. its distinctive syntax – but simply because it has not been interrupted in its development, and in doing so, has allowed its speakers to have something of their own retained. If German did not originate as the original language for Fichte, it did *become* the original language by being kept ‘alive’ when all other languages were ‘dying’. As a consequence, he believes that because the German people have always *possessed* it, it is properly their own and it can be made *pure*. We shall examine Fichte’s philosophy of language later in this article, but for now, let us concentrate on why commentators have frequently found these passages to equate to the very thing Fichte seems to deny – a claim about the purity of descent and the positing of an ethnic definition of the nation.

### Fichte and the secret idiom of the idiom

For Kedourie, ‘there is no clear-cut distinction between linguistic and racial nationalism. Originally, the doctrine emphasized language as the test of nationality, because language was an outward sign of a group’s peculiar identity and a significant means of ensuring its continuity. But a nation’s language was peculiar to that nation only because such a nation constituted a racial stock distinct from other nations’ (Kedourie 1960: 71–2). In other

words, for Kedourie, language and race are nearly always found together; when one names language as the distinctive feature of a nation, one is also always invoking at the same time race, because language and race are often coupled together. Kedourie thus identifies a sleight of hand occurring with linguistic nationalism – it speaks of language but slips inevitably into a discourse on race. For Kedourie, then, linguistic nationalism always collapses into a form of racial nationalism. Abizadeh holds a similar view, for he argues that Fichte relies on the notion:

[O]f a *people that persists over generations*: a nation that not only shares a language, but also one that shares it over time. This is what explains the *Reden's* subtle slide from linguistic to ethnic nationalism, why Fichte begins with an uncompromising linguistic-cultural conception of the nation, but ends up speaking of descent (*Abstammung, Abkunft*). (Abizadeh 2005: 346 – emphasis in the original)

The problem with these kinds of reading, as Derrida notes, is that it presumes that what Fichte calls language – or rather, *Sprache* – merges with what the linguists call language or linguistic ability. While both Kedourie and Abizadeh outline Fichte's philosophy of language, they do not sufficiently acknowledge how Fichte differentiates an idiom *within* an idiom, what Derrida in an unpublished seminar session on Fichte aptly calls the postulation of a 'secret idiom of the idiom' (Derrida, Box 18, Folder 2, Seminar 2, page 3 – my translation).<sup>2</sup> In other words, Abizadeh presumes that those people who persist over generations, who inherit the language and pass it on, must be those people who are ethnically German. But for Fichte, those who are said to speak German, and indeed, who may be born German, may in fact be 'strangers to this idiom of the idiom' (Derrida 2008: 29). The descendants of those who empirically speak German are therefore not necessarily the ones who inherit the true German idiom. As Fichte comments, 'there is little that is truly German left among the Germans themselves' (Fichte 2008: 85). Fichte believes this, crucially, because he does not equate the ability to speak German with the linguistic ability to speak the German language, rather, he equates it with the ability to understand the *Geistigkeit* that he thinks is internal to what is truly German. The ability to hear the national German idiom is thus different from attaining linguistic competency in a natural language. There is thus something 'cryptic' in the *Addresses*, as Abizadeh notes, but the crypt is the secret idiom of the idiom, and not, as traditionally understood, some form of biologism.

Fichte makes this pivotal distinction when he states that

Those who believe in spirituality [*Geistigkeit*: the emphasis is thus on the intelligible and the ideal] and in the freedom of spirituality, who desire the eternal progress [*die ewige Fortbildung*] of this spirituality through freedom [*Freiheit*] – wherever they were born and whichever language [*Sprache*] they speak – are of our race [*ist unsers Geschlechts*: as we will see, the problem is precisely how to translate this locution, if it is indeed translatable], they belong to us and they will join us. Those who believe in stagnation [*Stillstand*], retrogression [*Rückgang*] and circularity [*Cirkeltanz*: a round dance], or who even set a dead nature at the helm of world government – wherever they were born

and whichever language they speak [*Sprache*] – are un-German and strangers to us [*ist undeutsch und fremd für uns*], and the sooner they completely sever ties with us the better. (Fichte 2008: 97)

Abizadeh notes that there has been a series of French scholars of Fichte – like Martial Guérault, Alain Renaut, Luc Ferry and Étienne Balibar – who have highlighted this passage and made it impossible in so doing to ‘take for granted the text’s unmediated ethnic character’ (Abizadeh 2005: 335). He identifies their position as interpreting the *Addresses* as a text articulating not ethnic nationalism, but ‘cultural nationalism’, one which is *open* in principle to anyone by means of *Bildung* and which potentially ‘avoids the pathologies of its ethnic kin’ (*ibid.* 336). For Abizadeh, this ‘French thesis’, while a useful correction to the Anglophone caricature of Fichte as a blatant ethnic nationalist, goes too far. For while he readily admits that the text does not espouse what he calls unmediated ethnic nationalism, a form of nationalism defined directly in genealogical terms, he does believe that the text espouses what he calls mediated or cryptic ethnic nationalism, a form of nationalism that at first avoids genealogical definitions, but which draws upon ethnic types and models in the final instance.

