

# **Fichte's Heritage to Agentialist**

## **Account of Self-Knowledge**

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## Abstract

One of the frequent criticisms leveled at Agentalist account of self-knowledge is its limited application. This means that there are forms of self-knowledge that cannot be explained by the version of deliberative self-knowledge, for instance: appetite or recalcitrant attitude.

Matthew Boyle, in his famous paper, *Two kinds of Self-knowledge*, tries to address the issue of limited application by appealing to Kant's ideas about two different sorts of self-knowledge. The knowledge in which we understand ourselves as passive being and the knowledge that we realize ourselves as active being. While the former self-knowledge shows us our sensation, the latter involves our thinking and judgements. Boyle also claims for a priority of the latter form over the former. This distinction between the two different states of self-knowledge relates to a much more fundamental question. In what context should consciousness itself be defined? Should we look at self-consciousness as a representation that is obtained objectively through introspection or an 'inward gaze'? Or should it be understood as a subject that refers to itself at the same time as producing an action?

Fichte opened a new path and explained that the attitude of all the predecessors towards the question of consciousness and self is based on the theory of reflection. According to this circular method, the subject 'I' can never be grasped, and we will eventually fall into the trap of assuming an objective 'I' instead of the subject 'I'. The simple form of the problem is that agency cannot be proved based on objective 'I'. The solution that Fichte finds was the pre-reflective theory of self-awareness.

I would propose that Fichte and his basic principle of *Science of Knowledge* can provide a stable and reliable foundation for Agentalists to defend the claim that active self-knowledge prior and pre-condition of the passive self-knowledge.

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## Introduction

This project's primary goal is to clear up some particular issues in contemporary epistemological discussion of self-knowledge, inspired by a period in the history of philosophy in which the issue of self-awareness and self-consciousness was predominant, the moments of German idealism. In epistemology, each individual's knowledge of his or her sensations, beliefs, and mental states is, as claimed, distinct from other form of knowledge. Some see this distinction in the fact that this type of knowledge is epistemically secure, some believe that in terms of how to obtain this knowledge (method), each person has privileged access to their own beliefs and mental states. Others have looked at the semantic aspect of the statements made about the truth of mental states and speak of a kind of first-person authority.

However, in Agentialist account of self-knowledge, the focus of this research, self-knowledge is not limited to mental states in which the subject seems to be in a passive state. Instead, Self-knowledge reflects the individual's agency in active situations that are related to one's beliefs and intentions. (Boyle 2009, Moran 2001, Bilgrami 2006) Kant influences almost the majority of Agentialists in distinguishing between the active and the passive self-knowledge.

Matthew Boyle, in his famous paper, *Two kinds of Self-knowledge*, starts his analysis in the Kantian framework by comparing the knowledge in which we understand ourselves as passive being and the knowledge that we realize ourselves as active being. While the former self-knowledge shows us our sensation, there latter involves our thinking and judgements.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew Boyle, "Two Kinds of self-knowledge", philosophy and phenomenological research, Vol. LXXVIII no. 1, January 2009

Richard Moran, in chapter four of his book *Authority and estrangement*, talks about the Kantian tradition that identifies consciousness's reflectivity with rational freedom.<sup>2</sup> Akeel Bilgrami, in his treatise on *Self-knowledge and Resentment*, identifies himself as a "transcendental idealist" about the topic of mental dispositions, which is a Kantian approach itself.<sup>3</sup>

One of the frequent criticisms levelled at Agentalist account is its limited application.<sup>4</sup> This means that this peculiar sort of activeness and rational agency cannot observe in other forms of self-knowledge. And this form of self-knowledge has a limited scope of application.

