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NOTE DE LA RÉDACTION

Fichte and Kant (II)

The preliminary versions of the papers that are now being published in this volume of REsF were all presented at a meeting of the North American Fichte Society in Seoul, South Korea in June 2017. The purpose of the meeting was to fill a gap in Fichte research. The increased attention to German idealism in recent years is a by-product of factors in the discussion, including the change in the debate as Heidegger recedes, the Frankfurt School and Marxism in general, but not Marx, attract increasingly less attention, and phenomenology matures. These and other changes create "space" so to speak for a qualified return to German idealism, including Fichte.

Though it is well known that Fichte is a Kantian, what that means, what that means to Kant, what that means to Fichte and what that means to the different themes that both bring them together and keep them apart is only rarely studied in depth, rarely discussed beyond reference to Fichte's claim, perhaps less extreme than it seems, to understand the critical philosophy better than its author.

Fichte belongs chronologically and conceptually to German idealism, one of the two great moments in the history of Western philosophy. Though German idealism is slowly now in the process of coming back into fashion, we cannot say that idealism in all its forms, including German idealism, is at present either well or widely known. There are few philosophers active today who are willing to describe themselves as idealists. German idealism begins with Leibniz, if he is an idealist, or at least no later than Kant. This tendency includes Kant, Fichte, Schelling and Hegel. When Hegel died a light went out on one of the most interesting, richest but also most difficult philosophical tendencies. Few philosophers active today are knowledgeable about, much less able to discuss in detail either German idealism or idealism.

We live in a time when Fichte is an extremely influential author, according to some observers even the most influential thinker in the last two centuries. He is, to begin with, influential in the early reception of the critical philosophy. When the Critique of Pure Reason appeared, Kant's early readers were confronted with a massive and very difficult text that numerous observers implausibly each claimed to be the only person to understand. Jacobi, Kant's contemporary, famously thought that Kant's position was inconsistent, notably with respect to the key notion of the thing in itself. It should not be overlooked that the young Schelling and the young Hegel read Kant through Fichte's eyes. According to Hegel, Kant, who rejects dogmatism, is himself as dogmatist since he merely asserts but fails to deduce the categories initially

deduced by Fichte. Though Reinhold is the first contemporary to attempt to reconstruct the critical philosophy, Hegel describes him as the leading non-philosopher of the age.

The papers you are about to read all throw light, in different ways, on Fichte's relation to Kant, hence on both thinkers as well as German idealism and some of the basic problems of philosophy itself. In "Biology and ontology: Kant, Fichte, and the uses of natural history", Michael Steinberg explores the similarities and differences between Kant and Fichte's views on biology, paying special attention to the function and interpretation of the *Bildungstrieb* in both philosophers. Halla Kim's "Kant and Fichte on Belief and Knowledge" offers a very interesting analysis of the practical and ontological nuances that the (originally Kantian) concept of belief acquires in Fichte's philosophy. In his "The Problem of können", Michihito Yoshime examines the difficulties in translating the well-known first sentence of KrV §16 and the differences between Kant's "I think" and Fichte's I. Kienhow Goh's "The Hidden Moral Teleology in Fichte's *System of Ethics*" is an investigation on the function of moral law as a cosmic principle in Fichte's *System of Ethics* (SE). In "The Imagination in Kant and Fichte", Virginia López-Domínguez focusses on the radical change that Kant produces in modern philosophy with his new conception of imagination as well as on the differences and similarities between Kant and Fichte's concept of imagination.

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SOMMAIRE

Artículos/Artigos

Reseñas/Recensões

Artículos/Artigos

Biology and ontology: Kant, Fichte, and the uses of natural history

Michael Steinberg

1 Fichte presents himself as a Kantian, as continuing and developing Kant's transcendental philosophy. Yet at the same time he boasts of presenting something absolutely new, the first philosophy of seeing, the first body of thought which is capable of grasping activity rather than static entities, something so new that it has to have a novel and unique name—*Wissenschaftslehre*, not philosophy.

2 These claims are not at all incompatible, however, and for Fichte they are in fact the same, because he came to believe—not without justification—that Kant's project was at odds with Kant's way of philosophizing. The critical philosophy could be carried forward only through a radical transformation.

3 I cannot hope to justify such a generalization in a short paper. What I can do is unpack the similarities and differences that are wound around a single, seemingly tangential subject: the two philosophers' arguments from biology.

4 The most extensive discussions of biology in their work both came in the last decade of the eighteenth century, in Kant's *Critique of Judgment* and in Fichte's *System of Ethics* and *Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo*. On first reading the accounts appear extraordinarily similar, and if one encountered them in extracts it might even be hard to tell them apart. For both men the distinctive characteristic of living organisms is their self-perpetuating activity, directed to maintaining their internal structure and thus their continued viability. Their form is a product of their actions and their actions are products of their form, so living beings are both the cause and effect of themselves. [1] Both also portray the natural world as an interlocking complex of reciprocal and apparently purposeful activity which binds separate and discrete organisms into a biological system. This should not be a surprise, for they were drawing on ideas that were as dominant in the late eighteenth century as neuroscience or evolutionary biology are today. There had been a significant shift in Kant's day towards theories that "vitalized

nature," and with this came a strong interest in self-organization and self-generation as natural properties. [2] That shift has often been interpreted as a critical or even anti-rationalist responses to a mechanistic bias in Enlightenment thought, but as Jennifer Riskin has recently reminded us, the mechanism of the eighteenth century was less marked off from notions of intentionality and even consciousness than is twenty-first century physicalism. [3] The fascination with automata and the later craze for Mesmer show mechanism and purposefulness intermingling, and to think of man as a machine is to admit the possibility that machines, in turn, might possess agency and awareness.

5 But the two philosophers begin to diverge as they move forward. Both invoke the notion of a formative drive that guides and impels self-organization, the *Bildungstrieb* that features prominently in the writing of Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, Kant, though, praises Blumenbach not so much for his ideas as for his caution in applying them, and interprets the drive as nothing more than the "ability of an organized body to take on ... organization." [4] Fichte, on the other hand, characterizes the *Bildungstrieb* as "a drive to form or shape or to cultivate and ... a drive to allow oneself to be formed or shaped or cultivated." [5] It is the distributed activity of the entire system of nature, exhibited both in self-forming and self-maintaining organic wholes and in their reciprocal interactions.

6 There is a far more obvious way in which the two philosophers differ, though. Hardly anything seems less Kantian than a discussion of biology, and biological drives at that, in a *System of Ethics.* The moral law flies in the face of all inclination, and what are those inclinations but the promptings of our nature as physical organisms? From a Kantian perspective it is hard to see how biology could help us comprehend or comply with a law that is grounded in something utterly apart from our physical being. By incorporating it into his ethical treatise, though, Fichte seems to be moving in just that direction.

7 And what role biology plays for Kant is almost equally problematic. As John Zammito, in particular, has shown, the *Critique of Judgment* is something of a palimpsest. [6] Kant's emphasis if not his position changed repeatedly during its composition, and its different layers are not always easy to reconcile. The third critique was meant to complete the critical philosophy, and of course Kant had no need of a fourth; yet how exactly it accomplishes this end is still debated. Worse yet, Kant wrote two introductions to the work and in both he explained his aims, yet those introductions have quite different emphases and focus on different problems.

8 Both, however, shed light on his ambitions. In the first, which has a quasi-epistemological focus, Kant explains that the work aims to sanction, though

merely as a regulative idea, the concept "that [nature's] arrangement conforms to the ability we have to subsume the particular laws, which are given, to more universal laws, which are not given." [7] We may proceed as if nature were amenable to the systematization of rational thought and theorize as if our theories line up with the underlying order of things, although we cannot assert that homology as a fact.

9 Kant's reserve, though, is slightly disingenuous. Paul Franks has recently argued that the entirety of his critical philosophy responds to the lack of any ultimate grounding to the empirical, which Kant resolves by asserting two orders of explanation and then showing the dependence of the ungrounded order on a supersensual order which *is* grounded and which has its own, non-theoretical claim to validity. [8] Interpreters and critics from Jacobi on to the present have seen that this solution depends on Kant's ability to show that these two orders are related; as Kant himself wrote in the famous letter to Marcus Herz:

> I had said [in the *Inaugural Dissertation*]: The sensuous representations present things as they appear, the intellectual representations present them as they are. But by what means are these things given to us, if not by the way in which they affect us? And if such intellectual representations depend on our inner activity, whence comes the agreement that they are supposed to have with objects—objects that are nevertheless not produced thereby? And the axioms of pure reason concerning these objects—how do they agree with these objects, since the agreement has not been reached with the aid of experience? [9]

Kant calls this "the key to the whole secret of hitherto still obscure metaphysics..... What is the ground of the relation of that in us which we call 'representation' to the object?" [10]

10 Theoretical reason is reliable as an inquiry into phenomena, so much so that we can agree that it will continue to guide us through all possible experience. But experience of what? If we know nothing but phenomena, how can we know that we are not simply trapped within a compellingly consistent delusion? The first introduction shows that the *Critique of Judgment* addresses this question, and indeed it does so more comprehensively than Kant's earlier attempts, incorporating biology in a far more subtle way than he did in the relatively straightforward argument from design found in the first Critique's Canon of Pure Reason. [11]

11 In that argument Kant repeatedly invokes teleology. Yet it is not teleology itself which suggests this solution; it is our inability to decide between mechanistic and teleological explanations of organic life. Because we find ourselves with two valid lines of inquiry, we have reason to think that we are interpreting something about which both interpretations are simultaneously true. The very incompatibility of the claims which nature seems to force on

us suggests an unknowable perspective which guarantees a harmony or at least a resonance between the order of our thoughts and the noumenal order. As Kant writes, it is through the need for teleological explanation "that reason has a certain suspicion, or that nature gives us a hint, as it were, that if we use the concept of final causes we could perhaps reach beyond nature and connect nature itself to the highest point in the series of causes." [12]

12 The rich suggestibility of this approach is most evident in sections 76 and 77 of the Critique, which speak of the intuitive intellect or *intellectus archtypi.* This notion had stood at the apex of the critical philosophy at least since the 1772 letter to Herz. For such an intellect, cognition of objects is at the same time their actualization. [13] There are no mediating concepts for the simple reason that there is no room for them; the possible and the actual are one and the same, and this intellect is thus all-productive as well as all-knowing. [14]

13 But the distinction between noumenon and phenomenon is put in danger if we merely bring perceptual form to content which proceeds directly from the *intellectus archtypi*. The pantheistic implications of the idea that the world is a realization of the divine intellect would be evident even to a lesser thinker than Kant writing at a time other than at the height of the pantheism controversy. Kant is thus pulled in two directions at once. He cannot do without biological purposiveness, but he cannot give teleology any constitutive role without destroying the very argument he is trying to build. He cannot do without the intuitive intellect, but he cannot grant that we could have any immediate apprehension of that intellect's thoughts even though these might seem to be laid out before our eyes as the objects of perception. It is not for nothing, then, that some have interpreted the *Critique of Judgment* as a text aimed at limiting the damage that theories like Blumenbach's could cause. This risk was clearly evident in Herder, and it is widely granted that significant aspects of Kant's treatment of biology were developed as a critique of his former pupil.

14 That critique is strongest in sections 72 and 73, in which Kant outlines four possible "systems concerning the purposiveness of nature." He dismisses all four; none of them "accomplishes what it alleges to accomplish." But Kant's dismissal of the third system, the notion of an immanent purposiveness in nature which he labels hylozoism, is especially and tellingly peremptory.

15 Kant gives two reasons to reject hylozoism. He dismisses the possibility that matter itself might be alive with a wave of his hands:

> [W]e cannot even think of living matter as possible. (The concept of it involves a contradiction, since the essential character of matter is lifelessness, *inertia*.) [15]

This is hardly a strong argument. We may well have a *concept* of matter as lifeless and we may even be compelled to think of it that way, but this says nothing about what matter is in itself or even if there is something to which the concept of "matter" properly applies.

16 Kant also rejects hylozoism because, he insists, any appeal to it is circular. Yet this is not a defect if the circle is a virtuous rather than a vicious one. [16] What is more, one can see the entirety of the critical philosophy as itself a circular argument that "make[s] trial whether we may not have more success in the tasks of metaphysics, if we suppose that objects must conform to our knowledge." [17] Kant does not explain why we cannot make a similar trial of hylozoism.

17 He does not do this, of course, and of the four accounts Kant prefers theism. He begins with faint praise: it too fails, but it does so less than the others. But he soon leaves this caution behind. If this postulate of an intelligent cause, he tells us, "is perfectly satisfactory for all speculative and practical uses of our reason from every *human* point of view, then indeed I would like to know just what we have lost if we cannot also prove it valid for higher beings, i.e., prove it from pure objective bases (to which unfortunately our powers do not extend)." [18]

18 Yet this strong and uncharacteristically direct conclusion depends crucially on the rejection of hylozoism. It is thus resting on a very slim reed indeed. It is hard not to conclude that something else is going on here, that Kant's insistence that theism "is based on an indispensable [and] necessary maxim of our judgment" [19] is underdetermined by the arguments presented and correspondingly overdetermined by considerations which he does not acknowledge.

19 I would suggest that what is at work here is nothing inherent in the logic of the critical project in itself, nor is it something derived from Kant's need to maintain the independence of the ethical subject—he does not make that argument in the third Critique and to do so would reduce human individuality to the status of a postulate. It is an ontology to which Kant adhered throughout his career, formed in dialogue with Leibniz and Wolff and passing without essential revision into the critical philosophy. Kant consistently envisioned a universe of real individuals with intrinsic properties, and he saw those individuals as engaged in real interactions, made possible by and carried out in accordance with the inherent properties of a unitary ground.

20 We find this in his first major philosophical work, the "New Exposition of the First Principles of Metaphysical Knowledge" of 1755, whose Proposition XIII reads:

> Finite substances by their mere existence are unrelated and are obviously not involved in interaction (*commercio*) except to the extent that they are maintained by the common principle of their existence, namely, the divine intellect, in a systematic pattern based on mutual relations. [20]

Kant's demonstration of this proposition concludes:

> [T]o the extent that single substances have an existence independent of others and there is no place for their mutual connections, the least that follow is that it is certainly not the lot of finite things to be the [creative] causes of other substances. Nevertheless, since all things are found assembled in an all-embracing mutual connection, it must be admitted that this relationship depends on mutual participation in a common cause, namely God, the general principle of existence. But as a matter of fact, the mutual relations of these things do not follow simply because God founded their existence; it follows only inasmuch as the schema of the divine intellect which provides for their existence conceives of their existence as correlated and so has established their relationships. [21]

In the "Inaugural Dissertation" of 1770, as well, Kant argues that the principle of the intelligible world is what makes it possible "that a plurality of substances should stand in a relation of interaction." [22]

21 A great deal of Kant's thinking changed between 1755 and the first Critique, but Kant did not change his mind about what a proper metaphysics should look like; while the scope of possible metaphysical knowledge is significantly narrower in the critical philosophy, it is knowledge of the same underlying shape of things. One might even say that the critical philosophy aims at nothing less than the generation of that shape; starting from individual experience it leads us to the confidence that an intelligible world exists, that it grounds and connects the phenomena we experience, and that an unknowable agent has ordained and established both.

22 This is the framework for Kant's practical philosophy, too, which is just as much in need of an ontology as the theoretical philosophy. The *Critique of Practical Reason* had left a fundamental question unanswered which Kant did not address until the *Critique of Judgment,* and even there it is something of a latecomer, appearing explicitly only in the second, published introduction, written after what Zammito terms Kant's "ethical turn." "[I]t must be possible to think of nature as being such that the lawfulness in its forms will harmonize with at least the possibility of [achieving] the purposes that we are to achieve in nature according to the laws of freedom," [23] Kant says. This is his other explanation for the aims of the third Critique, and it demands a much stronger resort to the intelligible. One can imagine a naturalistic explanation for the first homology, but the amenability of nature to ethical transformation is significantly harder to conceive of in naturalistic terms, and in that context Kant's appeal to the divine is perhaps more forgivable. Yet that problem arises only because Kant has always already separated the

realms that he now seeks to unite or at least reconcile.

23 Kant does not reject hylozoism, then, because the arguments in its favor are weak. He cannot accept it because it is inconsistent with his fundamental ontological commitments. It recognizes no truly intrinsic properties, only relational ones. It leaves no separation between inner and outer and between the individual and its environment—which, of course, is where idealism moves, Fichte most decisively.

24 This does not mean that the Kantian distinction between noumenon and phenomenon is lost. What Fichte does is transform Kant, not reject him, and his incorporation of epigenetic biology could only succeed after he had worked that transformation. He could not simply usher in what Kant had kept out; to claim a theoretical grasp of the noumenal from the evidence of biology would indeed betray the critical project entirely, as it arguably does with Herder.

25 Several steps in that transformation may be noted here. First of all, Fichte certainly saw Kant's work as incomplete in that it could not present a unified account of the various faculties of the mind. But Fichte was not merely searching for a more fundamental ground of explanation. He was examining a more fundamental *subject*. If Kant starts with the question of how our inner representations can refer to external objects, Fichte asks how the separation of inner representations from external objects arises in the first place.

26 Kant's ontology simply assumes the existence of a subject and a realm of objects, and from the perspective of the *Wissenschaftslehre* it therefore starts too late. It takes its starting point as a given rather than as the problem that it is. This point is made as concisely as possible in Fichte's notes for his 1812 *Lectures on the Theory of Ethics:* Kant "already possesses consciousness as something that is familiar. Hence, mere facticity. We do not [proceed] this way," says Fichte. "[We] allow the *I* and consciousness to first come into being." [24]

27 This facticity obscures the roots of self-consciousness and the I, and not even Kant's genius can cross the boundary lines drawn in accordance with his ontological assumptions. But it also leaves us with the appearance of a fixed point around which our theories can proceed, and as Fichte wrote at the height of the atheism controversy, "something stable, at rest, and dead can by no means enter the domain of what *I* call philosophy, within which all is act, motion, and life. This philosophy discovers nothing; instead, it allows everything to arise before its eyes." [25]

28 And what arises before the philosopher's eyes is the noumenal itself, but as activity rather than object. This is another step in Fichte's transformation of the critical philosophy. For Kant the noumenal was the supersensible system

of real objects and individuals. For Fichte, on the other hand, the noumenal is not the supersensible itself, as Kant often suggests, [26] but the activity through which the intelligible will—the only true supersensible—manifests as both experience and its objects. As he notes, Kant "calls ... [the noumenal, which lies at the basis of sensible representations] 'something.' But this is not something that possesses being; ... rather [it is] acting." [27]

29 For Kant the relationship between noumena and phenomena is one between archetype and instance and the relationship between our theories and the unknowable that we theorize about is fundamentally mimetic. For Fichte the relationship is different. It is that between process and product—but this statement needs immediate clarification, because product and process are not to be distinguished. To quote again from the *Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo:*

> A noumenon lies at the foundation of appearance. More precisely, the entire world is both an appearance and a noumenon. ... The noumenon and the appearance are one and the same thing, merely viewed from two different sides in consequence of the necessary duality of the mind. [28]

That is, the ceaseless activity of the noumenal and the stable phenomena of ordinary perception are identical. Here, as so often, it is easy to see how much Hegel took from Fichte; the famous image of the "bacchanalian whirl" in the preface to the *Phenomenology* is a poetic expression of the very same thought.

30 As different as Fichte's noumenon is from Kant's, however, it is just as resistant to theoretical comprehension. The necessary condition of self-conscious experience, its articulation into I and not-I, renders every experience into a subjective perception of an objective world. Self-awareness itself imprisons us in the phenomenal, placing us in the quandary summed up by Novalis in an epigram that loses much of its sense and all of its wit in translation, "Wir suchen überall das Unbedingte, und finden immer nur Dinge." [29] Anything that we can think about is eo ipso not the noumenal.

31 For neither Kant nor Fichte is the noumenal completely inaccessible, however, and for both of them it is practical reason that gives access, not theoretical reason. And yet this marks another Fichtean transformation of Kant. For Kant the one point of contact is the fact of freedom under the moral law. It is something known. For Fichte, by contrast, the noumenal is the very movement that the *Wissenschaftslehere* directs us to observe, and it is grasped not through discursive thought but through our own embodied activity. It is something felt. [30]

32 And this brings us, at last, to Fichte's engagement with biology. In some ways its placement in the *System of Ethics* is not as un-Kantian as it might sound. The discussion forms a significant part of the second large division of the

text, which is devoted to a "deduction of the reality and applicability of the principle of morality" and aims to show both "the idea *of what we ought to do*" "and the *substrate in which* we ought to approximate the realization of this idea." [31]

33 This recognizably raises the same issue that Kant addresses in the second introduction to the *Critique of Judgment,* the amenability of the world of experience to ethical transformation. What Fichte does, then, is bring together some of the arguments in Kant's second and third critiques, and there are sound and thoroughly Kantian reasons for integrating them. Where Fichte diverges from Kant is how he resolves this problem. In fact, his transformation dissolves Kant's formulation of the task and constitutes it as a different one.

34 Fichte embraces the epigenetic biology of Blumenbach and shares both the contemporary fascination with self-generation, the inherent irritability and intentionality of matter, and an equally common hydrostatic model of drives. He also interprets the compound notion of the *Bildungstrieb* so that it embraces both the constitution of self-contained organic wholes and the homeostatic maintenance of those organisms through their reciprocal interactions. [32] Fichte thus reads the *Bildungstrieb* as a rendition of the creative activity which unfurls itself as the organized whole of the natural world and as experience itself.

