

FICHTEANA

Review of J.G. Fichte Research

No. 23 (2023)

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Editorial

February 2024

We were on the verge of completing issue 23 of FICHTEANA when we received the terrible news of Daniel Breazeale's passing. We send our sincerest condolences to his wife Viviane, his daughters Nicole and Rebecca, and to his family, friends, and colleagues.

The *Anstoß* or original impetus for Dan Breazeale's lifelong career devoted to research on J.G. Fichte was reading Bertrand Russell's remark that the creator of the *Wissenschaftslehre* was a philosopher who had "carried subjectivism to a point which seems almost to involve a kind of insanity."¹ Dan couldn't believe that sounded right, so he went to investigate for himself. That attitude formed the basis of his approach to the study of Fichte's philosophy in general: "My own work on Fichte always begins with a specific *problem*, with a particular issue raised by my frustrated efforts to make sense of Fichte's writing."²

Dan's impact on Fichtean and post-Kantian scholarship has been astonishingly productive, wide-ranging, and transformative. If anyone doubts the possibility of their work having lasting effects, they only need look to Dan's life and career to draw positive inspiration. Through his teaching, writings, conferences, and ground-breaking translations, he almost single-handedly led the resurgence of close and critical Fichte studies in the English-speaking world. In 1991 he co-founded (or co-positated as he would cheekily say) with Tom Rockmore the North American Fichte Society, a group that holds biennial national or international conferences open to young and established scholars alike. Up until 2019 the proceedings were co-edited by Dan in a dozen published volumes.

Thirty years ago, in 1993, Dan also founded the present publication: FICHTEANA. As the previous twenty-two issues attest, he was extremely fond of this newsletter. It gave him great pleasure to keep up with and inform others of the latest Fichte publications and events in both North America and around the world.

He wrote of its aim in issue 1:

¹ Bertrand Russell, *History of Western Philosophy* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1946), 744.

² Daniel Breazeale, *Thinking Through the Wissenschaftslehre: Themes from Fichte's Early Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), vii.

This first number of *Fichteana* inaugurates a project I have contemplated for some time and hope will help to nourish the current revival of interest in Fichte and transcendental philosophy in the anglophone world. In addition to announcing the next meeting of the North American Fichte Society, this first issue of *Fichteana* also contains information concerning other Fichte societies and conferences, as well as information on new and recent publications.

The present issue 23 of FICHTEANA is dedicated to Dan. It includes remembrances, condolences, and tributes to his life and work. We thank Viv, Nicole, and Becca, for allowing us to reprint their beautiful and moving obituary of Dan that appeared in the *Lexington Herald-Leader*, as well as for permission to use the photo of him. A number of close friends and Fichtean colleagues of Dan also generously took time to write reflections. In addition, Gabe Gottlieb kindly gathered remembrances by members of the North American Fichte Society that were sent to the Breazeale family; we thank these members for permitting us to publish their remembrances here. All these testimonies add up to an unmistakable and heartfelt portrait of a unique family man, friend, mentor, colleague, and scholar.

*

Following the Celebration of Life organized by Dan's family in Lexington, Kentucky, on 20th January 2024, there are now a number of other events and publications planned that will further commemorate his life and work.

The Sixteenth Biennial Meeting of the North American Fichte Society will be held at University College London, in the United Kingdom, from 15-17 June 2024. Organized by Benjamin Crowe, Gabriel Gottlieb, and Rory Phillips, it is dedicated to Dan and his recent edition in English of Fichte's 1794/95 *Foundation of the Entire Wissenschaftslehre*.

The Leuven Seminar in Classical German Philosophy is hosting an online event on 25 April 2024, from 5-7pm local time, entitled: "Commemorating the Work and Legacy of Daniel Breazeale (1945-2023)." Among the speakers: Karl Ameriks, Gabriel Gottlieb, Karin Nisenbaum, John Walsh, and Halla Kim.

Elizabeth Millán is editing a special volume of *Philosophy Today* that will contain essays in honor of Daniel Breazeale. It will appear as issue 64:4, Fall 2025, with contributions by Arnold Farr, Gabriel Gottlieb, Elizabeth Millán, Angelica Nuzzo, David W. Wood, and Günter Zöllner.

*

Some other upcoming Fichte events to keep in mind: The next annual international meeting in Rammenau (Fichte's birthplace) will take place 24-26 May 2024; its focus is a close reading of the second 1804 cycle of lectures on the *Wissenschaftslehre*. Red Ibérica de Estudios Fichteanos (RIEF) will host a conference from 19-20 June 2024, at the University of Valencia, devoted to Jimena Solé's new Spanish translation of Fichte's book on the French Revolution. The 40th Annual Conference of the Fichte Society of Japan will be held at Osaka University in November 2024. The XIIth Congress of the Internationale Johann Gottlieb Fichte-Gesellschaft, organized by Petra Lohmann, Matteo d'Alfonso, and the executive leadership, will be in Ferrara, Italy, in September 2025. Details of all these events are in the Bulletin below and on our website.

*

FICHTEANA 23 (2023) contains eleven book reviews – four of new editions of Fichte's works, and seven of recent book-length volumes. The reviewers for this issue are: Silvestre Gristina, Luis Felipe Garcia, Selda Salman, David W. Wood, Maiko Tsuji, Michael G. Vater, Matthew Nini, Dale Snow, Jordi Vernis López, Laurent Guyot, and Maurizio Maria Malimpensa. We are indebted to these reviewers for their efforts in writing in English about Fichte publications and texts that appeared in eight different languages.

As is customary, the Bulletin includes brief overviews of the different Fichte societies from around the globe, a bibliography of recently published works, as well as information on conferences, CFPs, translations in progress, and doctoral dissertations defended on Fichte.

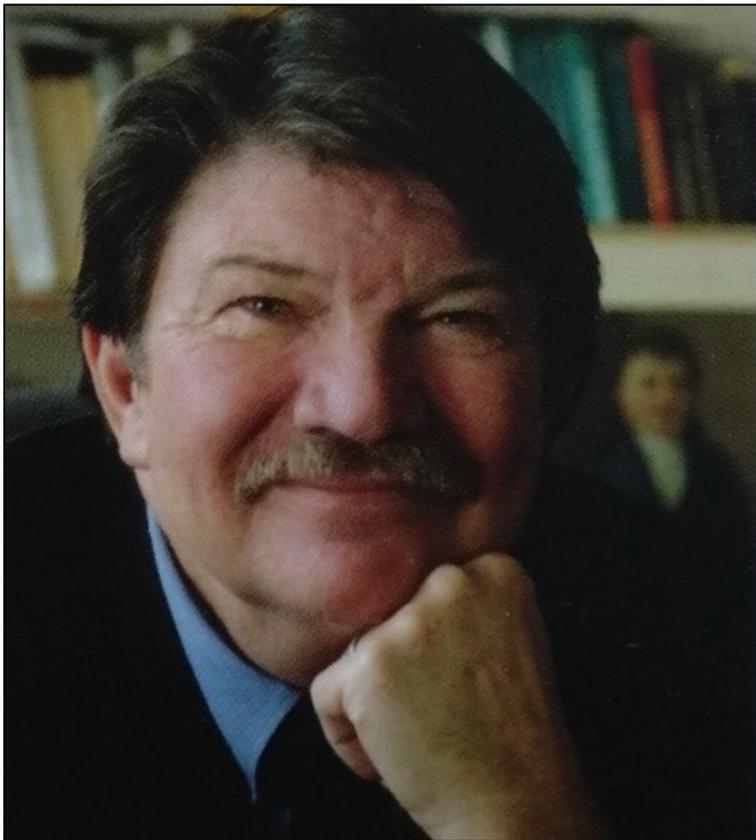
For supplying information and for assistance in putting this issue together, our thanks go to Gabriel Gottlieb, Yukio Irie, Salvi Turró, Faustino Oncina Coves, Hitoshi Minobe, Laurent Guyot, Jimena Solé, Michihito Yoshime, Nobukuni Suzuki, Simon Lee, Maiko Tsuji, Maurizio Maria Malimpensa, Thomas Kissler, and Laure Cahen-Maurel.

We are particularly grateful to our associate editors, Kienhow Goh and Gesa Wellmann, and to the members of our advisory board for their faithful support.

A provisional version of this issue appeared last month in January; this is now the definitive version. For queries, feedback, items for future issues, corrections, or omissions, please send an email to: fichteana@gmail.com

David W. Wood

In memoriam Daniel Breazeale (1945-2023)



James Daniel Breazeale (1/23/45 to 12/30/23) was known by many names in his life, including Dan, Danny, Dad, Achoo, and Granddaddy. Through the course of his 78 years, he earned an unlimited number of words to be remembered by, and he would be honored to know that others were inspired to encapsulate his legacy in words of their own, for he was eternally committed to the transformative power of human thought and writing.

By all measures that matter, Dan was larger than life. He was a man of unparalleled conviction, who lived his life intentionally, in deep contemplation. Through it all, he loved in action, not simply in exclamation. Nowhere was this more felt than how he adored his family. Born to Woody and Melba, he was raised in Houston, TX, where two years later he was joined by his younger brother Kelly. Their family remained close throughout the years, regardless of the miles that separated them.

With the solid foundation of this upbringing and the confidence of youth, he was fortunate to convince his high school sweetheart, Viv, to become his wife. He thereby lived his entire adult life in utter devotion to her for over 60 years. To witness their love was a gift, of which they gave freely. They orbited each other, ate every meal together, and until the end, always walked hand in hand. In union, they raised their daughters Nicole and Rebecca in Lexington, KY, where they both remain today. In conjunction with their partners, Phil (deceased), Bleik and Ben, they have subsequently raised families of their own, including Dan's grandchildren, Alex, Anna, Tyson and then Jasper & Owen. In this role of grandfather, in fact, he shone the brightest. And, of course, his life was accompanied by a bevy of dogs who wagged their way through his days. His commitment to family defied the limits of physics, and only grew stronger with each passing year. And while it's impossible to measure this capacity for love, it was felt in the hearts of all who were lucky enough to spend time with him.

Beyond family, Dan was a loyal and trusted friend to so many in all the stages of his life. He inspired them, reveled with them, and quickly formed kinships. His personality was magnetic, drawing people to him, and his quick banter always allowed him to make conversation in a room. He was a beautiful speaker, always quick with a toast, and even faster with a hug. He was witty and warm, and his friends loved to bask in his company.

In parallel to his prioritization of family, Dan was also a man of intellectual genius, and his contributions to the academic world, especially to the field of German philosophy, will never cease to ripple. From his humble roots at Austin College (he was honored many years later with the 2011 Distinguished Alumnus Award) to the

awarding of his doctorate from Yale University, he spent his entire teaching career at the University of Kentucky, where he made his home along with a lasting impact on the university community. He earned praise and awards by countless institutions for his work, including an astonishing 6 National Endowment for the Humanities research grants and 2 Humboldt Research fellowships. He gave over 100 invited talks around the world. Furthermore, he was a prolific author. He published 88 book chapters, journal articles, and research essays, along with more than 2 dozen book translations and volumes, including the 2013 monograph, *Thinking Through the Wissenschaftslehre*, and the 2021 edited text, J.G. Fichte: *Foundation of the Entire Wissenschaftslehre*.

Beyond his published body of work, he believed in leadership, helping to found the North American Fichte Society in 1991 and serving as the Philosophy Department Chair not once but twice, from 1998-2002 and again from 2007-2009. He was a world class beacon for philosophical scholarship and this contribution was recognized by the University of Kentucky's Provost as one of a small handful of Distinguished Service Professors for his outstanding service both to the university as well as to the profession.

Beyond his professional CV, he was, at his core, a mentor. He was deeply respected by his colleagues (no small task in the cut-throat world of academics). Furthermore, he never forgot to take the department secretary out for holidays and remained in communication with her throughout the years. Of greater importance, he regularly received praise from his students, and doctoral students routinely came to UK explicitly to work with Dan. Despite his early tenure, he continued to teach undergraduate students. He received the College of Arts & Sciences Distinguished Professor Award in 2006, honoring him amongst all the faculty in the college as one to emulate. And while he was known for his rigorous standards and tough marks, students clamored to enroll in his classes. He loved to challenge their thinking and inspire them to imagine more. Over the years, he chaired a jaw-dropping 17 graduate students to the completion of their PhDs. And he regularly stayed on at the fringes of their lives, beyond their departure from the program.

Aside from his documentable accomplishments, Dan had an insatiable appetite for beauty and life's pleasures. He adored food of all kinds, especially rich French dishes, and he was an accomplished cook in his own right. He particularly enjoyed consumption when shared with others over a hearty debate or a philosophical discussion. He was an avid traveler, having visited nearly every continent. He loved to learn from these visits, partaking of different tastes and customs, architectural sights, and historical importance. He especially enjoyed exploring out of the way places, and likely visited every remote church in France to admire its design and discover its historical significance from his treasured Michelin guides.

He resonated with the arts. No doubt, if an art museum was in driving's distance, he'd be there, preferably to spend the entire day pursuing galleries at his own pace. And there was hardly ever a time when he didn't surround himself with music, especially Bob Dylan. In fact, art and music vied throughout his life for his attention, and he was accomplished in both. He loved to draw, whether with pencil doodles on scrap paper with grandchildren or on canvases with oil paints. He also loved to play music, and would often while away the evening hours picking on a guitar, a banjo, or singing a song with Viv. And his creativity extended beyond the usual artistic mediums. He constantly fashioned handy objects or household repairs from found scraps he collected on his walks to and from the office. There was nothing he couldn't do with a bread twist tie and a scrap of wood in his ramshackle basement.

He also loved the outdoors, and spent much of his younger days rock climbing, backpacking, and hiking his beloved Rocky Mountains in Colorado with friends and family. These experiences were only made better should he get to meander along a stream fly fishing for trout. He loved the water too, and was always happy to splash in the ocean like a young boy or jump into a lake. He was always the adult who joined the kids in the pool.

In each of his pursuits there was a zest for life. Dan loved to laugh, causing his eyes, already deep set, to crinkle in delight. He was a brilliant storyteller, an art he learned from his father and earlier ancestors, which he dutifully passed on to the subsequent generations. When Dan entered a room, he undeniably brought his imposing brain and his passionate heart. But he also brought joy. To honor his legacy, his family, friends, and loved ones must now bring this joy forward. For that is the way life is meant to be lived. And that's the way in which Dan lived his.

The family will host a Celebration of Life for Dan on Saturday January 20th from 10am - 11:30am in Lexington, KY, at the Bolivar Art Gallery at the UK School of Art and Visual Studies at 236 Bolivar St. In lieu of flowers, they ask you to consider a donation to WUKY, his local NPR affiliate, that provided the backdrop to each of his workspaces for decades. May they keep spreading knowledge.

Viviane Breazeale, Nicole Breazeale, Rebecca Self

Erich Fuchs

Memoir für Dan

Lieber Dan,

mein Kopf ist leer, aber mein Herz ist voll. Was kann ich sagen? Meine Abschiedsworte an den besten Freund seit 38 Jahren, den Freund, mit dem ich zusammen laut denken konnte.

Wir haben einige Namen für uns erfunden, wie: altes Haus, old pulley wheel, seit wir in den Mittwochabend-Seminaren über Fichtes Wissenschaftslehre 1804 bei Reinhard Lauth in München ins Gespräch kamen; wir gingen bald einmal in Eure Wohnung in der Schackstraße am Siegestor. Wie herzlich hat Viviane den neuen (mehr oder weniger philosophierenden) Eindringling Erich begrüßt. Die beiden „Fichteaner“ wollten sich einem ganz absonderlichen Vergnügen hingeben: einer Partie der Soccer-Weltmeisterschaft im TV. Die Soccer-Begeisterung hatte dich mit den beiden Töchtern Nicole und Becca infiziert. Dies erfuhren wir beim ersten Besuch der Familie Breazeale bei uns am 19. Juni 1986; aber noch etwas: du mahntest bald zum Aufbruch und wurdest von Viviane mit energischem „Daaaniel!“ zur Ordnung gerufen: eine andere Partie lockte dich an den Bildschirm.

Eine lange Freundschaft begann. Zuerst mit Briefen, dann mit E-mails, die wir alle bis heute gesammelt haben. Wie oft nennst du uns darin deine „zweite Familie“! Von Lexington aus überfielst du mich bald mit einer Flut von Fragen zu Fichtes Texten. Unsere gegenseitige Sympathie war schon so stabil, dass ich gerne half, deine Übersetzungsarbeit zu unterstützen. Vor allem am *frühen* Fichte! Neben den philosophisch-philologischen Themen blieb der Blick auf unsere Frauen und Kinder genau so wichtig. Wir waren uns bald einig darüber, wie viel wir unserer Frau und und der Familie verdanken. Wir haben Viv – wegen ihrer Lehrtätigkeit blieb sie oft zu Hause – erst neun Jahre später wieder gesehen, als ihr uns 1995 nach Houlgate eingeladen habt. Dafür mehrmals zusammen mit dir, als sie dich nach ihrer Pensionierung begleiten konnte.

Nach Deinem zweiten Aufenthalt 1992 schriebst Du: „thank you and Ida-Maria and all of your wonderful children for making me feel so much a part of your family. As useful as the Conference was, and as interesting the trip afterwards, what I will remember longest and most fondly about this trip will certainly be the four days I spent in Eichenau. I was profoundly moved by the love and friendship I found there and will never forget it. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.“ Das hast Du bis zuletzt bewiesen. Und so sind unsere Gefühle für Dich bis heute dieselben.

Ich begreife in diesen wenigen Tagen immer besser, welche verschiedene Temperamente mit den beiden gleichalten Dan und Erich aufeinander getroffen sind. Ich war in die Aufgaben in der Edition festgebunden: Literaturbeschaffung, historische Verbindungen aufdecken, in alte Biographien eindringen, um Anspielungen und Kontroversen zwischen Professoren und Schriftstellern verständlich zu machen. Diese Resultate benütztest du mit staunenswerter Beharrlichkeit und Energie. Du hast es dir zu einer halben Lebensaufgabe gemacht, den Nachfolger Immanuel Kants Johann Gottlieb Fichte in der englischsprachigen Welt genauer bekannt zu machen. Und dieses Verdienst wird dir immer bleiben. Dafür entwickeltest du deine Fähigkeiten, Leute zu begeistern, sie zusammenzubringen, die NAFS zu gründen, Meetings zu organisieren.

Ich blickte schon lange mit bangem Staunen auf die Strapazen deiner langen, meist der Philosophie Fichtes gewidmeten Flugreisen in alle Welt. Ich habe schon lange befürchtet, dass du einst VOR mir weggehen müsstest. Ich sehe im Rückblick auch den Unterschied zwischen dir, dem umtriebigen Amerikaner, und dem in Bibliotheken, Archiven, Handschriftabteilungen forschenden Europäer. Ich hatte mich auch umzutun, aber in einem überschaubareren Gebiet. Dafür nanntest du mich manchmal bewundernd Sherlock. Deine Liebe galt aber der Lehre an der Universität von Kentucky mit viel Zuspruch der jungen Studierenden.

Wie hast Du mein Leben und Denken mitverändern geholfen! Das wurde mir erst in den letzten Jahren deutlicher. Schade, dass ich Dich bei meinem Eintritt in die Universität 1965 nicht getroffen habe! Ich hätte einen solchen Mentor - diese Eigenschaften schreiben dir mehrere Trauernde als herausragend zu - gut gebrauchen können. Dein Beispiel hätte mich in den ersten Jahren an der Münchner Universität warnen können, vertrauensselig eine Weltsicht zu übernehmen, die ich im Gymnasium schon nicht mehr geteilt hatte.

Dein skeptisch-kritischer Blick hat mir geholfen, mich langsam aus der konservativ-katholisch orientierten Fichte-Interpretation herauszuwinden. Anfangs war ich allerdings schockiert, von deinen zwei anderen philosophischen Leitfiguren Sartre und Nietzsche zu hören. Wenige haben so viel Interesse an meinem und Ida Marias Lebensgang und unserer geistigen Entwicklung genommen. Stundenlang hast du eins in der Zeitschrift der kirchenkämpferischen Gruppe meiner Anfangsjahre gelesen und mit mir darüber und den Wandel in der Beziehung zu meinem Lehrer und Chef der Edition Reinhard Lauth gesprochen. Über unseren immer wieder einmal begonnenen und nie beendeten Austausch über Fichtes Letztbegründung, über das menschliche und denkerische Streben und das Absolute.

ERICH FUCHS

Ich litt zwar an meinen mangelnden Englischkenntnissen und fühlte mich während der Debatte und Lektüre tiefgreifender philosophischer Argumentationen in englischer Sprache unsicher, ob ich wirklich verstanden habe. In unserer Korrespondenz, aber noch mehr in unseren vielen Gesprächen auf Tagungen oder gemeinsamen Reisen stellten dein Einfühlungsvermögen und Humor unser Einverständnis her. Wir besuchten zusammen meine nähere Heimat, Orte der Kindheit und Bildung. Zu unserer Freude konnten uns Viv und Ida-Maria begleiten, wie z. B. in Eichenau bzw. München, Wien, Halle, Prag, Siegen, Montreal, Lexington. Meinen 62. Geburtstag, den wir in Eurem gastlichen Haus inmitten eurer Familie feiern durften, werde ich nicht vergessen. Ebenso unvergeßlich ist uns, wie ihr uns 2007 ermöglicht habt, mit Euch die Autofahrt von Montreal die Ostküste entlang nach Okracoke und Lexington zu erleben.

Du wirst immer mein Vorbild bleiben in der Konzentration auf menschliche ethische Werte, auf die Wertschätzung der anderen Person; auch in der Kraft bei der Überwindung von Krisen im Beruf, in der Familie und Krankheit.

Mit Ida Maria verneige ich mich mit Tränen in den Augen vor deiner und deiner Lieben Lebensleistung!

Erich Fuchs

A Memorial for Dan

Dear Dan,

My head is numb, but my heart is full. What can I say? – My farewell words to the best friend I had for 38 years, the friend with whom I could think out loud.

Ever since we got into conversation in Reinhard Lauth's Wednesday evening seminars in Munich on Fichte's 1804 *Wissenschaftslehre*, we started inventing nick names for each other. Names like: 'altes Haus' (old house) and 'old pulley wheel'. We soon went to your apartment in the Schackstraße near the Siegestor. How warmly Viviane greeted the new (more or less philosophizing) intruder Erich. The two 'Fichteans' wanted to indulge in a curious pastime: watch a soccer World Cup match on TV. You and your two daughters Nicole and Becca had also caught the soccer bug. We realized this when the Breazeale family visited our home for the first time on 19 June 1986. When you wanted to go back to Munich earlier, Viviane quickly called you to order with a forceful "Daaaniel!" Shortly after, another match drew you to the TV screen.

A long friendship began. First with letters, then with emails, all of which we have collected and kept to this day. How often in them did you call us your “second family”!

A steady stream of questions about Fichte’s texts began to arrive from Lexington. Our mutual sympathy was already so strong that I was happy to lend support to your translation work. Above all with respect to the *early* Fichte! Beyond philosophical and philological topics, our families were just as important. We promptly agreed on how much we owe to our wives and children. We didn’t see Viv again until nine years later, for she often had to stay at home in Kentucky on account of her teaching work. This was in 1995 when you invited us to Houlgate in Normandy. Viv was able to accompany you again several other times after her retirement.

After your second stay in Munich in 1992 you wrote to us: “Thank you and Ida-Maria and all of your wonderful children for making me feel so much a part of your family. As useful as the Conference was, and as interesting the trip afterwards, what I will remember longest and most fondly about this trip will certainly be the four days I spent in Eichenau. I was profoundly moved by the love and friendship I found there and will never forget it. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.” You continued to demonstrate this until the end. And our feelings for you remained just as strong.

Over the past few days I’ve come to realize more and more how in Dan and Erich, who are the same age, two very different temperaments encountered one another. I was caught up in the tasks of editing Fichte’s works: locating literature, uncovering historical connections, and delving into old biographies in order to make allusions and controversies between professors and writers comprehensible to the reader. You knew how to employ the findings of this edition with an astonishing stamina and energy. It became half your life’s work to make Johann Gottlieb Fichte – the successor to Immanuel Kant – better known in the English-speaking world. No one can ever take this achievement away from you. To this end, you developed your abilities to inspire and bring people together, to found the North American Fichte Society, and to organize countless conferences.

For quite a while now I have been looking with anxious amazement at the hardships of your long flights all over the world, mostly dedicated to Fichte’s philosophy. I had long feared that one day you would have to depart *before* me. On reflection, I can better detect the differences between you, the industrious American, and me, the European researching in libraries, archives, and manuscript departments. I had to work hard as well, but in a more manageable area. You sometimes called me ‘Sherlock’ in admiration. Whereas you had a passion for teaching at the University of Kentucky, and your courses were extremely popular with the students.

ERICH FUCHS

How you helped me to change my life and my thinking! This has only become clearer to me in more recent years. It's a pity I didn't meet you when I first went to university in 1965! I could have done with a mentor like you – so many of the other mourners attribute outstanding mentorship qualities to you. Your example would have warned me about so trustingly adopting a worldview in my first years at the University of Munich that I no longer held at high school.

Your skeptical and critical view helped me to gradually free myself from the conservative Catholic interpretation of Fichte. To begin with, however, I was shocked to hear about your two other philosophical guides, Sartre and Nietzsche. Few people have taken so much interest in the life and intellectual development of me and Ida Maria. You once spent hours reading the journal of a militant church group of my early years and talking with me about it and the change in my relationship to my teacher and head of the Fichte edition, Reinhard Lauth. Or about the ultimate ground of Fichte's philosophy, a discussion we repeatedly started but never finished; or about human and intellectual striving and the Absolute.

Admittedly I suffered from my lack of English language skills and sometimes wasn't sure if I had really understood while debating or reading our complex philosophical arguments in English. However, in our correspondence, and even more in our many conversations at conferences, or just travelling together, your empathy and humor formed the foundation of our understanding. We visited my hometown together, as well as places of my childhood and education. To our delight, Viv and Ida-Maria were often able to accompany us. Not only Eichenau, but we also visited together Munich, Vienna, Halle, Prague, Siegen, Montreal, and Lexington. I will never forget how we celebrated my 62nd birthday in your cosy home surrounded by your family. We will also never forget our 2007 trip together, driving in your car from Montreal down the East Coast to Ocracoke and Lexington.

You will always be my role model for concentrating on human ethical values and appreciating other people; but also due to your strength in overcoming crises at work, and in the family, and in health.

With Ida Maria and your loved ones, I bow with tears in my eyes before your life's achievements!

Günter Zöllner

Remembering Daniel Breazeale (1945-2023)

“He who wants to learn to philosophize [...] may regard all systems of philosophy only as history of the use of reason and as objects for the exercise of his philosophical talent.”
I. Kant, *Jaesche Logik*, Introduction, III.

As someone who knew Dan Breazeale for over 30 years and who, together with him and a small group of fellow travelers, helped shape research and teaching of classical German philosophy—from Kant through Fichte to Hegel—on both sides of the Atlantic for even longer than that, I feel moved to remember my deceased colleague and friend by placing his work in the wider historical and philosophical context into which it belongs and within which it deserves to be remembered for many years to come.

When Dan began publishing work on Fichte in the mid-1970s, Fichte’s presence in the Anglophone world was largely limited to a few translations, some of which dating back to the nineteenth century, to a small number of articles in scholarly journals and to occasional references, usually perfunctory, in monographs devoted to Kant, Hegel and German idealism more generally. Thanks to Dan’s sustained activity in editing, translating, introducing, commenting, elucidating and interpreting Fichte’s works from the Jena period over almost half a century, Fichte has become a widely recognized equal player, along with Kant and Hegel, in classical German philosophy, as received and discussed in Anglophone academia.

Dan’s pioneering work on Fichte in the English-speaking world places him in the distinguished international company of such, recently deceased, colleagues in the critical study of classical German philosophy as Ernst Tugendhat and Dieter Henrich, Wolfgang Janke and Klaus Düsing, and, back in the US, Henry E. Allison. The particular cohort to which Dan belongs, in terms of his work and its influence, is a group of Ph.D.s from Yale’s glory years, the 1960s and 1970s, chiefly among them, besides Dan, Allen W. Wood and Karl Ameriks. For the past fifty-some years this group, especially its triple core, has been at the forefront of reforming, even revolutionizing the study of classical German philosophy in the US by combining European—not to say, German—standards of exegetical scholarship and textual

study with Anglo-American practices of argumentative reconstruction and analytic assessment.

At the center of the Yalies' contribution, including Dan's work, stands the conviction that the study of Kant, Fichte and Hegel requires the careful combination of historical knowledge, linguistic skills, philological training, conceptual elucidation, argumentative analysis and critical assessment. Acquired separately and applied together, these research modalities allow us to recognize and respect an author's and his works' specific contribution and historical location, while also making that author and his works speak to today's questions and problems—within philosophy and without. In Dan's particular case, the study of the German classics, especially of Fichte, was motivated and furthered by two philosophers close to Dan's heart, Nietzsche and Sartre, whose vital and existential concerns lent perspective and orientation to Dan's more narrowly scholarly work on Fichte.

Dan was fortunate to see his publishing career crowned by a carefully composed collection of his articles on Fichte (2013) and by his monumental new translation of Fichte's early publications on the *Wissenschaftslehre* (2021). He was more fortunate yet in having inspired in a younger generation working on Fichte throughout the English-speaking world a culture of research and an ethos of teaching that builds on Dan's prior and lasting contributions to the field, while moving the study of Fichte into a promising future of further discoveries and farther connections to be made.

Günter Zöllner is Professor Emeritus of Philosophy at the University of Munich and a former general editor of the *J. G. Fichte-Gesamtausgabe* of the Bavarian Academy of Sciences. Together with Daniel Breazeale, he has edited and translated Fichte's most extensive book publication, *The System of Ethics* (2005). His review essay on Daniel Breazeale's new annotated translation of the early *Wissenschaftslehre* appeared in *Mind*, Volume 132, Issue 528, October 2023, Pages 1142–1150, <https://doi.org/10.1093/mind/fzab030>

Halla Kim

**In Memoriam:
James Dan Breazeale 1945-2023**

I am utterly saddened by the unexpected passing of Professor Dan Breazeale, the doyen of North American Fichte scholarship. When he died, “the world became a lesser place.”

Initially I trained for Fichte scholarship under Günter Zöllner at Iowa, but he soon left for Munich after I obtained my PhD. Before moving away, Günter made sure in his Fichte seminar that I was exposed to Dan’s vast literature on Fichte, with a focus on the *Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo* (Dan was its editor and translator). To me, Dan was an epitome of a philosophical alchemist who blended the penetrating insights of German Idealism, especially the idealism of J. G. Fichte, and contemporary sensibility to create highly persuasive and impressively systematic works. There is no question he was a great scholar but, in my estimation, even more important than that, he was among the kindest and wisest people I have ever had the privilege of knowing. In other words, he was a consummate scholar and human being.

I first met Dan in person when I attended the conference on the “modern subject” organized by Karl Ameriks at the University of Notre Dame back in 1994. I heard the talks by Dan and other great minds including Günter, Karl, Henry Allison, etc. with huge profit and admiration. Then, during one of the breaks, I lined up for a coffee and some snacks. When it was my turn, I realized that Dan was standing right behind me. I turned around and invited him to go ahead, suggesting a passionate speaker like him deserves a fast track. But he emphatically and politely turned down my offer, saying something like “wearing a tie does not mean anything. Please let me wait for my turn” in the friendliest and most pleasant low voice. That experience left an indelible image of him in me.

My personal interaction with him continued at various encounters since then, including Chicago, Quebec City, and other places where the North American Fichte Society meetings were held. I also had occasions to meet and interact with him in Madrid and other places for the International Fichte Society meetings. I once ventured to organize, together with Steve Hoeltzel, an international conference on Transcendental Philosophy at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Dan enthusiastically supported it and the conference culminated in a party thrown at my home. He personally expressed his appreciation of the conference during the party

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and later rendered unremitting support for the publication of the anthology with papers from the conference under the title *Kant, Fichte, and the Legacy of Transcendental Idealism*, when Steve and I sent a proposal as prospective co-editors.

But my personal interactions with Dan culminated in Seoul when I hosted the biennial meeting of the North American Fichte Society at Sogang University in South Korea in 2017. This time he flew to Seoul with Viv. After the conclusion of the conference, his intellectual curiosity and respect for the local culture led to a whirlwind tour of South Korea with the information gathered from me. Later when it was published, he sent me an autographed copy of *Thinking Through the Wissenschaftslehre*, his collection of essays, as a token of gratitude. During my nearly 20-year career at Nebraska at Omaha, and now almost ten years of teaching at Sogang in Seoul, his English Fichte translations and essays on Fichte's work were part of the main texts as well as major sources of inspirations for my Nineteenth Century Philosophy and German Idealism courses and seminars.

He will be greatly missed. We all originally came by way of the *Tathandlung* and we shall go back to it. We all shall be united in this primordial spiritual yet cosmic act of autonomy someday.

Dan is a friend, a mentor, a model—he has been all this for me since I first met him, a very long time ago. It was 1997, I believe, at one of the early meetings of the North American Fichte Society (on the *Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo*). I had just moved to this country from Europe—a beginner philosopher (a convinced Hegelian but also a Kantian), naïve and still disoriented, with no experience of American academic life. I had no friends, no mentors, no models here. That meeting of the NAFS changed everything. It opened a new world for me—thanks to Dan and to Tom Rockmore, the ‘co-positors’ of the Society.

Dan was the un-presuming center of a unique community of scholars; a gentle and strong guide who immediately embodied for me the seriousness but also the fun of philosophical work. At that meeting, I felt immediately at home, welcome, and appreciated. I began to realize how incredible Dan’s work was: introducing Fichte’s thought to the Anglo-American reader, catching up and surpassing by far so much that had been done for centuries in Europe. In Dan’s translations and in his essays, Fichte always sounds fresher, truer, clearer—at times also crazier—than in the original German (or in the Italian and French translations).

From then on I kept attending the NAFS meetings through the years, in so many different cities and so many different countries. The exchanges with Dan and his friendship were always the highlight of those intense days; he always gave me the opportunity of thinking deeper, of appreciating anew the sense of community he was able to build around us. No other ‘philosophical’ society has ever done something similar.

It is our task now—a difficult task, for sure, but one he has long prepared us to perform—to carry on Dan’s project. And I don’t mean only the scholarly, philosophical project. I mean, first and foremost, the human project. We are the growing community he has ‘posited’. And we all think of him in these days. We should keep thinking of him and with him and for him. He remains our strong center.

