

FICHTEANA

Review of J.G. Fichte Research

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Editorial

December 2022

Welcome to FICHTEANA, an overview of recent research on Johann Gottlieb Fichte and the *Wissenschaftslehre*. It contains details about Fichte editions, publications, conferences, events, and Calls for Papers. FICHTEANA was launched by Daniel Breazeale in 1993 as an occasional newsletter of the North American Fichte Society (NAFS). All the back issues 1-21 are available to read on our website: <https://sites.google.com/view/fichteana> The present issue 22 appears in an expanded form with book reviews, as well as a new subtitle: Review of J.G. Fichte Research.

Since the last issue 21 of FICHTEANA in March 2020, Fichte scholarship, like the rest of the cultural world, has been disrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, a number of major Fichte events occurred during this period, either online or in person. These include the Fifteenth Biennial Meeting of the NAFS, held at DePaul University, Chicago, 19-21 May 2022. It was devoted to Fichte's practical philosophy and hosted by Elizabeth Millán. The year before, on May 1, 2021, the NAFS held on zoom an Early Career Workshop, followed on June 17 by an Author-Meets-Critics session on Owen Ware's book *Fichte's Moral Philosophy*.

The Sixteenth Biennial Meeting of the NAFS will be held in London, U.K, from 15-17 June 2024. Hosted by Rory Phillips at University College London, it will be devoted to the 1794/95 *Foundation of the Entire Wissenschaftslehre* and related writings. See the Call for Abstracts below for more details.

The XI Congress of the Internationale Johann Gottlieb Fichte-Gesellschaft (IFG) took place in Leipzig, from 28 September – 1 October 2022. It was on the topic "Paradigmen der Rationalität" (Paradigms of Rationality). A new executive council was chosen, comprising of: Petra Lohmann, Rainer Schäfer, Hitoshi Minobe, Jimena Solé, and Gesa Wellmann.

Another significant event co-sponsored by the IFG, the Fichte Forschungszentrum, and the Institut für Transzendentalphilosophie und Phänomenologie (Wuppertal), was a conference in Rammenau (Fichte's town of birth), 20-22 May 2022, focused on the 1801/02 *Wissenschaftslehre*.

In 2021 the members of the IFG mourned the passing of one of its former presidents, Jacinto Rivera de Rosales Chacón (1949-2021), who died unexpectedly on October 18.

The VI Congress of the Asociación Latinoamericana de Estudios sobre Fichte (ALEF) was held online on 14-17 April 2021. It was titled "Fichte en las Américas / Fichte in the Americas." The conference proceedings will appear as *Fichte-Studien-Supplementa* 30 in early 2023.

As mentioned, a new element of FICHTEANA 22 is the inclusion of book reviews. FICHTEANA is henceforth divided into three sections. Section One is devoted to reviews of new editions of J.G. Fichte's works. The first review is of Daniel Breazeale's volume

of translations – *Foundation of the Entire Wissenschaftslehre and Related Writings (1794-95)*. This edition is reviewed by Gabriel Gottlieb, Co-Director of the North American Fichte Society. Next is a review by Antonella Carbone of an Italian translation of Fichte’s 1794 lectures on the vocation of the scholar: *La mission del dotte*, an edition translated and edited by Elena Alessiato. Third is David W. Wood’s review of the German *Studienausgabe* of Fichte’s 1812 lectures on transcendental logic.

Section Two contains six reviews of recent books on Fichte. Matthew Nini opens this section by reviewing the mammoth *Bloomsbury Handbook of Fichte*, edited by Marina F. Bykova, which presents essays by several dozen contemporary Fichte scholars. Next is Suzanne Dürr’s comprehensive look at Dieter Henrich’s *Dies Ich, das viel besagt. Fichtes Einsicht nachdenken* – his final published statement on Fichte. This is followed by Kienhow Goh’s review of the volume of collected essays, *Fichte’s System of Ethics: A Critical Guide*, edited by Stefano Bacin and Owen Ware. Giacomo Gambaro then provides an overview of an Italian-language work on transcendental philosophy by Gaetano Rametta, *Take Five: Cinque contributi su Fichte e la filosofia trascendentale*. While Circé Furtwängler has reviewed Laurent Guyot’s monograph in French, *La philosophie de Fichte*. Lastly, Elise Frketich reviews *Reinhold and Fichte in Confrontation: A Tale of Mutual Appreciation and Criticism*, edited by Martin Bondeli and Silvan Imhof.

Section Three is the Bulletin, well-known to readers of FICHTEANA. It contains a detailed bibliography of recent Fichte publications, as well as information about different Fichte societies and associations from around the globe, conferences, CFPs, translations in progress, and PhDs defended on Fichte.

For supplying information and for assistance in putting this issue together, our thanks go to Selda Salman, Gesa Wellmann, Laure Cahen-Maurel, Sina Siahpoosh, Gabriel Gottlieb, Benjamin Crowe, and Rory Phillips. We are grateful to the members of our advisory board for their support, and particularly thankful to our associate editor, Kienhow Goh, for his wonderful editorial work.

Finally, we are indebted to all the reviewers who wrote reviews for this first expanded issue of FICHTEANA. By providing accounts in English of not just English-language publications but also of books that appeared in Italian, German, and French, they have provided us with a welcome, in-depth overview of the present state of international Fichte research. In future issues of FICHTEANA we hope to have reviews of Fichte books that are published in other languages as well.

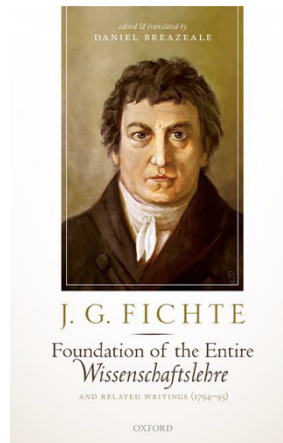
For queries, feedback, items for future issues, corrections or omissions, please send an email to fichteana@gmail.com

Daniel Breazeale

David W. Wood

1. EDITIONS

J.G. Fichte, *Foundation of the Entire Wissenschaftslehre and Related Writings (1794-95)*, translated, edited, annotated, and introduced by Daniel Breazeale (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021; paperback 2022), 602pp. ISBN 9780198842903



A masterful, brilliant, comprehensive, and at times, mind-blowing achievement – such are Daniel Breazeale’s translations and the editorial apparatus that make up *J. G. Fichte: Foundation of the Entire Wissenschaftslehre and Related Writings (1794-95)*. A work of this kind is wildly overdue – the last translation of Fichte’s *Foundation* appeared over fifty years ago, and although it had many flaws, it remained in print and has been used by generations of students and scholars. Breazeale’s translation of the *Foundation* is, however, the first reliable and readable translation of Fichte’s most influential work of philosophy, the work that essentially set the agenda for German philosophy until the death of Hegel in 1831. As Friedrich Schlegel noted in 1797, “The French Revolution, Fichte’s *Wissenschaftslehre*, and Goethe’s *Meister* are the greatest tendencies of the age.” Perhaps, that second tendency will be revived, if not kickstarted, in the Anglo-American tradition since we now have a reliable English translation of Fichte’s only complete presentation of the *Wissenschaftslehre* published during his lifetime and one that respects its language, historical context, structure, and development.

To appreciate Breazeale’s achievement, let me provide a rundown of the book by the numbers. In its 602 pages you will find roughly four works by Fichte: 1) “Concerning the Concept of the *Wissenschaftslehre*, or of so-called ‘Philosophy;’” 2) *Foundation of the Entire Wissenschaftslehre*; 3) “Outline of What is Distinctive of the *Wissenschaftslehre* with Regard to the Theoretical Power;” and 4) “The Zurich *Wissenschaftslehre*,” which includes a) “J.K. Lavater’s Transcription of the First Five Lectures,” b) “Jens Baggesen’s Notes on the Zurich *Wissenschaftslehre*,” and c) “Concluding Lecture: Concerning Human Dignity.” Accompanying these texts are, by my calculation (yes, I had to do some math for this review), 1,501 footnotes and endnotes, a 262-item bibliography of secondary sources (mostly on the *Foundation*), a 146-page editor’s introduction, which includes an introductory essay of 48 pages and a detailed outline of

the *Foundation* and the “Outline of What is Distinctive of the *Wissenschaftslehre*,” again, in 48 pages. Breazeale’s outline is indispensable and a welcome addition to the literature on the *Foundation* as it is often difficult to keep track of what exactly Fichte is doing as he takes you into the weeds of his argument; it will, no doubt, serve as a guard rail in case one becomes dialectically dizzy by Fichte’s deductions.

The “related writings” that accompany the translation of the *Foundation* are welcomed as well. The translation of the *Foundation* by Peter Heath and John Lachs in the volume *The Science of Knowledge* (Meredith Co. 1970; Cambridge 1982) provided what one might call an “unrelated” text by Fichte that certainly caused many casual readers of that translation some confusion. Heath and Lachs’s *The Science of Knowledge* includes the “First and Second Introductions” to Fichte’s *Attempt at a New Presentation of the Wissenschaftslehre*, published in 1797, yet Heath and Lachs mistake them as introductions to the *Foundation* when they note that these introductions were “written subsequently to the main work” (SK, vii). The two introductions were not intended by Fichte to serve as an introduction to the *Foundation* but to a significantly revised presentation of the *Wissenschaftslehre*. If any work counts as such an introduction, it is his essay “Concerning the Concept of the *Wissenschaftslehre*,” a work Breazeale rightly includes in his volume. Breazeale also wisely includes the “Outline of what is Distinctive of the *Wissenschaftslehre*,” a text that expands on the theoretical part of the *Foundation* and includes his deductions of intuition, time, and space. Fichte was clear that the “Outline” is an expansion of the *Foundation* and it was even later published alongside the *Foundation* at Fichte’s insistence. Both of these related works were previously translated by Breazeale in *Fichte: Early Philosophical Writings*. The versions here are updated but not radically different from their previous versions. While Breazeale has translated some things differently (e.g., *Grundsatz* is translated as “foundational principle” rather than “first principle”), these changes are more subtle reforms than radical overhauls. “The Zurich *Wissenschaftslehre*” includes translations of accounts of the lectures Fichte delivered in the home of Lavater in Zurich, which, besides the translation of the essay on human dignity included in *Early Philosophical Writings*, have never been translated into English before. These works provide the reader with a sense of the development of Fichte’s essay “Concerning the Concept of the *Wissenschaftslehre*” and the development of the *Foundation*.

I suspect that some people who already own a copy of the Heath and Lachs translation, *The Science of Knowledge*, will wonder why they should purchase or use Breazeale’s translation. Many of us cut our teeth on the Heath and Lachs translation, marked it up with our notes, wore its binding down and, therefore, may be reticent to set it aside or toss it into the dustbin of outdated translations that have been *aufgehoben* by their successors. To show the superiority of Breazeale’s translation, I will examine some key passages from these two translations. I will also provide A. E. Kroeger’s 1868 translation and the German for comparison. While I will mostly have praise for Breazeale’s translations, there are a few choices I will target with a critical eye.

I want to begin with a passage that, to my mind, offers one of the clearest statements of Fichte's conception of the I as a *Tathandlung*. This passage comes from §1 of "Part One:"

Breazeale:

The I's positing of itself through itself is therefore the pure activity of the I. — The I *posits itself*, and by virtue of this sheer positing by itself it *is*; and conversely: by virtue of its sheer being, the I *is*, and it *posits* its being. —The I is at the same time the acting subject and the product of this action, what is active and what is brought about by means of this activity. Action and deed are [here] one and the same, and this is why [the proposition] 'I am' expresses a F/Act, though this is also the only possible F/Act, as must be shown by the entire *Wissenschaftslehre*. (FEW, 203; I, 96)

Heath and Lachs:

The self's own positing of itself is thus its own pure activity. The *self posits itself*, and by virtue of this mere self-assertion it *exists*; and conversely, the self *exists* and *posits* its own existence by virtue of merely existing. It is at once the agent and the product of action; the active, and what the activity brings about; action and deed are one and the same, and hence the 'I am' expresses an Act, and the only one possible, as will inevitably appear from the Science of Knowledge as a whole. (SK, 97; I, 96)

Kroeger:

The positing of the Ego through itself is, therefore, the pure activity of the Ego. The Ego *posits itself*; and the Ego is by virtue of this its mere self-positing. Again, *vice versa*: the Ego *is* and *posits* its being, by virtue of its mere being. It is both the acting and the product of the act; the active and the result of the activity; deed and act in one; and hence the *I am* is expressive of a deed-act; and of the *only possible* deed-act, as our science of knowledge must show. (K, 68-69; I, 96)

German:

Also das Setzen des Ich durch sich selbst ist die reine Thätigkeit desselben. — Das Ich *setzt sich selbst*, und *es ist*, vermöge dieses bloßen Setzens durch sich selbst; und umgekehrt: Das Ich *ist*, und es *setzt* sein Seyn, vermöge seines bloßen Seyns. — Es ist zugleich das Handelnde, und das Produkt der Handlung; das Thätige, und das, was durch die Thätigkeit hervorgebracht wird; Handlung, und That sind Eins und eben dasselbe; und daher ist das: *Ich bin*, Ausdruck einer Thathandlung; aber auch der einzigen möglichen, wie sich aus der ganzen Wissenschaftslehre ergeben muß. (I, 96)

There are a few things that Heath and Lachs get wrong: 1) they translate 'das Ich' as 'the self;' 2) they italicize 'self' in the second sentence when it is not italicized in the German; 3) they provide a more interpretative translation of "bloßen Setzens durch sich selbst" as "mere self-assertion" rather than as Breazeale's more literal and accurate "sheer positing

by itself” (Kroeger’s “mere self-positing” is inaccurate as well); 4) they sometimes translate ‘ist’ as ‘exists’ rather than ‘is,’ which, arguably, gives it greater metaphysical weight than the German does; 5) they translate ‘Seyn’ as ‘existence’ rather than ‘being,’ which fails to appreciate that in many contexts there is a meaningful distinction between ‘being’ and ‘existence;’ 6) they mistakenly translate “was durch die Thätigkeit hervorgebracht wird,” a passive construction, actively as “the active, and what the activity brings about;” and 7) they translate ‘muß’ as ‘will inevitably’ rather than ‘must,’ removing the normative force of the claim that the *Wissenschaftslehre* is to show that the ‘I am’ expresses the only *Tathandlung*.

As it turns out, Kroeger’s translation of this passage is more accurate than the Heath and Lach’s translation, despite Kroeger introducing the Latin *Ego* for ‘das Ich,’ a pointless and confusing move that, thankfully, no longer plagues scholarship on German Idealism but, in the case of Freud, obscures his relationship to this very tradition. Similarly, ‘umgekehrt’ is better translated as ‘conversely’ than introducing additional Latin with ‘*vice versa*.’

Breazeale’s translation of the passage is far superior to the other two translations as he avoids their many mistakes. Nevertheless, there is room for critique, if one wants to be even more fussy about the details. At one point, Breazeale uses a comma (after “product of this action”) where Fichte employed a semi-colon. Ha! Got you Dan! But, in all seriousness, one might take issue with his two insertions in brackets, which in the case of “here” serves to qualify Fichte’s statement and in the case of “proposition” serves to make explicit what Fichte is speaking about, that is, a proposition that expresses a unique act, the *Tathandlung*. I find these additions clarifying without being interpretative.

Breazeale’s most controversial translation choice in this passage, and probably in the entire book, is his decision to translate *Tathandlung* with the neologism ‘F/Act.’ How to translate the term *Tathandlung* has puzzled translators since, at least, Kroeger’s translation of the term as “deed-act,” a translation even Rolf-Peter Horstmann has endorsed.¹ In order to assess, Breazeale’s translation of the term *Tathandlung* as ‘F/Act,’ I will identify *three difficulties* I see in translations of this term.

The thought behind translating *Tathandlung* as ‘deed-act’ is that it brings together *Tat* (deed) and *Handlung* (act, or action). I’ve never found this translation satisfactory as it is simply redundant; it is akin to translating *Tathandlung* as ‘act-act,’ for what is a deed but an act. This is the *first difficulty* I want to note. The first definition in *Oxford English Dictionary* defines ‘deed’ as “that which is done, acted, or performed by an intelligent or responsible agent: an act.” The OED even cites Coleridge, that friend yet foe of Fichte: “What are noble deeds but noble truths realized?” Placing my objection to the side, it is, nevertheless, clear that “deed-act” does capture an etymological connection: the althochdeutsch ‘*tāt*’, the altsächsisch ‘*dād*,’ the niederländisch ‘*daad*,’ the old-English

¹ See Horstmann 2016: 246. For two excellent discussions of the Fichte’s term *Tathandlung* that address its pre-Fichteian history, see Franks 1997 and Wood 2019, both of which have shaped my remarks in what follows.

dēd, and the English ‘deed’ are etymologically related.² Furthermore, if there is a redundancy in the English, that might just be due to the fact that there is a similar redundancy in the German, for a *Tat* is also a *Handlung*.

An alternative to “deed-act” is the often preferred “fact-act.” George Seidel has called the *Tathandlung* “a fact-producing activity,” and while Frederick Neuhouser tends to leave the term untranslated in *Fichte’s Theory of Subjectivity*, he does claim “that the subject is to be understood not as a mere fact, a *Tatsache*, but as a *Tathandlung*, a ‘fact-act.’”³ Seidel and Neuhouser are not alone in viewing the *Tathandlung* in these terms. Breazeale relies on this solution, though he sometimes trades the dash for a slash when he offers up “fact/act,” a precursor to his novel “F/Act.”⁴

“Fact-act” is sufficiently different from deed-act since a fact is not necessarily a deed. But is it to be preferred to “deed-act,” even if it avoids the redundancy charge? It is common to note, as Paul Franks does in his work uncovering the legal use of *Tathandlung* (which pre-dates Fichte’s *Wissenschaftslehre*), that the term *Tathandlung*, at least in Fichte’s use, is related to *Tatsache*, a term J. J. Spalding introduced in 1756 to translate Bishop Joseph Butler’s “matters of fact.”⁵ After all, what Fichte wants to avoid is offering a first principle that stems from a *Tatsache des Bewusstseins*, a fact of consciousness. Breazeale himself notes that “Fichte frequently contrasts *Tathandlung* with *Tatsache* (‘fact’ or ‘matter of fact’), which...is something *discovered* rather than also *accomplished* by the rational agent or I,” as is the case with the *Tathandlung* (FEW, 103). If there is a reason to prefer “fact-act” over “deed-act,” then it is because one wants to retain the relationship between the *Tatsache des Bewusstseins* and the *Tathandlung* which is its condition. The *Tathandlung* is, then, the act that conditions the possibility of any fact of consciousness.

The difficulty (my *second difficulty*) with “fact-act” as the translation of *Tathandlung* is that the entire point of the *Tathandlung* is to avoid describing the I as a fact. Part of what Fichte wants to bring to light in his account of the I is that the I is an *activity*; in contrast, facts are, well, static. This is one reason why, redundancy aside, deed-act has an advantage over fact-act. To press the point that talk of facts is exactly what Fichte eschews and that, thereby, the *Tathandlung* should not be confused with a fact, and especially not a fact of consciousness, I want to highlight what Fichte says about these matters in the “Review of *Aenesidemus*.” In the review, Fichte takes issue with Reinhold’s “principle of consciousness” precisely because it expresses a fact of consciousness available to empirical observation. A first principle grounded in empirical observation lacks the requisite warrant needed of a universal and necessary principle. Fichte’s transformative move is to shift the search for a first principle away from Reinhold’s theoretical considerations to practical ones that are a priori justifiable: “such a principle,” he says, “does not have to express a *fact*; it can also express a *Tathandlung*”

² See <https://www.dwds.de/wb/Tathandlung>.

³ Neuhouser 1991: 106.

⁴ See, for instance, Breazeale 2013: 205.

⁵ Franks 1997: 318.

(EPW, 64; I, 9). There is a bit of a hedge in the “Review of *Aenesidemus*”: there he suggests that the principle can [*kann*] express a *Tathandlung*, yet in the *Foundation*, it “is supposed to express one” such that the *Tathandlung* must be thought of “as the foundation of human knowledge” (FEW, 200; I, 91-92).

Franks has argued that Kant’s *Faktum* of reason, which in the *Critique of Judgment* he calls a *Tatsache*, actually is, also, in an important sense, an *act* of reason; *Faktum* and ‘fact’ stem from Latin, where they mean ‘to do’ or ‘to make.’ For this reason, *Faktum*, *fact*, *Tatsache*, and *Tat* are all related to the idea of a ‘deed’ or ‘act.’ One might argue, then, regardless of one’s preference, both ‘deed-act’ and ‘fact-act’ imply activity. To see this, however, you just need to know a bit about their etymologies. But, that just is a *third difficulty*. For experts and scholars, this all well and fine, but for most readers of the text, the etymological resonances embodied in ‘deed-act’ and ‘fact-act’ will fall on deaf ears. But, now, here is the real rub – if, with ‘fact-act,’ we emphasize the connection to *Tatsache*, a translation of ‘fact,’ and recognize that ‘fact’ is, given its etymological resonance, actually an act, then we have the first difficulty, the redundancy charge, as we are, in a sense left, with ‘act-act.’

Breazeale translates *Tathandlung* in a novel way as “F/Act,” yet we should ask whether or not he avoids the three difficulties identified above. Unfortunately, and here is where my eye becomes critical, Breazeale’s offering does not resolve the various difficulties I’ve noted: 1) it is arguably redundant if fact is taken to have an active sense, 2) it is too closely associated with facts of consciousness, and 3) it relies too much on knowledge of etymologies to grasp aspects of its meaning. The second difficulty is actually increased with Breazeale’s translation since it is morphologically almost identical to the term ‘fact.’ Let me, however, note the novelties of Breazeale’s neologism: “F/Act” retains the *Tatsache* connection in an elegant way and it stands out to the reader in a way that Heath and Lachs’s “Act” (which Breazeale has used before) does not. For an important technical term that does not appear on every page, its standing out can be useful to the reader, since it can serve as a reminder that the term has a special meaning.

Now, my initial response to Breazeale’s neologism, one that he himself foresees, pertains to “the difficulty of pronouncing it” (FEW, 103). If “F/Act” ought to be pronounced as ‘fact,’ then the translation is not progressive, but regressive. If we are meant to pronounce it ‘eff-act’ (as in ‘F-act’) then we have a new term, but one that, when spoken, may sound like ‘uh fact’ or ‘a fact’ which will only be confusing to audiences or interlocutors. Now, if for some reason we ought to pronounce ‘F/Act’ as ‘fact-act,’ then while there is a difference on the page, there is no difference in the ear. Thereby, not much progress is made. My guess is that many of us will simply say *Tathandlung* whenever quoting it at a conference or in class, and I suspect many of us will substitute the German in our publications as well. If Dan is bothered by this, well, he is in very good company, Fichte’s term *Wissenschaftslehre*, to his chagrin, never quite caught on either.

I think there are two alternatives that Breazeale and others might consider: 1) provide an interpretative translation or 2) leave the term in the German as Heidegger translators do with *Dasein* and Breazeale wisely does with *Wissenschaftslehre*. As for an interpretative translation, I prefer “constitutive act” since there is wide agreement among scholars that a *Tathandlung* is an act in which the I constitutes itself as an I. That is evident from the passage I examined above. However, I think the best option is to leave the term untranslated, and let readers and scholars determine its meaning from the context and its relationship to other relevant terms. One reason for thinking that leaving the term untranslated is the best option is that, as least in my experience, English speaking scholars tend to employ the German rather than any of the translations currently on offer.