35 Where epigenetic biology gives Kant a hint of an ordering agency at work, then, it gives Fichte a direct insight into the movement of the noumenal. And this is where Fichte has shifted Kant's problem. Kant had to show that the natural world was amenable to the purposes of the moral law, and he could do this only through an off-stage intelligence. Fichte dissolves the fixity of self and world into movement, and having done so he has to show that this movement tends towards the free self-activity of all of its human instantiations. In other words, the moral law must be implicated in into the movement of the drives.

36 This transformation of the problem was carried out, it should be noted, through the steps outlined above. By locating the *Wissenschaftslehre's* inquiry at a point prior to existence of the I Fichte opened the door to conceiving individuals as manifestations of a pre-individual activity. He then identified that activity with the noumenal itself. But Fichte would fall back into Kant's problem and indeed into a quasi-Cartesian dualism if the impetus towards self-activity—freedom—does not ground the noumenal; a drive to freedom that is superadded to the complex of natural drives would stand to those drives as Descartes' mind does to body. What is worse, perhaps, is that we would have no reason to conclude that the ends proper to the one could be

realized through the others.

37 It would require at least another paper to show in sufficient detail how Fichte accomplishes this, so a few signposts will have to suffice. Readers of the *System of Ethics* will recall that the sole guide to the ethical quality of an act is the accompanying feeling, and that this sense of contentment—*Zufriedenheit*—arises from the harmony of the drives accomplished by the act, which fulfills at once the interests of the natural drive and the ends of freedom as conveyed through the pure drive. [33] But this is not a synthesis but a reunification or a realization of an inherent unity. As Fichte writes, "All phenomena of the I rest solely upon the reciprocal interaction of these two drives, which is, properly speaking, only the reciprocal interaction of *one and the same drive with itself.*" [34] It follows, then, that the drive towards absolute self-activity, which is the moral law, must be an aspect of the *Urtrieb.* As everything in existence is a manifestation of that drive, the moral law must therefore be inherent in nature itself. [35]

38 From the ordinary point of view morality is opposed to nature, but this appears to be the case only because we cannot help but constitute nature in opposition to the I. From the transcendental perspective this opposition falls away. What we experience as nature is the product of the same activity that we grasp as the moral law. Both manifest the "one life" that Fichte hymns in the conclusion of *The Vocation of Man.* For Fichte as for Hegel, it is only our way of seeing that blinds us to the fact that the entire world is the revelation of the divine. [36]

39 It is a pity to stop here, because we are at the very heart of the *Wissenschaftslehre* and the source of many of Fichte's most challenging insights. But it should be clear enough by now to see what Fichte's employment of his contemporaries' biological ideas says about the tasks he set himself and where those diverges from Kant's.

40 Kant assumed that perception is a construal of a really existing world which we do not and cannot grasp as it is. In some ill-defined but relevant way, however, the order of those perceptions must line up with the unknowable order of the real. As Kant wrote to Herz, the deepest problem lies in establishing that connection, and Beiser is surely correct to argue that Kant never resolved it to his satisfaction; he was still struggling with it in the *Opus Postumum*. [37] This tension between ontological separation and epistemological resonance accounts for Kant's deep ambivalence towards biological purposiveness; though needed to hint at the connections between phenomenal and noumenal, it must be whisked off stage before it suggests that we know the noumenal directly. It is too easily taken for a theory of what organisms are in themselves or as a revelation of the ends of the divine.

41 For Fichte, on the other hand, biology poses no threat. It cannot produce the mirage of a theoretical grasp of the noumenal realm because the noumenal is not a realm to be mapped out but an activity to be observed and felt. Epigenesis is simply one aspect of the movement through which a unitary Absolute flows forth as both objective phenomena and transcendentally structured subjectivity. In the *Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo* the interweaving of biological purposiveness is thus incorporated into the fundamental syntheses of consciousness, united with our own free acting and thinking in an all-productive and all-embracing reciprocity. [38]

42 In a sense these theories are inversions of one another. In Kant's phenomenal realm individuals vanish in the ceaseless play of causality, while as noumena they subsist and interact through a supersensible ground, their intrinsic properties preserved and coordinated. For Fichte the *noumenal* is the realm of ceaseless activity, and in it there are none but reciprocal relations. [39] Individuality is a phenomenon, existing only within the ordinary perspective, and is to be overcome in willing the moral law; it is only through "the disappearance and annihilation of one's entire individuality that everyone becomes a pure presentation of the moral law in the world of sense and thus becomes a 'pure I.'" [40] We must live not for ourselves but as Reason itself, and ethical life is thus a striving towards the unity—both physical and mental—from which which self-positing emerges but which it sunders and conceals.

43 But much remains that is clearly Kantian. The Copernican Revolution is carried out with a vengeance. The noumenal/phenomenal distinction remains and is invoked to maintain the reality of freedom in the face of the mechanistic determinism of the phenomenal. The universalizability demand of the categorical imperative is not just retained, it is embedded in the very structure of the *Wissenschaftslehre* as a whole; one acts ethically only when one acts in consonance with the inner movement of the whole.

44 Kant's in-itself, conceived of as an order analogous to but distinct from the order of experience, was far from being a necessity of his system. On the contrary, it was too deeply marked by his pre-critical ontological commitments to fit comfortably into a theory that renounced any ambition of describing the intelligible. It also left an irreconcilable tension between a universalistic morality and the presumptive needs of individuals with unique intrinsic properties. Setting Kant's ontology aside thus did more than allow Fichte to incorporate epigenetic biology into his philosophy. It let him develop Kant's fundamental insights with more coherence and rigor than Kant could. [41] It opened the door to a transformation of the noumenon/phenomenon relationship, the recognition that perception and subjectivity emerge together, and the discovery of an ethics that is at once

universal in its demands and solicitous of individual needs. The means were new, but the ends were recognizably Kant's. There is thus some justice to his claim that Fichte was a better Kantian than was Kant himself.

NOTES

1. Kant § 64, 5:370, Pluhar 249.

2. See, e.g., Peter Hanns Reill, *Vitalizing Nature in the Enlightenment.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005.

3. Jennifer Riskin, *The Restless Clock: A History of the Centuries-Long Argument over What Makes Living Things Tick.* Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2016.

4. § 81, 5:424, Pluhar 311. There is a vast literature on the relationship between Kant and Blumenbach, much of it centering on the arguments of Timothy Lenoir and the extremely strong rebuttals by John Zammito (e.g., "The Lenoir Thesis Revisited: Blumenbach and Kant," Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences, 43 [2012], 120-132) and Robert Richards ("Kant and Blumenbach on the Bildungstrieb: A historical misunderstanding," Studies in the History and Philosophy of Biology and the Biomedical Sciences, 31, 11–32 [2000]; *The romantic conception of life*. Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press, 2002). A full bibliography on this subject would be as long as the present paper.

5. IV:121, 116.

6. John Zammito, *The Genesis of Kant's* ***Critique of Judgment***. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.

7. 20: 202, Pluhar 392.

8. Paul Franks, *All or Nothing: Systematicity, Transcendental Arguments, and Skepticism in German Idealism.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005.

9. 10:129 ff., in Kant, *Philosophical Correspondence, 1759-1799,* trans. Zweig. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1967, 72.

10.*Ibid*., 71.

11. A 826, B 854, Kemp-Smith 649: "Purposive unity is ... so important a condition of the application of reason to nature that I cannot ignore it, especially as experience supplies me so richly with examples of it. But I know no other condition under which this unity can supply me with guidance in the investigation of nature, save only the postulate that a supreme intelligence has ordered all things in accordance with the wisest ends. ... Moreover, the outcome of my attempts [in explanation of nature] so frequently confirms the usefulness of this postulate, while nothing decisive can be cited against it, that I am saying much too little if I proceed to declare that I merely hold it as an opinion. Even in this theoretical relation it can be said that I firmly

believe in God."

12. § 72, AK 390, Pluhar 271.

13. As Eckart Förster shows, while its interweaving with a related concept, that of an intuitive understanding of the whole, may blur this point, Kant clearly points toward "a non-sensible, i.e. intuitive intuition for which possibility (thinking) and actuality (being) coincide." Förster, *The Twenty-Five Years of Philosophy.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012, 145.

14. § 76, 5:402, Pluhar 284; § 77 *passim*.

15. § 73, 5:394, Pluhar 276.

16. See, e.g., Franks, *op. Cit*., 293. One can hardly avoid mentioning M. A. Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature.* New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1971.

17. B:xvi, Kemp Smith 22.

18. § 75, 5:400, Pluhar 282.

19. *Ibid.*

20. 1:412-413, Beck 100.

21. 1:413, Beck 100-101.

22. 2: 407, Beck 172.

23. 5:176, Pluhar 15.

24.*Lectures on the Theory of Ethics* (1812), II/13, 328, Crowe 46. The changes in the theory of the summons from the *Foundations of Natural Right* to the *System of Ethics* illuminates just how far-reaching this shift is. The first formulation clearly demands an external source for the summons, so that Fichte is eventually reduced to the unsatisfactory expedient of attributing the primordial summons to the first rational individual to God himself in the Garden of Eden. In the *System of Ethics,* however, the summons is a further moment in self-positing and the summons exists without any mention of a real summoner (SL IV: 219-221, Breazeale 208-210). We ascribe the summons "to an actual being outside of myself," writes Fichte, which is quite different from its actually originating from one. The thrust of the argument, though difficult, appears to be that individual self-ascription of free agency is not conceivable without its embeddedness in a complex of interacting free agencies. In other words, the concept of individual free agency is irrational if it is divorced from the concept of a suprapersonal reason; a rational agent in a cosmos of otherwise inert or blindly resistant objects would be neither rational nor free in the Kantian and Fichtean sense. It would be a god, and like all gods could not be self-conscious. The summoner is thus merely posited; in many ways it operates like the Kantian ought.

25. V: 382, Introductions to the WL, 161.

26. WLnm, 131-132, Breazeale 271-272.

27. WLnm, 113, Breazeale 243

28. WLnm, 222, Breazeale, 440.

29. Blütenstaub § 1

30. Hence the centrality of conscience and the elaborate analysis of states of satisfaction found in SE.

31. SE, IV, 70, Breazeale, 71.

32. See citations in note 4, *supra.*

33. For reasons of clarity and space I am omitting the ethical drive.

34. SE, IV, 130, Breazeale, 125. Fichte's claim that there are no morally neutral acts is simply another aspect of this identity.

35. Fichte's writings around the time of the atheism controversy are clearly relevant on the centrality of the "moral image of the world."

36. Hegel, *Hegel's Logic: Being Part One of the Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences (1830),* trans. Wallace. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1975, 274.

37. In Frederick Beiser, *German Idealism: The Struggle Against Subjectivism, 1781-1801.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002, 182-185.

38. WLnm, 239, Breazeale, 465. Kant's relation problem appears in Fichte in the deeply ambivalent concept of the *Anstoss.*

39. "Individual organized wholes are simply products of the organization of the whole universe," WLnm 238, Breazeale 463.

40. SE, IV, 256, Breazeale, 245.

41. This may well be one reason for the success of his ethical theories over those of Kant during much of the nineteenth century, on which see Michelle Kosch, "Fichtean Kantianism in 19th-Century Ethics", Journal of the History of Philosophy 53:1 (2015), 111-132.

ABSTRACTS

This paper explores the similarities and differences between Kant and Fichte that are wound around a single, seemingly tangential subject: their arguments from biology. The most extensive discussions of biology in their work both came in the last decade of the eighteenth century, in Kant's *Critique of Judgment* and in Fichte's *System of Ethics* and *Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo*. On first reading the accounts appear extraordinarily similar. But the two philosophers begin to diverge as they move forward. Both invoke the notion of a formative drive that guides and impels self-organization, the Bildungstrieb that features prominently in the writing of Blumenbach. Kant, though, praises Blumenbach not so much for his ideas as for his caution in applying them, and interprets the drive as nothing more than the "ability of an organized body to take on ... organization." Fichte, on the other hand, characterizes the Bildungstrieb as "a drive to form or shape or to cultivate and ... a drive to allow oneself to be formed or shaped or cultivated." There is a far more

obvious way in which the two philosophers differ, though. Hardly anything seems less Kantian than a discussion of biology, and biological drives at that, in a System of Ethics. The moral law flies in the face of all inclination, and what are those inclinations but the promptings of our nature as physical organisms? From a Kantian perspective it is hard to see how biology could help us comprehend or comply with a law that is grounded in something utterly apart from our physical being. By incorporating it into his ethical treatise, though, Fichte seems to be moving in just that direction .

INDEX

Keywords: Blumenbach, Bildungstrieb, biology, Kant, Fichte

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Kant and Fichte on Belief and Knowledge

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1 One of the most venerable distinctions in philosophy is the one between knowledge (*episteme*) and belief (*doxa*). Knowledge is one of the noblest/perennial goals of human activities, and it has been typically associated with genuine or scientific cognition that can provide truth whereas belief has been thought to present mere appearances or subjective opinion, usually founded on sense perceptions. In this paper, I will argue that for both Kant and Fichte, this standard view is mistaken, and, as opposed to this mainstream view, both of them present beliefs (*Glaube*) as more important than knowledge. In his lectures on logic, *Reflexionen* and published works, Kant presents knowledge (*Wissen*), opinion (*Meinung*) and belief (*Glaube*) as our three main modes of "ho lding-to-be-true" (*Fürwahrhalten*). Even though Kant admits that knowledge is prior, and superior, to belief as well as opinion in their purely epistemic dimension, Kant nevertheless ends up holding that belief in the more significant sense of a 'postulate,' is more important than knowledge. I will also argue that this is the fundamental point of his well-known doctrine of the primacy of practical reason over theoretical reason. The standard view is also challenged by Fichte's thoroughgoing transformation of our epistemic enterprise or rather its "reversal". For Fichte, belief (*Glaube*) is prior to knowledge (*Wissen*) (GA I/6, 253). Belief has something to do with "a resolution of the will" to admit the validity of knowledge. In this respect, it indicates a "firmness of my confidence," that is "reason's firm and unshakable adherence to a principle" (VM 104). In this sense, it refers to our deepest commitment to and reaffirmation of our nature as pure activity (*Tathandlung*). In other words, belief here is equated with the practical act of the self that expresses its true nature as *Tathandlung*. This is why belief is clearly different from discursive or propositional knowledge. In the course of the paper, I will also show that Kant and Fichte seem to argue for their view in a different way. For Kant, the superiority of belief is presented as part of his architectonic concern, i.e., as

an answer to the question “what may I hope” in the context of his elaborate theory of postulates. For Fichte, the doctrine is presented as part of his transcendental-ontological project of securing the reality of the self and the world from our moral vocation. Or so I shall argue.

1. Kant

2 Since the days of Plato, philosophers have often claimed that knowledge has a kind of privileged status that a mere belief lacks. For Kant, a true science (*Wissenschaft*) must carry universality and necessity where each of its components expresses knowledge and forms a part of a systematic whole. Thus, for Kant, knowledge is universal and necessary. Kant’s transcendental philosophy crucially involves justification of a priori synthetic knowledge. In particular, in his epistemological project, knowledge comes from the joint work of the sensibility and the understanding. The sensibility provides the materials but it is the understanding that provides the a priori forms that can organize and process the materials. But the forms are not derived from without. It is the transcendental subject that is the source of the forms and that can serve as the lawgiver of nature.

3 In practical philosophy, the ethical subject gives law to herself as well. So the ethical subject is a lawgiver. But the two laws that the cognitive subject and the practical subject give are of fundamentally different types. The laws of nature are deterministic causal laws, but the laws of actions are the laws of freedom. The human knowledge is confined to the deterministic natural world but the ethical subject is able to act freely beyond nature. Thus, there arises a discrepancy between nature and freedom. In this way, we can see that there emerges a cleavage between theoretical reason and practical reason in Kant’s project. This is part of the point that is addressed in his question, “what may I hope?” in the Canon of the *Critique of Pure Reason* (B 832 - 847). [1]

4 But how does Kant bridge the gap between nature and freedom? How exactly does Kant find that the physical world can “harmonize with” morality in this way? Is this accomplished by way of divine agency or is this harmony a human task? Kant typically views judgments as intentional actions (*Handlungen*) (A69/B94) engaging with the truth-value of propositions. Thus, for him, a judgment is the basic unit of all our rational activities. For this reason, any propositional attitude is an instance of “holding-to-be-true” (*das Fürwahrhalten*) (A820/B848) (9: 66), constituting a determinate way in which the rational cognitive subject produces an assertable judgment. (Hanna 2013) Holding-to-be-true, in turn, has three basic kinds: (i) “opining” (*Meinen*), (ii)

"scientific knowing" (*Wissen*), and (iii) "believing" (*Glauben*) (A820–831/B848–859).

5 Opining is an epistemic propositional attitude that falls short of "conviction" (*Überzeugung)*, i.e., objective sufficiency for the rational/judging subject, and also falls short of "persuasion" (*Überredung*), i.e., mere subjective sufficiency for the rational/judging subject. Hence opining includes such subjectively and objectively unconvinced attitudes as entertaining a proposition, fiction, supposition, etc.

6 Believing, by contrast, includes subjective sufficiency or persuasion for the rational/judging subject, but also, on its own, falls short of conviction, which includes both subjective sufficiency or persuasion and also objective sufficiency, which itself, in turn, necessarily includes truth in such a way as to rule out any sort of accidental connection between epistemic believing and truth, i.e., cognitive-semantic luck, and for that reason is also called "certainty" (*Gewissheit*). Finally, then, scientific knowing is perfected epistemic believing that has achieved conviction, i.e., objective sufficiency or certainty.

7 Further, Kant divides believing or *Glaube* n into four distinct doxic sub-kinds: (i) epistemic (or scientific-knowing-oriented) belief, (ii) transcendental metaphysical belief, (iii) "pragmatic" (or instrumental) belief, and finally (iv) "moral" (or ethical) belief. (Hanna 2013) [2] For Kant moral belief is a propositional attitude that is epistemically objectively insufficient. But it can be fully and sufficiently justified in practical terms. For it is backed up by the Categorical Imperative and the system of duties it gives rise to, among them the duty of promoting *summum bonum* (the highest good). A moral belief is such that "it is absolutely necessary that something must happen, namely that I fulfill the moral law in all points" (A828/B856). This is why the Kantian moral belief is different from transcendent metaphysical belief, which is unstable because it is bound to generate rationally unavoidable dialectical fallacies and contradictions

8 Despite the many senses of believing or *Glauben*, for Kant, the most important kind of believing is moral belief. A belief in this sense expresses a theoretical proposition that cannot be proven on theoretical grounds alone (CPrR 5: 122–134). It is, however, inextricably bound up with morality and in this respect importantly supported by the latter. Further, even though it is not epistemically proved, i.e., scientifically verified, it is rational as it is bound up with morality. So, unlike an epistemic belief, it cannot be turned into knowledge.

9 Is belief in this practical sense compatible with knowledge? Kant clearly suggests that our knowledge concerns the natural world, i.e., the world of

phenomena but belief in this sense is concerned with the supersensible world. In this respect, belief is not necessarily in conflict with knowledge. More importantly for our purpose, Kant suggests that belief in this sense is superior to knowledge. But why is this the case?

10 In the aftermath of the pantheism controversy that was all the rage in Germany in late 1770's, Kant was also greatly alarmed by Friedrich Jacobi's insistence on the need to rethink the presumed worth of reason. Kant apparently conceived it his mission to sustain the *Aufklärung* in the face of Jacobi's relentless attack. His doctrine of rational faith, already worked out in the "Canon" of the first edition of the Critique, appeared to silence all of Jacobi's doubts. [3] In this regard, he was very sympathetic to Moses Mendelssohn's critique of irrationalism inherent in Jacobi's religiously oriented vision of morality. The latter's attempt was nothing else but an epitome of *Schw ä rmerei* . Indeed, a *Schwärmer* is a mystic who believes that God is known intuitively through a special sense organ. Blindly relying on the mystical perception of the divine, such a fanatic thinks that one should subordinate all of one's thoughts and actions to a single purpose. Private ideas are bound to dominate over the sense of objective reality in fanaticism. [4] Jabobi's fanaticism leads to deception and manipulation. Since Jacobi cannot make use of reason or rational argument he deceives people into believing by inducing fear of reason and enlightenment. In short, *Schw ä rmerei* is madness (*Verr ü ckung*) . It also leads to a conception of God that is despotic. We cannot use reason to evaluate the morality of God's dictates. A threat of religious oppression immediately looming.

11 On the other hand, throughout his career, Kant is not only cautiously opposed to any form of empiricist skepticism which completely discounts knowledge but also he is carefully on guard against all forms of dogmatism. The metaphysical beliefs of dogmatism should not encroach on the realm of knowledge. Thus, he makes every effort to put a limit on all attempts to give objective reality to the ideas of God, freedom and the immortality of the soul. These are merely thinkable but not knowable. Thus, he was not able to side with Mendelssohn's ultra-rationalist trust in the unlimited power of reason. In particular, to Kant's eyes, the traditional rationalist attempt at proving God, and immortality of the soul are no different from the ages-old dogmatic assertions without any foundations.