In this project, I try to show where the background of the discussion of the activity of self-knowledge comes from, and I deal with Kant's distinction between receptivity and spontaneity, 'I think' as a synthesizing representations and the role of apperception in the first chapter. The second part deals with how Fichte points to a fundamental flaw in his theories of reflection in self-knowledge, the critiques of Reinhold and Schulze, which provide the conceptual framework for Fichte's intellectual movement and eventually, how Fichte turns Kant's principle of spontaneity into change and reform into the first original idealistic principle of the *Science of knowledge*. Chapter fourth is devoted to the discussions of the Agentalists, especially to the problem which Boyle seeks to solve (limited application). Provide the conceptual framework to explain that all forms of self-knowledge are derived from the knowledge of the judgements. I will explain in the final chapter that the pre-

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<sup>2</sup> Richard Moran, *Authority and estrangement- an essay on self-knowledge*, Princeton University Press, 2001. P. 138.

<sup>3</sup> Akeel Bilgrmi, *Self-knowledge and Resentment*, Harvard University Press, 2021, p. 184.

<sup>4</sup> "This sort of view come under criticism, however, for its inability to account for our immediate, authoritative knowledge of other kinds of mental states that do not seem to be subject to our active control." (Boyle, 2009)

reflection theory of self-knowledge formed under the influence of Fichte, may be able to provide a more appropriate description of Boyle's project.

I propose that there is an insight in Fichte's views and his reactions and modifications he has made to the Kantian system which can shed new light on contemporary debates of self-knowledge. In particular, I investigate Fichte's ideas about active<sup>5</sup> and self-positing I and as Neuhouser interprets, nonrepresentational nature of self-positing I in Fichte.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> The only thing the philosopher adheres to, and from which he proposes to account for what is to be explained, it is conscious being, or subject, ..., but when all existence of or for the subject is taken away, it has nothing left but an act; more especially in relation to existence, it is that (subject) which acts. (Fichte, 1982, I 457)

<sup>6</sup> Frederick Neuhouser, *Fichte's theory of Subjectivity (Modern European Philosophy)*- Cambridge University Press, 1990.



## Chapter One – On Kant's Spontaneity

### 1.1. Spontaneity versus Receptivity

Plato used the word spontaneity in *sophist* to show that there is a vitality and force of life bring about. In Aristotle this concept transforms to the word *automaton* which means a being that has self-movement. It was the renewal of the concept of spontaneity by looking back to the function of this meaning in Aristotle by Christian wolf. He was in a debate on freedom and fatalism and he argues against Spinoza, proposes that spontaneity is meant the 'power of self-determination' and it is in a close link to the concept of freedom and agency.

By examining the tradition of how the concept of spontaneity had been shaped Marco Sgarbi reaches to this conclusion that the notion of spontaneity in Kant implies two different meaning spontaneity as an 'inner determining force' and the second influenced by spontaneity of monads in Leibnizian philosophy Kant accept that the spontaneity would mean as 'thinking substance'.<sup>7</sup> The Leibnizian Monads, which are the windows are closed to the world all the changes and interactions they have originate from within themselves due to spontaneity. Kant Also rejected this Leibnizian idealist principle under this conviction that by accepting the ontological consequence of Leibniz we cannot distinguished between internal production of mind and sensible objects of the world.

The Copernican revolution in philosophy was to displace the usual standpoint about cognition. Instead of our powers of cognition being subject to the laws of the object world, It is the outside world that aligns itself with the laws of cognition.

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<sup>7</sup> Marco Sgarbi, *Kant on Spontaneity*, published by continuum, 2012. P. 38.

I would say the problem of spontaneity can be interpreted in a sub-level as a problem of conformity. The mind should be in accordance to its receptors that receive the data from outside or is that the objects that should be conformed to our categories and mind? Kant propose the second path. The basic principle that helped him to justify his claim was spontaneity. In the section on transcendental deduction Kant construed a crucial distinction between receptivity and spontaneity. But at first I clarify why Kant adheres to such a distinction.