(Angelica Nuzzo, New York, January 16, 2024)

Jimena Solé

(Buenos Aires, Argentina)

En memoria de Dan Breazeale

Si es cierto, como dice Fichte, que la inmortalidad se gana a través de las obras, no cabe ninguna duda de que Dan Breazeale lo ha logrado. Esto es así, no solo por sus clarísimos comentarios y sofisticadas interpretaciones, cuyo valor para los estudios fichteanos es incuestionable. Sino especialmente por sus traducciones, que permiten a todo un mundo de lectores acceder a la filosofía de Fichte, y por su iniciativa al fundar la North American Fichte Society, que reúne a los especialistas, fomenta la discusión y potencia las investigaciones sobre el pensamiento fichteano. Es en este sentido que el legado de Dan Breazeale excede inmensamente lo que contienen sus libros. Nos proporciona herramientas para continuar pensando con Fichte, y nos exhorta a hacerlo en comunidad, junto con otros. Por eso, para quienes estudiamos a Fichte, especialmente para quienes lo hacemos desde las Américas, Dan Breazeale fue, es y será un ejemplo a seguir y una inspiración. Conocí personalmente a Dan hace relativamente poco tiempo, en el último encuentro de la NAFS en Chicago. Aunque lamento no haber podido compartir más conversaciones con él, estoy agradecida de haber podido expresarle mi admiración por su trabajo y de haber podido confirmar lo que sospechaba: que Dan practicaba la filosofía con pasión y generosidad. Extrañaremos su presencia, pero su legado sigue vivo, impregnando nuestra manera de vivir y filosofar.

If it is true, as Fichte says, that immortality is gained through one's deeds, there can be no doubt that Dan Breazeale has achieved it. This is so, not only because of his very clear commentaries and sophisticated interpretations, the value of which for Fichtean studies is unquestionable. But especially for his translations, which give a whole world of readers access to Fichte's philosophy, and for his initiative in founding the North American Fichte Society, which brings together specialists, encourages discussion, and promotes research on Fichte's thought. It is in this sense that Dan Breazeale's legacy vastly exceeds what is contained in his books. He provides us with tools to continue thinking with Fichte, and exhorts us to do so as a community, together with others. Thus, for those of us who study Fichte, especially for those of us who do so in the Americas, Dan Breazeale was, is, and will be an example to follow and an inspiration. I met Dan in person relatively recently, at the last NAFS meeting in Chicago. While I regret not having been able to share more conversations with him, I am grateful to have had the opportunity to express my admiration for his work and to confirm what I suspected: that Dan practiced philosophy with passion and generosity. We will miss his presence, but his legacy lives on, shaping our way of living and philosophizing.

Rodrigue Nzameyo
(ENS / Université de Yaoundé 1)

In Memoriam

Daniel Breazeale (1945-2023), traducteur de Fichte

C'est avec beaucoup de peine que j'ai appris le décès de Daniel Breazeale, figure incontournable des recherches fichtéennes et fin connaisseur de l'histoire de la philosophie par l'attention constante qu'il prêtait aux textes philosophiques. La philosophie allemande, en particulier de Kant à Nietzsche, fut l'objet de ses recherches pendant un demi-siècle. J'ai eu la chance de rencontrer Daniel Breazeale à Madrid, au début du mois de septembre 2015, dans le cadre du IX^e Congrès de l'*Internationale Johann Gottlieb Fichte-Gesellschaft*. Mon collègue et ami David W. Wood nous avait auparavant présentés l'un à l'autre ; sans cérémonie aucune nous nous sommes librement entretenus au sujet du colloque et de mes activités d'enseignement et de recherche en Afrique. J'ai découvert un homme très sympathique, doté d'une très grande capacité d'écoute. Il a donné la conférence inaugurale dudit colloque sur le thème *Imagining the Wissenschaftslehre : The Method of Philosophy and the Power of Imagination*, dans un langage simple et accessible. Plus tard dans la soirée, nous avons longuement discuté de son texte et je pris congé de lui. Malheureusement, il ne m'a pas été donné de le revoir avant son décès.

Avec la disparition de Daniel Breazeale, l'*Internationale Johann Gottlieb Fichte-Gesellschaft* vient de perdre un pilier important, qui a fait connaître la philosophie de Fichte au-delà des frontières européennes par l'œuvre gigantesque qu'il a su mener à bien. Il a non seulement publié une importante monographie, de très nombreux ouvrages collectifs, articles de revue et chapitres d'ouvrage consacrés à Fichte, mais il a surtout à son actif une œuvre titanesque de traduction des textes de Fichte de l'allemand vers l'anglais. Un coup d'œil rapide sur l'ensemble de ses traductions montre qu'il a dû s'armer de beaucoup de courage, de patience et de rigueur pour parvenir à la restitution de la philosophie de Fichte dans l'univers anglo-saxon. Tout lecteur familier des textes de Fichte sait l'importance que ce dernier accordait aux concepts et aux tournures de la langue, si bien que s'engager dans la traduction de ses œuvres ne pouvait pas seulement être un travail de linguiste, mais bien un travail de philosophe conscient du fait que toute traduction doit nécessairement surmonter des problèmes épistémologiques.

La lecture de l'œuvre fichtéenne pose tout un ensemble de problèmes terminologiques qui sont, dans une certaine mesure, des problèmes philosophiques, tant

dans l'original allemand que dans les essais de traduction. Autant l'œuvre de Fichte nous renseigne fortement sur l'importance qu'il accordait au langage, autant son vocabulaire et sa terminologie contiennent d'innombrables difficultés de traduction¹. L'un des grands mérites de Daniel Breazeale a été de s'abstenir de traduire le concept de *Wissenschaftslehre*, afin de ne pas gauchir le sens que Fichte lui avait donné, et ceci dès les toutes premières traductions entreprises par lui, notamment celle de la *Wissenschaftslehre Nova methodo*². Ce choix judicieux de refuser de traduire une notion aussi centrale dans l'économie de la philosophie fichtéenne fait de la *Wissenschaftslehre* un concept intraduisible.

Tandis que les débuts de la réception philosophique de Fichte en France ont été marqués par d'interminables querelles de traduction de la *Wissenschaftslehre*, Daniel Breazeale, tout en restituant sa teneur véritable, n'a pas pris le risque de traduire la notion en anglais, donnant ainsi à la postérité la possibilité de lire/dire la *Wissenschaftslehre* avec Fichte, de penser avec lui dans les limites du langage humain, lequel ne saurait épuiser la réalité et le contenu de cet immense édifice théorique en constante construction.

Le fait que Fichte ait présenté dix-sept versions de la *Wissenschaftslehre*, de son recrutement à l'Université d'Iéna en 1794 à sa mort prématurée à Berlin en 1814, témoigne du caractère vaste et infini de l'entreprise, et prouve à lui seul que la *Wissenschaftslehre* était en permanence en chantier. Par son choix de ne pas traduire le concept de *Wissenschaftslehre*, Daniel Breazeale a notamment imprimé une orientation radicale aux études fichtéennes de langue française, qui traduisent de moins en moins le concept de *Wissenschaftslehre* par « doctrine de la science » ou « théorie de la science », préférant conserver le terme allemand *Wissenschaftslehre*, forgé par Fichte lui-même pour désigner en un sens profond la théorie philosophique du savoir en tant que savoir. En un mot, rendre la *Wissenschaftslehre* par le vocabulaire même de l'auteur de la *Wissenschaftslehre* réalise l'intention de Fichte lui-même quant à l'essence et à l'originalité du concept, sans toutefois ignorer le potentiel révolutionnaire que ce barbarisme cache pour les contemporains de Fichte. D'après le sens que Fichte lui a donné, la *Wissenschaftslehre* est l'édifice théorique du savoir, dont les formes spécifiques ou disciplines particulières ne constituent que les piliers. Un extrait tiré du § 3 de l'écrit *Sur le concept de la "Wissenschaftslehre"* montre combien Daniel Breazeale s'est efforcé de rester fidèle tant à l'esprit qu'à la lettre de Fichte :

¹ Voir, à ce sujet, la brillante étude de Marc Maeschalck : « Le langage philosophique comme langage spéculatif. Philosophie scientifique et philosophie populaire chez Fichte », *Revue philosophique de Louvain* 2 (2014), p. 289-311. On se reportera également au dossier récemment publié, « Fichte et langage », in *Archives de Philosophie*, vol. 83, no. 1, 2020.

² J. G. Fichte, *Foundations of Transcendental Philosophy (Wissenschaftslehre) nova methodo*, ed. and trans., with notes and an introduction by Daniel Breazeale (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1992; 2nd ed. 1998), x + 494 pp.

A/ Version allemande de la *J. G. Fichte Gesamtausgabe*³

Einen Begriff wissenschaftlich erörtern – und es ist klar, daß hier von keiner andern, als dieser höchsten aller Erörterungen die Rede seyn kann – nenne ich das, wenn man den Ort desselben im System der menschlichen Wissenschaften überhaupt aniebt, d. i., zeigt welcher Begriff ihm seine Stelle bestimme, und welchem andern sie durch denselben bestimmt werde. Nun aber kann der Begriff der Wissenschaftslehre überhaupt im System aller Wissenschaften, eben so wenig einen Ort haben, als der des Wissens an sich, im System des Wissens überhaupt: vielmehr ist er selbst der Ort für alle wissenschaftlichen Begriffe, und weist ihnen ihre Stellen in sich selbst, und durch sich selbst an. Es ist klar, daß hier nur von einer hypothetischen Erörterung geredet werde, d. i. die Frage ist die: Vorausgesetzt, daß es schon Wissenschaften gebe, und daß Wahrheit in ihnen sey, (welches man vor der allgemeinen Wissenschaftslehre vorher gar nicht wissen kann) wie verhält sich die aufzustellende Wissenschaftslehre, zu diesen Wissenschaften?

Auch diese Frage ist durch den bloßen Begriff derselben schon beantwortet. Die letztern verhalten sich zu der erstern, wie das Begründete zu seinem Grunde; sie weisen derselben ihre Stelle nicht an; aber jene weist ihnen allen ihre Stellen in sich selbst und durch sich selbst an. Demnach ist es hier bloß um eine weitere Entwicklung dieser Antwort zu thun. Die Wissenschaftslehre sollte eine Wissenschaft aller Wissenschaften seyn. Hierbei entsteht zuvörderst die Frage: Wie kann sie verbürgen, daß sie nicht nur alle bis jetzt bekannten und erfundenen, sondern auch alle erfindbaren und möglichen Wissenschaften begründet, und daß sie das ganze Gebiet des menschlichen Wissens vollkommen erschöpft habe? sollte in dieser Rücksicht allen Wissenschaften ihre Grundsätze geben. Alle Sätze demnach, die in irgend einer besondern Wissenschaft Grundsätze sind, sind zugleich auch einheimische Sätze der Wissenschaftslehre; ein und ebenderselbe Satz ist aus zwei Gesichtspunkten zu betrachten. Die Wissenschaftslehre folgert aus dem Satze, als einem in ihr enthaltenen weiter; und die besondere Wissenschaft folgert aus dem gleichen Satze, als ihrem Grundsatz, auch weiter. Also folgt entweder in beiden Wissenschaften das gleiche; alle besonderen Wissenschaften sind nicht nur ihrem Grundsatz, sondern auch ihren abgeleiteten Sätzen nach in der Wissenschaftslehre enthalten;

B/ Traduction anglaise de Daniel Breazeale⁴

To explicate a concept scientifically (and it is clear that we are here concerned only with this highest type of explication) is to assign it a place in the overall system of the human sciences, that is, to show which concept determines its place and which other concept has its place determined by it. Yet the concept of the *Wissen-*

³ *Ueber den Begriff der Wissenschaftslehre oder der sogenannten Philosophie, als Einladungsschrift zu seinen Vorlesungen über diese Wissenschaft*, in GA, I/2: 127

⁴ “Concerning the Concept of the Wissenschaftslehre or of So-Called ‘Philosophy’,” (1794), in J.G. Fichte, *Foundation of the Entire Wissenschaftslehre and Related Writings (1794-95)*, edited, translated, and annotated by Daniel Breazeale (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 170.

schaftslehre has no place in the system of the sciences, any more than knowledge in itself has any place in the system of knowledge as such. On the contrary, the *Wissenschaftslehre* is itself the locus of all scientific concepts and assigns all of them their places within itself and through itself. Clearly, we are here speaking only of a hypothetical explication. That is to say, the question is as follows: Assuming that there are already sciences and that these sciences contain truth (which is something one can by no means know prior to the universal *Wissenschaftslehre*), then what is the relationship between that *Wissenschaftslehre* which is supposed to be established and these [existing] sciences?

The answer to this question is also contained in the very concept of the *Wissenschaftslehre*. These existing sciences are related to the *Wissenschaftslehre* in the same way that something established is related to the foundation upon which it is established. The various sciences do not assign a place to the *Wissenschaftslehre*; instead, the *Wissenschaftslehre* assigns all them their places within and through itself. Therefore, all we have to do here is to develop this answer further. The *Wissenschaftslehre* is supposed to be the science of all the sciences. To begin with, this raises the following question: How can the *Wissenschaftslehre* guarantee that it will provide the foundation, not merely for all the sciences discovered so far, those with which we are already acquainted, but for all possible and discoverable sciences? How can it guarantee to exhaust completely the realm of knowledge? In this respect, the *Wissenschaftslehre* is supposed to provide all the sciences with their foundational principles. From this it follows that all those propositions that serve as foundational principles of the various particular sciences are, at the same time, propositions contained within the *Wissenschaftslehre*.

Il convient de noter qu'on ne saurait apprécier les traductions de Daniel Breazeale, chercheur de langue anglaise, sans admirer également les longues introductions et présentations qui les accompagnent et donnent au lecteur la possibilité de rentrer sans grande difficulté dans l'univers complexe de la philosophie fichtéenne. La note éditoriale intitulée *Genesis and First Presentation of the Wissenschaftslehre (1793-95)*, en introduction à sa traduction de la *Grundlage – Foundation of the Entire Wissenschaftslehre* –, expose, avec pleine clarté, les fondements du système fichtéen à l'état embryonnaire, qu'Alexis Philonenko a rendu sous le titre *Œuvres choisies de Philosophie première*, traduction française ayant longtemps servi d'*instrumentum laboris* à Daniel Breazeale, d'après ses propres dires⁵.

Il m'est impossible de donner, ici, un aperçu de l'ensemble des traductions de Daniel Breazeale et de mettre en perspective leur originalité. Je porterai plus particulièrement mon attention au tout dernier projet qu'il ait mené à bien et qu'il laisse à la postérité comme un témoignage vivant de l'originalité de son travail : sa traduction, déjà citée, de la *Grundlage, Foundation of the Entire Wissen-*

⁵ J.G. Fichte, *Œuvres choisies de Philosophie première (1794-1797)*, traduction par Alexis Philonenko, Paris, Vrin, 1964.

*schaftslehre*⁶. Cette traduction est, selon Gabriel Gottlieb, qui en a fait une recension élogieuse dans la dernière livraison des FICHTEANA, encore dirigées par Daniel Breazeale⁷ : « The first reliable and readable translation of Fichte’s most influential work of philosophy, the work that essentially set the agenda for German philosophy until the death of Hegel in 1831. » La particularité de ce volume de traductions réside dans la révision qu’il a effectuée de ses traductions précédentes pour les harmoniser avec les recherches actuelles consacrées à Fichte, recherches qui se nourrissent désormais de la *Fichte Gesamtausgabe* établie par la *Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften*, auprès de laquelle Daniel Breazeale s’était plusieurs fois rendu dans le cadre de ses travaux.⁸

Par ses multiples traductions de l’œuvre fichtéenne en langue anglaise, Daniel Breazeale a efficacement contribué à la diffusion, à la vulgarisation, à l’internationalisation et l’universalisation de la philosophie de Fichte, bien que cela puisse, en apparence, être perçu comme étant en contradiction avec la volonté affichée par Fichte de ne destiner sa *Wissenschaftslehre* ou ses écrits scientifiques qu’à un cercle restreint de disciples. Le dessein de Daniel Breazeale était celui de Fichte : rendre claire une *Wissenschaftslehre* devenue obscure aux yeux des contemporains du philosophe et pour un lectorat qui la considérait comme l’expression même de ce que la philosophie a de plus abstrait, se jouant de mots. Daniel Breazeale, par son travail de traduction, voulait atteindre le même but que Fichte, un but résumé par la formule tirée du sous-titre du *Rapport clair comme le jour sur le caractère propre de la philosophie nouvelle*, à savoir : « forcer le lecteur à comprendre ». Mais aussi, et surtout, comprendre soi-même la *Grundlage* de Fichte, l’une des œuvres philosophiques les plus difficiles de la pensée occidentale :

This new English translation of the 1794/95 *Foundation of the Entire Wissenschaftslehre* is my effort to force myself to understand it, while at the same time helping others do the same. Accordingly, I have tried to produce an English version that is not only as accurate as I can make it but is as broadly accessible as possible. For this reason, I have supplemented my translations with rather extensive annotation and commentary, as well as with detailed outlines of the contents and structure of the Foundation and Outline. It is my hope that the latter will help orient readers who — like myself — sometimes find themselves rather lost in the wilderness of Fichte’s complex “derivations.”⁹

⁶ J.G. Fichte, *Foundation of the Entire Wissenschaftslehre and Related Writings (1794-95)*. [New English translations of Ueber den Begriff der Wissenschaftslehre, Grundlage der gesamten Wissenschaftslehre, Grundrisse des Eigentümlichen der Wissenschaftslehre, first English translation of Lavater’s transcription of first five “Zurich Lectures” on Wissenschaftslehre.]

⁷ FICHTEANA 22 (2022): 6-15.

⁸ *J. G. Fichte Gesamtausgabe* [=GA], éd. Reinhard Lauth et Hans Jacob (à partir de 1973, Hans Gliwitzky), Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt, Frommann-Holzboog, 1962-2012, 42 vols.

⁹ Daniel Breazeale, “Preface” in J.G. Fichte, *Foundation of the Entire Wissenschaftslehre and Related Writings (1794-95)*, xi.

Pour ne pas conclure, Daniel Breazeale continuera de marquer les recherches fichtéennes par l'œuvre intarissable qu'il laisse à la postérité, fruit d'un travail rigoureux pour tenter de reconstituer et de restituer la philosophie de Fichte dans le langage de notre temps. Par ses traductions, Daniel Breazeale a su jeter des ponts entre les cultures et les nations. Ce modeste témoignage est l'expression de mon admiration et de ma haute considération. *Qu'il repose en paix.*

ダニエル・ブレジール教授の突然の訃報に接し、大変悲しく思います。心からご冥福をお祈りいたします。ダニエル・ブレジール氏は、フィヒテに関する多くの重要な論文や著作を発表し、フィヒテの多くの著作を翻訳されました。彼のこれらの業績は北米におけるフィヒテ研究において画期的なものであるだけでなく、日本を含む世界のフィヒテ研究にも多大な貢献をなすものです。彼の遺産は今後も永く継承されていくことと思います。個人的には、ブレジール教授を大阪大学にお招きし、講義をしていただいたことや、ご夫妻が東京や奈良を観光された際に、私がガイドを務めたときのことを昨日のことに覚えています。ブレジール夫人とご家族に心から哀悼の意を表したいと思います。

入江幸男（大阪大学名誉教授）

I was very saddened to hear about the sudden passing of Prof. Dr. Daniel Breazeale. I sincerely pray that he may rest in peace. Daniel Breazeale published innumerable papers and volumes on Fichte, and translated many of Fichte's writings. His work is a landmark in North American Fichte studies. It also constitutes a significant contribution to Fichte scholarship worldwide, including Japan, and his legacy will endure. I personally remember, as if it were only yesterday, inviting Professor Breazeale to give a lecture at Osaka University and when I acted as a guide for him and his wife while they toured Tokyo and Nara. I would like to express my sincere condolences to Mrs. Breazeale and her family.

Yukio Irie (Professor Emeritus of Osaka University, Japan)

Gabriel Gottlieb

Daniel Breazeale – A Remembrance

J.G. Fichte, by all accounts, was not an agreeable man. Though philosophically brilliant, he had a prickly personality and easily felt slighted. He was quick to disagree, and if necessary, he was more than willing to annihilate his opponents by declaring them “nonexistent as a philosopher,” as he once did to his colleague at Jena, Christian Erhard Schmid. Unlike Kant and Hegel, Fichte was perpetually perturbed by the very fact that no one seemed to rightly grasp his philosophical system, the *Wissenschaftslehre*. The only thing that could prevent him from revising the *Wissenschaftslehre*, draft after draft, year after year, was, in fact, his own premature death in 1814.

Dan Breazeale, one of the very few people who, I think, has understood Fichte’s *Wissenschaftslehre*, was, by all accounts, Fichte’s opposite. Dan was warm, supportive, ebullient, avuncular. Despite their temperamental differences and the challenge of Fichte’s work, Dan could not leave the study and promotion of Fichte’s philosophy behind – it constituted an essential part, though not the entirety, of his vocation as a scholar. Dan was in many ways, the dean of Fichte studies, a mentor and model to an entire field of study. The importance of his translations, scholarship, and work as the co-founder and driving force behind the North American Fichte Society not only significantly contributed to Fichte studies in English, but brought English Fichte studies into its modern phase. What might it mean to bring Fichte studies into its modern phase? It is to show that Fichte is not only a figure worth studying to understand Hegel’s philosophy, but that Fichte is a figure one must study to understand oneself.

I first met Dan, like so many of his colleagues, at a meeting of the North American Fichte Society. In my case, it was the 2008 meeting at DePaul. Still a graduate student, I barely had the nerve to speak to him. When presenting your first paper on Fichte, I think many people are struck by the fear that they may have misunderstood everything, gotten him completely wrong. After all, much brighter minds had done just that, including Christian Erhard Schmid. I prayed that Dan would not declare me nonexistent as a philosopher. Thankfully, no annihilation occurred. After the Q&A following my paper, Dan congratulated me and then registered a minor disagreement with something I said about Reinhold. I paid little attention to the disagreement and basked in his approval. I was not, it turns out, a complete idiot –

I had gotten, at least, something right about Fichte. Many years later, this time at a conference in Cincinnati, Dan and I had a back and forth, again about Reinhold. It was an insignificant point, to be honest. Dan thought I was wrong, I thought I was right – such as it is with philosophers. A few days after the conference, I received an email from Dan – he had checked the text and I was right. He had written to apologize, even though there was nothing for which to apologize. I was touched by his message for so many reasons. First, *humility* – the willingness to recognize when one is wrong, a feature all too rare in the academy. Who does that? Emails someone to admit that they got something wrong! Secondly, *scholarly care* – no matter how small a detail is, Dan wanted to make sure, not that *he* was right, but that he had *things* right. Third, the *care for others* – Dan was not dismissive or mean-spirited, but thoughtful and even gentle. And finally, the *recognition* – from his first disagreement with me about Reinhold in Chicago, to our disagreement in Cincinnati, again about Reinhold, to our last disagreement with each other over Fichte’s political philosophy in Vienna in 2022, he always recognized me as nothing less than a peer. From a man, who, in a sense, had few, if any, peers. Dan’s support of my scholarship and career, as well as his trust in my ability to co-lead the North American Fichte Society with Ben Crowe, are gifts I will forever be grateful for – in many ways, he’s made my career and life’s work possible. I am certainly not alone in this respect. May his memory be a blessing.

Dan, I like to think, was a believer – not in God, but in Fichte, and more particularly, in what Dan viewed as Fichte’s sense of philosophy’s existential task, the task of reconciling our divided self, Goethe’s “two souls” found dwelling separately within one’s breast. The self, both Fichte and Dan held, is divided: on the one hand, there is the practical awareness of one’s freedom, one’s moral vocation and, on the other hand, one’s theoretical awareness and experience of oneself in a determinate world of things and their causes. As Dan once put it, giving expression to Fichte’s view, “we are...painfully divided between the claims of our ‘heart’ and those of our ‘head’.” We ought, as Fichte argues, strive to be one with ourselves, to overcome the division within ourselves, by exercising our moral freedom with the purpose of realizing reason within the actual world. As we all know, it’s an infinite task.

Well, worlds vary in size, and we find ourselves in a relatively small one, the world of philosophy, of German Idealism, of Fichte studies. Dan’s great accomplishment is not found in any one essay or translation; it lies in setting us all on the right path, aiming us in the proper direction so that we may take up the unfinished task of bringing light and reason to the philosophy of our friend Johann Gottlieb Fichte. With Dan, we infinitely strive...

Remembrances of Dan Breazeale

by

Members of The North American Fichte Society

G. Anthony Bruno (Royal Holloway University, London)

I'm very saddened to hear of Dan Breazeale's passing. He was a giant in post-Kantian philosophy, generous, and good-humoured. As an undergraduate, I was fascinated with his paper "Circles and Grounds in the Jena *Wissenschaftslehre*", my copy of which was filled with the marginalia of multiple readings and partly inspired more than a few tattoos. It was a thrill to read his book *Thinking Through the Wissenschaftslehre* when it appeared in 2013. I had the pleasure of commenting on a talk he gave in 2019, surprised to have drawn his attention to what he thought was a useful distinction concerning the I. Since then, Dan was very supportive of my work. I was honoured that he included one of my papers in the bibliography of his landmark 2021 translation of Fichte's *Foundations of the Entire Wissenschaftslehre* and, in our final correspondence last month, he kindly agreed to write an endorsement for my book on facticity. Dan gifted generations of teachers and students with a great many translations of and publications on Kant, Reinhold, Schulze, Jacobi, Fichte, Maimon, Hegel, Schelling, and Nietzsche. Beyond their scholarly value, his works exhibit an invitational spirit, one that summoned me and many others to a philosophical vocation.

F. Scott Scribner (The University of Hartford)

Many years ago, Nietzsche scholar Babette Babich asked me to tell Dan how much Nietzsche studies missed him. When I conveyed this to Dan, he essentially said to me, "I know, I'd love to do more Nietzsche, but Fichte studies needs me more." And indeed, we did. Dan self-consciously chose the path of service, to go where his work was most needed, but I suspect he didn't fully grasp the scope and reach of his legacy.

Dan was the motor-force of Fichte studies in United States and the English-speaking-world. Through his translations, he a new standard for Fichte translation and made Fichte readily accessible - even to undergraduates; through The North American Fichte Society (co-founded with Tom Rockmore) he incubated a community and established seeded generations of younger scholars (myself included); and through his mentorship, both formally and informally, he personally cemented

these connections through his rigor and warmth. In his path-making, he both created the scaffold upon which current English-speaking scholarship is built and thoughtfully threw down the ladders by which generations of younger scholars could climb.

Dan will be deeply missed. But his legacy is not only far-reaching, like a social movement, it continues to grow exponentially with every new generation.

Karl Ameriks (University of Notre Dame)

Dan was finishing graduate school just as I was starting, so I didn't really know him then. But soon enough, his work, especially on Reinhold and on Nietzsche, had a huge impact on my thinking, teaching, and research. It was always good fortune to see him later on many occasions at conferences, and I have especially fond memories of his visit to Notre Dame and my chance to see him also in Lexington. I always thought of him as an angelic version of Charles Bronson, enormously respected by all who knew him. His loss is very saddening for all of us, but his innumerable good deeds are our solace.

Jean-Christophe Goddard (Université Toulouse-Jean Jaurès)

Chers amis,

Je suis personnellement et en tant qu'ancien président de la Fichtegesellschaft bouleversé par cette triste nouvelle et vous adresse ainsi qu'à la femme et la famille de Dan mes condoléances les plus sincères.

Marc Maesschalck (Prof. Université Catholique de Louvain)

When I was studying the thought of Fichte and Schelling in Belgium and Germany, Dan was a role model for all young scholars. He had succeeded in making this thought accessible without distorting it. With other researchers in Toulouse and Louvain, we followed his inspiration and created the French-language Fichte study group, because Dan was also a unifier. He was always ready to exchange and share his knowledge. Thanks to his family for allowing Dan to devote so much of his time to these international links.

Owen Ware (University of Toronto)

I'm incredibly saddened by this news of Dan's passing. I had admired Dan's scholarship on Fichte for years before I met him in person. In April 2019 he came to Toronto to give a talk in the philosophy department, and I had the pleasure of spending the next few days with him. We ended up visiting the Royal Ontario Museum and Dan was particularly impressed by the dinosaur exhibit. At one point he turned to me and said, with a wry grin: "The not-I is way cool." We both laughed. I felt that Dan had a remarkable warmth of character, and he wasn't at all the

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intimidating scholar I had expected him to be. Dan embodied the ideal of balance between heart and head. And I feel grateful for all the support and inspiration he offered me. I will cherish the memories I have of spending time with him. He will always be someone I look up to. I miss you, Dan.

Ursula Froese (University of Hamburg)

Thank you for sharing this very sad news and the remembrances. I met Dan in person only once - one of those rare people that then inspire you for life. My condolences to his wife and family.

Jürgen Stolzenberg (Martin-Luther-University Halle-Wittenberg)

We are losing a wonderful friend and colleague! I have known Daniel for decades and we have met again and again at conferences, most recently in Vienna. For me, Daniel's name is associated with the founding of Fichte and idealism research in the USA. And I have learned a lot from his articles and books. And I have always admired his enormous commitment and energy. Daniel was without doubt one of the best and most profound experts on Fichte on an international scale. He did an immense amount for Fichte and Idealism research. We must be very grateful to him for this. We will all miss him very much.

I would like to see his essays on Fichte collected and published in one or more volumes.

Elizabeth Millán Brusslan (DePaul University)

Dan's passing is a source of great sorrow for me, in part, because of all of the joy that surrounded all that he did in philosophy. I met Dan in Jena back in 1994 -- I was a graduate student, on a DAAD in Tübingen and had made the voyage to Jena for a big Fichte celebration (the 200th anniversary of the *Wissenschaftslehre*). I remember feeling as if I did not quite belong with the throngs of men, feeling as if the trip to the meeting had been a big mistake. Then I met Dan and Viv (George di Giovanni and his wife were also present) and I immediately felt at home. Dan had a way of making everyone feel at home in philosophy, and I think that this talent was especially important for many young women in philosophy, who too often were made to feel quite uncomfortable at professional meetings. Now, decades later, I still feel at home in this field, a field I might have left were it not for generous, welcoming, brilliant people such as Dan. Dan and Viv were an inspiration of love, and I am indebted to the home they helped give me in philosophy. I will miss Dan very much -- his work has kept me good company and will continue to do so, but I will miss his warm presence. Our entire field is a lonelier place for his absence.

Martin Bondeli (Philosophisches Institut der Universität Bern)

Das ist eine traurige und für mich überraschende Nachricht. Ich habe Dan zum letzten Mal in Leipzig beim Fichte-Kongress getroffen. Er wirkte dort sehr lebendig und zuversichtlich.

An dieser Stelle möchte ich seiner Familien und seinen Angehörigen kondolieren – dies auch im Namen des Kuratoriums der Gesammelten Schriften Karl Leonhard Reinholds.

Dan hat regelmäßig an unseren internationalen Tagungen zu Karl Leonhard Reinhold teilgenommen, und ich habe seine Präsenz jeweils sehr geschätzt. Er ist für uns ein Verlust.

George di Giovanni (McGill University)

It is with great sadness that I hear of Daniel's death. He was a great scholar, a trusted colleague, and a wonderful person. I felt special kinship with him because we both shared interest in translation and belief in its philosophical significance. Please, extend my condolences to Viviane, also on behalf of Sheila, my wife. We have fond memories of the trip we took together to Japan on a lecture tour. Daniel's passing is a great loss for our academic community.

Susan-Judith Hoffmann (McGill University)

I met Daniel Breazeale for the first time in Madrid, at the International Fichte Gesellschaft in 2015. I had of course read his work, and it had been the key that allowed me to unlock my passion and learned interest in the work of Johann Gottlieb Fichte. I gave a paper on Fichte and the Imagination at the Madrid conference, and much to my astonishment, Daniel Breazeale was there in the front row of my very small audience. There were august scholars giving papers at the same time as my paper and I would never have imagined that he might attend my talk! After my paper, Daniel Breazeale praised my paper and asked me to send it to him "so that he could quote me"!!! I was floored by his easy-going and incredibly generous manner and was able to speak with the giant in Fichte scholarship as though I had known him for many years. Since that time, we have corresponded and met at conferences and he has always remembered me and been incredibly generous and helpful. What mattered to him was the scholarship and furthering a careful and learned interpretation of Fichte. The works themselves were what mattered, not the egos of the scholars. It didn't matter to him that I was not a recognized and established scholar, it mattered to him that we shared a passion and interest in Fichte. This was clear to me from the moment I spoke to him and it was reassuring, empowering and inspiring. He was one of the greatest Fichte scholars we have had the privilege to learn from and he was a kind and generous human being. I am

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grateful that we will continue to be in conversation with him through his writings for as long as there are books and human beings.

Emiliano Acosta (Vrije Universiteit Brussel / Ghent University)

I simply cannot believe it. Life is very strange and although life has nothing to do with justice, I now have the feeling that Dan's death is unjust. I remember him as a person with many projects, with a lot of enthusiasm and life. These months I have been working on the final details of my *nova methodo* translation and consulting Dan's translation and his decisions about obscure passages or about inserting a passage from the Halle manuscript. I can only say that he was an amazing translator, an excellent scholar, an example to follow.

James G. Hart (Prof. Emeritus, Indiana University)

I wish to express my thanks to Dan Breazeale for his work founding the Fichte Society. I am a marginal Fichte scholar but nevertheless was grateful for its existence and for the excellent "Fichte Studies."

Steven Hoeltzel (James Madison University)

I first met Dan in 1995, in Shakertown, Kentucky, at the third-ever meeting of the North American Fichte Society, where I delivered my first-ever bona fide conference paper. I was a third- or fourth-year graduate student at the time, still pretty wet behind the ears, but already awed by the erudition and acumen on display in Dan's scholarship, which had opened up new vistas for me, and which has been an inspiration to me ever since. More importantly, though, I was delighted to discover that this intellectual powerhouse was also an all-round wonderful guy: jovial, unpretentious, encouraging — just a joy to be around. That was almost thirty years ago, and I can say today, without the least exaggeration, that times spent with Dan — not only in the conference room but also (heck, especially!) across the dinner table or at the bar — are among my fondest memories of my many years in philosophy. I should say, too, that like many others of my generation, I have benefitted immensely from Dan's pathbreaking scholarship and tireless organizational efforts. More than that, though, I've been uplifted by the example that he set, not just as a scholar but as a whole human being. I truly looked up to Dan, I miss him already, and to his loved ones, I offer my most heartfelt condolences.

Isabelle Thomas-Fogiel (University of Ottawa)

C'est avec une profonde tristesse que j'apprends le décès de Dan, que j'avais rencontré la première fois à Vienne en Mars 2006, lors d'une des rencontres de la *North American Fichte Society* (*Fichte and the phenomenological tradition*). J'ai

été frappée bien sûr par l'étendue de son savoir et la rigueur de ses analyses mais aussi par son extrême gentillesse, laquelle donnait aux rencontres qu'il organisait, avec Tom Rockmore, une atmosphère sans équivalent dans le monde universitaire. Fortement impressionnée par cette rencontre, je leur avais dédié à tous deux ma traduction en français de la *Doctrine de la science de 1805* en saluant « leur si joyeuse société fichtéenne », car c'est bien l'alliance de la joie et du sérieux de l'étude qu'incarnait Dan au plus haut point. C'est toujours avec grand plaisir que je le retrouvais à l'occasion de colloques (Chicago, Québec, etc.) et c'est avec admiration que je me plongeais dans les nombreuses études qu'il a consacrées à l'idéalisme allemand tout au long de sa carrière. Je mesure d'autant plus ce que perdent les *Études fichtéennes* que j'ai dernièrement étudié, pour un compte rendu demandé par *Le Journal of the History of Philosophy*, sa magnifique édition : *Foundation of the Entire Wissenschaftslehre of 1794-95*, fruit de toute une vie de recherche. Dan était incontestablement le maître des *Études fichtéennes* et sa disparition laisse orpheline la communauté internationale formée autour du philosophe allemand qu'il a tant contribué à faire connaître et aimer.

