

THE ROLE OF FEELING
IN FICHTE'S REJECTION OF THE THING IN ITSELF

In the Appendix to his dialogue on *David Hume*, Jacobi concludes his survey of Kant's transcendental philosophy with the following words: "The transcendental idealist must have the courage... to assert the strongest idealism that was ever professed,..."¹ It is certainly no exaggeration to say that Fichte's Doctrine of Science fulfilled this premonitory remark made in 1787. Fichte's development of transcendental philosophy as a radical brand of idealism has been, so we might argue, provoked at least in part by Jacobi's celebrated assessment of Kantian philosophy. This can be demonstrated in Fichte's texts, for example, in the *Second Introduction to the Doctrine of Science*, where he asserts his total agreement with the diagnosis of the main problem Jacobi encountered in his reading of the *Critique of Pure Reason*.² We will see how Fichte in his *Wissenschaftslehre* explicitly undertakes to solve this problem. First, however, we shall reiterate Jacobi's formulation.

We are all familiar with the following phrase from the Appendix: "...without that presupposition I could not enter into the system, but with it I could not stay within it."³ Nevertheless, we must pay close attention to the context in which this sentence is found. The "presupposition" in question does not refer simply to the thing in itself, as is usually thought; rather, it deals with the affecting object in general, the object that produces an "impression" (*Eindruck*) on sensibility. This is precisely the object which is the target of Jacobi's criticism of Kant in the Appendix. He cannot find a candidate to fill the role of

the affecting object in the first *Critique*; neither the thing in itself, nor the phenomenal object can do the job of explaining the origin of sensation. On the one hand, the thing in itself is not suited for this function because it is totally unknown and, in fact, unknowable. On the other hand, the empirical object qua appearance, since it is a mere representation, cannot be retained either, as we cannot conceive how a representation could give rise in the knowing subject to another representation such as sensation.⁴ The empirical object is itself nothing more than the product of a synthesis performed by the subject. In light of this, Jacobi cannot help but conclude that Kant's theoretical philosophy leads to the most blatant form of idealism: if the thing in itself has to be rejected from the start, then the remaining possibility, *i.e.* the phenomenal object, because of its purely subjective nature, leaves philosophy in the circle of representation and pure fantasy.

Although Fichte agrees with Jacobi on the lack of a conclusive answer in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, he cannot agree with the standpoint from which Jacobi leads his attack. In fact, the latter defends the perspective of ordinary life, which always amounts to some form of realism, while the former endeavours to solve the problem from a philosophical standpoint, which has to be, at least for Fichte, an uncompromising form of transcendental idealism. The following is an unequivocal exposition of the main tenets of this idealism:

Reason relies on itself absolutely; it is only for itself; for reason there is always only reason. Hence everything reason is must be grounded in itself, and can be explained only out of itself, not out of something outside it, to which it could not gain access without giving itself up.⁵

Fichte, despite the radicality of this formulation, nevertheless claims and has always

claimed to have remained faithful to the spirit of Kantianism. In fact, his reformulation of transcendental idealism contains, according to him, the truth of Kantianism. In what follows, I will refer mainly to Part 6 of the *Second Introduction* as well as to the *Doctrine of Science nova methodo* in order to demonstrate that Fichte directly addresses the issues raised by Jacobi: affection and receptivity. These are Kantian themes that Fichte is ready to deal with explicitly. Nevertheless, he cannot solve the problem of affection without bringing about some changes to the letter of Kantianism. My argument in this paper can be stated this way: Fichte meets the challenge of Jacobi by replacing "sensation" by "feeling" in the *Wissenschaftslehre*. Undoubtedly this looks like a very minor terminological change, but I would like to argue that it is of crucial importance. In fact, Fichte knows very well what he is doing when he puts "feeling" in the forefront in solving the problem of affection. We shall therefore first examine the meaning of both words in Kant and then analyse how the Fichtean conception of "feeling" allows for an explanation of receptivity without having to search for a cause outside the subject. We shall then be in a position to assess the value of this explanation as opposed to Kant's.