Having examined a key passage from Fichte’s *Foundation* to get a sense of how Breazeale’s translation differs from previous ones, I thought I’d select another passage by opening the book without care for the section or page and select a random paragraph. My eyes landed on this passage from Part II “Foundation of Theoretical Knowledge”:

Breazeale:

Here we are once again in the vicinity of the same conflict we objected to above, albeit in a somewhat mitigated form. The result of the first sort of reflection established a dogmatic idealism: *all the reality of the Not-I is nothing more than a reality that has been transferred from the I*. The result of the second sort of reflection establishes a dogmatic realism: *there can be no transference unless an independent reality of the Not-I, a thing, is already presupposed*. The task of the synthesis that must now be established is no less than this: to resolve this conflict and to indicate a middle path between idealism and realism. [FEW, 263; I, 172-73]

Heath and Lachs:

Here then the conflict deplored above is close upon us, in an only slightly mitigated form. The outcome of the first mode of reflection provides the basis for a dogmatic idealism: *all reality of the not-self is simply a transference out of the self*. The outcome of the second mode of reflection provides the basis for a dogmatic realism: *there can be no transference, unless an independent reality of the not-self, a thing-in-itself, is already presupposed*. The synthesis now to be established must therefore do no less than to resolve the conflict and point out the middle road between idealism and realism. (SK, 160; I, 172-73)

Kroeger:

Here we have again the conflict of Realism, which says that activity can not be transferred unless an independent reality of the Non-Ego is presupposed; and of Idealism, which says, that all reality of the Non-Ego is simply transferred to it by the Ego. This conflict is to be reconciled. (K, 149; I, 172-73).

German:

Hier haben wir denn den oben gerügten Widerstreit, nur um ein wenig gemildert, ganz in der Nahe. Das Resultat der erstern Art zu reflektiren begründet einen dogmatischen Idealismus: *alle Realität des Nicht-Ich ist lediglich eine aus dem Ich übertragene*. Das Resultat der zweiten Art zu reflektiren begründet einen dogmatischen Realismus: *es kann nicht übertragen werden, wenn nicht schon eine unabhängige Realität des Nicht-Ich, ein Ding an sich, vorausgesetzt ist*. Die jetzt aufzustellende Synthesis hat demnach nichts geringeres auf sich, als das, den Widerstreit zu lösen, und den Mittelweg zwischen Idealismus und Realismus aufzuzeigen. (I, 172-73)

From my point of view, Breazeale's translation is much more readable than the Heath and Lachs translation; furthermore, Breazeale does not fail to translate much of the text unlike the Kroeger translation. Heath and Lachs's "the conflict deplored above is close upon us" is clunky and not the most accurate; for instance, translating *gerügten* as 'deplored' is too strong ('rebuked' would be a better choice, but Breazeale's 'objected' is more natural to my ear) and "close upon us" does not quite capture "ganz in der Nahe." Again, we see Breazeale rightly substituting "Not-I" for Heath and Lachs's "not-self," the only accurate way to translate *Nicht-Ich*. However, I will take issue with one term in Breazeale's translation, and it is, perhaps, not a minor one, since it occurs in a definitional moment. When Fichte defines dogmatic realism, he stipulates that this form of realism presupposes a reality independent of the I that is, in fact, a reality of the Not-I, which Fichte calls *ein Ding an sich*, "a thing-in-itself" (as Heath and Lachs have it), not a "thing" (as Breazeale has it). Fichte, as is well known, took issue with Kant's conception of the thing in itself, calling it at one point "a piece of whimsy, a pipe dream, a nonthought" (EPW, 71; I, 17). But, since Fichte rejects dogmatic realism, a view he characterizes in the "First Introduction" of 1797 as a system where "representations are a product of the thing in itself," it seems important to get right the sense of *Ding* in this passage. Does Fichte mean "thing in itself" or simply "thing"? In another passage where Fichte uses the phrase *Ding an sich*, Breazeale translates it as "thing in itself," but there he interestingly notes that Fichte is employing the phrase "not in the problematic Kantian sense but in the traditional Scholastic sense, which means something 'considered as such'" (FEW, 505, n. 351). Fichte went on to amend the misleading phrase to "*Ding für sich*" in the authorized second edition of the *Foundation* published in 1802. But, where does that leave us with regard to the passage above? To my mind, "thing in itself" is the more accurate translation since 1) Fichte did not amend the phrase in this passage in the 1802 edition, 2) Fichte continued to use the phrase in 1797 when defining dogmatism, 3) philosophically the dogmatist is committed, on Fichte's view, to retaining the thing in

itself, and 4) “thing” allows for some ambiguity between the thing in itself and a thing of experience.⁶

If you have yet to catch on, my criticisms of Breazeale’s translation take us deep into the weeds, you might even call them “searching.” This, to my mind, is a virtue of his achievement. You will be hard pressed to find mistakes or mistranslations, and when you do find something to take issue with, doing so will require not simply knowledge of the German language but a fairly comprehensive understanding of Fichte’s *Wissenschaftslehre*. And, it is likely, you will find that the issue is less of a substantial disagreement than a stylistic preference. But, if it happens to be a substantial disagreement, you will likely find much value in tussling with Breazeale’s choices and will be all the richer for having done so, as I hope to have shown.

Having focused on Breazeale’s translation of the *Foundation of the Entire Wissenschaftslehre*, I want to comment on some aspects of his editorial apparatus, a feature of the volume that raises the scholarly bar much higher than most of us are, perhaps, willing or able to reach. I have trouble calling to mind anything similar within the field of German Idealism, as his efforts in this regard surpass what we find in the Cambridge translations of Kant and Hegel or in Pluhar’s translations of Kant, all of which provide extensive editorial guidance. I am reminded of the editorial apparatus of Terrence Irwin’s *Nicomachean Ethics* (Hackett), which includes a glossary and extensive notes, but, perhaps, it is Breazeale’s outlines of the translated texts that is, to recall my previous praise, mind-blowing.

Breazeale’s outline extends beyond noting the key sections of the texts and, so, it is more than an analytic table of contents. The outline also operates as a commentary on the texts. Consider for instance, Breazeale’s commentary in the outline on the first passage of the translation I looked at above about the *Tathandlung*. There Breazeale writes:

- 6.) Deduction of self-positing as a F/Act.
 - a.) “A=A” is a judgment, an act of the human mind that must satisfy all the conditions for such an act.
 - b.) The judgment that “A=A” is based upon X = “I am.”
 - c.) Self-positing is a F/Act that expresses the pure activity of the I and is the basis of its being as an I. (FEW, 50)

Notice that Breazeale refers to this section of the text as a “deduction,” but Fichte himself does not call it as much – this is not to say that Breazeale is wrong, but simply that he has made a claim about how we ought to understand that piece of the text. Fichte begins this section by stating that “we now return to the point from which we started” (FEW,

⁶ In an email exchange, Breazeale recognized his mistake as an editorial oversight and he noted that the passage should read “thing in itself,” not simply “thing.” As we all know, you can, at best, only strive to catch everything.

203). One might take this section to constitute not a deduction but a summary, or better, a re-description that makes explicit what was merely implicit, the *Tathandlung*. Breazeale's many endnotes also function as a commentary on the text and they are consistently helpful and enlightening. For instance, in endnote 279 Breazeale remarks: "Note how Fichte treats as synonyms the terms *bestimmt* (determined, determinant), *begründet* (grounded), and *gesetzt* (posited). This is helpful for understanding how he employs the verb 'to posit'" (FEW, 500). I suspect many of us will find much to agree and disagree with in these notes, but that is just what we need, if we want to seriously progress in our understanding of the *Foundation*.

In conclusion, I will say a few things about Breazeale's introductory essay, "Genesis and First Presentation of the *Wissenschaftslehre*." Breazeale's introduction is less a philosophical introduction to the works translated in the volume than a historical reconstruction and contextualization of them. As he has done with previous introductions to his translations, Breazeale draws on Fichte's letters, often providing long passages in translation to situate the texts. I found Breazeale's accounting of Fichte's time in Zurich particularly enlightening and I also found that my sense of the relationship of the various texts to each other was significantly clarified upon reading the introduction. For anyone unfamiliar with the *Foundation* who may be looking for a summary of its structure and contents, while Breazeale's essay does provide some very helpful accounts of key ideas from the translated texts, to find them one will have to wade through descriptions of Fichte's lecture style, his debates with his colleagues, and his struggles with his publishers.

While that historical analysis is absolutely my cup of tea, it may not be what first-time readers are looking for. In this regard, Breazeale's essay seems to be aimed more at scholars than students or first-time readers. Even though Breazeale's outline may be enough introductory material for some, I can recommend two excellent essays from his book *Thinking Through the Wissenschaftslehre*, "The Spirit of the Early *Wissenschaftslehre*" and "The Divided Self and the Tasks of Philosophy" as supplementary introductions.

Breazeale's *Foundation of the Entire Wissenschaftslehre and Related Writings (1794-95)* constitutes, not only a major scholarly achievement on his part, but it is also a significant advance in Anglo-American Fichte studies, one that we all will benefit from for decades. Perhaps the most exciting aspect of this work is the impact it will have on teaching, scholarship, and on our understanding of one of the greatest works of Post-Kantian philosophy.

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J.G. Fichte, *La missione del dotto*, edited, translated, and introduced by Elena Alessiato (Naples-Salerno: Orthotes, 2020), 148 pp. ISBN 978-88-9314-239-7



This volume contains a new Italian translation of the Fichtean work entitled “Einige Vorlesungen über die Bestimmung des Gelehrten” (Some Lectures on the Vocation of the Scholar) and is edited by Elena Alessiato. The original written German version, on which the translation is based, can be found in the third volume of the *Werke* series of the critical edition of the Bavarian Academy of Sciences (see GA I/3, 25-68).

Alessiato’s translation (77-142) is accompanied by an accurate set of notes provided by the editor and preceded by a long and in-depth introduction (9-74) and a bibliography of the works cited in it (7-8). It concludes with an index of names (143-146).

The original text of Fichte contains five lectures given by the philosopher at the University of Jena in 1794: the first is devoted to the vocation of man or the human being as such (81-90), the second to the vocation of man in society (91-103), the third to the various classes in society (105-116), the fourth to the vocation of scholar (117-129), and finally, the fifth concerns the critique of the concept of culture developed by Jean-Jacques Rousseau (131-142).

The subject that gives the entire lecture cycle its title, the vocation or mission of the scholar, was a topic of particular concern to Fichte, who would return to the subject again later in Erlangen in 1805 with “Über das Wesen der Gelehrten, und seine Erscheinungen im Gebiete der Freiheit” (On the Nature of the Scholar and his Manifestations in the Domain of Freedom), and in Berlin in 1811/1812 with the lectures entitled “Vorlesungen über die Bestimmung des Gelehrten” (Lectures on the Vocation of the Scholar).

Although this work is written in a popular form and intended for a wider audience than specialists of philosophy, Fichte’s words are a genuine appeal addressed to the intellectuals of his time. In fact, he diagnoses a certain weakness among intellectuals who ‘work’ in the academies, and he ‘reflects’ on his own epoch: among these scholars, he identifies erudite promoters of self-referential and encyclopaedic knowledge, popular

philosophers whose reflections are based on common sense, revealing themselves to have beliefs devoid of any scientific form, and finally the sceptics who exercise doubt without constructing anything positive for life.

These conceptions of knowledge are far removed both from the worldly concept of philosophy (*Weltphilosophie*) advocated by I. Kant that is based on reason as its legislator, and from the concept of knowledge that Fichte himself sought to construct and which is identical with the *Wissenschaftslehre*.

This intellectual reluctance is unacceptable to Fichte, especially given the historical scenario that was the forge for his reflections (think of the French Revolution and its aftermath). This text is the expression of the need to rethink both the role of the intellectual and the knowledge of which he is the proponent.

The hermeneutic action that Fichte carries out in the work, in which the method of the *Wissenschaftslehre* is already practised and its principle – freedom – is expounded, generates a substantial revolution in thought of the contemporary meanings of the German terms *Gelehrter* (scholar) and *Gelehrsamkeit* (scholarship). These concepts are connoted now in a transcendental key since they are transposed from the plane of contingency to the plane of ought (*Sollen*), and thus thought of according to necessity.

Through elevation (*Erhebung*) to the philosophical point of view, the essence of the scholar and his duties reveals a substantial link with the very essence of the human being (as a natural and rational being), and with his inter-subjective nature. This is illustrated by the presence in him of a social instinct that binds him to other people, thus forming society.

Each human being, in fact, must carry out this agreement with himself, “egli è perché è”¹, for such is his vocation (*Bestimmung*): he must know his needs and aptitudes and by placing his actions under the legislation of the moral law he identifies the most appropriate means for the attainment of happiness. This is possible in two ways: either by subduing inanimate nature to rational purposes and educating sensation to moral duty, or, as a social being, by cooperating with other rational beings outside himself to achieve a perfect and advanced society. The harmony and unity characteristic of a rational society is achieved by means of a genuine mechanism of collaboration, which is characterised by reciprocal giving and receiving:

una capacità di dare ovvero di agire sugli altri come esseri liberi, e una predisposizione a ricevere, ovvero a trarre il maggiore vantaggio dalle azioni degli altri su di noi.²

Through this reciprocity, society itself, as a self-regulating organism, provides for its own perfection in each of its individual parts. Culture is the result of the sharing of knowledge, and by this term Fichte means both the apparatus of knowledge that serves as a necessary

¹ “He is because he is”. (84)

² (102). In English: “a capacity to give, i.e. to act on others as free beings, and a predisposition to receive, i.e. to derive the greatest benefit from the actions of others on us.”

tool for individual training (*Ausbildung*) and the process of collective continuing education (*Bildung*): each person is free to educate others in that specific aspect in which he or she is best trained and at the same time to allow himself or herself to be educated in those points which he or she is lacking. Culture thus understood is created thanks to society and thus remains at its service.

The theory of intersubjectivity and at the same time the dialectical interplay between the concepts of responsibility and freedom that produces the equality between all members of the community allows Fichte to demonstrate the very essence of scholar. The latter is a human being among other human beings, collaborating with them to bring about the perfecting of society: in the fourth lecture, the scholar embodies the results of the knowledge-sharing process, but at the same time he is its driving force and promoter since he performs an educational function. By virtue of this duality, on the one hand he heightens his ability to become receptive (*Empfänglichkeit*), since he himself was ‘cultivated’ by earlier teachers, whose knowledge he has now incorporated into an infinite learning process, and on the other hand he improves his ability to communicate (*Mitteilungsfertigkeit*), which he exercises in his own education and in the education of others.

Therefore, the scholar is defined as the teacher (*Lehrer*) and educator (*Erzieher*) of mankind (125-126), and acts for the purpose of the ethical ennobling of humanity as a whole (127).

As Alessiato states in the introduction, the purpose of these lectures is to make human beings understand their *own vocation*, while at the same time providing the theoretical tools necessary to achieve it (50).

On the whole, the introduction is informative insofar as it clearly identifies and develops the main conceptual nodes addressed by the philosopher in the lectures and does not neglect to place them in the historical context that profoundly marked his thought. The introduction similarly reveals the editor’s particular awareness of the conceptual revolution that the Fichtean philosophy has generated in the employment of terms such as *Gelehrter*, *Gelehrsamkeit* and *Bestimmung*:

In questa prospettiva i termini appaiono segni in cui si registrano le oscillazioni e le incertezze proprie di tempi caratterizzati dal cambiamento e dal passaggio da un passaggio codificato a un futuro ancora indefinito perché aperto. L’uso di un termine colto nel suo presente diventa allora marcatore e insieme veicolo di un cambiamento in corso.³

³ (18) “In this perspective, terms appear to be signs in which are recorded the oscillations and uncertainties of times characterised by change and the transition from a codified passage to a future that is still undefined because it is open. The use of a term caught in its present then becomes both a marker and vehicle of a change that is still in progress.”

In this sense, Fichte not only figures as an acute interpreter of his own time but furthermore as the author of that characteristic mobility of concepts and terms through which we still think and talk about the world today.

The new Italian translation also reflects this sensitivity: the text is accompanied by an apparatus of explanatory notes illustrating both the meaning of Fichte's terms by resorting to the German etymology (as is the case, for example, for the terms *Wechselwirkung*, *Vereinigung*, *Cultur*, *Mitteilung*, *Beruf*) and elucidating the philological choices made. The presence of certain expressions in German, placed after the translation and indicated in brackets, denotes the translator's desire to remain faithful to the original. Moreover, it emphasises the terms and expressions that appear as cornerstones of the specifically Fichtean model of communication. It is therefore very accurate.

Finally, one special moral aspect cannot be overlooked – the scholar is a priest of truth: “sacerdote della verità” (*Priester der Wahrheit*) (128), acting under the sign of the moral law not to deceive other people but to educate them to a sense of truth and freedom by means of his own ethical behaviour.

It is not necessary to go beyond this book to discover the model of the intellectual or scholar that Fichte is talking about: he himself provides a prime example in these pages and throughout his philosophical work. The project of a *Wissenschaftslehre* itself stems from the scholar Fichte's desire to educate humanity to freedom, taking shape as practical knowledge that maintains its connection to life as well as in the exercise of freedom for whoever practises it.

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J.G. Fichte, *Transzendente Logik I (1812)*. Newly edited by Hans Georg von Manz, Ives Radrizzani, and Erich Fuchs (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: frommann-holzboog, 2019), XXXVIII + 251pp. ISBN 978-3-7728-2012-0



*Dies ist ein Zirkel; aber ein unvermeidlicher Zirkel.*¹

In his 1800 *Handbook of Logic*, Immanuel Kant looked back in history, marvelling at the rational height achieved by Aristotle and formal logic in the golden age of Greek philosophy:

Among the Persians and Arabs we do find some speculative use of reason; but they borrowed the rules from Aristotle, i.e. from the Greeks. Not the slightest trace of philosophy can be found in Zoroaster's *Zend-Avesta*. The same holds for the much-lauded Egyptian wisdom, which is mere child's play compared to Greek philosophy.²

Kant had similarly praised the peripatetic philosopher in the Preface to the second 1787 edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Reflecting on how a discipline attains the status of a secure science, Kant positively noted that logic had been able to become one through Aristotle's *Organon* and in toto it had not taken a step backward.³ But negatively for Kant, logic had neither taken a step forward. Logic seems a complete and perfected whole.⁴

Kant's position on the dire lack of progress in the field of logic apparently held for all contemporary thinkers, including J.G. Fichte. Although a disciple of the Königsberg

¹ Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *Grundlage der gesamten Wissenschaftslehre, als Handschrift für seine Zuhörer*, §1 (Leipzig: Gabler, 1794), 4. I will also use the *Sämtliche Werke* (SW), edited by Immanuel Hermann Fichte (SW I: 92). English: "This constitutes a circle, though an unavoidable one", J.G. Fichte, *Foundation of the entire Wissenschaftslehre and Related Writings*, edited and translated by Daniel Breazeale (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 200 (henceforth: *Foundation*). Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.

² Immanuel Kants *Logik, ein Handbuch zu Vorlesungen* (Königsberg: Friedrich Nicolovius, 1800), 30.

³ I. Kant, *Critik der reinen Vernunft*, 2nd ed. (Königsberg: Hartknoch, 1787), viii (= KrV B viii).

⁴ Kant, KrV B viii; he presumably had in mind the saying about Aristotle that has become commonplace: *flumen orationis aureum fundens*, Cicero, *Academia II (Lucullus)*, 2: 38, 119.

philosopher, Fichte followed his own independent path. This is evident in the prologue to his career prior to the *Wissenschaftslehre*. Here some brief background is necessary, it's not unknown. – When the 1792 *Critique of All Revelation* was published anonymously, its content, language, and spirit were so Kantian, people assumed it was from the author of the critical philosophy. Until the latter publicly stated that the book was not from his pen but the author's name was in truth – Johann Gottlieb Fichte. The next year, in late 1793, Fichte had his fortunate epiphany: the Archimedean point for a brand new philosophical science.⁵ It would remain faithful to the spirit of the teacher, if not wholly the letter. The name, essential content, architectonic, and idea, were announced in a programmatic text. Philosophy was no longer simply philo-sophia, love of wisdom, but following the critical directive, it should be transformed and adopt the form of a *Wissenschaftslehre* – a doctrine of science, or simply *Wissenschaft* (science), whose inner nerve is *Wissen* – cognition or knowledge.⁶ The attempt was made in the 1794/95 *Grundlage der gesammten Wissenschaftslehre* not just to posit a vital basis for human cognition and knowledge per se, but what is key for our purpose here – to furnish a fresh foundation stone and transcendental deduction of the discipline of logic itself. In other words, Fichte was in fact trying to take a step beyond Aristotle. Just like Kant himself was when he sought to provide a transcendental deduction of the categories.

But the succession in the transcendental school proved to be rocky. Jacob Sigismund Beck, Karl Leonard Reinhold, Johann Friedrich Schulz, Marcus Herz, and Salomon Maimon, all made, in their own ways, legitimate claims to be the anointed philosophical heir.⁷ A flashpoint came in 1799: during the turbulent crisis of the Atheism Dispute, Kant made his infamous public declaration that he did not see anything original in the 'sophistic' system of the *Wissenschaftslehre* and equated it with lifeless abstract logic. The prodigal son should return to the transcendental source – the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the work that had initiated the true Copernican revolution in metaphysics:

I hereby declare that I regard Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre* to be a totally indefensible system. For the *Wissenschaftslehre* is nothing more or less than mere *logic*, and the principles of logic cannot lead to any material knowledge; since logic, that is to say, pure logic, abstracts from the content of knowledge. [...] I have advised him, in a letter, to turn

⁵ According to the 1806 *Anweisung zum seligen Leben*, this insight occurred 13 years previously (SW V: 399), so round the time of his marriage to Johanna Rahm (a niece of Klopstock).

⁶ See Fichte, *Concerning the Concept of the Wissenschaftslehre* (1794). K.F. Forberg's (anonymous) *Fragmente aus meinen Papieren* (Jena: Voigt, 1796) recalls the different achievements of this period from the vantage-point of a student under Fichte in Jena.

⁷ Jacobi famously took the inverted position, preferring a philosophy of belief or faith to knowledge, worried that the critical project was a real *Anstoß* on the road to atheism, and labelling the treatment of space and time in the first critique as Spinozistic in spirit. See Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi, *Ueber die Lehre des Spinoza in Briefen an den Herrn Moses Mendelssohn* (Breslau: G. Löwe, 1785), 123-127.

his fine literary gifts to the problem of applying the *Critique of Pure Reason* rather than squander them in cultivating fruitless sophistries.⁸

Unbowed by this rejection, Fichte kept pointing in good conscience to Kant and repeating the mantra that his system was none other than the Kantian one, just as he had done at the outset: “The author realizes that he will never be able to say anything that has not already been indicated by Kant, directly or indirectly and with more or less clarity.”⁹ In Fichte’s eyes, therefore, the *Wissenschaftslehre* is to be situated in the same contemporary stream of scientific philosophical striving as Kant, but its content and form have arisen from a more comprehensive ordering and employment of the synthetic method. Its aim was to become a “science of the sciences.” It is not at all abstract or formal logic. A closer look at both the early 1794 Jena *Grundlage* and the late 1812 Berlin lectures on transcendental logic confirms this, arousing the suspicion that Kant’s 1799 public judgement was the fruit of a partial and superficial reading.

A new edition of the first cycle of Fichte’s 1812 Berlin lectures on transcendental logic – *Transzendente Logik I* (henceforth T, followed by page number) – has been published by frommann-holzboog. This cycle ran from 20 April to 14 August 1812. Fichte gave approximately 4 lectures per week at the newly founded University of Berlin (founded through the co-initiative of Fichte himself), comprising 57 lectures in total (T: XV). *Transzendente Logik I* is the fourth volume, part one, in the student edition of a series of texts on Fichte’s late scientific lectures. It will be followed by *Transzendente Logik II*, the fourth volume, part two, containing Fichte’s second cycle of lectures on transcendental logic, held at the University of Berlin, from 22 October to 18 December 1812 (T: XVI).