The strongest point Abizadeh has against the recent reception of Fichte by scholars in France is that the latest translator of the *Addresses* into French, Alain Renaut (Fichte 1992), renders *ist unsers Geschlechts* in this context as ‘our species [*notre espèce*]', rather than ‘our kin’ or ‘our race’, thus effacing the other possible meanings of *Geschlecht*, just as the most recent translator of the *Addresses* into English, Gregory Moore (Fichte 2008), has effaced the other meanings of the German locution by rendering it simply as ‘our race’, even though the word ‘race’ (*Rasse*) itself does not appear in the *Addresses*. In fact, Moore notes that the word *Geschlecht* has in his translation been rendered ‘as ‘race’ or ‘generation’, with no difference in meaning between the two (Moore 2008: xlii). R. F. Jones and G. H Turnbull followed a similar trajectory in their 1922 translation of the *Addresses* into English, having translated the locution as ‘our blood’. Derrida, in contrast, notes that he will probably not translate the word *Geschlecht* at any point because he is unsure of whether it has ‘a determinable and unifiable referent’ (Derrida 2008: 51). Moreover, he notes an earlier French translation of the *Addresses* by Serge Jankélévitch (1952), which leaves out the locution *ist unsers Geschlechts* altogether – probably, Derrida notes, because the text was translated after the war in a situation where the word ‘race’ was particularly dangerous.<sup>3</sup> The difficulty of the word *Geschlecht*, Derrida stresses, is that ‘according to the contexts that come to determine this word, it can be translated by “sex,” “race,” “species [*espèce*],” “genus [*genre*],” “gender [*genre*],” “stock,” “family,” “generation” or “genealogy,” or “community” ’ (Derrida 2008: 28).

Alongside the difficulty of the word *Geschlecht*, the logic of the passage, which it appears in should be closely examined, for according to Fichte, someone can be born German and speak German, yet not be truly German if they do not acknowledge the infinite progress (*die ewige Fortbildung*) of

spirituality (*Geistigkeit*) through freedom. For Fichte, the empirical ability to speak German thus does not make someone a true German or even a proper German speaker. Abizadeh argues that this interpretation cannot be correct because it cannot make sense of a large part of the *Addresses*, in particular, he notes, the fact that Fichte had earlier in the text differentiated the Germans from the *Germanier* – the Germanic tribes – by means of language. But this is to conflate the empirical distinction between the German (*der Deutsche*) and the *Germanier* with the *further* metaphysical distinction that Fichte makes between what is essentially and inwardly *Deutsch* from what is merely empirically and outwardly *Deutsch*. Indeed, there is a continuous emphasis upon the *internal* in the *Addresses*, befitting the historical event that properly institutes and constitutes the German spirit in its exemplary mission for Fichte – the German Reformation.

What the German Reformation, and specifically Luther achieved, was ‘not a matter of merely replacing the external intermediary between God and man but of dispensing with an external intermediary altogether and finding the bond of union within oneself’ (Fichte 2008: 77). Ignoring this concern for what is internal and what is external, what is held to be inside and what is held to be outside of the German nation, as Abizadeh does, in fact *misses* a crucial strand of Fichte’s nationalism. For his claim about the idiom within the idiom, as well as allowing non-German speakers to speak the German idiom, also allows Fichte to distinguish ‘true’ Germans from ‘false’ Germans. In other words, it allows him to locate internal enemies within German-speaking territories. As Fichte comments, the foreignism (*Ausländerei*) he is seeking to overcome can ‘be found at home or abroad’ (*ibid.* 78). The gesture of recognising an idiom within an idiom is thus as troubling as it is inclusive. Derrida’s use of the word ‘secret’ hints at this, since the etymology of the word derives from the Latin *secretus*, which, in turn, comes from the past participle *secernere*, ‘to set apart’, from *cernere*, to sift or separate, and *se*, one’s own. Hence, the secret idiom of the idiom, the secret *idion*, is what separates or severs, it is what cuts and separates the proper from the non-proper.

Fichte’s gesture is not even as inclusive as it might first appear, for he only allows non-German speakers to become German; he does not allow German speakers, or indeed, speakers of any language, to possess the secret idiom of *other* idioms. There is only *one* secret idiom and that is German. It remains singular and pure. One can thus only properly become a German by this method. The privileging of the German *Sprache* therefore remains, if not as a conventional natural language, as an internal non-empirical idiom within all other languages. All other nations and national languages for Fichte as a result can only be defined *outwardly* and empirically. The French, for example are those who simply are born French or speak the French language. Being French, unlike German, is *entirely* an empirical matter for Fichte. It is thus possible, on this outline, to be, empirically speaking, a Frenchman, but philosophically, a German. This is the cosmopolitan strand of Fichte. However, the nationalist strand appears at the very same time as the cosmopolitan strand

because while one can belong, empirically speaking, to *any* nation, one can *only* philosophically belong to Germany. The only national identity that is held to be essentially philosophical is German. The claim that Fichte is defining the German purely in ethnic terms, as found in Anglophone commentary on the *Addresses*, would thus paradoxically mean that Fichte is embracing the philosophy of the very people he would be contesting – the French. In sum, what should never be forgotten is that Fichte continually opposes French Materialism to German Idealism.