1- Kant on Sensation and Feeling

Kant's conception of sensibility involves two components: form and matter. Form, viz. space and time, is given *a priori* and belongs necessarily to the object, whereas matter is to be found in sensation, which always occurs *a posteriori*, since it

cannot be known in advance by the subject (like space and time). Sensation stems from the object, insofar as it affects sensibility. As Kant puts it, "the effect of an object upon the faculty of representation, so far as we are affected by it, is *sensation*."⁶ This definition clearly shows that affection, for Kant at least, results in a sensation. But what remains unclear is precisely what puzzled Jacobi: the sense in which the affecting "object" must be understood remains unspecified. In fact, there are passages in the *Critique of pure Reason* that relate sensation to the thing in itself, while others relate it to the phenomenal object.⁷

Be that as it may, it is important to notice here that sensation is not as "objective" as space and time (which are constitutive of every object for us), because even though sensations are essentially dependant upon the presence of the object, their particular quality (a sound, colour, taste, etc.) is conditioned by the sensibility of each individual. As secondary qualities (I employ the term loosely), sensations involve a subjective character, which Kant is ready to acknowledge.

Colours are not properties of the bodies of the intuition of which they are attached, but only modifications of the sense of sight, which is affected in a certain manner by light. Space, on the other hand, as condition of outer objects, necessarily belongs to their appearance or intuition. Taste and colours are not necessary conditions under which alone objects can be for us objects of the senses.⁸

But although Kant recognizes the mediating role of the senses in the configuration of the secondary qualities, making them in a certain way "subjective", he maintains the essential link that relates sensations to the object that has caused them, so that in another sense they may very well be declared "objective". This becomes an important issue for Kant when he feels obliged in the *Critique of Judgment* to contrast more sharply sensation and

feeling than he has previously. Feeling amounts to two things: pleasure and pain. Hence, feelings do no more than express the internal state of the subject. Sensations, on the other hand, are of an infinite variety and depict the mediated influence of affecting objects on the subject. For this reason, Kant considers them objective, when compared with feelings, which are exclusively subjective.

Now in the above definition the word *sensation* is used to denote an *objective* representation of sense; and, to avoid continually running the risk of misinterpretation, we shall call that which must always remain *purely subjective*, and is absolutely incapable of forming a representation of an object, by the familiar name of *feeling*.⁹

Kant goes on to illustrate this distinction with the example of the "green meadows". He claims that we must distinguish the sensation of "green" as an objective representation related to the meadows, from the subjective (aesthetic) impression that it makes on the subject (agreeableness), which is a "feeling". This amounts to saying that sensation represents a property of the object (meadows), while the feeling of pleasure raised by the colour mirrors nothing more than the inner state of the subject. On the basis of these definitions, we can now evaluate the terminological changes introduced by Fichte.

2- Fichte on Feeling and Sensation

I have already indicated that Fichte attempts to modify Kant's terminology in order to radicalize his transcendental idealism. This means that from now on, no "external influence" from an object can be exerted on the knowing subject, as otherwise the subject would itself run the risk of becoming an object.¹⁰ As in Leibniz'

philosophy, there is no such thing as a real influence from outside the monad. For Fichte, if there are to be secondary qualities, they will have to be integrated into the subject. Therefore, he decides to call them, against Kant's specifications, "feelings". He makes this move because he well knows that a feeling is by definition purely subjective. But this suits his aims perfectly. For he is clearly acquainted with the developments of the *Critique of Judgement* just alluded to.¹¹ By calling what Kant considered to be sensations feelings, he deliberately attempts to break the link with the so-called external object.

Later on we will see that what we have just described is precisely what is given through immediate feeling, e.g.: red, blue, sweet, sour. Feelings are purely subjective. One cannot communicate what "red", "sweet", "bitter", etc., are by means of concepts, ...¹²

Because Fichte wants to explicitly address the Kantian theme of receptivity, he is obliged to direct his efforts toward the problem of the "given" in knowledge. While the colour "green" in Kant's conception is provided by an *objective* sensation, in Fichte the given takes the form of an "immediate feeling". In the *WL nova methodo*, for instance, it becomes clear that feeling is now to replace the Kantian sensation. It is the "manifold of feeling" that now assumes the task of providing the "material" (*Stoff*) for concept formation.¹³ Fichte even attributes an intensive magnitude to feeling, in much the same way as Kant did for sensation in his principle on the Anticipations of Perception.¹⁴ It is obvious that the intensity of the feeling does not express any kind of pressure applied to the senses by an external object. On the contrary, the intensive magnitude of a feeling bears witness to the "limited state" (*Beschränktheit*) of the I. This immediate feeling is nothing more than a constraint imposed from within upon the freedom of the I. We shall

see that such an immediate feeling is irreducible in Fichte, and that it is practically impossible to explain it further.