Jeffery Kinlaw (University of North Carolina, Pembroke)

One afternoon in the fall of 1992 my office phone rang. The caller was Dan Breazeale whom at the time I had not met. I had published an article on Fichte (my first) in *Idealistic Studies* on a philosophy of religion topic in the later Berlin WL, but nonetheless was very much a novice in Fichte studies. Much to my surprise, Dan mentioned that he had read my article and proceeded to invite me to give a paper at the next NAFS meeting in the spring of 1993 in Denver. I didn't know at the time that Dan and Tom Rockmore had formed the society several years earlier. Of course, I understood that Dan was trying to promote NAFS in its fledgling years, but needless to say I gave that paper in Denver. That began a long and cherished friendship that made 30 December 2023 so shocking and sad (even though many of us knew, to some extent, that Dan was ill). Dan's brilliance, both as a scholar and as a philosopher, was obvious to anyone who spent some time in his presence. Those who knew him reasonably well, and I am honored to have been one of those, experienced his kindness, graciousness, and respectfulness which he extended to everyone. Dan didn't suffer fools, but he consistently maintained, in what seemed to be an effortless manner, an admirable balance between a demand for excellence and commitment to high standards and patience and encouragement to all who chose to undertake the daunting task of writing on Fichte. I will not enumerate the times he has assisted me in my career—at times indispensably—and I was not his formal student. People pass, but love and friendship always endure. So, rest in peace, Dan. You will never be forgotten.

Kienhow Goh (National University of Singapore)

I remember Dan as a warm and giving mentor, always eager to help, and with no reserve. His giant figure contrasts sharply with a gentle, gracious gait and mien. His eyes glimmer with knowledge and understanding. The academic world felt so much smaller, closer, in his presence. He will be dearly missed.

I wish Viv and her family the very best.

Marco Ivaldo (Università degli studi di Napoli Federico II)

Liebe Freunde der Amerikanischen Fichte-Gesellschaft, liebe Viviane und Familie Breazeale,

mit großem Bedauern erfahre ich, dass der Freund und teuerste Kollege Dan Breazeale nicht mehr unter uns ist. Ich denke jetzt an den immensen Schmerz, den Viviane und die Familienangehörige ertragen müssen. Ich möchte ihnen mein tiefes Beileid und menschliche Nähe ausdrücken. Daniel ist eine Schlüsselfigur der internationalen Fichte-Forschung zwischen den zwei Jahrhunderten gewesen. Er hat entscheidende Impulse zu einer neuen Epoche der Fichte-Forschung angebracht. Seine Studien sind und bleiben maßgeblich und beleuchtend. Ich habe außerordentlich viel von ihnen gelernt.

Es tut mir ein großes Leid, an der Zelebrierung des Lebens am 20. Januar nicht teilnehmen zu können. Ich werde aber ‚im Geist‘ präsent sein.

Ich hoffe Viviane, dass die Zeit komme, an der wir uns wieder treffen können und verbleibe mit lieben Grüßen.

Mike Vater (Marquette University)

It was my privilege to work alongside Dan for fifty-five years, from graduate school seminars to local conferences and international meetings. As a scholar, I hold him in the highest regard. He is among a handful of North Americans who secured an accurate timeline for the development of German philosophy after Kant, translated essential texts, and established a two-way conversation between North American and German philosophical traditions. Dan's life-long project of making Fichte's Jena systems accessible to a wide philosophical public was supported by careful historical research and a clarity of argument unsurpassed among commentators on the German tradition.

As careful as his scholarship was, Dan's academic character showed a remarkable openness and generosity, and a personal availability lavished on colleagues and students alike. His decisions, along with Tom Rockmore's, on how the North American Fichte Society should conduct itself: open to all, scholar or non-academic, and committed to a range of philosophical approaches, made that society a model for contemporary philosophic discussion. The rare combination he showed of strength of mind and warmth of character will be much missed.

Frederick Beiser (Syracuse University)

Like everyone else, I was very sad to learn about Dan's death. I wrote the review of his first book for the TLS many years ago, and that was my introduction to his work. We met in 1995 (I think) when he came to Bloomington to give a talk on Fichte; he then invited me to his department in Kentucky. The visits were fun and a success for both of us.

One little anecdote about my visit to Kentucky. We got locked in a parking garage and could not get the gate to elevate. We were in a hurry and very frustrated about the defective gate. So what did we do? We broke the gate and rode off, laughing, like naughty children. As far as I know, we got away with this. Maybe Viviane knows better.

My health is weak and feeble; I will not be able to be at the celebration; but you can be sure I will be there in spirit.

Michael Gerten (Universität Bamberg)

Yes, it was a punch to learn that Dan Breazeale died. I wasn't expecting that. The last time I met him was at the Fichte Congress in Leipzig (September 2022); we had good meetings and, as always, a very good exchange of ideas.

And it was also a Fichte Congress (Jena 1994), when I met Dan the first time – at my own first talk at a conference. This was almost 30 years ago...

Since then we met at almost every Reinhold conference and Fichte conference. We had a lot of very good discussions – about philosophy at the conference, about life in pubs. Now, much too late, I learn, that he was a fan of music, sharing some of my favorites (like Bob Dylan). So we both missed the opportunity to talk about that important part of our lives. Okay, there is more possible than is real, but we should live in reality and be happy and content with what we have and already had ... And that's more than enough to know what I'll miss in a world without Dan.

Dan was the best English-language Fichte interpreter I know, and many others confirm this to me. But that did not lead him to a false philosophical dependence on one author. For us, Fichte was the philosopher of freedom, and Dan and I agreed that, as in life, so in philosophy, freedom of thought was the highest principle and the freedom of the whole person was the highest goal – and that only truth itself stands above it.

Dan dedicated his philosophical life to 'the' truth (which is also expressed in 'the good' and 'the beautiful'), as a logical result of making it the measure for his thoughts and actions in his non-philosophical life. "Was für eine Philosophie man wählt, hängt davon ab, was für ein Mensch man ist" (What kind of philosophy you

choose depends on what kind of person you are) – this motto from Fichte applies to few people as much as it does to Dan, whom I valued and liked first and foremost as a person, and then as a philosopher. He was no person you could admire from a distance. His interpersonal genius was: no pretense, but simple presence. I, like everyone who came close to him, liked him because he had integrity, intelligence, education, irony, humor, and, above all, an immediate kindness.

We have not only lost a gifted and extremely creative and productive philosopher, but above all a wonderful person (which of course nobody can know better than his family does). With the sadness of no longer being able to meet him in this world, I also feel joy and, above all, gratitude to have gotten to know him and to have been able to spend so many good days and evenings with him at so many beautiful places. And of course, his philosophical work will remain – and will not age with respect to all the truths it contains.

Let us reap what he has sown!

Violetta L. Waibel (University of Vienna)

I knew Daniel for a long time. I was one of the first people from Europe to take part in the biennial meetings of the NAFS organized by Daniel Breazeale and Tom Rockmore: 1999 in Montreal; 2001 in Del Mar, California; 2004 in Philadelphia. These meetings were of great importance for me. I learned to think Fichte's philosophy in English. I learned to have a new perspective on Fichte. It was always a pleasure to discuss with Dan, how to translate special notions and expressions into English. Before I gave my conference paper, I would go through it with Dan to check certain tricky expressions. These meetings were always very intense, but also held in a very friendly atmosphere. I appreciated this a lot.

In 2004 we took the decision to hold the next meeting in Vienna, in 2006, in the city where I had obtained a university position in transcendental philosophy. I was very happy about this decision and my university provided me with good support to organize the conference. It was the very first meeting of the NAFS in Europe, and if I may be allowed to say, it was a great success. In 2008 we met in Chicago; then in 2010 in Lisbon, Portugal, which was the second meeting of the NAFS in Europe. There were many other conferences where I was able to meet Dan and often Viviane. Dan was several times our guest in Vienna for further conferences. Once, I remember, Dan and Viviane travelled after a conference from Vienna to Venice, and I was able to give them advice on how to get the tickets.

Whenever I was invited to a conference on Fichte, I could expect that Dan would be a part of it, and that I would see him (and Viviane) again. He did an enormous amount of work on Fichte and other philosophers. His translations are benchmarks. I was happy to hear he was translating Fichte's very important *Foundation of the Entire Wissenschaftslehre* of 1794/95. There already existed a translation of this

text, but it was far from the level of what I was used to with the other writings of Fichte that had also been translated by Dan.

It was a great pleasure for me to learn that he esteemed Jean-Paul Sartre as much as I did. So I invited Dan to a conference on Fichte and Sartre in Vienna in 2011.

Dear Viviane, dear Nicole, and dear Becca, I share in your pain that you have lost Dan, your husband and your father. You feel this pain because you had an amazing life with Dan. You shared a communal spirit of life! That is wonderful. I wish you all the very best in the future.

Claude Piché (Université de Montréal)

Odette and I would like to express our heartfelt condolences to Viviane, her children and her grandchildren. Our thoughts are with you during this time of grief for the loss of a loving husband, father, and grandfather. Daniel's death is a great loss for the philosophical community since we lose a most eminent Fichte researcher, but also a person with rare human qualities.

I first met Daniel at the international Fichte Conference of 1994 in Jena and I was impressed to finally get to know the man that I knew through his excellent articles. At the same time, I discovered a very kind, empathetic and outgoing personality. In fact, I had the chance to meet him again the following week since we both took part in another Fichte conference, this time in Poitiers. By mere coincidence, we arrived at the railway station of this city at the same time and we shared a taxi. It was on the way to the conference that Daniel extended to me an invitation that would have long-lasting consequences for my career: he suggested that I should attend the NAFS meeting that he was organizing in Shakertown for the winter of 1995. I never regretted accepting this invitation and I participated in many of the following meetings of the NAFS. I am so grateful to him for that.

What I found remarkable in these meetings is the fact that both Daniel and Tom Rockmore agreed to allow the same length of time to the presentations of the students as to the papers of the well-established scholars. In Daniel's mind, there was a democratic approach to philosophical discussion. Daniel even refused to be called the "Co-President" of the Society, he preferred instead "Co-Positer." Furthermore, these meetings did not feature any keynote speakers. I discovered that the NAFS is not a closed circle reserved for an élite. It is open to newcomers of any origin. This is strictly in accordance with Daniel's personality and with his views on philosophical research.

I can say that it is Daniel who introduced me to Fichte studies in North America as he did for so many of us. And he did so not only by his authoritative publications, by his meticulous translations, or by the meetings he co-organized, but also by regularly posting his famous newsletter that kept us aware of all the new books and

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articles in the field and of every event on Fichte and German idealism in the US and abroad. A painstaking task that he patiently accomplished for so many years. We all know how important this information was for our work.

I might add that Daniel was a convinced Francophile, as well as Viviane, who is a French teacher. He told me once that what had first attracted him to Fichte was the central issue of this philosophy: Fichte's theory of freedom as it is presented in Alexis Philonenko's *La liberté humaine dans la philosophie de Fichte*. In this respect, it is worth pointing out that Daniel and Tom spontaneously accepted that for the meetings of the NAFS in Montréal and Québec City papers could also be read in French. For Daniel, philosophy is inclusive and should be open to all who are interested.

Since many others have already done it, I will not insist on Daniel's considerable contribution to the interpretation of Fichte's thought or to the transmission of his philosophy. I would rather like to conclude on a more personal note. At the occasion of the dinners held at our meetings, Odette and I were exceedingly happy when we learned that we happened to be seated with Daniel and Viviane. It was clear to us that we would spend a most enjoyable evening in the best company, discussing philosophy but also all kinds of interesting topics in a cordial atmosphere, never deprived of humor. I am certain that many of us have experienced such evenings with Daniel. We will surely miss this delightful man.

Benjamin D. Crowe (Boston University)

It is difficult to express the loss being felt by those fortunate enough to know Dan Breazeale. I first met Dan at the APA in San Francisco almost two decades ago. At that first meeting, I was profoundly impressed by Dan's warmth, openness, and generosity toward me, someone he'd never met. It was genuinely inspiring for a recently-minted Ph.D. like myself to encounter someone with so many accomplishments to his name who nevertheless embodied Hume's adage, "Be a philosopher; but amidst all your philosophy, be still a man." From that moment until now, Dan proved to be a mentor and loyal friend to me. We shared meals, conversation, and serious debate in far-flung places around the world. He supported and influenced my own scholarly work in innumerable ways.

In 2019, Dan entrusted me, along with Gabe Gottlieb, with the stewardship of one of his most significant legacies, the North American Fichte Society (founded by Dan and Tom Rockmore in 1991). The NAFS was and is still a group permeated by Dan's spirit of serious scholarship and deep humanity, and I am humbled to have been chosen by Dan to carry on his work.

I offer heartfelt condolences to Dan's family during this time of loss.

Daniel Breazeale

List of Publications¹

Monograph

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¹ This list is not yet complete.

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I. EDITIONS

J. G. Fichte, *Ascetica come appendice alla morale*, edited, translated, and annotated by Maurizio Maria Malimpensa (Milan: Mimesis, 2023). 122pp. ISBN 9788857597195



Bridging the Abyss between Theory and Practice. Notes on the new Italian translation of Fichte's *Ascetik*

If there is anything that young Hegelians such as Ludwig Feuerbach, Moses Hess, or Mikhail Bakunin could learn from Fichte, it is surely the practical nature of his philosophy. This quality is expressed in the transformative practice of thought and the – epistemologically grounding – thematization of the relationship between transcendental philosophy and life.¹ In other words – to paraphrase the introduction to Moses Hess' *European Triarchy* – philosophy would have to reconnect with life, not to conceptualize it, but to empower it. It would be a matter of reactivating a philosophy capable of articulating the relationship between theory and praxis in a critical, dynamic, and productive way in order to bring about a concrete transformation of the existing order.

One of the earliest works in which Fichte addresses the problem of the relationship between theory and praxis is the *Ascetik als Anhang zur Moral* [*Ascetics as an Appendix to Ethics*] (1798). The first Italian translation of this text has recently been published by Maurizio Maria Malimpensa: J. G. Fichte, *Ascetica*

¹ Let me introduce this review through some notes on the themes of my doctoral thesis (S. Gristina, *Dal trascendentale alla praxis. L'eredità di Fichte nei giovani hegeliani e in Marx* [From the Transcendental to Praxis. Fichte's Legacy in Young Hegelians' and Marx's philosophies], University of Padua 2023 – <https://www.research.unipd.it/handle/11577/3491644?mode=full>), kindly quoted by the editor of the edition of *Ascetik* reviewed here, in his historical-critical note.

come *appendice alla morale* (Mimesis: Milano 2023), with a historical-critical note and an afterword by the translator and editor of the edition. This translation fills a gap in the *corpus* of Fichte's works in Italian – and makes an important piece of the systematic development of the *Wissenschaftslehre* of the Jena period accessible to Italian students and scholars.

The problem of *Ascetik* is thus the mediation between the level of transcendental philosophy and the level of empirical reality. Having derived and systematized the sphere of ethics from a transcendental standpoint in *Das System der Sittenlehre nach den Principien der Wissenschaftslehre* (1798), Fichte must define the criteria for the transfer or “application”² of the *Wissenschaftslehre* to the level of life. Indeed, the practical vocation of the *Wissenschaftslehre* requires us to think structurally about how science is introduced into life. According to Fichte, the philosopher must indicate how the demands of reason are to be realized in the empirical world, and how theory is to become practice and interact with contingency. The science that should bridge this “abyss” (cf. p. 14) between theory and practice in general, insofar as it can be bridged scientifically, is *history*.

To introduce the specific role that the *Ascetik* plays within the *Wissenschaftslehre* and the place it occupies in the logic of the system, Fichte compares it with *politics* [*Politik*] or – as the editor emphasizes in the afterword – *Art of the State* [*Staatskunst*]. In fact, according to Fichte:

ciò che armonizza l'applicazione della dottrina pura del diritto ai determinati statuti esistenti si chiama politica; ciò che armonizza l'applicazione della morale pura al carattere empirico, fin tanto che ciò è possibile, si chiama ascetica.³ (17)

(what harmonizes the application of the pure doctrine of right to certain existing statutes is called politics; what harmonizes the application of pure morality to the empirical character, as far as this is possible, is called *Ascetik*)

And further he adds that

la politica deve indicare la via per cui si possa condurre a poco a poco un determinato Stato all'unico statuto giuridico conforme a ragione. Al contrario, l'ascetica dovrebbe parimenti avere il compito di indicare la via per cui si possa introdurre gradualmente altri o se stessi all'intenzione morale. (17)

(politics should point the way by which one can gradually lead a given state to the only legal status that conforms to reason. Differently, ascetics should

² Regarding the problem of the *Anwendung* [application] of philosophy and the excess of the practical dimension as an epistemologically foundational element of Fichte's transcendental philosophy, cf. G. Gambaro, *Filosofia trascendentale e orizzonte pratico nell'ultimo Fichte* (Cleup: Padua, 2020).

³ The English translation of selected passages from the *Ascetik* is by the author of this review.

likewise have the task of pointing the way by which one can gradually introduce others or oneself to the moral intention.)

At this point, Fichte makes a further distinction in order to determine the realm of the *Ascetik*. It is not possible to regard others as one's own product, but it is possible to point out a direction for moral self-determination. However, the practical knowledge that deals with educating others to a moral life by example is pedagogy. The specific task of the *Ascetik*, on the other hand, is to find “*un quadro sistematico dei mezzi per mantenere ininterrottamente presente in noi il pensiero del dovere*”⁴ (27), and – even more decisively – “*un mezzo per rammentarsi incessantemente del proprio dovere*”⁵ (30). This is where perhaps the most interesting theme in the *Ascetik* emerges, namely the relationship of oblivion and remembrance to the concept of pure duty. In order to act morally, the concept of “I must” should, in a sense, be able to accompany my every deed.

The *Ascetik* can thus be described as a *practice of remembrance*. This is not to be understood as a mechanical operation of the spirit, but – precisely because it is a practice – as an act of constant revitalization of freedom. It is a remembrance of the decision for freedom, which explains that every moral decision in accordance with duty does not result from a previous chain of actions, but from the triggering of new chains of free and moral deeds. The question of the possibility of an *Ascetik* implies the question of whether there is a law that guarantees these operations of the spirit. Fichte asks himself “*c'è un efficace mezzo meccanico [...] mediante cui un determinato concetto deve ripetersi secondo una regola interna?*”⁶ (32) and he immediately answers that “*c'è senz'altro una legge corrispondente al meccanismo, e questa legge è quella dell'associazione di idee*”⁷ (32), i.e., a law that is found “*tra necessità e libertà: – facoltà della rammemorazione*”⁸ (32).

If what makes remembrance possible is the law of the association of ideas, and this is explained not by a mechanical concatenation but by an ever-new act of freedom, then *Ascetik* depends on constant practice. The basic principle of this practical science, Fichte specifies and searches for ever more precise formulations, could be formulated by the imperative: “*connetti in anticipo alla rappresentazione delle tue future azioni la rappresentazione dell'agire conforme al dovere*”⁹ (33). The latter is the task of the *Ascetik*, which can never be regarded as fulfilled once and for all, but is based on the principle of reflection, the revision of one's own actions and constant self-examination. Only through such an exercise is it possible

⁴ “a systematic outline of the means of keeping the thought of duty uninterruptedly present in us.”

⁵ “a means of ceaselessly reminding oneself of one's duty.”

⁶ “is there an effective mechanical means [...] by which a given concept must repeat itself according to an internal rule?”

⁷ “there is certainly a law corresponding to the mechanism, and this law is that of the association of ideas.”

⁸ “between necessity and freedom: – *faculty of remembrance*.”

⁹ “connect in advance to the representation of your future actions the representation of acting in accordance with duty.”

to counteract the repetitive compulsion of human being's natural instincts and the tendency to forget one's duty, making human beings uniquely dependent on their freedom. In other words:

il compito dell'ascetica sarebbe perciò: ricercare questo atto della libertà nei diversi affetti possibili, al fine di annodare ad essi un contrappeso, di congiungervi uno stimolante della libera volontà, e attraverso ciò una rammemorazione del dovere.(45)

(the task of the *Ascetik* would therefore be: to search for this act of freedom in the various possible affections, in order to knot to them a counterweight, to join to them a stimulant of the free will, and through this a remembrance of duty.)

There is certainly a double tendency in the human being, a truly natural tendency, and a natural tendency to reason. However, the urge to freedom can also give rise to harmful passions. When freedom is only formal and not material, – that is, when it is not concretized through reflection, – it presents itself as lawless and free of any rules, leading to “un impulso all'indipendenza assoluta, quindi al dominio su tutto ciò che si trova fuori di noi”¹⁰ (47). Insatiable passions depend on this defect of freedom, above all what I would call – with a certain hermeneutical freedom – “egoism” or “self-interest.” This lack of freedom would lead one to see the world as an object or a series of objects that one can dominate and possess. In other words, it would be the flawed view that produces – this would probably appeal to the young Hegelians and the young Marx – the unsociable sociability of private property. The solution to this disproportionate attitude of freedom is

“un'attenzione ininterrotta a se stessi, è un'auto-osservazione, un atto di continua riflessione non al fine di apprendere qualcosa su noi stessi, bensì di dominarsi. Dunque, la regola principale sarebbe: osserva continuamente te stesso. Fa' tutto ciò che fai solo ed esclusivamente con avveduta libertà. (51)”¹¹

(uninterrupted attention to oneself, is self-observation, an act of continuous reflection not for the purpose of learning something about ourselves, but to master ourselves. So, the main rule would be: continuously observe yourself. Do everything you do only and exclusively with shrewd freedom.)

¹⁰ “an impulse to absolute independence, thus to dominion over everything outside ourselves.”

¹¹ As mentioned by the editor of the edition in his afterword, this is the anticipation of the themes of *Besonnenheit* and *Weisheit*. On these topics, cf. G. Rametta, “Fichte, o il trascendentale come saggezza”, in J. G. Fichte, *Dottrina della scienza 1813*, edited by G. Gambaro (Rome: TrE-Press, Rome 2018); G. Rametta, *Libertà, scienza e saggezza nel “secondo” Fichte*, in G. Duso, G. Rametta (eds.), *La libertà nella filosofia classica tedesca. Politica e filosofia tra Kant, Fichte, Schelling e Hegel* (Milan: FrancoAngeli, 2000), and G. Rametta, *Take five. Cinque contributi su Fichte e la filosofia trascendentale* (Milan: Mimesis, 2021), which was recently reviewed in *FICHTEANA* 22 (2022): 57-62.

However, Fichte also warns against *abstract* reflection, which instead leads to inertia and stagnation. While it is true that it is necessary to distance oneself from pure action through moments of reflection and meditation, one must be wary of overstimulating the speculative nature, which leads to a different but equally problematic kind of selfishness and self-centeredness. This is the intellectual who closes himself off in the circle of theorists and loses sight of the practical significance of thought and the connection between philosophy and life. Moral principles are thus known in theory but never put into practice.

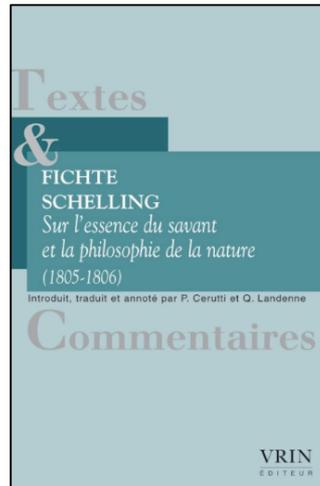
Fichte thus brings us back to the starting point of his writing and confronts us with the errors in the practical attitude that result from the fact that we remain trapped in the rift between theory and practice, in that abyss to which he had referred in the first pages. The problem has two faces: some are too fixated on practice, do not engage in reflection, and lose themselves in formal freedom; and others are too overwhelmed by theory, and think about practice from a theoretical standpoint but do not act in continuity with their theoretical achievements, thus disconnecting philosophy from life. The result is the same: the autistic closure of the ego, a practical or theoretical egoism. The solution lies in transcendental philosophy and is what Fichte calls “material freedom” (cf. p. 46), i.e. a kind of concrete freedom resulting from the exercise of “speculativo come qualcosa di *pratico*”¹² (71).

Fichte’s text – well translated by Malimpensa – is followed by a historical-critical note by the translator, which helps to place the text in the context of Fichte’s philosophical production and to clarify some translation choices that are appropriate and useful for understanding in Italian some speculative movements in Fichte’s thought. In addition, this edition is supplemented by an afterword by the translator, which can serve as an introduction to the problems raised by Fichte’s *Ascetisk*. Malimpensa’s short text helps to orientate oneself in Fichte’s *Ascetisk*, through a clear and effective reconstruction that also provides some interpretative ideas that enhance Fichte’s *Ascetisk* as a whole and reassess its significance within Fichte’s works. In general, Malimpensa’s editorial work is commendable because it makes available to the Italian reader an important and often neglected text of Fichte and provides the international community with a tool with which to engage in research on the problem of the *Ascetisk* and the moral philosophy of the Jena Fichte.

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¹² “speculative as something *practical*.”

J.G. Fichte / F.W.J. Schelling, *Sur l'essence du savant et la philosophie de la nature (1805–1806)*. Introduced, translated, and annotated by Patrick Cerutti and Quentin Landenne (Paris: Vrin, 2021), 280pp. ISBN 978-2-7116-2984-8



In the introduction to the *System of Transcendental Idealism*, Schelling praises transcendental idealism for its capacity to generate “new problems never before considered” thereby giving “rise to a new sort of truth” (HKA I/9.1, 23–24). This description of transcendental idealism resonates with what Thomas Kuhn would later call a paradigm shift, namely, a fundamental change in the basic concepts of a science. In a short text published in 1989, Marek Siemek explicitly draws on Thomas Kuhn’s famous theory to refer not only to transcendental idealism, but to the specific ways in which Fichte and Schelling further develop Kant’s philosophy. In Siemek’s view, both authors would represent “two paradigms of post-Kantian philosophy” (Siemek 1989, 389).

The volume currently under review offers this and future generations of French-speaking scholars a significant contribution to research into the contemporary relevance of this paradigm conflict and all the related issues of commensurability. The editors, Patrick Cerutti and Quentin Landenne, provide francophone research with the first integral French translation of two important and yet relatively understudied texts of Fichte and Schelling: Fichte’s *Ueber das Wesen des Gelehrten, und seine Erscheinungen im Gebiete der Freiheit* (On the Essence of the Scholar and his Appearances in the Domain of Freedom) and Schelling’s *Darlegung des wahren Verhältnisses der Naturphilosophie zu der verbesserten Fichte’schen Lehre* (Statement on the True Relationship of the Philosophy of Nature to the Revised Fichtean Doctrine). Fichte’s text is the printed version of a series of public lectures given in Erlangen in the summer of 1805 and published in early February 1806. Schelling’s text, published in the fall of 1806, contains a critical review of Fichte’s lectures together with a more comprehensive criticism

of what he takes to be the improved version of Fichte's doctrine. Together with these two texts, the editors have also included a translation of a supplement to the preface to Fichte's *Anweisung zum seligen Leben* (Way to the Blessed Life) also published in 1806, in which Fichte reproduces and responds to an anonymous review¹ of his lectures on the scholar and reflects on the issues related to the activity of undertaking book reviews.

Fichte's original texts on which the translation is based can be found in the critical edition of Fichte's complete works published by the Bavarian Academy of Sciences (GA I/8, 37–140 and GA I/9, 194–212). The translation of Schelling's text is based on Schelling's *Sämmtliche Werke* published by his son K.F.A. Schelling (SW VII, 1–130). Since the present translation was published in 2021, the editors did not have the opportunity to consult the critical edition of Schelling's text published by the Bavarian Academy of Sciences in 2022 (HKA 16.1, 3–164). The only significant change to the text included in the critical edition is the separation between Schelling's review of Fichte's lectures (HKA 16.1, 3–33), originally published by Schelling in the *Jenaische Allgemeine Literaturzeitung* in June 1806, and the *Darlegung* (HKA 16.1, 35–164), the first edition of which was published in Tübingen in the fall of 1806. Schelling's son incorporated the review into the *Darlegung* (SW, VII 4–20) and the editors of this French translation follow this incorporation in their own editorial work. However, given that no other substantial change has been made to either of these texts in the critical edition, this does not affect the quality of the present translation.² The only possible disadvantage is that the French-speaking researcher will not have the critical edition reference immediately in front of her or his eyes for citation.

Particularly meaningful is the choice of publishing the translation of these texts together in one single volume. Scholars who tackle the controversies between Fichte and Schelling tend to side with one part, often falling prey to a certain reductionist portrayal of the opponent's position. From a Fichtean point of view, Schelling would be too ontological; from a Schellingian point of view, Fichte would be too subjectivist. While it is true that Schelling focuses more on the natural world than Fichte and that Fichte tends to emphasize the structure of the human mind more than Schelling, neither is Schelling's concept of nature devoid of subjectivity nor is Fichte's concept of subjectivity deprived of objective reality. By engaging a Fichte scholar, Quentin Landenne, and a Schelling scholar, Patrick Cerutti, to carry out this editorial work, the current volume effectively avoids such a trap. Thus, the nicely nuanced introduction presents the Fichte-Schelling controversy from the standpoint of both philosophers and tries to find some common ground “par-delà leurs multiples lignes de fracture” (34) (beyond their

¹ As the editor of the critical edition notes, the reviewer was Heinrich Luden, who was in the audience of Fichte's scientific lectures in Berlin in 1804 and 1805 and who became professor of history in Jena in 1806 (GA I/9, 195).

² In addition, the editor of the critical edition even took this French edition into account as part of his editorial work, which testifies to the high quality of this volume (HKA 16.1, 38).

multiple fault lines). If we return to the paradigm analogy, the editors seem to suggest that there might be some sort of commensurability between these two paradigms of post-Kantian philosophy after all. Be as it may, this approach has the potential of providing the new generation of French-speaking scholars with a more balanced view of this pivotal moment in the history of classical German philosophy.

This is even more relevant given what is at stake in the rupture between Fichte and Schelling. If the philosophical rupture effectively takes place with the interruption of letters exchanged between the two philosophers in 1802, the consequences of such a controversy will only begin to become clear in the following years. The climax of this process is arguably reached with the publication of Fichte's three popular texts in 1806 – the lectures on the scholar, the *Anweisung*, and the *Grundzüge des gegenwärtigen Zeitalters* (Characteristics of the Present Age) – and Schelling's reply in the *Darlegung*, a text to which Schelling himself referred as the “Anti-Fichte” (HKA 16.1, 45). In these texts, the overarching discussion of the status of general principles during the letter exchange of 1800–1802 is spelled out in concrete problems concerning the relationship between humans and nature, the way in which philosophy should be practiced, and the role of the philosopher within society.

Once one explores the specific way in which these issues are discussed by both philosophers, the topicality of the debate becomes even more evident. For instance, should nature be considered as something that can only acquire vitality and rationality through humanity, or is nature itself alive and a source of rationality? Does Fichte approach tend to instrumentalize nature or, as Schelling puts it, to grasp nature “according to an economical-teleological principle” (SW VII, 17 / HKA 16.1, 30), thereby being anti-ecological? Or does Schelling tend, as Fichte puts it, “to divinize nature” (GA I/8, 73), thereby going in the opposite direction of the modern natural sciences? Or yet another issue: What is the role of philosophy and of the philosopher in the world? Should philosophy strive to create a new reality more in accord with a certain ideal as Fichte's lectures on the scholar seem to suggest? Or should philosophy rather strive to understand the overarching unity to which humanity belongs? Given these issues, I take the editor's choice of starting the introduction to the volume with Adorno's passage on how to keep the philosophical spirit alive in a hyper-specialized society to be a very fortunate one. The editors offer here a fruitful and insightful angle of approach to this paradigm conflict of post-Kantian philosophy. Indeed, by doing this, they suggest bringing Fichte's and Schelling's positions to bear on contemporary discussions on our role as philosophers and more broadly on the role of educational and culture-building institutions.

A further advantage of this conjoint translation is the service it provides to the standardization of the translation of both philosophers' technical vocabulary. One of the unfortunate side-effects of the specialization of the secondary literature is that translations often take into account solely the internal consistency of the use

of technical terms within the works of one philosopher, losing sight of the way this term was used in broader debates between different philosophers. This may lead to different translations of the same term across different contemporary philosophers, thereby generating substantial difficulties for scholars who work with these translations. This volume offers a significant contribution to avoid such a problem, since it furnishes a unified choice of terms for the texts of both authors. Moreover, since Patrick Cerutti has himself translated several of Schelling's works and is one of the co-translators of Fichte's *Anweisung*, he can offer a unifying perspective not only on Fichte's and Schelling's philosophical vocabulary but also between different works published by Fichte in this period. Accordingly, the translation and annotation are carefully carried out, taking into account the work of the standard French commentators, especially the Schelling ones, namely, Jean-François Courtine, Xavier Tilliette, and Jean-François Marquet.

For all the praise this edition deserves, I allow myself to mention two points for potential improvement. First, given the praiseworthy choice of opting for a balanced edition of Fichte and Schelling, I missed a more detailed annotation of Fichte's text. Both of Fichte's texts taken together contain a total of 10 pages of annotations, whereas Schelling's text is accompanied by 33 pages of annotations. I particularly missed a more detailed engagement with Fichte's attacks on Schelling in his lectures since this would have set the stage for the translation of Schelling's text in the following pages of the volume. It is true that such criticism is not always explicit in Fichte's text since he does not mention Schelling by name, but the critical edition of the Bavarian Academy identifies four different points in Fichte's lectures where Schelling is the very likely target. A second related issue that, in my view, deserved a little more attention is the expression "revised Fichtean doctrine" (*verbesserte Fichte'sche Lehre*) employed by Schelling in his title. This Schellingian objection of a change of doctrine has become the source of a long discussion in the reception of Fichte's works on whether Fichte altered his doctrine from the *Grundlage* to the works published post-1800. I understand, and highly praise, the option of focusing on the contemporary stakes of the paradigm conflict between Schelling and Fichte, however given the relevance of this point, it deserved more attention, if not in the introduction, in the annotations of the texts of both authors.

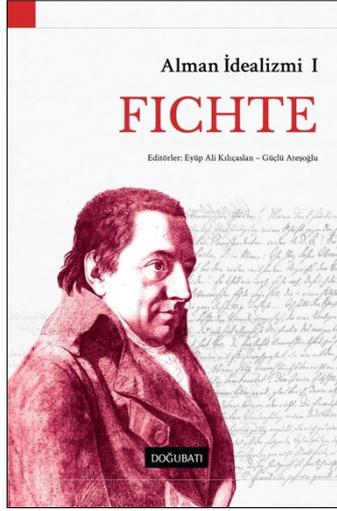
Yet these two relatively small points may be considered nitpicking given the high quality of the editorial work and the invaluable contribution it offers to future generations of French-speaking scholars interested in a nuanced appreciation of the potentials of these two paradigms of post-Kantian philosophy.