Moreover, Fichte's gesture is especially troubling not, as Abizadeh would have it, because it simply relies on making the German separate from the Germanic tribes by means of positing an 'original language', but because Fichte claims to *dispense* with the privilege of the German language while *reasserting* its privileged role as a secret universal idiom. While possession of the German language, according to Fichte in the seventh address, is thus not even a necessary condition for being German, he still relies on his earlier claim, made in the fourth address, that German has been continuously spoken, to privilege the secret idiom of the German idiom, the idiom that is supposed to remain separate from the German language. As a result, the secret idiom of the idiom, while not identical to German, will still share the destiny of the German language, and it *needs* to do so in order to claim its metaphysical privilege.

Nevertheless, for Fichte, this idiom does not vitiate its universality by being German, *but only becomes universal by being German*. The fact that the German language has not been historically interrupted for him will therefore still have metaphysical consequences. Fichte thus *never* completely eradicates the privilege he accords to the German language, even when its possession is seemingly not needed to be identified as German. As Derrida comments, Fichte says *ist unsers Geschlechts* in 'German, and this *Geschlecht* is an essential *Deutschheit*. Even if the word *Geschlecht* acquires a rigorous content only from out of the "we" instituted by that very address, it also includes connotations indispensable to the minimal intelligibility of discourse, and these connotations belong irreducibly to German, to a German more essential than all the phenomena of empirical Germanness, but to a certain German [*à de l'allemand*]' (Derrida 2008: 29).

In other words, Fichte still uses the indispensable resources of a certain German to articulate the claim that there is an idiom beyond German as natural language. He therefore ultimately relies on the fact that one does not know how to translate the locution out of German, in fact, its untranslatability is *required* to produce the sought after effect. As a result, Fichte relies on the fact that no translation of *Geschlecht* can be made that does not erase some meaning or connotations of the word, including its reference to mankind. This is why, as we will see in the next section, to speak about the Germans for Fichte is to speak about all mankind, or rather *Menschheit*, and why, in turn, it is in the world's interest that Germany should fulfil its cosmo-national destiny. In short, the word *Geschlecht* needs to retain an irreducible connection to

German in order to achieve Fichte's intention of identifying the German as the best representative of humanity.

### Fichte and cosmopolitanism

There is thus an internal relation between the cosmopolitical and the German for Fichte – they are coextensive insofar as the true German can come from anywhere and speak any language. Accordingly, Fichte believes that the German national character is the most exemplary figure of the cosmopolitan. The true German represents the *best* cosmopolitan, the *most* cosmopolitan figure possible, because unlike all other national groups, he is not bound by his empirical constitution, be it by his blood, his native soil or his language. His community, i.e. the German nation, is formed by an intangible spirit – a belief in the infinite progress of spiritual freedom – and spirit alone.

In fact, Fichte had written – if not published – on patriotism the year before delivering the *Addresses* in 1807. The text, entitled *Dialogues on Patriotism and Its Opposite (Der Patriotismus und sein Gegenteil)*, has two interlocutors speak of the place of patriotism within cosmopolitanism, one of them convincing the other that these views are not strictly opposed to one another, because

B: 'cosmopolitanism is the dominant will, that the purpose of existence, of humanity be really achieved by humanity [*Zweck des Menschengeschlechtes im Menschengeschlechte wirklich erreicht werde*]. Patriotism is the will, that this purpose [*Zweck*] be first fulfilled in that nation of which we ourselves are members, and that the result shall spread from it to the whole of mankind [*ganze Geschlecht*]'.

A: 'I shall accept that for the time being'.

B: 'It should be clear to you if you look more closely at the conception I have just described, that in reality [*wirklich*] there cannot possibly be any cosmopolitanism, but that in the true world [*Wirklichkeit*], cosmopolitanism necessarily becomes patriotism'. (Fichte 1971; 228–9 – my translation)

For Fichte, the promotion of cosmopolitanism is thus to be achieved not simultaneously and equally by all of mankind, but by one leading nation advancing the cause of cosmopolitical progress on behalf of mankind. The emphasis on a single nation, the postulation of a national mission, is thus justified in terms of a cosmopolitical and teleological framework. In other words, cosmopolitanism cannot become effective (*wirklich*) for Fichte unless it becomes a form of patriotism. This higher form of patriotism is possible only because of the *Wissenschaft* found in Fichte's *Science of Knowledge (Wissenschaftslehre)*, which is written in German. This patriotism is therefore a *philosophical* vocation, as he states:

[P]hilosophy [*Wissenschaft*] and its widest possible dissemination in our time must be the immediate purpose of mankind [*Zweck des Menschengeschlechtes*], which can and must set itself no other goal [*Zweck*].