While Fichte explains the limited state of the I which results in feeling in the *Second Introduction to the Doctrine of Science*, he takes the occasion to openly express his disagreement with Kant's terminology:

The determinate character of my limitation manifests itself as a limitation of my practical power (...) This determinate limitation is immediately perceived as a *feeling*: sweet, red, cold, etc. (I prefer the name 'feeling' to Kant's *sensation*, for it becomes a sensation only when it has been related to an object by means of an act of thinking.)¹⁵

The deliberateness of Fichte's shift in terminology appears as clearly as possible, however one also notices that Fichte is not ready to completely abandon the concept of "sensation". One is allowed to continue to use this word, but only in the context of an "object" which we first gain access to through a "concept". The *WL nova methodo* amply demonstrates that the secondary qualities experienced in the immediate feeling are just a first step in the process of knowledge. In fact, (here Fichte wants to remain true to the copernican revolution) the object is not given in advance, it must be synthesised on the basis of concepts and intuitions. What Fichte says about the Kantian concept of sensation is that this term can only be employed to refer to a property of a constructed object. But before the construction of this object, the colour green cannot be said to come from the object "meadows", for the simple reason that the latter is not yet an object that can have properties. At the beginning of the process of knowledge, the colour "green" is instead an immediate feeling, that is, an inner accident of the knowing subject. In other words, as long as green expresses a certain limitation of the I, it is a

feeling, but when it is later transposed onto an object constituted by the knowing subject, the colour green becomes a sensation, i.e., a property of the object "meadows".¹⁶ We can now better understand why Fichte could agree with Jacobi that neither of the two parts of the alternative offered by the *Critique of Pure Reason* can be accepted as satisfactory. With regard to the first branch of the dilemma, the thing in itself is a pure absurdity for Fichte and it deserves no more attention: an object that we are obliged to *think*, but that is simultaneously said to have no relation to the thinking subject is utter nonsense.¹⁷ Alternatively, the "empirical object" singled out by Jacobi as the other possible explanation of sensation cannot make the origin of the matter of experience intelligible either, simply because the empirical object, according to Kant's own explicit conception, is not given from the start, but construed according to necessary rules in the subject. Therefore, Fichte cannot attribute, any more than Jacobi could, the origin of the matter of experience to any kind of object within the Kantian framework, be it a thing in itself or a phenomenal object, but must rather attribute it to the subject itself by discovering in it an originally given manifold of feelings.

3- Beck, Fichte and Kant

After having outlined his own solution to the problem of affection in the *Second Introduction*, Fichte proceeds by criticizing Jacob Sigismund Beck for not having taken seriously enough the problem of the real basis of our knowledge of objects. It is one thing to explain the laws of the constitution of an object with the help of the categories

(like Beck), it is quite another to solve the problem of the givenness of its raw material.

In fact, Beck has simply "skipped" (*übergehen*) this last issue, making his idealism "transcendent".

Forgetting to take into account the role of original feeling leads to an unfounded transcendent idealism and to an incomplete philosophy which is unable to account for the purely sensible predicates of objects. Beck, it seems to me, has fallen into this trap...¹⁸