“If we will call the receptivity of our mind to receive representations insofar as it is affected in some way sensibility, then on the contrary the faculty for bringing forth representations itself, or the spontaneity of cognition, is the understanding. It comes along with our nature that intuition can never be other than sensible, i.e., that it contains only the way in which we are affected by objects. The faculty for thinking of objects of sensible intuition, on the contrary, is the understanding.”<sup>8</sup>

The purpose of Kant by sketching the difference between receptivity and spontaneity is to vindicate that in the process of achieving knowledge two faculties of (sensibility) intuition and understanding (spontaneity) required. The spontaneity of mind is a faculty of knowledge that is in charge of relating object of thought to the universal categories of mind or add an extra ingredient to singularity of sense data or the given overall makes it a concrete concept or phenomena.

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<sup>8</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Translated By Paul Guyer and Allen w. Wood, Cambridge University Press (1998), P.214.

## 1.2. Synthetic role of Spontaneity

For Kant, what makes manifold presentations of objects in time and space united in mind is spontaneity. Because of the manifold senses that affect the mind, the mind inevitably gathers different presentations under a single united concept.<sup>9</sup> Kant calls this special function in understanding, which arises from the spontaneity of mind, judgment. Here there is also an important distinction that made by Kant as two different kind of judgements.

This distinction suggests that in synthesizing manifold representations, the imagination also plays a role. But playing the role of imagination ultimately comes back to spontaneity. However, we have another form of spontaneity that is more abstract and deals only with the relationship between the elements of thought. This form of spontaneity is closer to absolute spontaneity. This latter sort of strong spontaneity, I will argue that is the form of spontaneity that considered by Agentalist like Boyle.

Until this point we conclude that the two faculties of mind always working together and spontaneity has effect on the given or receptions.

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<sup>9</sup> "The I think must be able to accompany all my representations; for otherwise something would be represented in me that could not be thought at all, which is as much as to say that the representation would either be impossible or else at least would be nothing for me. [B132]"

Immanuel Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, Translated By Paul Guyer and Allen w. Wood, Cambridge University Press (1998), P.272.

### 1.3. Function of Spontaneity

Sgarbi rejecting the idea of relative spontaneity by distinguishing between cognizing and thinking while the former needs sensibility the latter can do its job regardless of the presence of sensibility and it is a mere act of spontaneity.<sup>10</sup>

Also we experienced the two different conception of I involved in representation. The I which I can perceive (the objective I) and the I which act and I realized it through its self-activity which is a subjective I.

According to Pippin spontaneous activity for Kant as he uses in different context means a "self-causing" activity or when he proposes about the intuition of God which is spontaneous he means that God instantiates the object that intuit.

Rosen believes the meaning of spontaneity etymologically speaking has two distinct meaning first implies free action or intentional act and the second meaning exhibit a there is no logical antecedent prior to the act we call it spontaneous.

He argues that the consequence of the former is to accept an autonomy and the latter has no involvement with autonomy. Then as a conclusion he reaches to the philosophical and crucial formulation of this meaning as spontaneous when the happening of it is not in conformity with natural law. So the act of spontaneity implies that thinking is spontaneous because it follows its own constructed rules.

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<sup>10</sup> "We cannot think any object except through categories; we cannot cognize any object that is thought except through intuitions that correspond to those concepts."

Immanuel Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, Translated By Paul Guyer and Allen w. Wood, Cambridge University Press (1998), P.290.

#### 1.4. Weak or Strong spontaneity

The main question that Pipin raise regarding the issue of mind or spontaneity is that to explain why thinking in Kant epistemological system is time to time synonymous with spontaneity? And what would be the logical and if it has the metaphysical implication of it? His main purpose is to show that the concept of spontaneity of mind bear a much heavier claim than the contemporary debate of spontaneity of Kant. And concept of spontaneity should be closer in interpretation to German idealist framework than the usage and distinction that contemporary philosopher made out of it. So his aim is to revive something more than it is understood in the current debate by acknowledging subjective idealism interpretation. As we can see in philosophy of Fichte and Hegel. And as he said he claim for a non- distorted reading of this Kantian genuine idea.<sup>11</sup>

According to Kitcher two main reasons that Kant's does not tend to accept and he was hesitant to consider subject as phenomenal were that the subject of experience that makes the phenomenal world possible, he could not be phenomenal in itself and in his practical philosophy Kant tries to explain the subject as thing in itself.