Expertly edited by the principals Hans Georg von Manz, Ives Radrizzani, and Erich Fuchs, these beautiful paperback volumes of the student edition are of the highest philosophical and philological quality. This edition deserves to be much more widely known and used in Fichte research. The books are more affordable than the *Gesamtausgabe*, easier to handle, and more up-to-date and exact than it or any other similar edition. They are the result of meticulous textual work based on the *Gesamtausgabe* itself (since the editors worked on both editions). They have accessible overviews, comprehensive and detailed indexes, while Fichte’s written texts are complemented when required with passages from notes taken by his students. To be sure, because of the lecture notebook format, many of these notes are cryptic, terse, and difficult to understand, and therefore need exegesis and supplements, as well as consultation of Fichte’s often allusive references, to much better grasp the thread of the arguments. In this text, this is done using square brackets, footnotes, reading keys, lists of Fichte’s abbreviations, further bibliographies etc., and in the preface and introduction.

⁸ I. Kant, “Declaration Concerning Fichte’s *Wissenschaftslehre*” (1799), translated by Arnulf Zweig in: Kant, *Correspondence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 559 (AA 12: 370).

⁹ Fichte, Preface, *Concerning the Concept of the Wissenschaftslehre* (1794) in: *Foundation*, 153 (SW I: 30-31).

Here Hans Georg von Manz has written a very helpful introductory piece on the history, function, and location of transcendental logic in the architectonic of the *Wissenschaftslehre*, as well as outlining the various elements of both general and transcendental logic, such the roles of the concept, intuition, judgement, the a priori, synthesis, the acts of the I, and so on (T: XV-XXXV). A huge compliment to the editors and publisher for this editorial undertaking.

What exactly is transcendental logic for Fichte?¹⁰ It is his attempt to show that the principles of formal or general logic do not have their foundation in themselves but in a higher science. For Fichte, although logicians may consciously employ these principles, they are generally ignorant of their origins, i.e. unconscious of the unified ground or foundational principle of their own discipline, even though of course it is in the power of every logician to attain this knowledge. This foundational principle is to be supplied by a transcendental deduction, a procedure documented in the *Wissenschaftslehre*. We discover that the higher cognitive principle of logic is ultimately knowledge *or knowing itself*, i.e. the cognitive faculty of the conscious human I. In lecture one of *Transzendente Logik I*, Fichte speaks about the epistemological relationship between the logician and the transcendental philosopher:

φ = *Wissenschaftslehre*¹¹: i.e. it is the theory of knowledge itself as one absolute principle of a system of phenomena. [...] I'm now saying it is *knowledge* as such: but what *is* that, what *is* knowledge then? The logician [answers]: knowledge is an abstract concept, where I bring together what is common and particular and think it! That's [provisionally] fine. [But] Who is this 'I', which does the thinking: from where does it draw this power [of bringing these elements together]?

(φ = *Wissenschaftslehre*: d.i. Lehre von dem Wissen selbst als einem absoluten Princip eines Systems von Phänomenen. [...] nun sage ich *das Wissen* überhaupt: was *ist* das, *ist* es denn? Der Logiker [antwortet]: es ist ein abstrakter Begriff, in welchem ich das gemeinsame zusammennehme u. besonders denke! Damit [sei es vorerst] gut. [Aber] Wer ist denn dieser Ich, der dies thut: woher hat er die Kraft [des Zusammenfassens]?) (T: 3)

Although both logic and philosophy intersect in the sphere of knowledge, Fichte demarcates the *particular* science of logic from the more *universal* science of the *Wissenschaftslehre*. “φ considers *knowing*. Logic is distinguished from it. [...] φ has the whole of knowledge as its object. This is *not* the case for logic and the mere logical view” (T: 4). Yet if logic is not strictly part of general philosophy for Fichte, how could a thinker

¹⁰ For two of the best fuller treatments of Fichte's transcendental logic, see Stefan Schick, *Contradictio est regula veri. Die Grundsätze des Denkens in der formalen, transzendentalen und spekulativen Logik* (Hamburg: Meiner, 2010), esp. 123-277 on Fichte; and Alessandro Bertinetto, *L'essenza dell'empiria. Saggio sulla prima 'Logica trascendentale' di J.G. Fichte (1812)* (Naples: Loffredo Editore, 2001).

¹¹ φ is Greek shorthand in Fichte's lecture notes for philosophy.

like Kant conflate Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre* itself with mere logic? – Doubtlessly due to a misreading of the admittedly enigmatic opening paragraphs §§1-3 of the *Grundlage*.

It is highly recommended to read these 1812 lecture notes on *Transzendente Logik I* in conjunction with Fichte's published works, especially the *Grundlage*, since the practical exercises and deduction of transcendental logic (without using that name) are found in the latter text in an especially illuminating manner. Moreover, as is customary for Fichte, some of the terminology in the *Transzendente Logik I* has become metamorphosed, and its “double-sense” (T: 47) needs to be deciphered in order to recognize it in the *Grundlage*. For instance, the 1794 operation of “synthesis” is called in 1812 “composition” or literally “positing together” (*Zusammensetzung*) (T: 64-66), and positing is “seeing oneself” (*Sichsehen*) (T: 105-107). In the *Grundlage*, the first three main principles of formal logic are directly interconnected with the first three foundational principles of the *Wissenschaftslehre*: the principle of identity with the first principle of the absolute I; the principle of non-contradiction with the second principle of the Not-I; and the principle of sufficient reason with the third principle of the creative imagination, which ultimately becomes spirit or absolute reason.¹²

Thus, Fichte's unavoidable circle is a methodological one: he starts with logic, but logic does not form the ground of the *Wissenschaftslehre*, but precisely the opposite relation holds – the *Wissenschaftslehre* forms the ground of logic.¹³ How is that possible? Because, as the 1812 *Transzendente Logik I* explains, the cognitive attention of the Fichtean philosopher is not merely focused on any particular logical syllogism (T: 66), or on an analysis of a set of specific sentences or propositions in the text (T: 18), but on the mental operations of the entity that is carrying out the logical deductions, that is, on the knowledge of that agent designated by the word “I”. We first have to carry out some kind of intellectual operation in order to obtain better insight into the rational laws, nature, intuition, and idea of the I. The science of logic is just one example of an intellectual discipline that can be employed to this end. Mathematics, geometry, arithmetic, and algebra, which are all closely affined with logic and its axioms, are similarly excellent stepping stones onto the meta-science of the *Wissenschaftslehre*, especially since the third foundational principle can also be derived from an arithmetic division to infinity.¹⁴ In any event, this I is not an “abstract”, hidden or “occult I” (T: 13), but it is the same I that consciously performs the mental acts. Just as the natural thinker

¹² See Fichte, *Foundation*, §§1-3, in: *Foundation of the entire Wissenschaftslehre and Related Writings*, 200-224 (SW I: 91-122).

¹³ In a review, the Kantian S.M. Beck belittled this procedural circularity, claiming the *Wissenschaftslehre* was full of “magic circles” (Fichte, GA I/2: 172).

¹⁴ In addition to Kant's response to Eberhard and the works of Maimon, two further contemporary sources for Fichte's ideas on infinity and mathematics in relation to logic are Lazarus benDavid and Christian Wolff. See L. BenDavid, *Versuch einer logischen Auseinandersetzung des mathematischen Unendlichen* (Berlin: Petit und Schöne, 1789), and C. Wolff, *Kurzer Unterricht, von den Vornehmsten Mathematischen Schriften* (Vienna: Trattner, 1763), especially §§1-10. For further details on a number of these topics, see my: *Mathesis of the Mind: A Study of Fichte's Wissenschaftslehre and Geometry* (Amsterdam: Rodopi/Brill, 2012).

cognitively abstracts from the factual material world to generate concepts and ideas, like with colours and bodily forms, so the transcendental thinker does the same with the facts and acts of consciousness. Real separate, disparate, or even antithetical elements, are brought into an ideal relation or synthesis, but the latter already presupposes an inherent unity or original thesis. Philosophy is an ideal-real construction, logic is an abstract after-construction: “*The I*. – the *I* joins – colours, forms, matter of this sort. Logic cognizes as knowledge, and only joins the latter in a given after-construction” (T: 9). Since the goal of the *Wissenschaftslehre* is to trace logic back to its underlying transcendental ground, back to the mental operations of the *I*, its content and goal are altogether different from formal logic. In this sense, the particular science of logic can be viewed as a propaedeutic leading to the more universal science of the *Wissenschaftslehre*. Or as the 1812 *Transzendente Logik I* puts it:

More precise explanation of philosophy: it is the grounding of the phenomenon of the *logical I*.

(Nähere Erklärung der Ph[ilosophie]. [: sie ist] Begründung des Phänomens [des] *logischen Ich*.) (T: 11).

Contrary to Kant’s 1799 public judgment, the *Wissenschaftslehre* does have a real and material content, an empirical touchstone or *Grundsatz*. In the 1794 *Grundlage*, the first grounding principle or axiom of the whole human being is: *I am (Ich bin)*; this is the “first absolutely unconditioned principle of human knowledge.”¹⁵

The first grounding principle remains identical in the 1812 *Transzendente Logik I*. It is merely cloaked in another linguistic guise: “The *I am* is the reflection of the appearance itself [...] the expression of seeing is called *I am*; seeing presents itself as the stationary reflection of a flow” (T: 194). The three logical principles remain formal, since they are abstracted from this material basis (cf. T: 24-25). It is no different in the *Grundlage*, where Fichte states how the first logical principle of identity is obtained: “The purely formal, logical proposition ‘*A = A*’ arose from the material proposition ‘*I am*’ by means of abstraction from the content of the latter.”¹⁶ Thus, the logical principle of identity, expressed in the notation *A = A*, is not the first principle of the *Wissenschaftslehre* (cf. the symbolic notation on T: 235). To correctly posit the *Grundsatz* or the “first ring of the comet” (Fr. Schlegel), presupposes intellectual effort and “the power of freedom of an inner intuition” (SW I: 88), also known as an intellectual intuition (*intellektuelle Anschauung*). Similar to Spinoza, in the 1812 *Transzendente Logik I* intellectual intuition is abbreviated to its Latinate form ‘*intuition*’ (T: 192-194); as well as being expressed in innovative visual German terms like “absolute seeing” (*absolutes Sehen*) (T: 192). While the conscious carrying out of a synthesizing or

¹⁵ Fichte, *Grundlage* (SW I: 91-98). Of course, many modern philosophers are incredibly sceptical of Fichte’s claims here, i.e. of fully grasping the self or *I*. E.g. Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of the Mind* (1949), or Daniel Dennett, *Intuition Pumps* (2014).

¹⁶ Fichte, *Foundation*, 210 (SW I: 105).

unifying logical operation is denoted “immediate apperception” (*unmittelbare Apperzeption*) (T: 6).

Both Fichte’s early Jena and later Berlin presentations on the first logical principle of identity remain Kantian in spirit, because they are actually a concrete application of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. There Kant notes that logic can be deduced from the synthetic unity of apperception: “And so the synthetic unity of apperception is the highest point to which we must attach all use of the understanding, and even the whole of logic, and consequently, transcendental philosophy; indeed, this power is the understanding itself.” (KrV: B 134).¹⁷ Pure apperception is of course none other than a different word in Fichte for intellectual intuition. Fichte’s first step beyond Aristotle in the *Grundlage* therefore is the transcendental deduction of the logical principle of identity from the rationality of the I itself.

The second principle of the *Wissenschaftslehre*, the positing of the Not-I, bears a parallel with the principle of non-contradiction. Here Fichte strives to take a second step beyond Aristotle, whose philosophy K.L. Reinhold believed was based on the logical principle of non-contradiction.¹⁸ While the third principle of sufficient reason, tries to find the *ground* of something. In the *Wissenschaftslehre*, it becomes in turn inwardly derived from the human power of the creative imagination, or the pure rationality of the spirit. This faculty of the mind oscillates or hovers between two extremes or dualisms, those of the archetypal conflict between the I and the I-Not, the ideal and the real, the infinite and the finite, striving to find a synthesis to overcome the contradiction between the two.¹⁹ The true nature and power of this third principle of the productive imagination is often overlooked, as both Fichte and Kant recall. But it is via this power that the posited absolute I provides itself with a foundation. Fichte’s argument on the logical principle of sufficient reason was elaborated by engaging with the sceptics Aenesidemus and Creuzer.²⁰ Logically, materially, and structurally, the *Wissenschaftslehre* is not dualistic

¹⁷ For two insightful studies on Fichte’s logic in relation to Kant’s logic, see Angelica Nuzzo. “‘Das denkt nicht, sondern das Wissen denkt – sagt der transzendente Logiker.’ Fichte’s Logic in Kant’s Aftermath”, *International Yearbook of German Idealism* 12 (2014): 189-211; and Christoph Asmuth, “‘Sie muss drum als Wissenschaft nicht nur vernachlässigt, sondern positive bestritten, und ausgetilgt werden’ – Fichtes Logik als Logikkritik”, *International Yearbook of German Idealism*. 12 (2014): 213-235.

¹⁸ See Karl Leonhard Reinhold, *Über das Fundament des philosophischen Wissens* (Jena: J.M. Mauke, 1791), 28. Regarding Fichte’s early reading of Reinhold during the period of discovering the *Wissenschaftslehre*, see Elise Frketic, “The First Principle of Philosophy in Fichte’s 1794 *Aenesidemus Review*”, *Fichte-Studien* 49 (2021): 59-76.

¹⁹ A Kantian-Fichtean perspective on this problem of synthesis, see Günter Zöller, *Fichte’s Transcendental Philosophy: The Original Duplicity of Intelligence and Will* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). For a renewed philosophical diagnostic of the problem in general, see John McDowell’s now classic: *Mind and World* (Harvard University Press, 1994, 2000).

²⁰ Fichte engaged with these sceptics in two early book reviews from late 1793 (SW I: 3-25; SW VIII: 411-417). Cf. Aenesidemus (pseudonym for Gottlob Ernst Schulze), *Aenesidemus oder über die Fundamente der von dem Prof. Reinhold in Jena gelieferten Elementar-Philosophie* (1792) and Leonhard Creuzer, *Skeptische Betrachtungen über die Freyheit des Willens* (Giessen: Heyer, 1793). On Aenesidemus and Creuzer, see the respective ground-breaking articles of Daniel Breazeale, “Fichte’s Aenesidemus Review

but triadic. However, it is ultimately a unity for Fichte, since the second two of the three foundational principles can be transcendently deduced from the first absolute principle, that identity expressed in the proposition “I am”.

Hence, logic on the one hand is a separate discipline apart from philosophy, almost set in opposition to it at times, but on the other hand, it is a pedagogical path for students to arrive at the more complex and comprehensive presentation of the *Wissenschaftslehre*.²¹ Fichte’s ultimate aim is therapeutic as it were: to awaken the student’s “organ for philosophy”, to “open the eye” of those who have been temporarily blinded by the abstract nature of conventional logic (cf. Introduction, T: XX).

The 1812 *Transzendente Logik I* also refers to other propaedeutics. To this extent these late lectures do not just cover logic, but touch on other sub-disciplines of the *Wissenschaftslehre*.

In conclusion, I’ll briefly mention a couple of these. Fichte’s idea of nature in the 1812 lectures on logic continues the earlier Jena reflections insofar it is grounded in bodily existence and experience: the outer world of nature is known via the body and empirical experience on the whole (T: 51). “Dogmatists do not have an I, they are Not-Is, nature” (T: 7) This of course recalls Fichte’s negative footnote in the *Grundlage* about dogmatists who have failed to divine Kant’s spirit, and find it easier to see themselves as “a piece of lava on the moon”, as a machine of nature, than as a pure I.²² But we also find a conception of nature in which the different kingdoms are sketched in a positive hierarchy: the order of concepts passing from “mineral, plant, animal, human etc.” (T: 51). In its “*Urfassung*” (archetypal constitution) this is the attempt at properly determining nature, the “essence of nature” (T: 51). Both *Über den Begriff*²³ and the *Grundlage* had already wrestled with the problematic idea of nature’s order or continuity, the chain or ladder of being, which was most thoroughly defended at the time in the science of biology by Charles Bonnet. This where the scientist of nature has a rightful role to play in constructing correct conceptions of nature. Paragraph §3 of the *Grundlage* briefly evokes this idea for the world of nature and the different natural sciences, where the need for more precise conceptual determinations of the facts (*Tatsachen*) are paramount. Heuristically, one could start with mineralogy, with the inorganic matter of the mineral world, such as specific metals like gold or silver, before ascending to the

and the Transformation of German Idealism”, *Review of Metaphysics* 34/3 (1981): 545-568, and Wayne Martin, “Fichte’s Kreuzer Review and the Transformation of the Free Will Problem”, *European Journal of Philosophy* 26/2 (2018): 717-729.

²¹ On logic as a propaedeutic, see Hans Georg von Manz’s illuminating article: “Fichtes Theorie des Begriffs und der Empirie in der ‘Transzendentalen Logik I’: Zur Methodik, zu ihrem Status als Propädeutik für die Wissenschaftslehre und eine kurze Darstellung ihrer Ausgangsthesen” *Fichte-Studien* 45 (2018): 44-60.

²² See Fichte, *Foundation*, 265, footnote (SW I: 177-176). On the Kantian background to this dogmatic form of thinking, see I. Kant, *Über die Vulkane im Mond* (1785).

²³ Fichte, *Concerning the Concept*, 177, footnote.

concept of metal itself²⁴, then to the organic world of botany, like a blade of grass and its concept, further to biology and the concept of an animal like a bird, then to the physiology or anthropology of the human being, and finally, from the perspective of astronomy, determining the planets, constellations, and fixed stars etc.²⁵ In the cosmogonies of the time, the philosopher J.G. Herder conjectured the star Sirius as the highest central star of the cosmos. Here he was appealing to the scientific theories of Kant and Bonnet.²⁶ But the philosopher of the *Wissenschaftslehre* does not remain of course at the outer stage of natural empirical facts or *Tatsachen*, but has to transcendently carry out an inner cognitive operation. The work of the natural scientist is not rejected, but complemented by the philosopher. This is embodied in Fichte's position on an infinite, unconditioned, and absolute first principle expressed by a *Tathandlung*. The *Transzendente Logik I* mints new terms for this *Tathandlung* such as "absolute seeing" (T: 192) or "a systematic seeing that sees" (T: 192). The 1795 *Grundriss* crucially reminds us that the *starting point* of the *Wissenschaftslehre* is the universal and infinite, and not finite empirical facts. The vocational task and path of the transcendental philosopher is inverted to that of the natural scientist: "The *Wissenschaftslehre*, which is supposed to encompass the whole system of the human mind, has to follow this path and descend from the universal to the particular."²⁷ Furthermore, it is to perceive, uncover, and present the unity between the two real and ideal systems of knowledge, to arrive at a "total science" in the words of Hemsterhuis.

A prevalent and recurrent theme in the *Transzendente Logik I* is the idea of the "Kunst des Denkens" (art of thinking) or "Denkkunst" (thinking as an art) (T: 17-18), with Fichte insisting on the practice of "Socratic proofs" (T: 77). This is perhaps obvious for logic, but his discussions repeatedly transition over to the discipline of philosophy as an art of construction of inner images (*Bilder*) (cf. T: 87, 176, 207-211). Once more we are reminded of the need in philosophy to correctly employ the force of the creative imagination. Indeed, it is this faculty that leads us over to the fine arts, and the feelings and ideas generated by the best artistic works and images. Like formal logic and mathematics, art is a particular propaedeutic to the universal *Wissenschaftslehre*. Fichte's 1795 *Über Geist und Buchstab in der Philosophie* argues for this at length with specific models. Here the artistic genius can help us scale the heights, up to the sphere of aesthetic feelings, like beauty, the pleasant, and the sublime, which are all stimulated in genuine art and literature. Fichte's concrete contemporary examples of the latter include Goethe's

²⁴ Fichte, SW I: 116. In Fichte's time the scientific idea of these metals was in flux; see Abraham Gottlob Werner, *Neue Theorie von der Entstehung der Gänge, mit Anwendung auf den Bergbau, besonders den freibergischen* (Freiberg: Gerlach, 1791). Historically, this text goes back to gold mining in Diodorus Siculus's account of Egypt.

²⁵ Further background to this can be found in Fichte's French Revolution book (SW: 124-125).

²⁶ Kant of course had created a model more based on Isaac Newton's mechanical principles. See Johann Gottfried Herder, *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*, Erster Teil (Riga & Leipzig: Hartknoch, 1784), 6. For Herder, the earth is a "star among stars" and the human being is the central ring in creation.

²⁷ Fichte, *Grundriss* (Outline), in: *Foundation*, 383 (SW I: 333).

Faust, Wieland's creative literature and fairy tales, the music of Mozart's *Magic Flute*, Schiller's poems, Lessing's *Laocoon* and dramas, or the art of architecture – they all form creative bridges to the art of philosophy. One philosophical source for this architectonical link in the *Wissenschaftslehre* between the fine arts and the art of thinking is of course Kant again, who gave in the 3rd Critique examples like poetry and architecture as a means for evoking pure aesthetic feelings, such as the experience of the sublime when beholding enormous buildings like the pyramids or Saint Peter's in Rome.²⁸

Finally, Fichte's 1812 lectures on transcendental logic also contain some late reflections on the sub-discipline of religion. These include a discussion of a *Gesicht* (T: 131-133) – literally 'face' in German; his reference to the "illumination" (*Erleuchtung*) of the "seer" (T: 62); the idea of a "symbol" (T: 63); or the "image" (*Bild*) of God (T: 48-50). This reinforces how important it is not to study these kinds of lecture comments in isolation, where they can often remain obscure. The reader additionally needs to consult Fichte's other published writings to smooth over some of the dissonances. That said, they will probably always remain problematic to some readers. For instance, *Gesicht* is mentioned in both the *Addresses to the German Nation* and the 1811 *Lectures on the Vocation of the Scholar*. In the first book the seer Ezekiel experiences a *Gesicht*. From the standpoint of religious feeling, *Gesicht* signifies a *vision*, but from the higher standpoint of the *Wissenschaftslehre*, it designates a perception of a rational *idea*. It is just that the religious inclined needs more the support of sensible images. Key too is the 1798 *Sittenlehre*, where Fichte explains how these sensible images or symbols are a necessary counterpart of the inner religious life. Here the enlightened priest or artist takes up the mantle and interprets them for the community of believers. This is why sensible images are found in Fichte's texts on religion and art, such as light or food in the early *Revelation* book (SW V: 26, 134), flowers in the 1795 essay on language (SW VIII: 316), or a sparrow²⁹, heavenly council and divine author (*Urheber*) in the 1798 essay "On the Ground of our Belief in a Divine World Governance" (SW V: 177-189). But idolatry happens when a lower sensible thing is worshipped as an idol (*Götze*) instead of striving for the higher supersensible sphere, as Fichte warns when pleading his case in the *Appellation* (SW V: 220). Fichte drew many of these distinctions and interconnections between the sensible and supersensible, the moral law, the voice of conscience, and the divine, from the same philosophical source: Kant. In fact, the Kantian-inspired language, name, and content of Fichte's 1798 essay on religion was offered as a gravitational

²⁸ See Immanuel Kant, *Critik der Urtheilskraft*, 2nd edition (Berlin & Libau: Lagarde & Friedrich, 1793), 87-88. Here Kant refers to Savary's experience of the pyramids under moonlight. See Claude Etienne Savary, *Lettres sur L'Egypte* (Paris: Onfroi, 1785), 162-170. Savary's depiction of seeing the pyramid of Zoser in Saccara contrasts lived aesthetic experience with mere information gleaned from reading a book (8-15).