In his *Einzig Möglicher Standpunkt, aus welchem die Kritische Philosophie beurteilt werden muss*, Beck has forgotten to inquire further about the predicates of the object immediately related to sensation. For Fichte, this leaves him with only one half of critical philosophy.¹⁹ In a famous letter to Kant dating from June 1797, Beck deals extensively with this issue, which has been brought to his attention by Jacobi's Appendix to the *David Hume* dialogue.²⁰ As we know, Beck will not receive a formal answer from Kant in this regard, but in his letter Beck already specifies his preference. If, for the affecting object, one has to choose between the thing in itself and the appearance, then Beck does not hesitate to pick the latter. This is the surest way to keep Kantianism from falling prey to dogmatism. Fichte himself is ready to acknowledge that this move is of great importance if transcendental idealism is to be recognised as the only coherent form of philosophy. But Beck's attempt stops half way, simply because he refuses to apply the "principle of reason" far enough and to question the origin of the predicates of sensation.²¹ In so doing, Beck implicitly attributes the origin of the "existence of things" to mere fantasy (*Einbildung*), transforming in the eyes of Fichte the whole of experience into a mere illusion (*Schein*).²² This is exactly the way Jacobi portrayed idealism at the end of his Appendix, arguing that transcendental philosophy necessarily

culminates in speculative egoism. This is also the kind of transcendent idealism that Fichte wants to keep away from by further pursuing the question concerning the source of the material of sensibility.

At the beginning of both his *Introductions to the Doctrine of Science* from 1797, Fichte claims that the aim of every philosophy is to offer an *explanation* of the representations in us that are accompanied by a feeling of necessity.²³ Necessity here refers to the fact that the I is a free being unconsciously submitted to the laws of intelligence. The role of philosophy is to unearth these laws, providing in this fashion an explanation of what could at first only be brought about by a feeling. In fact, the philosophy of Fichte satisfies this requirement in many ways. For example, §15 of the *System of Morals* gives an explanation of two philosophically very important kinds of feeling: on the one hand, the "aesthetic feeling" comes from the unexpected satisfaction of a drive, and, on the other hand, the feeling of certainty which lies at the center of the theory of truth comes from the "coincidence (*Übereinstimmung*) of the empirical I with the pure one".²⁴ These are clear cases of an explanation of the occurrence of a feeling in the I. Actually Fichte has recourse to a very wide variety of feelings in his texts and one must admit that they do not all become the object of an explanation. It remains to be seen then if the immediate feeling of colours, tastes, etc. themselves are capable of receiving an explanation, or rather if they do not themselves count as the last word in an explanation.

Leaving aside these "immediate feelings" for a moment, we can mention some other cases where the explanation itself consists in a feeling that is not, or cannot, be

further grounded or justified. We do not find these examples in Fichte's philosophy as such, but in his methodological writings. Fichte called them his "critical" works, whereas we would tend nowadays to describe them as metaphilosophical.²⁵ Hence, in the *First Introduction* it becomes clear that the choice between the only two possible philosophical systems (idealism and dogmatism) is simply a matter of feeling, the feeling of one's own freedom, or the feeling of one's dependency upon pre-existing things.²⁶ The same irreducibility holds for the "obscure feeling" that serves as a guiding thread for the philosopher in the elaboration by trial and error of the true system of philosophy. The latter has no choice but to rely on these feelings since there are no rules prescribed in advance for philosophy. Another case of unexplained feeling, also mentioned in the *Programmschrift* of 1794, is found in the fact that a feeling can effectively set on the right track a line of reasoning in which a mistake was inadvertently introduced.²⁷

What about the case of the immediate and primary feelings that are the secondary qualities? They certainly do not pertain to metaphilosophical considerations, rather they belong to the Doctrine of Science as such. Thus we have to ask the question: are these feelings the *explanans* or the *explanandum*? And if the latter is the case, does it suffice, in order to ground these feelings, to attribute them to a limitation of the I? If these subjective feelings explain the origin of the sensible properties of the object of knowledge, do they really take the reader further than did Beck, who did not raise this question? Or, if we turn to a philosopher who exerted considerable influence on Fichte, does the recourse to immediate feelings provide a more satisfactory explanation than Salomon Maimon's thesis according to which the givenness corresponds to a certain

passivity of consciousness, whose degree can decrease infinitely?²⁸ It looks as though Fichte with his originary feelings reached an ultimate point that cannot be further explained and has to be acknowledged as such. Fichte's idealism seems to reach a limit, i.e. the absolute contingency of this givenness inside the I.