Pipin's certain position is that as long as the subjects has the feature of spontaneity of mind they cannot count as phenomenal beings, they are the role player of a causal series.

I would argue that Pippin paper defends a strong spontaneity against the weak reading of spontaneity in contemporary debate of spontaneity like the relative spontaneity construes by Sellars. In which Sellars believes that the spontaneity of the mind is like an automaton spirituale incapable of imputation but once a problem and a challenge inserted to it provoke its logical routine to act.

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<sup>11</sup> Robert B. Pippin - Idealism as Modernism (Modern European Philosophy), Hegelian Variations, Cambridge University Press, 1997. P. 54.

Allison also defends a strong spontaneity or in precise term believing an absolute spontaneity he believes that we cannot explain the activity of mind and judgement by applying the content of memory and internal mechanism of mind like a computer. (Appropriate causal history)

### **1.5. Features of spontaneity in Kant first critique**

The 'I' think is not achieved through the sensibility but it is made through act of spontaneity and it is not a given.

The 'I' included in the phrase I think is not a mere subject but it shows a synthetic unity.

The role of the self- ascribing of the 'I'.

The 'I' manifested in I think bring about a unification of all presentation for an I.

The presentation of the I think put an end to the regress of each presentation that presents another presentation.

## Chapter Two – Fichte's Theoretical and Practical Self-positing I

### 2.1. Background

Kant's relationship with the philosophers following him, Kant's formulation of the unity of apperception provoked a contention between Reinhold and Schulze. The genuine idea of Fichte's modification of Kant's idea of self-knowledge has also been shaped in a constant deliberation with critics of Reinhold and Schulze. Understanding these critics helps us grasp Fichte's attempts and motivations better to go beyond the "I think" of apperception and rectify its regress. The next step was dedicated to Fichte's solution to Schulze's specific problem and illustrating the essential features that Fichte had in mind when he was describing the self-positing I. According to Nuehouser's interpretation of Fichte, the self-positing I is a **nonrepresentational self-awareness** or, in other words, **subject-object I**. Also, the fundamental motivation<sup>12</sup> of Fichte for establishing *Science of knowledge*<sup>13</sup> and its revisions and his quest for constructing a unity between theoretical and practical reasons will be discussed, the concept of self-consciousness and self-awareness, as proposed in Fichte systematic thinking, has two theoretical and practical functions, the theoretical formulation of which appears in the *Science of knowledge* and its final and practical form in the *Foundation of Natural Right*, in which self-awareness takes a social form.

In the light of the explanation of Fichte's basic motivation for extracting the only principle of self-positing which has both theoretical and practical aspects, I will explain how the unitary principle of self-positing I is structured in the theoretical field and what features it finds in the

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<sup>13</sup> J. G. Fichte, *The Science of Knowledge- With the first and Second Introductions*, (Edited and Translated by Peter Heath and John Lachs), Cambridge University Press, 1982.

light of its practical function. Simultaneously with this discussion, it becomes clear to what extent the commonsensical interpretation (Fichte is usually known as the philosopher who culminates subjectivism)<sup>14</sup> of Fichte's philosophy is incomplete and sterile. While rational interpretations of his philosophy confirm the social characteristic of self-consciousness. The crucial part of this section examines that to what extent does his steps in explaining self-awareness and self-consciousness distance himself from the Cartesian tradition that explains self-awareness within the closed mind, and replace it with a framework in which self-awareness is intertwined with concepts such as agency, deliberation and self-determination.