²⁹ Here Fichte is taking a Socratic leaf out of the book of J.G. Hamann, the magus of the north and an early student of Kant, who uses this same symbol. See Johann Georg Hamann, *Sokratische Denkwürdigkeiten für die lange Weile des Publicums* (Amsterdam, 1759), 24.

counterpoint to Forberg's atheistic tendencies, but it was fatefully misunderstood, distorted, and attacked, sparking the Atheism Dispute.³⁰

In sum: this student edition of Fichte's 1812 lectures on transcendental logic is absolutely recommended. As mentioned, these late lectures do not just cover logic, but many other topics, and it is advised to read them alongside Fichte's published writings. Moreover, they can be profitably read in conjunction with Kant's lectures and writings on logic and transcendental logic.

Under this angle, the Kant-Fichte relationship has an epilogue, one in which the unavoidable circle of logic is timeless and their two lives continue to run in parallel. Understanding alternates with misunderstanding, agreement with disagreement, harmony with disharmony. As we saw, for the duration of his career Fichte had already taken to heart Kant's words about applying the critical philosophy. At the completion of his 1795 *Grundriss*, he once again took pains to guide the reader back to the Kantian source, writing: "and for the moment we take leave of our reader, who will find himself situated precisely at the point where Kant begins."³¹ However, at the same time as Fichte was writing these words in Jena, the original transcendental philosopher was hard at work in Königsberg drafting an updated version of his philosophy, one that would supersede the earlier critical one. Fichte did not live to see its publication, but its architectural form and starting point would have been strikingly familiar to him. It was none other than an axiomatic philosophy based on a single first principle and where the consciousness of one's self is also a logical act.³² Even more, Immanuel Kant's new system, christened *opus postumum* by the editors, appears to have the identical name to his own:

PHILOSOPHY AS DOCTRINE OF SCIENCE [*WISSENSCHAFTSLEHRE*], IN A COMPLETE SYSTEM.³³

David W. Wood

³⁰ A number of the texts relating to this controversy have been translated into English in: J.G. *Fichte and the Atheism Dispute (1798-1800)*, edited by Yolanda Estes and Curtis Bowman (London: Routledge, 2016). See too the untranslated: (Anonymous), *Die Erscheinungen des Engels Gabriel; Oder: der Engel Gabriel und Johann Gottlieb Fichte, Im siebenten Jahr der Fichte'schen Offenbarungen* (= 1799); and K.L. Reinhold's puzzling *Sendschreiben an J.C. Lavater und J.G. Fichte über den Glauben an Gott* (Hamburg: Perthes, 1799).

³¹ Fichte, *Grundriss* (SW I: 411); *Foundation*, 436.

³² Kant, *Opus postumum* (AA 22: 69).

³³ Kant, *Opus postumum*, edited by Eckart Förster; translated by Eckart Förster & Michael Rosen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 255.

2. BOOKS

The Bloomsbury Handbook of Fichte, ed. Marina F. Bykova (London-New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020; paperback 2022), xxi + 576 pp. ISBN 9781350036611



In this substantial volume, Marina Bykova has gathered together essays by some of the most prominent contemporary Fichte scholars writing in English. Indeed, this book is not an encyclopedia, but a portrait of contemporary Fichte scholarship. The eclecticism that this format yields is outweighed by the book's numerous qualities: the book frees Fichte from clichés and offers a nuanced portrait of a seminal thinker, only becoming more important with time. Of particular interest in this book is the prominence given to Fichte's post-1800 work, put on equal footing with the Jena period; the inclusion of a "key concepts" section; and the synthetic nature of many of the chapters, often the fruit of years—if not of a lifetime—of research. It would be impossible in the context of a review to give each of the thirty-eight chapters the attention they deserve. What follows is instead an overview of each of the five sections into which they are divided, with emphasis on what this reviewer found most engaging.

Part 1: Fichte in Context and His Path to Transcendental Idealism

Part One is demonstrative of what this volume's aims are. This section is not a systematic treatment of Fichte's work prior to 1794. It is rather a means of entering into contact with Fichte, at once an introduction to a style of thinking and a portrait of the kind of philosophy one finds in anglophone Fichte scholarship today. The historical centre point is nonetheless pre-1794, with Tom Rockmore leaning on the *Aenesidemus Review* to supplement his arguments, and Sebastian Gardner examining the *Attempt at a Critique of All Revelation*.

Marina Bykova's opening chapter offers a biographical overview of Fichte's life and work. This highly readable essay not only paints a sympathetic picture of the complex human being that Fichte was, it introduces some of the themes that will dominate his work: Fichte's rapport with religion, politics, and his deep desire for systematicity of thought in service to human freedom are emphasized. Particularly

commendable are the concise explanations of key concepts and texts, which elucidate without breaking the narrative thread.

If Bykova's essay is an introduction to Fichte's life, an approach to his philosophy that reconciles "head" and "heart" (to use Daniel Breazeale's terms) distinctly from the point of view of "heart," Tom Rockmore's is something of an intellectual introduction to thinking with Fichte. The *Wissenschaftslehre* is foremost a practical philosophy, one that is performed rather than read, and this essay, gathering some of the main insights of Rockmore's career, is living philosophy. Rockmore's essential claim is that transcendental philosophy is both ancient and modern, but that its modern iteration begins with Fichte, not Kant. Fichte rejects the latter's "representationalism" in favour of a "constructivism." Ultimately, the artificial philosophical subject to which Kant refers is replaced by a real, finite, human one.

Sebastian Gardner writes a skillful "From Kant to Fichte" essay, demonstrating the path from the Third Critique to the *Wissenschaftslehre*. While it is easy to see a link between the Second Critique and Fichte's philosophy, Gardner reminds us of Fichte's enthusiasm for the Third Critique. He proposes that the Jena *Wissenschaftslehre* ultimately realizes goals that the Third Critique identifies, but fails to reach. Kant had identified a gulf between Freedom and Nature, one he failed to solve, but to which Fichte offers various iterations of an answer, ranging from his correspondence to the *Critical of All Revelation* through to the Jena *Wissenschaftslehre*. Gardner's attentive readings and rigorous thought process represent yet another way into the *Wissenschaftslehre*, a robust and legitimate beginning to thinking through Fichte's main concerns.

Part 2: The Jena Period (1794-1799) and the Jena System of Transcendental Idealism

The first chapter in this section is Violetta Waibel's, dealing with the productive imagination in the 1794 *Foundations of the Entire Wissenschaftslehre*. While Waibel's article can be seen as an entryway into the *Wissenschaftslehre* by means of a key concept, it also contains a detailed analysis of one of the more difficult parts of the *Foundation*, synthesis "E" of the Theoretical *Wissenschaftslehre*. Waibel has done serious work on this segment in the past, partly in her writings on Fichte, but also in those on Novalis, for whom synthesis E was crucial. The astute reader, therefore, can already see the theoretical framework that the Jena romantics would later adopt and make their own. Waibel's chapter benefits immensely from being able to use Daniel Breazeale's new translation of the *Foundation*, in itself a powerful tool in clarifying what Fichte means by "productive imagination."

In one of the book's most remarkable chapters, Michael Vater claims that there is "an unwritten doctrine of nature that accompanies the Jena *Wissenschaftslehre*" (p. 103), and offers a brief but compelling reconstruction. This project is not new: Reinhard Lauth published a monograph reconstructing "The Transcendental Theory of Nature

[*Naturlehre*] according to the principles of the *Wissenschaftslehre*” in 1984. But while Lauth’s reconstruction moves from Kant’s Third Critique and the concept of reflective judgment, Vater adopts a different path. He juxtaposes Kant’s own attempt at a Philosophy of Nature in *The Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science* with Fichte’s 1795 *Grundriß*. Addressing the meaning of nature in Fichte’s philosophy both on the cognitive and the practical level, he moves from nature for consciousness according to a dynamic construction of space, to the role that the body plays in the expression of freedom. The arguments are systematic, lucid, and compelling, and the chapter, despite its brevity, is a major contribution to Fichte scholarship.

In addition to these, Gabriel Gottlieb and Allen Wood offer accounts of the Philosophy of Right and Ethics, two subjects that are major concerns of the Jena period. Benjamin Crowe’s article on Fichte’s philosophy of religion offers a systematic overview of one of the most important themes in Fichte’s philosophy.

Part 3: The Berlin Period (1800-1814) and the Systematic Development of the Transcendental Philosophy

The Third section, on Fichte’s Berlin period, is almost twice as long as the previous section on Jena. That such a section be included in an English-language volume on Fichte at all would have been inconceivable even just a few years ago, let alone be given such prominence. The length and breadth of Part 3 are a credit to Bykova—so many of the chapters in this section offer something new to English-language Fichte scholarship. In what follows, I would like to highlight the original character of some of these contributions.

Between 1800 and 1814, Fichte presented the *Wissenschaftslehre* about a dozen times. While these texts have been edited and included in the *Gesamtausgabe*, to date, only the second iteration of the 1804 *Wissenschaftslehre* has been translated into English. George di Giovanni’s chapter is a thorough interpretation of this difficult text that makes a major contribution to the literature on 1804 in any language. Emiliano Acosta offers the English reader an excellent introduction to the (as yet untranslated) 1805 Erlangen *Wissenschaftslehre*, one of the most difficult in the entire Fichtean corpus. He offers not only an interpretation, but an account of the main positions on the text found in German and French scholarship.

David James, writing on the *Addresses to the German Nation*, claims that Fichte’s conception of patriotism is not only compatible with cosmopolitanism, but integral to it. His chapter closely examines one of the main themes of the *Addresses*, the role of language in the constitution of a nation, and the apparently privileged status that Fichte accords to the German language. Ultimately, James finds Fichte’s claims about the uniqueness of German to be incompatible with the broader patriotic-cosmopolitan claims of the *Addresses*. This chapter is an important moment in distancing Fichte from

twentieth century nationalism and its excesses, allowing for a robust scholarly engagement with Fichte's political thought

It is just such an engagement that Günter Zöller undertakes in the follow chapter, focusing on the 1813 *Staatslehre* or *Doctrine of the State*. This text is in many ways an excellent introduction to Fichte's last period of activity, touching on subjects such as politics, history, and religion. Zöller explores all of these aspects, and also relates the text to the *Wissenschaftslehre*, thereby situating it in his overarching interpretation of Fichte's philosophy as one of freedom. This interpretation sees Fichte's concept of freedom as central but precise in its function, and allows Zöller to reach a nuanced conclusion: "Fichte's political philosophy, while being built—like his entire philosophy—on the idea of freedom, focuses on civic liberty under the rule of law at the expense of political liberty under the guise of popular participation in political rule. In particular, the outlines of future 'free' civil society that emerge from Fichte's politico-philosophical *opus postumum* reveal not a modern, liberal polity but a society ruled by pure reason under the custody of self-appointed philosopher-kings." (p. 262). Ultimately, both James and Zöller offer subtle portraits of Fichte's political thought that embrace difficulties and contradictions rather than attempting to eliminate them too hastily.

Ives Radrizzani's chapter on Fichte's Philosophy of History is the fruit of a long engagement with the question. His work on the subject began by focusing on *The Characteristics of the Present Age* (published 1806), of which he has produced a French translation the likes of which is sorely lacking in English. In recent years, he has confronted the question of the meaning of history for Fichte in broader terms, leaning on his extensive work on intersubjectivity as derived from the *Nova Methodo Wissenschaftslehre*. Just as Michael Vater offered us a reconstruction of a Fichtean Philosophy of Nature, so does Radrizzani offer a masterful reconstruction of a Fichtean transcendental approach to history.

Part 4: Substantive and Interpretative Questions and Key Concepts

This section is closer to a traditional encyclopedia, offering explanations of terms that are significant in Fichte's work, but also adding topical treatments, such as philosophy of mind, language, and the structure of Fichte's overall project (e.g., the separation of Right from Morality).

The section's greatest merit is its inclusion of all the key terms that a student new to Fichte would want to explore. Emiliano Acosta introduces us to the term "*Wissenschaftslehre*" in an entry that addresses questions such as "why this term and not just philosophy?" a question that those new to Fichte inevitably ask. Steven Hoeltzel's entry on the *drei Grundsätze* provides an entrypoint not only into the text of the 1794 *Foundation*, but also serves as an introduction to transcendental philosophy itself; the materials Hoeltzel has gathered are sophisticated enough for scholars to cite, but could also be expounded into lectures for students. The same could be said for Halla Kim's

entry on *Tathandlung*, which establishes what it is not (a substance or state of affairs), what it is (a self-sufficient performance of the I), its impact on the Dogmatism/Idealism conflict, and its status as principle of freedom. Jeffrey Kinlaw addresses one of the most frequent yet enigmatic terms in the Fichtean corpus, Intellectual Intuition. While the article does offer a commentary on the different valences of the term, Kinlaw's chapter has merit foremost as an initiation into thinking with Fichte, distinguishing between intellectual intuition and "introspection," and offering systematic arguments for its core definition.

Of the topical entries, the one that most intrigued this reader was Radrizzani's, entitled *The Ambivalence of Language*. The author's claim is that for Fichte, language must be a transcendental condition of consciousness. Yet language remains "radically ambivalent" for Fichte. Radrizzani writes, "Language, which turns out to be the instrument par excellence to unfold spirit, is at the same time—such is its paradoxical nature—a permanent threat to it" (p. 365). Language, in other words, is meant to communicate ideas, but actually reifies them. Radrizzani presents three Fichtean solutions: the first is "polyglotism" (Reinhard Lauth's term), and refers to the repeated presentation of the *Wissenschaftslehre* according to different sets of terminology. The second he calls "The Ruse of Language." It refers to Fichte having adopted the terms and vocabulary of his opponents in order to turn their own linguistic apparatus against them—the main example is the *Vocation of Man* (1800) adopting the vocabulary, tone, and style of Jacobi's *Letter to Fichte* (1799). The third is Romantic irony, which, in a "ruse of language" of his own, Radrizzani claims was to a certain extent Fichte's responsibility, obtained by "transposing in literature Fichte's distinction between the points of view of ordinary consciousness and the philosopher[.]" (p. 368).

Part 5: Reception and Influence of Fichte's Philosophy

While not always recognized, Fichte's influence is myriad. The last section explores a few of these myriad paths, both historical and contemporary. From the historical perspective, Elizabeth Millán Brusslan explores the Fichtean roots of Jena Romanticism, examining not only the enormous influence Fichte had on Novalis and Friedrich Schlegel, but also highlighting the tensions between Fichte and the Romantics. Faustino Fabbianelli offers a Fichtean response to Hegel as grounded in the late *Wissenschaftslehre*—a theme that Ludwig Siep had taken up in *Hegels Fichtekritik und die Wissenschaftslehre von 1804* (1970), but in reverse. Regarding a correlation between contemporary thinkers and Fichte, G. Anthony Bruno offers a fascinating account of how contemporary German philosopher Sebastian Rödl owes much to Fichte. The chapter is not only an exercise in finding contemporary expressions of post-Kantian philosophy, but also an introduction to Rödl.

Conclusion

At 576 pages, the *Bloomsbury Handbook of Fichte* is extensive in form and eclectic in content, which can make it seem unwieldy to those unfamiliar with the terrain. The neophyte seeking introductory materials would do best to go straight to the key concepts outlined in Part 4; those looking for a guide to specific texts should look for them in Parts 2 and 3. Fichte scholars and advanced students, however, will find something even more enriching than introductions to this or that aspect of Fichte—they will find some of the best Fichte scholars working today offering synthetic accounts of questions they have been exploring for decades. The book is ultimately an indispensable resource that will no doubt be frequently consulted and cited in years to come.

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Dieter Henrich, *Dies Ich, das viel besagt. Fichtes Einsicht nachdenken* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 2020; 2nd edition 2022), XIV + 306 pp. ISBN 9783465045885



Reflections on *Fichtes ursprüngliche Einsicht*

The programmatic 1966 essay *Fichtes ursprüngliche Einsicht* (Fichte’s Original Insight)¹ is a central contribution to initiating a more systematic form of Fichte research and to the theory of self-consciousness. Henrich emphasizes the relevance of Fichte’s theory of self-consciousness, while objecting to post-modern critiques of theories of subjectivity. Fichte makes a paradigm shift in the following sense: He chooses the structure of self-consciousness as the center of his research. Further, he creates a model in opposition to the traditional “Reflexionstheorie” (reflective or reflection theory of consciousness), which was state of the art until Kant. *Fichtes ursprüngliche Einsicht* becomes the starting point for reflections (*Nachgedanken*) and new ideas in Henrich’s recent book *Dies Ich, das viel besagt* (“This Most Discussed I”).² The title of the book refers to Leibniz’s *Discours de Métaphysique* (1686), which shows that the problem of self-consciousness has neither a simple description nor a simple solution. Henrich adopts a new point of view, because the explanations in *Fichtes ursprüngliche Einsicht* now seem insufficient to him. The earlier essay led:

zu theoretischen Konstruktionen bei der Verständigung über den Grundsachverhalt ‘dieses Ich’, die erkennbar gekünstelt und ohne die Fähigkeit zu einem überlegenen Aufschluss waren.³

¹ Dieter Henrich, *Fichtes ursprüngliche Einsicht* (unchanged new reprint) in: D. Henrich, *Dies Ich, das viel besagt. Fichtes Einsicht nachdenken* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 2nd edition, 2022), 1-49. *Fichtes ursprüngliche Einsicht* was originally published in: D. Henrich & H. Wagner (eds.), *Subjektivität und Metaphysik, Festschrift für Wolfgang Cramer* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1966), 188-232. In 1967 the text was published as a monograph by Klostermann. For an English translation, see: “Fichte’s Original Insight”, trans. David R. Lachterman, in: D.E. Christensen, M. Riedel et al (eds.), *Contemporary German Philosophy*, vol. 1 (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1982), 15-53.

² Henrich, *Dies Ich, das viel besagt. Fichtes Einsicht nachdenken*. All references in this review will be to the 2022 edition. All translations are by the reviewer. The reviewer is very grateful for the proofreading, language corrections, as well as the editing by David W. Wood.

³ Henrich, *Dies Ich, das viel besagt*, X.

(to theoretical constructions for the discussion about the factual topic of ‘this I’, which were recognizably artificial and without the ability to pass to superior insights)

Henrich presented his own draft of a theory of self-consciousness in the 1970 essay *Selbstbewusstsein. Kritische Einleitung in eine Theorie* (Self-Consciousness. Critical Introduction to a Theory). That essay treats the topic self-consciousness in continental philosophy by using methods from analytic-empirical philosophy. Henrich developed a “Minimalprogramm von Bewusstseinstheorie”⁴ (minimal programme of consciousness theory) in contrast to the (*ex negativo*) reflective theory of consciousness. The reflective theory of consciousness explains self-consciousness as a bending back (*Rückbeugung*) as it were of the subject into itself as object. According to Henrich, Fichte was the first person who understood the circularity of the reflective model and substituted this traditional paradigm with a production model,⁵ which with the expression “*Sich-Setzen*” (self-positing) is described as a “negatives Bild des Reflexionsmodells”⁶ (negative image of the reflective model). Whereas Fichte assigns to self-consciousness a self-referential structure despite its immediate character, Henrich – in order to avoid the circularity of the reflective self-consciousness theory – explains it using the paradoxical concept of an immediate “subjectless” knowledge without a self-relation in the strict sense⁷, that is to say: “selbstloses Bewusstsein vom Selbst”⁸ (selfless consciousness of the self).

However, the concept of a selfless and therefore unconscious consciousness now became on the one hand itself a paradox, and on the other hand Henrich could not show how such a consciousness could have knowledge of itself. As a result, Henrich abandoned all such efforts at explaining self-consciousness. He did this for two reasons: First, all derivations of self-ascription in the self-reference of knowledge are *necessarily circular*. Second, further research led him to *Kant* as the starting point for the theory of subjectivity, because Kant had started his analysis with complex but atomic concepts.⁹ Henrich therefore develops in *Dies Ich, das viel besagt* a concept of self-consciousness based on Kant’s theory of finite subjectivity. Henrich argues that the problematic presentation of *Fichtes ursprüngliche Einsicht* is neither solved nor concluded, and hence the goal of his new book is to rethink it “von Grund aus” (VII) (from the ground up). He wants to develop the “Profil einer möglichen Lösung” (56) (profile of a possible solution) for the problem of self-consciousness, or at least determine its range. Accordingly, his new book has a “poly-dimensional” form (56). While rereading the essay of 1966, Henrich becomes aware of the differences between Fichte’s motives and his own. He

⁴ D. Henrich, “Selbstbewusstsein. Kritische Einleitung in eine Theorie”, in: R. Bubner, K. Cramer, R. Wiehl (eds.), *Hermeneutik und Dialektik I*. (Mohr/Siebeck: Tübingen 1970), 257-284; see: p. 275.

⁵ *Produktionsmodell*.

⁶ Henrich: *Dies Ich, das viel besagt*, 15.

⁷ D. Henrich, “Selbstsein und Bewusstsein”, in: e-Journal *Philosophie der Psychologie* 8 (2007): 1-19, see p. 1. (<http://www.jp.philo.at/texte/HenrichD1.pdf>)

⁸ D. Henrich, 1970, 280.

⁹ Cf. D. Henrich, 2007, 1-2.

nevertheless appreciates Fichte as someone who charted unknown territory and found the “Schlüssel zu einer ganz neuen Verfahrensart” (IX) (key to a wholly new method of proceeding). Whereas Leibniz and Kant presupposed the unity of the subject, Fichte was the first thinker to question this presupposition:

“Als erstem überhaupt wurde Fichte klar, dass in dem, was vermeintlich problemlos war, eine der größten Herausforderungen für die Philosophie gelegen ist.” (71)

(Fichte was the first who realized that something which was apparently trivial is one of the greatest challenges for philosophy.)

Henrich’s self-critical and careful approach is remarkable. His new book has the frontier of knowledge at its center – self-consciousness as the most familiar and apparently most common entity. Henrich criticizes his own early approaches to explain thinking and language by a non-transparent foundation or ground (*Grund*), thereby avoiding the paradox and circular explanations of the self-relation theory of self-consciousness.

He states now that the bounds of an analytical explanation of self-consciousness claimed by Fichte as a “Grundevidenz alles Verstehens” (X) (basic self-evidence for all understanding) cannot be reversed into its opposite. Here it is important to show the obstacles of Fichte’s system, which prevent the “Entfaltung und Integration” (development and integration) of Fichte’s original insight. Fichte’s model should be confronted with the “Umriss einer anderen Konzeption” (sketch of another conception) that links on to Kant and passes the “Nagelprobe von Fichtes Einsicht” (XII) (acid test of Fichte’s insight). Therefore, Henrich wants to exploit the hidden motives in Fichte’s “Denkweg” (manner of thinking).

Horizons

The first chapter “Horizonte der Einsicht” (Horizons of the Insight) discusses the different perspectives of Fichte’s insight. The Fichte essay of 1966 was centered around the problem of circularity and the definition of self-consciousness as well as Fichte’s solution, and concluded with an outlook towards the relation of generality and particularity (individuality) as the basic state of self-consciousness. This becomes the main subject of Henrich’s new book. He acknowledges that his 1966 essay ignores two internal premises of Fichte’s insight: First, it dismisses the self-determined I as the first principle of Fichte’s system. Second, it ignores Fichte’s grounding of practical philosophy in the Kantian tradition of a philosophy of freedom.

Henrich understands Fichte’s insight not as a fixed position, but as the explication of a problem: to grasp the closed self-reference of self-consciousness as a mode of knowledge that presupposes every other mode of knowledge (cf. 66). In the 1966 essay, Henrich describes Fichte’s solutions by three different formulas: 1. From the 1794

Wissenschaftslehre: The I posits itself unconditionally (schlechthin). – Here Fichte’s concept of *self-positing* expresses the absolute and immediate character of self-relation. 2. From the 1797 *Wissenschaftslehre: The I posits itself unconditionally as self-positing.* – This expresses the emergence of the I’s self-knowledge. 3. From the 1801 *Wissenschaftslehre: Self-consciousness is an activity into which an eye is inserted.* – This combines the aspect of self-determination of the first formula and self-knowledge of the second formula. The I is not the Absolute in itself, but is inserted into the Absolute.