As we can see, the necessity of *some limitation of the I* has been derived from the very possibility of the I. The *specific determinacy* of this limitation is, however, not something that can be derived in this way; because, as we can also see, such determinacy is itself what provides the condition for the very possibility of all I-hood. Consequently, we have arrived at the point at which all deduction comes to an end. The determinacy in question appears to be something absolutely contingent and furnishes us with the *merely empirical* element in our cognition.²⁹

This is the final answer to the question that Beck has forgotten to ask, even though he stood so close to the Doctrine of Science. According to Fichte, "receptivity" and "affection", which are central Kantian issues, receive an adequate account when one recognises that the sum of feelings made possible by the limitedness of the I is something underivable.³⁰

If we return to Jacobi's dilemma, it becomes evident that Fichte could only escape it by getting deeper into the structure of the second alternative, that is to say, by grounding the explanation of the givenness in immediate feeling, and not in a phenomenal object-to-be. With regard to Kant's position concerning this dilemma, many readings are possible, and they are all supported by Kant's texts. But there is one formulation of his position on the origin of affection that bears striking resemblance to the way in which Fichte conceives the central task of philosophy mentioned earlier, namely explaining the representations in us that are accompanied by a feeling of necessity. The following passage is to be found in Kant's *Grounding for the Metaphysics*

of Morals. Here Kant describes the attitude proper to common understanding, but he insists that this way of interpreting experience is fundamentally sound. Let us see how he takes up Jacobi's first alternative, the thing in itself:

all representations that come to us without our choice [*ohne unsere Willkür*](such as those of the *senses*) enable us to know objects only as they *affect* us; what they may be in themselves remains unknown to us... Once this distinction is made (perhaps merely as a result of observing the difference between representations which are *given* to us from without and in which we are *passive* from those which we produce entirely from ourselves and in which we show our own activity), then there follows of itself that we must admit and assume that behind the appearances there is something else which is not appearance, namely, *things in themselves*. Inasmuch as we can never cognize them except as they *affect* us, we must admit that we can never come any nearer to them nor ever know what they are in themselves.³¹

To be sure, Fichte would tend to attribute this dogmatic stance to the Kantians rather than to Kant himself, if only because Kant is the one who has provided in his three *Critiques* the tools to build a perfectly consistent system of transcendental idealism. His own solution to the problem of affection appears to him to be the only way to bring Kant's critical philosophy to its fulfillment, without stopping half-way, like Beck. It becomes clear in this passage that Kant seriously considers an explanation of the representations "of the senses" based on the thing in itself. While sensations might very well express a limitation of the subject, they are nevertheless attributed to something outside it.

We have seen that the solution to the secondary qualities provided by Fichte totally fits within the framework of idealism. On this basis, he is led to recognise the pure contingency of the immediate feelings in the I. But we must admit that, in his own

way, Kant does the same. He too considers what he calls sensations to be "contingent", insofar as they are what bear witness to the existence of the object.³² However, to Jacobi's dismay, the explanation of affection in Kant gives rise to two readings: an empirical one, according to which it is the phenomenal object that produces the impression, and a transcendental one, which stipulates that it is the thing in itself that is ultimately responsible for the affection of the subject, as we have just seen. Without a doubt, for Aenesidemus-Schulze, the transcendental interpretation is inconsistent because it includes a metabasis in the use of the category of cause that, in the case of the thing in itself, cannot be properly schematised. It is not my aim here to argue that Kant in fact needs both readings (the empirical and the transcendental), that they are consequently not only compatible but also both necessary, and that the incoherence detected by Schulze in the use of the category of cause can be surmounted. But one thing is certain: the recognition of the contingency of sensation has led Kant to depart from a pure form of idealism.

Before going any further, we must ask what the word 'contingent' means as a philosophical term. Traditionally this adjective denotes what is not in itself necessary, what could have been otherwise than it is. In other words, for a being to be contingent means that it is not a *causa sui*. In this sense even Fichte's I is contingent. It is revealed to be finite since it has not created itself. The same goes for the immediate feeling within the I. Thus, for an immediate feeling to be contingent simply means that it is in need of an explanation that could point out what it depends on. However, as we have seen, Fichte claims that in this case contingency remains "absolute": no explanation

can be sought, because it is impossible to dig any deeper into the structure of the I. Yet it is always interesting when a philosopher addresses contingency, especially when this contingency is said to be absolute, *i.e.* "underivable". Once again, a comparison to Kant is highly instructive.