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***Alman İdealizmi I: Fichte*, edited by Eyüp Ali Kılıçaslan and Güçlü Ateşoğlu (Ankara: Doğu Batı Yayınları, 2nd edition, paperback, 2021), 549 pp. ISBN 978-625-7030-56-4**



Alman İdealizmi I: Fichte as a Key Resource in Turkish Philosophy

The book *Alman İdealizmi I: Fichte* has consistently remained a significant resource in Turkish philosophy. Initially published in 2006, it has now seen a second edition appear in 2021, with some minor revisions. It is edited by two scholars, Eyüp Ali Kılıçaslan and Güçlü Ateşoğlu, both renowned for their expertise in German Idealism, especially Hegelian philosophy. Therefore, it is not surprising that the second book in the *German Idealism* duology focuses on Hegel and is edited by Ateşoğlu. With similar scholarly backgrounds and a history of collaboration on various projects, Kılıçaslan and Ateşoğlu have produced a substantial volume on Johann Gottlieb Fichte. The book under review includes translations of numerous fundamental texts by Fichte, as well as historical and contemporary essays on Fichte's philosophy. *Alman İdealizmi I: Fichte* is published by Doğu Batı Publishing, a prestigious publisher with a collection of more than one hundred philosophy books and journals devoted to philosophical issues.

It is worth noting that Fichte is still not widely studied in Turkey. In this context, the book has reached a limited audience over the years, a fact particularly evident during the time between the first and the second editions. Nevertheless, it remains an essential resource for Fichte studies in Turkish. Despite some

shortcomings, which I will elaborate on in the following paragraphs, the book retains a central place among few other works in the field of Fichte research in Turkey.

To provide an overview, the editors have structured the book into two main sections: one dedicated to Fichte's writings and the other to texts about Fichte. The book deviates from a traditional volume insofar as it primarily consists of an anthology of Fichte's basic works by various translators, including translations by the editors. To align with this division in the book, I will structure this review into two main sections, mirroring the editors' approach.

Introduction

The book opens with an introduction by Ateşoğlu, which provides an account of "Fichte's Life and Philosophy." This introduction draws heavily on the works of Daniel Breazeale and Allen Wood and aims to kindle interest in Fichte studies within the Turkish academic context. It offers a concise overview of key historical and biographical milestones, including the influence of Spinoza, Fichte's encounter with Kant, his response to the ideals of the French Revolution, his Jena period, and essential conceptual developments in Fichte's philosophical journey. Although a more comprehensive account would have been appreciated, this brief yet informative introduction serves as a reliable guide for readers navigating the book.

Ateşoğlu is well aware of the significance and challenges associated with such a volume. At the end of the introduction, he dedicates a section to highlighting the difficulties involved in editing a book on Fichte in Turkish. This is because the volume, apart from a few editions of Fichte's *Reden an die deutsche Nation*, the latest of which was as far back as 1938, is the first comprehensive work available on Fichte in the Turkish language. Ateşoğlu succinctly summarizes his aim as follows:

tüm yaşamı boyunca yazdıklarından seçilerek derlenmeye çalışılan, aynı zaman-da onun felsefesi üzerine yazıların da yer aldığı *Alman İdealizmi I: Fichte*'nin, Alman İdealizminin en önemli uğrak noktalarından birisi olan Johann Gottlieb Fichte'nin felsefesi üzerine Türkçede yıllardır hissedilen bir açığı kapatacağı ve bu felsefenin hak etmiş olduğu yeri kısa zamanda [...] alacağı düşüncesindeyim. (24).

(compiled from the selected writings throughout his lifetime, including essays on his philosophy, *Alman İdealizmi I: Fichte* is an attempt to fill a gap that has been felt for years in Turkish concerning the philosophy of Johann Gottlieb Fichte, one of the crucial stages in German Idealism. I believe that the book will fill this gap and Fichte's philosophy will soon attain its deserved place.)

Ateşoğlu also acknowledges the challenges in translation and notes that, while the editors largely respect the personal choices of the translators, they simultaneously need to maintain consistency of language in the book. This dual responsibility adds an extra layer of complexity to the editors' task (25). I will discuss some of the issues of translation in the next section.

Section I: Writings of Johann Gottlieb Fichte

Following the introduction, the first section presents a selection of Fichte's writings in Turkish translation. It extends from his early works in the 1790s to more mature pieces: beginning with Fichte's *Aenesidemus* review and culminating in the 1807/8 *Reden an die deutsche Nation*. The chosen texts encompass not only Fichte's theoretical contributions but also his exploration of ethics and politics. The selection includes pivotal excerpts from Fichte's oeuvre, such as the *Wissenschaftslehre* (1794), *Nova Methodo* (1796/99), *Sittenlehre* (1798), and the above-mentioned, *Reden an die deutsche Nation* (1807/8). In addition, it contains translations of several shorter essays, including, "Über den Unterschied zwischen Geist und Buchstabe in der Philosophie" (1794), "Über Belebung und Erhöhung des reinen Interesse für Wahrheit" (1795), and "Über den Grund unseres Glaubens an eine göttliche Weltregierung" (1798). Moreover, this section incorporates a selection of Fichte's correspondence with influential figures in his life, such as Kant, Reinhold, Goethe, Baggesen, Schiller, and Jacobi.

While various translators contributed to the rendering of these works, some of whom are esteemed Turkish philosophers renowned for their work in translating fundamental philosophical texts from German, like Kaan H. Ökten and the late Uluğ Nutku, the editors have successfully maintained consistency and coherence throughout the book. This is notable because previous generations of translators occasionally struggled with outdated language or attempted to create overly "purist" Turkish equivalents for central philosophical concepts. Though some translators, including Kılıçaslan, adhere to these traditions to a certain extent, the present Fichte book offers texts that are both accessible and understandable, addressing these challenges as effectively as possible.

Section II: Texts on the Philosophy of Johann Gottlieb Fichte

The second section of the book contains half a dozen texts in Turkish on Fichte's philosophical system. It commences with an early version of Allen W. Wood's contribution "Fichte's Philosophy of Right and Ethics", which would be later published in 2016 in English in *The Cambridge Companion to Fichte* edited by David James and Günter Zöllner. It is followed by an article of Kaan H. Ökten titled "The Intersection of Political History and Philosophy: Fichte's *Addresses to the*

German Nation.” These articles concentrate on Fichte’s political understanding, offering a background to his political ideas and how they manifested in his philosophy. Taken together, these articles paint a comprehensive picture of the theoretical and practical movements of the era and illustrate how Fichte revolutionized them. It is worth noting that the first article is already accessible to an international audience. Looking at Ökten’s article, it is divided into two main sections. It begins by exploring the historical events of the period, ranging from the French Revolution to Napoleon’s intervention, which precipitated the Franco-Austrian War, and the waning of Austrian power in the Germanic world. Subsequently, it delves into the intellectual atmosphere in 19th century Germany and elucidates why German thinkers closely monitored events in France. This historical context sets the stage for an analysis of the philosophical underpinnings of German idealism, with a focus on how Fichte’s *Addresses to the German Nation* fits within this milieu. While the article serves as a guide to understanding Fichte’s *Addresses*, it also offers constructive criticism by portraying the work as somewhat dogmatic in contrast to the broader political climate of the time and Fichte’s initial intentions, which had not yet been tainted by the catastrophic events of 20th century Germany. Therefore, Ökten concludes:

Fichte’yi yirmi birinci yüzyılın başında okuyanların da, yani totalleştirici, kat’î olarak temellendirici ve/veya fundamentalist söylemlerin nerelere varabileceğini ziyadesiyle görmüş ve tecrübe etmiş olan bir neslin de bu tür anlamlandırma girişimlerine belirli bir tereddütle yaklaşması son derece haklı görülmelidir (429).

(It is entirely justified for a generation reading Fichte in the early 21st century, a generation that has seen and experienced the lengths to which totalizing, categorical, and/or fundamentalist discourses can lead, to approach such interpretative endeavours with a certain scepticism.)

Following these articles on Fichte’s political philosophy, the second section continues with two important texts by G.W.F. Hegel, who both admired and criticized Fichte. These texts include excerpts from *Differenz des Fichteschen und Schellingschen Systems*, and *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie*, accompanied by an explanatory article by Eyüp Ali Kılıçarslan entitled “Hegel’s Interpretation of Fichte in the *Differenzschrift*”. Kılıçarslan provides a systematic overview of Hegel’s approach, highlighting the relationship between Schelling, Hegel, and Fichte, and how the *Differenzschrift* serves as a central critique of both. Kılıçarslan opens the discussion by depicting the philosophical interconnections among Hegel, Hölderlin, and Fichte. He then delves into Schelling, leading to a reassessment of Spinoza and Fichte’s early period before engaging with Kant’s works. Emphasizing Fichte’s endeavor to deduce the Kantian categories and posit

the self, Kılıçarslan proceeds to explore Hegel's critique of Fichte's positing of the 'I' and 'Not-I.' He underscores that the latter, in his view, is "indeed, a disguised version of Kant's thing-in-itself" (Gerçekte bu, Kant'ın kendinde şeyinin kılık değiştirmiş bir biçimidir) (496).

This portion, consisting of three texts by and on Hegel, could potentially be placed at the end of the book, creating a natural segue to the second volume in the *German Idealism* series.

While the editors' emphasis on exploring the link between Fichte and Hegel is understandable, it would have been valuable to include articles that investigate the influence of Kant on Fichte, recalling how Fichte, through his critique of Kant, became a pivotal figure in the development of transcendental idealism. The book only presents one final text in that regard: the Turkish translation of F.W.J. Schelling's "*Kant-Fichte: System des transzendentalen Idealismus*" from the *System des transzendentalen Idealismus*.

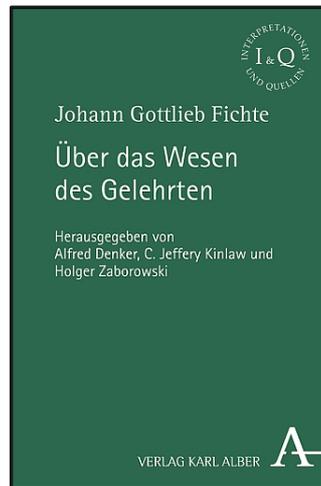
At the end of the book, readers will find a Fichte bibliography which includes Fichte's works and works about Fichte in both German and English, and a select list of works in Turkish.

Conclusion

This substantial 549-page volume, *Alman İdealizmi I: Fichte*, remains a valuable resource for Turkish scholars. This is especially true of the first section, which contains translations of Fichte's key philosophical writings. The second section, however, exhibits a rather eclectic structure within the book itself and could have benefited from more recent insights into Fichte's philosophy. It may be worthwhile expanding this section, or possibly even turning it into a separate companion volume. Furthermore, the 2021 edition would have been an ideal opportunity to introduce updates to this section, aligning it with contemporary Fichte studies. A revised bibliography, considering the surge in Fichte studies in the 21st century, would have also enhanced the book's utility. Nevertheless, overall the editors have undertaken an important endeavour by shedding light on a philosopher who, though not widely known, significantly influenced philosophical thought in the 19th and 20th centuries.

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J.G. Fichte, *Über das Wesen des Gelehrten*, edited by Alfred Denker, C. Jeffery Kinlaw, and Holger Zaborowski (Freiburg / Munich: Verlag Karl Alber, 2020), 290pp. ISBN 978-3-495-48718-1



“So hebe ich unter Ihnen ein neues Leben an.”

– J.G. Fichte¹

1. The Erlangen Lecture Cycle

Announced in a programmatic text, and then printed as a manuscript for his listeners in Jena, the *Grundlage der gesamten Wissenschaftslehre* (1794/95) undoubtedly forms the foundation stone of Fichte’s *scientific* philosophy.² Yet many scholars are convinced that the *popular* philosophical works should not be overlooked and also constitute a perfectly good point of entry into the Fichtean corpus.³

During his lifetime Fichte delivered a trilogy of popular lecture cycles on the nature of the scholar. The cycles are very different, but a key idea in all three is the scholar’s *Bestimmung*, a mercurial term in German that can variously mean: determination, vocation, mission, or destiny. Fichte made the three cycles available to the public in written form.⁴ The first of the three cycles is the most well-known, and was held at the University of Jena immediately upon the 32-year-old taking up his professorship in May 1794. The second cycle was given a decade later in 1805 to students at the University of Erlangen. While the third was held in 1811 at the newly founded University of Berlin. In parallel with these popular presentations,

¹ “Thus I am beginning a new life among you.” J.G. Fichte, “Gedanken zu einer Antrittsrede in Erlangen” [Thoughts on an Inaugural Lecture in Erlangen] (GA II/9: 23). For an overview of Fichte’s Erlangen period, see *Fichte-Studien* 34 (2009) – “Fichte in Erlangen 1805”, edited by Michael Gerten.

² On Fichte’s idea of science, cf. Gabriel Gottlieb, “Theory of Science – Fichte, Schelling”, in: *A Companion to Nineteenth-Century Philosophy*, edited by John Shand (Hoboken N.J.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2019), 55-82.

³ See among others, Peter L. Oesterreich, Hartmut Traub, *Der ganze Fichte: die populäre, wissenschaftliche und metaphilosophische Erschließung der Welt* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2006).

⁴ And of course, Fichte also published a popular *book* on the vocation of the whole human being: *Die Bestimmung des Menschen* (1800).

Fichte gave at the same three universities his customary technical lectures on the *Wissenschaftslehre*.

As a series of ten talks, the Erlangen cycle is the longest and surely the most challenging. It was first published in 1806 under the unusual title: *Über das Wesen des Gelehrten und seine Erscheinungen in Gebiete der Freiheit* (On the Essence of the Scholar and his Appearances in the Domain of Freedom).⁵ The volume additionally forms a triptych with two other major works that Fichte published in 1806 – the lectures on history: *Die Grundzüge des gegenwärtigen Zeitalters* (The Characteristics of the Present Age), and his *magnum opus* on the philosophy of religion: *Anweisung zum seligen Leben* (Way to the Blessed Life).

The Erlangen cycle on the scholar has now been reprinted by the publisher Karl Alber, in a volume edited by Alfred Denker, C. Jeffery Kinlaw, and Holger Zaborowski. This new edition is based on the original 1806 publication, yet takes into account the *Gesamtausgabe* (GA) edition and helpfully puts the pagination of both the 1806 and *Sämtliche Werke* (SW) editions in the margins. Besides Fichte's text (pp. 11-95), this volume contains thirteen interpretive essays in German and English (97-290). This is an excellent idea to combine the German primary source with critical pieces. Since Fichte's works require informed textual exegesis, even the so-called popular ones, it is hoped that more hybrid editions of this kind will appear in the future.

This 1805 Erlangen cycle is currently receiving renewed scholarly attention. A brand-new French translation of it has been recently published;⁶ while Schelling's polemical review of these lectures has just appeared in the historical-critical edition of his works.⁷

2. What is the Scholar's "Essence"?

What are Fichte's 1805 lectures on the scholar about? I'll first provide a brief outline of them before considering the interpretive essays.

Fichte himself regards the Erlangen cycle to be an improved version of the earlier Jena one (13). The opening lecture provides a "Plan des Ganzen" (plan of the whole)⁸ (14). Not only is the scholar's vocation put under the microscope, but as the title states, their inner nature or very *essence* (*Wesen*) as well (15). One could

⁵ Full title of first edition: *Ueber das Wesen des Gelehrten, und seine Erscheinungen in Gebiete der Freiheit. In öffentlichen Vorlesungen, gehalten zu Erlangen, im Sommer-Halbjahr 1805 von Johann Gottlieb Fichte* (Berlin: In der Himburgischen Buchhandlung, 1806) [215pp]. Republished in: SW VI: 349-447, and GA I/8: 57-139.

⁶ Contained in: J.G. Fichte / F.W.J. Schelling, *Sur l'essence du savant et la philosophie de la nature*, edited, translated, and introduced by Patrick Cerutti and Quentin Landenne (Paris: Librairie philosophique J. Vrin, 2021). This French edition is reviewed by Luis Felipe Garcia here in FICHTEANA 23 (2023).

⁷ See F.W.J. Schelling, *Darlegung des wahren Verhältnisses der Naturphilosophie zu der verbesserten Fichte'schen Lehre*, edited by Ives Radrizzani (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: frommann-holzboog, 2022). This new edition is reviewed by Dale Snow here in FICHTEANA 23 (2023).

⁸ Unless otherwise noted, all translations in this review are my own.

interpret this essence to be the scholar's genius or absolute I (*Ich*). Accordingly, the standpoint of the scholar should be the standpoint of "absolute truth", in which the goal is to build on the knowledge of the empirical world so as to seize it in a living manner (14-15).

For Fichte, there are two aspects to bear in mind when grasping philosophical knowledge: the *Was* (What) and the *Wie* (How) (18). The two elements may be rationally translated as: 1). the content or facts (the What), and 2). the composition or method (the How). These two aspects will re-appear as a cryptic injunction in Goethe's *Faust II*: "Das Was bedenke, mehr bedenke Wie" (Consider the What, consider more the How). The prescribed method in these Erlangen lectures is the *genetic* one. That is, to inwardly grasp or generate factual and static "Sein" (being) from out of the "Wurzel seines Lebens" (root of its life) (19).

Such a dual approach will eventually lead the scholar to attain what Fichte calls "*die göttliche Idee*" (the divine idea). It is a higher view of reality, more fully determined in lecture two (23-31). In the philosopher's own words:

Die gesammte Welt ist keineswegs in der That und Wahrheit dasjenige, als was sie dem ungebildeten und natürlichen Sinne des Menschen erscheint, sondern sie ist ein höheres, das der natürlichen Erscheinung bloß zu Grunde liegt. In der höchsten Allgemeinheit kann man diesen Grund der Erscheinung sehr füglich nennen die göttliche Idee von der Welt. Ein bestimmter Theil des Inhalts dieser göttlichen Idee ist dem gebildeten Nachdenken zugänglich und begreiflich. (23)

(The entire world is not at all in fact and truth that which it appears to be to the undeveloped and natural senses of the human being, but the entire world is something higher that merely underpins the natural phenomena. In line with the highest universality we may rather appropriately call this ground of the phenomenon: the divine idea of the world. A certain part of this divine idea's content is accessible and comprehensible to trained contemplation).

Attaining more precise knowledge of the divine idea is the golden thread running throughout this cycle. This is the scholar's true vocation. Everything new, grand, and inspired that has ever appeared in the world has entered through the divine idea (29). An obvious task of the critical researcher would be to deploy Fichte's synthetic method to ascertain if the divine idea might be a popular manner of referring to the scientific idea of the Jena *Wissenschaftslehre*. In this regard Fichte posits five principal paths or ways for arriving at the divine idea, including a scientific one: via the spheres of nature, law (ethics), art, religion, and science (30-31). This numerical classification immediately recalls the five world-epochs in the lectures on history, the fivefold view of the world in the *Way to the Blessed Life*, and the five cognitive modes (extending to twenty-five) in the 1804 *Wissenschaftslehre*.

These 1805 lectures also sketch out Fichte's *Trieblehre* (theory of drives). A fundamental drive in the scholar is *Wißbegierde* – the desire or drive for knowledge,

a classic Aristotelian motif. This cognitive drive of the scholar is related to *genius*, the cultivation of the *talent* to become a free artist of ideas (33-36):

Das natürlich Talent, oder das Genie ist ja nichts weiter, als der Trieb der Idee, sich zu gestalten; (34)

(Natural talent or genius is nothing more than the drive of the idea to fashion itself).

This underlies Fichte's insistence in lecture five on the decisive power of the creative imagination in philosophy, as opposed to the lower form of mere fantasy (52). Moreover, the genuine student and scholar must possess humbleness and not arrogance; this aids in the striving to distinguish the transitory from the non-transitory in the world. A hallmark of the divine idea is precisely its kinship to the imperishable and eternal, with which the inner essence of the scholar should ultimately merge, to lend a fresh sense and significance to their lives (43-46).

Lecture six is a plaidoyer for academic freedom (56-64), while lectures seven and eight paint the required traits of anyone seeking to become a scholarly educator of humanity. Fichte gives the enigmatic name "regents" to these educators (72), which implies a relation to rulership, like with Plato's philosopher king, or more concretely, to the idea of moral governing found in Fichte's 1798 essay: "On the Ground of our Belief in a Divine World Governance." It is the regent who possesses the most fruitful overview of the connection between the empirical part and the ideal whole:

Er kennt das Ganze, von welchem jenes Verhältniss ein Theil ist, und von welchem alle Verbesserungen des Letztern Theile bleiben müssen; und behält dieses Ganze bei den beabsichtigten Verbesserungen des Einzelnen unverrückt im Auge. [...] Sein Blick vereinigt immerfort die Theile und das Ganze, und das letztere im Ideale und in der Wirklichkeit. Wer nicht mit diesem freien Blicke die menschlichen Verhältnisse betrachtet, der ist niemals Regent, an welche Stelle er auch stehe, und er kann es nie werden (73).

(He knows the whole, of which the former relation is a part, and of which all improvements to the latter have to remain parts; and constantly retains this whole in view during the intended improvements in the individual. [...] His sight continually unites the parts and the whole, and the latter in an ideal manner and in reality. Whoever fails to consider human relationships from this free perspective can never be a regent, no matter his position, and he can never become one.)

The final two lectures examine the tasks and duties of the oral teacher and the scholar as writer, in which the necessity of truthfulness and selflessness is repeatedly underscored. Fichte succinctly summarizes the mission of the scholarly author as follows:

Die Idee muss selber reden, nicht der Schriftsteller. (92)
(The idea itself must speak, not the writer.)

3. Fichteian Platonism

Fichte's ten Erlangen lectures are followed by thirteen interpretive essays in German and English, all of whose quality is high. Naturally, a book review cannot cover these thirteen essays in detail. Since it plays such a pivotal role in Fichte's text, I will take the commentators' interpretations of Fichte's concept of the "divine idea" as my guiding thought. A recurrent endeavour in the essays is to situate the divine idea within the history of philosophy, both ancient and modern. A number of commentators see in these 1805 lectures a flashing up of philosophical Platonism.

Annette Sell's opening chapter is devoted to an analysis of the textual and argumentative structure of Fichte's work. After a discussion of the systematic concepts found in Fichte's Erlangen presentation, such as "Idee" (idea), "Sein" (Being), and "Leben" (life), she places the concept of the divine idea in the Platonic tradition (101). Sell rightly points out that one should not expect a transcendental deduction of these concepts in a popular work (102) and concludes with a look at the political background to the lectures and their relevance to *Bildung* and institutions of education in Fichte's time and now (106-110). C. Jeffery Kinlaw emphasizes the *moral* and ethical component of Fichte's philosophy of the vocation of scholar (111). Despite the clearly religious implications of the principle of the "divine idea", Kinlaw deftly shows that is still possible to have a "naturalized reading" (112) of this concept. He brings Fichte's theory of the infinite will and moral world-order from other popular writings on vocation and religion to bear on modern issues in contemporary philosophy, defending among others the view that Fichte was "motivated by an attempt to close an explanatory gap in an account of the efficacy of free agency." (113) The newness of these 1805 lectures "arises from an effort to resolve a standard problem in the philosophy of mind, specifically the problem of mental causation in the physical world" (114). Crucially for Kinlaw, Fichte's principle of the divine idea is not transcendent but remains "immanent" to our universal rational existence (124).

Angelica Nuzzo convincingly demonstrates that a unified microcosmic and macrocosmic approach is needed for comprehending Fichte's philosophy of vocation. Contrasting the 1805 Erlangen lectures with the earlier 1794 Jena ones, she reveals how in the Jena exposition Fichte progressively and visually moves outward from the human I in a "social and anthropological" (127) sense, striving to situate the scholar in ever-larger concentric circles, from the body, to the professional sphere, to the social sphere, to the ethical sphere of humanity, to ultimately locate the *Bestimmung* of the scholar within the fabric of the entire universe. Here Fichte "echoes the Enlightenment use of the term which conjoined in one concept a moral and a cosmological meaning." (126) – Nuzzo's key reference

to the Enlightenment can be supplemented by noting that the historical genesis of this determination may be traced back to ancient Greek thought. Namely, to Aristotle's *Historia Animalium*, where the peripatetic philosopher was on the shores of Pyrrha researching the scientific hierarchy of natural beings.⁹

According to Nuzzo, Fichte's more outer cosmological vantage-point on vocation in Jena has circled back again to the inner I (*Ich*) in the Erlangen lectures, but with the adoption of a theological and metaphysical perspective that seeks to illuminate the scholar's "identity" and "essence" (127). She next ingeniously positions Fichte's theory of the divine idea in the tradition of Benedictus de Spinoza's *Ethics*, with the Fichtean scholar as Spinozistic sage (127, 131-135). Consequently, the 1805 lectures "radically" distance themselves from Kant, announcing instead a "Christianized" form of Spinozism (127). They proclaim:

a metaphysical theory that grounds the *Gelehrter's* moral vocation in a Spinozistic conception of essence and its manifestations. The *Gelehrter* is now a sort of 'mode' – an expression and manifestation – of the divine idea that is immanently at work in the human world. (127; cf. 133, 138)

Citing the Sermon on the Mount in its title, Tom Rockmore's piece on the "Educated Man as the Salt of the Earth" is in agreement with Annette Sell's chapter by highlighting the Platonistic approach of Fichte (149). Rockmore helpfully recalls that the Kantian and Platonic reception in Fichte should not be considered as contradictory since "Kant claimed to be a deep Platonist" (139). However, Rockmore does claim that Fichte's dismissal from his university job in Jena led to a substantial altering of his outlook – "it led to a deep change in his philosophical position" (140). For Rockmore, it is a Christian religious and nationalistic change. On the one hand, it is based on exploring the true nature of "Germanness" (141-142), and publishing on the other hand more "sermon"-like popular texts. The scholar is equated with a clergyman whose purpose is to "spread the holy word" (148). Rockmore's chapter returns to Fichte's affinity with idealistic figures in the history of philosophy: "Like Plato, Fichte is concerned with the realization of a rational society that, like Kant, is composed of rational beings only." (145) He then provides a useful overview of Fichte's 1805 Erlangen lectures, detecting a striking shift in tone even within the ten lectures themselves. In Rockmore's opinion, it is a change from criticism to dogmatism, where the scholar's role is now to grasp the divine idea and transmit "God's plan." Nevertheless, this is again where Fichte and Plato are in harmony for Rockmore: "Unlike Kant, Fichte agrees with Plato that only the philosopher really knows, in this case knows God's divine plan." (153) Divergences like these from the critical philosophy illustrate in Rockmore's eyes

⁹ See Aristotle, *Historia animalium*, translated, and with a prefatory note, by D'Arcy W. Thompson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910), vii.

that the Jena philosopher of the *Wissenschaftslehre* has essentially become a dogmatic theologian in Erlangen:

At this point, the distinction between philosophy and theology has vanished, and the former takes as its task the dogmatic assertion of the latter. [...] Fichte abandons the modern conception of philosophy, which depends on the distinction between philosophy and theology, reason and religious faith. (151, 154)

4. Annihilation of the Self

The Erlangen lectures raise a number of legitimate questions. If scholars are to train and modify themselves to be pure manifestations of the divine idea, what must happen to the instruments of their body and self for this to occur? Do scholars have to renounce their freedom and diminish their inner stature, even annihilate themselves in the manner of certain Buddhist traditions, in order to make room for the divine idea?

Franzikus von Heereman's 22-page chapter is the longest in the book and is in part devoted to this problem of the scholar as a "Werkzeug" or "instrument". The author declares Fichte's popular lectures to be *Hohes, Erhabenes* and *Heilsames* (lofty, sublime, and therapeutical) (155), yet his principal concern is the apparent dramatic tension between the freedom of the scholar and the sacred obedience to the divine idea, notwithstanding Fichte's explicit defence of academic freedom in lecture five (56-64). Von Heereman does not analyse this lecture five but prefers an examination of freedom in the late technical writings of Fichte, including *inter alia* the 1804, 1811, and 1812 presentations of the *Wissenschaftslehre*, and the 1813 *Staatslehre*. He maintains that the late Fichte's theory is one of the diminishment of the "person" at the expense of the appearance of the divine, which leads to the terrible dichotomy: "entweder bloßer Schein (Individuum) oder das göttlich ergriffene Erscheinungsleben selbst: heilig oder verdammt" (either mere illusion (individual) or the divinely seized phenomenal life itself: scared or condemned) (164). The existential weight of this dilemma permeates the further reflections on the "reign of the scholars" (165-168) and the "mutiny of the instrument" (168-170). The chapter ends with a number of stimulating thoughts on the role of love: it is love that allows and furnishes the moral condition for the absolute to appear within human life (173). For von Heereman, this latter outlook permits us to go beyond the problematic primacy of the scholar and diminishment of the person in the face of the absolute, which he contends is the "tragedy" of Fichte's system; since according to the author, it is loving people who bring the world forward, even more than scholars (176).

Elisabeth Kessler too agrees that the Fichtean scholar must undertake a paradoxical act of self-annihilation (*Selbstvernichtung*) in order to reach the more perfected stage of embodying the divine idea (188). One of her goals is to inquire

into what extent certain philosophers of early modernity, like Descartes, had already carried out this self-annihilation. She discovers a first step in the Cartesian process of radical doubt and the devotion to the truth, which recalls for her the earlier initiation of Socrates (188-190). However, Kessler posits that Spinoza most fully incarnates the perfected scholar insofar as he genuinely underwent a self-annihilation by becoming an instrument and mediator of the idea under the “sign of intellectual intuition” (194). She compares this to a reflection on death in the sage: “Gerade deshalb habe der Weise nichts weniger nötig, als an den Tod zu denken.” (194). Kessler then presents in detail Descartes’ philosophy of overcoming the passions, noting in conclusion his reluctance to become a teacher of humanity. Nevertheless, there is a nameless inner master driving him on, i.e. an element in his biography intertwining vocation with fate (*Geschick*). Fichte too was aware of this difficulty, underscored in his later works by the transition from the vocation (*Bestimmung*) to the “essence” (*Wesen*) of the scholar (202).

A third essay in the volume likewise touches on the death-like or self-annihilation experience that the perfected scholar has to undergo. As the title of Paul Cobben’s chapter intimates, “Die Todesangst als die Vermittlung zur absoluten Idee”, the fear of death can form a mediation to the absolute idea or divine idea (252). Yet Cobben claims that Fichte does not sufficiently furnish the means for the attainment of this absolute idea, contrasting this state of affairs with a detailed overview of Hegel’s indications on mediation in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (253-263). It is Hegel’s presentation that most properly explains how the fear of death, in which death is an “absolute Herr”, can yield a practical experience of the pure self: “die Todesangst ist die praktische Erfahrung des reinen Selbst.” (257). Ultimately Hegel and Fichte agree for Cobben to the extent that both maintain that it is the philosopher and scholar who possess the highest insight into the “absolute spirit” (261).

5. Aquinas’s *magister* and Fichte’s *Gelehrter*

For the reader or historian of philosophy not versed in medieval philosophy, Wilhelm Metz’s chapter “J.G. Fichtes *Über das Wesen des Gelehrten* und die Bestimmung des *magister* bei Thomas von Aquin” (J.G. Fichte’s *On the Essence of the Scholar* and the Vocation of the *magister* in Thomas Aquinas) might come as a surprise (177-187). But Metz – an expert on Aquinas who has written a monograph on the architectonic of the *Summa Theologiae* – makes it clear that since Fichte never explicitly refers to Aquinas, his chapter is just a factual and historical comparison of the figure of the *magister* (master) in the writings of these two thinkers. Metz first looks at the *Summa*, explaining that Aquinas’s treatment of the *magister* can be found in the last treatise of part one (*quaestiones* 106-119), which discusses the *gubernatio mundi* or divine government of the world (179). There is an essential hierarchy within the divine plan. This plan is communicated to humans via angelic inspiration – first to the *magister* or scholar, then to the teacher, then to

the student. It is the task of the master to prepare the teacher and student to participate in this chain of intelligible inspiration and the resulting theological doctrines (179-182). Metz recalls that Aquinas would often quote Aristotle's contention that the supreme task of the philosopher is *sapientis est ordinare*, i.e. the correct ordering of knowledge into a scientific whole (182).

Metz then presents Fichte's scholar (or regent) as someone who similarly partakes in the rational life of the divine idea in order to communicate it to others. The student must be awakened to a productive existence in the absolute and be its external manifestation (186-187). Metz's short chapter concludes by pointing out that it is precisely here that a comparison can be drawn with Aquinas's magister who has insight into the divine world government (187).

Metz's chapter is valuable but the reader is left wondering why these parallels between the *magister* in Aquinas and the *Gelehrter* in Fichte are not more critically and textually exploited. For instance, Metz explicitly acknowledges that the scholar participates in a divine world government with the mission of correctly ordering knowledge, at one point even translating the Latin *gubernatio mundi* into German as "göttliche Weltregierung" (179). – This is of course the central name and idea in the title of Fichte's already-mentioned 1798 essay on the philosophy of religion: "Über den Grund unseres Glaubens an eine göttliche Weltregierung." The ethical task there is likewise the correct ordering of knowledge grounded in practical reason. Why not take into account this crucial Fichtean text on religion? And presumably the scholar's intellectual intuition can be equated with angelic inspiration? Lastly, Metz alludes in passing to Aquinas's "berühmten 'fünf Wegen'" (famous 'five ways') to the divine (as proofs for the existence of God) (178), yet forgoes the obvious analysis with Fichte's "five ways" to the divine idea. These structural parallels might be worth further exploring, or they could just be philosophical dead-ends.

6. Artistic Genius and Education

Along with Cobben's piece on Hegel, five further essays round out the volume. They compare Fichte's views on the scholar with those of contemporaries like Kant, Reinhold, Schelling, Wilhelm von Humboldt, and later figures, such as Heidegger. I can only briefly touch on their perspectives regarding the Fichtean concept of the "divine idea."

Richard Velkley's paper treats the "Ghosts of Kantian Philosophy" in Fichte's 1805 Erlangen lectures. He takes his start from the tenth lecture which claims that the spirit of the Kantian philosophy has fled (noticeably said just one year after Kant had died) to be replaced with an un-respected ghost (203). Velkley argues that Fichte's philosophy of the scholar radically and originally combines the three Kantian ideas of "realizing the pure idea of the Highest Good in the sensible world"; the "architectonic concept of philosophy"; and "artistic genius as the capacity to create works that evoke ideas of the supersensible" (204). In this regard, the lofty

vocation of the scholar and of humanity as a whole remains constant. People should freely see themselves as an instrument of the divine idea, which is an “endless striving to overcome death” (212). Yet the author maintains that Kant would have considered this standpoint on vocation to be an extreme form of “enthusiasm” (212). Velkley does note that freedom still remains the foundation of Fichte’s philosophy and that a metamorphosis is required: the metamorphosis of the philosophical scholar into the artist of genius. This naturally invites a comparison with Kant’s conception of genius in the 3rd Critique (213). However, Velkley contends that Fichte’s position is “deeply non-egalitarian” because the perfected scholar occupies a loftier rank in the greater scheme of things; this is a departure from Kant’s idea of the universal dignity of all autonomous humans (213-214). Velkley ends with a very promising suggestion on genius that I can only agree with:

Fichte’s account of the scholar as genius and artist relates to Kant’s brief but suggestive discussion of philosophic architectonic as ‘the art of systems’ (*Kunst der Systeme*) [... it points] to a kinship between the art of philosophic architectonic and fine art, for both can be understood as products of genius and its animating force, spirit (214).