According to Henrich’s *Dies Ich, das viel besagt*, Fichte’s third formula reveals the concept of finite freedom as:

“das Bewusstsein von einer Spannung zwischen der Eigenständigkeit im Handlungsbereich des Einzelnen [...] und seinem Wissen davon, dass er nicht kraft seiner selbst wirklich ist – dass er zwar sein Subjektsein aus sich selbst ausgestaltet, dass dies Subjektsein aber nicht durch sich selbst ermöglicht ist” (80)

(the awareness of the tension between the independence of the individual range of action [...] and the knowledge of the individual that it is not real by virtue of itself – that it indeed creates its subjectivity out of itself, but that this subjectivity is not made possible by itself).

Therefore, self-consciousness should not be understood as *absolute* self-positing, like in Fichte’s first formula. This represents the main motive behind Henrich’s own philosophizing:

“Diese Erweiterung und Vertiefung von Fichtes Versuch zu einer Grundverständigung über das bewusste Leben und die Eigentümlichkeit seiner Freiheit hat mich in meiner eigenen Motivation zur Philosophie bewegt.” (81)

(This extension and deepening of Fichte’s attempt at a basic understanding of conscious life and the peculiarity of its freedom was my main motivation for doing philosophy.)

In his later *Wissenschaftslehre*, Fichte focuses on the connection between finiteness and autonomous freedom. This is a continuation of Kant’s new foundation of ethics in the freedom of the finite rational being (*Vernunftwesen*), in which the grounding of the finiteness of freedom remains undiscussed. The internal limitation of freedom does not mean determination by given purposes or dependency on authorities, but the self-conscious subject’s own knowledge of the autonomous self-determination of its actions (cf. 83). Here Henrich also provides an answer to the question discussed in contemporary practical philosophy about the possibility of individual freedom within the framework of a theory in which subjects must already relate to predetermined intersubjective practices, and hence cannot be absolutely free. This again illustrates the relevance of a theory of subjectivity.

The problem of the unity and the general form of self-consciousness should be considered from a different perspective than the Fichtean, namely as the “strikte Selbigekeit aller Subjekte in dem, was die Verfassung ihrer Selbstbeziehung ausmacht” (90) (strict identity of all subjects with respect to the constitution of their self-relation). While the experience of certain qualities (qualia) like pain is characterized by a self-relation without any self-ascription (‘es schmerzt mich’ – I feel pain), self-consciousness includes a self-relation as well as the knowledge of the self-relation. Therefore, self-consciousness has a unique position “dass ein Einzelner davon weiß, dass er in allem, was er erfährt, von sich selbst *als* sich selbst ein solches Wissen hat” (93) (that an individual knows *that* in all its experiences it knows that it has a knowledge of itself *as* itself). Fichte’s insight is about the necessary structural connection between the generality and particularity of self-consciousness, which is expressed in Fichte’s formula of self-positing as self-positing and not about the “unglücklich[e] Verbindung einer ersten Evidenz im Wissen mit dem Programm einer Systematik aus nur einem Prinzip” (97) (unfortunate connection of a first self-evident form of knowledge with the program of a system based on only one principle), even though this itself was neither understood nor penetrated by Fichte as the content of his insight (101). The particularity of an event is connected with a type: The single subject understands itself as an ‘I’ and updates the reference to itself. This is true for all subjects. For Henrich, this is the strength of Fichte’s model in contrast to Hegel’s speculative logic: Hegel’s *formal ontological* model defines self-consciousness as objective self-relation without considering the immediate, intrinsic knowledge of itself. According to Henrich, the indexical expression ‘I’ cannot be understood from an external point of view by gestures and indications to oneself (cf. 108). The condition that the subject ascribes an identity to itself leads, in Henrich’s eyes, to the concept of generality, which means the generality of logical forms as well as of the normativity of actions, which is necessary for integration into a social order. Henrich criticizes Fichte’s strong derivation of categories like e.g. generality and particularity, from out of self-consciousness, but understands it – in line with Kant – as a condition of possibility (*Ermöglichungsbedingung*), as an interconnection point of all possible thoughts, as well as the foundation principle for the possibility of the rational cognition of objects.

The Problem

The second chapter “Das Problem im Zentrum” (The Problem in Focus) both emphasizes the relevance of Fichte’s insight for analytic philosophy and discusses *Fichtes ursprüngliche Einsicht*. Henrich considers Ernst Tugendhat’s linguistic-analytical criticism of *Fichtes ursprüngliche Einsicht*. In his book, *Selbstbewusstsein und Selbstbestimmung* (1979), Tugendhat characterizes Henrich as critic of the traditional theory of self-consciousness, insofar as the latter exposes the inconsistencies of the traditional model. By trying to avoid the paradoxes of the reflective theory of

consciousness, Tugendhat maintains that Henrich prefers to abandon “das Phänomen ‘Kenntnis seiner selbst’ [...] als dieses Phänomen vom traditionellen Modell zu lösen”¹⁰ (the phenomenon ‘knowledge of oneself’ [...] instead of separating this phenomenon from the traditional model). Consequently, Henrich misunderstands the expression ‘I’ as a substance predicate. But the ‘I’ as personal pronoun should rather be examined in a linguistic context.

Henrich criticizes in turn Tugendhat’s reductionism of the first-person perspective (‘I’) to a third person perspective (“he/she”) (cf. 143). The linguistic-analytic approach is not sufficient to solve Fichte’s problem of self-consciousness because it reduces this issue to an interactive connection between speakers. To bolster his criticism of Tugendhat, Henrich argues that the constitutive significance of the self-relation for an understanding of reality and the irreducible character of the first person is demonstrated by this turn in the Philosophy of Mind (e.g. in Héctor-Neri Castañeda, John Perry, David Lewis, Roderick Chisholm, and Thomas Nagel). Henrich elaborates on Robert Nozick’s approach, who is the only philosopher in analytic philosophy who explicitly refers to Fichte’s theory. (Henrich had met Nozick at Harvard, where the 1973 lectures *Between Kant and Hegel* were held).

Nozick understands self-consciousness in relation to Fichte’s formula of the “I positing itself as self-positing” as a basic fact, insofar as there must be a knowledge of the self-relation and the self-relation must be immune to doubt. The self-relation therefore cannot be understood as external, but must be: “im Vollzug ‘von innen’, also zusammen mit dem Eintritt von Selbstbewusstsein und also in dem Sinne wissend vollzogen werden” (158) (performed ‘from the inside’, together with the occurrence of self-consciousness and therefore knowingly carried out). To the extent that Nozick tries to explain the linguistic peculiarities of self-consciousness based on facts, Henrich points out how his position, as well as those of Castañeda and Chisholm, are close to Fichte’s position. Henrich agrees that Nozick, Chisholm and Castañeda have made a contribution to Fichte’s original insight by showing that the explanation of self-consciousness cannot simply be presupposed. Indeed, he pleads for a *Grundverständigung* or basic agreement between analytic and speculative philosophy. In any event, it should be acknowledged that the physical description of the world reaches its limits when trying to explain self-consciousness. In his famous article “What is it like to be a bat?” (1974), Thomas Nagel shows that the subjective character of experience cannot be grasped by a reductive analysis of the mental. Since the objective nature of things is not bound to a special perspective, we have no clue of either a bat’s subjective experience or of another person’s. Henrich maintains that self-consciousness must be described in a language opposed to everyday categories and the rules of scientific research. This is precisely the potential of Fichte’s approach.

¹⁰ E. Tugendhat, *Selbstbewusstsein und Selbstbestimmung. Sprachanalytische Interpretationen* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1979), 67.

The second part of the second chapter discusses the difference between Henrich's own intention in *Fichtes ursprüngliche Einsicht* and Fichte's intention. In Fichte's presentations of the *Wissenschaftslehre* from 1801 onwards, the structure of the system fundamentally changes: the I no longer takes the role of the first principle, but knowledge (*Wissen*) as appearance of the Absolute. Therefore, the self-realization of the subject is not central anymore, but its self-negation. In the 1966 essay, Henrich seems to refer to Fichte's third formula as a solution to the problem of the circle of self-consciousness, but in his new book he explicitly criticizes it. Henrich thinks that Fichte's new conception of 1801 results in a circle, because it leads to a "Verdoppelung der Identität der einzelnen Subjekte" (183) (doubling of the identity of individual subjects). Fichte distinguishes between the general form of I-hood (*Ichheit*) and the individuality (*Individualität*) of a single subject, but this form of I-hood means "etwas ganz anderes als ein Allgemeines" (171) (something quite different to something general). Namely: the singular real principle of Fichte's metaphysical monistic system, and the unity of subjects as an entity.

Henrich then presents the resulting divergences between his own conception and Fichte's (cf. 184-195): 1. *Fichtes ursprüngliche Einsicht* discusses the problem of an invariant frame for the single subject, this "ground" should not be understood as a real principle as Fichte does, but in the sense of Kant's "*Grund der Möglichkeit*" (186) (ground of possibility). 2. Whereas in Fichte the subject has an immediate consciousness of the Absolute, Henrich neither presupposes a monistic system nor a knowledge of the Absolute. 3). In contrast to Fichte, Henrich does not claim a final justification (*Letztbegründung*) in form of a system or propose an absolute principle, to which a single finite subject belongs. Following Kant, Henrich understands the "Ich denke" (I think) as constitution of a finite thinking. 4). *Fichtes ursprüngliche Einsicht* refers to Kant's theory of self-consciousness as a guide, understanding the "I think" as an intelligent act, which is integrated in the manifold of the world. The subject's integration into this unity therefore does not lead to the subject's self-negation like it does in Fichte's model, but to its self-realization: "Je mehr sich das Einzelleben in einem Anderen zentriert, umso mehr muss es zugleich in seiner Selbstheit verwirklicht sein." (194) (The more the single life is centered in another, the more it has to be realized in its selfhood at the same time).

For Henrich, what *Fichtes ursprüngliche Einsicht* has in common with Fichte's conception is that it should not only solve theoretical problems, but provide an understanding of life.

Alternatives

In the third chapter "Alternativen im Bauplan" (Alternatives in the Blueprint), Henrich examines the difference between Fichte's intention and his own in more detail. Henrich discusses the question whether

“auch die dritte Formel als eine Skizze verstanden werden kann, welche die Verfassung *vereinzelter* Realisationen von Selbstbewusstsein [...] treffend charakterisiert” (204)

(the third formula can also be understood as a sketch, which appropriately characterizes the constitution of isolated realizations of self-consciousness)

Henrich considers self-consciousness as an ineluctable *Faktum*, just as Fichte does in his early *Wissenschaftslehre*. Fichte changes this position in the late *Wissenschaftslehre*, in which knowledge takes the role of the first principle. In this respect, Henrich claims that in the late *Wissenschaftslehre* Fichte tries to explain Kant’s apperception based on knowledge as a first principle, but lacks “die begrifflichen Ressourcen, diese Apperzeption an ein Subjekt zu binden” (226) (the conceptual resources to bind this apperception to a subject). Henrich states that a single self-consciousness cannot be derived from knowledge, because there is no knowledge which the subject does not believe to be true and therefore is not part of the subject’s true belief. Consequently, the form of the I cannot be deduced from a system’s first principle. This confirms the fundamental nature of Fichte’s insight. Though within his system Fichte understands a single self-consciousness based on the principle of the absolute I, Henrich emphasizes “dass ein Selbstbewusstsein als ein Selbstverhältnis, dass sich über das Pronomen ‘ich’ zu artikulieren vermag, nur einem einzelnen Subjekt zugesprochen werden kann” (255) (that a self-consciousness as a self-relation, which is capable of articulating itself by the pronoun ‘I’, can only be attributed to a single subject).

Henrich, therefore, suspends Fichte’s program of a system (*Systemprogramm*). A single self-consciousness cannot be explained by a presupposed general form, but must be understood as “Ort einer Verwurzelung der Form allgemeiner Geltung” (256) (the location of the root in the form of general validity). Insofar as Henrich’s new book is focused on the relation between generality and particularity in self-consciousness, Fichte’s second formula of the “I positing itself unconditionally as self-positing” gains fresh importance:

“Als ‘Ich’ versteht sich genau ein Subjekt – und zwar das, welches jeweils der Denker eines Gedankens ist. Das, *als* was es sich so versteht, koinzidiert aber in seiner Verfassung vollständig mit dem, was jeder, der zu Ich-Gedanken befähigt ist, in jedem seiner Ich-Gedanken gleichfalls denkend mitvollzieht.” (98)

(Exactly one subject understands itself as an ‘I’. It is the one who is the thinker of the thought. But whatever understand itself in this way, coincides in its constitution completely with what everyone who is capable of I-thoughts likewise cognitively carries out in each of their ‘I’-thoughts.)

In *Fichtes ursprüngliche Einsicht*, Henrich had tried to avoid the circularity of self-consciousness by presupposing a non-reflective transcendent ground. In his new book *Dies Ich, das viel besagt*, he now understands the paradoxical condition of the self-relation as fundamental self-evidence. This points to a limit in the self-enlightenment of the mind (*Selbstaufklärung des Geistes*):

“Denn das ‚sich‘ in diesem Selbstbezug ist insofern in sich geschlossen, als es sich von keinem der in ihm gelegenen Momente her gewinnen lässt. Deren Wechselbezug lässt sich nur unter der Voraussetzung seiner als Ganzem und somit in Zirkelform im Bewusstsein halten.” (269)

(Because the ‘oneself’ in this self-reference is closed in itself insofar as it cannot be attained from any of its included aspects. The interrelation between them can only be present in consciousness under the presupposition of the whole and therefore only in circular form.)

In continuation of Kant, Henrich characterizes an individual self-consciousness by 1) equivalence of the rational form, 2) *Allbezogenheit* or full relations to finite content, 3) knowledge as one self among other subjects, 4) original consciousness of specific identity (cf. 255-261).

Retrospective

The fourth chapter “Ein Rückblick zum Hintergrund” (Looking Back at the Background) gives a short preview of Kant’s theory of self-consciousness and the relation between Kant and Fichte. Henrich appreciates Kant as the explorer of the problem of self-consciousness and his central influence on Fichte. Henrich offers an alternative interpretation to two opposing interpretations that can be found in contemporary research: The first one states that Fichte suspends the limits of knowledge in Kant’s transcendental idealism. The second one claims that Fichte develops Kant’s transcendental idealism into a consistent system. According to Henrich, the difference between the two positions becomes clear by analyzing consciousness as the main topic of both Kant’s and Fichte’s philosophies. The most difficult task here is the analysis of the self-relation of ‘I’-thoughts (Ich-Gedanken). Kant did not work in this area because self-consciousness for him resists a theoretical solution. His localization of self-consciousness in the field of the formal (he defines the ‘I’ as “an Inhalt gänzlich leere Vorstellung” (KrV B 404) (a representation that is empty and devoid of content) is supposed to fend off “alle weitergehenden metaphysischen oder empirischen Schlussfolgerungen” (292) (all further metaphysical or empirical conclusions).

Henrich maintains that the philosophical problem of self-consciousness is captured only in Fichte’s insight. Insofar as Kant and Fichte take different perspectives on the

problem of self-consciousness, they develop different areas of a theory of subjectivity. Henrich is of the view that Fichte wants to fill up the gaps in Kant's theory while ignoring Kant's perspective on the possibility of objective knowledge. Although self-consciousness in Kant's theory is located in the fields of the formal and logic respectively, the awareness of the subject's identity represents a: "Art von Wirklichkeit, die weder die der Gegebenheit von Vorstellungen noch die der Objekte der Erkenntnis ist" (294) (type of reality, which is neither that of the givenness of representations nor that of the objects of cognition).

Fichtes ursprüngliche Einsicht had placed Kant among the prominent representatives of the reflective theory of consciousness, yet *Dies Ich, das viel besagt* characterizes the circle of consciousness that Kant claimed exists as only a methodological circle that comes into being because "der Gehalt des Gedankens ‚Ich‘ nur von der Instanz selbst gefasst werden kann, die das ist, was in ihm gedacht wird" (294) (the contents of the 'I' thought can only be grasped by the agent itself; it is that which can be thought in him). In Kant's theory, the openness of the "I think" (*Ich denke*) and its relation to all possible contents results in its "Grundlegungsfunktion" (foundational function) without leading to "selbstständigen Untersuchungen" (independent investigations). This procedure is according to Henrich

"so lange auch angemessen, wie nicht auf das Wissen, *dass* ein Selbstbezug vorliegt, geachtet wird, welches für den Gehalt, welcher Selbstbewusstsein ist, konstitutive Bedeutung hat" (294)

(appropriate as long as the knowledge of the self-reference is not taken into account, which is of constitutive significance for the content which is self-consciousness)

This is not a topic of Kant's critical philosophy but becomes the main topic of Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre*. Trying to investigate the structure of self-consciousness leads to the difficulties that Fichte was confronted with. Henrich therefore pleads for

"Fichtes alles erschließende Einsicht zugleich als den Ursprung eines *Problems* zu verstehen. Für dieses gilt zweierlei: Es kann für es keine Lösung mit alltäglichen Mitteln geben; aber es ist dennoch mit einer Einsicht verbunden, die zwar extraordinär ist, die aber über alle Zweifel feststeht. Daraus folgt dann, dass es die erste und eigentliche, vielleicht sogar die einzige Aufgabe der Philosophie sein muss, diese Einsicht sicher zu erfassen, zu entfalten und dann in einem systematischen Zusammenhang auszuarbeiten." (165)

(also understanding Fichte's comprehensive insight as the origin of a *problem*. For this there applies two things: There is no solution using ordinary methods, yet it is still connected with an insight that is indeed extraordinary, but which stands beyond any doubt.

Therefore, the first, essential, and perhaps only task of philosophy is to recognize, unfold, and analyze this insight in a systematic context.)

Intersubjectivity

In *Dies Ich, das viel besagt* Henrich rethinks *Fichtes ursprüngliche Einsicht* and works out the specific constitution of self-consciousness. Henrich considers the central conception of immediate consciousness in the latter text as a starting point: He characterizes self-consciousness as the unity of the concrete accomplishment (*Vollzug*) and self-knowledge, as an internal self-relation that is not related to an external object. The expression ‘I’ explicates the relation between particularity and generality: ‘I’ means the specific me, for myself, but this is a general form – everybody is an ‘I’ for themselves. Fichte’s insight therefore has a double meaning: Insofar the I (which posits itself as itself positing) represents itself conceptually for itself, it realizes its general form:

“Denn das Selbstwissen von dem einzelnen Subjekt, das ich selbst bin, kann nur eintreten, wenn der Form dieses Subjektwissens die Allgemeinheit zugeschrieben wird, die mit elementarer und spontaner Rationalität korreliert ist.” (245)

(Because the self-knowledge of the single subject, which is I myself, can only occur, when the form of this subject knowledge is ascribed generality, which is correlated with fundamental and spontaneous rationality.)

Henrich criticizes the overestimation of the methodological importance of language in the explication of self-consciousness. His position is confirmed by the epistemological turn in analytic philosophy which has recourse to ‘inner’ experience. He emphasizes the up-to-date nature of the transcendental theories of Kant and Fichte showing the possibility of mediation between analytic and traditional theories of self-consciousness. He further presents his own draft of a theory of self-consciousness that continues Kant’s epistemological framework as well as Fichte’s explanation of the internal structure of self-consciousness.

Showing the connection between Fichte’s theory of self-consciousness and Fichte’s system, Henrich explains his own perspective and how it differs from Fichte’s model. According to Henrich, Fichte gained his insight into the structure of self-consciousness in the context of its systematic role as a first principle. Henrich appreciates “die Kraft und die Eigenständigkeit von Fichtes Denken” (70) (the strength and autonomy of Fichte’s thinking) with respect to his system, but criticizes the self-imposed constraint of a system which causes Fichte to more and more deviate from his original insight.

Henrich is right to assume that Fichte’s model of a system pushes individual self-consciousness into the background. This is particularly the case in Fichte’s first *Wissenschaftslehre*, the *Grundlage der gesamten Wissenschaftslehre* (1794/95) in which

the absolute I takes the role as first principle. Henrich does emphasize the significance of Fichte's theory of intersubjectivity (cf. 194-195), but since he focuses on Fichte's late *Wissenschaftslehre*, he does not cover the *Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo* lectures from Jena 1796-1799, where Fichte develops a theory of intersubjectivity for the first time in the history of philosophy. To avoid the misinterpretation of the first principle as a metaphysical entity, Fichte does not mention the "absolute I" anymore, but uses instead "endliche Vernunft überhaupt" (finite reason in general). At the same time, in the "Zweite Einleitung in die Wissenschaftslehre" (1797), he understands intellectual intuition (intellektuelle Anschauung) in the sense of Kant's apperception. While Kant's conception of the categorical imperative only presupposes other subjects, Fichte derives the individual subject from the pure will (*reiner Wille*). The subject can only posit itself as self-positing and therefore has a concept of itself, if it is solicited or summoned (*aufgefordert*) by another subject. The concept of the pure will in the *Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo* includes freedom and determination: The subject can be summoned by another subject, if it is determined by itself, otherwise it could not understand the other subject's summons. Fichte therefore develops the concept of finite freedom as an internal limitation of the subject's autonomy in the *Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo* and not only in the late *Wissenschaftslehre*, as Henrich claims. According to Henrich, Fichte could understand the first principle of the absolute subject in terms of finite subjectivity and had to do so in agreement with Kant's transcendental philosophy. But this would contradict Fichte's model of a system as the complete derivation from a first principle (cf. 255, note 132). Henrich argues that a system based on finite reason as a first principle is not possible, because finite reason could not provide a final or ultimate grounding. There is an objection to this: Fichte develops in the *Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo* a model of ultimate grounding in the sense of a reflective self-determination which includes the aspect of freedom as well as the finiteness of the subject. Thus, Fichte's model of a system based on the original synthesis of freedom and limited thinking, of the summons (*Aufforderung*) and recognition (*Anerkennung*), can be characterized as superior to critical rationalism (*Kritischer Rationalismus*) and transcendental pragmatism (*Transzendentalpragmatik*).¹¹

Concluding Thoughts

Like Fichte before him, Henrich assigns Kant's transcendental apperception a central place in his conception of finite freedom, because he understands self-consciousness in the sense of the articulated cognitive self-relation of the "I think". In alignment with Fichte's idealistic position, Henrich ascribes to the spontaneous subject the generation of single episodes of consciousness and therefore the continuity of consciousness, in

¹¹ Cf. U. Schwabe, *Individuelles und transindividuelles Ich. Die Selbstindividuation reiner Subjektivität und Fichtes Wissenschaftslehre*. (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2007), 161-170.

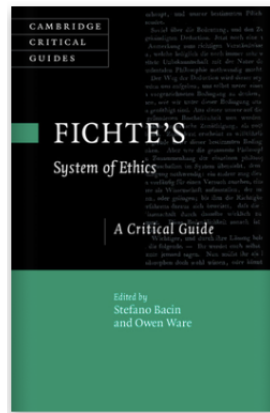
contrast to a phenomenological perspective, which understands the subject as the result of the passive syntheses of consciousness (cf. 241-242).

Some fundamental differences between Fichte's philosophy and Henrich's position are: whereas Fichte derives the finite subject from the general form of subjectivity, Henrich locates this general form in the subject, while rejecting Fichte's deduction. Moreover, Henrich criticizes Fichte's monistic system of a single first principle, proposing instead a dualistic approach based on the opposition between finite thinking and its grounding or justification. This opposition arises on the one hand from the limits of self-consciousness's explicability, and on the other hand from the inaccessibility of the grounding dimension of its finitude. (cf. 276-277).