The German patriot [*deutsche Patriot*], in particular, wants this to be achieved first of all among the Germans and that from them it should then spread to the rest of mankind [*Menschheit*]. The German can desire this, because through him philosophy began and it is set down in his language [*in seiner Sprache ist sie niedergelegt*]. It may be assumed that in the nation which has had the power to generate philosophy there should also lie the greatest facility to grasp it. Only the German can desire this, for only he, through the possession of philosophy and through the understanding of time which has thus become possible, can comprehend that this is the immediate purpose of mankind [*Zweck der Menschheit*]. This purpose is the only possible patriotic goal [*Jener Zweck ist der einzige mögliche patriotsche Zweck*]. Only the German can therefore be a patriot. Only he can, in the interests of his nation, embrace all of mankind. Whereas from now on, since the instinct of Reason has become extinct and the era of egoism has begun, every other nation's patriotism must become selfish, narrow and hostile to the rest of mankind [*jeder andern Nation Patriotismus selbstisch, engherzig, und feindselig gegen das übrige Menschengeschlecht ausfallen muss*]. (*ibid.* 234)<sup>4</sup>

The German has therefore a special role to play for Fichte, for only he can ensure the progress of mankind (*Menschheit*). As we will see in the next section, it is in fact because terms like *Menschheit* are German that Fichte will claim that the German language is the language of philosophy. An indication of this line of thought, however, is already found in the above passage, when Fichte declares that the necessary *Wissenschaft* has been grounded in 'his' language – the relationship of the *Wissenschaft* to German is thus held to remain essential and irreducible. The opposite of this higher form of cosmopolitanism, indeed, a corruption of it, is for Fichte none other than France. While it was the leading cosmopolitan nation for him in the 1790s since it advanced the cause of republicanism through the French Revolution, in the 1800s it betrayed its mission with the rise of Napoleon and what he took to be the opposite of cosmopolitanism – French imperialism.

In fact, the distinction of the German nation, in contrast to the French nation, was for Fichte precisely its ability to avoid this kind of despotism. He states, for example that the 'German nation is the only modern European nation that has for centuries shown by the deeds of its burgher class that it is capable of supporting the republican constitution' (Fichte 2008: 83). He went on to argue that the continuous republican constitution of the German nation has thus 'been until now the pre-eminent source of German culture [*deutscher Bildung*] and the primary means of safeguarding its particularity [*Eigentümlichkeit*: what is most *proper* to the German]' (*ibid.* 115).

But even what first appears in the German nation, and is protected by it, eventually spreads to the whole of mankind, according to Fichte. He thus describes, for example the German Reformation as 'the last great and, in a certain sense, complete world deed [*Welt-That*] of the German people [*deutschen Volkes*]' (*ibid.* 73). This worldly perspective, this concern for mankind, is why the German is 'imbued with a spirit not narrow-minded and exclusive, but universal and cosmopolitan [*mit allgemeinem und weltbürgerlichem Geiste*]' (*ibid.* 91). Therefore, devotion to one nation was not only compatible with cosmopolitanism for Fichte, it was in fact *necessary* in order to bring about cosmopolitanism. By serving the German nation, one was, according to this

logic, serving humanity as a whole. Moreover, in doing so, wherever one was born and whatever language one spoke, one was *becoming German* – because the German nation, unlike other nations, defined itself in terms of a spirit of freedom, one that embodied the cosmopolitan project. This cosmopolitical strand of the *Addresses* is what Abizadeh underplays in his reading of Fichte and what the French scholars bring out in their interpretations. Indeed, Guérout claims

[I]t is no longer race that defines this ‘absolute people’, but rather its aptitude for liberty and its revolutionary mission. The word *German thus takes on an entirely cosmopolitan signification* [. . .] As such spirituality is no longer a privilege resulting from Germanic ethnicity, but Germanness itself results from profound spirituality, independently of any reference whatsoever to ethnic, linguistic, or geographical characteristics [. . .] *Germanness* no longer designates anything but the character possessed by all those who recognize themselves as belonging to a single fraternal humanity (a people). (Guérout 1974: 240–1 – my translation)

One of the reasons Abizadeh opposes this kind of reading is that it treats the *ist unsers Geschlechts* passage ‘as if it were a purely ‘philosophical’ act, i.e. a conceptual clarification of the meaning of a key term’, rather than something delivered as a ‘*political act* intended to “rouse” the German nation against the Napoleonic yoke’. However, the problem with this kind of objection is that Abizadeh himself seems to treat the political dimension of the text as an *addition*, something that comes after its philosophical constitution, as if the ‘philosophical act’ were not already a ‘political act’ (Abizadeh 2005: 349 – emphasis in the original).