Ernst-Otto Onnasch’s chapter on the *Bildung eines neuen Menschen* is devoted to Reinhold’s theory of *Bildung* or education/development. Onnasch’s states that this theory formed the basis for Fichte’s concept of *Bildung*, specifically, the theory found in Reinhold’s 1786/87 *Letters on the Kantian Philosophy* (218-219). For Onnasch, Fichte’s well-known primacy of the practical is similarly indebted to the pivotal role that practical reason plays in Reinhold’s philosophy (218-219, 223). His piece above all provides a detailed analysis of Reinhold’s *Letters* and less known *Gedanken über Aufklärung* (223-233).

The goal of Holger’s Zaborowski’s paper is to examine the core and continuing relevance of Wilhelm von Humboldt’s idea of a university, while casting an eye on Fichte’s view of the scholar. Both thinkers of course played crucial intellectual roles in the founding of the new University in Berlin. After an extensive treatment of Humboldt’s ideas concerning the inner and objective organisation of this institution of higher education (237-248), Zaborowski finishes with Humboldt’s critique of Fichte’s ideas for a university (248-252). In short, Fichte’s ideas for Humboldt are “unausführbar und überflüssig” (not possible to execute and superficial) (248). In Zaborowski’s opinion, this is because they seemed to presuppose a deduction from the founding principles the *Wissenschaftslehre* which was so little understood at the time (249-250). Whereas Humboldt preferred an inverse inductive path, proceeding from concrete facts to the plan: “Bei ihm steht die Idee nicht am Anfang, sondern am Ende.” (With him, the idea is not placed at the start, but at the end) (250).

Alfred Denker’s paper, the final one in the volume, concerns the relation between the thought of two antithetical characters, Fichte and Heidegger. The latter

studied the former intensively in his younger years, and adopted from him concepts like “*Faktizität*”, the thought of a pre-theoretical principle in philosophy, and reflections on the status of the true scholar (280-284). Denker outlines too how Heidegger and Fichte diverge, specifically in the claims that the divine idea should become part of the personality and being of the scholar and student (285), as well as on the university relations between the latter two (286-287), or the degrees of comprehending being and the Absolute (290). Via the examples of their respective manner of educating students, Denker believes that Heidegger “lived” his philosophy more than the creator of the *Wissenschaftslehre*, pursuing a search for truth in common with his Freiburg students (287). This difference is “faktisch auch” (also factually/factically) illustrated by Heidegger going on communal walks and ski trips with students. (287) That may be, but it should not be forgotten that Fichte implored his students in Jena to fully embody the vocational life of a “priest of truth”, even at the risk of death; nor the opening words of these 1805 Erlangen lectures, in which the scholar is philosophically encouraged to go beyond the “faktisch”, to contemplate being from the standpoint of “absolute truth” (14).

7. Fichte’s Divine Comedy

I’ll finish this review with some remarks on the one piece that I have not yet touched on, Michael G. Vater’s essay, simply titled “Fichte and Schelling” (264-279). It’s an essay divided into four parts. In a brief introduction, Vater underscores that Fichte’s Preface to the Erlangen lectures clearly states that this work is addressed to students who did not have “the chance to *hear* them” (264). Vater then lays a philosophical foundation in part one by looking at the principal points of contention and difference in the correspondence between Fichte and Schelling in the years 1801-1802 (266-269). At base, this difference concerns the actual starting point of transcendental philosophy proper, whether it should start with intellectual “seeing” (Fichte) or natural “being” (Schelling) (268). The paper next considers Schelling’s 1802 lectures on academic study in relation to *Naturphilosophie* (269-272). It includes in part three a bullet-point synopsis of Fichte’s ten Erlangen lectures on the scholar, listing the fivefold manifestation of the divine idea in academic fields (272-274). Part four presents the fascinating polemical reception of Fichte’s lectures by Schelling; the latter penned a short review and a longer critical treatise (274-279).¹⁰

Vater recalls that Schelling’s contentious review and treatise did not come out of the blue, since in the Erlangen lectures Fichte had explicitly warned his students about the dangers of the new “*Naturphilosophie*” that was attempting to turn nature into an absolute and divinize it (25). Vater translates into English the controversial

¹⁰ See F.W.J. Schelling, *Darlegung des wahren Verhältnisses der Naturphilosophie zu der verbesserten Fichte’schen Lehre* (1806); English translation: *Statement on the True Relationship of the Philosophy of Nature to the Revised Fichtean Doctrine. An Elucidation of the Former*. Translated, introduced, and edited by Dale E. Snow (Albany, N.Y. SUNY Press, 2018).

passage in question (273), as well as the “syllabus of errors” that Schelling thought Fichte had supposedly committed (277-278). According to Vater, some of Schelling’s criticisms of Fichte include: the breaking of a self-imposed philosophical silence to write popular works; the non-publication of the announced new version of the *Wissenschaftslehre*; lucid writings that are somehow self-contradictory; mistaken views on an unconditioned God and the emergence of the Absolute; a conflating of the transcendent and transcendental; an ‘atheistic’ conception of nature, etc. etc. (274-276).

Schelling’s treatise not only critiqued the Erlangen lectures on the scholar, but also took aim at Fichte’s two other 1806 works, the history lectures on the present age and the lectures on religion. According to Vater, this trilogy of works is sarcastically characterized by Schelling as:

an inverted *Divine Comedy* in which the lectures on the present age lead the reader through hell, to the purgatory of the scholarly life, and finally to the ersatz paradise of the ‘blessed life’ essay. (277)

Vater’s essay excellently summarizes the content, stakes, and early reception of Fichte’s Erlangen and Berlin publications and repays rereading.

In conclusion, I will just add a short postscript to Schelling’s remark about the *Divine Comedy*. It is often thought that Fichte did not publicly reply to Schelling’s polemical treatise. Explicitly this may be the case. Yet in 1807, the year after Schelling’s treatise appeared, Fichte published in the journal *Vesta* a German translation of an older work of Italian poetry. – It was none other than a translation of a canto from Dante’s *Divine Comedy*, specially canto XXVIII from the Purgatory. Situated in earthly paradise at the top of a mountain, the pilgrim-poet (Dante) finds himself at the edge of a dark wood of spruce trees, near a double stream, on the verge of seeing Beatrice and ascending to heaven.¹¹ In other words, Fichte does not disagree with Schelling. The scholar must indeed pass through hell and purgatory in order to enter the blessed life of the “divine idea.” Fichte turns a dismissive comment into a serious statement about the reciprocal relationship between the *Wissenschaftslehre* and a popular presentation. Within Fichte’s transcendental system, what the artist is able to express in a poetic and anagogical manner continues to remain valid. But it is true, the vocation of the scientific scholar is inverted: for these imaginative images and words still have to be correctly translated into rational concepts and ideas.¹²

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¹¹ See J.G. Fichte, “Dantes irdisches Paradies. (Acht und zwanzigster Gesang des Purgatorium)” (GA I/9: 281-286).

¹² Fichte’s view of translation is in the technical tradition of Leibniz’s *characteristica universalis*. See J.G. Fichte, “[Ankündigung]: Seit sechs Jahren” (1800/1801) (GA I/7: 156, 164).

II. BOOKS

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日本フィヒテ協会 編

The Japanese *フィヒテ研究* [*Fichte-Studien*] is the annual journal of the Fichte Society of Japan. Here I would like to introduce the contents of issue 30 which was published in November 2022. The latest issue number 31 was just published in November 2023, and will also be briefly mentioned below at the end of this review.

Issue number 30 is divided into five parts. The table of contents is as follows:

- (1). Contribution from Kunihiko Nagasawa “日本フィヒテ協会の設立とドイツとの交流” (Die Begründung der Japanischen Fichte-Gesellschaft und der Austausch mit deutschen Professoren / The Founding of the Japanese Fichte Society and the Exchange with German Professors).
- (2). Symposium: “構想力——フィヒテとその前後——” (Einbildungskraft Fichtes und seiner Zeitgenossen / Imagination in Fichte and his Contemporaries):

- Katsuaki Okada, “シンポジウム「構想力——フィヒテとその前後——」から考える” (Einige Ergebnisse aus dem Symposium / Some Results of the Symposium).
- Shunsuke Kuwahara, “批判期カントの構想力概念再考——心理学、超越論、天才論の系譜から——” (Kants Begriff der Einbildungskraft in seiner kritischen Zeit umgedacht: Zur Genealogie der Psychologie, Transzendentalismus und Genietheorie / Kant’s Concept of the Imagination Reconsidered in his Critical Period: On the Genealogy of Psychology, Transcendentalism and the Theory of Genius).

- Ryozo Suzuki, “「構想力の動揺」と「無限の接近」”(‘Schweben der Einbildungskraft’ und ‘unendliche Annäherung’ / ‘The Hovering of the Imagination’ and ‘Infinite Approximation’).
- Nobuhiro Tabata, “超越論的「構想力」から美的「想像力」へ——ノヴァーリスと Fr. シュレーゲルにおける「構想力」の「描出作用」について——”(Zum ‘Darstellen’ der ‘Einbildungskraft’ bei Novalis und Fr. Schlegel / On ‘Presenting’ the ‘Imagination’ in Novalis and Friedrich Schlegel).

(3). Book reviews:

Nobuhiro Tabata, 哲学的思惟と詩的思惟のインターフェイス—フィヒテ vs ヘルダーリン、ノヴァーリス、Fr. シュレーゲル (*Berührungsebene des poetischen Denkens mit dem philosophischen Denken / The Interface between Philosophical and Poetic Thinking – Fichte vs. Hölderlin, Novalis, and Friedrich Schlegel*) (Reviewed by Ryo Hirai).

Tadahiro Oota, *Another History of 19th Century German Philosophy: Illuminating the Stream of Philosophical Methodology of Fries and Schopenhauer* (Reviewed by Maiko Tsuji).

(4). Abstracts in German.

(5). Activity Report.

Regarding part (1): Issue 30 was the last paper-based issue of フィヒテ研究, the Japanese *Fichte-Studien*, and it moved online from issue 31 onward. Because this transition is counted as a turning point in the association, Kunihiro Nagasawa (Professor Emeritus, Doshisha University), a founding member and ex-president of the Japanese Fichte Society, contributed an essay on the background to the establishment of this society.

The Japanese Fichte Society was founded on May 19 (Fichte’s birthday), 1985 as the first Fichte Society in the world, led by Tadataka Kumamoto (Professor Emeritus, Hiroshima University), Akira Omine (Professor Emeritus, Osaka University), and Nagasawa, with enthusiastic encouragement from Reinhard Lauth. This was two years earlier than the establishment of Die Internationale Johann Gottlieb Fichte Gesellschaft. Three founding members studied in Germany in the 1970s and since then they were in contact with Lauth, Dieter Henrich, Wolfgang Janke, Helmut Girndt, and other German Fichte scholars, both publicly and privately. Because of this relationship, as Nagasawa notes, when Die Internationale Johann Gottlieb Fichte Gesellschaft was first established, there was a proposal to set up the headquarters in Japan, since a Fichte Society already existed there. Although this proposal was not realized, Die Internationale Johann Gottlieb Fichte

Gesellschaft was still founded in 1987 with the phrase “in partnership with the Japanese Fichte Society” in its official name.

Since its establishment, the Japanese Fichte Society has held an annual conference every November, and published an annual journal, *フィヒテ研究*, the Japanese *Fichte-Studien*. The number of members, both in Japan and abroad, grew at one point to 150, and even today there are over 100 members.

Part (2) of Issue 30 is devoted to a symposium that was held at the annual conference in November 2021. First, Okada, as the organiser of the symposium, briefly summarized the framework of its overall theme, its historical background, and the topics to be discussed. The theme succeeded the one in 2020: “Fichte and Romanticism”, both of which put an emphasis on the *Einbildungskraft* or power of the imagination. German Romanticism embraced Fichte’s absolute I as its origin. The *Einbildungskraft* plays an essential role in the absolute I, as it operates at the basis of the active power hovering between the finite and the infinite.

Following this is Kuwahara’s paper, which gives an overview of the history of the *Einbildungskraft* with two genealogies: empirical psychology deriving from Aristotle’s *De Anima*, and poetics deriving from Plato. The former saw the *Einbildungskraft* (or *imaginatio*) as the power to retain and reproduce what was perceived, i.e. as the condition of true cognition. In the latter, on the other hand, the *Einbildungskraft* (or *phantasia*) bears divine creativity but at the same time tends to be combined with emotion or desire. Because such a power presupposes the absence of the intellectual, the *Einbildungskraft* in this genealogy can be easily related to insanity or delusion. These two sides of the *Einbildungskraft* flowed into Kant’s first and third critiques in a complicated manner via many philosophers of modernity, like Wolff, Baumgarten, and Gerard.

Suzuki’s is the next paper in this issue, and it considers the *Schweben der Einbildungskraft* or hovering of the imagination, by focusing on Fichte’s *Grundlage*, the early Schelling, and Hegel’s *Phänomenologie des Geistes*.

Lastly, Tabata analyzes the understanding of the *Schweben der Einbildungskraft* in Novalis and Fr. Schlegel. Novalis tried to extend the conception of the *Einbildungskraft* to the aesthetic imagination, which portrays the absolute and deepens it as the most fundamental function of the I (*Ich*). Friedrich Schlegel emphasized the free activity and fundamentality of the *Einbildungskraft* in comparison with understanding or reason. While Kant characterized it as nothing more than the power to mediate intuition and concepts, and Fichte viewed it as the activity which realizes various polar opposites by hovering between them, for Friedrich Schlegel the *Einbildungskraft* was “das Atmen der Seele” (the breath of the soul), the fundamental activity of spirit that oscillates back and forth between extending the world into the infinite manifold and contracting it into a unity. Tabata concludes that behind this overextension of the *Einbildungskraft* in Early German Romanticism there was a grand project to integrate philosophy and poetry.

Part (3) of this volume of the Japanese *Fichte-Studien* includes two book reviews by young scholars: Nobuhiro Tabata, *Berührungsebene des poetischen Denkens mit dem philosophischen Denken*. Koyo Shobo: Kyoto 2022 (originally in Japanese: 『哲学的思惟と詩的思惟のインターフェイス——フィヒテ vs ヘルダーリン、ノヴァーリス、Fr.シュレーゲル——』) (Reviewed by Ryo Hirai) and Tadahiro Oota, *Another History of 19th Century German Philosophy: Illuminating the Stream of Philosophical Methodology of Fries and Schopenhauer*. Kyoto University Press: Kyoto 2022 (Originally in Japanese: 『もう一つの19世紀ドイツ哲学史——ポストカントにおける哲学方法論の系譜』) (Reviewed by Maiko Tsuji).

Part (4). The Activity Report includes mainly the programme for the 37th annual conference of 2021, and the results of the Fichte Prize, as well as a list of current staff and board members.

At the 37th annual conference, held online on 14 November 2021, in addition to the symposium on the imagination, there were two oral presentations on predetermination in Fichte's *System of Ethics* (1798) by Ryo Asada, and on “das Absolute” in the 1804 *Wissenschaftslehre* by Keiko Kimura.

The Fichte Prize is divided into two categories: Category 1 is intended for outstanding research papers on Fichte by young scholars, and Category 2 is for an outstanding single-authored monograph on Fichte.

For 2021, the winner of the Category 2 Fichte prize was: Masahiko Yuasa, for *The Status of das absolute Wissen*, Kadokawa Cultural Promotion Foundation: Saitama, 2020 (in Japanese: 『絶対知の境位——フィヒテ知識学読解への誘い』). This book deals with the *Darstellung der Wissenschaftslehre* (1801/1802) and *Thatsachen des Bewußtseins* (1810/1811). Regarding the 1801/02 *Wissenschaftslehre*, Masahiko Yuasa analyzes in detail the characteristics of absolute knowledge as the basis of universally valid knowledge in relation to the Absolute. On the other hand, regarding the latter, he closely traces the ascension from perceptual consciousness up to the commitment with the absolute, through which *das Leben* (life) would manifest itself.

The latest issue 31 of フィヒテ研究, the Japanese *Fichte-Studien*, was also recently published. As mentioned above, this issue is and will henceforth be published online. The full text is available in Japanese on the official website of the Japanese Fichte Society. See: http://fichte-jp.org/Fichte_Studien.htm. The table of contents of issue 31 is as follows:

(1). Words from Yoichiro Ohashi, President of Japanese Fichte Society: “On the occasion of the online publication of *フイヒテ研究*, the Japanese *Fichte-Studien*.”

(2). Symposium: “Fichte and Spinoza”

- Yasushi Kato, “Bericht über das Symposium ‘Fichte und Spinoza’” (Report on the Symposium ‘Fichte and Spinoza’).
- Yukio Irie, “Spinozas Kritik des freien Willens und Fichtes Verteidigung – Inflationäre Freiheit vs. deflationäre Freiheit” (Spinoza’s Critique of Free Will and Fichte’s Defence – Inflationary Freedom v. Deflationary Freedom).
- Masami Komemushi, “Fichte und Spinoza aus der Perspektive der französischen Philosophie” (Fichte and Spinoza from the Perspective of French Philosophy).

(3). Special lecture by Johannes Brachtendorf: “Die ‘kantianische’ Religionsphilosophie des frühesten Fichte – zum Begriff der Offenbarungsreligion in *Versuch einer Kritik aller Offenbarung* (1792).” (The translation of this lecture into Japanese is by Masafumi Sakurai).

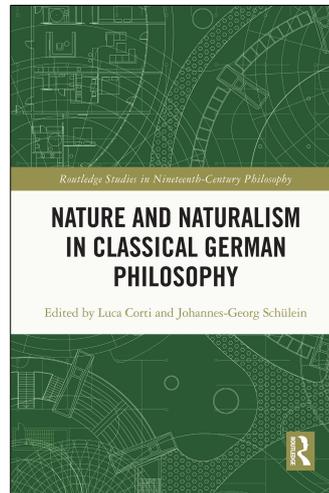
(4). Paper by Ryozo Suzuki: “Annäherung durch Aufopferung.”

(5). Abstracts in German.

(6). Activity Report.

Maiko Tsuji
Kyoto University

Luca Corti and Johannes-Georg Schüle (eds.), *Nature and Naturalism in Classical German Philosophy* (New York & Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2022), xi + 285 pp. ISBN 9780367541729.



This volume is a welcome addition to a growing list of studies in Nineteenth Century and contemporary philosophy. The editors set out to walk a productive line between history and philosophy, ranging over topics as diverse as naturalism, anti-naturalism, and supernaturalism; life and living entities; nature and normativity, and second nature or humans' inorganic body. Their Introduction includes histories of recent debates on these four topics. Each essay makes significant historical or philosophical points and includes an extensive bibliography, so the volume will both inspire and facilitate ongoing discussions. My remarks roughly follow the chronological order of the volume, considering either individual essays or the convergence or dissonance of multiple authors around a single historical figure.

Life, Lifeworld, and Scientific Explanation

The volume opens with James R. O'Shea's "Kant's Regulative Naturalism." Kant rejected ontological naturalism or materialism, but established a *methodological* naturalism in the Transcendental Dialectic whereby mechanical causality was restricted to items of experience, but room is left for a regulative use of reason's ideas of unconditioned conditions and systematic unities. This "*practically* liberating restriction" follows from Kant's realization that causal explanation will not explain all that needs explanation about human action and morality. O'Shea regards this regulative naturalism as an enduring and plausible philosophical position. Indeed, the enduring value of the German transcendental tradition is its insistence on the irreducible duality of factual cognition and normativity—or the

simultaneous rejection of materialism and supernaturalism. In the remainder of the essay, he considers the heart of Kant's arguments in the *Analytic* that establish the *Mutuality Thesis*, or the interdependence of the thinking self and nature's empirical reality. He is guided by an interpretive tradition stemming from Strawson's *Bounds of Sense* down to the contributions of Sellars, McDowell, Kitcher, and Longuenesse. Its crucial move is Strawson's rejection of an in-self transcendental I: "What has the non-history of the transcendental subject to do with us?" Readers of *FICHTEANA* will not need reminding that naturalizing started early in the transcendental tradition; by 1794 the thing-in-itself was disappeared, by 1804 the subject shed all traces of objectivity except in the occurrent "I think." O'Shea closes with two objections to the mutuality thesis, one that contends that human self-awareness is constituted autonomously from its own side, the other that some cases of animal cognition seem to point to states of perceptual awareness not related to object consciousness. The first is handled by a clarification: cases of self-awareness *can always* be associated with perception of empirical objects. The second is handled by specifying that only apperceptive consciousness is associated with perception of objects *conceived as objects*.

Birgit Sandkaulen's "The Concept of Life in Classical German Philosophy: A Question of Nature or the Lifeworld" argues that around 1800, a shift occurred in philosophical thinking that put the concept of *life*—or as phenomenology would have it, *lifeworld*—at the center of hitherto reductive discussions about the relation of nature and spirit. Habermas defined *lifeworld* as the "participant's perspective" as opposed "the observer's perspective." Sandkaulen finds it not a special kind of inquiry but a meta-concept for approaching all classical German philosophy. Specifically, it is the gateway to the problems that *Naturphilosophie* seeks to solve in advancing its holistic concept of life. The author gives brief citations from Jacobi, Schelling, Hegel and Fichte, all of which seem to point to the centrality of world-experience or the human presence in nature, or a common interest in actuality rather than abstract concepts. The commitment to lived actuality is best seen in these thinkers' favorite weapon against competitors: the charge of formalism. Although the system-building idealists seem removed from Jacobi's personalistic stand on lived experience, they were not reproducing a failed rationalistic view of nature but crafting a *speculative* science that keeps the whole of experience in its view, not the individual's bare morsel. This essay contains glimmers of novel themes but lacks either a broad textual or a clear argumentative basis.

Most Eighteenth-Century physiology concentrated on animal anatomy or the life process in the individual specimen. Dalia Nassar offers a different view in "The Challenge of Plants: Goethe, Humboldt and the Question of Life," suggesting that the model of plant life that they developed spotlighted the interaction between organism and environment. While animal sentience seems to elevate it above the plant's mere irritability and reproduction, a correct ontology of nature would

perceive that both life forms involve a dynamic interaction between the organic and the inorganic. A holistic ontology could appreciate the subtle ways that environments are actors and enablers, thus bearer of value. Goethe's views of plant life evolved from observations made on his travels of the differences between specimens growing at different altitudes, in different soils, or varying proximity to water. He concluded that plant morphology cannot depend on identifying causes but only on a complete *enumeration of the conditions* under which phenomena appear. The plant therefore provides an important clue for understanding life in that its interior expresses its external content. The environment may be physically outside the plant, but it is internalized or inscribed in the functioning of its parts (morphology) and development (growth patterns). Life thus eradicates the perceptual boundary between inside and outside, or state and process. Goethe cemented this "conditions, not causes" view with an attack on teleological explanation, as in attempts by earlier physiologists to 'explain' beings' deeds and acts through a supposed *Bildungstrieb* (life force). A teleologist might say, *der Fisch ist für das Wasser*, implying that the element is responsible for its fin, gills, and musculature, where Goethe says, *der Fisch ist in dem Wasser und durch das Wasser da*, implying that the fish's organs and functions evolve in water as organic functions in an inorganic context. Humboldt developed similar views on the reciprocal or dynamic relation of plants and environments in his investigation of South American plants. Though he is remembered today by ecologists as the inventor of 'social plants,' Nasser locates his contribution in the delineation of 'forms' or 'natural forms' under the title of *a physiognomy of nature*. Every environment has its botanic face or form determined by its vegetation. Elevation, latitude, rainfall and the amount of sunlight and shade condition the plant-cover of a region just as much as plant and animal species influence the functioning of an environment like a rain forest. Though Humboldt provisionally identified sixteen original life forms, he insisted on the primacy of place or region. He makes this clear in distinguishing the work of the botanist working like an engraver on an individual species from the natural physiognomist who works something like a landscape painter. While we can readily see how an individual tree expresses its environment in its forms, the kinds of trees that will thrive in each forest influence temperature, humidity, and relative richness of nutrients. Humboldt's journey to Lake Valencia in Venezuela revealed a parched and arid landscape in a region he expected to be teeming with life. Whereas his predecessors had realized that humans are affected by their environments, Humboldt was the first to observe how humans degrade their environment. Beings and their environments are not two separate entities, each is mutually transformative—and their transformation is fundamentally connected to vegetation.

Exceptionalism, Idealism, ‘Enlightened’ Control of Nature

Three essays consider the topic of the presence or absence of a philosophy of nature in Fichte’s Jena *Wissenschaftslehre*. Elizabeth Millan Brusslan’s “Nature and Freedom in Schlegel and Alexander von Humboldt” tries to connect the view of nature as an independent realm with its own normativity to the task of political liberation but relies on authors other than Schlegel and Humboldt to make the connection. She takes at face value Hölderlin’s ascription to Fichte of a “tyrannical” attitude toward nature, turns to the *Oldest Systematic Program of German Idealism* to suggest how an organic, non-mechanistic view of nature may lead to a post-political view of social relations, and to Fichte’s *Bestimmung des Menschen* to illustrate the ideology of an “effortless, enlightened control” of nature that the Romantics rejected in espousing an aesthetic approach to nature as the ‘realm of freedom’. As Millan Brusslan summarizes Fichte’s view, nature can supply human materials and utilities, furnish empirical data, or cause destructive setbacks to human domination. But it also has the power to propel us beyond facts or help us face our limits. Remarks on Humboldt’s voyages to the Americas, his scientific work and his connections to liberal or anti-colonial movements in New Spain and Cuba provide the most interesting part of this essay. His stated goal to “comprehend the phenomena of physical objects in their general connection, and to represent nature as one great whole, moved and animated by internal forces” is taken as a personal quest to unify his studies of nature, politics, history, and human progress and to see them as “animated by the breath of life.” Nonetheless, when Humboldt objects in 1856 to the exclusion of a chapter on slavery in Cuba from an English translation of his scientific works, he claims rather too politely that “it is the duty of the traveler who has been an eyewitness of all that degrades and torments human nature to cause the complaints of the unfortunate to reach those whose duty it is to relieve them” (72).

Daniel Breazeale’s “Beyond Nature? The Place of the Natural World in J.G. Fichte’s *Wissenschaftslehre*” denies the widespread view that Fichte has an entirely negative of nature as a mere obstacle to freedom and argues for a more positive view of the relationship of freedom and nature in Fichte’s “unwritten philosophy of nature” (101). In both theoretical cognition and practical activity, nature signifies what is excluded from the I, its life and activity, and from any philosophical account that focuses on the identity, unity, and autonomy of consciousness. The core of the Jena *Wissenschaftslehre* is a story of how the I comes to posit for itself an independent and opposing Not-I. Though some account can be given of how the I posits the Not-I, there is no proper accounting for the appearance of this *Not-I* in the primitive domain of experience, feeling, except to multiply synonyms for limitation: negation, or check upon activity. Subjectivity constructs an objective world in and from its reaction to this limitation. Fichte follows Kant in making

nature entirely the product of productive imagination but enlarging Kant's vision in making the body—a self-organized expression of the will—the primary object and medium of experience. This gives rise to a double view of nature. In the negative or “deckchairs on the Titanic” account, mere objectivity shows up in nature as dead quietude, inert endurance, mere being; in contrast to the free activity of the I, it is resistance, mere *stuff*. Kant recognized the crucial distinction between objects which are powerless or other-determined and subjects that exert causal efficacy, thought, formulation of purpose, and spontaneity—the hallmarks of agency. Although powerless to destroy the stuff or dead objectivity of nature, agents are capable of the limited freedom of modifying and rearranging ‘stuff’ according to their wishes and goals. But Breazeale insists there is a positive meaning for nature in that in its malleability or total lack of self-activity it furnishes the I with a field of possible action, thus serving not as hindrance to the will but the very condition of its activity. Materiality as a condition of self-consciousness means that I must always posit nature, in me or outside, as filling space, hence that I appear as a material body, in space among and alongside others, and capable of altering them.

Fichte's truly revolutionary claim is that such an articulated body is *a condition for the very possibility of free self-positing and therefore for I-hood itself*. Without such a body, moral obligation could be no more than a certain way of *thinking*. (107)

From this positive perspective, the body's preservation becomes an ethical duty, and the recognition of other finite wills through their embodiment opens the gate to intelligent interaction with others (the summons) and to realization of myself as an individual. But beyond this double account of nature's utility, Breazeale identifies a further possibility for the interaction of freedom and nature whereby nature is the complement of finite I-hood, an arena where freedom can be actualized or realized. This upgrade from condition of freedom to complement seems to entail that we should put our natural powers to the service of our moral ideals, which means making a more commodious home for human beings and their ends, employing scientific knowledge to modify nature in accordance with our ends. Nature is promoted from dead stuff and hindrance to freedom to being a staging ground for human flourishing, “an infinitely modifiable, *originally given stuff* external to ourselves,” where ‘originally given’ means necessarily posited by thinking itself. From this Fichte deduces moral constraints on the appropriation of nature. Since my freedom is enhanced, not diminished, by the existence of a plurality of agents, the natural world should be stamped with human individuality so that every piece of nature is related to human agency. And further, the universality of the moral law demands that every object ought to be the property of some human being. Breazeale comments that confidence in the eventual total dominium of nature seemed an

Enlightenment ideal. But beyond these three stages of the valuation of nature (which carries no intrinsic value), he finds a fourth in Fichte's talk of an ultimate harmony of theoretical and practical reason. The I's defining character of freedom or orientation toward self-sufficiency is not reflected in the prior three stages. "It is, however, reflected in nature when we view it from a new and higher philosophical standpoint, that is, insofar as we consider not merely the laws of our intellect, but 'our freedom itself [as] a *theoretical principle for the determination of our world*'" (Fichte's emphasis, 113). The distinct laws of theoretical and practical reason converge in a single underlying law of freedom that is both their origin and harmony. With the appropriation of nature as the means for accomplishing the finite I's final goal, self-sufficiency, Fichte believes we are at the point of origin of all reason.

[Re-] Constructing Nature as Organism

Three essays converge to clarify Schelling's *Naturphilosophie* 1797-1806 and find a program that combined the interest of the empirical sciences in identifying the major elements and systems of living and inorganic nature with philosophy's interest in theoretical unity and completeness. With varying emphasis, as the list of empirical items and systems that attracted Schelling's attention remained the same, the concepts of polarity of forces and their arrangement in a hierarchical order gained precisions in successive drafts or versions, and the problem of how to integrate this apparently realistic subdiscipline into the idealistic texture of transcendental philosophy became more vexed. Philipp Schwab's "The Fichte-Schelling Debate, or: Six Models for Relating Subjectivity and Nature" explores six models, some compatible, some incompatible, that Schelling proposed in writings between 1797-1800 and debated in correspondence with Fichte 1800-1802. Schwab uses a quotation from the 1809 *Treatise on Human Freedom* that bemoans the absence of a living concept of nature in modern philosophy to frame his analysis. Schelling claimed, "Idealism is the soul of philosophy, realism its body; only both together constitute a living whole." The line conveys two intuitions, the first that nature is not dependent on consciousness but is to be viewed as independent productive activity, the second that nature and spirit are not essentially opposed but are equally parts of a living whole. These intuitions form the realistic and holistic sides of the *Naturphilosophie* that Schelling debates with Fichte. Schwab devotes an initial section to exploring Schelling's early agreement with Fichte on the foundational character of philosophy, where a single principle grounds and makes possible all the various acts of consciousness and the problems that this foundationalism causes Schelling when in his 1797 *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature* he wishes to introduce an equal and opposite activity at the basis of nature. How can systematic philosophy trace all its moves to the I as principle of

philosophy but issue in two independent and opposed accounts—a realism alongside a foundational idealism? In a second section, Schwab traces the evolution of six distinct models of the relationship between nature and consciousness in the three main books on philosophy of nature, the *System of Transcendental Idealism* of 1800, and the debate with Fichte: (1) *Subordination*: a philosophy of nature will be subordinate to theoretical philosophy as ‘applied philosophy’ (1797). (2) *Analogy*: the original principles of nature must be conceived in analogy to those of the I in transcendental philosophy, but the realms are distinct and equally unconditioned (1799). (3) *Complementary Opposition*: philosophies of nature and consciousness are distinct, proceed in opposite directions, and are equally necessary and co-original (1799, 1800). (4) *Parallelism*: as in the analogy model, there are similar components to the two disciplines, but these are not elements or forces, but structural moves or parallel sequences of explanatory steps. The two must remain separated (1800). (5) *Continuity*: philosophy narrates a continuous development from nature as the prehistory of consciousness to consciousness proper (1800 & *Correspondence*). (6) *Priority*: there is a continuous development from nature to consciousness, and nature has factually followed this evolutionary path (1800). Schwab observes that these models are inconsistent and attributes the plethora of paradigms to a lopsidedness in Schelling’s perspective: too much interest in the material content of the sciences, and too little methodological reflection. Schelling fails to ask after the legitimacy of the idea of *Naturphilosophie*, spontaneity or original productivity, or to acquire sufficiency about the philosophical foundation of a system that is in fact two antithetical philosophies. A third section explores the *Fichte-Schelling Correspondence*, where Fichte objects to the third model he saw in *System of Transcendental Idealism* that opposites can in no way be added—consciousness added to matter, or the reverse—but must be features of the ‘ideal-real, real-ideal I’. Schwab construes Fichte’s objection as twofold: a systematicity issue, or Schelling’s lack of a unifying principle, and a transcendental argument that only the I exhibits the identity or equivalence of the real and ideal. In a later letter, Schelling replies to Fichte’s objection that there is no explanation of the duality of nature and consciousness by introducing the language of potentiation: the unconscious productivity of nature is but a deconstruction of the mechanisms of consciousness. Opposition fades into continuity. The upshot forces Schelling back to the parallelism model, but this time to disengage the common structural elements, elevate methodology into ontology, and propose a *structural idealism*—or identity philosophy—with its ‘absolute reason’ or indifference of subjectivity and objectivity as the ultimate principle (1801 *Presentation*). Evidently, the kick in the butt that Fichte provided was just the *Anstoß* Schelling needed.