Henrich's new book provides a comprehensive overview of the difficult issue of self-consciousness from the questions of its unity, the concept of self-relation, the epistemological significance of the knowledge of ourselves, to analytic theories of self-consciousness, Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre*, and Kant's transcendental philosophy. *Dies Ich, das viel besagt* is an important contribution to the topic of self-consciousness, demonstrating the continuing relevance of Kant and Fichte, while trying to initiate a discourse between analytic and continental philosophy.

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Bacin, Stefano and Ware, Owen (eds.), *Fichte's System of Ethics: A Critical Guide* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021). ISBN 978-1-108-48006-2-8 Hardback; 246 + vii pp.



This volume comprises a collection of ten self-standing essays written by some of the most important, leading commentators of Fichte's ethics in the Anglophone world. As the title indicates, the chapters are about the different key philosophical issues that are broached in Fichte's main work on moral philosophy in the Jena period, *The System of Ethics according to Principles of the Doctrine of Science* of 1798. Despite the recent reawakening of interest in Fichte, the mature and complete ethical treatise has not received as much scholarly attention as, for example, its legal and political counterpart, *Foundations of Natural Right* of 1795/96. The contributing authors render an invaluable service by probing the unduly neglected work without retraction from any of its depth and complexity.

The book is, as the editors are forthright in cautioning, no beginner's guide. It provides no running commentary on the *System of Ethics* but aims instead at "a reappraisal of the [work] in its entirety," "highlight[ing] the distinctive features of [its] views" and "promot[ing] discussion with new interpretations" (pp. 3-4). Still, the chapters are evenly spread in their coverage of the different parts of the work and fiercely searching in their engagement with them. As such, it serves advanced readers as a helpful guide in their effort to navigate the work and to master its contents. The contributing authors display attentiveness to the nuances of the text and thoughtfulness over its implications. None seems content with an in-depth and rigorous analysis of the more-or-less clearly defined portion of the *System of Ethics* to which his or her chapter is devoted, but each strives for innovative approaches to, and broader perspectives on, his or her portion of the work by relating it to other portions of it, other contemporaneous works of Fichte, as well as the moral theories of Kant, Hegel, Kierkegaard and some major contemporary philosophers (e.g., Christine Korsgaard, Jonathan Dancy).

The opening chapter by Allen Wood serves as a good introduction to Fichte's Jena ethical system. In comparing the "spirit" of Fichte's ethics with that of Kant's ethics, it in effect identifies some of the system's basic distinguishing features. In Chapter 2,

Benjamin Crowe is interested to articulate Fichte's view of practical rationality, i.e., moral normativity. In the course of doing so, Crowe advances the gripping thesis that Fichte's view is intrinsically *theological* in the sense of relying on the concept of God (i.e., "the pure will" or "absolutely self-determining reason") to furnish the formal principle of morality with its content. Crowe's thesis finds an echo in Chapter 9, where Luca Fonnesu points out that Fichte takes the true subject of the project of reason to be reason as such. Alluding to Hegel's distinction between ancient "ethical life" (*Sittlichkeit*) and modern "morality" (*Moralität*), Fonnesu argues that the shift from the individual to society that is discernible in Fichte's Jena ethical system marks virtually a "new scene of ethical life" (p. 186), one characteristic of our modern era.

After what is by all accounts an excellent treatment of Fichte's concept of autonomy by Ulrich Schlösser in Chapter 3, Ware looks in the following chapter at what is no doubt one of the most fascinating aspects of Fichte's Jena ethical system – the "long detour" in the first part of Division Two to a deduction of drives, feelings, and the lower power of desire (p. 71). Ware frames the deduction in terms of Fichte's prepossessing concern to displace "an empty formula philosophy" (which traffics in abstract concepts) by a "*reelle Philosophie*" (which reunites the concepts with their objects). The advantage of seeing the deduction in this light, Ware argues, is that it explains why Fichte is compelled to take the detour in order to demonstrate the moral principle's "applicability" (*Anwendbarkeit*) – that is, "reality" (*Wirklichkeit*). Angelica Nuzzo pursues the problematic of the moral principle's applicability in Chapter 9, exploring it this time in terms of "embodiment." According to Nuzzo, Fichte's shift from to a "metaphysics of morals" (*Metaphysik der Sitten*) of the Kantian sort to the "doctrine of morals" (*Sittenlehre*) of his own signals a move beyond addressing "the need for the moral principle to be material and not only formal," to addressing "the need to rethink the acting subject as the integrated connection of practical reason and natural drives" (p. 152). For Fichte then, the application of the moral principle entails its *realization* in nature, which translates in the final analysis, Nuzzo argues, to the embodiment of freedom in the living human body. Like Fonnesu, Nuzzo thinks that the latter development takes ethics in a direction away from Kantian *Moralität* toward a Hegelian *Sittlichkeit*.

Ware's and Nuzzo's essays on the moral principle's applicability are interposed by three chapters, each of which covers a central concept in Fichte's Jena ethical system: freedom (by Daniel Breazeale in Chapter 5), conscience (by Dean Moyar in Chapter 6) and evil (by David James in Chapter 7). Moyar's chapter opens with a masterful statement of the "Two Criteria Problem" that threatens to tear Fichte's account of the moral principle's content in the *System of Ethics* asunder: on the one side, conscience is presented as an infallible authority on the correctness of one's judgments of one's duties; on the other, certain duties are deduced as necessarily informing the judgment of conscience. In recent years, Michelle Kosch has suggested that the problem be solved by interpreting conscience as the criterion for a second-order judgment of *one's conviction for a judgment of duty* rather than for a first-order judgment of duty. Moyar proffers a

Careful critique of Kosch's "deflationary reading" of conscience, thereby remedying Kosch's conspicuous absence in the volume. Another, textually sounder strategy is to differentiate "between the perspectives of the ordinary agent and the transcendental philosophy that bars the agent from appealing to the transcendental account" (p. 110). Moyar rejects the move and pursues instead an alternative, philosophically more intriguing line of defence in terms of the moral-particularist distinction of "prima facie duties" from an "all-things-considered judgment" (p. 125). In the concluding chapter, Stefano Bacin reminds readers that Fichte's Jena ethical system does not end with the deduction of the moral principle and its applicability but goes further to confirm the principle by way of "an extended survey of the main substantive contents of [its] demands" (p. 201). Bacin presents the resultant "doctrine of duties," i.e., normative ethics, as a perfectionism that "justifies moral obligations on the basis of the general end of the development of the rational nature of agents" (p. 217). Like Moyar, he insists that Fichtean normative ethics does more than just describe ordinary moral thinking: it provides "the epistemic ground for a full development of the moral nature of rational agents" (p. 219).

Overall, the editors have done a good job in balancing the task of providing "a bird's-eye perspective" of Fichte's work with that of giving an in-depth analysis of its concepts and principles. The book is apt to take advanced undergraduate students of the *System of Ethics* through its labyrinthian deductions. At the same time, it offers graduate students and specialist researchers of Fichte's Jena ethical system with a wealth of insights and intimations to draw upon. In my estimate, it marks a sizable milestone in the habilitation of the work into present-day moral-philosophical discourse, elucidating its positions on various issues and opening new paths for future investigations.

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Gaetano Rametta, *Take five. Cinque contributi su Fichte e la filosofia trascendentale* (Milan-Udine: Mimesis, 2021), 123pp. ISBN 9788857583365



An unfortunate prejudice still casts its shadow across the thinking of Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762-1814), one of the greatest exponents of what is known as ‘German idealism’ in the history of philosophy. It is a prejudice based on the belief that the greatness of Fichte lies only in the first period of his theorizing, that of the *Foundation of the Entire Wissenschaftslehre* (1794-1795). Here the idea of identifying the transcendental philosophy introduced by Kant as a ‘science of science’ – or Doctrine of Science (*Wissenschaftslehre*) – is developed alongside the primacy accorded to the subject, the pure I that posits itself. According to this same prejudice, in the stage subsequent to the ‘atheism dispute’ (1798-1800) and his departure from the University of Jena, Fichte elaborated in Berlin numerous versions of his system in which there was supposedly a weakening of the transcendental perspective. This stage is characterized by the marginalization of the subject and the metaphysical affirmation of the absolute as the genuine first principle. In short, we have on the one hand a transcendental philosophy founded on *subjectivism*, and on the other hand a metaphysical regression tending to *mysticism*, determined by the I losing its centrality.

Take five. Cinque contributi su Fichte e la filosofia trascendentale (Take Five: Five Essays on Fichte and Transcendental Philosophy) by Gaetano Rametta, a transcendental philosopher who is among the foremost exponents of the ‘rediscovery’ of Fichte in recent decades, is without doubt a most effective and convincing antidote to this prejudice, and a fundamental instrument for recapturing the full significance of Fichtean thought as a transcendental philosophy that has not lost its potential in contemporary debates.

Drawing on the diverse content of the five chapters of this book, the author makes the case that the decentralization of the I after 1800, far from debasing the transcendental perspective, effectively and exponentially radicalizes it. Thus, we are able to witness not only the dissolution of Fichte’s supposed subjectivism, but also the delineation of an a-subjective form of transcendentalism, orbiting around the relationship with a brand-new principle, that of the absolute viewed as an impersonal ‘original life’ (*Urleben*), anterior

to consciousness. It is by virtue of such a relationship with ‘life’ that Fichte’s transcendental philosophy appears in all its radical nature as a thinking of the *real*. And this very insistence on the real turns out to be crucial in exploring the close theoretical consonance of the five chapters making up the book, as well as for appreciating both the elements of *consistency* and *discontinuity* in Fichtean speculation on the whole.

In chapter one – *Sistema e principi in Fichte e in Hegel* (System and Principle in Fichte and in Hegel) — devoted to the first stage of Fichtean thought, Rametta concentrates on the fundamental difference between Fichte and Hegel, starting with a determination of the fundamental principle (*Grundsatz*) from the standpoint of the system’s construction. Whilst it is undeniable that in Hegel, the theory of speculative presentation (*spekulative Darstellung*) makes it possible to look beyond the Fichtean conception regarding an unconditioned first principle, interpreted in terms of a residual attachment to “pre-critical rationalist thought”¹ (21), it is nonetheless on this level that one can discern an element of genuine disruptiveness in what Fichte is doing. In defining the first principles of the *Wissenschaftslehre*, he was in effect laying the foundations for a kind of thought that is able to interact with the prompting of the real in all its radicalness. Indeed, the impossibility of deducing the Not-I (second principle) from the I (first principle) means that the real can be formalized as a sort of unpredictable ‘check’ (*Anstoß*), which indicates the “transcendental gap between the level of the Idea and that of the effectual”² (31).

This characterization of the real as a discrepancy between Idea and reality also recurs in the period of philosophizing that comes after Jena. The second and the third chapters of the book, titled respectively *La dottrina trascendentale della potenza* (The Transcendental Doctrine of Power) and *Singolarità e immanenza nella Seconda Esposizione del 1804* (Singularity and Immanence in the Second 1804 Presentation), are concerned with the expositions of the Berlin period. In this context, however, the conception of the real is further expanded upon, given that the primacy of the subject has now been displaced. Not unexpectedly, at this point it is no longer merely a question of the *Anstoß* of the Not-I and the resulting break-up that the subject undergoes, but of the difference between the absolute and the phenomenon, between supersensible reality (*Realität*) and empirical reality (*Wirklichkeit*), between ‘original life’ as impersonal genesis, and effective experience.

All of this means that the transcendental perspective, far from being undermined, is given a veritable boost, which the author allows the reader to discern fully, beginning with the relationship between life and knowledge explored by Fichte post-1800. This same relationship, while not nullifying the element of consciousness, impresses on it a “different and ontologically more radical twist”³ (38). Consciousness is now understood as: “the place, the *empty* space ‘through’ [*Durch*] which”⁴ the absolute can “manifest

¹ “pensiero del razionalismo pre-critico”. Translations are by the reviewer.

² “scarto trascendentale insuperabile tra piano dell’Idea e piano dell’effettuale”.

³ “torsione diversa e ontologicamente più radicale”

⁴ “il luogo, il varco *vuoto* ‘attraverso’ [*Durch*] cui”

itself in and as ‘phenomenon’⁵ (40), unleashing itself in terms of that “power” (*Vermögen*) that subtends thought as the “energetic principle of its own dynamism”⁶ (59). Thus, we find ourselves in the presence of a transcendental that does not deny the “epistemological dimension of the Critical turn”⁷ of Kant (58), but reinforces it to the point of culminating in the definition of a ‘post-metaphysical ontology’ based on the idea of an ‘original life’, conceived not as substance but rather as energy, power and creativity.

So, how do we account for interaction with a reality conceived as ‘pure actuality’ (*esse in mero actu*) without restating the centrality of the subject, which had characterized the Jena period? It is in response to this question that one perceives the emergence of a further element in the speculation of the ‘late Fichte’, one that we can see as particularly important not just for understanding the *Wissenschaftslehre*, but equally in order to delineate a new kind of transcendental perspective that is up to the challenge of contemporary times.

As the author remarks in referring to the fifteenth lecture of the Second Exposition of the 1804 *Wissenschaftslehre*, Fichte reaches the conclusion that:

philosophy can achieve interpenetration with absolute life only insofar as this may be brought about in terms of an exercise of thought undertaken in common

(la filosofia può raggiungere la compenetrazione con la vita assoluta solo nella misura in cui si produca nei termini di un esercizio di pensiero messo in comune) (41)

Decentralizing the I, gives place to a deep transformation in the subject of thought, which is found to coincide with that ‘We’ (*Wir*), which has been established through the teaching and has been deduced in the course of the exposition. In short, to think of the real as ‘life’ requires a redefinition of philosophy itself, turning it into that “kind of expressive activity”⁸ (40) that enables the absolute to become apparent in a pluralistic exercise of thought. To understand this, however, one has to realize that the ‘original life’ has always been present at the core of the exposition as the “matrix of our power of thinking”⁹ (60).

The transformation of the subject of thought, from a single individual to the ‘We’ of the philosophical community — a ‘we think’ that appears surprisingly akin to the *general intellect* of Marx (65) — makes it clear how the *practical* vocation of the transcendental was no less significant in the ‘late Fichte’. Indeed, with the primacy of the I set aside, the practical dimension becomes even more important in certain respects, as the fourth and the fifth chapters of *Take five* make clear: *La logica trascendentale come*

⁵ “manifestarsi nel e come ‘fenomeno’”

⁶ “principio energetico del proprio dinamismo”

⁷ “la dimensione epistemologica della svolta critica”

⁸ “attività di tipo *espressivo*”

⁹ “matrice di un *insieme di singolarità pensanti*”

logica del senso e L'idea di politica in Fichte (1793-1808) (Transcendental Logic as the Logic of Sense and The Idea of Politics in Fichte, 1793-1808).

The fourth chapter looks at the two lecture courses in 1812 on transcendental logic, which were intended as introductions from the standpoint of common sense to that of the *Wissenschaftslehre*. One of their objectives was to rebut the dogmatic assumptions of logic as commonly understood, which reduces it in the final analysis to a branch of psychology. In short, it is a matter of overcoming the idea that thought is equivalent to nothing else than following one own's representations. However, it would be a mistake to suppose that the significance of the Fichtean lectures is exhausted within the scope of a theoretical deconstruction. In effect, dismantling the dogmatic assumptions of common logic leads to a positive outcome, namely, a genuine transfiguration of the exercise of thought which, being freed from the primacy of the subject and from the paradigm of representation (*Vorstellung*) that typifies psychology, is accomplished by switching the focus to 'sense' (*Sinn*). Sense is generated by virtue of the transcendental perception of the *difference* between the level of philosophical concept (*Begriff*) and that of psychological representation (*Vorstellung*), just as the real was defined, as noted above, as the difference between the original reality (*Realität*) of 'life', and the empirical reality (*Wirklichkeit*) to which common logic remains anchored in its dogmatic conception. In this way, the conditions are created for "an exercise of thought completely different from that which operates in common consciousness"¹⁰ (86). It is the self-reflection suggested by the expression 'Besinnung', which the author presents in terms of a 'meditation' or 'contemplation' transfiguring the thought in which one is engaged via the conversion exerted by "consciousness addressing itself"¹¹ (76). Reflecting on its own thought, consciousness breaks free from the level of empirical reality around which representation revolves, and by this process moves away from being a 'first principle' to becoming simply a medium that 'life' is directed 'through' (*Durch*). In this way, the empirical subject finds itself at the centre of a radical change: formerly the supposed principle, it is now the *medium* through which the absolute bursts into the world. In contrast to a 'contemplative' outcome, this is the moment where subjectivity regains its practical quality, bringing about the transition from 'contemplation' (*Besinnung*) to 'wisdom' (*Besonnenheit*), causing transcendental vision to feed into "practical principle and lifestyle" (78) and logic to culminate in *ethics*. Just as in the Jena period, it becomes clear that in Fichte's later speculation, the relationship with the practical dimension, with world's operations and workings, is crucial and indeed represents a key aspect in the *Wissenschaftslehre*'s development. This, however, is not the mere reiteration of a need that was already there previously. With the primacy of the I set aside, and the relationship with the real radicalized as an interpenetration with the 'original life', the practical dimensions now actually take on a different configuration.

¹⁰ "un esercizio di pensiero completamente diverso da quello operante nella coscienza comune"

¹¹ "strappo operato dalla coscienza rivolgendosi a sé"

Multiple spheres are involved in this ‘metamorphosis of the practical’, not only the ethical, which, since it is no longer anchored to the categorical imperative of Kant, becomes reconfigured in terms of a ‘higher morality’, characterized by the *creativity* of subjectivity as merely a medium ‘through’ (*Durch*) which ‘life’ is directed. One of *Take five*’s most remarkable achievements is precisely that of having unearthed another new aspect that characterizes the late Fichte: the sphere of *politics*. It was previously linked to the sphere of law and the state, but takes on a whole new centrality in the later Jena period.

On this point, the book’s last chapter allows the reader to fully discern how Fichte — from his *Contributions to the Correction of the Public’s Judgments on the French Revolution* (1793) to the *Addresses to the German Nation* (1807-1808) — unlocks “the circuit incorporating *philosophy* [...], *history* [...] and *politics*”¹² (112). The reader can now see politics as a more and more autonomous domain, increasingly distant from the enlightenment metaphor of the ‘state as machine’ and the ‘social contract’ paradigm of modern political science. In other words, the reformulation of transcendental philosophy undertaken around 1800, in particular beginning with the *Closed Commercial State*, goes hand in hand with an equally radical transformation of the practical dimension. An autonomous quality is now attributed to politics, on the one hand in terms of knowledge, independent and distinct from scientific knowledge in the strict sense — i.e. the *Wissenschaftslehre* ‘in specie’ — and on the other hand, in terms of ‘art’, as a complex of decisions and practices, at once rational and contingent. Becoming gradually independent of the modern template of ‘sovereignty’ identifiable with Hobbes, politics in Fichte’s eyes is redefined in terms of education (*Bildung*), the building of ties through teaching fostered by the transcendental vision. Once again, it is the ‘We’ treated by the author in connection with the Second Exposition of 1804, which now acquires a significance that is no longer purely theoretical, but also — and above all — practical and political, which exalts philosophy in the sense of being the:

potential core of a new form of social bond, compared to the model of social contract and the related hypostatization of the ‘people’ as an indistinct collective subject, conceived as the repository of sovereignty

(nucleo potenziale di una nuova forma di legame sociale, rispetto al modello contrattualistico e alla correlata ipostatizzazione del popolo come indistinto soggetto collettivo, depositario della sovranità) (65)

This perhaps is one of the most crucial contributions offered by the book *Take five*: it not only enables a *return* to Fichte, but likewise permits a *new opportunity*, based on Fichte’s own thinking, to delineate a transcendental philosophy for our contemporary age, a system of thought that sets out from speculation in a bid to regain the real, and which,

¹² “il circuito tra *filosofia* [...], *storia* [...] e *politica*”

beyond any kind of subjectivism, can be measured relative to it only in the form of a *pensare condiviso* – a “thinking shared in common” (60).

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Laurent Guyot. *La philosophie de Fichte. Repères* (Paris: Librairie philosophique J. Vrin, 2020), 198pp. ISBN 978-2-7116-2959-6



In this book, Laurent Guyot proposes a short general presentation of Fichte's philosophy, which continues and supplements the classic French monographs of X. Léon (1922), M. Guérout (1974), A. Philonenko (1980), I. Radrizzani (1993), J.-C. Goddard (1999), I. Thomas-Fogiel, (2000), B. Bourgeois (2000), M. Vetö (2001) and X. Tillette (2003). After a brief biography of Fichte (pp. 11-23), the book is divided into two parts: a section devoted to Fichte's thought and presented thematically (25-90), followed by a commentary on Fichte's major works: *Foundation of the Entire Wissenschaftslehre*, *Foundations of Natural Right*, *The System of Ethics*, *The Vocation of Man*, and *The Way to the Blessed Life* (91-171).

The first part presents the general organization of the *Wissenschaftslehre* in its relation to Kantian idealism and according to the synthetic and genetic method. This is done in order to then introduce, as its internal and necessary developments, the practical philosophy, the philosophy of religion, the philosophy of right, the theory of the state, and finally, the philosophy of education. The starting point of the Fichtean project is understood as a "systématisation du kantisme" (systematization of Kantianism) (26) under the influence of Reinhold: Fichte replaces the Kantian inquiry into the conditions of possibility of the representation of the object with another and more original one – an inquiry into the series of the acts of the mind that explain the "sentiment de nécessité" (feeling of necessity, 27) that accompany a true representation and which constitute the foundation of experience. The Fichtean position is classically characterized by the author as a development of Kantianism that makes it more coherent in spirit, even if it is not entirely faithful to its letter.

Guyot's presentation of the *Wissenschaftslehre* is centered on the 1794/95 *Grundlage* and the 1797/98 introductions. It starts from a definition of the pure I as the act of representing something and which characterizes "spiritualité en général" (spirituality in general, 35), independently of empirical individuals. The exposition of the three foundational principles of the *Grundlage* is related to an original form of philosophical reasoning that consists in reconducting the fact of representation to the series of acts which produces it, thus purifying it from any empiricity. Rejecting any

scholastic assimilation of these principles to an opposition between freedom and matter or form and content, the author underlines instead its logical architecture:

Par un procédé ascendant-réductif, on abstrait successivement d'une proposition communément admise au départ comme certaine, tout ce qui est empirique en elle, de sorte que le noyau dur obtenu à la fin nous donne le principe absolu de toute certitude. (35)

(By an ascending-reducing process, one successively abstracts from a proposition commonly admitted at the beginning as certain, everything that is empirical in it, so that the central core obtained at the end gives us the absolute principle of all certainty)¹

The first principle is the act of the original self-positing of the I. It is supplemented by the possibility for thought to open itself towards what it is not (second principle of the *Wissenschaftslehre* which opposes a Not-I to the I). This absolute opposition can only be resolved by a quantitative critical idealism, which reunites the divisible I and divisible Not-I (third principle of the *Wissenschaftslehre*). The synthetic method is therefore defined as: “la réunion de termes en apparence inconciliables, dès lors que chacun d’eux a été reconnu comme nécessaire” (the reunion of apparently irreconcilable terms, once each of them has been recognized as necessary, 111).