The question can now be raised: How could Kant afford not to claim that the contingency of sensation is absolute? To put it positively, how could he dare to push the questioning further? The answer might well be the following: In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, which consists of nothing else than a self-examination (*Selbstprüfung*) of the contribution of the subject to knowledge, Kant discovers that sensation cannot in any way stem from the activity of the subject, thus he feels entitled to search for an explanation in the object. In a similar manner, Fichte realises that it is impossible to conceive of the activity of the I without admitting a hindrance, this time originating *in* the subject itself: immediate feeling. In this sense, the limited state of the I must be considered as a central condition for its very possibility. Unlike Kant, Fichte cannot, in order to remain faithful to his idealism, search for a cause outside the I, nor can he attribute this hindrance to the activity of the I, since it renders this activity possible in the first place. No explanation for this limitation can be found, neither inside of nor outside of the I. And in the latter case, there is no use to appeal to an *alter ego*, for example, that would manifest itself to the I through an *Aufforderung* from another I. In his study of the *Anstoss* in the *Wissenschaftslehre* 1794-1795, Daniel Breazeale has convincingly established that the *Aufforderung* may not be identified with this 'check' (*Anstoss*) of the Not-I, that must rather be interpreted as constitutive of the inner structure of the I.³³ At

this stage in the constitution of the object, no appeal can be made to an external influence, not even that of another subject.

In the final analysis, we may conclude that Fichte, like Kant, cannot attribute the matter of experience to the inner activity of the I, but that, unlike Kant, he cannot conceive of it as being furnished by the object. Because of his system of transcendental idealism, he cannot acknowledge the presence of any autonomous object, that is, an object independent of the subject. This not only means that there is no object without a subject, but that the object totally relies on the subject for its essence as well as its existence. It is no wonder that Fichte totally agrees with Jacobi's condemnation of Kant's proposed solution to the problem of affection: neither the empirical *object* nor the *object* in itself can produce an impression on the subject. And in this last case, the object is discarded *per definitionem*: as an object *in itself*, it directly contradicts the fundamental premises of idealism.³⁴ So Fichte is left with immediate feelings as something underivable and originally foreign within the I. How can he then escape the ultimate consequence of idealism drawn by Jacobi: speculative egoism? This answer is provided only after the deduction of intersubjectivity, which comes at a later stage, has been accomplished.³⁵ Only then is it possible to speak of a shared world, of an objective world in the usual sense. But in such a commonly shared world, the object that is defined through a common language does not become an independent third term. It is still the product of the subject since in idealism the truth of the sensible world can only be found in the intelligible world, that is, the world of intelligence.

NOTES

1. F. H. Jacobi, »Ueber den transzendenten Idealismus« Beilage zu *David Hume über den Glauben, oder Idealismus und Realismus. Ein Gespräch*, in *Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi's Werke*, Band II (Leipzig: G. Fleischer, 1815), 310; trans. G. di Giovanni, Supplement "On transcendental Idealism", in F. H. Jacobi, *The Main Philosophical Writings and the Novel 'Allwill'* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994), 338. Cf. Daniel O. Dahlstrom, "Jacobi and Kant", in *Proceedings of the Eighth International Kant Congress*, Hoke Robinson (ed.), Volume I, Part 3 (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1995), 907-928.
2. Fichte, *Zweite Einleitung in die Wissenschaftslehre*, in *Fichtes Werke*, Band I (hereafter SW I), 481.
3. Jacobi, »Ueber den transzendenten Idealismus«, 304; trans., 336.
4. Jacobi, »Ueber den transzendenten Idealismus«, 301; trans., 335.
5. Fichte, *Zweite Einleitung...*, SW I, 474 (my translation); for the here mentioned position of Fichte toward Jacobi, see *ibid.*, 482-483, note.
6. Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, A 19-20/B 34.
7. For an example of the first case see *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, A 143/B 182; and for the second, A 166-168/B 207-209.
8. Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, A 28-29/B 45.
9. Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft* §3, Akademie Ausgabe, Band V (hereafter AK. V), 206; trans. James Creed Meredith, *The Critique of Judgement* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1952) 45, emphasis mine. [2021: See also Kant, *Metaphysik der Sitten*, AK VI, 211-212 n.]
10. Fichte, *Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo* (Kollegnachschrift K. Chr. Fr. Krause 1798/99), Erich Fuchs (ed.) (Hamburg: Meiner, 1994), 165-166, 170; trans. Daniel Breazeale, *Foundations of Transcendental Philosophy* (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 1992), 339: "All external influence is completely eliminated, for otherwise we would be dogmatists."
11. Fichte, *WL nova methodo*, 69; trans., 178. See also Fichte, *Vorlesung über Logik und Metaphysik SS 1797*, GA IV.1, 257: »Empfindung und Gefühl: ich bin ursprünglich beschränkt, das unmittelbare Empfinden dieser Beschränktheit ist Gefühl, insofern ich genöthigt werde ein beschränkendes durch productive Einbildungskraft zu setzen, in so fern