12 Kant's solution to the conceptual impasse between Jacobi's enthusiasm and Mendelssohn's hyper-rationalism is the doctrine of rational belief. We have beliefs that are rational yet not scientifically proven. Furthermore, these are beliefs that can serve as the bridge between nature and freedom. For, even though these beliefs do not produce knowledge of the sensible world, they concern the supersensible world and its inhabitants. Thus, in a famous

passage in the B-edition Preface to the *Critique of Pure Reason* he says that "I had to deny knowledge (*Wissen*) in order to make room for faith (*Glauben*)" (Bxxx). As opposed to the super-rationalist attempt, he hopes to restrict the scope of epistemic believing and scientific knowing, by means of his Critical epistemology and transcendental idealist metaphysics, in order to make room for fully and sufficiently practically justified moral beliefs or believing. On the other hand, *pace* fanaticism, he wishes to defend these beliefs as rationally anchored in our moral outlook on the world. In this way, moral beliefs are shown to philosophically trump epistemic beliefs (including the best of current sciences) and also doctrinal beliefs (including the traditional transcendent metaphysics). This is known as Kant's doctrine of the primacy of the practical.

13 The rational but moral beliefs here concern what Kant calls "postulates of pure practical reason" (CPrR 5: 122–134), which most notably include the immortality of the soul and the existence of God. In Kant's ethics of belief, the soul's immortality and God's existence are something that we cannot possibly know scientifically, yet at the same time they specify certain morally obligatory ways of living one's life as a rational human agent. For Kant, postulates "give objective reality to the idea of speculative reason *in general* (by means of their reference to what is practical) and justify its holding concepts even the possibility of which it could not otherwise presume to affirm" (5:132). This is because, as theoretical propositions, "postulates are... then presuppositions having a necessarily practical reference," ... albeit "not one demonstrable as such, insofar as [they are] attached inseparably to an a priori unconditionally valid practical law" (5:122). The ideas of God and immortality are not conditions of the moral law but only conditions of the necessary object of a will determined by this law (ibid.). Thus we must assume or take them for granted as "the necessary conditions for observance of the precept [of the will]" (5:132). It is well-known that Kant identifies three postulates for his ethical system: freedom, immortality and the existence of God (ibid.). Most importantly for our purpose, we have the rational need to postulate the existence of God as the one who has the power to bring virtue and happiness into harmony in that next life. This is the only way that fairness will be achieved in the universe with virtue and happiness harmonized. It is important to understand that Kant was not arguing that morality is invalid if God's existence is denied; rather, for Kant, the fact that something is a duty or obligation is sufficient reason to do it. The most fundamental move that Kant makes here is the claim that a reflection on our moral law requires belief in free will, God, and the immortality of the soul. Although we cannot have knowledge of these things, reflection on the moral law leads to an authenticated belief in them, which amounts to a kind of

rational ‘faith.’ Nonetheless, Kant argues that the existence of God must be postulated if the ultimate task of morality, i.e., the highest good (*summum bonum*) as our overall happiness proportional to our virtue was to be carried out. Kant invokes the primacy of practical reason, so that the practical subject may accept the postulates of God, freedom and immortality “as a foreign possession handed over to it” (5:120). This is how Kant links nature and freedom, i.e., the realm of theoretical reason and that of practical reason. In this teleologically contrived scheme of things, Kant seems to suggest that the cognitive subject and the acting subject are one and the same because the principle that unifies the spheres of theoretical and practical reason is the assumption of a wise and benevolent God who has created a teleological world that coheres with morality.

14 Thus, in response to the question “What may I hope?” Kant answers that we human beings may hope that our souls are immortal and that there really is a God who designed the world in accordance with principles of justice. Indeed, this question, as far as its answer depends on claims regarding the consequences of moral righteousness and the existence of God, is “simultaneously practical and theoretical” (A805/B833) and it is answered by religion (AE 9:25). Kant’s account of hope consequently connects his moral philosophy with his views on religion as well as knowledge. He emphasizes the rational potential of such hope, but he also makes clear that rational hope is intimately connected to religious faith, i.e., the belief in God for embodied beings such as us humans.

2. Fichte

15 Now I turn to Fichte’s view of belief and knowledge. Despite his continued engagement with the venerable Kantian transcendental project i n his *Jena* writings including the *System of Ethics* , Fichte clearly feels that it falls far short. In particular, he complains that Kant as well as his contemporaries have failed to ask what our power to act in the world consists in, suggesting that they have merely focused on an analysis of our power to represent the world. If you focus on the power of representations and its product alone, i.e., discursive knowledge, you cannot find your vocation in life. [5] Indeed, as Fichte succinctly shows in Book I of the *Vocation of Man* , it only leads to a soulless universe of determinism. Discursive knowledge cannot explain our freedom and dignity. [6] It is thus completely useless as a way of disclosing the dynamic reality itself. What is more, it also leads to solipsism. [7] Theoretical reason, when dogmatically conceived in the manner of Spinozism, simply cannot explain freedom, the hallmark of our active nature. Fichte thus gives up dependence on realist approaches to knowledge. [8]

16 In Book II of the same work, Fichte goes on to consider theoretical reason now conceived in the Kantian transcendental fashion, and finds that in it we are connected to the world only through our representations and the underlying power thereof. There must be something outside of our representations but we cannot make any progress if we are exclusively preoccupied with them. In other words, the theoretical but transcendental knowledge cannot prove anything outside of itself. Something other than purely cognitive and intellectual resources is needed in order to fully grasp and ground this reality. Thus, the Kantian transcendental idealism (at least without what Fichte later calls "belief" [9] or "conviction") leads to skepticism. If idealism begins and ends in Kant's manner, i.e., with its transcendental-epistemological explanation of the conditions of experience,

> you absolve me of all dependence by transforming me and everything around me on which I might be dependent into nothing. You do away with necessity by doing away with and annihilating all being (VM 60; GA I, 6: 247).
>
> There is no being.... There are images... images which drift by, without there being anything by which they drift ... images which do not represent anything, without meaning and purpose.... All reality is transformed into a fabulous dream, without there being any life the dream is about... (VM 63-64; GA I, 6: 251)

17 Fichte then asks:

> ...what is that lies beyond all representations?" (ibid.)

18 He goes on to answer that there is "something which is more and higher than all knowledge and that contains the final purpose of knowledge within itself" (VM, 84; GA I, 6: 254). This something turns out to be morality. This revelation then ties us to the objective world (ibid). We now must renounce our dependence on mere knowledge and aim at morality. But how can this be?

19 For morality to be possible, Fichte points out, there must be within me "a drive to absolute independent self-activity" (VM 68; GA I, 6: 254) ," which can ultimately serve as "the point where consciousness connects with reality" (VM 68; GA I, 6: 254). We are practical agents first and this means that we can go beyond mere representations because our consciousness is based on a drive to autonomy which is inseparably bound up with our self-consciousness. Furthermore, this consciousness of ourselves reveals itself as a feeling. [10] It is this feeling that can give rise to the objective world only if it is endowed with an objective certainty. But this latter cannot be granted by any sort of logical - deductive knowledge. [11] In fact, as the latter takes its departure from some grounds, it would end up as a necessary link in an infinite chain of causal nexus, as we have seen in VM I (VM 71, 74, and 75 (GA I, 6; 257, 260, and 261). So, the consciousness here must be a consciousness

that assets itself in action, not knowledge of a logical - deductive sort.

20 Fichte then suggests that it is the consciousness of our active agency that can send us beyond mere knowledge, beyond mere representations. [12] However, this consciousness is not forced upon us but immediately stems from our voluntary decision to confront our active agency and our moral vocation at its face. This decision of the will is then what Fichte calls "belief (Gluabe)." [13] It is typically characterized by Fichte as "the voluntary acquiescence in the view that naturally presents itself to us" (VM 71; GA I, 6; 257). In this respect, we can see that the Fichtean belief is connected to the will in the most intimate way. It is a positing of the will that is given through the feeling of the drive to autonomy. Belief, however, is never separated from knowledge, more precisely, from a judgement and motivations. In fact, Fichte says that belief is concerned with a vision of our vocation.

21 It is now clear that among others, freedom and intersubjectivity [14] are needed for a proper analysis of our action as moral beings. In other words, instead of resorting to pure theory, we have to go beyond mere representations and focus on our self and its action. Because we as subjects are agents, we must consider ourselves as independent, namely, as able to think freely and so to act (ibid.) even if no knowledge can be its own foundation and proof (VM, 71; GA I, 6: 257). Where then does this agency take us? It not only gives rise to confidence in our own being as a self and in a real world in which we can act, but agency also implies free choice, and free choice brings with it the question of which acts we ought to perform. Then the question of constraints and duty naturally arise for us. [15]

22 For Fichte, then, theoretical philosophy cannot justify its own fundamental principle, which must be grounded on a practical belief that is not knowledge "but a decision of the will to recognize the validity of knowledge" (VM, 70–73, 76, 79, and 97; GA I, 6, 256–59, 262, 264–65, and 283). It is not mere knowledge but belief that can allow for the validity of knowledge. Our life as a whole depends on belief, "not knowledge, but a decision of the will to admit the validity of knowledge." (VM, 71; GA I, 6: 257). No "knowledge can be its own foundation and proof," because belief "first gives approval to knowledge," and so "every supposed truth, which is to be produced by mere thinking without having its roots in belief, will surely be false and fallacious." (VM 71–72; GA I, 6: 257–58).

23 In this way, transcendental reflection leads us to an objective world. But as there are two modes of agency, i.e., physical agency and moral agency, the objective world must be thought of as divided into two different spheres, the sphere of the sensible world corresponding to our claim to physical agency, and the sphere of the supersensible world corresponding to our moral

agency. [16] Because we are physical agents, we can confront the real world in which that agency is effective. But we are also moral agents and, accordingly, we must also confront a morally ordered world in which one's ethical intentions are similarly effective.

24 We must now transition from the empirical knowledge of material determinism and then from theoretical transcendental idealism to practical transcendental idealism. This also means a transition to the immediate consciousness of self-sufficient freedom. According to Fichte, the moral law requires that the moral subject obey the law without any incentive other than respect for morality. It follows that moral willing is the only goal of the moral subject ' s activity; but since all our knowledge is discursive, the moral subject must think about the act of moral willing as one member in a series of events, which is connected to a final end by an ordering principle. [17]

25 It follows that ultimately all knowledge claims depend on practical motives and beliefs, which are " more and higher than all knowledge. " As Fichte himself puts it,

> This voice [within me] leads me outside of mental representations, out of mere knowledge, to something which ... is more and higher than all knowledge and contains the final purpose of knowledge itself within it. (VM 68; GA I, 6: 254)

26 This difference between belief and knowledge is "no mere verbal distinction but a true deeply founded distinction of the most important consequence." It follows that the practical transcendental idealism that is suitable to our "dignity and vocation" is far from being nihilistic. Because he recognizes that believing involves a volutary acceptance of knowledge (and that knowing involves a free acceptance of belief), which he chooses not because he "must" but because he "wants" to, he apprehends that transcendental idealism is not fatalistic, as F. Jacobi charges. As Fichte puts it,

> [I]t is not these [empty images of things supposedly existing outside ourselves] but the necessary belief in our freedom and strength, in the reality of our acting . . . that justifies all consciousness of a reality existing outside of us—a consciousness which itself is only a belief since it is based on belief, but a belief that necessarily follows from consciousness (VM, 79; GA I,6: 264).

27 The Fichtean ' belief ' is none other than our moral consciousness because the moral law requires the moral subject to obey without disturbing another moral subject's freedom, so the moral subject cannot intend to influence others against their will. In this way we can see that it is not empirical knowledge but t ranscendental act of will that justifies the fundamental principles of discursive knowledge, which is necessary for life. The purpose of life, and so the "final purpose of knowledge," is moral activity (VM, 64–65 and 67–68; GA I, 6, 251–52 and 253–54). Thus, Fichte can be seen here deploying a

transcendental argument, based on the Kantian presupposition that purposive behavior or agency is not the mere production of natural causal necessity, but aims at efficacy in a purely rational order—or the cultivation of will for sake of will. Drive, interest, and purpose are all gradations of rational activity that culminate in morality. Of this Fichte emphatically claims:

> This voluntary acquiescence in the view [that] naturally presents itself to us, because only on this view can we fulfill our vocation, ... first gives approval to knowledge and raises to certainty and conviction what without it would be mere deception. ... All my conviction is only belief; and it proceeds from my disposition. (VM, 71 (GA I/6, 257). [18]

28 Furthermore, the Fichtean belief carries the sense of prudential belief in the efficacy of rational action creating not only a better, but a utopian world: " [T]hat purpose has got to be achieved. Oh, it is achievable in life and through life, for reason commands me to live. It is achievable, for — I am " (VM, 91; BM, 276).

29 Earlier, in the *System of Ethics* , conscience (*Gewissen*) is also offered as the further condition of the possibility of our practical, moral belief (SE IV 147). Here Fichte argues that conscience is "the immediate consciousness of that without which there is no consciousness: the consciousness of our higher nature and of our absolute freedom" (ibid). And this typically takes the form of hearing the voice within ourselves. Conscience, Fichte tells us, is concerned with "our consciousness of our determinate duties" (SE IV: 173), and it produces a "conviction (*ü berzeugung*)" accompanied by the subjective feeling of "certainty (*Gewissheit*)." [19] Indeed, for Fichte, to lead a moral life means to act with consciousness of duty. Thus, morality demands that we make sure to ascertain for ourselves what our duty is (SE IV 153, 163). Thus, to act from duty requires our conviction or belief concerning our duty.

30 Once we are clearly convinced of our determinate duties, we cannot act against them (SE IV:191). When we are convinced about duty, it is wrong not to act in accordance with it. We would be immoral when we obscure and neglect our consciousness of duty (SE IV: 192).

31 Consequently, our moral/practical belief involves an employment of various mental faculties including the original (or ethical) drive, the immediate feeling of conscience (that never errs) and the reflecting power of judgment (that can err). [20] As an individual moral agent, I must examine what my duty is by way of deliberations about my actual life situation, my current beliefs and other agents' views. When I carry this out, I then get the objective conviction about my duty, which is then accompanied by a subjective feeling of certainty. So, when I hear the deliverances of my conscience, I have "the feeling of certainty that there is a compete harmony of my empirical I with the pure I" (SE IV: 169). Conscience for Fichte then is the power of feeling

that plays a critical role in securing moral belief. [21] Fichte claims:

> For the sake of conscience, every human being must judge for himself and must compare his judgment to his own feeling: otherwise he acts immorally and unconscionably (SE IV: 168, 176).

32 In this way, as we make a moral decision, we come to grips with our own vocation, that is to say, we are brought to confront just who we are. By means of conscience, then we become acquainted with ourselves in action. "Only," as Fichte puts it, "through [...] commandments of conscience do truth and reality come into my representations. I cannot refuse them my attention and my obedience without giving up my vocation" (VM 76; GA I, 6: 261). Conscience then expresses the very relation of oneself as a practical agent through which one comes to grips with one's own true nature, not only as mere theoretical reason, that is to say, as cognizer of reality and consciousness, but also and primarily as something that has to be realized in this world through one's acting. In this respect, we are only certain of our own ability and possibility to act through conscience and through our "conception of a moral world" (VM 78; GA I, 6: 264). In other words, conscience entails a special kind of self-relation through which we are acquainted with ourselves and our existence, especially since our knowledge of acting is something about which we are, as Fichte explicitly states, "immediately certain" (VM 79; GA I, 6: 265). Whereas theoretical knowledge can be doubted, knowledge of our own ability to be moral and, therefore, of our own being, cannot be doubted. Of this, Fichte has this to say: "We raise ourselves out of this nothingness and maintain ourselves above this nothingness only through our morality" (ibid.)

33 At a critical juncture in the third section of the *Vocation of Man* , Fichte now boldly declares: "Conscience alone is the root of all truth," or alternatively, "truth," as Fichte puts it, "has its origin in conscience alone" (VM 72; GA I, 6: 268). For it is an absolute presupposition that – in the moment of a drive to act – we must believe that our drive is eo ipso *our* drive (i.e.., it is *me* who acts) and that it is the right and thus, "true," drive. Consequently, according to Fichte, conviction or belief is the necessary condition of a "truth" that is established beyond the distinction between right and wrong, for it constitutes our own consciousness in the moment of action and self-activity. This is to say, it constitutes the truth of ourselves. [22] Put differently, belief creates a basic truth and absolute certainty of a decision in the very moment of the decision, which at this very moment can no longer be "conceived" as wrong, that is, as something that does not belong to the agent. As Fichte puts it,

> Nor can I refuse to *believe* in the reality which [the commandments of conscience] bring along without likewise denying my *vocation*. It is simply

> true, without further testing and justification, it is the first truth and the ground of all other truth and certainty, that I ought to obey that voice (VM 73; GA I, 6: 261, emphasis mine)

34 Because of our active nature, we have a goal, a vocation in life. In other words, we are ineluctably and irreducibly active beings and this immediately implies a moral universe. Why would moral obligations tell us that there is a real world? The point is that the real power of human beings lies in action. At the conceptual climax of *The Vocation of Man,* Fichte suggests that by anchoring his entire system properly on a firm foundation in 'belief,' can he finally dispose of the genuine threat of nihilism and solipsism. This 'belief' involves metaphysical commitment to the reality of a supersensible world populated exclusively by active intelligences. [23] Fichte's implication here is that the system in question concerns belief in our agency and in a realm of external objects in which that agency is efficacious. Our entire life – not just theoretical life but also practical life - then rests on belief.

35 Already two years earlier in " On the Ground of Our Belief in a Divine Government of the Universe" (1798), Fichte suggests that "our conviction concerning our own moral determination or vocation is itself already the result of a moral disposition and is a matter of belief" and goes on to claim that "belief is the element of all certainty" (147; GA I,4: 351). Later, he also adamantly insists that "your vocation is not merely to know but *to act* according to your knowledge" (VM 67; GA I, 6: 253).

36 What then is the content of the commitment shown by the Fichtean belief or for that matter conscience? What is the belief a belief in? First of all, there is no question it refers to our deepest commitment to and reaffirmation of our nature as pure activity. As Fichte puts it, "what grounds all consciousness of a reality outside ourselves is the necessary belief in our freedom and power to act, in our actual acting and in the determinate laws of human acting. Such consciousness is itself only a belief, since it is grounded on a belief [in our own acting], but it is a belief that necessarily follows from the latter belief (VM 79; GA I/6, 265). In this sense, the (necessary) belief is clearly different from discursive or logico-deductive knowledge. For the former has something to do with "a decision of the will" to admit the validity of knowledge. Belief then implies a "firmness of my confidence," that is "reason's firm and unshakable adherence to a principle" (VM 104; GA I, 6: 290).

37 For Fichte, belief also serves as a type of non-theoretical knowledge within his search for an alternative conception of the self. It then expresses an immediate intuition of the self whose nature is not fixed but in constant, dynamic operation. But this also implies that we must believe in the reality of other finite rational beings and the sensible world as well as the

supersensible world, the last of which must include its governing law which Fichte calls "One Infinite Will" (VM 105-107; GA, I/6 291-3).

38 Methodologically, Fichte's practical transcendental idealism purports to give an account for all experience strictly in terms of subjective states and autonomous intellectual activities. As Fichte puts it,

> *[T]he consciousness of a thing outside of us is absolutely nothing more than the product of our own representational capacity....* in what we call knowledge and observation of things we always and ever only know and observe ourselves, and ...in all our consciousness we simply know of nothing other than ourselves and our own determinations. (VM 59; GA I, 6: 246-47)

39 This is also the point that he made clear when he said that "everything which occurs in our mind can be completely explained and comprehended on the basis of the mind itself" early in his career in his "Review of *Aenesidemus* " (EPW, 69; GA I, 1; 15). [24]

40 So, belief directly discovers the reality of meaning, purpose, and value (in the form of the normativity of norms and of the efficacy of purposes). But belief also indirectly reveals the reality of freedom and of 'providence.' This of course means that mechanism and nihilism is false. For on then can norms be genuinely binding, and purposes efficacious. Dogmatic Spinozism only leads to mechanism and determinism. Indeed, in the essay "On the Ground of Our Belief in a Divine Government of the Universe," he also suggests that the "belief must be seen as the core element of a religion that is based in reason alone," especially since, as Fichte puts it, the "true belief" in the moral world order "is constituted by right action." [25]

41 But belief in this peculiar Fichtean sense has another aspect as well– the teleological aspect. As we have learned so far, "belief" refers to the certainty of the actuality of our own self. However, since belief in our morality and conscience establishes the possibility of actions and decisions, we must take the ends of our action and their means to them into account. As Fichte puts it, "c an I will, without having something which I will? No:--this would entirely contradict the nature of my mind" (VM 79; GA I, 6: 265). I am simply to act but if this is the case, then something resulting from this activity must necessarily become a "purpose" for me. For "I ought to carry out the act which is the means to this purpose and only to it" (VM 80; GA I, 6: 266). This, however, does not meant that for Fichte purposes here should drive 'the ought.' Purposes should not drive the will. Rather, the active will 'ought' to create the purpose. It is a short step here to infer that "to every action there is united in my thought, immediately and by the laws of thought itself, a condition of things placed in futurity, to which my action is related as the efficient cause to the effect produced." Accordingly, "the end does not determine the commandment; but, on the contrary, the primitive purport of

the commandment determines the end" (VM 80; GA I, 6: 265) All my thoughts must have a bearing on my actions, and must be capable of being considered as means, however remote, to this end, and "a s I live in obedience to it [viz. conscience, or belief], I live also in the intuition of its purpose; live in the better world which it promises to me" (VM 80-81; GA I, 6: 266).