Fichte identifies in each antinomy a point of indistinction, from which the contradiction can be lifted, an infinite task which is that of a “circular process” (*Kreisgang*), where the acts of the mind are stated synthetically: self-consciousness is at the same time the given starting point and the conclusion to be reached of a deduction which is carried out by intellectual intuition. Guyot underlines the difficulties of such a method: if it is guided by a concern for systematicity, it refuses the incoherent residue of realism present in Kantianism when it resorts to a causality of phenomenal things-in-themselves. Subsequently, the mind can only produce an image of a necessarily atemporal process that spontaneously is already carried out by the I in its self-active essence. Hence, the philosopher can only reproduce this process in the form of an imperfect “image” due to the dividing intellect. (53)

Fichte’s practical philosophy is considered from the standpoint of his theory of striving: according to the *Wissenschaftslehre*, the pure I is only possible on the condition that it is limited to a finite and empirical I. The absolute I, abstracted from all experience, is unconditioned, but it can only exist for the finite consciousness as a horizon to be reached. The end of this moral striving is the ever-renewed overcoming of a finite action by which the empirical I seeks to become truly itself, that is to say, the absolute I or God. (70) The strictly internalist principle of reading adopted by Guyot would undoubtedly have benefited from being supplemented by a comparison of Fichte’s philosophy with the sciences, from which it draws its models: firstly, the mathematical principle of the asymptote, in which self-activity is defined as a continually restarted action; secondly,

¹ The English translations in this review are by the reviewer.

the Newtonian physics of the attraction and repulsion of physical forces. The *Wissenschaftslehre* makes use of the latter's concept of *Anstoß*, the original impulse that constitutes the supreme condition of the possibility of representation. Notwithstanding, this internalist reading allows one to exclude any interpretation that would argue in favor of a material understanding of the *Anstoß*, since this impulse is not of a physical nature, but refers to a self-affection of the I: the unlimited activity of the I limits itself as soon as it is indeed an original activity of an I and not an absolute activity.

Fichte's conception of religion is treated by relating religious belief to philosophical knowledge: the immediate externalization of God as infinite will is the freedom of the I. Becoming oneself is to generate through freedom a moral order of the world that corresponds to the predestination of events. This predestination does not exclude freedom but allows it, since we institute the divine through our moral choices. Both Guyot and Fichte insist on the difference between religion and philosophy. According to *The Way to the Blessed Life*, the most appropriate attitude to religion is not actually the concept, which freezes or fixes as it were the reality that it reproduces, but rather faith and love. (164-165)

Stressing the necessity of a free State to allow moral action, on the one hand Fichte reflects on a theory of right that starts from the fiction of natural right to contemplate positive laws, and on the other hand, on the necessity of supplementing the Rousseauian social contract with an authority of control, the Ephorate, that would be able to play the role of counter-power. The 'subjective' conditions of practical reason are thus supplemented by objective conditions that refer to a social, political and legal organization that renders possible the applicability of the moral law. For the true test of freedom is that it is capable of being put into practice. (129-130)

Education constitutes the final piece of a philosophy defined as a "system of freedom" (173): it permits humanity to pass from egoism to freedom: humanity's determination or vocation can only be inhibited by natural causes, in short, by the Not-I. Education helps people to realize their freedom by awakening them to the "dispositions portées par l'auto-activité de la raison" (dispositions carried by the self-activity of reason, 86). Fichte refers to the existence of certain great human beings, existing in all societies, who have contributed to the education of humanity to become itself. Here Guyot insists on the humanist dimension of Fichte's philosophy, which has as its condition the development of equality among human beings (178). This is far from the typical nationalist caricatures of Fichte (183).

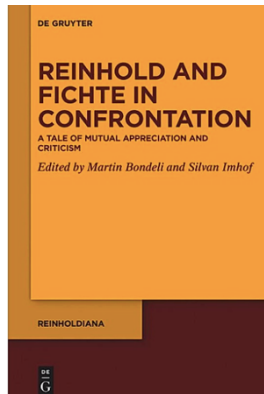
The second part of the book proposes more precise accounts of four Fichtean works. Its brevity prevents it from being really considered as an introduction. Rather, it is an accompanying reading guide that reproduces the content and structure of these works. Without getting involved in the classic interpretative debates, the author supports the idea of a continuity to Fichte's thought. (157) Nor does Fichte renounce his philosophy of the I to substitute it with a philosophy of being, as Schelling accuses him of doing. (158)

However, the absence of a study of the *Attempt at a Critique of All Revelation* (1792) is regrettable: it would have situated Fichte more precisely in relation to his Kantianism, and introduced a series of central topics to anyone unfamiliar with Fichte's work, not to mention relating it to the philosophy of religion and morality, as well as anticipating the presentation of the *Wissenschaftslehre*.

In summary: the author obviously favours an intermediary approach between linear history and structuralist reconstruction: first identifying the key elements of the *Grundlage*, then choosing to present Fichte's thought according to the synthetic and genetic method. This approach does not arbitrarily separate parts of the Fichtean philosophy, but relies on a logical sequence of propositions: the self-appearance of the I is not separable from the freedom of a practical I, which can only be applied within the framework of a philosophy of education. Though Guyot's volume, on account of its brevity, has to omit certain works and interpretative controversies, it is still completely in conformity with the spirit of Fichte's philosophy and offers a clear introduction to the contemporary reader.

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Martin Bondeli and Silvan Imhof (eds), *Reinhold and Fichte in Confrontation: A Tale of Mutual Appreciation and Criticism. Reinholdiana Band 4* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2020). 236 pp. ISBN 9783110681871



Martin Bondeli's and Silvan Imhof's valuable collected volume was born out of a conference called "*Reinholds Wechsel zur Wissenschaftslehre*" that took place in 2016 and that commemorated the newly edited volume of Reinhold's *Auswahl vermischter Schriften* (1797)—i.e., volume 5/2 of the annotated edition of Reinhold's *Gesammelte Schriften*—in which Reinhold announces his transition from the Kant-loyal *Elementarphilosophie* to Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre*. This collected volume focuses on the relationship between Reinhold and Fichte. While this focus might seem narrow in scope, the editors' introduction divides this relationship into three stages, making clear that it is in fact complex and multifaceted. The first stage (approximately 1793-1797) is a "period of mutual, critical convergence" (p. 2). By 1793, Reinhold had already published three significant works on Kant's first *Critique*, in which he argues that its results, i.e., the *a priori* forms of human cognition and the principles that govern them, are correct but that its method, i.e., a critique of pure reason, is not persuasive. During this year, Fichte enters the philosophical scene and is "immediately convinced of Reinhold's programme but [is] not satisfied with Reinhold's implementation of it" (p. 2). For this reason, he argues that the *Elementarphilosophie* requires a new and solid foundation, echoing what Reinhold stated about Kant's critical philosophy just a few years prior. The second stage (approximately 1797-1800) begins with Reinhold's conversion to the *Wissenschaftslehre* and is characterized by a collaboration: he and Fichte advocate the *Wissenschaftslehre*. The third stage (approximately 1800 onwards) marks the end of this collaboration. Reinhold puts an end to it when he starts to work on his Bardili-inspired philosophical system, which he calls "rational realism".

The articles that make up this collected volume make an important contribution to the Reinhold and Fichte scholarship because they deepen our knowledge of these three stages. The first four address the first stage, the next three address the second stage, and the final two address the third stage. The first article is written by Daniel Breazeale. He chronicles the pivotal moments of Reinhold's and Fichte's approximation and ultimate

estrangement between 1792 and 1801, using their correspondence and reviews as evidence. The result is a detailed story about where they agree, e.g., the need for an unassailable first principle for a Kant-inspired system of philosophy (p. 9), as well as where they disagree, e.g., Fichte's view that Reinhold's first principle of the *Elementarphilosophie* cannot ground both theoretical and practical philosophy (p. 9) and Reinhold's view that Fichte does not adequately distinguish "the concepts of *Freiheit* and *Selbsttätigkeit*" with respect to the absolute subject (p. 16). Despite what Breazeale describes as Reinhold's "Eureka!" moment—i.e., once Fichte convinces him that his *Elementarphilosophie* is dogmatic because it relies on given sensations that are grounded in the thing in itself (p. 19)—he concludes that Reinhold's conversion to Fichte's philosophy in 1797 is founded on certain misunderstandings. E.g., he argues that Reinhold does not grasp the "complex interrelations between the theoretical and the practical activities of the I in Fichte's early system" (p. 43), and he is silent about an aspect central to it, namely, Fichte's genetic deduction of representation in the *Grundlage der gesamten Wissenschaftslehre* (p. 44). Finally, Breazeale documents Fichte's response to Reinhold's system of rational realism in the form of a public denouncement in which he states that Reinhold never understood the *Wissenschaftslehre* (p. 40). This contribution, thus, spans the pivotal moments of Reinhold's and Fichte's entire relationship. In the next contribution, Philipp Schwab takes up Fichte's first attempt at a solution to the problem of "the transition from the first proposition (the I) to the second proposition (the non-I)" in his *Eigene Meditationen über ElementarPhilosophie* (p. 49). He shows that Fichte provides two conflicting solutions to this problem, i.e., one that relies on the unconditioned I and one that relies on the conditioned I (p. 91). He concludes that the second is Fichte's preferred solution (pp. 91-92). Finally, Jindřich Karásek argues that the first principle of Reinhold's *Elementarphilosophie*, namely, the principle of consciousness, can be reduced to the third principle of Fichte's *Grundlage*, albeit in a qualified sense. In so doing, Karásek provides justification for the claim that Fichte makes in the *Aenesidemus Review*, namely, that Reinhold's first principle can be derived from an even higher one.

The next three papers in this collected volume treat the second stage of Reinhold's and Fichte's relationship during which they both advocate the *Wissenschaftslehre*. Martin Bondeli contributes the first of these three articles. In it, he explains why Reinhold converts to Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre*, emphasizing that Reinhold "had failed to propose a satisfactory explanation of the mere subject or the pure I" in the *Elementarphilosophie* because his account presupposes the existence of the troublesome thing in itself (pp. 126-127). However, Reinhold's conversion is only partial according to Bondeli. As Bondeli shows, he never completely eradicates the thing in itself from his system of philosophy, despite intentions to the contrary, because he maintains a distinction between the subject in itself and the subject qua noumenon (the "subject of self-active reason") (p. 140). In the second paper that addresses this phase, Silvan Imhof agrees with the claims that Bondeli makes, but argues that it is Beck's *Einzig-möglicher*

Standpunct, published in 1796, that provides the impetus for Reinhold's conversion to Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre*. Finally, Faustino Fabbianelli contributes the final article that addresses the second phase of Reinhold's and Fichte's relationship. Fabbianelli argues that Reinhold's conversion to the *Wissenschaftslehre* is incomplete because he insufficiently appreciates its practical moment. This is the case, Fabbianelli argues, because Reinhold neglects two dialectics central to the *Wissenschaftslehre*, namely, that of transcendence and immanence as well as that of ideality and reality.

The two final contributions address the third and final stage of Reinhold's and Fichte's relationship. The first is penned by Ives Radrizzani and asks the question: was Reinhold ever a "transcendental philosopher" in the Fichtean sense of the word? Radrizzani's answer is a clear and resounding "No!". He supports this claim with two pieces of evidence. First, Reinhold employs what Radrizzani characterizes as an empirical dualism in his system of rational realism, suggesting that he never gave up this dualism after abandoning the *Elementarphilosophie*, not even while advocating the *Wissenschaftslehre* (p. 210). Second, he criticizes what he views as the subjectivism plaguing the *Wissenschaftslehre* (p. 207). Moving now to the final contribution of this volume, Federico Ferraguto focuses on Fichte's public rejection of Reinhold's rational realism in 1801 (p. 221), the elements of it that—despite this public rejection—he then integrates into the *Wissenschaftslehre* between 1804 and 1807 (p. 223), and, finally, his use of these elements to move against "a Schellingian extension of transcendental philosophy" (p. 228).

This volume provides a wealth of information—both biographical and systematic—about the three stages of the relationship between Reinhold and Fichte. To my knowledge, it is the most detailed and informative study on this relationship. For this reason, it makes an important contribution to post-Kantian scholarship. However, it is at the same time in a sense a missed opportunity. Several articles study the same aspects of Reinhold's and Fichte's relationship, e.g., the problem of the thing in itself in Reinhold's version of the *Wissenschaftslehre*, and they do so without engaging with one another. Thus, these talented and knowledgeable scholars have missed an opportunity to debate with one another on these issues and to parse out the dialectical options for interpreting them. However, this missed opportunity is at the same time a gift to the reader. This volume provides the reader with all the information necessary to continue this fruitful project.

*Elise Frketich,
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3. BULLETIN

1. SOCIETIES AND ASSOCIATIONS

The North American Fichte Society

The North American Fichte Society (NAFS) was founded – or “co-positd” – in 1991 by Daniel Breazeale and Tom Rockmore, who continued to serve as co-positors until 2019. Two new co-positors of the North American Fichte Society were co-positd at the Cincinnati meeting in May 2019: Gabriel Gottlieb (Xavier University) gottlieb@xavier.edu and Benjamin Crowe (Boston University) bcrowe@bu.edu. All inquiries concerning NAFS and its events should be directed to Gabe and Ben. Website: <https://www.fichtesociety.org/>

The inaugural conference of the NAFS was held in the spring of 1991 on the campus of Duquesne University in Pittsburgh; the second was held in the spring of 1993 on the campus of the University of Denver; the third was held in the spring of 1995 at Shaker Village in Pleasant Hill, Kentucky; the fourth was held in the spring of 1997 on the campus of Marquette University in Milwaukee; the fifth was held in May 1999 in Montréal, Québec, and the sixth was held in March of 2001 in Del Mar/La Jolla, California. The seventh conference was held in the spring of 2004 on the campus of St. Joseph’s University in Philadelphia. The eighth occurred in March 2006 in Vienna, Austria and the ninth in March 2008 on the campus of DePaul University in Chicago; the tenth meeting was held in Lisbon in April of 2010; the eleventh was held in Quebec in May of 2012, the twelfth was held in May of 2014 at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City; and the thirteenth was held in May of 2017 in Seoul. The fifteenth at Xavier University in Cincinnati in May of 2019. The most recent meeting occurred in Chicago at DePaul University in May 2022. The next meeting will be in London in June 2024, see the Call for Abstracts on page 77 below.

Previous and Forthcoming Publications of the North American Fichte Society

The selected proceedings of the Duquesne conference were published in 1994 by Humanities Press under the title *Fichte: Historical Contexts / Contemporary Controversies* and are currently available from Humanity Books. The selected proceedings of the Denver conference were published by Humanities Press in 1996 under the title *New Perspectives on Fichte* and are currently available from Humanity Books. The selected proceedings of the Shakertown conference, *New Studies in Fichte’s Foundation of the Entire Doctrine of Scientific Knowledge* were published in 2001 by Humanity Books. The selected proceedings of the Milwaukee conference, *New Essays on Fichte’s Later Jena Wissenschaftslehre (1795-1799)* were published in 2002 by

Northwestern University Press. The selected proceedings of the San Diego / Del Mar conference are available from Ashgate Publishing Co. under the title *Rights, Bodies and Recognition: New Essays on Fichte's Foundations of Natural Right*. The selected proceedings of the Montréal conference have been published by Northwestern University Press under the title *After Jena: New Essays on Fichte's Later Philosophy*. The proceedings of the Chicago conference, devoted to Fichte's *System of Ethics*, were published in a special double issue of the journal *Philosophy Today*. The selected proceedings of the Vienna conference were published by de Gruyter under the title *Fichte and the Phenomenological Tradition*, and those of the Philadelphia conference by Rodopi under the title *Fichte, German Idealism, and Early Idealism*. Proceedings of the Lisbon conference were published by SUNY Press under the title *Fichte's Vocation of Man: New Interpretive and Critical Essays* and those of the Quebec Conference were published in 2014 by Palgrave Macmillan under the title *Fichte and Transcendental Philosophy*. The proceedings of the Salt Lake City conference were published in 2016 by SUNY Press as *Fichte's Addresses to the German Nation Reconsidered*, while those of the Seoul conference have appeared in three special journal issues, as indicated below.

Die Internationale Johann Gottlieb Fichte Gesellschaft

The Internationale Johann-Gottlieb-Fichte-Gesellschaft (IFG) was founded in December of 1987 in the Federal Republic of Germany “in partnership with the Japanese Fichte Society.” The current board of directors (elected at the 2022 Fichte Congress in Leipzig) are: Petra Lohmann (President), Rainer Schäfer, Hitoshi Minobi, Jimena Solé, and Gesa Wellmann. The IFG sponsors an International Fichte Congress every third year. Website: <http://www.fichte-gesellschaft.org>

Fichte-Studien

Fichte-Studien. Beiträge zur Geschichte und Systematik der Transzendentalphilosophie is a publication founded in 1990 by the Internationale Fichte-Gesellschaft. The current editors are Matteo Vincenzo d'Alfonso and Alexander Schnell. *Fichte-Studien* is published by Brill. For information concerning individual and institutional subscriptions, as well as information concerning other Fichte titles by the same publisher: <https://brill.com/view/journals/fis/fis-overview.xml?contents=journaltoc>

The Internationale Fichte-Gesellschaft also publishes the *Fichte-Studien-Supplementa*: <https://brill.com/display/serial/FISS>

Japanische Fichte-Gesellschaft

For Japanese Fichte studies, see the site of the Japanese Fichte Society: <http://fichte-jp.org/> The Japanese Fichte Association is the oldest such society in the world. Its current president is Prof. Katsuaki Okada is professor of the Himeji Dokkyo University, whose email address is Tetsugakuokada@aol.com

Groupe d'Études Fichtéennes de Langue Française

Créé en 1999 sur l'initiative de Jean-Christophe Goddard (Univ. de Toulouse le Mirail) et Marc Maeschalck (Univ. Catholique de Louvain-la-Neuve/ Centre de Philosophie du Droit), le GEFLF est un Réseau de Recherches qui a pour projet le développement européen et international de la recherche francophone sur un auteur de la tradition philosophique classique et humaniste allemande : Johann Gottlieb FICHTE (1762-1814). Il promeut la traduction française des œuvres de Fichte et l'organisation de journées d'études et de colloques internationaux sur son œuvre, en étroite collaboration avec les principales sociétés et les principaux acteurs de la recherche fichtéenne européenne et américaine. Les activités du GEFLF sont actuellement coordonnées par Jean-Christophe Goddard, Marc Maeschalck et Alexander Schnell. Contacts: jc.goddard@libertysurf.fr alex.schnell@gmail.com Website: <http://gefllf.chez-alice.fr>

Rete Italiana della Ricerca su Fichte

La *Rete italiana per la ricerca su Fichte* è una organizzazione informale di studiosi del pensiero di Fichte e in generale della filosofia tedesca classica. Avviata anche su iniziale impulso di Reinhard Lauth al Fichte-Kongress di Monaco 2003 organizzato dalla Internationale J. G. Fichte-Gesellschaft, e promossa tra gli altri da Claudio Cesa, Carla De Pascale, Giuseppe Duso, Luca Fonnesu, Marco Ivaldo, la Rete riunisce periodicamente studiosi, giovani ricercatori, dottorandi e laureandi nella discussione critica di temi significativi della filosofia fichtiana.

Sede dei seminari: Accademia Toscana di Scienze e Lettere "La Colombaria", Via s. Egidio 23 – 50122 Firenze.

Website:

<https://fichteit.hypotheses.org/category/presentazione>

Red Ibérica de Estudios Fichteanos / Red Ibérica de Estudios Fichteanos

El interés por la obra de Fichte, su estudio y la investigación filosófica en diálogo con su pensamiento, han tenido en los últimos años un gran desarrollo. También entre nosotros, en el ámbito portugués y español, se ha asistido a un número creciente de iniciativas y de trabajos de investigación en este campo. Ha faltado, sin embargo, durante mucho tiempo un contacto más continuo, una estrecha colaboración y un intenso intercambio de ideas entre los distintos investigadores interesados en la obra de Fichte en la península ibérica. Nos ha parecido por eso que era oportuno constituir una Red Ibérica de Estudios Fichteanos (RIEF). El objetivo es promover e intensificar la investigación filosófica en torno al pensamiento de Fichte, así como la colaboración y el intercambio entre los investigadores que trabajamos en este campo. Lo que nos une es el interés por la obra filosófica de Fichte, por los problemas que plantea, los debates filosóficos en los que sigue teniendo relevancia y la convicción de que la conjugación de esfuerzos, el diálogo y el intercambio de ideas pueden constituir una fuente inestimable apoyo mutuo, de enriquecimiento y de clarificación. Son bienvenidos todos los aquellos que compartan este planteamiento y deseen trabajar e investigar en la RIEF. Ideada en los últimos meses del 2006, la RIEF ya ha organizado algunos encuentros:

Asociación Latinoamericana de Estudios sobre Fichte

Nacida a partir de la iniciativa de profesores e investigadores latinoamericanos dedicados al estudio de la obra del filósofo alemán Johann Gottlieb Fichte (Rammennau 1762 – Berlín 1814), la Asociación Latinoamericana de Estudios sobre Fichte (ALEF) aspira a ser un lugar de encuentro, discusión y difusión de la obra de este filósofo alemán.

La ALEF está afiliada a la Internationale Johann-Gottlieb-Fichte-Gesellschaft E.V. y coordina sus tareas con la Red Ibérica de Estudios Fichteanos. Entre sus objetivos principales se hallan la organización de seminarios, cursos y congresos en Latinoamérica y la elaboración y publicación tanto de la obra de Fichte en español y en portugués como así también de monografías y artículos de especialistas latinoamericanos.

Die 2010 gegründete “Asociación Latinoamericana de Estudios sobre Fichte” (ALEF) hat zum Ziel, die Fichte-Forschung in Lateinamerika zu fördern und deren Resultate und Diskussionen zu verbreiten. Seit 2011 haben bereits vier Kongresse der ALEF stattgefunden, zuletzt 2016 in Buenos Aires. Die ALEF gibt die Zeitschrift *Estudios sobre Fichte* heraus und ist am Projekt Fichte Online der Europhilosophie beteiligt.

Websites: <https://alef.hypotheses.org> <https://journals.openedition.org/ref/>

2. CONFERENCES AND CFPS

Fichte's Foundation of the Entire Wissenschaftslehre

Sixteenth Biennial Meeting of the North American Fichte Society

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

June, 15-17, 2024

University College London, London, U.K.

The Sixteenth Biennial Meeting of the North American Fichte Society will be held at University College London, London, UK June 15-17, 2024. Local arrangements will be coordinated by Dr. Rory Phillips of University College London.

The conference will be focused on Fichte's *Foundation of the Entire Wissenschaftslehre* and Fichte's other writings published alongside it in Daniel Breazeale's translation *Foundation of the Entire Wissenschaftslehre and Other Writings* (OUP, 2021). Papers dealing with any aspect of these works on their own terms, in relationship to Fichte's other writings, or in regard to other philosophers will be welcomed.

As is the practice of the North American Fichte Society, this event is open to all interested scholars, both in North America and elsewhere. The official language of the conference will be English. Please send paper proposals, including a title and an abstract (approx. 300 words) of the paper's contents to Gabe Gottlieb, Department of Philosophy, Xavier University <fichtesociety@gmail.com> **no later than November 15, 2023.**

Conference papers should have a **maximum reading time of 30 minutes**. As in the past, we intend to publish a volume of selected papers from this conference. Though it may not prove possible to publish all of the conference papers, we nevertheless request (although it is not required) that anyone presenting a paper formally grant the North American Fichte Society the "right of first refusal" for the publication of the same.

Please note that no funds will be available from the conference organizers to support either travel costs or living expenses of the participants. However, an official "letter of invitation" for the purposes of obtaining travel support from one's own institution, can easily be arranged. Further details concerning lodging, program, etc. will be forthcoming at a later date.

For more information and updates: <https://www.fichtesociety.org/>

2022

September 28 – October 1, 2022, “Paradigma der Rationalität” Leipzig, XI Kongress der Internationale Fichte-Gesellschaft.