John Zammito and Johannes-Georg Schüle in consider the two major ideas that define Schelling’s *Naturphilosophie*, the thesis that nature really is single unified organism, as opposed to Kant’s view that it merely appears that way for

reflective judgment, and an argument that Schelling's proposed "physical explanation of idealism" aimed to show the presence of freedom in matter, thus enlarging idealism rather than critiquing it. Zammito's "Schelling and *Von der Weltseele*" closely tracks the 1797 *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature* and the 1798 *Von der Weltseele: Eine Hypothese der höheren Physik zur Erklärung des allgemeinen Organismus*. The first treatise paid close attention to developments in the empirical sciences, especially the 'chemical revolution' of Lavoisier's new approach and vocabulary of *oxidation*. It took a revisionary stance toward Kant's 'as if' view of nature's organic constitution and argued for the objective, not merely subjective, coherence of nature. Leibniz was correct in choosing an indwelling teleology over mechanism to explain living entities, arguing that a concept is at the basis of every organization. Schelling reasons, therefore, that nature is "mind made visible" and mind is invisible nature or the union of mind *in us* and nature *outside us*. But he is not content to stay with the static language of substances. Nature, as a vast collection of forces and processes, is activity or productivity itself, not one nameless drive, but a living outcome of a dynamic unity of contesting or opposed forces. It was not to be until 1798, after extended discussions with Goethe, that Schelling defines this nexus of forces as the intersection of *polarity* and *potentiation* (*Steigerung*). The 1798 *Weltseele* essay aims to characterize life or organism more closely and at the same time establish that one and the same set of principles characterize life and inorganic nature. This involves transforming what he had called 'natural history' into a developmental *system of nature* that elevates Blumenbach's 'formative drive' (*Bildungstrieb*) into an explanatory principle. If a single expressive drive manifests in all products, nature becomes a graduated series not of products but of productivity. Individual items of nature figure only as inhibitions of the one force, and the dyadic tension between productivity and product gets expressed in the continuous hierarchy of organic forces: sensibility, irritability, and reproduction. Despite Kant's subjectivistic hesitations, nature is one organism governed by a continuous expression of productivity constrained by inhibition.

Johannes-Georg Schülein offers a treatment more argumentative than historical in "The Freedom of Matter: Self-Constitution in Schelling's 'Physical Explanation of Idealism.'" To meet the difficulty that a philosophy of nature might be plainly inconsistent with principles of idealism and the course of post-Kantian philosophy, he argues that idealism does not drive us to an anti-naturalist position, for Schelling explained how there is already freedom in matter since nature, like spirit, is self-constituting. His 1800 *General Deduction of the Dynamic Process* offers the programmatic idea of a "physical explanation of idealism," a genetic account of spirit as a product of nature. Schülein thinks the idea may be over-promising, but contrary to the received view that Schelling advocates a compatibilist view of freedom and nature, Schülein thinks a stronger position of the

isomorphism of natural and spiritual freedom can be maintained. Such an isomorphism does not concern spirit as practical freedom or agency, only the unconscious activity that relates self to object. Self-constitution is thus an original form of freedom whereby we determine what we are. Schelling argues for this isomorphism in general and illustrates it by aligning specific forms of self-constitution in inorganic matter and spirit. That this isomorphism is the core of Schelling's program of physical idealism explains how in the many versions of his philosophy in this era, transcendental or natural, it didn't seem to matter whether self-constitution is explained transcendently or *top-down* or naturalistically or *bottom-up*. In a final section of his argument, Schülein observes that Schelling goes beyond isomorphism and self-constitution to offer his "physical explanation of idealism" as a *reductive materialist account of freedom* that sees spiritual self-constitution as a development of nature's self-construction. This may seem a simple category mistake, but one can offer either a softer interpretation that sees *analogies* between natural organization and spiritual freedom or a *monistic* interpretation. Either way, one cannot deny Schelling pointed to spiritual analogs not only in living forms but in inorganic nature. "His provocative idea is that we can conceive of nature as a whole as a domain of freedom" (164).

Life as Self-Production, Availability, and Appropriation

Three essays approach Hegel's view of life and the organism through contemporary debates and comparisons. Luca Illetterati's "Beyond a Naturalistic Conception of Nature: Nature and Life in Hegel's *Early Writings*" traces contemporary disagreements by scholars such as Beiser and Gardiner over Hegel's naturalism back to a confusion in Hegel's early reception where what we today would call naturalizing moves in metaphysics were taken to be anti-naturalist. He tests out the appellation *non-naturalistic naturalism* by exploring the topic of laceration (aka wound, alienation) in Hegel's early writings on religion, where the notion of nature is seen to play between spirit's cleavage from nature and a possible reconciliation offered by a different way of thinking. The young Hegel's interest in religion is not at all theological or metaphysical, but anthropological. In one text he notes that religion unites the spheres of feeling experienced by the subject with objective norms extrinsic to the subject, a contrast that gives rise to both subjective and objective forms of religion. Hegel contrasts the two as the "living book of nature" where species intermingle in response to the joy of living and the "cabinet of the naturalist" full of desiccated specimens preserved in alcohol, displayed in a taxonomy, not an ecosystem. Illetterati refers to Kant's distinction between the internal purposiveness of an organism where its end is its own realization and external purposiveness like that which joins the researcher and her specimens. Hegel widens this analysis to a general contrast between life as an excess of reality

and the reduction of reality's lived concreteness in dead concepts. The 1800 *Systemfragment* indicts *reflection* or fixed intellect for applying abstract concepts of relation and distinction to separate the self-subsistent particular and the unifying universal “and *by positing these has turned life into nature*” (author's emphasis). It is only reason that can feel and recognize this one-sidedness, not as a mere thinking about life, but as *thinking life*, able to raise the multiplicity of dead abstractions to a living, all-powerful unity. Illetterati explains this non-natural naturalism as “a mode of being that in nature transcends nature” (206) while never thinking spirit as something external to nature.

A similar contrast between *thinking about life* and *being immersed in life* animates Robert Pippin's “The Phenomenology and the Logic of Life: Heidegger and Hegel.” Pippin claims that Hegel held there is a conceptual difference between living and nonliving being, knowable a priori, that enables us to distinguish them. By reason of the syllogistic interrelation of concepts that logic (metaphysics) displays, *all* concepts are required to isolate any single item. In our specific case, ‘nonliving objects’ and the *mechanism* that explains them would be unintelligible absent ‘organic beings’ and the concepts *teleology* and *life* that explain them. To Heidegger's eye, logic that relates items solely by distinguishing them is the heart of metaphysics' misunderstanding of being—a misunderstanding that reaches back to Aristotle, who limited cognition to what can be asserted. Even if Hegel includes an essential relation to self-consciousness in the category of life, logicism insists that what the living being *means* is what I can say about it. Pippin cites texts from Heidegger's Marburg years that deny that philosophy presents a domain of things resting inertly in some objective connection. Instead, it remains in “the immanent illumination of the experience of life itself,” its task “simply to draw attention to something in all rigor” (220). When Heidegger inquires in his *Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* lectures how we can determine the essence of life in general, he answers with the word *world* or the complex of meanings available to us in a definite cultural-historical context. Under the conditions of worldliness or *availability*, stones might show up as wordless, animals as word-poor, humans as being-in-the-world. Nowhere does an entity with the singular property of being alive emerge except in a world where such a being makes sense. Heidegger acknowledges there is a circularity in presupposing concepts of living and nonliving entities and then understanding them on this basis. The circular character of knowing is part of its temporality, since meanings are occurrent, not a timeless self-enclosed domain. Pippin amply accounts for Heidegger's views but falls short on Hegel in that he notes but fails to explore a difference between the role of organism in the *Philosophy of Nature's* account of the scientific description of nature and its treatment in the *Logic*. He is clear, however, that Hegel bumped up Kant's subjectivist position on the reflective, not constitutive, nature of teleological

analysis applied to organisms. Beings that can set and pursue ends are more like the *Idea* than a Roomba vacuum cleaner.

Luca Corti returns to the question of whether life pertains to the human-centered lifeworld or the domain of natural science in “The Logical Form of a Living Organism: Hegel, Naturalism, and Biological Autonomy.” He contests the neo-Aristotelian/Marxian theories of Michael Thompson’s *Life and Action* but acknowledges that they have succeeded in reviving Hegel’s scandalous idea that life is a *logical* concept, as are species and organization. Thompson puts Sellars’ distinction between the manifest and scientific images of humankind at the center of his discussions, confining conceptual analysis to ordinary or ‘common-sense’ conceptions of life such as *species*. Corti argues that Hegel believes that a good philosophical account of *organism* aligns with the categorial framework of the natural sciences. He finds no evidence in Hegel of a distinction between a manifest and a scientific image; the task of a *Philosophy of Nature* is not to reconstruct a primitive vocabulary of experience but to construct a philosophical framework adequate to the complexities of nature’s structures, which include the scientific, categorial dimension. This also applies to *life* and especially *organization*, which Thompson finds either too abstract or too mereological, often substituted as a measure of complexity. Corti turns to the use of *liveliness* and *organization* in the scientific disciplines after 1770 when the terms started to become synonymous. Their meaning shifts from the simple disposition of parts to a *processual* grasp of the life of the organism. Kant made dynamic organization a constituent feature of organisms in the *Critique of Judgment* but delivers a more functional analysis in *On the Use of Teleological Principles in Philosophy* (1788), arguing that the concept that researchers use is the interrelation of the parts of an organization as reciprocal *means* and *ends*. Georges Cuvier argued in early Nineteenth Century works on anatomy and biological classification that internal organization, not external structure, defined the phenomenon of life or “the capacity to resist for a certain amount of time the laws that govern inorganic bodies” (233). Cuvier turned from analyzing the animate body as a constellation of parts to the idea that chemical transformation of fluids produces as a mass of ‘conditions for existence’ that are subprocesses in a processual whole that moves in something like a circle. Hegel adopted these ideas early on, making the processive nature of organization the defining feature of organism’s ontology. In 1821/22 lectures on *Naturphilosophie*, Hegel defined life as an extended chemical process that is “circular” and “made persisting.” Life processes are continuously generated in a way that is self-maintaining or resistant to death. This self-maintenance has two sources: the *means*, or organs and structures, and *material*, or the circular activities that are its life. In 1828 Hegel expressed this as an interaction of organs and secretions, every organ being both *end* and *means* inside a closed totality. Corti notes that Hegel’s ideas

foreshadow organizational accounts in contemporary theoretical biology, where means-end language is supplanted by one of *processes* and *constraints*.

Thomas Khurana's "Genus-Being: Marx's Dialectical Naturalism" sets out to correct a widespread misconception that the Marx of the *1844 Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* embraced speciesist and exceptionalist anthropological views, signified by the term species-being (*Gattungswesen*). He argues that Marx is better categorized as an ethical naturalist who elaborated the idea of genus-being (wide-ranging creativity as a response to environmental constraints) found in Hegel's *Philosophies of Nature* and *Spirit*. In Hegel's view, living beings and spiritual beings share the fundamental trait that they are self-reproducing. Through an 'inner process' they organize themselves as parts of wholes; by an 'outer process' they assimilate the environment to their needs, by the 'genus process' they reproduce their kind by relating to other specimens of their type. In the living being, these self-reproductive processes manifest as *self-feeling*, in the human being, as *self-consciousness*—an ongoing negative unity of differentiated processes. In animal life, the genus is realized only by one individual reproducing the genus as another; in human life, individual and genus coincide. The animal has a specific environment or territory of activity, while the human has a *world* or broad repertory of activities that "makes all objects its inorganic nature." Animal satisfactions are narrow and always accompanied by need, while human satisfactions arise from a perception of general needs and issue in regimens of habit. And animal satisfactions are consumptive or destructive of the inorganic environment, while spirit's persistence engineers a world by means of objectification and externalization, labor and development, acquisition and appropriation. In his treatment of the reproductive process Hegel contrasts the limited universality of the biological species with the "universal fluidity" of the genus itself that is not a maintenance of the same forms across different generations but a fluid series of metamorphoses that constantly attain, overcome, and abandon different forms—or the "*universal* unity that contains all these moments as sublated in itself." Khurana believes that Marx and Hegel shared this understanding of genus-being, that in its theoretical and practical activity, spirit uncovers the genus of things while relating to itself as the actual living genus. Hegel's plain way of saying this is that spirit "makes *all* objects its inorganic nature," while Marx says that the human being turns "the whole of nature into its inorganic body." Human activity is a *productive*, not consumptive, response to the possibilities the environment presents. While part of nature, humans transform it by means of their genus-being. Khurana goes on to discuss how Marx transformed Hegel's idea by specifying the practical, social, and historical character of embodied self-production. Its world-creative activity is physical, not just intellectual; its tools are social bonds, not blunt instruments; and its self-creative activity is essentially historical. The genus-activity of self-production is concretized in labor or the set of operations that supply the humans' living needs. "*Labor is the*

epitome of a self-conscious life-activity.” But since this activity is objectified, the possibility arises that its external form might conceal the productive and cooperative activity that is its origin and make it into a mere means to sustaining animal existence: this is the situation of *alienation*. Alienation functions something like a mutation or series of mutations in the genetic process; normative standards of genus-satisfaction or alienation emerge only inside a historical give and take of social arrangements. Khurana describes the social and historical character of labor in detail, but I must turn to his concluding comments on what kind of naturalist the early (and later) Marx is. He is not a classical ethical naturalist, tied to some vision of an ideal human person or society. Rather, his social and historical analyses display the forms whereby humans produce their existence as distinct social nexus that materially support them while simultaneously blocking them from perceiving themselves as creators—or make them misperceive themselves as laboring animals. His is a dialectical naturalism, a conversation between naturalism and idealism characterized by normative openness, the finiteness of the interplay between naturalism and humanism, by lingering tension between biological and produced nature (pervasive alienation), and an aesthetic dimension that should be integral to basic self-production but is for the most part lacking.

Reflections on the Human-Natural Interface: Unintended Consequences

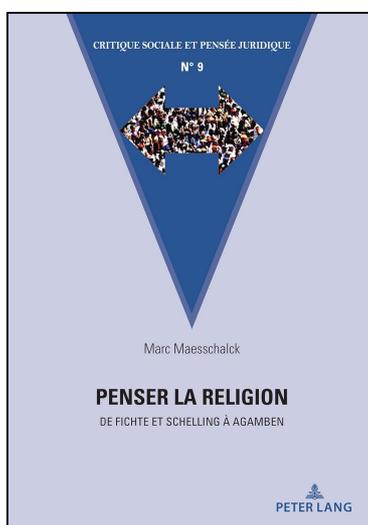
Since the editors designed this volume to further discussion, I add some personal reflections. At the time of writing, one billion humans—or one-eighth of the total population—are living under administratively declared climate emergencies. Nature is adjusting to human-caused constraints the way nature acts, i.e., as a self-preserving process or homeostatic system of systems. The cumulative human injury to its integrity results from short-sighted research programs, a rush to the patent office by researchers and universities, unconstrained activity by multinationals, and a world economy dependent on technological innovations. The industrial era that caused today’s climate crisis coincided with geopolitical adventures that projected an indefinite expansion of ‘Western’ population and wealth through colonization, slavery, resource extraction and obliterating indigenous people. It was not imagined that earth’s resources were finite, its peoples and culture both diverse and historically rich, or that a region’s flora, fauna, soils, and waters had any extra-utilitarian value. If one believes, as some of our authors do, that normativity is ever-present but fluid, arising from long conversations about what is valuable, permissible, or necessary, then it seems something has gone wrong in the axiological discussions between humans and their environment, or the few spiritual or poetic voices that speak for it. One can picture the spokesman for Rio Tinto asking William Blake how many bulldozers he had. – Of course, one can deny nature has a role in value conversations or that it has any values to be voiced.

The classical German thinkers of this volume were persistently drawn to contrast inorganic and organic nature, and among living organizations, to draw analogies between animal and rational life. Both are viewed as ‘organized’ or self-produced, a complex interweaving of means-end relationships embedded in interdependent processes, or as systematic self-subsisting processes that have no defined external end. The idea of *entelechy* is as old as Aristotle and Leibniz. That it applies to all of nature is new to Kant’s German successors.

– The idea that nature is a bearer of value and ought to have a voice in conversations about its normative standing is somewhat novel, although moral arguments against using animals as food have had religious and philosophical proponents. Our idealistic thinkers have not widely addressed the issue of what would constitute a claim for autonomy in a natural system; a range of behaviors or adaptive skills, locomotion, freedom from specific environmental constraints, or some ability to set and pursue external ends. Natural systems are successful if they can for some time surmount challenges such as shifts in climate or predation patterns within an ecology. Surviving, adapting to shifting conditions, maintaining sufficient populations are natural markers of value, at least where individual death or species extinction is the alternative. —One theme our philosophers have addressed is quite ambiguous: nature’s standing as humanity’s ‘inorganic body’ or its availability to human participants in a lifeworld. Is the organic body just a symbol or signifier of spirit’s freedom, a tool for the rearrangement of inert material stuff? Or does the individuality of self-consciousness insert an origin or point of self-reference into the continua of space, time, and matter such that *res extensa* becomes a world or workshop or library—or the space poets designate more simply as *home*?

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Marc Maesschalck, *Penser la religion: De Fichte et Schelling à Agamben* (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2022), 366 pp. ISBN 9782875745538



In this dense and ambitious volume, Marc Maesschalck, professor at the Catholic University of Louvain, sets himself a lofty goal. While it is not expressed in these terms, it seems to be nothing less than the re-founding of the academic study of religion on the basis of the philosophies of religion of Fichte and Schelling. While the casual reader—especially those who are familiar with theoretical debates immanent to the academic study of religion but *not* the philosophical context out of which it emerges—may bristle at this idea, it in fact has a strong historical precedent. The concept of religion *sui generis* as inherited by scholars owes an enormous debt to Schleiermacher (whose near-absence from this volume is conspicuous). But the discipline could have just as easily been founded on the theories of the “canonical” German Idealists, whose philosophical investigations into the concept of religion are not only more robust than those of Schleiermacher, but are also the beginnings of the philosophical discipline with which Religious Studies has an uneasy relationship: the philosophy of religion.

Maesschalck’s case is made stronger by the claim that Fichte and Schelling ultimately found the “*phénomène religieux*” in the sociality of reason. Both thinkers suggest ways in which religion can be incorporated into social discourse, since for both, its absence creates a “blind spot” [*trou*] in the ways that individuals and societies interact. Far from being bound up with their 19th century Protestant context, these two German Idealists therefore prove to be thinkers whose concepts of religion are well-situated to approach modern problems. In fact, it is precisely their Kantian heritage and historical situation that allows them to think questions

such as secularism, individualism, and religious ethics. They are “Christian free-thinkers.” While this too seems strange, it is ultimately a coherent product of the cultural milieu of the two philosophers; one might, in this spirit, add to Maesschalck’s analysis that in Germany, the Enlightenment is the continuation of the Reformation, and not a break with the *ancien régime*, as it was in France. Some might even be inclined to go a step further, and, in the spirit of Max Weber, conjecture that secularism is itself an evolved expression of Protestantism. This fine line between being able to think religion and thinking one’s way out of religion is precisely what Fichte and Schelling, according to Maesschalck, are attempting to do. He writes:

The Idealists therefore create a rational posture regarding their own religion that establishes the possibility of thinking on the basis of one religion, according to its cognitive content, hence part of the cultural horizon of a religion, but at the same time seeking a passage or opening that goes beyond it, that transgresses its prejudices and arrives at free thought. (16, *my translation*)

The key to this interpretation is the open-ended definition of religion that Maesschalck attributes to the idealists: at least as a socio-cultural phenomenon, it signifies the “indeterminacy of a common destiny,” a phrase that punctuates some of the important passages of the book. Without directly engaging in the historical details this claim identifies precisely why German Idealism’s philosophy of religion constitutes a break from the Enlightenment. Indeed, it was common in the 18th century to speak of the “vocation of humankind” [*die Bestimmung des Menschen*] an expression popularized by J.J. Spalding (1714-1804) but that reaches its final and most sophisticated expression (or perhaps better still, its corrective) in Fichte’s 1800 book of the same name. The optimism of the Enlightenment could not conceive of humanity’s historical progression other than as one of “progress” and with it, its ultimate goals as being determinate. This, of course, created an intractable problem: the “ugly ditch” between historical fact on one hand, and reason on the other. Fichte’s brilliant move is to describe a teleological structure guided by human freedom, marshalling the resources of the *Wissenschaftslehre* to elaborate an open-ended concept of vocation.

But if the foundation of Maesschalck’s reflection is Fichtean, its conclusions are Schellingian. In his turn to the positive, Schelling gives religion pride of place in his examination of the immediacy of human experience. Religion is, in Maesschalck’s terms, used heuristically by Schelling; philosophy, the “negative” apparatus of reason, can be deployed within the life-world that had first been scouted out by religious experience. The frame that the positive provides for reconsidering “Bestimmung” in terms of revelation and eschatology is picked up

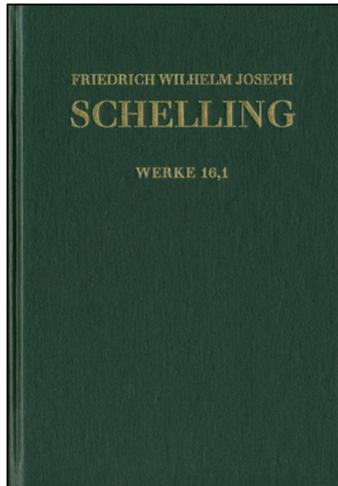
by a myriad of thinkers, from Hans Urs von Balthasar and Jürgen Moltmann through to Giorgio Agamben, whose debt to the *Philosophie der Offenbarung* is made clear.

Yet in this progression that names and explores a multitude of thinkers, the absence of one in particular is conspicuous. Hegel, who is only ever mentioned in passing (strangely enough, he is only really discussed in relation to Schelling's *Erlanger Vorlesungen*, often qualified as "Hegelian" in the secondary literature) is the great *arlesienne* of this book. Why should there be any connection between the philosophies of religion of Fichte and Schelling that *de facto* exclude Hegel? But the problem is not so much that Hegel is excluded, but rather that he is forgotten. This reviewer, at least, sees good reason for Hegel's exclusion: if the goal is to reconceive of religious studies on the basis of religion being the indeterminate expression of a collective vocation, Hegel presents a significant challenge. In the lectures on philosophy of religion that Hegel gave during the last decade of his life (1821-1831), but perhaps even more poignantly in the penultimate chapter of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, religion's social vocation is tempered by its weak essential content. For if religion is ultimately a communal means of self-awareness that allows for the containment of evil and the mutual forgiveness of transgressions (no small feat!) it "borrows" its essential content from philosophy. One might speculate that from Maesschalck's perspective, the Hegelian view remains trapped in the "mirror stage": religion (or theology) as merely the mirror of philosophy. For Maesschalck, both Fichte and Schelling burst out of this paradigm in the first decade of the 19th century. Hegel, he might want to say, stays there. In Hegel's defense, the account of religion provided in *Phenomenology* is ethically compelling, and resolves a host of problems: the intractable problem of defining religion is avoided, since there can be no *sui generis* concept of religion—its appearance would be studied anthropologically, its concept philosophically. All of this makes one wonder: could Maesschalck's account survive a Hegelian critique?

This last question, of course, is not meant as a dismissal, but rather as an invitation to further reflection. The basis for that reflection—the work that Maesschalck has done on Fichte and Schelling and their influence in regards to religion—is undeniably solid, and is a major contribution to the study of German Idealism, philosophy of religion, and religious studies. For this last discipline in particular—often unaware of its historical foundations—Maesschalck's book is a genuine gift.

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F. W. J. Schelling, *Darlegung des wahren Verhältnisses der Naturphilosophie zu der verbesserten Fichte'schen Lehre*, in Schelling: *Historisch-Kritische Ausgabe*, Reihe I, Band 16/1, edited by Ives Radrizzani (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: frommann-holzboog, 2022). ISBN 978-3-7728-2646-7. Hardback, 391 + xiv pp.



Schelling thought of the *Darlegung des wahren Verhältnisses der Naturphilosophie zu der verbesserten Fichte'schen Lehre* (*Statement on the True Relationship of the Philosophy of Nature to the Revised Fichtean Doctrine*) as a final reckoning with Fichte, with whom he had been out of contact since their correspondence had broken off abruptly in 1802. Fichte had also stopped publishing after his move to Berlin. When Fichte did begin to publish again, in the form of the *Vorlesungen über das Wesen der Gelehrten* (*Lectures on the Nature of the Scholar*) in 1806, Schelling felt personally attacked, and as he explained in the preface, one thing led to another:

The author wrote a review of the philosophical part of the Fichtean *Lectures on the Nature of the Scholar*, which appeared in Numbers 150 and 151 of the *Jenaische Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung*, before the existence of the other two works, published at almost the same time, became known to him by way of the book fair catalogue, which by chance he had failed to see. After reading the *Characteristics of the Present Age*, and *The Way Towards the Blessed Life*, he recognized that his work with respect to the book he had reviewed might stand, for better or for worse, but that it did not include the current standpoint of Fichtean speculation, inasmuch as this had progressed further from publication to publication, and this clearly demonstrated not merely a simple, but rather a double and triple duplicity in the spirit of its author [...] (HKA 16,1, 71; *Statement*, 1).¹

¹ F.W.J. Schelling, *Statement on the True Relationship of the Philosophy of Nature to the Revised Fichtean Doctrine*, tr. Dale E. Snow (Albany, NY: State University of New York, 2019).

The accusation of duplicity is vital to understanding the idiosyncratic structure of the *Statement*, in which Schelling accuses Fichte of both imitating him and in the very imitation revealing the depths of his lack of understanding of the philosophy of nature.

This sixteenth volume in the first, or “works” division of the *Historisch-Kritische Ausgabe* is as beautifully produced as its predecessors. This volume, divided into polemical writings and writings on the philosophy of nature, contains seven texts, including Schelling’s review of *Lectures on the Nature of the Scholar*, which appears separately from the *Statement* proper, although they were originally published in the same volume and appear together in the edition prepared by Schelling’s son.² Both are given editorial reports which contextualize the reasons for writing the text and the intended audience; for example, the reader learns that the original working title of the *Statement* was “Über J. G. Fichte und sein Verhältniß zur Naturphilosophie,” (*About J. G. Fichte and his Relationship to the Philosophy of Nature*) but Schelling and his circle referred to it simply as “Anti-Fichte.” To the extent possible, the amount of time it took to write the text is noted; it is evident that both the review of the *Lectures on the Nature of the Scholar* and the *Statement* were composed in great haste and in the midst of numerous other demands on Schelling’s time, yet he evidently considered both important enough to interrupt other work for. Finally, the explanatory notes identify almost all of Schelling’s references to Fichte, which is of particular value given his insistence on being both plagiarized and misunderstood; access to the sources in Fichte’s texts enables the reader to come to her own conclusions.

Also noteworthy is the part of the editorial report which gives information about how the work was received upon publication. This is especially true for the *Statement*, which the editor claims received “astonishingly” little attention, especially given its unabashedly polemical nature. The editor speculates, as have others, that Schelling may have been the victim of bad timing, since the war against France and the defeat of the Prussian army by Napoleon’s troops were taking place. These upheavals could also help to account for the surprising fact that Fichte himself does not seem to have known about its publication until March 1807.

This relative neglect of this lively and pointed settling of scores has arguably continued to the present day, if one considers the relative paucity of references to it, even in the context of discussions of Fichte and Schelling’s relationship. There are three main important points of contention: Fichte’s two-pronged attack on the philosophy of nature as consisting of little more than a deification of nature, and as a new and particularly pernicious form of fanaticism, and Schelling’s counter-attack. On June 25, 1806, Schelling wrote to his publisher, Cotta, that “Fichte has

² *Schellings Werke* (München: C. H. Beck’sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1927) Dritter Hauptband, 595-720. The English translation also combines the review and the text of the *Darlegung* in one volume).

attacked the *Naturphilosophie* in such a way that the importance of the matter and my honor does not permit me to remain silent,”³ yet by the time of publication his focus seems to have expanded well beyond any specific attacks on his reputation. Much of the enduring interest of the *Statement* lies in Schelling’s prescient and passionate counterattack on Fichte’s impoverished and lifeless conception of nature.

Fichte’s Attack on the *Naturphilosophie*

Schelling begins by noting that the difference between his philosophy of nature and the original *Wissenschaftslehre* is well known to “all who read German books” (HKA I, 16,1, 74; *Statement*, 21) and that he does not intend to revisit that topic, but rather he is focused on Fichte’s ‘revised’ [*verbesserten*] doctrine. There was a time, Schelling muses, when he was not entirely sure that he understood Fichte, “although he thought that I did and said as much; it was a time when I sought something higher and deeper in his doctrine than I could actually find” (HKA I, 16,1, 74; *Statement*, 22). However, reading his more recent writings had convinced Schelling that he understood Fichte very well; but once Schelling had made Fichte’s emptiness clear to himself, it was Fichte’s turn to not understand. Yet, Schelling continues, I must after all have understood him well enough to go beyond him, and “he has taken principles that were already presented in 1801 in the philosophy of nature in a scientific context and adopted them one by one in 1806.” (HKA I, 16,1, 74-75; *Statement*, 23).

As an example of these borrowed principles in use, Schelling points out the surprising departure from Fichte’s former manner of speaking, as employed at the beginning of the *Lectures on the Nature of the Scholar*, where Fichte declared that “it is not man who loves the divine idea, but rather it loves and contains itself in him; in general it is not the subject or the I which is the ground of philosophy but rather the divine idea.” (HKA I, 16,1, 20-21; *Statement*, 3). Schelling says that although he rejoices to see this advance in Fichte’s thinking, it clearly comes at a high price, namely that almost immediately after this declaration, Fichte goes on to speak of the divine life expressing itself outside of itself. Schelling pounces: “It can be seen that Fichte is quite casual and unself-conscious about God going outside of himself and becoming externalized, as if it were something quite self-explanatory.” (HKA I, 16,1, 21; *Statement*, 4) This is the initial bone of contention: Fichte seems to think that he has defined his (supposedly new understanding) of nature in explicit opposition to the standpoint of the philosophy of nature, but does so using language markedly similar to Schelling’s.

³ *Briefe und Dokumente*, Band III, (Zusatz band), hrsg. Horst Fuhrmans (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag, 1975), 346.

Despite this new talk of the divine idea, Schelling points out, Fichte is careful to keep nature and God separate. As if anticipating that he may be thought to be too quick to take offense, Schelling gives a very close paraphrase of Fichte's claim, when he concedes that nature is entitled to existence, but not "an absolute [existence], that is, an existence for its own sake, but only as the means or condition of another, and should always be more and more overcome." – "Don't let yourself be fooled (by these exceptionally well-founded and proven claims)", continues the speech to the listeners, "or misled by a philosophy which calls itself philosophy of nature" (a more distasteful name could not be given to it by its worst enemy), "and which believes it has surpassed all previous philosophy, by elevating nature into the absolute [and] striving to deify it." (HKA I, 16,1, 25-26; *Statement*, 8). It is a kind of delusion, as Fichte describes it, a willful and inappropriate elevation of the natural world out of its divinely ordained subordination to man. As Schelling presents it, the rest of the *Lectures on the Nature of the Scholar* rests on the assumption of the desirability and necessity of nature's domination by man.

Deification of nature is a serious enough charge, but Fichte also accused the philosophy of nature of being a kind of fanaticism (*Schwärmerei*), indeed, a form of fanaticism especially well suited to the times. In the *Characteristics of the Present Age* Fichte identifies the dominant ethos of the present as a kind of addiction to the clear conceptualization of absolutely everything, an illegitimate overextension of Enlightenment principles. Since the philosophy of nature of course opposes this, but cannot be expected to bring forth anything rational itself, then it must necessarily maintain "the opposite, [that] unreason [*Unvernunft*], namely the incomprehensible as such, for the sake of the incomprehensible, is to be made the unique principle." (HKA I, 16,1, 87; *Statement*, 35) This is followed by Fichte's dire predictions of the "fearsome dominion" of this "system of wild fanaticism" with all its "order-destroying consequences." (ibid). Indeed, Schelling adds that Fichte sees himself as duty-bound to "bring attention to the order-disturbing consequences of this teaching" (HKA, 16,1, 88; *Statement*, 36) – which threatens to displace his own.

Schelling's counterattack on Fichte's concept of nature

In recounting Fichte's accusations, Schelling does offer brief refutations, but it is easy to see why Schelling's central focus (and one that certainly remains evergreen), was on Fichte's pernicious and also internally contradictory concept of nature. Fichte had constantly been at pains to describe nature as an empty nothingness, nonexistent, at most a necessary opposition or arena for human action (HKA I, 16,1, 30; *Statement*, 7). Yet just as frequently, if not more frequently, it is depicted as something that resists him, that restricts human freedom of action, and therefore must be controlled if not destroyed. (HKA I, 16,1, 31; *Statement*, 13). Fichte insists on a certain hostility and intransigence in nature that he can neither

fully explain nor entirely dismiss; it is this frustration with nature that fuels his attitude of suspicion and antagonism toward it, which is especially prominently displayed in *Characteristics of the Present Age*. This has been Fichte's view at least since *The Vocation of Man*, where "nature was something absolutely ugly and unholy, without inner unity, something that ought not to exist, and only did exist so that it might not, that is, in order to be overcome." (HKA I, 16,1, 135; *Statement*, 82).

Schelling offers a general explanation that reveals how fundamentally opposed their perspectives are, as well as defining how he understands his relationship to his time:

I will here remark that my main error with respect to the age is that I regard nature dynamically and not mechanically. If I could only be persuaded that it really consists of mere mechanism, my conversion would be complete; then nature would be undeniably dead, and every other philosopher would be right, but I would not be. All dominant philosophy since Descartes is modeled on this mechanical view; it does not take a dynamic living nature into account, and living nature is therefore most unwelcome to all previous and already completed philosophies. (HKA I, 16,1, 144; *Statement*, 91)

As an expedient to best reveal the relative merits of their approaches, Schelling suggests "questioning the real physicists, in order to discover which of the two of us they find to be in the right" (HKA I, 16,1, 150; *Statement*, 97). Schelling paraphrases Fichte's description of the proper activity of the physicist, who seeks in the phenomena the ground of their unity, and when they believe that they have found it, go back to the phenomena to test the thoughts for their application to them; a procedure, Schelling points out, that contains an obvious circle. Moreover, he declares "there is no genuine physicist who does not abominate this way of wanting to achieve knowledge of nature." (HKA I, 16,1, 144; *Statement*, 91). For Schelling the true spirit of the natural scientist is one of "devotion, piety before nature, religion, unconditional submission to reality and truth as it is expressed in nature, and it is one with nature." (HKA I, 16,1, 150; *Statement*, 97). Yet it is this attitude which is to be rejected according to Fichte, indeed, such submission enrages the spirit of a free being, which must have nature conform to its ideas.

If instead of insisting that nature conform to our ideas, we seek to learn from it and be instructed by it, our science will necessarily be much different:

What is more contemptible to the genuine researcher in his innermost soul than the teleological view and perspective on things[?] In older systems it was at least the revelation of the goodness, wisdom, and power of the eternal being that was given as ultimate end of nature: in the Fichtean system it has lost this last vestige of sublimity and its entire existence is connected to the purpose of being used and made profitable by humanity. Could there possibly be a

physicist who thinks so little of the object of his science that he would accept the Fichtean deduction of physics in the *Erlangen Lectures* with equanimity? (HKA I, 16,1, 150-151; *Statement*, 98).

Of course, we read this appeal to the mind-set of practicing scientists from a very different vantage point today, knowing as we do that something very similar to the Fichtean perspective did prevail, even if when Schelling was writing in 1806 he could still hope that the philosophy of nature's respect for and humility before nature would prevail.