42 As pointed out earlier, the Fichtean belief clearly does not express ordinary discursive knowledge as it involves a "decision of the will to recognize the validity of knowledge" (VM 71; GA I, 6: 257). Indeed, it is a "voluntary acquiescence in the view which naturally presents itself to us because only on this view can we fulfill our vocation" (Ibid.) However, note this does not mean that belief is arbitrary, imposed, or irrational. It is an activity of reason, albeit without any involvement of such operations as reflection, abstraction or comparison. [26] Following this claim, Fichte also suggests that belief can even quickly turn into "[...] good will [...]" and conscience (which, by the way, are moral/practical concerns) (VM 72; GA I, 6: 258). In a word, "we are all born in belief" (VM 73; GA I, 6: 259). We don't have to blindly act in accordance to a naturalistic/materialist hard determinism, if we are, in fact, free, as posited by Fichte. Our 'vocation' is that we can act in accordance to our will, rather than, by nature (Ibid.).

43 This view of belief on the part of Fichte, however, is not an aberration in his system nor a return to a pre-critical dogmatism but consistent with Fichte's transcendental project. In particular, the Fichtean 'belief' is not a retraction of the transcendental-epistemological approach to explaining experience. [27] "The world," as Fichte puts it in "Our Belief in a Divine Governance," is "nothing more than our own inner acting (*qua* pure intellect), made visible to the senses in accordance with comprehensible laws of reason and limited by incomprehensible boundaries within which we simply find ourselves to be confined (EPW 149, G/A I,4: 353) [i.e., unchosen empirical givens]. Fichte thus continues:

> Granted, the origin of these boundaries is incomprehensible; but, replies practical philosophy.... [n]othing is clearer or more certain than the meaning of these boundaries: They constitute your determinate place in the moral order of things. ("Our Belief in a Divine Governance," ibid.)

44 In an important suggestion, Stephen Hoeltzel argues that the Fichtean 'belief' is subject to critical control by the transcendental-epistemological explanation of experience. Fichte accordingly holds that we posit nothing of a kind not proven to exist by the aforementioned explanation. We have no reason to believe in any other kinds of things. [28] As Fichte claims,

> free spirits alone are real ... an independent, sensible world through which they might act upon each other is quite unthinkable. (VM 109; GA I, 6: 294)

45 The Fichtean ‘’belief’ then comprises metaphysical commitments that complement and contextualize the transcendental-epistemological explanation of experience. These commitments are neither ingredient in, nor deductively entailed by the above explanation. The Fichtean belief thus shows a firm commitment to the reality of extra-subjective entities: specifically, a real ‘world of reason’ (a supersensible order of free, active, interacting intelligences), [29] which appears to the finite subject, as a mechanistic material world. As a result, nihilism, *pace* Jacobi, is false.

46 In conclusion, we may say that the Fichtean ‘belief’ is premised upon an quintessentially transcendental project and, in particular, upon the *Wissenschaftslehre* ’s ‘first principles,’ which articulate the ultimate conditions of the possibility of experience) [30] For ‘belief’ undertakes to capture the primordially projectival nature of the transcendental subject (the finite rational being). In this respect, belief involves an essential commitment to the total rational comprehension and moral perfection of all that it experiences. Here is what Fichte has to say:

> The whole final purpose of reason is its own pure activity.... (VM 99; GA I, 6: 284)

47 A full metaphysical commitment is thus offered by ‘belief’ and the transcendental subject exists in relation to something other than itself, i.e., a ‘higher’ order of being that its sensory states somehow signify, and that its autonomous endeavors can advance or enhance. As Fichte puts it,

> If I am to be able to recognize that obedience as ration, if it really is to be reason which forms my being, and not an extravagant fancy of own invention or dragged in from somewhere or other ... then this obedience [to the imperative of autonomous activity] must have some outcome or serve some purpose. Evidently it does not serve the purpose of the natural earthly world. There must, therefore, be a supernatural world whose purpose it serves. (VM 93; GA I, 6: 278)

48 ‘Belief’ for Fichte then constitutes an irreducible and unobjectionable practical postulation . This is no theoretical proof-no epistemic norms obligate anyone to adopt this view of things. According to Fichte’s transcendental idealism, then the ultimate ethical norm does thus obligate us and norm has as much authority over the rational being as do any and all principles of theoretical rationality.

49 Note that this metaphysical commitment cannot be justified on epistemic grounds, as shown by the discussions so far, but can be vindicated on ethical grounds. In this regard, he inherits the strategy from Kant as the latter is committed to the objective but practical reality of God and other supersensible entities on ethical grounds. This means that for Fichte’s project, ethical norms are no less authoritative for rational beings than are

epistemic ones.

50 While ‘belief’ falls far short of the basic requirements for rational discursive, logical-deductive knowledge, it remains in perfect accord with the ultimate requirements of reason (considered in its purest and most radical forms). In this respect, belief may be equated with intellectual intuition. Faith establishes what Fichte calls the “harmony of all external things with his [man’s] own necessary, practical concepts of them,” which is the “total self-harmony or absolute identity.” It can be realized through the will in fulfilling the final end of man’s perfection. [31]

51 Fichte also points out that Knowledge produced without belief "is surely false and fallacious, since bare and pure knowledge . . . leads only to the insight that we can know nothing. ... I know that such false knowledge never can discover anything other than what by faith it has first put into its premises... ” (VM 72; GA I, 6: 258). In a passage that sounds almost paradoxical, Fichte claims that “we do not act because we know, but we know because we are meant to act. Practical reason is the root of all reason" (VM 79: GA I, 6: 265).

52 In this way, we are able to construct our view of world with the immediate consciousness of ourselves, through our certainty about our conscience and our moral vocation. The vision that Fichte has about the entire world does not leave room for any theoretical or conceptual explanation of the creation of this self-certainty. This is because every explanation is tied back to theoretical reason, but – instead – we will find an element in our consciousness that allows us to see while we are acting.

3. Kant and Fichte

53 From what we have observed, it is clear that Kant and Fichte are united in holding that belief in the practical sense is more important than epistemic knowledge. Further, this importantly stems from their common view that practical reason is more important than theoretical reason. How then is the Fichtean belief different from the Kantian postulates? The motivation for Kant’s theory of postulates, as we have seen, stems partly from Kant’s stake in the pantheism controversy, as well as from his architectonic conception of philosophy, which culminates in his doctrine of the primacy of practical reason over theoretical reason. However, Kant never claims that theoretical reason originates from practical reason. He merely claims that the claims of practical reason take precedents over those of theoretical reason.

54 On the other hand, Fichte’s motivation stems importantly from the ultimate goal of establishing the *Wissenschaftslehre* on the firm foundation of the self’s

pure activity. While Fichte's belief is different from speculative/dogmatic flight of fancy, there is no denying that what c onscience - as our inner voice - delivers, i.e., a conviction, is immediately intuitive, infallible and certain as far as Fichte is concerned. But the Kantian postulates are not of this nature. It may take an 'existential' leap of faith to accept the Kantian postulates but they definitely require heavy rational backing from moral considerations. It is also obvious that Fichtean the feeling of conscience cannot be doubted ("conscience never errs"!) at least its formal aspect is concerned. However, Kantian *Glauben* may be doubted, it seems.

55 Further, the Fichtean belief is not propositional while the Kantian Glauben are propositional. In other words, the Fichtean belief is not discursive whereas the Kantian Glauben are discursive, albeit the latter are "theoretical propositions" inextricably bound up with practical cognition. We can also point out that the Fichtean belief is not reflexive. Finally, the Fichtean belief is voluntary yet intellectual. At least the Fichtean belief about self's active nature seems to involve intellectual intuition. The Kantian Glauben are composed of the Ideas of reason and have nothing to do with intellectual intuition. However, Fichte suggests that, while our belief about our own nature is immediately certain, our belief about the external world of sense, etc. is not immediately certain and the latter's certainty must be derived from the former.

56 The most radical difference between the two, however, seems to be that belief is the source of our knowledge of the world on the part of Fichte, but not Kant. For the former, as Z ö ller puts it, "freedom and its laws have original certainty and epistemic authority for theoretical knowledge claims." [32] After all, for Fichte, "practical reason is the root of all reason" (VM 98: GA I/6, 265). Beginning with the self, Fichte, on the sole basis of the beliefs, goes on to prove the existence of the material body which is the substantial agent of the self's action, and the non-self or external material world, which is the object of its actions, and also other selves by way of summons. The Kantian Glauben are not the source of the knowledge at all. The latter are merely compatible with the scientific knowledge of the natural world. Conscience/belief is the source of knowledge of the world, at least when formally considered, because it gives rise to the discursive knowledge by forming the latter's condition of possibility. The Kantian Glauben, however, can be made compatible with and can be harmonized with the knowledge of the world. Finally, the Fichtean subject first acts before doing anything else. The Kantian subject performs the act of self-consciousness first as the transcendental apperception so it is primarily theoretical-conceptual. The Kantian subject is also premised on the distinction between the appearances and the things in themselves while the Fichtean subject knows no such

distinction—the whole world is nothing more than the manifestation of the inner acting of the self, albeit Book III of the *Vocation of Man* also ventures out to suggest that what is now considered to be the proper domain of legitimate philosophical inquiry has expanded considerably since 1794, inasmuch as it now embraces the entire supersensible world, understood as existing on its own, apart from the finite human mind, as well as the independently existing author of the same: "the One, which exists . . . the original source [*Urquelle*] of both you and me"(VM, 107; GA, I/6: 293). [33]

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61 FNR = Fichte, *Foundations of Natural Right*, trans. Michael Baur, ed. Frederick Neuhouser (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

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NOTES

1. In his *Lectures on Logic* (Jäsche Logic, 1801, AA 16:25) Kant discloses the fourth question as is discussed in *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*. This sums all of this up and addresses the very nature of a human being.

2. See also Chignell 2007. The last sense of "believing" might be most illuminatingly captured in English as 'believing-in', although the word "*Glauben*," is sometimes translated as 'faith.' But believing in this sense by no means entails non-rational or even irrational mental states of various kinds.

3. Frederick Beiser , 46.

4. Michah Gottlieb , 81.

5. Steinberg , 57.

6. Dogmatic realism typically holds epistemological foundationalism and assumes that the ordinary discursive knowledge has a foundation in basic knowledge that has direct connection to extra-mental reality. For Fichte, dogmatic realism claims that the non-self (*Nicht-Ich*) is the cause of representations and that the representations are an effect of the non-self; thus, the non-self is the real ground of everything, and the self (*Ich*) is a mere accident of the non-self and not a substance at all (*Foundations of Entire Wissenschaftslehere* (FEW for short), GA I, 2: 310). On the basis of this, he also argued

that the very concept of a "thing in itself," understood as a mind-independent, external "cause" of sensations, is indefensible on critical grounds in the *Foundations of the Entire Wissenschaftslehre*.

7. Fichte acknowledges that neither dogmatism nor idealism could directly disprove each other and thus recognizes that the choice between philosophical starting points could never be resolved on purely theoretical grounds by famously asserting that "the sort of philosophy one chooses depends upon the sort of person one is" (GA I, 4: 195). He nevertheless denies that any dogmatic realism, that is to say, any system that commences with the concept of sheer objectivity, could ever succeed in accomplishing what was required of all philosophy. Dogmatism, he argued, could never provide a transcendental deduction of ordinary consciousness, for, in order to accomplish this, it would have to make an illicit leap from the realm of "things" to that of mental events or "representations" (*Vorstellungen*). Idealism, in contrast, at least when correctly understood as the kind of Critical idealism that demonstrates that the intellect itself must operate in accordance with certain necessary laws, can—at least in principle—accomplish the prescribed task of philosophy and explain our experience of objects ("representations accompanied by a feeling of necessity" (GA I, 4: 187) in terms of the necessary operations of the intellect itself, and thus without having to make an illicit appeal to things in themselves.

8. Cf. "My connection with the whole of nature... determines all I was, all I am, and all I will be.... Whatever I am and become I am and become necessarily, and it is impossible for me to be anything else (VM, 14; GA I, 6: 201). . . . "I don't act at all but nature acts in me.... Nature makes me and whatever I become." (VM, 19; GA I, 6: 207)

9. The Fichtean term, "Glauben," is sometimes translated as "faith" but this translation can be misleading if faith here implies non-rational or even irrational mental states of various kinds. Further, *pace* Jacobi's trenchant protest, the Fichtean Glauben is natural, not supernatural.

10. Even in FEW, Fichte suggest that "reality is possible for the self, as well as for the non-self only by means of a relation to feeling. . . . With respect to reality as such—that of the self and of the non-self—there is only a feeling" (GA, I/2, 429).

11. Marco Ivaldo, 280.

12. Rockmore, 150

13. In the Second Introduction, Fichte says that "it is only through the medium of the moral law that I catch a glimpse of myself" and goes on to claim that "I necessarily view myself as spontaneously self- active" (GA I, 4: 219).

14. Fichte's notion of intersubjectivity is most perspicuously developed under the idea of summons (*Aufforerung*) as part of his theory of recognition (*Annerkennung*) In the *Foundations of Natural Right.*

15. Steinberg, 62.

16. Steinberg, 66.

17. Yolanda Estes, 91

18. See also, VM 75; GA I,6: 261. Compare "Divine World Governance," GA I/5, 354.

19. Conviction here must be based on a practical reasoning that a power of judgment engages in. This judgment then is followed and confirmed by the feeling of harmony (SE 4: 166). Thus, the Fichtean conviction or for that matter belief cannot just any subjective opinion (Allen Wood, 166-7).

20. "Some Lectures concerning the Scholar's Vocation," in *Early Philosophical Writings*, 179 (GA I,3: 61); "On the Basis of Our Belief in a Divine Governance of the World" in *Introductions to the Wissensschafteslehre*, 147, GA I,4: 351.

21. The latter essentially involves affective and cognitive components, so to speak. I owe this to Kien-how Goh's observation. Wayne Martin raised an interesting question about the phenomenological manifestation of conscience, which might take the form - in the case of a belief that I ought to do X - of an *immediate feeling of harmony/disharmony* of my cognition of X with what is demanded by the original (or ethical) drive. When in harmony, the feeling is one of contentment and approval. Otherwise, it's one of annoyance and disapproval. Sometimes, Fichte also puts it in terms being at one with or contradiction with oneself, or agreement of the head (or mind) with the heart. Finally, the peace of the mind ensues when there is the inner harmony between thoughts and convictions (156, 164). But, of course, there are many questions that need to be answered as well.

22. Christian Lotz, 30.

23. Hoeltzel, "Non-Epistemic Justification and Practical Postulation in Fichte," 296.

24. Jacobi characterizes the Fichten belief as: "rational intuition, or the intuition of reason" i.e., direct non-sensory awareness of supersensible realities. Indeed, it is an organ with which we are aware of the supersensible (MPW 540). "Just as there is an intuition of the senses, an intuition through the sense, so there is also a rational intuition through reason ... (MPW 563)" and it "...gives us objects that transcend nature for our cognition, i.e. it makes us certain of their actuality and truth" (MPW 563.) But he most grotesquely misunderstood Fichte when he characterized the latter's view as nihilism that reduced all knowledge and meaning to nothingness in his "Open Letter to Fichte" (GA III, 3: 224-81).

25. Fichte, *Introductions to the Wissenschaftslehre*, 146: GA I/4, 351.

26. Günter Zöller suggests that belief here expresses the unity of intelligence and volition, head and heart, thinking and willing (Zöller, 124).

27. Hoeltzel, 299.

28. Ibid.

29. For a complete list of Fichte's ontological commitment, see Breazeale, 217.

30. Hoeltzel, 308. The ultimate goal of the *Wissenschaftslehre* is not to produce knowledge in itself nor analyze it but the intuitive understanding that the self is an activity (*Tathandlung*), not an object. Indeed, early in the Jena *Wissenschaftlehre* Fichte made it sufficiently clear that the goal of philosophy is not a mere knowledge but knowledge in the very special sense of the knowledge of knowledge, i.e., foundational knowledge, and how this is possible on the firm basis of the fundamental activity of the self, which knowledge is clearly demarcated from ordinary discursive knowledge

31. "Lectures Concerning the Vocation of Scholars," EPW 150-1; GA I, 4: 299.

32. Zöller, 124.

33. I would like to thank the audience at the North American Fichte Society's biennial conference on Kant and Fichte at Sogang University in Seoul, especially Wayne Martin and Steve Hoeltzel for stimulating questions and discussions. The members of the department of philosophy at the University of Nebraska at Omaha also provided helpful suggestions. Finally, I thank Kienhow Goh for comments on the entire penultimate draft of the paper.

ABSTRACTS

One of the most venerable distinctions in philosophy is the one between knowledge and belief. Knowledge has been typically associated with genuine or scientific cognition that can provide truth whereas belief has been thought to present mere appearances or subjective opinion, usually founded on sense perceptions. In this paper, I will argue that for both Kant and Fichte, this standard view is mistaken and that they present belief (*Glaube*) as more important than knowledge. Even though Kant admits that knowledge is prior, and superior, to belief as well as opinion in their purely epistemic dimension, he nevertheless ends up holding that belief in the more significant sense of a 'postulate,' is more important than knowledge. I will also argue that this is the fundamental point of his well-known doctrine of the primacy of practical reason over theoretical reason. The standard view is also challenged by Fichte's thoroughgoing transformation of our epistemic enterprise. According to Fichte, belief (*Glaube*) is prior to knowledge (*Wissen*), since it has something to do with "a resolution of the will" to admit the validity of knowledge. Belief here is equated with the practical act of the self that expresses its true nature as *Tathandlung* . In the course of the paper, I will also show that Kant and Fichte seem to argue for their view in a different way. For Kant, the superiority of belief is presented as part of his architectonic concern, i.e., as an answer to the question "what may I hope" in the context of his elaborate theory of postulates. For Fichte, the doctrine is presented as part of his transcendental-ontological project of securing the reality of the self and the world from our moral vocation .

INDEX

Keywords: Kant, Fichte, belief, knowledge, postulate

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The Problem of "können" in Kant's B-Deduction and Its Significance for Fichte

Michihito Yoshime

Introduction: What is the problem of *können*?

1 The opening passage of §16 of the Transcendental Deduction section in the second edition of *Critique of Pure Reaso* n is one of the most famous from Kant's entire works. Namely:

> It must be possible for the 'I think' to accompany all my representations; for otherwise something would be represented in me which could not be thought at all, and that is equivalent to saying that the representation would be impossible, or at least would be nothing to me (B131-132; Kemp Smith [1929] 2007, pp. 152-153). [1]

2 This translation by Norman Kemp Smith seems more precise and explicit in its interpretation of the first sentence compared to the vague implication of the original German text:

> Das: *Ich denke*, muß alle meine Vorstellungen begleiten *können*... (B131)

3 First, Kemp Smith omitted Kant's stress on '*Ich denke*' and '*können*'. [2] Additionally, and more importantly, he chose 'be possible' as the translation for 'können', while there are other possible candidates here. This becomes clearer if compared with, for instance, the following recent translations:

> The *I think* must be *capable* of accompanying all my presentations... (B131; Pluhar 1996, p. 177).
> The *I think* must *be able* to accompany all my representations... (B131; Guyer and Wood 1998, p. 246)

4 It is understandable that a number of different translations have been employed for 'können'. Due to difference s in the syntactic rules for auxiliary verbs between German and English, if 'können' were simply replaced with the English equivalent, namely, 'can', this would yield a solecism. However, this would make no difference given that Kant's use of *können* would not substantially change the meaning of this text. In that case, what Kant intended to express in this passage would remain the same with or without

this auxiliary verb or, at the very least, this use of *können* would not be inconsistent with his conclusion regarding the characteristics of the transcendental apperception in the A-deduction. Additionally, you can remove this auxiliary verb from the sentence without causing any solecism.

5 Still, it should be noted that this opening sentence is not the only one where Kant uses 'können'. In actuality, he repeats similar modal expressions right up until the next section, whereas the corresponding parts of the A-deduction seldom have it. Above all, he emphasizes the word *können* by spacing it out as he spaces out *Ich denke* . As the latter is the key phrase of the entire section , the former is also likely to be important to him .

6 Thus, it is likely that he actually added some substantial meaning with the word *können* . Apparently, it suggests that he changed his view on pure apperception from that of the A-deduction because, there, he had consistently argued concerning "transcendental (or pure, original) apperception" involving not the necessity of possibility, but the necessity itself of one and the same self-consciousness, in which the threefold synthesis of the manifold should be accomplished. If this is the case, this auxiliary verb should constitute the key to comprehending the difference between the two versions of Kant's doctrine of transcendental apperception.

7 While a large number of studies have been made on Kant's doctrine concerning apperception, including the meaning of *können* , many recent scholars do not regard it as being central to our interpretation of either edition. For example, Patricia Kitcher argues that that opening sentence is the essential point of the B-deduction, and it is the equivalent of the A-deduction's "principle of apperception," that is: "All representations must (if cognition is possible) belong to a single self-consciousness" (Kitcher 2011, p. 125).