This is all the more pertinent as Fichte himself affirms the primacy of the practical over the theoretical in philosophy. If for Kant practical and theoretical philosophy were separate but co-ordinated aspects of one discipline, for Fichte, all philosophy must be built on the foundations of practical philosophy. Moreover, Fichte places the foundation of all philosophy on an ‘act’ (*Thathandlung*) – the act of positing the self. Indeed, activity and man are inseparable for Fichte, as he states, ‘thought [*Gedanke*] and activity [*Tätigkeit*] are only apparently divergent forms . . . science [*Wissenschaft*] is itself life [*Leben*], self-subsistent life [*in sich selbstbeständiges Leben*]’ (Fichte 2008: 62). But Abizadeh seems to hold the nationalism of Fichte separate from his philosophy, including, pivotally, his philosophy of non-natural life (*Leben*). There is no rigorous examination of Fichte’s metaphysics (e.g. on life or his definition of man), and moreover, Abizadeh treats the so-called philosophical clarification of terms – be it *Geschlecht* or *Geistigkeit* – as if it were an ‘act’ without the gravest of political consequences, or as if the meaning of these terms in Fichte were something separate or subordinate to the political act of rousing.

Abizadeh, in other words, unwittingly continues on the tradition of *dissociating* nationalism from philosophy – Fichte’s metaphysical system is not condemned as such, but only the way it collapses into a ‘political act’. The metaphysics it constructs is merely a screen to its nationalism; it plays no

essential part in the formulation of its nationalism. The political, and in this case, the language of genealogy, of *Abstammung* and *Abkunft* in the *Addresses*, is thus taken as an ‘act’ distinct from philosophy, rather than something already inscribed within a series of concepts that as a chain have metaphysical value. The reading I have pursued has, in contrast, recalled that ‘There is no such thing as a “metaphysical-concept” [. . .] The “metaphysical” is a certain determination or direction taken by a sequence or “chain” ’ (Derrida 1981: 6). It is this metaphysical system, one that touches every single aspect of the *Addresses*, including its genealogical language, that is being ignored, allowing us to think, as Abizadeh does, that there is only one ‘extended metaphysical discussion in the whole of the *Reden*’ (Abizadeh 2005: 349). He thus discounts the possibility that genealogical terms – such as *Geschlecht* – may have a central role in the metaphysics of the *Addresses* due to their position in a chain of concepts. In fact, ignoring the metaphysics generated from this chain or constellation of concepts has led us, I have argued, to *overlook* aspects of Fichte’s nationalism. Rather than separating Fichte’s metaphysics and politics, I have thus shown the political dimension of his metaphysics and the metaphysical dimension of his politics.

However, unlike commentators such as Guérout or Renaut, I do not want to read Fichte’s position as being simply cosmopolitan and republican in nature. As I have already shown, Fichte privileges German in a deeply problematic way, if not as a natural language, as an idiom within all languages. But as well as this, my claim is that we need to be more sensitive to how the different strands of cosmopolitanism and nationalism function in the text – how Fichte’s deployment of *ist unsers Geschlechts* remains ambivalent throughout. For if it is true that the German *Sprache* is privileged as the secret idiom of the idiom in Fichte, it is also true that this nationalism is paradoxically coherent with certain forms of cosmopolitanism that are democratic and republican in spirit. As Derrida states

The sole analytic and unimpeachable determination of *Geschlecht* in this context is the ‘we’, the belonging to the ‘we’ to whom we are speaking at this moment, at the moment that Fichte addresses himself to this supposed but still to be constituted community, a community that, strictly speaking, is neither political, nor racial, nor linguistic, but that can receive his allocution, his address, or his apostrophe (*Reden an . . .*), and can think with him, can say ‘we’ in some language [*langue*] and from a particular birthplace. (Derrida 2008: 29).

The cosmopolitical ambition of the *Addresses* is thus inscribed, we might say, in this ‘we’, the ‘we’ that can extend to all of humanity. But at the same time, this ‘we’ is never completely separated from what is essentially German, the potentially universal community of the ‘we’ is only made possible by the secret German idiom, even if it extends beyond the borders of the German nation and language – beyond what is empirically German. Thus Fichte’s claim that the ‘cultivation [*Bildungsmittel*]’ of a ‘new race of man [*Menschengeschlechts*]’ must first be applied by Germans to Germans [*von Deutschen an*

*Deutschen*], and that it is a task that quite properly [*eigentlich*] and immediately pertains to our nation' (Fichte 2008: 47).

Derrida, in 'The Ends of Man', in fact analyses the use of the first person plural by philosophers. He claims that there is often a move from 'the we of the philosopher to "we-men," to the *we* of the total horizon of humanity [*l'humanité*]' (Derrida 1982: 116 – emphasis in the original). This can be witnessed in Fichte when he discusses the choice of what sign or *Bild* should be used to designate the total horizon of humanity. For Fichte, the pivotal choice is between the Latin *humanitas* and the German *Menschlichkeit* and *Menschenfreundlichkeit*. The choice will *itself* for him determine who is most able to speak on behalf of mankind – who will usher in the next stage of progress for mankind as a whole. This is what Abizadeh forgets in his reading of Fichte; he neglects the pivotal question of man, of humanism in the *Addresses*. For the contrast with *ist unsers Geschlechts* is not simply and always *undeutsch* as Abizadeh would have it, but also includes mankind insofar as the German is identified *with* man, taken as the best example of what a human being is. For the question *what* is man and *who* is the privileged representative of humanity is grounded for Fichte most fundamentally in the question of what is German and what the German language – in contrast to the Latin languages – *names* when it names 'mankind'.