May 20-25, 2022. Tagung, Fichte 1801-1802 *Wissenschaftslehre*, Rammenau, Germany

May 19-21, 2022. “Fichte’s Practical Philosophy”, Fifteenth Biennial Meeting of the North American Fichte Society, DePaul University, Chicago

2021

June 17, 2021 North American Fichte Society, Author Meets Critics, Owen Ware’s *Fichte’s Moral Philosophy*

May 1, 2021, North American Fichte Society, Early Career Workshop (zoom)

2020

September 16 – 18, 2020, *VI. International Congress of the Latin American Fichte Society (ALEF) “Fichte in the Americas”*

2019

November 2019. *V Congresso Internacional de la ALEF “Eu – Imagem – Ser”*, PPGF da PUCP, Curitiba.

May 22-25, 2019. Fourteenth Biennial Meeting of the North American Fichte Society, Cincinnati.

Spring 2019. “*Fichte y la educación*,” Valencia.

October 4-6, 2018. *X. Kongress der Internationalen J.G. Fichte-Gesellschaft*, Aix-en-Provence.

2018

May 35-27. 2018. *Tagung: Fichtes Entdeckung der Subjektivität III (GWL)*, Rammenau.

April 27-28, 2018. “The Enigma of Fichte’s First Principle(s)”, Leuven, Belgium.

February 27, 2018 Conference of the Japanese Fichte Society, Tokyo.

January 19-21, 2018. *Tagung: Fichtes Entdeckung der Subjektivität II (EM)*, Wittenberg.

2017

May 24-26. Thirteenth Biennial Meeting of the North American Fichte Society, Seoul.

May 19, 2017. *Tagung: Fichtes Entdeckung der Subjektivität I, Rammenau.*

February 14, 2017. *XVI Seminario della rete italianano per la ricerca su Fichte.*

2016

October 2016. Bajo el tema *A filosofia da História e da Cultura em Fichte*, Coimbra.

September 2016. *IV Congreso Internacional ALEF "Fichte en el laberinto del idealismo,"* Buenos Aires.

May 20, 2016. *Tagung: Kritik und Transformation des transzendentalen Denkens*, Rammenau.

September 8, 2015. *IX. Kongress der Internationalen J.G. Fichte-Gesellschaft: Fichte und die Zeit der Bilder*, Madrid.

May 15, 2015. *Tagung: Die Tatsachen des Bewusstseins und das Problem des Unbewussten*, Rammenau.

3. PUBLICATIONS**Editions of Fichte's Works**

J.G. Fichte. *Foundation of the Entire Wissenschaftslehre and Related Writings (1794-95)*. Ed. and trans. by Daniel Breazeale (Oxford: Oxford University Press, paperback August 2022, hardback 2021). [New English translations of *Ueber den Begriff der Wissenschaftslehre*, *Grundlage der gesamten Wissenschaftslehre*, *Grundrisse des Eigentümlichen der Wissenschaftslehre*, first English translation of Lavater's transcription of first five "Zurich Lectures" on *Wissenschaftslehre*.]

J.G. Fichte / F.W.J. Schelling. *Sur l'essence du savant et la philosophie de la nature (1805-1806)*. Présentation, traduction, notes et commentaires par Patrick Cerutti et Quentin Landenne (Paris: Vrin, 2021). [New French translation of *Vorlesungen über das Wesen des Gelehrten* (1805).]

J.G. Fichte. *Contribution to the Correction of the Public's Judgments on the French Revolution*. Ed. and trans. by Jeffrey Church and Anna Marisa Schön. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2021). [First English translation of *Beitrag zur Berichtigung der Urtheile des Publikums über die französische Revolution* (1793).]

J.G. Fichte. *La missione del dotto*, a cura di Elena Alessiato (Napoli-Salerno, Orthotes, 2020). [New Italian translation of *Vorlesungen über die Bestimmung des Gelehrten* (1794).]

J.G. Fichte. *Über das Wesen des Gelehrten* (Interpretationen und Quellen, Band 4), edited by Alfred Denker, Jeffery Kinlaw, Holger Zaborowski (Freiburg i. Br.: Alber, 2020).

J.G. Fichte. *Die späten wissenschaftlichen Vorlesungen IV,1: ›Transzendente Logik I (1812)‹*. Hrsg. von Hans Georg von Manz und Ives Radrizzani. Unter Mitarbeit von Erich Fuchs (frommann-holzboog, 2019).

Forthcoming Editions

J.G. Fichte. *Die späten wissenschaftlichen Vorlesungen IV,2: ›Transzendente Logik II (1812/1813)‹*. Hrsg. von Erich Fuchs, Hans Georg von Manz und Ives Radrizzani. (frommann-holzboog, 2024).

J.G. Fichte. *The Art of Philosophical Seeing: Last Writings, Diaries and Letters (1810-1814)*. Ed. David W. Wood, and trans. David W. Wood and Graham J. Harrison. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2023). [First English translation of a selection of Fichte's last philosophical writings in Berlin from the years 1810-1814.]

J.G. Fichte. *Absolute Knowledge: 1801-1802 Lectures on the Wissenschaftslehre*. Eds. Gabriel Gottlieb, Graham J. Harrison, and David W. Wood (in preparation)

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Journals & Series

Fichte-Studien-Supplementa 30. Fichte and the Americas, edited by María Jimena Solé and Elizabeth Millán Brusslan. Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2023.

<https://brill.com/display/title/63893>

Fichte-Studien 51 (2022). “Das Andere im Wissen.” Edited by Marco Ivaldo, Bryan-Joseph Planhof, Alexander Schnell, Martin Wilmer. Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2022.

<https://brill.com/view/journals/fis/51/1/fis.51.issue-1.xml>

Fichte-Studien 50 (2021). “Das Wissen vom Anderen.” Edited by Marco Ivaldo, Bryan-Joseph Planhof, Jacinto Rivera de Rosales, Alexander Schnell, Martin Wilmer. Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2021.

<https://brill.com/view/journals/fis/50/1-2/fis.50.issue-1-2.xml>

Fichte-Studien 49 (2021). “The Enigma of Fichte’s First Principles / Das Rätsel von Fichtes Grundsätzen,” edited by David W. Wood (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2021). ISBN: 978-90-04-45978-6.

<https://brill.com/edcollbook/title/59923>

Contents: Preface: Fichte’s First Principles and the Total System of the Wissenschaftslehre” (David W. Wood).

Part I. Fichte’s Earliest Reflections on First Principles

“Fichte’s First First Principles, in the Aphorisms on Religion and Deism (1790) and Prior” (Jason M. Yonover). “General Logic and the Foundational Demonstration of the First Principle in Fichte’s Eigene Meditationen and Early Wissenschaftslehre” (David Sommer). “The First Principle of Philosophy in Fichte’s 1794 Aenesidemus Review” (Elise Frketich).

Part II. The First Principles of the Wissenschaftslehre

“Why Is the First Principle of the Grundlage der gesamten Wissenschaftslehre Foundational for Fichte’s Entire Wissenschaftslehre?” (Alexander Schnell). “Difference within Identity? Fichte’s Reevaluation of the First Principle of Philosophy in § 5 of the Foundation of the Entire Wissenschaftslehre” (Philipp Schwab). “‘The Subsequent Delivery of the Deduction’ – Fichte’s Transformation of Kant’s Deduction of the Categories” (Gesa Wellmann). “From Being Reflexive to Absolute Reflection – Fichte’s Original Insight Reconsidered” (Stefan Schick). “The First Principle of the Wissenschaftslehre and the Logical Principle of Identity” (Esma Kayar). “Facticity and Genesis: Tracking Fichte’s Method in the Berlin Wissenschaftslehre” (G. Anthony

Bruno). “‘Knowledge is Existence’ – Ascent to the First Principle in Fichte’s 1805 Erlangen Wissenschaftslehre” (Robert G. Seymour).

Part III. The First Principles of the Sub-Disciplines of the Wissenschaftslehre

‘The Monogram of the ‘Sweet Songstress of the Night’: The Hovering of the Imagination as the First Principle of Fichte’s Aesthetics” (Laure Cahen-Maurel). “Fichte’s First Principle of Right” (Michael Nance). “I-Hood as the Speculative Ground of Fichte’s Real Ethics” (Kienhow Goh). “The Role of First Principles in Fichte’s Philosophy of History” (Pavel Reichl). “Circumvolutions of the Mind: Fichte on First Principles and Transcendental Circuits” (Carlos Zorrilla Piña).

Part IV. Freie Beiträge

“‘Transcendental’ in Kant and Fichte: A Conceptual Shift and Its Philosophical Meaning” (Elena Ficara). “Fichtes Kolleg ‘Moral für Gelehrte’ – Jena 1794–1795: Zur Geschichte von „Über Geist und Buchstaben” (Ricardo Barbosa). “Die gelehrte Bildung nach der göttlichen Idee in Über das Wesen des Gelehrten” (Quentin Landenne). “Fichte’s Original Insight Reviewed” (Roberto Horácio Sá Pereira). “Images de l’absolu : Phénoménologie matérielle et phénoménologie fichtéenne” (Frédéric Seyler).

Rezensionen

Luis Felipe Garcia, *La philosophie comme Wissenschaftslehre. Le projet fichtéen d’une nouvelle pratique du savoir*. Olms: Hildesheim 2018 (Reviewed by Antonella Carbone). Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *Die späten wissenschaftlichen Vorlesungen IV, 1: Transzendente Logik 1 (1812)*. Neu herausgegeben von Hans Georg von Manz und Ives Radrizzani. Unter Mitarbeit von Erich Fuchs. Frommann-Holzboog Verlag, Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt, 2019 (Reviewed by Zhu Lei). Thomas Sören Hoffmann (Hrsg.), *Fichtes Geschlossener Handelsstaat. Beiträge zur Erschließung eines Anti-Klassikers*. Duncker & Humblot, Berlin 2018 (Reviewed by Konstantinos Masmanidis).

Fichte-Studien 48 (2020). “Fichtes Bildtheorie im Kontext. Teil I: Entwicklungsgeschichtliche und Systematische Aspekte,” edited by Christian Klotz & Matteo Vincenzo d’Alfonso. (Leiden & Boston: Brill and Rodopi, 2019). ISBN: 878-90-04-39696-8.

<https://brill.com/edcollbook/title/56866>

Contents: “Nachruf auf Wolfgang Janke (8. Januar 1928–5. Juni 2019).”

I. Anschauung, Einbildungskraft und Sprache in Fichtes Bildtheorie.

Silvan Imhof, “Realität durch Einbildungskraft. Fichtes Antwort auf Maimons Skeptizismus in der *Grundlage der gesamten Wissenschaftslehre*,” pp. 3-24; Francisco Prata Gaspar, “Wahrheit und Einbildungskraft: Erklärungsversuch einer Textstelle,” pp. 25–44; Carsten Olk, “Fichtes Intellektualisierung der Anschauung: Die Rolle der anschauungskonstituierenden Einbildungskraft mit einem Blick auf Kants Spätwerk,” pp. 45–66; Philipp Höfele, “Zwischen Selbsttätigkeit und Passivität. Ein Beitrag zur Rolle der Einbildungskraft und des Bildes bei Fichte und Heidegger,” pp. 67–89; Tamás Hankovszky, “‘Die durch das Bild angegebene Regel.’ Die Ersetzung des Schemas durch

das Symbol in der Sprachphilosophie der *Reden an die deutsche Nation*,” pp. 90–108; Giovanni Cogliandro, “Concepts, Images, Determination. Some remarks on the understanding of Transcendental Philosophy by McDowell and Fichte,” pp. 109–31.

II. Fichtes Bildtheorie als Grundlehre der Theorie der Freiheit, der Ethik und der Staatslehre.

Francesca Fantasia, “Bild und Logos bei Fichte. Der Zusammenhang zwischen Sollen und Freiheit mittels der Bildstruktur,” pp. 133–49; Wilhelm G. Jacobs, “Die Freiheit des Absoluten und die seiner Erscheinung,” pp. 150–59; Max Macuzzi, “Wie kann ein Bild frei sein? Wirken und Reflektieren in der Konstruktion des moralischen Bildes in der letzten Philosophie Fichtes,” pp. 160–70; Luc Vincenti, “De l’image-modèle à l’image de Dieu. Le dépassement de l’individu dans la doctrine éthique de Fichte, 1798–1812,” pp. 171–84; Marco Rampazzo, “Le Vorbild comme clef de voûte de l’image et de l’usage de Platon chez Fichte,” pp. 185–203; Michael Lewin, “Der Stachel der Selbsttätigkeit und das Ausschöpfen der Freiheit. Zur Vollständigkeit der fünf Weltansichten beim späten Fichte,” pp. 204–19; Augustin Dumont, “Zur Kontinuität der Trieblehre in der Spätphilosophie J.G. Fichtes. Bemerkungen über die ‘unendliche Modifikabilität der Freiheit,’” pp. 220–39; Luciano Cosico, “Image and Freedom in Fichte’s Doctrine of the State of 1813,” pp. 240–58.

III. Aufklärung, Erziehung, Kunst und Religion in Fichtes Bildtheorie.

Sebastian Schwenzfeuer, “Über den Gelehrten als Erzieher der Menschheit. Fichte im Kontext der Bildungsdiskurse bei Kant und Schiller,” pp. 261–76; Jakub Klockołowicz, “Fichtes Begriff der Aufklärung als der wachsenden Klarheit der Bilder. Das Konzept des Bildes und seine praktisch-politischen Implikationen,” pp. 277–92; Susan Judith Hoffmann, “Breathing Life into Primal Beauty: The Imagination at work in Fichte,” pp. 293–304; Eduardo Ralickas, “La Doctrine de la science à l’usage des artistes,” pp. 305–26; Jürgen Stahl, “Zeit der Bilder und Bilder der Zeit – Fichtes Religionskritik in ideologiekritischer Perspektive,” pp. 327–57; Elena Alessiato, “Fichte im Wilhelminischen Reich: Idealisiertes Bild, patriotische Vorbildhaftigkeit und nationale Bildung,” pp. 358–86.

IV. Mit dem Fichte-Preis für junge Forscher ausgezeichnete Beiträge.

Jelscha Schmid, “‘Es ist so, weil ich es so mache.’ Fichtes Methode der Konstruktion,” pp. 389–412; Harald Münster, “Bedeutung als Problem: Fichtes Beitrag zur Begründung einer Philosophie der Sprache,” pp. 413–33; Marco Dozzi, “The Problem of the Unconscious in Fichte’s Later Jena Wissenschaftslehre,” pp. 434–56.

Rezensionen.

Gérard Raulet, Elena Alessiato: *Lo spirito e la maschera. La ricezione politica di Fichte in Germania nel tempo della Prima Guerra Mondiale*, pp. 459–61; Martin Wilmer, Patrick Tschirner: *Totalität und Dialektik: Johann Gottlieb Fichtes späte Wissenschaftslehre oder die lebendige Existenz des Absoluten als sich selbst bildendes Bild*, pp. 462–70; Laurent Guyot, pp. 471–76.

Revista de Estud(i)os sobre Fichte 23 (2021), eds. Francisco Prata Gaspar, Thiago Suman Santoro y Christian Klotz.

<https://journals.openedition.org/ref/1827>

Contents: “O Insight Originário de Fichte. O ensaio pioneiro de Dieter Henrich meio século depois” (Günter Zöllner); “O duplo insight de Fichte” (Suzanne Dürr); “Fichte sobre a estrutura do Eu. Uma investigação crítica acerca da interpretação de Dieter Henrich do “Ensaio de uma nova exposição da doutrina da ciência”, de Fichte” (Stefan Lang); “A segunda fórmula da autoconsciência: o ‘como’ da consciência de si na Doutrina da Ciência nova methodo” (Christian Klotz).

Archives de Philosophie 83 /1 (2020): “Fichte et le langage,” edited by Ives Radrizzani.

<https://www.cairn.info/revue-archives-de-philosophie-2020-1-page-7.htm>

Contents: Ives Radrizzani, “Fiche et le langage. Avant-propos;” Isabelle Thomas Fogiel, “Une philosophie du dire (*Sagen*) comme faire (*Tun*);” Ives Radrizzani, “La philosophie du langage dans l’architectonique du système fichtéen;” Marco Ivaldo, “La transcendantalité du langage;” Marc Maeschalck, “Langage et protogenèse des normes chez Fichte;” Max Marcuzzi, “Le vouloir dire et la référence selon Fichte;” Luis Fellipe Garcia, “Fichte et la puissante impuissance du langage;” Antonella Carbone, “Le langage dans la Logique transcendantale de 1812;” Augustin Dumont, “Fichte et le langage. Le « Lyrisme transcendantal » contre la dissolution;” Sébastien Roman, “L’Antiquité et la culture humaniste au XVIe siècle : étude comparative de Machiavel et de La Boétie;” Julia Christ, “Totalité et symptôme ou comment lire la « société ».”

Handbooks

The Bloomsbury Handbook of Fichte, ed. Marina F. Bykova (London / New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020, paperback 2022), xi + 576pp.

Contents: “Introduction: About the Volume, Its Content, and Structure” (Marina F. Bykova).

Part I: Fichte in Context and His Path to Transcendental Idealism “Fichte’s Life and Rise to Philosophical Prominence” (Marina F. Bykova); “Fichte, Kant, and the Copernican Revolution” (Tom Rockmore); “Fichte’s Reception of Kant’s *Critique of Judgement*,” (Sebastian Gardner).

Part II: The Jena Period (1794-1799) and the Jena System of Transcendental Idealism “The Generation of Intuition and Representation through the Productive Imagination in the 1794/1795 *Grundlage*” (Violetta L. Waibel); “Freedom’s Body: Fichte’s Account of Nature” (Michael G. Vater); “Fichte’s Philosophy of Right” (Gabriel Gottlieb); “Fichte’s Ethical Theory” (Allen W. Wood); “The Development of Fichte’s Philosophy of Religion” (Benjamin D. Crowe)

Part III: The Berlin Period (1800-1814) and the Systematic Development of the Transcendental Philosophy

“Fichte’s Meditations: The Practical Reality of the ‘Real World’ in *The Vocation of Man*” (Matthew C. Altman); “The Transcendental Spinozism of Fichte’s 1804 *Wissenschaftslehre*” (George Di Giovanni); “Down by Law: On the Structure of Fichte’s 1805 *Wissenschaftslehre*” (Emiliano Acosta); “Systematic and Doctrinal Differences in Fichte’s Early and Late *Wissenschaftslehre*: From the I as Deed-Act to God as Schema” (Rainer Schäfer); “Fichte’s Cosmopolitan Nationalism” (David James); “Freedom, Right, and Law. Fichte’s Late Political Philosophy” (Günter Zöller); “Fichte’s Philosophy of History” (Ives Radrizzani); Fichte’s Conception of *Bildung* and His Proposal of University Reform” (Marina Bykova).

Part IV: Substantive and Interpretative Questions and Key Concepts

“*Wissenschaftslehre*” (Emiliano Acosta); “Fichte’s First Principle: Self-Positing and Gambit Normativity” (Wayne M. Martin); “The Three Basic Principles (*drei Grundsätze*)” (Steven H. Hoeltzel); “Transcendental Method” (Halla Kim); “Fact/Act (*Tathandlung*)” (Halla Kim); “*Anstoß* and *Aufforderung* (‘Check’ and ‘Summons’)” (Steven H. Hoeltzel); “The Ambivalence of Language” (Ives Radrizzani); “Intellectual Intuition” (C. Jeffery Kinlaw); “Fichte and Philosophy of Mind” (C. Jeffery Kinlaw); “Freedom” (Kienhow Goh); “Drive (*der Trieb*)” (Kienhow Goh); “Resistance (*Widerstehende*)” (Mário Jorge de Carvalho); “‘I,’ ‘You,’ and ‘We.’ Intersubjectivity, Recognition, and Summons” (Mário Jorge de Carvalho); “Deduction of Right” (James A. Clarke); “Separation of Right from Morality” (James A. Clarke); “Are There Any Moral Rights For Fichte?” (Nedim Nomer);

Part V: The Reception and Influence of Fichte’s Philosophy

“Fichte and the Emergence of Early German Romanticism (Elizabeth Millán Brusslan); “Fichte’s Response to Hegel in the Late *Wissenschaftslehre*” (Faustino Fabbianelli); “Fichte and Phenomenology” (Virginia López Domínguez); “Freedom and the Problem of Others: Fichte and Sartre on Human Freedom and Its Conditions” (Arnold L. Farr); “The Thought of a Principle: Rödl’s Fichteanism” (G. Anthony Bruno); “Fichte and the Contemporary Debate about Speculative Realism” (Isabelle Thomas-Fogiel).

Part VI: Timeline and Chronology

“Notable Dates in Fichte’s Life”; “Timeline of Fichte’s Publications and Lectures.”

The Palgrave Fichte Handbook, ed. Steven Hoeltzel. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019. 550 pp. Cloth, \$135. ISBN: 978-3030265076.

Contents: Steven Hoeltzel, “Introduction: Fichte’s Post-Kantian Project,” pp. 1-29; Yolanda Estes, “Fichte’s Life and Philosophical Trajectory,” pp. 33-55; Günter Zöller, “The Precursor as Rival: Fichte in Relation to Kant,” pp. 57-74; Andreas Schmidt, “Fichte, German Idealism, and the Parameters of Systematic Philosophy,” pp. 75-93; Halla Kim, “Fichte on the Standpoint of Philosophy and the Standpoint of Ordinary Life,” pp. 97-116; Isabelle Thomas-Fogiel, “Reflection, Metaphilosophy, and Logic of Action in the Science of Knowledge,” pp. 117-137; Kienhow Goh, “Fichte’s Anti-

Dogmatism and the Autonomy of Reason,” pp. 139-160; Jeffery C. Kinlaw, “Knowledge and Action: Self-Positing, I-Hood, and the Centrality of the Striving Doctrine,” pp. 163-87; Steven Hoetzel, “Fichte’s Account of Reason and Rational Normativity,” pp. 189-212; Gabriel Gottlieb, “Fichte’s Relational I: *Anstoß* and *Aufforderung*,” pp. 213-35; Owen Ware, “Fichte’s Deduction of the Moral Law,” pp. 239-56; Paul Guyer, “Freedom as an End in Itself: Fichte on Ethical Duties,” pp. 257-83; Wayne Martin, “Fichte on Freedom,” pp. 285-306; Nedim Nomer, “Fichte on Property Rights and Coercion,” pp. 309-28; James A. Clarke, “Fichte’s Theory of the State in the Foundations of Natural Right,” pp. 329-51; David James, “Fichte’s Concept of the Nation,” pp. 353-72; Angelica Nuzzo, “Fichte’s Philosophy of History: Between a priori Foundation and Material Development,” pp. 373-94; Benjamin D. Crowe, “Giving Shape to the Shapeless: Divine Incomprehensibility, Moral Knowledge, and Symbolic Representation,” pp. 397-420; Matthew C. Altman, “The Letter and the Spirit: Kant’s Metaphysics and Fichte’s Epistemology,” pp. 421-41; Markus Gabriel, “Transcendental Ontology in Fichte’s *Wissenschaftslehre* of 1804,” pp. 443-60; Michael Stevenson, “Heidegger’s Modest Fichteanism,” pp. 463-84; Cynthia D. Coe, “Fichte, Sartre, and Levinas on the Problem with the Problem of Other Minds,” pp. 485-506; Michihito Yoshime, “Fichtean Selfhood and Contemporary Philosophy of Language: The Case of Transcendental Pragmatics,” pp. 507-29; Steven Hoeltzel, “Conclusion: Complexity, Unity, Infinity,” pp. 531-34.

Books

David James. *Property and its Forms in Classical German Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023).

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4. DISSERTATIONS

Matthew Nini, "J.G. Fichte's Comprehensive Idea of Philosophy in the Middle Period 1804-1806" McGill University, Montreal, Canada [Degree awarded, 7/2022]

Rory Lawrence Phillips. "Fichte's Theory of Free Will", University College London, U.K. [Degree awarded, 10/20]

Antonella Carbone. “Sprachlehre and System: Reflections on Language in the Philosophy of J.G. Fichte.” San Raffaele University/LMU Munich (co-tutelle). [Degree awarded, 09/20]

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