8 However, such a simplifying reading does not seem to provide a satisfactory account of the necessity of *können* , which Kant himself emphasized. In this paper, therefore, I would like to focus my attention on the meaning and origin of the word *können* . I will do this with reference to Fichte's view on the issue. Some scholars, including Henry E. Allison, have already investigated the meaning of *können* within Kant's own writings. My main interest here consists, rather, in how and to what extent Fichte's view of apperception differs from that of Kant.

1. The word *können* as redundant

9 Even if different readings of the word *können* did not ha r m the consistency of Kant's argument for the necessary unity of apperception, what the notion

represents should be explained. The simplest explanation is to see it as having no substantial sense, as simply being an auxiliary word used to adjust the tone of a sentence. On this reading, Kant would mean simply that the *I think* must *actually* accompany all my representations. If this is misleading, it would be because of Kant's carelessness. I do not believe that this explanation has broad support, but the classic commentary by H. J. Paton does seem to adopt it. Paton mainly follows Kant's argument by means of the A-deduction and uses passages of the B-deduction as supplementary explanation, as needed. So, he apparently finds no substantial difference between them, but is a little puzzled by "Kant's usual carelessness in terminology" (Paton [1936] 2011, p. 380n4).

10 As for more recent works, as I see it, we can find at least two different ways to understand *können* . First, it could represent the nature of transcendental apperception as a function or faculty. Kant calls transcendental apperception "the function by means of which this manifold [of the representations] is synthetically combined into one cognition" (A108; Guyer and Wood 1998, 233, my supplement), "a common function of the mind for combining it in one representation," (A109; Guyer and Wood 1998, p. 233) or "the radical faculty of all our cognition" (A114; Guyer and Wood 1998, p. 236). The recent translations of *können* as 'be able to' or 'be capable of' also seem to support such a reading. According to this reading, that the *I think* must *be able to* accompany all my representations is almost equivalent to the fact that transcendental apperception must *be able* to unify all my representations. And it must be able to do so, if empirical cognition is possible at all. Kant writes as follows:

> [N]o cognitions can occur in us, no connection and unity among them, without that unity of consciousness that precedes all data of the intuitions, and in relation to which all representation of objects is alone possible. This pure, original, unchanging consciousness I will now name *transcendental apperception* (A107; Guyer and Wood 1998, p. 232).
>
> [I]ndeed, it is through those conditions [of the necessary unity of apperception] that every cognition is first made possible (A110; Guyer and Wood 1998, p. 234, my supplement).

11 However, what makes the matter complicated here is that the modal expression of possibility rarely appears in the A-deduction. Instead, Kant argues repeatedly for the necessity of one self-consciousness, that is, for transcendental apperception:

> [T]he original and necessary consciousness of the identity of oneself is at the same time a consciousness of an equally necessary unity of the synthesis of all appearances... (A108; Guyer and Wood 1998, p. 233)
>
> All empirical consciousness...has a necessary relation to a transcendental consciousness (preceding all particular experience), namely the

> consciousness of myself, as original apperception. It is therefore absolutely necessary that in my cognition all consciousness belong to one consciousness (of myself) (A117n; Guyer and Wood 1998, p. 237).

12 Apparently, these passages affirm that transcendental apperception must actually unify all the representations in empirical consciousness. And given that the A-deduction could be read as consistent with the opening phrase of §16 of the B-deduction, we should have a basis for eliminating *können* . Some scholars, including Kitcher, seem to share this reading. The word *können* , which should represent the function or faculty of transcendental apperception, becomes redundant once the actuality of experience is given in the argument, because then the function or faculty must have already been activated. And this actuality is, in fact, presupposed by Kant as the starting point of the whole argument of *CPR* . His chief concern in this is, of course, how synthetic *a priori* propositions (as cognition) are possible (cf. B73). He then assumes that logic, mathematics and pure natural science "traveled the secure path of a science" (BX; Guyer and Wood 1998, p. 107). He is not here tackling the enormous problem of whether cognition is at all possible.

13 In my opinion, however, such a reading does not provide a satisfactory account of the meaning of the word *können* or, strictly, Kant's emphasis on it by repeating similar modal expressions in the B-deduction. It seems that this auxiliary verb is not redundant.

2. The word können as representing probability

14 Another reading of the passage in question, which I would like to support, is that of understanding *können* as representing no more than the possibility of transcendental apperception. Henry Allison, for instance, seems to understand it in this way when he says, "Kant maintains that it must be possible, for the "I think" to accompany them [representations], even if it does not always actually do so" (Allison 2015, p. 335, my supplement). In that sense, Allison's view of the auxiliary verb looks to be near to Kemp Smith's translation, namely, 'possible', though he chose "be able" (ibid.) for his own translation of that sentence. This possibility does not represent the function or faculty and is, therefore, not redundant even under the condition that the necessity of experience is given. It, rather, represents a kind of probability of the *I think* that accompanies all my representations. In other words, Kant affirms, with *können* placed not only in the sentence at issue but also in that section and the following sections, that it is also possible for the *I think* not to accompany my representations. If so, then it is also understandable that Kant seems to have stressed and repeated the expression, particularly given that this is one of the most important points changed from the A-deduction. What

is, then, the content of this change?

15 Allison emphasizes the importance of the distinction between sensibility and understanding here. According to him, Kant cannot simply argue that the *I think* must actually accompany all my representations, since these include sensible intuitions that are not thought (ibid, p. 337). [3] In short, we are not always thinking "I, I, I....". Kant has already made what seems to be the same point in the A-deduction's stronger argument:

> This [one self-] consciousness may often only be weak, so that we connect it with the generation of the representation only in the effect, but not in the act [of synthesis] itself, i.e., immediately; but regardless of these differences one consciousness must always be found, even if it lacks conspicuous clarity... (A103-104; Guyer and Wood 1998, p. 231, my supplement)

16 However, strictly speaking, this passage does not mean exactly the same as: "It must be possible for the 'I think' to accompany all my representations..." (B131; Kemp Smith [1929] 2007, p. 152), where this is read as expressing the probability of the *I think*'s accompanying all my representations. In the Transcendental Dialectic of the first edition, criticizing the "Third paralogism of personality," he states:

> [I]n the whole time in which I am conscious of myself, I am conscious of this time as belonging to the unity of my Self, and it is all the same whether I say that this whole time is in Me, as an individual unity, or that I am to be found with numerical identity, in all of this time (A362; Guyer and Wood 1998, p. 423).

17 There he also uses the phrase "the I think accompanies — and indeed with complete identity — all representations at every time in *my* consciousness" (A362-363; ibid.). Thus, at least for Kant in the first edition, the lack of *I think* in some of my representations is not exactly the same as one and the same self-consciousness being weak at times. Kitcher, rightly, describes this contrast as the difference between "togetherness" and "mineness". According to her, what Kant tries to show is "how different mental states can be unified in a single self and not how an individual can attribute a particular mental state to himself" (Kitcher 2011, p. 124). Although she regards this principle as common to both editions, it seems to apply better to the B-deduction. Certainly, Kant also refers in the B-deduction to the "same subject" (B132, Guyer and Wood 1998, p. 246) or a "universal self-consciousness" (ibid. p. 247), in which all representations are to be unified. But in the following paragraphs, in contrast to the A-deduction, he prefers the expression "the transcendental unity of apperception" to "the transcendental (or pure, original) apperception".

18 Thus, if one employs the second, and to me appropriate , reading that *können* represents probability, then the contrast between the two editions on

transcendental apperception, or one and the same self-consciousness, also becomes clearer. It seems that in the B-deduction Kant revised his claim concerning transcendental apperception (one and the same self-consciousness) and the identity of *the I* , to a somewhat weaker or more modest one. That is, he dropped "mineness" in favor of "togetherness". This might suggest that Kant changed the focus of his argument on the issue, namely from the aspect of *ratio essendi* to that of *ratio cognoscendi* , just like he did later in his *Grounding of Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals* and the second *Critique* (cf. Allison 2015, p. 230). [4] If so, however, why did he need to make the transition? I would like to investigate the reason for this not within his own writings but, rather, with regard to Fichte's view on this issue.

3. Why is Kant's argument unsatisfactory to Fichte?

19 Although his *Wissenschaftslehre* itself was established through his meditation upon Reinhold's Elementary Philosophy and Schulze's *Aenesidemus* , Fichte considered himself to be a transcendental idealist, completing the work that Kant should have done. He states:

> I have always said, and say it here again, that my system is no other than that of Kant. That is, it includes the same view on the matter, but it is entirely independent of Kant's account in its process (*EEWL*, GA I/4, 184). [5] Now I know very well that Kant has never established such a system.... However, I surely believe myself as well to know that Kant might have thought such a system... and that only under this condition his claims have meaning and a relevance (*ZEWL*, GA I/4, 230).

20 In fact, Fichte often employs Kant's terms or arguments while he describes his own system, namely *Wissenschaftslehre* , and the *I think* is no exception. In *Zweite Einleitung in die Wissenschaftslehre* , he writes:

> To all, what is thought to appear in consciousness, the I must be necessarily thought in addition. In the explanation of the determination of mind, the I must not be abstracted, or, as Kant expresses it: All my representations must be able to be accompanied, [so must] be thought as accompanied, by the I think. (*ZEWL*, GA I/4, 253, my supplement)

21 Here Fichte paraphrased the equivalent of Kant's sentence in the original passage without the modality of possibility. So, at a glance, he also seems to think the word *können* is redundant or dispensable. And he mentions this in defending his doctrine of *the I* and of intellectual intuition. According to Fichte, the latter is not an immediate consciousness of the thing in itself, but "of that I act, and what act I make [daß ich handle, und was ich handle]" (ibid. 216). This intellectual intuition appears in every moment of everyone's consciousness; we cannot even walk without it (cf. ibid.). Therefore, Fichte

also seems to hold that the *I think* must actually accompany all my representations.

22 However, he also states that it is nonsense to think "I, I, I..." in all moments (cf. ibid. 253), and, though in *ZEWL* no other passage on this issue appears, years later in *WL1812* , he re-engages with *können* . There he states:

> Kant notes that the deduction of the categories can only be the establishment of the principle of the self-relation of the consciousness, so precisely of the reflexibility.... The point of this deduction would be, namely, that it must be possible for the *I think* to accompany all my representations [das: *Ich denke* muß alle meine Vorstellungen begleiten können].... This können stands in the wrong part. It must have been: The possibility of I think accompanies necessarily all my representations (*WL1812*, *GA* II/13, 102-103).

23 According to his argument, what must be accompanying my representations is, strictly speaking, not the *I think* itself but the "determined reflexibility [bestimmte Reflexibilität]" (ibid. 104), which becomes *I think* once reflection is performed. This reflexibility must always accompany our representations, even if it remains inactivated and subtle in one's daily consciousness. The reason for this is clear: if there were no such background, then we could not explain the source of the "mineness" (Kitcher 2011, 124) that the *I think* should bear. Reflection is naturally self-referential, and the presupposition that the *I think* comes from reflexibility correlates with Fichte's view on *the I* and each representation. Namely, representations are not the given but rather the end products of the mutual limitation of *the I* and the *not I* , which occurs within *the absolute I* (cf. *GWL* , *GA* 1/2, 369-384). As is well known, Fichte later introduced *the absolute* (God) on top of *the absolute I* , the highest principle of the *Wissenschaftslehre* in his Jena years. Additional ly , his late writings and lectures are rather abstruse due to their metaphysical tendencies and frequent use of visual metaphors such as "image [Bild]", "seeing [Sehen]", or "light [Licht]"; for this reason, it becomes more difficult to contrast them with the arguments of other philosophers, including Kant. For instance, Fichte also notes:

> It must be possible for the I think to accompany all my representations [Das Ich denke muß alle meine Vorstellungen begleiten können]. It might be true: however, in a sense, it totally disappears for us. The I accompanies all seeing, and is the original material of all seeing. (*WL1812*, GA II/13, 147)

24 We would need an account of the word *seeing* to fully understand this passage. Yet we can safely say that his view of the relation between *the I* and representations remains the same. The main point of this view consists in the idea that it "descends from the universal [i.e. *the I*] to the special" (*BWL* , GA I/3, 145, my supplement), contrary to Kant who "starts from the presupposition that a manifold is given for the possible reception to the unity

of consciousness" (ibid. 144). 'I think' for Fichte is primarily an expression of spontaneity, and secondarily an expression of negativity, limitation, and receptivity. This is because the predicate 'think' is a special determination of the subject 'I' in so far as it excludes all other ways of being of the 'I' (cf. *GWL* , GA I/2, 298). Therefore, Fichte's view of the *I think* is nearer to the A-deduction than the B-deduction. He never admits the possibility of thinking of "togetherness" of the self, to which the manifold of representations should be unified, without there being a "mineness" of it. The latter is indispensable for Fichte, because it is the very source of the former.

25 And the reason why Kant dropped this view is, as I see it, to avoid the risk of being taken to admit intellectual intuition. Kant consistently understood intellectual intuition as being an immediate consciousness of *the I* as *noumenon* , that is, the thing in itself. The fact that he prefers the expression "the transcendental unity of apperception" to "the transcendental apperception" in the B-deduction also suggests the reason for his transition. As mentioned above, however, such a transition would be needed in so far as intellectual intuition, as well as *the I* itself, should be understood to refer to being. In this sense, Kant's philosophy of the self is somehow ontological, and so lacks a viewpoint on human acts, [6] which Fichte gave in his *Wissenschaftslehre* . Thus, for Fichte, Kant's *können* is an unnecessary compromise, and could ruin the view of *the I* , which stands at the center of transcendental idealism.

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NOTES

1. In this paper, I will refer to English translations of CPR with the name of the translator and the year of publication of each version, to distinguish them from one another. Abbreviations: EEWL = *Erste Einleitung in die Wissenschaftslehre* , 1797; GA = *Gesamtausgabe der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschafte;* GEWL = *Grundriss des Eigenthümlichen der Wissenschaftslehre in Rucksicht auf das theoretische Vermögen* , 1795/1802; GWL = G *rundlage der gesammten Wissenschaftslehre* , 1794/1802; WL1812 = *Die Wissenschaftslehre [von 1812];* ZEWL = *Zweite Einleitung in die Wissenschaftslehre* , 1797.

2. I use italics for the words, which are spaced out or typed in boldface.

3. Allison also points out the importance of the imagination in the matter, for it is closely related with apperception, and its role is also changed from that of the A-deduction.

4.) In the former he started from freedom to accomplish the deduction of the categorical imperative, and in the latter he introduced the consciousness of moral principle as a "fact of reason", and then claimed that this fact shows the practicality of pure reason as transcendental freedom.

5. For the translation of Fichte's writings, I take full responsibility.

6.) A classic reading of Kant's self by Heinz Heimsoeth apparently admired this ontological tendency. On the other hand, some scholars including Friedrich Kaulbach try to interpret Kant's apperception as referring to the act of reason. In my opinion, the most thoroughgoing attempt at such an interpretation is made by Fichte.

ABSTRACTS

The present paper examines the problem of "können" at the very beginning of KrV § 16 by offering a linguistic analysis of the term in order to highlight the difference between Kant's and Fichte's views on pure apperception, self-reflection and self-consciousness. Firstly, it will be considered whether "können" is redundant in the Kantian account. Secondly, it will studied the hypothesis that this term represents probability. Thirdly, it will be discussed why Fichte finds Kant's argument to be unsatisfactory. As a conclusion, it will be argued that Kant's "können" ruins the unity of the I or subject that is central for Fichte .

INDEX

Keywords: Kant, Fichte, I, pure apperception, deduction of the categories

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The Hidden Moral Teleology in Fichte's *System of Ethics*

Kienhow Goh

1 In Kant's critical system of philosophy, the moral law serves both as a *practical command* and as *a cosmic principle* . While its function as a practical command is expounded at length in the branch *of philosophy* known as the *metaphysics of morals* , its function as a cosmic principle is only briefly touched upon in the branch *of critique* known as *moral teleology* (as a prelude to moral theology). One might expect the principal ethical work written by Fichte during his glorious days in Jena – the *System of Ethics* (SE) – to be primarily, if not exclusively, concerned with the law as a practical command. On this score, the work turns out to be strikingly exceptional: it investigates the law's function as a cosmic principle with the hope of delivering a deduction of its applicability in the world of sense . In what follows, I argue that Fichte harnesses the concept of the original, determinate end of a natural thing in the deduction as a means of mediating the Kantian "supersensible idea of the morally good" by sensible intuitions . In doing so, he is inspired above all by Kant's moral teleology.

Kant's moral teleology

2 In his exposition of the moral proof of God's existence in the Appendix to the Critique of the Teleological Power of Judgment, Kant distinguishes between two forms of teleology: physical teleology and moral teleology. While physical teleology is based plain-and-simply on a theoretical consideration of nature, moral teleology has a source in human beings *considered as (practical-)rational beings* . Insofar as we stand under the jurisdiction of the pure practical law of reason, we are compelled to relate ourselves as means "to ends and even a final end [*Endzweck*] that must be aimed at by us in the world" (Ak 5:447 [1]). By prescribing "an end without a condition," the moral laws of reason "do exactly what the concept of a final end requires" (Ak 5:449): they furnish us with "an objective ground" for the *nexus finalis* which

we can readily observed in nature – "an end which needs no other as the condition of its possibility" (Ak 5:434). By doing so, they put an end to the *why* questions which can be raised concerning the final causes of natural things.

3 The first thing to note about Kant's moral teleology is that it is not a branch of *practical philosophy* , but a *teleology* . It propounds not a way of *handling* (*behandeln*) natural things, but a way of *judging* (*beurteilen*) them. As Kant makes clear, moral teleology concerns "the reciprocal relation of the world to [the] moral end and the external possibility of its accomplishment" (Ak 5:447-48). The difference is further underscored by Kant when he draws attention to the distinctiveness of the "purposiveness of nature" from "practical purposiveness (of human art as well as of morals)" (Ak 5:181). Practical purposiveness, he cautions, derives from our capacity as rational beings to adopt or set ends for ourselves with regard to objects. An "end" in this sense "is an object of the choice (of a rational being), through whose representation choice is determined to an action to bring this object about" (Ak 6:381, translation modified. See also Ak 6:385). To distinguish it from the teleological concept of a natural end, we might call it a "practical end." As a teleology, moral teleology is concerned with natural rather than practical ends. It is no less a *natural* teleology than physical teleology is.

4 On Kant's view, we are already able to ascribe a "system of ends" to nature outside the context of moral teleology. By sheer theoretical consideration of nature, we are first able to judge some of its effects "immediately as a product of art" or "as material for the art of other possible natural beings." In the former case, we judge the effect as an *internal end* ; in the latter case, we judge it as serving some *external* or *relative end* . If the effect is judged as serving an end of human beings, the means/end relation is one of *usefulness (Nutzbarkeit)* ; if it is judged as serving an end of other creatures, the relation is one of *advantageousness (Zuträglichkeit)* (see Ak 5:367). The concept of a natural end impels us to postulate "the idea of the whole of nature as a system of ends" (Ak 5:379). On the other hand, our rational capacity to form the concept of an end for ourselves allows us to "make a system of ends out of an aggregate of purposively formed things" (Ak 5:427). An end by means of which we are able to construct such a system of ends is called an "ultimate end" (*letzte Zweck*). While not every ultimate end qualifies as the final end, the final end certainly qualifies as the ultimate end. Kant is notably unsure of whether we are entitled by a sheer theoretical consideration of nature to ascribe relative ends – that is, relative ends *taken to be natural ends* – to natural things (and by implication, a system of ends to the whole of nature). [2] As Paul Guyer puts it, "from a strictly naturalistic point of view, it is contingent whether we see the whole of nature or any subecology in it as a

teleological system, and if we do so, it is arbitrary and indeterminate how we are able to see such a system as working – that is, what is end and what is the means in it." [3] From within the context of moral teleology, however, Kant believes we are entitled to consider the relative ends we observe of natural things to be part of the natural scheme of things, and not artificial ends we arbitrarily read into them.

5 Additionally, though Kant is given to opposing relative purposiveness to the inner purposiveness that is characteristic of an internal end, he cites "a single external purposiveness that is connected with the inner purposiveness of organization and is such that, without raising the question of for what end such an organized being must exist, nevertheless serves in the external relation of a means to an end" (Ak 5:42). Here Kant has in mind the means/end relation that obtains between the organization of the sexes for the propagation of their species. Although the male and female are not "organized in a single body," they can nonetheless be said to constitute "an *organizing* whole" (Ak 5:425).

Rethinking relative purposiveness

6 At first glance, Kant's moral teleology seems to play no role in Fichte's ethics. To Kant, moral teleology is not a branch of practical philosophy and not concerned with practical purposiveness. Its possibility turns on the assumption that natural things have relative ends *apart from the discretionary uses we freely make of them* . Thus Fichte seems to rule out its possibility when he writes:

> In nature, there is only an inner, and by no means a *relative* purposiveness. Relative purposiveness first arises only through the discretionary ends a free being is able to posit for itself in the objects of nature and is to some degree able to accomplish as well (SW IV: 128-29 [4]).