Those who can properly name mankind, according to Fichte, will be those who are most properly representative of man, those who best understand the spirit of infinite progress (*die ewige Fortbildung*). Moreover, he also thinks that the nation that can properly name mankind will be of crucial benefit for the *whole of mankind*.

### German as a 'living' language

Fichte believes this partly because the idiom within every other idiom for him is also essentially philosophical. The secret idiom of the idiom is thus philosophical *and* national, or rather, this national idiom is *equated* with the philosophical as such. It is held to be essentially philosophical because it is the only idiom that is truly *universal*. In other words, to speak German, true German, is, for Fichte, to speak philosophy. It is the secret idiom found in all languages, *including* the natural language called German. Indeed, for Fichte, philosophers who write in the German language and who write about the central role of language in philosophy, may themselves not be truly German. He denounces, for example J. G. Hamann, writing that 'an un-German spirit among us [*undeutscher Geist unter uns*]' has expressed the nature of 'a dead language [*einer toten Sprache*] [. . .] in loftier-sounding terms', namely, 'a metacritique of language' (Fichte 2008: 63–4).

Similarly, philosophers who write in the German language with an essential recourse to Latin may still be truly German for Fichte – as none other than Kant, his former teacher, was to him. In fact, Fichte unequivocally states that

Kant is ‘the real founder of Modern German philosophy [*neuen deutschen Philosophie*]’, even if Leibniz also struggled with ‘foreign philosophy [*ausländischen Philosophie*]’, as Kant in his *Critiques* managed to break the dominance of the sensuous in philosophy – the kind extolled, for example in French materialism. What Kant did according to Fichte was to locate the supersensuous in reason itself, thus inaugurating a form of idealism into philosophy that would, for Fichte, overcome all forms of materialism. Hamann, in contrast, sought the origin of reason in language itself, going so far as to equate language with reason in his metacritique. For Fichte, this was a debasement of reason, something fundamentally ‘un-German’ insofar as it understood language merely outwardly and empirically. This linguisticism, according to him, forgot what underlies all natural languages, namely the secret German idiom, the idiom that makes it possible for anyone – no matter where they were born and what language they speak – to become German.

This secret idiom is paramount not only because of its non-empirical nature, but because it is a ‘living language [*lebendige Sprache*]’, or rather, because access to the non-empirical – the supersensible and the spiritual (*Geistigkeit*) – is what constitutes ‘life’ for Fichte, it is ‘living’ insofar as it is non-empirical (*ibid.* 57). He thus opposes any equation of life with biology, the equation for him in fact constitutes one of the signs of a ‘foreign philosophy of death [*todgläubigen Philosophie des Auslandes*]’ (*ibid.* 88). Life is held, rather, to be a non-natural property. This is crucial, as it shows that Fichte links death with biologism, and all that which is fixed, limited and stagnant and that he links life with spirituality (*Geistigkeit*), and all that which fosters eternal progress and originality.

The German language is therefore opposed to the French language not on empirical and philological grounds, but because for Fichte, French can no longer have clear access to the non-empirical, i.e. the supersensible and the spiritual. It is for him a dead language (*die tote Sprache*). It cannot even be considered to be a ‘mother tongue [*Muttersprache*]’ by those who speak it, as it can only name phantoms like *humanité* – like the Latin influenced German *Humanität* – rather than concrete entities like *Menschheit* (*ibid.*).

The significance of this can be measured by Theodor Adorno’s insight that the word *Menschheit* in Kant means the sum of all existing men *and* the human potential in men – the abstract principle of humanitarianism. As Adorno states in his *Negative Dialectics*,

Kant must have noticed the double meaning of the word ‘humanity [*Menschheit*]’, as the idea of being human and as the totality of all men [. . .] His subsequent usage vacillates between ontical manners of speech and others which refer to the idea [. . .] He wants neither to cede the idea of humanity to the existing society nor to vaporize it into a phantasm [*phantasma*] (Adorno 1983: 258).

We might state that Fichte’s concern is also with warding off phantoms, that the superiority of the term *Menschheit* is for him linked to the fact that it is not associated with a philosophy of death. For Fichte, what *humanité* names is

nothing but a spectre, this is why no tongue that utters it can be a ‘living language’, or indeed, a ‘mother tongue’. It is unconceivable for Fichte that a ‘living language’ could house a ghost. The term *humanité* thus has shades of meaning unacceptable to Fichte. He concludes that because French is a ghostly language, because it speaks of ghosts and ashes, it is where language comes to die. The opposite of this is the German language and German philosophy, which is ‘opposed with earnest and unrelenting rigour to every foreign [*ausländischen*] philosophy with a belief in death [*totdgläubigen Philosophie*’ (Fichte 2008: 97).