→ See also Fichte, *Die Bestimmung des Menschen*, SW II, 202-204. [note added in 2021 : According to Dieter Henrich, we cannot exclude a possible influence of Jacobi's 1792 edition of *Allwill* on Fichte's reassessment of the concept of sensation. See D. Henrich, *Between Kant and Hegel*, Cambridge, Mass./London, Harvard University Press, 2003, p. 117-119.]

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kann ich sagen, ich empfinde die Nothwendigkeit, etwas auser mir zu setzen, diess nennt Kant überhaupt Empfindung; er hat Gefühl für etwas anderes bestimmt; aber bei Empfindung ist immer das, dass man glaubt, man empfinde das Ding, man empfindet nur die Nothwendigkeit etwas auser uns zu setzen; das gemeinschaftl[iche]. kann nur aufgefasst werden *e. gr.* roth, grün p sage ich: das Kleid ist roth, so zeigt das, dass ich roth auch schon vorher denken konnte;...«

12. Fichte, *WL nova methodo*, 65, 116; trans., 171, 248.

13. Fichte, *WL nova methodo*, 77; trans., 189.

14. Fichte, *WL nova methodo*, 116; trans., 248.

15. Fichte, *Zweite Einleitung...*, SW I, 489-490; for this passage, I shall use the lengthy quote translated by Daniel Breazeale in his "Check or Checkmate? On the Finitude of the Fichtean Self" in *The Modern Subject. Conceptions of the Self in Classical German Philosophy*, K. Ameriks & D. Sturma (eds)(Albany: SUNY Press, 1995), 108-109, note 31.

16. Fichte, *WL nova methodo*, 83; trans., 196: "In this way we can explain the synthetic unification of the predicates derived from feeling with those derived from intuition -- which is otherwise inexplicable. I taste something sweet and posit the existence of a piece of sugar, and then I say, 'The sugar is sweet.' A feeling is here transferred to an object of intuition, and the two are united with each other in the same moment. {The object is not felt to be sweet; instead, what I actually feel to be sweet is myself. I feel that an object is present only insofar as I am engaged in intuiting.} See also *ibid.* 105; trans., 229. And Fichte, *Grundlage der gesamten Wissenschaftslehre*, SW I, 314.

17. Fichte, I, 483. Cf. *WL nova methodo*, 5; trans., 80.

18. Fichte, I, 490; trans., 109, note 34. See also *WL nova methodo*, 23, 27, 111; trans., 104, 109, 240.

19. Fichte, *Erste Einleitung in die Wissenschaftslehre*, SW I, 444, note.

20. Beck, Letter to Kant of the 20th of June 1797, in Kant, *Briefwechsel*, Otto Schöndörfer (ed.) (Hamburg: Meiner, 1972), 727-728. See further J. S. Beck, *Erläuternder Auszug aus den kritischen Schriften des Herrn Prof. Kant auf Anraten desselben*, Book III, *Einzig Möglicher Standpunkt, aus welchem die Kritische Philosophie beurteilt werden muss* (Riga: Hartnoch, 1796); trans. G. di Giovanni, *The Standpoint from which Critical Philosophy is to be judged*, in *Between Kant and Hegel*, 204-249.