7 Unlike Kant then, Fichte flatly denies that the concept of relative purposiveness is applicable to natural things themselves apart from the discretionary uses we freely make of them. For him, relative purposiveness is an instance of practical purposiveness rather than an instance of the purposiveness of nature. This is especially evident in Section 15 (Subsection V), where he writes that the *purposiveness* – that is, relative purposiveness [5] – of an object is nothing but " *its usability* [Brauchbarkeit] *for certain arbitrary* [beliebigen] *ends* that one might set for oneself with regard to this object" (SW IV: 171, translation modified). Accordingly, Hegel remarks of Fichte's teleology that it "represents everything which manifests itself naturally as existing for the sake of something else, namely to create a realm for free beings and to allow itself to be shattered so that free beings may rise

above the ruins and fulfil their destiny." [6] Nature assumes the guise of purposiveness only in the light of its practical relationship to us.

8 Nevertheless, I think we miss a great deal of what is interesting about Fichte's theory of purposiveness by approaching it in terms of Kant's concept of practical purposiveness (viz., functionality of objects for ends we set for ourselves). Throughout the SE, Fichte repeatedly draws attention to the difference of the practical ends we *are compelled to* posit by the necessity of reason from the practical ends we are free to posit by sheer play of the power of imagination. Unlike the former, the latter is firmly anchored in an original, determinate system of ends unified as means to the unconditioned "end of reason" (viz., "idea of the pure I"). According to Fichte, "the *purposiveness* of the sensible world is present for a human being only insofar as and only because he is able to set goals for himself, and he is able to do this only because his own reason provides him with an absolutely final goal (viz., morality)" (GA I/6: 413, translation modified [7]). [8] In this light, not every end we imagine by wishful thinking counts for the "discretionary ends" that give rise to relative purposiveness. The relative ends of natural things are ends *which are given only through the original, determinate system of ends* in the following sense: they are either identifiable with the ends of the system or derivable from them .

9 First of all, Fichte recognizes a smaller class of relative ends than Kant. In the deduction of the human body (as an organized product of nature) in Section 8, Fichte ventures to revise the Kantian theory of organized systems on the basis of the Kantian insight that the parts of an organized system are characterized by their dependence on each other and on the whole. [9] An important result of the revision is that the relations that obtain between the parts of an organized being come to be regarded as essentially the same as those that obtain between organized beings (as well as between organized beings and raw matter). The whole of nature becomes "a self-grounding whole, complete within itself; and precisely for this reason, it becomes an organized and organizing whole which possesses within itself and within its own immanent the ground of all the phenomena that occur within it" (SW V: 179-80). [10] Recall that Kant cites a single instance of relative purposiveness that does not fit the bill – namely, the propagative end of the sexes' organization. By reconstruing nature as "an organized and organizing whole," Fichte in effect takes the single instance as a paradigm for explaining advantageousness. Granted that the kind of purposiveness Kant classifies under *advantageousness* is really inner rather than relative purposiveness, relative purposiveness amounts to nothing but what Kant means by *usefulness* .

10 Admittedly, when Fichte equates the purposiveness of an object with its usability for our arbitrary ends, he seems to think that natural things have no relative ends apart from the discretionary uses we freely make of them. But this interpretation cannot be sustained upon a careful reading of Section 17 (Subsection IV) of the SE. Here I will cite the crucial passage in two parts. The first part speaks to what the "final end" (*Endzweck*) of a natural thing is:

> a determinate object is posited only in consequence of some determinate limitation of a drive; it is posited in order to explain this limitation. If the drive itself, *qua* drive, is posited (as a longing or desiring) and is referred to the object, then one obtains what the I wants to bring about in the object, what the I might use the object for; i.e., one obtains the thing's original, determinate end – which is by no means the same thing as an end one has arbitrarily [*willkürlich*] posited for the object. (SW IV: 210, translation modified)

11 The drive in question is the "original drive" (*Urtrieb*). Each natural thing is posited by the I in the first place in order to explain the limitation of the original drive. On this basis, we are entitled to regard the end obtained by the I when it refers the drive to the natural thing as "the thing's original, determinate end" – what the thing is meant as it were to be used for. This so-called "final end" *of a natural thing* must not be confounded with the unconditioned final end *of the whole of nature* – the self-sufficiency of reason or idea of the pure I.

12 The second part of the passage speaks to how the final end of a natural thing is related to its usability as such:

> It follows from the preceding remark, however, that every arbitrary [*willkürliche*] end is at the same time an original one; or, to put it more clearly, it follows that I am at least unable to achieve any end that is not demanded by an original drive. But it is quite possible for me to apprehend only a part of my original drive when it aims at an object, and in that case, I grasp only a portion of the thing's purposiveness. (SW IV: 210)

13 Kant himself suggests such a relationship of an arbitrary to an original end when he remarks that an "action which is morally absolutely necessary can be regarded physically as entirely contingent (i.e., what necessarily ought to happen often does not)" (Ak 5:403n, translation modified). It turns on the thought that if an action or end *X* ought to be, then *X* can *but need not* be, and if *X* need not be, then ~*X* as well as *X* can be. In this way, no final end of a thing is given as a possible end except together with a cluster of other possible ends. Fichte's contention then is that the entire cluster of the thing's possible ends exhausts its usability. [11]

The significance of moral teleology

14 Even as Fichte undercuts Kant's moral teleology by denying that natural things have relative ends apart from the discretionary uses we freely make of them, he reintroduces it at the higher level as part of a theory of practical purposiveness. By this theory, not every end we can think up or will by a "sheer empty willing" (SW IV: 73) is an end we can actually will (*wollen*) and realize (*wirken*) in the world of sense. Although both classes of ends are marked by their "thinkability" (*Denkbarkeit*), the latter class of ends is distinguished from the former by their "perceptibility" (*Wahnehmbarkeit*) or "capacity to be sensed" (*Empfindbarkeit*). To be sure, we exercise our power of choice by freely choosing from among a manifold of possible ends. In doing so, however, we choose only from among possible ends *which are given through the final ends of natural things as parts of an original, determinate system of ends* .

15 At the outset, I have suggested that Fichte's approach to the deduction of the moral law's applicability in the SE is prompted by Kant's moral teleology. This is suggested in a note to *Collegium über die Moral* , where he identifies the "purposiveness of nature" as key to the "matter [*Materie*] of the moral law" (see GA IV/1:41). To appreciate the latter's significance, we need to first elucidate the problem he seeks to solve by the deduction, and how the final ends of natural things contribute to solving it.

16 In Kantian ethics, one typically assumes that the applicability of the moral law concerns its practical employment as a discursive criterion for moral actions. But in his discussion of the object of pure practical reason in Chapter Two of the Analytic of Practical Reason, Kant in fact raises two distinct questions: the first which we might call the "question of schematism" is the transcendental one concerning how the "supersensible idea of the morally good" can be "presented [*dargestellt*] *in concreto* in a sensible intuition" (Ak 5:68); the second which we might call the "question of appraisal" is the practical one concerning how actions in conformity with duty can be told apart from actions which are not (Ak 5:69). According to Kant, the question of schematism is unanswerable because we simply have no *a priori* intuition by means of which to mediate a supersensible idea by a sensible intuition. Notwithstanding, an adequate answer to the question of appraisal can be given in terms of the *typic* of a universal law of nature. By applying the mere typic of the law, we are able to judge whether an action is our moral duty without having to have recourse to the presentation of the idea of the good *in concreto* in sensible intuitions.

17 In response, Fichte insists that the question of schematism cannot be avoided because we would be at a loss in applying the law if we did not know *where* in the world of sense the law is to be applied. The applicability of the law presupposes the availability of answers to the questions:

> To which domain of the sensible world do the demands made upon me by the moral law refer? How am I supposed to recognize this domain in general, and do so systematically? How am I even supposed to recognize *how* I ought to work upon each determinate object within this domain in accordance with the moral law – how I ought to work upon precisely this A and this B, etc.? (SW IV: 66, translation modified)

18 The fact that we are not at a loss in applying the law only goes to show that the typic is already "actually operative" (SW I: 506) as a *constitutive* principle in our everyday life. [12] A deduction of the moral law's applicability is only left with the task of showing that (and how) this is so. In all fairness, we can say that the deduction addresses not so much the question of appraisal as the question of schematism. [13]

19 Agreeing with Kant that we have no *a priori* intuition by means of which to mediate the idea of the good by a sensible intuition, Fichte sees an alternative approach to the question of schematism in Kant's moral teleology. Kant suggests it when he remarks that moral teleology

> is just as necessarily connected with the *nomothetic* of freedom on the one hand and that of nature on the other as civil legislation is connected with the question of *where the executive power should be sought*, and with the general question of how reason is to provide a principle of reality of a certain lawful order of things that is possible only in accordance with ideas (Ak 5:448, emphases added).

20 But alas, the promise (if there is one) turns out to be empty! For Kant, the moral law can be universally enforced (*allgemeingeltend*) as a cosmic principle only by means of a morally impeccable and supremely powerful and intelligent Person. Since we have no systemic epistemic access to the workings of such a divine Person, moral teleology leaves us practically clueless as to where the executive power of the nomothetic of freedom is to be sought. Thus Kant's moral teleology turns out to have no relevance for mediating the idea of the good by sensible intuitions.

21 Notwithstanding, Fichte is summoned by Kant's suggestive remark to explore the possibility of accomplishing the task *by means of the concept of the original, determinate end of a natural thing*. In the hope of doing so, he advances the controversial thesis that the law is actually operative in ordinary consciousness as "*a theoretical principle for the determination of the world*" (SW IV: 68). As is clear from our examination of Section 17 (Subsection 14), we acquire cognition of the final ends of natural things when the I refers the original drive to the things. Now the original drive is none other than the

concept of morality (or freedom) considered as a transcendental law (viz., law of reason as such). Inasmuch as the I refers it to natural things, the concept comes into play as a theoretical principle. From Section 15, we know that the exact power of cognition involved in the process is the reflecting power of judgment. The claim then is that through our immediate feeling of the harmony/disharmony of the varying reflecting judgments we pass upon natural things with the drive, we are able to settle upon a stable cognition of *what each thing is meant to be used for (viz., how it is meant to be handled)* . In this way, the normative authority of what each thing is meant to be used for is immediately felt. Of course, this does not mean that we cannot choose to act contrary to it. But it does mean that we cannot choose to act contrary to it without getting into trouble with ourselves and with others.

22 Although Fichte does not set out to give an exhaustive list of these "original determinations" (*Urbestimmungen*), it is safe to say that he has in mind at least (i) the contingency of our world, (ii) the articulation of our body, and (iii) the rationality of some other beings. Inasmuch as we are conscious of our world as contingent, we cognize that natural things are *meant to be* used solely as tools (*Werkzeugen*) for advancing our goals. As contingency is essentially modifiability, consciousness of our world as contingent amounts to consciousness of an invitation to act upon it. Also, inasmuch as we are conscious of our body as articulated, we cognize that our body is *meant to be* used in the same way. We misuse it by using it for the sole end of sensual enjoyment. In other words, our body as well as the whole of nature have us for their final ends. On the other hand, inasmuch as we are conscious of some other beings as rational, we cognize them not only as not being meant to be used solely as tools for advancing our goals, but as being *meant not to be* used in this way. When the I refers the original drive to a "product of artifice" (including the body of another rational being), it finds the drive to be limited in a "particular and characteristic" way: its very drive to act "is repulsed" (SW IV: 225).

23 By a deduction of the moral law's applicability, the final ends of our world, our body and other rational beings are shown to be grounded in a transcendental law (or, what is the same, the original drive). Moreover, their normative authority derives from the fact that the law in question is the moral law. In this light, there is no tautology in stating the demand of the moral law as follows: Handle each natural thing in accordance with (your cognition of) what it is meant to be used for. In Fichte's eyes, this way of fleshing out the law's demand marks an improvement over Kant's formulas primarily because it simultaneously specifies the domain of the world of sense where the demand is to be met. As he puts it, it determines not only "the idea of *what we ought to do* ," but also "the *substrate in which* we ought to

approximate the realization of this idea" (SW IV: 70).

NOTES

1. Ak is short for *Immanuel Kant Schriften*. Ausgabe der königlich preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (Berlin: Walter de Gryuter, 1902-.

2. "We have said that the external purposiveness of natural things offers no sufficient justification for using them at the same time as ends of nature, as grounds for the explanation of their existence, and using their contingently purposive effects, in the idea, as grounds for their existence in accordance with the principle of final causes" (Ak 5:377. See also Ak 5:367-69).

3. Paul Guyer, "Kant's Principles of Reflecting Judgment," *Kant's Critique of the Power of Judgment: Critical Essays*, ed. Paul Guyer (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), 52.

4. SW is short for *Fichtes Sammtliche Werke*, ed. Immanuel H. Fichte (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1970).

5. Fichte tends to use the term *purposiveness* exclusively to mean relative purposiveness, and does not regard inner purposiveness as purposiveness proper speaking.

6.Georg W. F. Hegel, "Glauben und Wissen," *Erste Druckschriften*, ed. Georg Lasson (Leipzig: Meiner, 1928), 334-35, translation is mine. Likewise, Arnold Farr notes that the reflecting power of judgment by which we think of nature as purposive "tells us nothing about nature and does not affect nature but only affects the human subject." Farr, "Reflecting Judgment and the Boundaries of Finite Human Knowledge: The Path toward Fichte's 1794/95 *Wissenschaftslehre*," *New Essays in Fichte's* Foundation of the Entire Doctrine of Scientific Knowledge, ed. Dan Breazeale and Tom Rockmore (New York: Humanity Books, 2001), 107.

7. GA is short for *J. G. Fichte – Gesammtausgabe*, ed. Reinhard Lauth and Hans Gliwitzky (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann, 1962-).

8. Daniel Breazeale's separate treatment of our practical dominion over nature and our consciousness of nature's final end is somewhat misleading as it suggests that the former is possible without the latter. See Breazeale, "Against Nature? On the Status and Meaning of the Natural World in Fichte's Early *Wissenschaftslehre*," *Philosophia Osaka*, No. 9, Mar 2014: 29-34. As I understand Fichte, our cultural and technical mastery of natural things has to presuppose some consciousness, however obscure, of their final ends.

9. The insight is concisely stated at two points in the *Foundation of Natural Right* (FNR) (see SW III: 203, 208-09).

10. See also SW IV: 124.

11. One cannot help but marvel at the consistency with the critique of Rousseau in the fifth lecture of *Some Lectures of the Vocation of a Scholar*. There Fichte agrees with Rousseau that culture entails the development of sensibility and its needs, and makes possible vice and corruption. But it also makes possible virtue and reason. By abolishing culture, we eradicate vice and corruption. But we thereby also eradicate virtue and reason (see SW VI: 340-41). Likewise, Fichte shows here how the possibility of virtue and reason (X) must give rise to the possibility of vice and corruption (~X).

12. The same point is made in Fichte's critique in the *FNR* of the Kantian formula of the categorical imperative "Act so that the maxim of your will can be the principle of a universal legislation" (see SW III: 80-81). Barbara Herman seems to have reached a similar conclusion about what she argues that the categorical imperative (CI) "cannot be an effective practical principle of judgment unless agents have some moral understanding of their actions before they use the CI procedure." Barbara Herman, *The Practice of Moral Judgment*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1993, 77.

13. Commentators are generally agreed that one looks in vain for a discursive criterion for moral actions in the SE. See Daniel Breazeale, "In Defense of Fichte's Account of Ethical Deliberation," *Archives für Geschichte der Philosophie* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2012), 199, and Allen Wood, *Fichte's Ethical Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 137-38, 149.

ABSTRACTS

Fichte's *System of Ethics* (SE) investigates the moral law's function as a cosmic principle with the hope of delivering a deduction of its applicability in the world of sense. In the work, Fichte harnesses the concept of the original, determinate end of a natural thing as a means of mediating the Kantian "supersensible idea of the morally good" by sensible intuitions. In doing so, he is inspired above all by Kant's moral teleology. This concerns, not the metaphysics of morals as practical philosophy but moral teleology (as a prelude to moral theology). By a deduction of the moral law's applicability, the final ends of our world, our body and other rational beings are shown to be grounded in a transcendental law (or, what is the same, the original drive). .

INDEX

Keywords: Kant, Fichte, System of Ethics, moral law, moral teleology

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The Imagination in Kant and Fichte

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1 Traditionally, imagination has been dismissed or devalued by philosophy. For centuries, it was considered a minor and secondary function in the constitution of our worldview. And this holds true for both its reproductive and productive aspects.

2 Plato first introduced it as an ability to reflect images (*eikona*), to create mere imitations of the tangible, of that which for him was already a copy of the ideas and, for that reason, was excluded from the realm of knowledge [1]. This negative view lasted right up to rationalism, where the theory prevailed that the image is – as Sartre said in *The Imagination* – a thing in our consciousness, a dead product, the result of complete passivity. In fact, Descartes, as well as Leibniz and Spinoza, considered the imagination as a derivative function, which degrades the truth by presenting it in a faded or confused way, compared to the clarity and distinction, characteristic of innate ideas. It is that erratic character which depends on the attachment of the imaginary to the bodies, that darkness that prevents this faculty to give clear account of the real and achieve the subtlety and perfection of true knowledge, but that does not mean that their products are false in themselves. It is rather the weakness of the will, which exceeds itself in judging and attributes to the imagined a status that does not correspond to it, refusing to admit that it is neither a perception nor can it be raised to the level of conceptual thought [2].

3 In the second case, that of the creation of new images, the imagination again did not acquire a good reputation, although it was generally never considered a completely new production but as a different ordering of previously experienced data. It was thought to build *phantasmata*, operating on the fringes of reality and producing a fantastic and illusory vision, contrary to the truth or, at least, unconcerned by it. Thus the opinion of the inefficacy and irrelevance of the imagination for science and for the transformation of the world was consolidated, tuning into a valid instrument only for the construction of utopias of artists and poets.

4 The view of the imagination changed radically after Kant, because with him, it became a fundamental active faculty in the process of knowledge. At this point, Kant continued the work of empiricism, but from a critical perspective. On the one hand, he followed Locke and Hume in their opposition to the theory of innate ideas and rejected the epistemic validity of those concepts whose origin does not refer to experience, but he acknowledged that data of perception are meaningless if they are not organized by successive synthesis, which filter and subsume the matter of knowledge under the pure subjective forms of sensibility and understanding respectively. For Kant, knowledge begins with experience while for Hume, everything originates in it. Ideas, at least in their simplest elements, are copies of an effective sensible impression. The imagination associates them actively and freely, that is, shapes our reality. While memory repeats impressions, preserving to some degree their original strength and vivacity, the imagination is free to modify the order of ideas. It can form complex mental content from the simple and even berak them down in order to reunite their elements according to its whim. It does so, however, following certain rules of association, which arise from qualities that lie in the ideas themselves, i.e. that the imagination gives a certain universality to their associations [3], although it is a relative universality, because its norms guide, and even create habits of association, but are not imposed.

5 In contrast to Hume, Kant incorporated the rules of the imagination into the constitution of knowledge and granted them a universal and necessary value, provided that they remain under the subordination of the understanding, that is, provided that they are not "subjective and *empirical* ground of reproduction", which he called precisely "*association* of representations" (KrV, A 121). In this way, he managed to separate imagination from error and falsehood, but at the same time he gave imagination the ability to free itself from the intellect in order to become an authentic creative force, present both in aesthetic experience and in artistic production. He did this precisely to enhance its function apart from the understanding. With this he prepared the way for Fichte, Schelling and the Romantics, transforming it into an inventive activity, linked to genius and freedom, but at the same time, builder of our reality. Nevertheless, the old fear of the *phantasmata*, of the arbitrariness or the delirium, made Kant distrust the intervention of the imagination in the moral realm. And since he had admitted that practical reason is the key vault of the whole edifice of pure reason (KrV, *Einleitung*), he was unable to make it into the very center of all the activity of the subject, as his successors actually did. He simply stayed on the timid recognition that the ideas of reason are the "*analogon*" of a schema of sensibility (KrV, A 665 / B 693) and thus implicitly presenting the

movement of the imagination as a model of the antinomic character of pure theoretical reason.

6 However, Kant was aware of the importance of the introduction of imagination in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, and in *Lose Blätter* (B 12) he acknowledged that it had been a decisive factor in the construction of Criticism, just as much as the substitution of the *noumena* by the transcendental concept of object. He also accepted the influence of Tetens' Psychology on this point, who argued that the rules of association implied an "inner and autonomous activity of the understanding", which combines the ideas and starts with experience but is not obtained from it through abstraction [4]. And perhaps to avoid such similarity, he insisted on distinguishing himself from him, attributing to this Psychology an empirical and subjective character, and defining his own analysis as transcendental and objective. But Tetens had also offered a more unitary model of the imagination, since for him it was not a separate faculty but an aspect of the faculty of representation, that performed three cognitive functions attributable to different levels of representation: perception, imagination and fancy formative power or *Dichtkraft* [5]. Somehow, this contributed to Kant considering imagination as a mediating faculty and trying to find, through it, the synthesis between the two sources of knowledge. In addition, Tetens had taken a step further by trying to explain the genesis of concepts unitarily. He had offered an epigenetic explanation of the concepts taking life sciences as a model, an explanation that Kant would record in the second edition of the *Critique*, just after reading and reviewing the first two parts of Herder's *Ideas on the Philosophy of the History of Mankind* [6]. These previous steps culminate in a holistic theory of human activity, which is precisely that of Fichte, although this does not mean that there was a direct and decisive influence of these authors on him. Rather, it seems that regarding the matter of imagination, Fichte takes these ideas from Kant himself and adapts them to his concern of building a system of freedom, taking into account Herder's suggestions on the need to incorporate the feeling to the basis of reason.