Fichte believes in the superiority of the German because he holds that language as a whole does not depend on arbitrary decrees or conventions. He in fact deploys a philosophy of language to differentiate the Germans from the Germanic tribes of Europe – like the Franks. His fundamental claim is that there is a one-to-one relation between sensible and supersensible (or supersensuous) objects designated in language, and that this relation must be maintained *over time* to have transparent access to the supersensible. This is because he holds that all language begins by naming objects of *immediate sensuous perception*. There is no unmediated access to the supersensible, language will at first name only objects that can be observed in sense experience. But because the supersensible cannot be observed by means of the senses – because it lies outside of what is given by means of sensibility – the supersensible world will be designated only *indirectly* by language. ‘Language [*Sprache*] cannot do more in this sphere; it presents a sensuous image of the supersensuous [*ein sinnliches Bild des Übersinnlichen*’ (*ibid.* 51). Words designating the supersensible are thus symbolical (*sinnbildlich*) in character. What is named indirectly by means of a sensuous *Bild* are thus secondary and derivative terms, they are dependent on the sensuous objects, even if they are more significant because they do not belong to the sensuous world.

Moreover, because the sensuous world is not the same for all, because humans are dispersed across the world, and environment and locality differ, it is impossible, according to Fichte, for all peoples to acquire language in the same way, because they will have access to different sensuous objects. By adopting a ‘foreign language’, one is thus closing oneself off from the supersensible objects it names because one has not shared the sensuous *Bild* that make up the language. This is why the name ‘mankind’ is so different for him in German from the Latin languages, because for the German ‘humanity [*Menschheit*] in general has remained only a sensuous concept [*sinnlicher Begriff*] in his language and has never, as it did with the Romans, become the symbol of a supersensuous idea [*Sinnbilde eines übersinnlichen geworden*’ (*ibid.* 55). Consequently, while *Menschheit* can either mean the sum of all men, the ontic human species as a whole, or the human potential in men, the German word *Humanität* or the French word *humanité* – both deriving from the Latin *humanitas* – signify solely the *idea* of humanity, humanity as a regulative idea. These Latin influenced words are thus without a sensuous *Bild*.

The reason this has such an impact on spiritual development (*Bildung*) for Fichte is that he identifies the spiritual (*Geistigkeit*) with philosophy. As he states, ‘when we are speaking of spiritual character [*geistiger bildung*], this should be taken to mean first and foremost philosophy [. . .] For it is philosophy that grasps scientifically [*Wissenschaftlich*] the eternal archetype [*Urbild*] of all spiritual life [*geistigen Lebens*]’ (*ibid.* 61). But if spiritual cultivation is philosophy, it is not just any sort of philosophy. It must reflect the secret idiom of the idiom – the German idiom.

German philosophy is thus the only philosophy worthy of the name for Fichte. This is so even if ‘German philosophy of the present day is not German, but a foreignism [*deutsche Philosophie nicht deutsch, sondern Ausländerei*]’. For

[T]rue philosophy, which is complete in itself and has penetrated *beyond appearance* to its very core, proceeds from the one, pure, divine life [*göttlichen Leben*], – from life simply as such [*als Leben schlechtweg*], which is what will remain for all eternity, ever one; but not from this or that particular life. It sees how this life endlessly closes and opens again only in the world of appearance, that only by reason of this law is there a being and a something at all. For this philosophy being arises, whereas the other assumes it as a given. And so this philosophy is *properly* German [*Philosophie recht eigentlich nur deutsch*], that is, original [*ursprünglich*]; and inversely, if someone were a true German [*wahrer Deutscher*], then he would not be able to philosophise in any other way (*ibid.* 87 – my emphasis).

German philosophy thus brings itself into being for Fichte as it is essentially concerned with being, or rather, the act of something *becoming* the being it is. This is why the German is identified with the project of universality and cosmopolitanism. While one can be born French, one can only become a (true) German for Fichte. One is never a German to begin with; it is an act, something to be performed – like the positing of the self. This act of becoming German, for Fichte, is nothing less than the manifestation of life itself. German philosophy is thus opposed to foreign philosophy on the grounds that the latter concerns itself solely with what is already given, with what already exists – sheer materiality. German philosophy, in contrast, is a philosophy of life, a performative philosophy, one that creates things which never existed before. It stands opposed not only to foreign philosophy, like the famous French materialism of the eighteenth century – e.g. Helvétius’ 1758 book *De l’esprit* – but a philosophy of the inert, a philosophy of death. As Fichte states, ‘the intrinsic nature of the foreign [*innere Wesen des Auslandes*] – that is to say, non-originality [*Nichtursprünglichkeit*] – is the belief in something final, fixed immutably permanent; the belief in a limit [*Grenze*] [. . . it] necessarily believes in death as the first and the last, as the original source [*Ursprüngliche*] of all things – even of life’ (*ibid.* 86).