Schelling alludes to several rumors or stories, among the spiciest of which is that the followers of the philosophy of nature "intoxicate or enrapture themselves, when they are short of insights, with physical stimulants" (HKA I, 16,1, 157; *Statement*, 104) that Fichte had either started or enthusiastically repeated without naming him, yet all the while knowing that what is attributed to the followers will eventually be attributed to the founder. Schelling insists "I have never, to my knowledge, insulted Herr Fichte and have kept my personal relationship with him aboveboard. My only offense is that I have dared to go further in knowledge and in science" (HKA I, 16,1, 161; *Statement*, 108). That Fichte has reacted so aggressively to this proves, to Schelling's way of thinking, that he has been successful in surpassing him. It also represents a betrayal of Fichte's own principles. Schelling references the letter Fichte sent him after Kant's public repudiation of the *Wissenschaftslehre*, a letter later reprinted in the *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung*, in which Fichte declares:

Just as the defenders of pre-Kantian metaphysics have not yet stopped telling Kant that he was wasting his time with fruitless sophistries, Kant says the same thing to us [...] Who knows where the fiery young thinker already lives, who will go beyond the principles of the *Wissenschaftslehre* and seek to demonstrate its mistakes and incompleteness. Heaven lend us the grace not to remain in the position of saying, that is fruitless sophistry [...] ⁴ (HKA I, 16,1, 162-163; *Statement*, 109).

Schelling concludes that it is indeed a pity to see, all these years later, that heaven's grace is abandoning Fichte, since he has chosen to conduct a bitter and insulting dispute with Schelling, rather than an honest scientific argument. His conduct has been backhanded and dishonorable, as Schelling believes he has demonstrated. This is the final chapter in the Fichte-Schelling relationship, as Schelling sees it, and his portrayal, through the final pages, is of Fichte as the one who has really betrayed himself.

⁴ Originally appeared in the *Jenaische Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung*, 1799, Int. No. 122, p. 991-992.

Reception of the *Statement*

It should be noted that according to the editor, once the *Statement* was available, at least one of his friends urged Fichte to make a speedy reply in the form of a new *Wissenschaftslehre*, insisting that “it is necessary, dear Professor, for you to once again step forth in all your glory” (HKA I, 16,1, 46). Yet nothing was published in Fichte’s lifetime. His son, I. H. Fichte, did include material for an “Abfertigung Schellings” (“A Settling of Scores with Schelling”) and a “Zurechtweisung” (“Rebuke”) in his edition of Fichte’s posthumous work, but the editor of the present volume is agnostic on the question of whether either of these were even in part directed at the *Statement*. Perhaps the most direct evidence we have of Fichte’s reaction is in an exchange of letters with a former student, E. v. Berger, who had urged Fichte to overcome his differences with Schelling. Fichte replied to the letter suggesting a reconciliation that it was impossible, since he was certain that Schelling did not begin to understand the true standpoint of speculation: “For him the *Wissenschaftslehre*, indeed even *Kant* and *Leibniz* were in vain; he heads back into the darkness and confusion of Spinoza.”⁵ (HKA I, 16,1, 48). In other words, Schelling is not the future of philosophy, as he may intend to claim, he is not even the present, but has shown himself to have continued to embrace some of the darkest aspects of the past.

No discussion of the reception of the *Darlegung* is complete without mentioning Hegel. Schelling sent him a copy with a friendly letter, and he responded quite positively. A longer echo may be identifiable on the basis of the coincidence that Hegel was evidently reading the *Darlegung* while he was composing the preface to the *Phänomenologie des Geistes*. Indeed, some scholars have seen the preface as a reply to the *Darlegung*.⁶

Another valuable feature of this volume is the inclusion of “Über das Verhältniß des Realen und Idealen in der Natur,” (On the Relationship of the Real and Ideal in Nature) also written and published in 1806, which Schelling described in a letter to Windischmann as “the best thing of this sort that I have written in some time. At least it is once again authentic and fresh philosophy of nature” (HKA, 16,1, 172).⁷ This essay was added to the 1806 reprint of *On the World-Soul*, inserted between the preface to the second edition and the text of the *World-Soul*. It has since been reproduced with later editions, but that it was not added until 1806 is not usually noted.

⁵ J. G. Fichte to E. v. Berger, August 1810, in: GA III/6, 332. “Für ihn ist die Wissenschaftslehre, *Kant*, *Leibniz* sogar, vergeblich da; er führt in die Finsternis und Verworrenheit des Spinoza zurück.”

⁶ Cf. Thomas Buchheim, “Zwischen *Phänomenologie des Geistes* und *Vermögen zum Bösen*. Schellings Reaktion auf das Debüt von Hegels System”, *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 86 (2003): 304-330

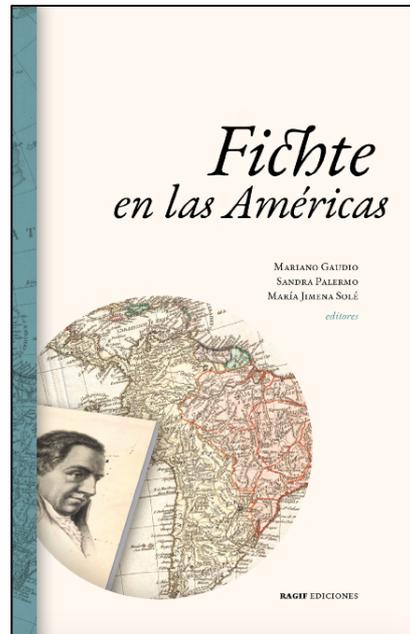
⁷ F.W.J. Schelling, “Treatise on the Relationship of the Real and the Ideal in Nature” (1806), tr. Dale E. Snow, *International Philosophical Quarterly* 55/2 (2015).

Conclusion

This 391-page volume of the Schelling *Historische-Kritische Ausgabe* contains seven of his published works from the years 1806-1807, divided into polemical works, of which the two longest and most significant are Schelling's review of *Lectures on the Nature of the Scholar* and the *Statement*, and writings on the philosophy of nature. In addition to "On the Relationship of the Ideal and Real in Nature," discussed above, there are four shorter pieces, published in one case anonymously, in periodicals such as the *Morgenblatt für gebildete Stände*, which show some of the range of Schelling's scientific interests. All of them are commentaries on contemporary controversies, ranging from chemistry to physiognomy, physics, and galvanism. This volume offers a multi-faceted reflection of the last years of Schelling's explicit engagement with the philosophy of nature, which was at the same time his last extended engagement with Fichte before the rather different reckoning appearing in *Lectures on the History of Modern Philosophy* in the 1830s, which in any case was not published in Schelling's lifetime. It is to be hoped that the publication of this volume will bring some much-deserved attention to this final chapter in Fichte and Schelling's relationship.

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Mariano Gaudio, Sandra Palermo, María Jimena Solé (eds.), *Fichte en las Américas* (Buenos Aires: RAGIF Ediciones, 2021). 410pp. ISBN 978-987-48149-1-3



“Es un hecho innegable que el pensamiento de J. G. Fichte está vivo en América.” (p. 9) (It is an undeniable fact that the thought of J. G. Fichte is alive in Latin America)¹, says the preface to *Fichte en las Américas*. This book brings together a selection of different contributions from the homonymous VI International Congress of the **Asociación Latinoamericana de Estudios sobre Fichte (ALEF)**² – which subsequently formed the basis for the recent publication *Fichte in the Americas* in the *Supplementa* (vol. 30) of the *Fichte-Studien*.³

The aim of this book is: “Investigar el vínculo entre Fichte y América, rastrear las huellas – olvidadas pero imborrables – de su recepción local, descubrir conexiones y crear otras nuevas” (12) (to investigate the link between Fichte and the Americas, to track the traces – forgotten but indelible – of his local reception, to discover connections and to create new ones).

All this denotes, as stated by the editors **Mariano Gaudio, Sandra Palermo, and María Jimena Solé**, that in the midst of 2021 – the year the congress was held

¹ All translations into English are by the author of this book review.

² ALEF - The Latin American Association of Fichte Studies. The congress was organized by the research group on Idealism of the Universidad de Buenos Aires.

³ María Jiménez Solé, Elizabeth Millán (eds.), *Fichte in the Americas, Fichte-Studien-Supplementa* 30 (Boston: Brill, May 2023).

– the Fichtean philosophy was a project still to be more fully vindicated in the Americas.

The meeting succeeded in: “reconstruir la recepción del pensamiento fichteano en nuestro territorio, a descubrir afinidades y cruces fecundos entre sus ideas y las de pensadores americanos” (10) (reconstructing the reception of Fichte’s thought in our territory, in discovering affinities and fruitful intersections between his ideas and those of Latin American thinkers). More than this, to vindicate research on the Fichtean philosophy presupposes, for a context such as the Latin American one, not only especially to connect it with historical events but also with the political and social needs of then and now.

“Si Fichte nos interpela, es porque su exhortación a la acción y a la autonomía resuena en nosotros, habitantes de una región que todavía lucha por emanciparse de los poderes externos e internos, una región todavía considerada –material y simbólicamente– periférica, que se esfuerza para que sea reconocido su derecho a participar de la historia universal de la filosofía.”(12)

(If Fichte calls upon us, it is because his exhortation to action and autonomy resonates in us, inhabitants of a region that still struggles to emancipate itself from external and internal powers, a region still considered – materially and symbolically – peripheral, that strives to have its right to participate in the universal history of philosophy recognized.)

It is difficult to transfer the dynamics and the organization of panels and discussions typical of a congress over to a printed volume that has to be rationalized through a table of contents. This book is divided into four sections: 1. *Current Debates*; 2. *19th Century*; 3. *20th Century*; 4. *More Current Debates*. Although this division is not ideal, it helps to dispense with hierarchies based on how well the speakers are known or on the popularity of the topics.

Fichte en las Américas begins with the chapter “Tríplice revolução fichtiana: notas para um pensamento latino-americano mais livre” (Triple Fichtean Revolution: Notes to a Freer Latin American Thinking” by **Thiago S. Santoro**. Can Fichte’s thought be read from a decolonial point of view? The approach is as necessary as it is risky. It is therefore comprehensible that part of the chapter is focused on the role of the *Reden an die deutsche Nation* (1808), not as a work of national exaltation but as a critique of the German culture of that time, unrooted and without direction. Can Fichte’s philosophy be the bearer of a “permanent aboriginal revolution”, as stated in the article by J.C. Goddard⁴ that is cited by Santoro? Can it still be a source of examples from which to criticize imperialism? For the author,

⁴ See Jean-Christophe Goddard, “Fichte o la revolución aborígen permanente,” *Revista de Estud(i)os sobre Fichte* 4 (2012). The sentence “permanent aboriginal revolution” is originally quoted by Étienne Balibar.

it is so, but despite the good approach and its balanced proposal, the text raises some other questions.⁵ Does not the reconciliation of Fichte's philosophical project with the idea of Being (from 1801 onwards) posit his philosophy as another episode of a metaphysics founded on Being that would continue that “pilar estático [...] sintoma do pensar estrangeiro” (25) (static pillar [...] symptom of foreign thinking)?

The fine editorial work in the whole compilation makes the other articles play the role of counterweights and counterarguments to this topic and among each other. Similar topics are explored in **Manuel Tangorra's** chapter “Modernidad y Periferia. Existencia originaria y descolonización en el pensamiento a la luz del Fichte tardío” (Modernity and Its Peripheries: Originary Existence and Decolonization of Thought in Light of Fichte's Late Work); and **Gonzalo Santaya** with “Escatología Cristiana e historia universal: notas en torno al salvajismo, la conquista, el ‘fin de los tiempos’ y la ‘vida en las Ideas’” (Christian Eschatology and World History: Notes on Savagery, Conquest, the ‘End of Time’ and ‘Life in Ideas’.) For instance, the latter takes into account the various approaches of Fichte himself to enrich the different points of view. If the *Characteristics of the Present Age* (1806) contains details of colonialism and proclaims to destroy the “surrounding savagery” (cf. 372) of the peripheries, this is contrasted with the testimony that Fichte himself offers in the *Grundlage des Naturrechts* (1796) and in his review of Kant's *Perpetual Peace* (1795), where the philosopher from Rammenau exhorts an end to exploitation and slavery (373).

Reading Fichte's thought from current perspectives is also the task of **Yolanda Estes's** chapter, “La recepción, desarrollo y aplicación en las Américas de la exposición sobre género, matrimonio y familia de J.G. Fichte” (The Reception, Development, and Application of J.G. Fichte's Account of Gender, Marriage, and Family in the Americas). Her chapter proposes something difficult: How to compensate the vision of marriage that Fichte presents in texts such as the *Sittenlehre* (1798) and the above-mentioned *Naturrecht*, which has transcended as “The power of man and the exploitation of woman” (in the words of Bärbel Frischmann). Can an alternative be offered to an image of Fichte that is “full-blown patriarchal” (in the words of Anthony J. La Vopa)?

Estes explores mutual consent and sexual desire, writing about the possibility that Fichte might offer an alternative to contractual notions of justice as applied to marital relations. She shows the internal contradictions of Fichte's thought on these issues, such as the limit he places on the full development of the public role of women. The author also sensibly deals with topics that are now widely discussed, such as Fichte's position on rape. The part where it is more difficult to keep the balance right is when the author argues that the explanation of gender within the

⁵ One of them, which is not so directly related to Fichte: is the decolonial approach flexible enough not to have red lines for a thinker like Fichte? Is not philosophy itself an element of colonialism for R. Grosfoguel and for Mignolo? In any case, the author seems to be aware of the contradictions that his exposition may have.

Naturrecht implies that gender does not depend on biological sex but is based on an expression of sexual desire that allows us to develop as humans (35). A few debatable historical notes are added to these reflections, such as the curious statement that “Fichte’s parents were successful peasants” (39).

Lastly, a good move in this chapter is to introduce an exhortation to seek in Fichte a referent that allows feminism to move away from liberal and neoliberal feminisms. It is clear that an author like Fichte has little connection with liberalism, but: are we sure that he is not a thinker that has been proved correct by liberal philosophical currents?⁶

So far we have found two themes in the first chapters that provide support for the remainder of the contributions. The decolonial point of view is one, the other is the status of the founder of the *Wissenschaftslehre* as a socialist or liberal. Next is **Günter Zöllner**’s chapter: “*Et in America ego. La crítica liberal e igualitaria de Fichte a la colonización, la servidumbre y la esclavitud*” (*Et in America ego. Fichte’s Liberal and Egalitarian Critique of Colonization, Servitude, and Slavery*). Zöllner presents Fichte as someone who oscillates between a liberal position and its opposite, a nationalist and illiberal one. After comparing him with John Locke (the ‘proto-liberal’ versus the anti-colonial Fichte), and with Ernst Jünger (both as sorts of conservative revolutionaries), Zöllner tries to show that the *Contribution to the Correction of the Public’s Judgments on the French Revolution* (1793) does not over-correct the judgment on the Revolution, since Fichte’s approach to it is ‘indirect’ and ‘deceptive’; and with the aim of “la sustitución de una revolución (francesa) desde abajo por reformas (alemanas) desde arriba” (replacing a (French) revolution from below with (German) reforms from above) (85). Zöllner mostly maintains a cautious balance and he is right to do so.

However, in these reflections there is a special emphasis on the reactionary elements in Fichte’s mature works. This entails a certain skepticism to Zöllner’s reading of Fichte’s early views on the French Revolution. Did Fichte really take an intellectual stance in favor of the Revolution? Zöllner does not render the revolutionary contents of Fichte’s early political writings invisible, but he attributes an early expiration date to them. And that is at least debatable.⁷

⁶ A general example: Thomas Mayer, “Kant und die Links-Kantianer – Liberale Tradition und soziale Demokratie”, in: V. Gerhard (ed.): *Kant im Streit der Fakultäten* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2005). And a particular example: Günter Zöllner (ed.), *Der Staat als Mittel zum Zweck: Fichte über Freiheit, Recht und Gesetz* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2011).

⁷ It is true that Fichte declares that “gewaltsame Revolutionen zu verhindern, giebt es ein sehr sicheres; aber es ist das einzige: das Volk gründlich über seine Rechte und Pflichten zu unterrichten.” (there is only one sure way to prevent revolutions: to instruct the people firmly about their rights and duties.) (J.G. Fichte, GA I/1: 204); but Zöllner’s reading does not seem to want to consider either Fichte’s letter to Bagessen of 1795 (GA III/2: 300; letter 282b), or other readings that see in the Revolution texts “la retórica más inflamada y combativa que le valdrá para siempre la fama de jacobino” (the most inflamed and combative rhetoric that will earn him forever the notoriety of a Jacobin). Salvi Turró, *Fichte: De la consciencia al absoluto* (Bogotá: Universidad de la Salle, 2019), 32.

If a first foray into the liberal/modern question is made with Zöllner, it will return in **Mariano Gaudio**'s chapter, "El Fichte de Taborda. Idealismo y crítica de la modernidad" (Fichte by Taborda: Idealism and Critique of Modernity). If Zöllner contrasts Fichte with Locke, Gaudio brings up Adam Smith, with whom Alejandro Taborda (1885-1944) contrasts himself. Gaudio also points out that the latter presents Fichte "como referencia fundante y en el marco de la visión crítica de la modernidad" (249) (within the framework of the critical vision of modernity), but later Gaudio himself introduces well-argued passages, concluding that Fichte and especially the *Reden* are usually treated with the same misguided recourse: the part is taken for the whole.

After this first section, the compilation continues with two blocks dedicated to a series of investigations that highlight the varied reception of Fichte in Latin American philosophers and intellectual currents. Page after page reveals how close authors such as Juan Bautista Alberdi, Walt Whitman, or Esteban Echeverría (19th century), but also Farias Brito, Lima Paz, Torres Filho or Perón (20th century), all were to the German philosopher Fichte.

The emancipatory vocation of Fichte's philosophy is one of the themes examined, and directly connected with the processes of independence in Latin America. The chapter by **Virginia López Domínguez** "Ecos y reverberaciones: la voz de Fichte en la independencia de los países sudamericanos" (Echoes and Reverberations: Fichte's Voice in the Independence of South American Countries), presents a clear case of how in these countries "el espíritu del pensamiento fichteano estaba latiendo desde mucho tiempo antes" (99) (Fichte's thought was beating long before) their independence.

López-Domínguez also succeeds in raising something that hangs over many of the open debates in the volume and which is taken up in a more forceful and critical manner in **Aberto Sandoval**'s paper "Fichte and Rojas." It is the contrast between cosmopolitanism and nationalism, well attested by Fichte in his works *Patriotism and its Counterpart* (1807) and *Letters to Constant* (1800), where he synthesizes the two terms in a co-determined relationship. López-Domínguez's piece has a scientific, historiographic vocation, searching for objective causes to Fichte's approaches to argue the "complejo proceso de transmisión indirecta que se revela en las constantes afinidades entre las ideas de nuestro filósofo y los patriotas independentista" (101) (process of indirect transmission that is revealed in the constant ideas of our philosopher and our independence patriots).

This "indirect transmission" is common to a number of chapters in the two central sections and deserves a critical remark: the connections sought by many of the authors are often more vocational and tacit than explicit and direct. **Maria Jimena Solé**'s chapter, "Filosofía y emancipación, El espíritu de Fichte en la letra de Alberdi" (Philosophy and Emancipation, Fichte's Spirit in Alberdi's Letter)

refers to this issue.⁸ So too *Federico Vicum*⁹, in his “Fichte y el yo democrático según Walt Whitman” (Fichte and the Democratic Self According to Walt Whitman). How far can one extend the establishment of influences beyond the evidence? And with regard to Vicum’s text, couldn’t the considerations that Whitman has on war – and which Vicum critiques – be contrasted with passages that Fichte himself has on war?¹⁰

Another aspect that we find in many of the contributions is the focus on topics from the Jena era, and which are not often compared or contrasted with elements in Fichte’s later works. For instance, the chapter by **Elizabeth Millán Brusslan** “Fichte, el progreso y el surgimiento del Positivismo en América Latina” (Fichte, Progress and the Rise of Positivism in Latin America) and the one by **Christian Klotz**, “Raimundo de Farias Brito, crítico do positivismo entre Fichte e Jacobi” (Raimundo de Farias Brito, Critic of Positivism between Fichte and Jacobi), research the relationship between Fichte and empiricism. The first text looks for possible positivist motivations of Fichte, and the second one explores the role of the empirical/psychological I that Farias Brito attributes to the same philosopher. Assertions like “Fichte equipara el progreso de la humanidad con el dominio sobre la naturaleza. Y el dominio sobre la naturaleza es totalmente empírico” (188) (Fichte equates the progress of humanity with mastery over nature. And mastery over nature is entirely empirical), or that Fichte “parece respaldar precisamente el tipo de positivismo abrazado por Gradgrind, un positivismo que empuja los hechos por encima de las fantasías” (186) (endorses precisely the kind of positivism embraced by Gradgrind, a positivism that pushes facts over fantasies) are understandable when dealing with certain positions of the Jena period.¹¹ However, after Fichte warned of his reservations towards *ἐμπειρία* in the 1805 *Wissenschaftslehre* and the 1811 *Wissenschaftslehre* some of these arguments need to be more nuanced.¹²

⁸ “A pesar de que no hay evidencia de que Alberdi haya leído a Fichte ni de que las ideas fichteanas hayan tenido algún impacto directo en su pensamiento, el hecho de que lo mencione en dos de sus obras emblemáticas de juventud, abre la posibilidad de pensar un vínculo entre ellos.” (Although there is no evidence that Alberdi had read Fichte or that Fichte’s ideas had any direct impact on his thought, the fact that he mentions him in two of his emblematic works from his youth opens the possibility of thinking of a link between them).

⁹ “Posiblemente Whitman no haya leído de Fichte más que una selección de pasajes de *El destino del hombre* incluidos en el libro *Prose Writers of Germany*” (165) (Possibly Whitman may not have read from Fichte more than a selection of passages from *The Vocation of Man* included in the *Prose Writers of Germany*).

¹⁰ See, for example, Jacinto Rivera Rosales, “Fichte: La guerra verdadera y los principios del Estado de Derecho (1813)”. In Diogo Ferrer (ed.), *A filosofia da história e da cultura em Fichte* (Coimbra: Imprensa da Universidade de Coimbra, 2019); and Salvi Turró, “Fichte i la guerra veritable”; and Josep Montserrat, Ignasi Roviró (eds.), *Col·loquis de Vic XIX*. Volum 19: *La guerra*. 2015.

¹¹ In the *Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo*: Certainly in the theoretical part of the *Wissenschaftslehre* as a project it “teaches us how the world is and must be to be given to us; the result in which the theoretical philosophy concludes is the system of the pure *empeiria*.” (GA, IV/2: 262).

¹² In the 1805 *Wissenschaftslehre*: “Bemerkung: bei uns: Ich *bin*, u. damit kurz u. gut: ist empirische Auffassung, innere Verwachsenheit, u. Unklarheit. – Hätte nun die W.L. ihr Ich *bin* also gemeint, so hätte sie unrecht. Im ersten, dem theoretischen Theile meint sie es freilich so; so wie in Erörterung

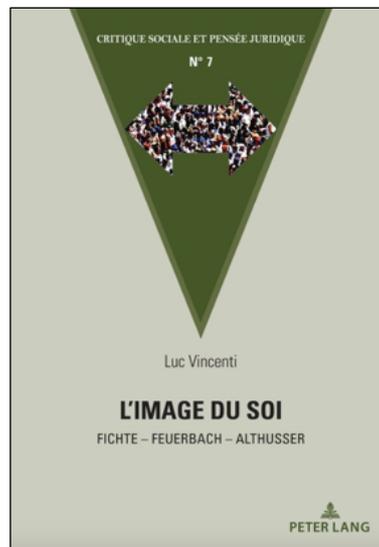
Some Conclusions. These critical observations cannot lead us to a complete critique of *Fichte en las Americas*. It is important not to lose sight of what was said at the beginning: one of the purposes of an initiative such as this is “to discover connections and to create new ones.” It involves understanding the Americas on the basis of Fichte, not necessarily the opposite. So this action of understanding goes beyond academic literalism and must frequently go beyond Fichte himself.

Regardless of the Latin American context, *Fichte en las Américas* will be of interest to anyone who wants to revisit the figure of Fichte from the current trends of social and political philosophy; and to anyone who wants to see how much the shadow of Fichte is at the basis of contemporary debates, with special attention paid to the limits of categories such as ‘nationalism’, ‘liberalism’, and ‘colonialism.’ In this sense, the general effort to find the right approach to the *Reden an die deutsche Nation* is commendable and future research on Fichte’s text must take into consideration this edited compilation of research papers.

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dieses ersten Gebrach nun niedergelegt haben, bis wir ihn etwa ordentlich berichtet, u. beschränkt wiederfinden. So nun thut sie auch im Druke im zweiten Theile. Wer aber nur den ersten kennt, der muss pp.” (Remark: When among ourselves we speak of *I am*, without adding anything else, it is a matter of empirical apprehension, inner atrophy and lack of clarity. And then, if the *Wissenschaftslehre* had meant the *I am* in this way, it would have been wrong. In the first part, the *Wissenschaftslehre* is certainly thinking of the *I am* as such (...) but now we are refuting ourselves (...) until we find it again duly corrected and limited. And that is also what the *Wissenschaftslehre* does in the second part. But whoever only knows the first [has only to accuse the printed *Wissenschaftslehre* of empiricism]. The aforementioned, who pass it off as subjectivism and a reflective system, and who, as we shall see in due course, swing over it [,] must take it thus.) (GA II/9: 207-208). Thanks to Manuel Jiménez Redondo (Universitat de València) for his translation into Spanish of the 1805 *Wissenschaftslehre*, with the comments in brackets that help to understand many parts of the text.

Luc Vincenti, *L'image du Soi. Fichte – Feuerbach – Althusser* (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2021). Critique sociale et pensée juridique, Série 'Etudes idéalistes', vol. 7, 2021), 158 pp. ISBN 978-2-8076-1563-2



Luc Vincenti's book is an original project, in contrast to the many monographs that are fashionable in contemporary philosophical literature. Focusing on three philosophers: Fichte, Feuerbach, and Althusser, the book is divided into three chapters devoted to each of them, but it is not organised as a simple juxtaposition of doctrinal statements. Rather, it is an attempt to prove the existence of a "filiation" (p. 20) between these three authors, even a "discontinuous" one (20), that has gone unnoticed until now. Vincenti is aware of the difficulty of the task, for there is nothing on the surface that immediately invites us to bring these three thinkers together. From the outset, everything opposes Fichte's speculative metaphysics to the materialism of the other two authors. So there is no question of simply showing how we move chronologically from Fichte's subjective idealism to Feuerbach's materialism and finally to Althusser's Marxist materialism. Vincenti's aim is to bring to light identical patterns and formal structures of thought within these philosophies, even though they are very different in terms of their respective contents. The borrowings from and influences of Fichte are not directly related here to the ideas he defends, as would be the case for a philosopher who was purely and simply inspired by the doctrinal content of another thinker, but, more subtly and discreetly, to the very way in which he thinks about these ideas.

As part of the title of the book indicates, Vincenti's thesis is that it is mainly through the way in which the self or I (*Ich*) and personal identity are thought of in terms of image that a certain continuity between these three authors may be identified. Fichte initiated a manner of conceiving the identity of the subject that later thinkers drew upon. His conception had repercussions, in the sense that the author sets out to establish, firstly on Feuerbach's critique of religion and then later on Althusser's deconstruction of the subject. Vincenti notes:

la mise en rapport des trois auteurs se justifie par les développements que la *Bildlehre* de Fichte consacre à l'analyse du Moi comme image, développements mis en perspective sur la définition de l'essence humaine comme reflet chez Feuerbach, puis sur la reprise par Althusser, notamment dans son manuscrit sur Feuerbach de 1967, du redoublement spéculaire pour décrire le fonctionnement de l'idéologie (20-21).

(the connection between the three authors is justified by the developments that Fichte's *Bildlehre* [theory of image] devotes to the analysis of the I as image, developments that are put into perspective with Feuerbach's definition of the human essence as reflection, and then with Althusser's revival, particularly in his 1967 manuscript on Feuerbach, of specular doubling to describe the functioning of ideology.)

The substantial introduction to the book examines in particular the notion of the image and shows how Fichte's conception of the pure I as self-positing helps us to grasp the true nature of the image. Fichte's break with the substantialist and reifying representation of the subject in favour of its conception as an act frees up the possibility of seeing the image as that which also generates itself. Like the subject-object I, which has no support and contains nothing but the aim of itself, it bears a self that allows it to constitute *itself*. It is therefore inseparable from the identity of the I. Or rather: it is the I itself realising itself as image, as Fichte would say in his late philosophy. Distinct in this respect from the linguistic sign, the image is not the mere dead reflection of an imagined entity that stands beyond and outside it, but that which reflects itself in its own way of indicating itself as image. Better still, insofar as it houses the structure of self-consciousness, it reveals how the I produces itself by producing its own image. Vincenti's successive studies of Fichte, Feuerbach, and Althusser thus focus on the self-constitution of self-consciousness as image.

In the first chapter on Fichte, Vincenti clearly distinguishes four aspects of the I in Fichte: 1). the pure I of the first principle of the *Wissenschaftslehre* or: *Thathandlung*; 2). the empirical I of the third principle; 3). the individual I; 4). and the I as ideal. The I of the first principle, in which subject and object merge, a pure reflexive act internal to self-consciousness, is assimilated under the Absolute itself.

This reading is based on the commonly accepted idea that the identity posited between the absolute I and the Absolute applies only to Fichte's first system of the so-called Jena period. The I of the third principle of the *Wissenschaftslehre* is as distinct from the absolute I as it is from the individual I. In equivalent Kantian terms, it represents transcendental subjectivity, i.e. the set of conditions of possibility of experience in general, whereas the I of the first principle represents transcendental apperception. It is here called empirical only in opposition to the absolute I, and must not be confused with the individual I engaged in the world as a determined part of it (23). Finally, detached from the self-consciousness of which it is otherwise a part, the absolute I serves as its horizon and is identified with God as an ideal to be reached *ad infinitum* for the individual. This is the absolute practical requirement the individual must fully realise its rational nature and conform its real I to its pure I situated at the principle of its consciousness. These four senses or dimensions of the I will be reformulated by Fichte in the language of the image. In his late philosophy, from 1804 onwards, the pure I or intellectual intuition is called an image of the Absolute; and real self-consciousness is an image of this image. Even the I as an ideal was defined in the *Sittenlehre* of 1812 as an image of God to be realised in the world. Vincenti can then reflect on Fichte's legacy in the conception of the subject and self-consciousness in Feuerbach and Althusser.

The transition from idealism to materialism neither erases nor contradicts this heritage in Feuerbach's *Essence of Christianity*. We find again the primacy of the universal element of knowledge in self-consciousness, which, as with Fichte, remains the radical point of departure of his philosophy. The essence of the human being consists in the same relationship to itself, and it is identically the universal knowledge of this essence that consists in knowing itself in and through the thought that serves as its model and moral ideal. As with Fichte, it is up to the human being to become entirely what it is and to realise its essence completely in the world. This moral ideal, which in Fichte corresponds to the kingdom of ends, is in a certain sense transposed in Feuerbach in the figure of the absolute man represented by the rational state. Vincenti clearly shows that for both authors, the fulfilment of man requires the suppression of the individual, who is not his own moral end, insofar as he is only the instrument of universal reason. The kingdom of reason cannot come about outside the community of human beings.

Even where Feuerbach is furthest from Fichte, namely where he makes religion an illusion and the projection of the self-consciousness of a man who does not recognise himself in the projected object, we find the same gesture of unveiling borrowed from Fichte; in other words, we see the same deconstruction of the mechanism of alienation. This is reducible to a projection that ignores itself and to a movement of "deportation" (101) that can only derive the possibility of its distance from the essence via the internal constitution of the essence itself. It is

because man's essence consists in relating to himself, in other words that his essence is relation, that he potentially contains the danger of missing what is always intended in himself. Just as for Feuerbach God is the projected image of man with all his essential characteristics, an image that cuts him off from himself because he fails to recognise it for what it is (i.e. a projected image), so for Fichte, the alienated self is that which clings to the projected image of itself without realising what it is. The illusion that masks alienation comes from the fact that it belongs to the very life of the essence to project itself into an external object or image. In other words, the life of the essence carries us out of itself, so that we don't notice it. There is then a "dialectic of alienation" (104) which consists in thwarting the image by exposing the image-making process itself. Vincenti might usefully have recalled Fichte's Latin formulation of this in the second 1804 series of lectures on the *Wissenschaftslehre: projectio per hiatus absolutum*.¹

It is Feuerbach who, above all through the concept of alienation, ensures the transition between Fichte and Althusser. But here again, we should not look for homologies between these thinkers on the basis of the theses they defend, because from the point of view of these theses, everything is reversed between the authors. What is firm and absolute knowledge in Fichte's self-consciousness is overturned and becomes pure illusion in Althusser. For Fichte, the absolute subject is the primary truth, while for Althusser it is the *proton pseudos*. What interests Vincenti are the "structural identities" (25) between their philosophies. And there is an important one concerning the genesis of the subject, analysed in the third and final chapter of the book devoted to Althusser.

Ideology is the relationship imagined by the individual to its own conditions of existence. It is in this very relation that the individual (who is always already a chronological subject) becomes a (logical) subject. Not that it really becomes a subject, but that it believes itself to be one. For what is subject is that which is free and the cause of its own action. But such a subject does not exist in society. Ideology installs in the individual the belief in itself as a subject, in other words it leads it to imagine that what it does in the place where it does it in society, it does freely. Ideology is always both relayed and materialised by the IEA, the ideological apparatuses of the State; in short, the institutions that prescribe the rules of conduct for the individual in such a way that it feels it is deciding for itself to follow them. What is important here, in relation to Fichte, is that the subject establishes itself as such in its own eyes on the basis of an "interpellation" (139) or call: it is not a subject (for itself) before being determined – by and in society, whose institutions are always already soliciting it – to determine itself as a subject.

Similarly, for Fichte, as is apparent in the 1796 *Foundations of Natural Right*, there is no subject constituted in advance outside intersubjectivity, which takes the original form of a "call": the subject can only be posited as a subject, i.e. recognise

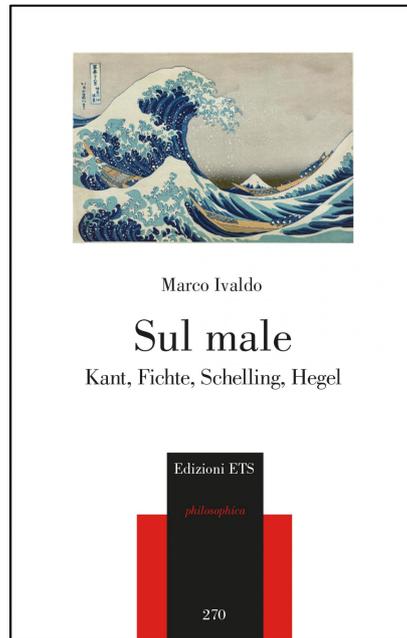
¹ Cf. Fichte, *WL 1804-II* (GA II/8: 278).

itself as a rational individual, in response to the solicitation of another rational being who determines it to determine itself as a rational being. The result is a moral, legal, and political task for the individual: to surpass itself *ad infinitum* towards “I-hood” in Fichte, towards the “absolute man” in Feuerbach, towards the “complete individual” in Marx (153), and towards a “fairer imaginary” (152) or a “progressive ideology” (148) in Althusser. Since ideology is neither true nor false, in addition to being ineradicable in principle, we can only endlessly pursue the goal of making it better, just as Fichte sees no end to the path that leads to the ideal prescribed by man’s rational nature. The individual can never exist as an absolute subject, i.e. as a perfectly free and autonomous subject (or as a subject *tout court* in Althusser’s sense), but it must strive towards this absolute as an image or imaginary of autonomy and freedom.