7 Although Kant is ambiguous with regard to the function of the imagination within the order of faculties, depending largely on whether it is artistic, productive (that is, transcendental) or reproductive imagination, in the *Critique of Pure Reason* prevails what Beck called the theory of radical diversity of the two sources of knowledge [7]. There are two separate, independent and irreducible modules or cognitive systems. On the one hand, there is sensibility, a totally passive faculty, capable of receiving representations through the pure forms of space and time. On the other hand, there is understanding, a spontaneous faculty, which enables to know such representations by actively ordering the data using categories in order to

properly conform the object (KrV, A 85 / B 118). The double origin of knowledge has repercussions on its products and thus the intuitions and concepts are completely opposite, since the former collect sensory data and offer the multiplicity and the individual, while the latter are intellectual, universal and encompass what is multiple in one unit. By being completely heterogeneous, categories can not be directly applied to the phenomenon; they require a mediator faculty – active and spontaneous – which is both sensible and intellectual (non-empirical) and manages to bring together the given multiplicity and unify it (A 137 / B 176). This is done through the transcendental scheme, which is not a fixed product, an "image-thing", but a rule, a procedure, by which the mind "draws" intermediate representations that serve to apply pure concepts to empirical intuitions. The transcendental scheme effects a sensitization, that is to say that it makes a temporalization of the categories, since time is the general form of sensibility. In this sense, imagination acts as "a blind function of the soul" (A 78 / B 103). It is not only that we are not usually aware of its functioning but also that we cannot anticipate what its final product will be in each of its interventions, because we do not know which of the categories will be used in the synthesis, for the adoption of a certain perspective to judge reality is spontaneous and therefore a free choice.

8 Fichte is completely faithful to Kant's theory of transcendental imagination, but he presents it from a different conception of philosophy, which will allow him to expand, deepen, and make it the basic faculty of man. Critical philosophy had established the conditions of possibility of knowledge through an analysis by which it separated the distinct faculties at stake and deduced the cognitive functions from their results or products. For example, from the judgments he came to the categories of understanding. In explaining the whole of human knowledge, Kant had proceeded from its elements, and in this progression from one to another, he created a dichotomous and partial vision, in which each new phase was added to the previous (*per appositionem*) without arising from it as a necessary articulation (*per intus susceptionem*). This was the procedure used by Kant, although in the "Transcendental Doctrine of Method" he suggests another "architectural". Fichte, however, followed this suggestion. On the one hand, he wanted to build a system of philosophy and in the context of the age this meant starting from a single, first, unconditioned principle, and derive all reality from it. In this way, the transcendental method became genetic. Fichte took his principle, the last explanatory ground of the system, from the second *Critique*, from the Kantian idea that the key to the whole edifice of reason lies in practical reason. And so his starting point was the *Thathandlung*, the absolute action, without further conditions. This would

give rise to a holistic vision, where the unity underlies the different human faculties, in a globalizing process led by the imagination, which creates new spheres of freedom, constructing all human activity, whether theoretical, practical, aesthetic or political.

9 In order to develop the imaginative process in Fichte, I have chosen the *Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo* , not because in this work there is something truly new in the evolution of his thought regarding this matter, but because, being a complete systematization of the entire period of Jena, he perfects and clarifies the exposition of the *Grundlage der gesamten Wissenschaftslehre* , introducing further clarifications; for example, the *Einleitungen* or the *Grundlage des Naturrechts* , in which Fichte assumes the criticisms and misinterpretations that his philosophical system has led to. As far as our subject matter is concerned, in this work the relation between imagination and freedom is better expressed, and to a great extent for this reason the imagination is shown more clearly as the basic faculty of the subject. Driven by the feelings that arise from the primary contact of the subject with the world, it operates by attempting the conjunction of opposing emotions, whereas the understanding (*Verstand*) is secondary and dependent on it, since it is passive and merely receives the imaginative process when it stops and sets at a certain point. This synthesis of opposing emotions is the expression on the most intimate and subjective level of the integration of the empirical with the intellectual intuition. In this way, Fichte avoids the hypostasis of the absolute I, characteristic of the *Grundlage* by showing that intellectual intuition is a process of the finite I in which an absolute instance immanent to him is revealed. Finally, in the *Nova methodo* it is seen more clearly how Fichte's approach to imagination points to the unity, integrity and totality of human activity. That is, to an organic conception of subjectivity that does not present the realization of the categorical imperative so much in the form of duty – as a struggle against inclinations and feelings, as in Kant – but in the form of coherence, of the law of restitution of the proper balance of homeostatic processes. This organic view of man and knowledge obeys that both the categories and the pure forms of sensibility, time and space, are not accepted merely as facts of consciousness for which a condition of possibility is sought, but are rather deduced from the dynamic itself of the imaginative process, a process that can only find its fullest sense when consummated in reality by assuming a material field of action, which is the human body (*Leib*) and which in this work is identified with the soul.

10 The beginning and foundation of all consciousness, and therefore of all reality, since there is no other reality for the subject than what he can understand and grasp, is freedom in the *Nova methodo* :

> "die Freiheit ist sonach der erste Grund und die erste Bedingung alles Seyns und alles Bewusstseins" [8].

11 Philosophy's mission is to explain reality, and will have as its starting point the consciousness of freedom, its idea:

> "der Gedanke der Selbstständigkeit und Freiheit das höchste und erste ist" (MK, 15).

12 This absolute freedom, which can have no other foundation than its own spontaneity and which consequently proves to be unfounded, is an absolute activity of self-assertion in which there are no limits of any kind: no subject, or object, or laws. It is itself subject, object and its own law, although it is clear that this freedom cannot be attributed to the thing, since in that case the subject could not give account of it. There is no other possibility than to consider it the self-positioning of the I, pure activity or *Thathandlung* , but its character of full unity and indistinction makes it unintelligible:

> "Die Freiheit ist absolute Selbstaffection und weiter nichts, sie ist aber kein Mannigfaltiges, also auch nicht anschaubar" (MK, 59).

13 It is only felt:

> "Das Gefühl ist Affection unserer selbst" (MK, 155).

14 Precisely because of the subjective nature, deprived of the feeling, the principle of philosophy in the *Nova methodo* has to be postulated and the confirmation that such a postulate is true is obtained through the complete development of the system in which it is shown how the whole process of the I is coherently explained based on it because, truly, all human activity points to freedom as a goal. It is a circle where the beginning (the foundation) and the end (the goal) coincide.

15 The whole of Fichte's effort consists in making conceivable the inconceivable [9] , in explaining the irrationality on which consciousness is based, that, being separation, limitation and finitude, presents an absolute, as an aspiration and even as a *factum* in the case of moral conscience. He will try to explain it based on finitude, opening it to the infinite, but without transcending the finite. This is why his next step in the *Nova methodo* , after presenting absolute freedom as a postulate, is to place himself on the plane of consciousness by avoiding the hypostasis of the absolute I and to admit that without self-consciousness, consciousness cannot be given or, in other words, that there can be no freedom without awareness of freedom:

> "Das Bestimmte muss anschaubar sein, denn nur unter Bedingung seiner Anschaubarkeit ist Freiheit möglich, welche Bedingung des Bewusstseins ist" (MK 52).

16 This is the point at which effective freedom begins, which, given its close relationship with the imagination, can only be realized through trials, testing, through a maturity exercise.

17 Thus, the true starting point of philosophy is the very beginning of consciousness, with a pure and unconditioned activity of self-assertion that has no effect in the world, for in that case it would annihilate it without ever being able to distinguish itself from it. This activity projected into the infinite is defined as tendency or aspiration towards the absolute (*Tendenz, Streben*) and constitutes the very presence of the absolute in the finite subject. And precisely because of this finitude, the tendency ends up finding an obstacle in its path of expansion that forces it to return to itself and initiate a re-flexion – according to the terms of the *Grundlage* [10] . The encounter is felt as an impact (*Anstoss* [11]) that serves as an occasion for a centripetal activity of self-determination. It seems as if the very energy of the I was returned to it because it has been unable to carry it out, although this implies a resistance, registered by the I through a feeling of limitation. This gives him the guideline that there is something different from it, a Not-I, which it has not grasped directly – *in situ* , as it were, outside itself – but only through its own limits, through the effect that the Not-I has produced in him. Hence in the *Grundlage* , Fichte affirms that regarding the world we can only have faith (*Glaube* [12]).

18 The limitation is therefore offered subsequently as an inexplicable fact, as a *factum* beyond which one can not go, but that could not have arisen without the previous spontaneity of the I, thereby recognizing the logical-ontological priority of the affirmation over denial – of being over nothing. Freedom, then, has allowed its limitation, its linkage, its *Gebundenheit* , to become concrete, and it has not completely denied itself because of this, for there is always the possibility that the I does not want to admit the obstacle and recognize it as such. In fact, this is largely what happens, because, once the movement of contraction, of reflection of the I, is initiated, it is not completed until the disappearance of the subject; rather, the tendency, whilst absolute, replaces the activity until it finds yet another limit. And in that encounter the initial process occurs again, producing an oscillation (*Schweben*) of the activity between two points – one fixed and another mobile – an oscillation that Fichte calls "imagination" (*Einbildungskraft*). Those poles between which the imaginative activity moves are the absolute I, represented by the tendency, and the absolute Not-I, that it is not able to penetrate. At the extreme points of the oscillation opposite feelings of integrity and lack occur respectively, so that imagination, as already happened in Kant, actively builds synthesis of unity with plurality, of the intellectual with the sensitive. At the periphery, at the outer limit – as it might be called – arises a feeling of limitation, of activity that has been restrained or impeded. Fichte calls this a "feeling" (*Gefühl*), in a provisional and in a loose sense, identifying it, as he had already done in the *Grundlage* , with what in Kant was the moment of the

affection, the sensation [13] . In the center or the inner limit, there is a feeling of fullness, doubtless very vague, for at this point there is not really an externalization of the activity:

> "Im Gefühl kommt das ganze unzertheilte Ich vor; sehen können wir das Ich nicht, aber fühlen" (MK, 78).

19 In spite of its imprecision, it is necessary to admit this purely subjective or ideal moment because in truth it is a certain emotion. It is even the most certain of all, since without it the restitution of the tendency after its limitation could not be explained. It is a feeling of affirmation of one's own being or of affirmation in life, an expression that will characterize the Fichte of the Berlin stage, but which is already suggested in the *Nova methodo* , since the imagination is defined as movement, as deed (*That*) or liveliness (*Lebendigkeit*) (MK, 202). Consequently, we must assume that its foundation is the *Thathandlung* , life, meaning not the biological life, but the spiritual one, which will end up expressing itself in the human, concretizing into the biological and seeking consciousness. Without this feeling of rooting in being and life, the I would let itself die after encountering the first obstacle of its performance.

20 In any case, the feelings bring to the subject a fact which he cannot doubt, for it is always the I that feels itself:

> "Ich fühle nicht etwas, sonder ich fühle mich" (MK, 78).

21 However, to become an agent in the realm of knowledge, the feeling must be accompanied by an intuition. Already in the *Grundlage* , Fichte had recognized it by paraphrasing Kant: " *intuition sees* – he said then – *but it is empty, the feeling is related to reality but it is blind* " [14] .

22 And so, the oscillatory game of imagination combines – as Fichte puts it – four pieces (*Stücke*) MK, 87: the feeling of limitation, the feeling of aspiration, the intuition of the determined object and the intuition of the ideal. Two feelings and two intuitions: a finite intuition, limited in some respect and variable in each moment, which is the sensible intuition, and an intuition of the absolute and infinite, the intellectual intuition, which is the fixed and immovable pole without which the consciousness would be lost trying to find support for its construction.

23 In this movement of reception and comprehension of data by subsumption of the plurality to the unity, the I is tense and distended as in a movement of systole and diastole [15] , by which it extends its activity and contracts it by admitting the cuts occurring in it. It is for this reason that Fichte describes the imaginative function as pulling lines (*Linienziehen*) or as projecting (*Entwerfen* , MK 110, 201 n.; GNR, SW III, 58). What is outlined in each case are the oscillating, variable limits of the I and, by reference to them, the contours

of the world are also drawn. As Kant had already proven in the "Refutation of Idealism", world and consciousness are always correlative; consciousness is in a sense the world and the world is consciousness. Or, in Fichte's words:

"Ich bin nicht ohne Welt, und meine Welt nicht ohne mich" (MK, 223).

24 As we have said, consciousness develops between limits that are impenetrable, so that the reality that it comprises is also limited. However, it cannot renounce absolute activity, which, although it is unrealizable, remains in consciousness as it did from the beginning, under the form of a now limited aspiration or tendency, which Fichte calls drive, impulse (*Trieb*). This energetic and dynamic aspect – which unquestionably reminds us of Freud, if we ignore the libidinal content of the Freudian drives – allows Fichte to explain the imagination as a unitary process that intervenes both theoretically and practically.

25 In the realm of praxis the oscillation does not stop at the obstacle. Undoubtedly, the I becomes aware of it, but tries to extend its activity beyond the limit by imagining a practical project (*das Ideal*), which, as in Sartre [16] , has a direct relation to the restriction that the I discovered in the affirmation of its activity, because the project is imagined in order to solve the shortcomings that the subject found in its action. Such an extension of the activity is always accompanied by feelings that help the I become aware of what is happening in it. Since for Fichte there is no feeling without action and vice versa, there is no action without feeling, for the latter is considered the internal, the purely subjective side of the activity:

"Kein Gefühl ohne Handeln, kein Handeln ohne Gefühl" (MK 138).

26 This process of projection of the subjective activity, insofar as it is impelled by an absolute tendency, is potentially infinite. For this reason, the I puts as its ultimate purpose the full subjectivation of the world, its unrestricted affirmation, the absolute I, and this is what Fichte calls "idea" (*Idee*) of the I. It is an idea for reason, which operates at every moment of the subject's realization of his aspiration, and which, like all ideas, is only an unrealizable goal for the finite I. In the first place, by the very structure of consciousness that does nothing but move between boundaries. Second, because of the insurmountable physical barrier that death imposes on the empirical subject.

27 In the realm of theory, however, the I stops its movement by accepting its limitation and fixing in a product the synthesis that it obtained at that moment. We will return to how this process is performed. For now it is worth emphasizing that imagination, insofar as it is directly related to freedom, achieves a wider productivity in the praxis, since it allows to modify the world according to a project of affirmation of the subjectivity that does not admit the confines that are imposed from outside and, consequently, denies

the world in order to create a more harmonic environment.

28 Evidently, imagination is presented in the Doctrine of Science as pure dynamism of constitution, as a movement of synthesis between the infinite and the finite, between the ideal and the real, the intelligible and the sensible, unity and multiplicity, or ultimately between the I and the Not-I, thus collecting the etymological meaning of the German word *Einbildungskraft* , as a unifying force, which forms in unity. As in Kant, its main function is productive; it is to create projects and not imitations or reproductions (MK 53). Although in Fichte's case, it is a more radical constructivism, which allows him to define the I as an eye and not as a mirror that is limited to reflect reality (MK 54). This distinction between project and imitation is perfectly captured in the German language. The imagination is primarily the ability to elaborate *Vorbilder* , that is, types or models prior to the finished image, which guide its construction; not *Nachbilder* , mere images, which are the result of the process and therefore something fixed, sclerosed, a product in a sense already reified. That is why it is interesting to note the fact that in his book on the imagination Sartre affirms that the great error of philosophy has been the consideration of the image as an object or a thing [17] , forgetting the contribution of transcendental idealism, not only the contribution of Fichte, but also that of Kant. However, unlike Kant, Fichte's treatment of the imagination is primary, since his explanation is genetic (MK, 192) and ultimately goes back to the absolute spontaneity of the I. The unity of the principle has repercussions on the unity of the imaginative process, whose root is in the activity of a single drive, and thus Fichte can extend the use of the imagination from the theoretical to the practical, making it the basic faculty of man:

> "Im Denken ist kein Fliessen, da ist lauter Stehen, bloss in der Einbildungskraft ist die Basis alles Bewusstseins, soll das Bewusstsein dieses Fliessens sein". (MK 208 n.)

29 The centrality of the imagination in Fichte is reinforced by his deducing it from its very internal dynamics of the pure forms of knowing, something which does not occur in Kant, for in his works there is no genetic explanation of the pure intuitions of space and time nor of the categories.

30 As in the *Grundlage* , in the *Nova methodo* the categories are moments of the imaginative movement, of the unfolding and contraction of the subjective activity, which are fixed by the absolute spontaneity of the I (reason = *Vernunft*), becoming passive products, in concepts of an understanding that is only limited to accept the syntheses obtained [18] .

31 As far as time is concerned, the *Grundlage* offers suggestions for its deduction by asserting that it is the conflict of the imagination with itself what distorts the condition of the I to a temporary moment (SW I, 217). But it is in the *Nova*

methodo , where a detailed exposition of this question appears in which the origin of time is again linked to the imaginative work:

> "Jeder einzelne Moment eine Dauer hat, diese entsteht aus dem Schweben der Einbildungskraft zwischen Entgegegesetzten. Darin besteht die Einbildungskraft, dass ich unendliche theilbares fasse, erst in diesen Zusammenfassen ensteht der Moment" (MK 206).

32 One of the opposites to which Fichte refers in this passage is the intellectual intuition, which I had just characterized as timeless (MK 136), an intuition that reveals an I that, by its absolute presence, is perpetual activity: eternity. The other opposite is the Not-I, a set of the different limitations endured by the activity as plurality versus absolute subjective unity. To become intelligible, this chaotic set requires order, it must become, as Fichte says, a series, a sequence (MK 88). But at the same time, the multiple sensations of the I can only be related and ordered in a succession if there is a point of reference always identical to itself, which is precisely the intellectual intuition. Thus, time is defined as the form of the multiple of intuition (MK 130) or as mediator between the sensible or the intelligible (MK 136 n.) and, in turn, as the connection that we are forced to put to our representations (MK 192). This connection is neither arbitrary nor external to the I. It arises from the tension and distention of the activity in the imaginative process. By introducing the temporal relation, consciousness is constituted as such, it differs from that accumulation of mechanically associated data by referring the series to itself, by adjudicating succession as its product. Thus, time is a peculiarity of consciousness itself; it is the form that the I gives to itself when it is related to multiplicity. Moreover, time becomes the ontological structure of the finite subject, where the being of the I is transformed into a progression. When the I wants to assert itself over the world and it finds obstacles to its expansion, it is forced to look for alternative ways, to oscillate between different options, to disperse its affirmation, to decompress it – as Sartre would say [19] – finally seeking its own reunification. The concept of the purpose is then sketched out and, by outlining this goal, the duration is also created, because, thanks to sensitive mediations, successive actions arise to achieve this goal, the means that are linked in time to their end (MK 206 n.). In other words – which undoubtedly remind Sartre again – the I has to be completed in its unity and is forced to exist in the diasporic form of temporality.

33 Moreover, it is interesting to note that the deduction of time has inevitably been linked to its negation, to eternity. And vice versa, eternity is only given in reference to time. If Fichte had not recognized that intuition brings us into contact with the eternal, with something outside of time, he would have explained the metaphysical with proper physical coordinates. But if he had

not closely linked the eternal to the temporal through the productive imagination, he would have become dogmatic leading to a mystique of the absolute, in which the individual would be absorbed by the totality. It is thus possible to present this link as one more attempt to emphasize the critical nature of his philosophy and his will to deepen human finitude.

34 As for the deduction of space, no reference is found in the exposition of the Doctrine of Science of 1794-95. The first reference appears in paragraph V of the *Grundlage des Naturrechts* . The *Nova methodo* incorporates this deduction by completing the theory of the imagination. As in the case of time, the explanation goes back to the absolute activity of the I, to the freedom that, being limited, requires a sphere of action (MK 114), which necessarily has to be in the Not-I and, therefore, must be material. In the face of an obstacle, imagination is set in motion, which outlines the limits of the I, and in doing so creates space as a form of external intuition (MK 111). The parallelism between this phase and that of the genesis of time reveals that it is a single process, that of the derivation of multiplicity, considered from two different perspectives, and allows to affirm that for Fichte space is externalized time, alienated and reified outside the subject. Thus, objects external to the I are always given in space and, conversely, space is always bound to objects (MK 112). Finally, matter is presented by Fichte as a subjective synthesis between space and objects, making it clear that the sphere of deduced action is the corporeal world (*die Körperwelt* , MK 112 n.). Now, the space between the different corporeal objects is relative and this could not arise if there were no fixed point from which to organize it, just as it is impossible to create a temporal sequence if no reference is made to an inalterable axis and outside time as represented by intellectual intuition. In this way, it is also necessary to formulate an absolute space (MK 114), generated from an identical point that for each particular I is its own body (MK 124). Thus, in a similar way as was already done in the *Grundlage des Naturrechts* , also in the *Nova methodo* the deduction of space is associated with the deduction of the body as a system of sensibility – whose existence is noted by the subject – of what Fichte calls "original feeling" (*Urgefühl* , MK 139). At the same time, as in that work, the deduction of corporality leads to the deduction of other individuals (MK 150), of a material community, which serves as a sphere of manifestation of freedom, an indirect manifestation, that is always mediated by the immediate sphere of realization of the freedom of each one, which is the own body [20] . In this way, the body presents itself as an instrument of action in the world, but also – as Sartre said [21] – as a way of adapting our consciousness to the world, with which it identifies itself. Precisely for this reason, for Fichte, the feeling that is at the basis of the uptake and assumption of our body is primary, it is the feeling that reveals our

individuality, fundamentally our limitation, and therefore also our conscience. Hence, in its eagerness to accentuate the finite character of man, the *Nova methodo* culminates in the defense of the inseparability of body and spirit (MK 160), and the full identification of body and soul (MK 171) for it is a single reality, the same I perceived sensibly, but from two different strands: that of the external and that of the internal sense [22] .