21. Fichte, *Erste Einleitung...*, SW I, 441.

22. Fichte, *WL nova methodo*, 147; trans., 299.

23. Fichte, *Erste Einleitung...*, SW I, 433, and *Zweite Einleitung...*, SW I, 455; see also *WL nova methodo*, 12; trans., 88.

24. Fichte, *System der Sittenlehre*, SW IV, 167, 169.

25. Fichte, »Vorrede zur zweiten Ausgabe« (1798), *Über den Begriff der Wissenschaftslehre...*, SW I, 33-34.

26. Fichte, *Erste Einleitung...*, SW I, 433, emphasis mine: »Nun gibt es zwei Stufen der Menschheit; und im Fortgange unseres Geschlechts, ehe die letztere allgemein erstiegen ist, zwei Hauptgattungen von Menschen. Einige, die sich noch nicht zum vollen *Gefühl* ihrer Freiheit und absoluten Selbstständigkeit erhoben haben, finden sich selbst nur im Vorstellen der Dinge;... Das Princip der Dogmatiker ist Glaube an die Dinge, um ihrer selbst willen...« In the *Grundlage der gesamten Wissenschaftslehre*, SW I, 121, Fichte says of the dogmatist that he has a "feeling of the dependence" of his I. See also *WL nova methodo*, 15-16; trans., 92-93.

27. Fichte, *Über den Begriff der Wissenschaftslehre...*, SW I, 73 note and 78.

28. Salomon Maimon, *Versuch über die Transzendentalphilosophie* (Berlin: C. F. Voss, 1790), 82, 168, 412-413.

29. Fichte, *Zweite Einleitung...*, SW I, 489; trans. D. Breazeale, 108. See also *WL nova methodo*, 69; trans., 178: "The multiplicity of feelings cannot be deduced or derived from any higher {characteristic of the I}, for we have here reached the limit {of all consciousness}." See also *ibid.*, 74; trans., 184: "I am originally limited, and a manifold of feelings is also present within me from the start. I can do nothing to alter this fact, which conditions and makes possible my entire being, nor can I go beyond this; this is simply the point at which I find myself." See further, 161, 165-166; trans., 323, 330.

30. Fichte, *Zweite Einleitung...*, SW I, 490: »Diese ganze Bestimmtheit, sonach auch die durch sie mögliche Summe der Gefühle, ist anzunehmen *a priori*, d.i. absolut und ohne alles unser Zuthun bestimmt; sie ist die Kantische *Receptivität*, und ein besonderes aus ihr ist ihm eine *Affection*. Ohne sie ist allerdings das Bewusstsein unerklärbar.« The open question then is how far Fichte's practical philosophy can provide a more satisfactory answer to this theoretical problem.

31. Kant, *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*, AK. IV, 451; trans. James W. Ellington, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals* (Indianapolis & Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1981), 52, emphasis mine. In fact, Henry Allison finds this description so sophisticated that as a decisive step in the "deduction" of the principle of morality it could only convince someone who has already accepted the transcendental idealism outlined in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. See his *Kant's Theory of Freedom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 225.

By stressing the similarities between this formulation and the Fichtean thesis concerning the "representations accompanied by a feeling of necessity," I do not want to argue that there exists a direct relation between the two. Fichte might as well have been

inspired by Jacobi's *David Hume*, 173.

32. Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, A 160/B 199; cf. also A 225/B 272-273: »Das Postulat, die *Wirklichkeit* der Dinge zu erkennen, fordert *Wahrnehmung*, mithin *Empfindung*, deren man sich bewusst ist... Denn, dass der Begriff vor der Wahrnehmung vorhergeht, bedeutet dessen blosse Möglichkeit; die Wahrnehmung aber, die den Stoff zum Begriff hergibt, ist der einzige Charakter der Wirklichkeit.«

33. See note 16. 15.

34. It must be noticed that the reference to a thing in itself is not necessarily in Kant's opinion a reference to something absolute. On the contrary, he can very well conceive the thing in itself to be merely "contingent". *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* A 206/B 251-252.

35. See Fichte, *Grundlage des Naturrechts nach Principien der Wissenschaftslehre*, §6, SW III, 73.