In conclusion: Vincenti’s book is clearly and precisely written. It is of major interest to the Fichte community insofar as it offers a first-rate analysis of Fichte and his posterity. It opens up entirely new and original perspectives, not only of each of these three thinkers in their own right, but above all on account of the unsurmised relationships between them.

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Marco Ivaldo, *Sul male. Kant, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel* (Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 2021), 136 pp. ISBN 978-88-4676-158-3



This book – concise but conceptually very dense – is the result of a reworking of a seminar held by the author at the *Istituto Italiano per gli Studi Filosofici* (Italian Institute for Philosophical Studies, Naples), on Oct. 28 and 29, 2020, entitled “Classical German Philosophy and the Problem of Evil” (devoted to Kant, Schelling and Hegel). A chapter on Fichte was then added, itself reworked from an older article by the author.¹

As the title indicates, it investigates the treatment of this traditional problem in philosophy – but also in religion and art, as crucial to human experience in general – by the main figures of classical German philosophy. Ivaldo also acknowledges in the Foreword the contemporary masters who inevitably conditioned his perspective in dealing with this issue, namely: Paul Ricœur, Luigi Pareyson, Alberto Caracciolo, and Reinhard Lauth. This remark is not superfluous, since it is precisely the existentialist mood that Ivaldo’s references share that makes it possible, or at least facilitates, a comprehension of the seriousness with which the German idealists addressed the problem of evil.

In fact, contrary to what a certain historiographical tradition has lazily handed down without problematizing it, evil is a concrete problem and a ‘wound’ of reason as it were. It is present in the systematic elaborations of each of these four

¹ See Marco Ivaldo, “Das Problem des Bösen bei Fichte”, *Fichte-Studien* 3 (1991): 154-169.

philosophers, and constitutes the counterpoint – to a greater or lesser degree – to the optimism that seems to unilaterally characterize their worldviews.

That said, Ivaldo is very careful to convey to the reader the particularities of each of these thinkers, without conflating them, or considering their succession according to the classical genealogical scheme (cf. p. 6). He continually points to the common denominator in their elaborations of this problem, and that is, *freedom*. For these four philosophers,

[i]l male si lascia pensare (comprendere, non spiegare intellettualmente) muovendo dalla libertà, la quale a sua volta è non soltanto un principio morale, anche se lo è, ma è un principio trascendentale-pratico e pertanto è principio costituente della realtà essente. (7)

(evil can be thought (understood, not intellectually explained) by moving from freedom, which is itself not only a moral principle, although it is, but is a transcendental-practical principle and therefore is a constitutive principle of the being of reality.)²

In this sense, the German idealists would be the first philosophers in the Western canon to think about the *reality* of evil, its positivity, i.e. not merely to reduce it (as earlier theodicy had done) to a mere lack of good (*privatio boni*). It is an ineradicable part of our experience of reality, despite (indeed, perhaps because of) the fact that it questions, by opposing it, the absoluteness of reason. Although the destination (*Bestimmung*) of evil is to be overcome, its actual presence cannot be removed by a mere intellectual act.

The negativity of evil is defined by a *duty*, which as such refers back to the concrete free activity of consciousness. Good and evil, therefore,

si presentano nella loro radice non come fatti, stati mentali, connessioni di ‘cose’, ma come posizioni opponentesi *della libertà*, come ciò che deve essere (il bene), e come ciò che non deve essere (il male). (8)

(present themselves in their root not as facts, as mental states, connections of ‘things’, but as opposed positions *of freedom*, as what ought to be (good), and as what ought not to be (evil).)

This power to treat both the reality of evil and the irrepressible need to overcome it practically are indicated by Ivaldo as an element of the speculative richness of the idealist thinkers. They were far from regarding it as a contradiction to be removed by eliminating one of the two aspects of the problem (as was done in much post-Hegelian and twentieth-century philosophies, and there is still perhaps a tendency to do this).

² All translations into English are by the author of this review.

I will now briefly outline the characteristics specific to each of these four philosophers that the author minutely reconstructs.

Kant

The discussion of Kant's position has its origin in an important prompt by Paul Ricœur.³ – Does Kant belong or not belong to the tradition of theodicy? The answer given by Ivaldo is that Kant does not renounce a theodicy *qua talis*, but reformulates it from the critical point of view, placing it in the sphere of practical rather than theoretical reason.

The analysis of Kant's position is carried out by tracing its evolution from the *Vorlesungen über die philosophische Religionslehre*, to the 1791 essay *Über das Mißlingen aller philosophischen Versuche in der Theodicee*, and then the fundamental formulation in *Ueber das radikale Böse in der menschlichen Natur* (1792). Highlighted in these parallels is Kant's accentuation on the reality of evil and the impossibility of the traditional arguments of theodicy. These cannot succeed in what they propose, namely: "to support the cause of God" (18). For either they lose sight of the reality of moral evil (*das Böse*) by reducing it to a natural evil (*das Übel*); it is then not possible to speak of imputability. Or they make God co-responsible for evil, so that he forfeits one or all of his fundamental attributes (goodness, omnipotence, justice). The critique of "doctrinal theodicy", however, is not meant to be an abolition of its goal, but leads to an

situazione epistemologica [...] analoga a quella elaborata nella Dialettica trascendentale nella prima *Critica*, dove la ragione teoretica non può dimostrare l'esistenza di Dio, ma nemmeno dimostrarne la non-esistenza. (25).

(epistemological situation [...] analogous to that elaborated in the Transcendental Dialectic of the first *Critique*, where theoretical reason cannot prove the existence of God, but neither can it prove his non-existence.)

This outcome results in a "negative wisdom" that opens a space for what is "authentic theodicy" in Kant's view. Ivaldo very appropriately baptizes this as "a theodicy of (pure) practical reason" (26). The latter model can be found in the biblical figure of Job. While undergoing the ineradicable reality of *mala mundi*, we turn to faith to make sense of events that our practical conscience – grounded in the categorical imperative – has to postulate. This, of course, is not a mere fideistic option, since it is not based on a selfish claim to happiness that the moral agent advances for himself. But it is a faith grounded in morality, that is to say, in the meaningfulness that moral action possesses for itself.

³ See Paul Ricœur, *Le mal. Un défi à la philosophie et à la théologie* (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1986).

Although this framework remains in the essay *On Radical Evil*, more attention is focused on the fundamentally evil nature of humanity. God is in no way to blame for this wickedness, since it depends on the *free activity* of the finite rational being. – This is the point where classical idealism first decisively supersedes the earlier tradition.

Moral evil “has its ontological root in freedom, which is freedom for the law and *against the law*” (42). The faculty of electing a maxim opposed to the categorical imperative (and thus fundamentally based on self-love) explains the tendency to evil that is present in human beings. But this derives from our freedom, which is not a foundation whose reason can be further demanded, thus imputing God of the tendency to evil.

L'uomo è un essere libero, ed è nella libertà che va ricercata la causa – non investigabile (*unerforschlich*) dall'intelletto e accessibile solo in una coscienza pratica – della tendenza al male nell'uomo. (42-43)

(Man is a free being, and it is in freedom that the cause – un-investigable (*unerforschlich*) to the intellect and accessible only in a practical conscience – of the tendency to evil in man is to be sought).

This conscience implies and makes it possible to think that mankind nevertheless must (and therefore *can*) act in such a way as to produce a “revolution” in this tendency. This ultimately grants us hope for a *höhere Mitwirkung* (higher cooperation) that would make one’s work for the good perfect (according precisely to the model of Job, so that the “religious horizon” is necessarily summoned at the end of the moral discourse).

Fichte

Ivaldo next sets out Fichte’s position in the *System der Sittenlehre* (1798), a work in which the German philosopher deals – both explicitly and implicitly – with the Kantian elaboration of evil. In fact, Fichte starts exactly from Kant’s result: “there is no necessity *of nature* (physical and metaphysical) that produces moral evil, nor any possibility of erasing its imputability to human *freedom*” (47).

Fichte provides a transcendental foundation for this fact in his *System of Ethics*. It is based on the genetic deduction of the categorical nature of the imperative (understood as the tendency to *Selbständigkeit*, autonomy) from a multiplicity of impulses. This takes place through the activity of consciousness which consists in reflection. The argumentative structure enacted by Fichte excludes on principle that the origin of evil is to be found in human nature rather than in freedom. This is because any choice to act that follows an impulse rather than duty is mediated by what Fichte calls “formal freedom.” The positing of an impulse as impulse in fact elects the impulse itself as the motive for one’s action.

The satisfaction of an impulse (= happiness) is not in itself immoral, but becomes so when it is elected by reflection in a maxim as a principle:

L'errore morale non consiste nella soddisfazione selettiva della ricerca della felicità, ma nel fare di essa il principio determinante dell'agire, principio che è invece la legge morale. (52)

(Moral error does not consist in the selective satisfaction of the pursuit of happiness, but in making it the determining principle of action, a principle which is instead the moral law.)

Evil action is never principally inevitable, since it never results from impulses alone but from an assent that the will gives to them, preferring them to the command of the law. "The non-use of freedom (*Nichtgebrauch*) is (already) guilt, or at least is the basis of the election of evil maxims" (53).

For Fichte (this was already the case for Erhard) an evil will is not possible in principle, i.e., that a person chooses evil with the clear consciousness that it is evil. Where, therefore, does the possibility of a freedom arise that decides on a principle other than the categorical imperative as the motive for its action? This arises from a "darkening" of the moral conscience, which "through lack of reflection and attention" becomes *accustomed* to acting according to selfish principles. It takes exception to the life of the moral principle, which it nevertheless still recognizes. Accordingly, for Fichte the "awareness of duty is itself duty", and the moral agent must accustom itself to strengthening its power to reflect on duty and always remember it on every occasion of action (this is the task of an *ascetic*). "The culture of the conscience reflecting on determined and concrete duty is the remedy for the self-deception that presents itself as a specific embodiment of evil" (59).

If this is the case, how can it make sense to speak of radical evil? It does in truth make sense because the tendency to forget one's duty is not something contingent but represents a characteristic of the human being as a natural being. Just as moral action qualifies as a striving (*Streben*), there is likewise present in it a "force of inertia" that Fichte designates as a "laziness" with respect to the exercise of reflection. All the other vices spring from this. Thus "moral evil is promoted by an active resistance to reflection that obscures the consciousness of duty" (64). This is not a direct action of nature on freedom, since that would be a dogmatic concept of the relationship between the I and the world. Rather, it is a renunciation of freedom to itself; that is, the impulse is still freely chosen as the motive for action. The horizon of improvement with respect to that laziness which corrupts the human will is not only individual, but collective, as is evidenced by Fichte's attention to the problem of education. This is because the collective is situated on the same horizon in which consciousness arises. That is to say, through the *summons*

(*Aufforderung*) of another consciousness and through mutual *recognition* (*Anerkennung*):

nessun io individuale sviluppa quel senso morale che è originariamente in lui, e si strappa dalla sua inerzia naturale, senza che almeno un altro io, un tu, liberamente lo inviti ad esercitarlo, attraverso la proposta [...] di una immagine concreta e positiva dell'ideale morale. (69)

(no individual I develops that moral sense which is originally in him, and is torn from its natural inertia, without at least another I, a 'you', freely inviting it to exercise it, through the proposal [...] of a concrete and positive image of the moral ideal.)

Hence, overcoming the selfishness on which evil acts are based corresponds first and foremost to the practice of inscribing one's individual action in a collectivity of free beings who act on each other without hindering one another's freedom.

Schelling

With Schelling (as well as later with Hegel) the level of discourse shifts to a more decidedly ontological level. Yet Ivaldo's challenge is to show how even in these two thinkers the understanding of evil is still essentially that of a position which is not to be enacted by freedom.

The Schellingian position is reconstructed by considering the (nonlinear) evolution of his thought in the transition from *Philosophie und Religion* (1804) to the *Philosophische Untersuchungen über das Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit* (1809). The philosophy of identity shows all its limitations in the first of these two works. This becomes obvious with the emergence of the problem of evil, which *Philosophie und Religion* manages to answer in a highly unsatisfactory way (cf. p. 88). Here the transition from the indistinct unity of the first principle to the multiplicity of experience is explained through the concept of a fall (*Abfall*): "the foundation of finite things is not a communication of reality, but a detachment from the one real" (76). The fall is possible only insofar as freedom grasps itself as something different from the absolute. It thus becomes the nothingness that is the multiplicity of the phenomena, a non-absolute. The cause of this fall is not to be found in the absolute, but in freedom seizing itself as something that subsists independently of the absolute. As is well known, Schelling points to the philosophy of Fichte as the thought that best explains the principle of this freedom, as the principle of everything finite. While Schelling entrusts himself with the task of constructing a more general system of the absolute that ultimately explains and integrates the system grounded in freedom (we will not enter here into the merits of Schelling's understanding of the *Wissenschaftslehre*). I-hood (*Ichheit*) is the ultimate point of estrangement from the absolute (or from God). Yet it is also what

enables a return toward it, so that the purpose of history consists precisely in this *odyssey* of freedom that must return to its origin.

It should not be surprising if the discussion so far seems to have little to do with the topic of evil. Ivaldo himself notes how the understanding of freedom in this 1804 work of Schelling appears as “an act that takes place according to an ontological, that is, metaphysical, rather than moral necessity” (80). But the standpoint actually changes in the later 1809 book; space is allotted for a more concrete understanding of the experience of evil. In fact, in the *Philosophical Inquiries*, freedom is explicitly conceived “as a faculty of good and evil, that is, as a power (*potestas*) of resolving itself for *both* opposites that exclude each other” (86). It is from this *possibility* that evil reveals itself as “the stumbling block” of all philosophy. Just like with Kant and Fichte, in Schelling the responsibility for the human being’s choice of evil is not borne by its sensibility (its nature), but by its *will*, its *spirit*. Conscious individuality is only conceivable as hinging on the decision for evil as well as for good. In other words, it can just as much recognize itself as separate from this principle, and thus return to dwell in the bosom of it, so to speak, as it can unduly arrogate its autonomy as a completed separation from God.

Questo capovolgimento del rapporto dei principi, questo disordine introdotto nel giusto rapporto fra centro e periferia (disordine adombrato analogicamente nella malattia), questo insorgere del volere particolare che si allontana da quel centro che è invece il luogo suo, è precisamente il male. (92)

(This reversal of the relation of principles, this disorder introduced into the proper relation between center and periphery (disorder shadowed analogically in sickness), this arising of the particular will that turns away from that center which is instead its own place, is precisely evil.)

A Kantian-like conception of fact emerges, whereby evil is essentially the result of a free subversion of the order of what *ought* to be. It is therefore the outcome of a real action that “overturns the order of creation” giving rise to a “false unity” (93). However, the *existence* of evil in this sense is included in Schelling’s discourse in the dynamics of the manifestation of the absolute. Of course, the ground of evil is not God, but without evil God’s love could not have been manifested. Despite the great appeal of Schelling’s speculative construction, Ivaldo nevertheless advances the doubt that this may in fact reproduce the *felix culpa* device typical of dogmatic theodicy (cf. p. 99).

Hegel

The treatment of evil in Hegel that interests Ivaldo is not the most well-known one contained in the *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte*. There it is

not difficult to recognize a “historicist theodicy” that *de facto* subsumes the reality of evil into the process of the absolute’s self-revelation. This is because even the “pursuit of selfish aims and particularistic purposes, which characterizes the actions of individuals in history, is finally always brought back and ‘redeemed’ in the historical-universal development of the spirit.” (103)

Ivaldo’s attention is turned instead to §§ 139-140 of the *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts* (1820), where the transition from *Moralität* to *Sittlichkeit* is discussed. Here we have, in analogy with the thinkers discussed above, a conception of evil as “inversion”. This is the dialectic that emerges once moral conscience (*Gewissen*) becomes self-conscious and universalizes itself, giving rise to a merely formal conscience of the good. Therefore, it can be said that for Hegel too

il male si presenta allorché la soggettività, cioè la libertà, si separa – come essa può – dal contenuto morale, se essa riduce il contenuto a parvenza, ponendo se stessa, la soggettività, al posto del contenuto. (109)

(evil arises when subjectivity, that is, freedom, separates itself – as it can – from moral content, if it reduces content to appearance, putting itself, subjectivity, in the place of content.)

In the sphere of morality, freedom is presented according to an ‘ambivalence’ that exposes it to the possibility of evil action. This possibility is only avoided with the transition to ethicity, when the formalism of our moral conscience that has separated the principle and the content of its action is finally overcome. However, Hegel also qualifies the origin of evil as a *Mysterium*, since its possibility lies in the necessity of the passage from nature to inwardness. Evil, in other words, preserves a disturbing aspect. For while responding to the logic of the absolute’s manifestation, it does so in a way that seems opposed to this goal. Insofar as the theater in which this evil takes place is moral life, it seems to retain a reality that cannot simply be resolved through speculation. “Evil is the obstinacy of subjectivity in the face of and against the universal; it is the arbitrary and guilty fixation of subjectivity in the opposition between particularity and universality” (113). *Hypocrisy* is the concrete figure in which this conception of evil is summed up. However, it is hard not to have the impression that the shift to ethicity marks a clear overcoming of the very possibility of evil on the path of the absolute spirit.

This treatment of evil in Hegel ends with an *excursus* on the theme of *forgiveness* in the *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (1807). This is precisely where this element (as an outcome of the dialectic between agent conscience and judging conscience) is indicated:

una pratica del riconoscimento diversa da quella, notissima, che passa per la lotta per la vita e per la morte fra il signore e il servo ospitata nella parte sulla

Autocoscienza. È una idea di riconoscimento come perdono reciproco, come vicendevole confessione del proprio esser-affetti dalla malvagità. (126)

(a practice of recognition different from the well-known one that passes through the struggle for life and death between the lord and the servant housed in the part on self-consciousness. It is an idea of recognition as mutual forgiveness, as a mutual confession that one is affected by wickedness.)

All in all, Ivaldo's text has the merit of showing with great expertise and lucidity how the problem of evil is addressed in a number of crucial places in the works of Kant, Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel. Perhaps it is not as successful in showing how in all four thinkers an *equal* capacity of holding firm with regard to the *reality* of evil can be discerned along with the need for overcoming it. – The transition from *transcendental* idealism to *absolute* idealism seems to confirm, at least in part, a certain reading whereby the latter would tend rather to overcome evil as a mere *moment* in the self-manifestation of the absolute.

Maurizio Maria Malimpensa
Università degli Studi di Ferrara

III. BULLETIN

1. SOCIETIES AND ASSOCIATIONS

The North American Fichte Society

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

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

Previous and Forthcoming Publications of the North American Fichte Society

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

Publishing Co. under the title *Rights, Bodies and Recognition: New Essays on Fichte's Foundations of Natural Right*. The selected proceedings of the Montréal conference have been published by Northwestern University Press under the title *After Jena: New Essays on Fichte's Later Philosophy*. The proceedings of the Chicago conference, devoted to Fichte's *System of Ethics*, were published in a special double issue of the journal *Philosophy Today*. The selected proceedings of the Vienna conference were published by de Gruyter under the title *Fichte and the Phenomenological Tradition*, and those of the Philadelphia conference by Rodopi under the title *Fichte, German Idealism, and Early Romanticism*. Proceedings of the Lisbon conference were published by SUNY Press under the title *Fichte's Vocation of Man: New Interpretative and Critical Essays* and those of the Quebec Conference were published in 2014 by Palgrave Macmillan under the title *Fichte and Transcendental Philosophy*. The proceedings of the Salt Lake City conference were published in 2016 by SUNY Press as *Fichte's Addresses to the German Nation Reconsidered*, while those of the Seoul conference appeared in 2018 in issues 16 & 17 of the online journal *Revista de Estud(i)os sobre Fichte*. The proceedings of the fifteenth meeting of the NAFS at Xavier University in Cincinnati will appear in February 2024 with SUNY Press as *Fichte's 1804 Wissenschaftslehre: Essays on the 'Science of Knowing'*.

Die Internationale Johann Gottlieb Fichte-Gesellschaft

The Internationale Johann Gottlieb Fichte-Gesellschaft (IFG) was founded in December of 1987 in the Federal Republic of Germany “in partnership with the Japanese Fichte Society.” The current board of directors (elected at the 2022 Fichte Congress in Leipzig) are: Petra Lohmann (President), Rainer Schäfer, Hitoshi Minobi, Jimena Solé, and Gesa Wellmann. The IFG sponsors an International Fichte Congress every third year. The next Congress will be held in Ferrara, Italy, in September 2025 (See the Call for Papers below). Website: <http://www.fichte-gesellschaft.org>

Fichte-Studien

Fichte-Studien. Beiträge zur Geschichte und Systematik der Transzendentalphilosophie is a publication founded in 1990 by the Internationale J.G. Fichte-Gesellschaft. The current editors are Matteo Vincenzo d'Alfonso and Alexander Schnell. *Fichte-Studien* is published by Brill:

<https://brill.com/view/journals/fis/fis-overview.xml?contents=journaltoc>

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

Fichte Society of Japan

The Fichte Society of Japan is the oldest such association in the world. It was founded on 19 May 1985. Its website is: <http://fichte-jp.org/>

連絡先 (Contact) E-Mail: J.G.Fichte.JP@gmail.com

Board members of the Fichte Society of Japan (Mar 2022-Feb 2025):

President: Yoichiro Ohashi

Standing committee members: Yukio Irie, Hitoshi Minobe, Masahiko Yuasa

Committee members: Yujin Itabashi, Hiroaki Uchida, Katsuaki Okada, Yoshinori Katsunishi, Chukei Kumamoto, Masafumi Sakurai, Takao Sugita, Nobukuni Suzuki, Nobuhiro Tabata, Chinone Grüneberg, Maiko Tsuji, Akitoshi Nakagawa, Takashi Hamano, Yasuyuki Funaba, Masahiro Yamaguchi, Michihito Yoshime.

Accounting auditor: Takao Ito, Aya Shoji

Secretary: Sambu Ozaki

Selection Committee for the Fichte Society of Japan Prize

Chairperson: Katsuaki Okada

Committee members: Yukio Irie, Hiroaki Uchida, Chukei Kumamoto, Takao Sugita, Nobuhiro Tabata, Masahiro Yamaguchi, Masahiko Yuasa.

フィヒテ研究 (Japanese ‘Fichte-Studien’)

The Japanese Fichte Society publishes a journal: フィヒテ研究 (Japanese ‘Fichte-Studien’). The latest issue 31 (2023) is now available online:

http://fichte-jp.org/Fichte_Studien.htm

Editorial Committee for フィヒテ研究, the Japanese Fichte Studies

Chairperson: Yasuyuki Funaba

Committee members: Yujin Itabashi, Yoshinori Katsunishi, Masafumi Sakurai, Chinone Grüneberg, Maiko Tsuji, Takashi Hamano, Hitoshi Minobe, Michihito Yoshime.

Groupe d'Études Fichtéennes de Langue Française

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

Rete Italiana della Ricerca su Fichte

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

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

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

Red Ibérica de Estudios Fichteanos (RIEF)

El interés por la obra de Fichte, su estudio y la investigación filosófica en diálogo con su pensamiento, han tenido en los últimos años un gran desarrollo. También entre nosotros, en el ámbito portugués y español, se ha asistido a un número creciente de iniciativas y de trabajos de investigación en este campo. Ha faltado, sin embargo, durante mucho tiempo un contacto más continuo, una estrecha colaboración y un intenso intercambio de ideas entre los distintos investigadores interesados en la obra de Fichte en la península ibérica. Nos ha parecido por eso que era oportuno constituir una Red Ibérica de Estudios Fichteanos (RIEF). El objetivo es promover e intensificar la investigación filosófica en torno al

pensamiento de Fichte, así como la colaboración y el intercambio entre los investigadores que trabajamos en este campo. Lo que nos une es el interés por la obra filosófica de Fichte, por los problemas que plantea, los debates filosóficos en los que sigue teniendo relevancia y la convicción de que la conjugación de esfuerzos, el diálogo y el intercambio de ideas pueden constituir una fuente inestimable apoyo mutuo, de enriquecimiento y de clarificación. Son bienvenidos todos los aquellos que compartan este planteamiento y deseen trabajar e investigar en la RIEF. Contacto: Salvio Turro Tomas salvi.turro@ub.edu Faustino Oncina Faustino.oncina@uv.es Oscar Cubo Oscar.cubo@uv.es

Asociación Latinoamericana de Estudios sobre Fichte (ALEF)

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

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

Die 2010 gegründete “Asociación Latinoamericana de Estudios sobre Fichte” (ALEF) hat zum Ziel, die Fichte-Forschung in Lateinamerika zu fördern und deren Resultate und Diskussionen zu verbreiten. Seit 2011 haben bereits vier Kongresse der ALEF stattgefunden, zuletzt 2016 in Buenos Aires. Website: <https://alef.hypotheses.org>

Die ALEF ist am Projekt Fichte Online der Europhilosophie beteiligt. Und gibt die Zeitschrift *Revista Estud(i)os sobre Fichte* heraus:

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

Founded in 2010 as a common initiative of professors and students from different universities in Latin America, the Latin American Association of Fichte Studies (ALEF) aims to be a place of meeting, exchange and discussion that promotes research on Fichte’s philosophy within the region. ALEF is affiliated with the Internationale Johann Gottlieb Fichte-Gesellschaft, and coordinates its tasks with the Iberian Network of Fichte Studies. Among its main goals are the organization of seminars, courses and congresses all over Latin America, as well as the publication and translation of Fichte’s works into Spanish and Portuguese as well as monographs and articles by Latin American specialists. Website: <https://alef.hypotheses.org>

ALEF publishes the academic journal: *Revista de Estud(i)os sobre Fichte*:

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

Internationales Fichte-Forschungszentrum (IFF)

Das Internationale Johann-Gottlieb-Fichte-Forschungszentrum (IFF) an der Bergischen Universität Wuppertal setzt es sich zum Ziel, die Fichte-Forschung in Deutschland sichtbar zu verorten und sich von dort aus in die verschiedenen internationalen Netzwerke einzufügen. Hierdurch soll an die traditionsreiche Vergangenheit der Fichte-Forschung an der Bergischen Universität Wuppertal angeknüpft werden. Diese wurde von Prof. Wolfgang Janke begründet, der von 1975 bis 1993 einen der beiden ersten Lehrstühle am Philosophischen Seminar innehatte. Die nationale und internationale Fichte-Forschung steht noch immer vor der Aufgabe, die seit 2012 abgeschlossene monumentale 42-bändige kritische Gesamtausgabe zu kartieren und zu erarbeiten. Dabei sucht sie einerseits ein Bild der Fichte'schen Philosophie in ihrer inneren Entwicklung und eigenen Dynamik zu geben und andererseits daraus eine philosophische Grundstruktur zu bestimmen, die es erlaubt, die Bedeutung dieses Denkens für die Gegenwart und den aktuellen Diskurs, in dem nach wie vor die Wendung zur Sprache sowie die Kritik der Subjektivität zentrale Paradigmen sind, zu präsentieren. Die Arbeit am IFF verschreibt sich daher der Förderung des Denkens und Wirkens Fichtes im Kontext seiner Zeit und im Austausch mit den Protagonisten der Klassischen Deutschen Philosophie. Ein Hauptaugenmerk soll auf seine Wirkung auf die zeitgenössische Philosophie gelegt werden. Dabei steht der Austausch und Vernetzung mit den internationalen Forscherinnen und Forschern im Vordergrund. Regelmäßig werden hierzu Workshops, Ateliers und Seminare veranstaltet, die diese Internationalität widerspiegeln sollen. Ein langfristig verfolgtes Ziel ist die Digitalisierung der Fichte Gesamtausgabe und die Bereitstellung von Forschungs- und Sekundärliteratur online. Darüber hinaus ist das ZFF auch Mitausrichter der jährlichen internationalen Tagungen im Barock-Schloss Rammenau, die jedes Jahr an Fichtes Geburtstag in dessen Geburtsort stattfinden.

Direktor: Prof. Dr. Alexander Schnell (Bergische Universität Wuppertal)
Geschäftsführer: 1. Dr. Thomas Kisser (Bergische Universität Wuppertal)
2. Prof. Dr. Petra Lohmann (Universität Siegen)

Website: <https://itp-buw.de/2021/06/01/internationales-fichte-forschungszentrum-iff/>

Publikationsorgan des IFF ist die Editionsreihe "Deutsche Idealismen" in der Online-Plattform "EuroPhilosophie Editions":

<https://books.openedition.org/europhilosophie/91>

2. CFPS and CONFERENCES

CALL FOR PAPERS

XIIth Congress of the Internationale Johann Gottlieb Fichte-Gesellschaft

Philosophy as Art: Imagination, Life, and System

Ferrara, Italy, 17– 20 September 2025

<http://www.fichte-gesellschaft.org/internationale-j-g-fichte-gesellschaft/>

‘Art’ is a key concept in Fichte’s work; it applies in a characteristic and original way to almost every area of his philosophy. In systematic terms, the notion of the “art of philosophizing” (WL-1804) is a fundamental prerequisite for understanding and carrying out the *Wissenschaftslehre*. This is closely related to the imagination, which the philosopher uses to imaginatively insert him or herself into the development of the foundation of consciousness. In the *Sittenlehre*, wisdom is assigned to ‘art’ rather than to science (SL-1798); similarly, in the *Rechtslehre*, we become certain of our own body by means of an art (GNR-1796). In the *Staatslehre*, drawing closer to the rational state [*Vernunftstaat*] is achieved by means of the ‘art of reason’ [*Kunst der Vernunft*]. From the perspective of the philosophy of history, the development of human life is completed in the “epoch of the art of reason” (GgW-1800). Furthermore, Fichte makes innumerable references to the fine arts and the specific talents of the artist, which he integrates into his philosophy beginning in the Jena period, and which, in later writings, he repeatedly contrasts with the philosopher’s art of reason and its object, i.e. the *Wissenschaftslehre* (BdG-1811).

The enthusiastic approval that the *Wissenschaftslehre* received among Fichte’s contemporaries and in the early Romantic period was likely due in no small part to the inspiring force the *Wissenschaftslehre* had insofar as it was the product of an art of reason. Thus, within the framework of its 12th congress, the International Johann Gottlieb Fichte Society invites contributions that explore the ways, areas of application, and methods of the art of reason in Fichte’s philosophy.

Call for Papers / Panels

The congresses of the International Johann Gottlieb Fichte Society are aimed at all those who research on Fichte and his philosophy. Contributions can provisionally be assigned to the following sections:

- Philosophy as an art of reason (*Wissenschaftslehre*)
- Forms and manifestations of the art of reason in various disciplines (natural science, morality, law, philosophy of religion, philosophy of history)
- Approaches to aesthetics as a sub-discipline of *Wissenschaftslehre* / the place and function of art and aesthetics
- Fichte's concept of art
- On the role of imagination, oscillating activity, and productive imagination in the *Wissenschaftslehre*
- Image and concept
- Aesthetic education in Fichte
- Philosophy as the art of living (popular philosophy)
- The art of speech
- Fichte and the arts
- On the relationship between the scholar and the artist
- Fichte's position on art and aesthetics in a contemporary context (Kant, Schiller, Schelling, Hegel)
- Fichte's concept of art in the context of current debates
 - The influence of the *Wissenschaftslehre* on art (literature, music, architecture, painting)
 - Fichte and Romanticism (Schleiermacher, Fr. Schlegel, Tieck, Novalis...)
- The titles of the sections may still be adapted or extended.

In addition to individual registrations, group registrations (research groups, panels) are also welcome.

The languages of the congress are German, English, and French. Please send abstracts of approx. 3,000 characters together with a short CV by e-mail to the following address: FichteKongressferrara@fichte-gesellschaft.org

Deadline for Abstracts: 15 September 2024

Congress fees: Members of the International Fichte Society: regular 70 EUR, students 40 EUR; Non-members: regular 120 EUR, students 70 EUR

For students and young researchers, the organizers will seek to obtain cost subsidies. The congress will be held in cooperation between the International Fichte Society, the **Università degli Studi di Ferrara** and the **Universität Siegen**.

Further information about the congress will be provided regularly on the homepage of the International Johann Gottlieb Fichte Society: <http://www.fichte-gesellschaft.org>

Prof. Dr. Petra Lohmann, Siegen

Prof. Dr. Matteo d'Alfonso, Ferrara

XII. Kongress der Internationalen Johann Gottlieb Fichte-Gesellschaft

Philosophie als Kunst – Imagination. Leben. System

Ferrara, 17.– 20. September 2025

<http://www.fichte-gesellschaft.org/internationale-j-g-fichte-gesellschaft/>

„Kunst“ ist ein Schlüsselbegriff bei Fichte, der in fast allen Bereichen seiner Philosophie eine charakteristische und originelle Anwendung findet. In systematischer Hinsicht ist die Rede von der „Kunst zu Philosophieren“ (WL-1804) eine grundlegende Voraussetzung des Verständnisses und der Durchführung der Wissenschaftslehre. Die „Kunst zu Philosophieren“ hängt in der Wissenschaftslehre eng mit der Imagination zusammen, mit der sich der Philosoph in die Entwicklung des Grundes allen Bewusstseins ‚hineinbildet‘. In der *Sittenlehre* wird die Weisheit eher der „Kunst“ als der Wissenschaft (SL-1798) zugeordnet und ganz ähnlich ist es in der *Rechtslehre* ebenfalls eine Kunst, mit der wir uns unseres eigenen Leibes vergewissern (GNR-1796). Im *Geschlossenen Handelsstaat* verdankt sich die Annäherung an den Vernunftstaat der „Kunst der Vernunft“.

Aus geschichtsphilosophischer Perspektive vollendet sich die Entwicklung des menschlichen Lebens in der „Epoche der Vernunft-Kunst“ (GgW-1800). Hinzu kommen unzählige Hinweise auf die schönen Künste und das spezifische Talent des Künstlers, die Fichte bereits seit seiner Jenaer Zeit in seine Philosophie integrierte und die er auch in späteren Schriften immer wieder mit der Vernunftkunst des Philosophen und dessen Gegenstand, d.i. Wissenschaftslehre, kontrastierte (BdG-1811). Die enthusiastische Zustimmung, die die Wissenschaftslehre unter Fichtes Zeitgenossen und in der Frühromantik erfuhr, dürfte sich nicht zuletzt auf die inspirierende Kraft, die von der Wissenschaftslehre als Produkt einer Vernunftkunst ausging, zurückführen lassen. Im Rahmen ihres XII. Kongresses möchte die Internationale Johann Gottlieb Fichte-Gesellschaft dazu einladen, Weisen, Anwendungsgebiete und Methoden der Vernunftkunst in Fichtes Philosophie nachzugehen.

Call for Papers / Panels

Die Kongresse der Internationalen Johann Gottlieb Fichte-Gesellschaft wenden sich an alle, die sich mit wissenschaftlichem Anspruch mit Fichte und dem durch ihn begründeten Denken befassen. Beiträge können vorläufig folgenden Sektionen zugeordnet werden:

- Philosophie als Vernunftkunst (Wissenschaftslehre)
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