In the end then, for Fichte, all true philosophy is a philosophy of life, and because the German idiom is the only ‘living language’ (*lebendige Sprache*), the German idiom is the only language of philosophy. It is the only idiom that is intrinsically philosophical. As Derrida states, this is why Fichte’s

*Addresses* 'wants to be both nationalistic, patriotic and cosmopolitan, universalistic. It essentialises Germanity to the point of making it an entity bearing the universal and the philosophical as such' (Derrida 2007: 312).

## Conclusion

This article has argued that the *Addresses* is not positing a natural ethnic type when describing the German, but a cosmo-national figure that embodies philosophy as such. It does not deny the dangerous nationalist ambition of the text nor its discourse on the organismic. But this biologism is not interpreted as a naturalising form of biologism, as the *Addresses* does not single out the German nation *from other nations* in terms of kinship or blood. Instead, we find that this biologism remains inscribed in a metaphysical system, one that defines what is 'living' primarily in terms of a 'living language', and so for Fichte, a national philosophical idiom. The claim that Fichte is implicated within nationalism is thus not advanced as a historical claim within the history of ideas, but as a *methodological* point regarding the non-empirical structure he provides for understanding German nationality as a form of philosophy – if not the bearer of philosophy itself.

Moreover, the methodological issues I raise in this article have consequences beyond Fichte scholarship as such. For it can be argued that since its formation as a discipline or an area of interdisciplinary studies in the 1980s, nationalism studies, or at least some of its leading theorists, have tended to dismiss the philosophical – or more broadly ideational – aspect of nationalism as epiphenomenal, or at best, assign this philosophical aspect of nationalism only a secondary and derivative role. What this article suggests is that a more rigorous and insightful way to think about nationalism is through a *schematic affiliation* that mediates the particular (e.g. 'What is German?') and the universal ('What is Man?'). Such a philosophical schema, one I hope to present in the future, would enable us to see how nationalism participates in both empirical (sensory, material) and non-empirical (conceptual, ideal) elements at the same time, and so would avoid taking the ideational aspect of nationalism as epiphenomenal or always secondary to social and historical conditions.

As should also be clear from this summary, my article argues against the common tendency to view nationalism as a strongly particularist worldview, one which is incompatible with cosmopolitanism as an equally strongly universalist worldview. Instead, I have argued that even in a nationalist like Fichte, there is an ineradicable universalist element to his nationalism (a conception of 'Man') and an ineradicable particularist element to his cosmopolitanism (a specific national identity providing the best model for cosmopolitanism). Accordingly, my article suggests that the dichotomy between the national and the cosmopolitical tends to be drawn too starkly, and in an

oppositional way, in the leading theories of nationalism and cosmopolitanism, and hence that nationalism studies needs to pay more attention to forms of cosmo-nationalism in the future.

## Notes

1 Language had always been an interest of Fichte's, but his views on it changed as came to focus on the question of *national* languages as opposed to the origin of (all) language(s). For an example of his earlier work on language, see his 1795 work 'On the Linguistic Capacity and the Origin of Language' in Surber's (1996) *Language and German Idealism*.

2 This citation derives from an unpublished philosophical nationalism seminar by Derrida. The citations consist of box and folder numbers as used by the University of California Irvine Special Collections Archive. Jacques Derrida conducted his seminars on philosophical nationalities and nationalism under the auspices of the *École des hautes études en sciences sociales* between 1984 and 1988. Only the very first seminar session – entitled 'Onto-Theology of National-Humanism (Prolegomena to a Hypothesis)' – has been published out of forty plus seminar sessions, although some of the seminar material can be found reworked under various names, including the so-called *Geschlecht* series, *Of Spirit*, 'Khôra' and 'Kant, the Jew, the German'. The first three seminar sessions make many references to Fichte, although no single seminar session is devoted to Fichte. Derrida's seminars are currently being published, so the series on nationalism will eventually be published, although this will take at least a decade and a half to appear.

3 The *Addresses* has been translated into French four times: in 1895 by Léon Philippe, in 1923 by Jacques Molitor, in 1952 by Serge Jankélévitch and, lastly, in 1992 by Alain Renaut. The first two translations render *ist unsers Geschlechts* as 'our race [*notre race*]', the third, as mentioned previously, leaves out the locution altogether and the last translated it as 'our species [*notre espèce*]'. The French reception of Fichte is detailed by Michel Espagne in *Les transferts culturels franco-allemands*, 1999, as well as in the journal *Fichte-Studien: Kosmopolitismus und Nationalidee*, 1990.

4 I have used the English translation provided by Mary Anne Perkins, when she cites this Fichte passage in her introduction to *Nationalism versus Cosmopolitanism in German Thought and Culture, 1789–1914*, page 12, 2006.

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