35 By way of concluding this brief summary of the imaginative function, we can say that the greatest contribution of the *Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo* is to have placed the imagination at the center of all human activity, presenting it in a unitary way. Fichte prefers to refer to it using the geometric images that were dear to him in his youth, for example, almost at the end of the *Nova methodo* , he says that consciousness is a circle whose center is the intelligible, inseparable from the infinite, from which it extends, radiating through the imagination to the periphery, according to the necessary laws of thinking that connect the outer edge to its center allowing it to contain everything that is empirical and sensitive (MK 207). However, the process that is described is not so much a function of mathematical reason in its constructive power, but the creative and vital capacity of an organism in which homeostatic laws govern. On this matter Fichte, like most intellectuals of his time, has passed from the admiration of *more geometrico* of Spinoza to an organic and teleological vision [23] , which is precisely the one that is announced at the end of the *Nova methodo* and allows him to think nature as *analogon* of freedom. Fichte presents the human activity in a unitary and comprehensive way, as a dynamic process in which all the elements are put together, deepening the suggestion that Kant had made about the organic character of the reason [24] , complemented by the idea that there is an epigenetic theory, that allows to explain the synthesis of the categories from the transcendental apperception [25] .

36 Thus, at the beginning of the process is the undeveloped totality, that is, the tendency to the absolute, and, just as in an organism, that initial germ grows and matures in contact with the world in a game of action and reaction that ends up doing synthesis with that world in order to survive. In this game of exchange, the organism creates its own organs, which in this case, are the structures of the subject: time, space, concepts, practical projects, and so on. And the process of homeostasis itself creates them by maintaining an internal balance, which requires parallelism and complementarity of the opposing elements. Thus the feeling corresponds to intuition, intellectual intuition with the sensible, space with time, intuitions with concepts, categories arise in pairs, which find a synthesis in the third of each group, and the body with the soul.

37 Each one of the organs is important, necessary, because they all obey the end of the whole organism. Every moment is preserved without one displacing or replacing the other, even the most primitive, which are integrated by the higher moments. The final end is the realization of the effective freedom of the organism by intermingling with others, its full development in the world, the affirmation of its laws above the irrational. The creative capacity that realizes this process of subjectivation of the world, the synthesis, is the productive imagination. This subjectivation is only partial in knowledge, since the representations are determined by a feeling of necessity, whereas, in praxis, the subjectivation, besides being ideal, is real and, therefore, complete. Although it is limited by the particularity of individuals and the duration of their physical life, so that this process is posed as a task extended to the infinite, achievable gradually by humanity alone. And if the imagination can assume this basic and transforming function it is because it is a movement between two poles, a "between" that bridges lie on the gap that separates the intelligible and the sensible. Although the absolute can be the ultimate referent and the source that contains the mystery of life, the truth is that reality, consciousness and effective freedom, are in the interstice. Thus the Fichtean theory of imagination in the *Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo* shows us the absolute from the finite, a finitude that is consummated with the deduction of the body, a deduction that is realized through the imagination.

NOTES

1. Plato, *The Republic* , 510 n.

2. Descartes, R., *Metaphysical Meditations* VI (Tr. Morente: Madrid, Espasa Calpe, 2006, 121, 131, 175).

3. "according to itself given any time and place", Hume, D., *Treatise* I, I, Sec. IV, 10.

4. Tetens, J. N., *Philosophische Versuche über die menschliche Natur und ihre Entwicklung* , Riga, 1776, vol. I, 320.

5. B 12, R 5635, E 67. Cfr. Beck, L. W., *Early German Philosophy. Kant and his Predecessors* . Cambridge Mass., the Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1969, 412-125 and Allison, H. E.: *Kant´s Transcendental Deduction: An Analytical-historial Commentary* . Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2015, 153 n.

6. Kant, KrV, Parag. 27, B 166-168. In view of this text, Mensch argues that "Kant knew that his theory moved between Locke, Condillac and Bonnet". Cfr. Mensch, Jennifer,

Kant´s Organisation: Epigenesis and the Development of Critical Philosophy . Chicago, University Chicago Press, 2013. See also: KrV, 113 n.

7. Kant, KrV, A 50/B 74; Beck, *op. cit* ., 268-269.

8. Fichte, J. G., *Doctrine of Science nova methodo* , 46, 51. The edition used here corresponds to the Krause Manuscript in the version of Erich Fuchs, appeared in Felix Meiner, Hamburg, 1982, from now on: MK.

9. Fichte, ZEWL, SW I, 461 and WL, SW X, 114. Mme. De Stäel sums up Fichte's philosophy with the following formula: " *Il faut comprendre l'incomprehensible comme tel* " (De l'Allemagne IV, 253), which Fichte himself uses in a letter to Reinhold to define his thought. See *Ruckerinnungen, Antworten und Fragen* , par. 7 and 8, SW V, 341 n.

10. Fichte, GWL, SW I, see the "Deduction of representation".

11. GWL, SW I, 212, 228, among others.

12. GWL, SW I, 301 and 328.

13. MK, 68. See also GWL, SW I, 134 n. and ZEWL, SW I, 490.

14. SW I, 319. See also MK, 71, 79 n. and 87.

15. The expression is used by Novalis in *Allgemeines Brouillon* to refer to the two movements of the divine life, which are expressed both within the subject and in nature. *Novalis Werke* (ed. Edward Wasmuth), Heidelberg, 1957, IV, 446.

16. *Being and Nothingness* , Part II, Cap. IV: "The for-itself and the being of the possible".

17. Sartre, J. P., *The Imagination* . Tr. Buenos Aires, Sudamericana, 1978, 22 n.

18. In this way, Fichte gathers the etymological meaning of the German word *Verstand* , as what remains, MK 32 n.

19. *Being and Nothingness* , Part II, Cap.II. "Ontology of temporality".

20. On this matter, see my article: "Die Idee des Leibes im Jenaer System", in *Fichte Studien* XVI (1999), 273-293.

21. *Being and Nothingness* , Part III, Cap. II, 1: "The body as being for-itself: facticity"

22. Fichte, WLnM, Halle Manuskript, GA IV, 2, 139.

23. Among these contemporaries we shall mention Herder, Goethe and Schelling. Fichte implicitly uses Herder's notion of organism, whose laws of behavior have not only served to explain evolution in nature but also in history. On this latter application, see, e.g., *Ideas on the Philosophy of the History of Mankind* , Part III, Chap. XV, 2 and 3. It is interesting to note that many of the principles used by Herder pass to Lamarck, although restricted to the purely biological sphere, as well as to H. Spencer, as he applies them in this case, also to society. It is also to be noted that the shift of theoretical interest from mathematics to life sciences already occurs in Leibniz, since, for him, medicine was the model science. This is reflected, of course, in his metaphysics and, in particular, in the idea of substance as a monad. Cf. Smith, Justin: *Divine Machines. Leibniz and the Sciences of Life* . Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2011.

24. KrV, BXXIII; BXXXVII n. and B 860 n./ A 832 n.

25. KrV, Par. 27, B 166-168. See Zöller, G., "Kant on the Generation of Metaphysical Knowledge", in *Kant. Analysen-Probleme-Kritik*. Würzbug, Könighausen & Neumann, 1988, p. 85 n. and Moya, E., "Apriorismo, epigénesis y evolución" in *Revista de Filosofía*, 30, 2 (2005), 61-88.

ABSTRACTS

Traditionally, imagination has been dismissed or devalued by philosophy. For centuries, it was considered a minor and secondary function in the constitution of our worldview. And this holds true for both its reproductive and productive aspects. In this paper, it will be argued that the view of the imagination changed radically after Kant, because he considered imagination not only a fundamental active faculty in the process of knowledge but also an authentic creative force, present both in aesthetic experience and in artistic production. With this he prepared the way for Fichte, Schelling and the Romantics, transforming it into an inventive activity, linked to genius and freedom, but at the same time, builder of our reality. Fichte is completely faithful to Kant's theory of transcendental imagination, but, as it will be argued, he presents it from a different conception of philosophy, which will allow him to expand, deepen, and make it the basic faculty of man. Fichte took his principle, the last explanatory ground of the system, from the second *Critique* , from the Kantian idea that the key to the whole edifice of reason lies in practical reason. And so his starting point was the *Thathandlung* , the absolute action, without further conditions. This would give rise to a holistic vision, where the unity underlies the different human faculties, in a globalizing process led by the imagination, which creates new spheres of freedom, constructing all human activity, whether theoretical, practical, aesthetic or political .

INDEX

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REFERENCIA

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1 En su último libro *Remnants of Hegel* Félix Duque, sin duda alguna uno de los más prestigiosos, creativos e interesantes comentadores de Hegel y la filosofía moderna en lengua española, profesor emérito de la Universidad Autónoma de Madrid e inspiración de más de una generación de especialistas en la filosofía clásica alemana en el mundo iberoamericano, nos ofrece una visión de conjunto actualizada del corazón mismo del proyecto hegeliano. No se trata, en este sentido de otro libro más sobre Hegel, sino de un ejercicio hermenéutico y fenomenológico, en sentido hegeliano, que a través del diálogo con Hegel intenta dilucidar el sentido de la existencia humana en nuestro presente.

2 A diferencia de otros comentarios filosóficos, *Remnants of Hegel* no es el producto del trabajo solitario del especialista, sino que es un libro nacido de y durante la actividad académica de Duque. Los cinco capítulos que componen este libro son versiones revisadas, aumentadas y mejoradas de seminarios, cursos y conferencias dictadas por Duque en los últimos cinco años en universidades de Europa y Latinoamérica. Las versiones definitivas de los capítulos son, como confiesa Duque, el resultado de una revisión en la que comentarios tanto de colegas como de estudiantes han contribuido. Cada capítulo puede ser considerado una obra de arte, el producto del trabajo artesanal de Duque no sólo para lograr claridad sino también una cierta belleza que el lector apreciará tanto en el tempo de la prosa como en la meditada elección de las palabras y, sobre todo, de las líneas con la que cada

capítulo se cierra. Fiel a Hegel Duque no renuncia a las posibilidades poéticas que nos da el lenguaje a la hora de expresar el concepto. También a diferencia de otros comentarios sobre Hegel, Duque muestra poco o casi nulo interés en confrontar con la literatura secundaria. Para hacer comprensible su Hegel, reconstruido esencialmente a partir de la *Fenomenología,* la *Ciencia de la lógica,* la *lógica* y la *Filosofía de la naturaleza* de la *Enciclopedia* y las lecciones sobre filosofía de la religión, Duque se vale de otro tipo de interlocutores: Aristóteles, Heidegger, Derrida, Pablo de Tarso, Kant, Descartes, Spinoza, Novalis, Hölderlin, Goethe, Machado, Rosenkranz, Adrono, Rousseau, Tomás de Aquino, Boecio, la *Gran Enciclopedia Soviética* y los Evangelios.

3 Ahora bien, ¿cómo debemos traducir "remnants" para entender el título de esta obra? ¿Se trata de los "retazos", los "restos", las "ruinas" que caen *fuera* del trabajo del concepto hegeliano? ¿O es la intención de Duque mostrarnos qué es lo que queda o sobrevive hoy de aquella sistemática explicación del modo en que la totalidad de la realidad se manifiesta en y por el pensamiento? Ni lo uno ni lo otro. En primer lugar, estos "restos" son, sostiene Duque, "precisamente el todo de la *Lógica* misma." Los restos de Hegel no hay que buscarlos fuera sino dentro del sistema. Pues ellos son la verdad de esta filosofía, es decir, el producto de la completa auto-supresión de todas las síntesis de las distintas determinaciones lógicas que intentaron, sin éxito, expresar de una vez y para siempre lo Absoluto: la negación determinada del escepticismo hegeliano bien entendido de la *Fenomenología* . Este modo trágico de vivir la filosofía tanto en su propia historia como en su efectiva realidad no hace más, como indica Duque, que tornar comprensible *a contrario sensu* la manera en la que los mortales se acercan a lo Absoluto. En segundo lugar, estos "restos" son, como aclara Duque, "las heridas que, tal vez en oposición a las intenciones deliberadas del gran filósofo melancólico suabo, pueden ser expuestas en textos que aún pueden llegar a provocar nuevos pensamientos con respecto a otros restos. Dicho con otras palabras: con respecto a lo que queda de aquello que una vez se llamó a sí mismo con orgullo Occidente – incluso si al hacerlo negara probablemente el significado último de la palabra *Abendland,* la tierra del sol poniente. Tal vez estamos comenzando a entender la razón de semejante nombre oscuro." Siguiendo a Duque, entonces, se puede afirmar que Hegel nos ayuda, por lo tanto, a leer en la palabra Occidente el verbo latino "occidere", de modo que comencemos a comprendernos como habitantes de la tierra en la que algo o alguien (¿el sol? ¿Dios? ¿el hombre?) perece, muere, ha perdido orientación o sencillamente se ha arruinado. La actualización de Hegel, es decir, la tarea de poner su filosofía en diálogo con nuestro tiempo y darle así un lugar en nuestro presente, no consiste pues en aggiornar el mensaje hegeliano a nuestra particularidad histórica sino, por el contrario, en dejarlo

manifestarse tal como es de modo que arroje luz sobre la dimensión conceptual de nuestro tiempo. De allí, creo entender, el constante esfuerzo de Duque en este libro de leer a Hegel lo más fielmente posible, lo cual no significa hacerlo de modo anacrónico sino a partir de actitudes nobles tales como la admiración y el respeto sin las cuales ningún aprendizaje es posible.

4 *Remnants of Hegel* es un título que en lugar de fijar un significado, problematiza no sólo nuestras lecturas e interpretaciones de Hegel, sino que además abre nuevos campos semánticos para entender la obra del filósofo alemán y sobre todo nuestro presente. El argumento central del libro es que las heridas del espíritu que la filosofía hegeliana torna visibles no desaparecen totalmente sino que permanecen bajo la forma de cicatrices. De allí que Duque se atreva a afirmar, con convicción envidiable, que el sistema hegeliano es en última instancia "un intento malogrado de reconciliar naturaleza y teoría, individualidad y praxis colectiva".

5 La demostración de semejante afirmación – tal vez un ejemplo de lo que la amistad filosófica en esencia es, si recordamos por ejemplo el Sócrates de Platón o lo que Deleuze y Guattari nos dicen sobre este tipo de amistad en su *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?* – se desarrolla en cinco capítulos. En el primero, "Substrato y sujeto (Hegel tras Aristóteles)", Duque ofrece una lectura detenida del célebre adagio de la *Fenomenología* acerca de que "todo depende de aprehender y expresar lo verdadero no en cuanto sustancia sino precisamente tanto más en cuanto sujeto". En su análisis Duque se sirve en primer lugar del legado de Aristóteles y Heidegger, sin por esto dedicar algunas reflexiones a posiciones de la filosofía moderna tales como Descartes y Spinoza. Es digno de destacar el esfuerzo de Duque en este capítulo por intentar comprender el dictum hegeliano sin caer en los lugares comunes de los estudios y traducciones de Hegel que sostienen que el texto tiene que ser corregido antes de ser comprendido. Duque, a contracorriente de esta costumbre, propone interpretar sin violentar el texto gramaticalmente. El objetivo de Duque en este capítulo es mostrar que el giro de la metafísica hacia el sujeto lejos de brindar soluciones abre un nuevo problema: el de la imposibilidad del sujeto de dominarse a sí mismo en cuanto sustancia.

6 El segundo capítulo lleva por título "Hegel sobre la muerte de Cristo (Yo soy la lucha misma)". La exposición que hace Duque del modo en que Hegel lee el fenómeno histórico Cristo en cuanto momento del espíritu tiene como fin tornar comprensible en primer lugar cuál es el mensaje de Hegel detrás de su cristología, a saber, por un lado, que en Cristo es la muerte misma quien muere, Cristo nos devuelve a la finitud, por el otro, que con Cristo la subjetividad no se conoce a sí misma como la unificación, harmónica o no, de los antagonistas que componen la naturaleza humana, llámense éstos por ejemplo agua y fuego o teoría y praxis, sino antes bien como la unidad de los

opuestos en sentido espacial, es decir: como el campo de batalla donde agua y fuego existen siendo ellos mismos aquello que deben ser: fuerzas antagónicas cuya vida consiste, tal como Schiller lo afirma en *Las cartas sobre la educación estética del hombre,* en un incesante esfuerzo por oprimir o aniquilar a su contrario. Es este campo de batalla el objeto del trabajo de la religión, el cual debe preparar al individuo para la vida en sociedad instruyéndolo en la sabiduría de morir al mundo, es decir, de abandonar la naturaleza inmediata, para entonces adquirir esa segunda naturaleza humana que llamamos la vida política en general. Este paso de una primera a una segunda naturaleza no cura las heridas sino que, tal como sostiene Duque siguiendo la idea básica de este libro, fija cicatrices que posibilitan nuevas formas de auto-consciencia.

7 En el tercer capítulo, "La muerte es un trago de agua (*La Terreur* en la historia universal)". Duque se concentra en la idea hegeliana de revolución en general y en la lectura hegeliana del terrorismo de la revolución francesa en particular. Luego de una introducción, en la que entre otras cosas se nos informa acerca de la increíble recepción del idealismo alemán por parte del comunismo stalinista, y en la que Duque ensaya una interpretación de nuestra a-teleológica auto-consciencia geo-política e histórica y no duda en mostrar las deficiencias de los críticos actuales de Hegel, Duque dirige toda su atención al modo banal y crudo en que la muerte según Hegel se manifiesta en la época del Terror revolucionario en la Francia de fines del siglo dieciocho. Esta muerte tan natural como irrelevante se apoya en su reverso: la infinitud, también vacua, de la libertad absoluta que no es más que la negación sin determinación alguna del señorío tanto de Dios como de la naturaleza. Ahora bien, esta experiencia que hace la consciencia de la muerte y del terror produce, como señala Duque, una segunda forma de consciencia de ambos fenómenos en la que la muerte misma aparece como el señor absoluto y el terror como la base de la institucionalización, que cobra realidad efectiva bajo el mando de Napoleón, de los principios de libertad, igualdad y fraternidad. En este capítulo el lector encontrará pasajes en los que Duque logra una claridad diáfana en su intento de explicar la dinámica que Hegel atribuye a la consciencia en cuanto tal y en cuanto espíritu así como también podrá apreciar uno de los puntos más interesantes de la lectura que hace Duque de la *Fenomenología* al ponerla en diálogo con la filosofía de la naturaleza de Hegel.

8 En el cuarto capítulo, "Persona, libertad y comunidad", Duque analiza explícitamente el tema de los restos o retazos de Hegel. Duque comienza con una problematización de la actividad de la idea en la lógica hegeliana entendida como un diferenciarse de todo error, confusión, opinión y arbitrariedad. ¿Cómo puede hablarse de algo que caiga afuera de la idea si la idea lo es todo? Lo que resta, lo que queda como restos del trabajo del espíritu

no es, según Duque, sino el exceso mismo de la idea. Lo que Duque intenta hacer comprensible aquí es la génesis de la exterioridad o alteridad en cuanto tal dentro de un sistema que permanece fiel al postulado de la inmanencia absoluta. De este modo Duque ofrece una interpretación de lo otro de la idea con el fin de explicar el paso de la lógica o de lo lógico a la dimensión práctica o política de la individualidad y comunidad auto-consciente. En este paso de teoría a praxis la libertad absoluta es interiorizada en la moralidad de modo que el individuo se conozca en cuanto persona en sentido legal moderno o, como sugiere Duque, en cuanto *homo oeconomicus:* el sujeto moderno divido de nuestro presente gobernado por las leyes del mercado.

9 El quinto y último capítulo, intitulado "La razón errante (el perecer de la comunidad)" permite entender todo lo que se ha venido acumulando en los capítulos anteriores. La tensión entre el sujeto y su sí-mismo en cuanto sustancia, el redescubrimiento de la finitud ya sin naturaleza ni mundo por medio de Cristo, el derramamiento infinito e indeterminado de sangre como afirmación de la libertad abstracta revolucionaria y la fundación de la vida política incluyente y alienante en términos de lo que Hegel llama la sociedad civil cobran un nuevo brillo a la luz de un nuevo problema: el de la comprensión de la naturaleza de un Dios que ha demostrado poder gozar con la sangre derramada por la humanidad en la historia universal, que ha encontrado paz, dicho de otro modo, en las ruinas de Occidente.

10 En *Remnants of Hegel* Duque da una lección de lo que significa leer a Hegel, es más: de las consecuencias y efectos secundarios de una lectura comprometida y fiel. Se trata, por esta razón, de un estudio valioso y relevante no sólo para aquél que quiera sumergirse en el universo hegeliano sin dejarse llevar de las narices por discusiones técnicas carentes de espíritu filosófico, sino también o sobre todo para aquél que desee perderse y volver a encontrarse en la nada determinada que, tal como muestra Duque, es el sistema hegeliano.

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