## 2.2. Fichte's rejection of Kant's thing-in-itself

The initial origin of forming the concept of "I" in the theory of knowledge goes back to Descartes' and Hume's two opposed theories. While Descartes defends a kind of rational intuition, Hume calls the concept of 'I', accompanied by every sensory perception, nothing but a mere illusion. It was ultimately up to Kant's Copernican revolution to determine the role of consciousness in conceptualizing our world.

According to second introduction of Science of Knowledge, two foundations on which Kant's transcendental system has been based on, are transcendental 'I' and things-in-itself. Things-in-itself provides the material structure of knowledge, and the transcendental 'I' and its spontaneity are responsible for supplying the formal structure of knowledge. The crucial issue for Fichte was that both of these foundations are unknown. According to Kant, our knowledge

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<sup>14</sup>To read Russell and Heidegger's comments on this topic, see the opening sections of Paul Franks's article in David James, Gunter Zoller, *The Cambridge Companion to Fichte*, Cambridge University Press, 2016, Last chapter by Paul Franks, Fichte's Position: *Anti Subjectivism, Self-awareness and Self-location in the space of reasons*.



is limited to the phenomenal realm, and we do not have access to the knowledge of thing-in-itself (noumenal realm).<sup>15</sup> However, the thing-in-itself is the cause of representations in us. Transcendental 'I' is the condition of human knowledge, but it is not grasped by the subject's consciousness and is unknown. However, the issue is not just the unknowability of these two foundations. Either a matter of contradictions in explaining these foundations.

On the one hand, Kant introduces causality as one of the twelve categories that apply only to the phenomenal realm. Nevertheless, Kant uses the category of causality in the noumenal realm or sphere of the thing-in-itself. On the other hand, Kant did not have a satisfactory and convincing justification of transcendental "I", which is the condition of the unity of apperception. Kant thinks that thing-in-itself is the cause of our representations and considers the spontaneity of transcendental 'I' as the cause of the unity of concepts. Fichte's other critique is that the mechanical causality arising from the thing-in-itself cannot create two existential aspects of the real and ideal in mind (the being and seeing). "All causation is mechanical and that no presentation comes about through mechanism" (I, 439).

In Fichte's view, these objections were shortcomings of the Kantian system. He sought to resolve these defects in Kant's system. This was one of the serious motivations of Fichte's philosophical work. However, more notably, Fichte attempts to unite Kant's first and second

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<sup>15</sup> "The question (the science of knowledge has to answer is, as we know, the following: whence arises the system of presentations accompanied by the feeling of necessity? Or: how do we come to attribute objective validity to what in fact is only subjective? Or: since objective validity is described as existence: how do we come to believe in an existent?" (Fichte, 1982, I 456)

critiques, in other words, part of his project was to pursue unification of theoretical reason and practical reason.

Kant's practical philosophy strongly influences Fichte<sup>16</sup>; Fichte needs to realize that it is the freedom (which is the ground of practical philosophy) that can determine necessity (nature), not the other ways around. So his goal was to make nature and freedom identical. But what does it mean? Where does this motivation come from? Moreover, to what extent does this goal reflect Fichte's work.

### 2.3. The unity of Theoretical and Practical Reason in Fichte

By distinguishing between dogmatism and idealism systems of philosophizing, Fichte argues that idealism begins to explain its system from **rational intuition (absolute 'I')** and that dogmatism begins from thing-in-itself. Fichte tries to solve the problems created by Kant's transcendental 'I' by setting up the **absolute 'I', the single and unified principle** that the whole *Science of knowledge* should be extracted from this principle.<sup>17</sup> Neuhaus

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<sup>16</sup> Allen, W. Wood, *The free Development of Each*, Studies on freedom right, Oxford University Press, 2014, p. 164.

“As he reported in a letter of late summer, 1790 to F. A. Weissshuhn: I have been living in a new world ever since reading the Critique of Practical Reason. Propositions which I thought could never be overturned have been overturned for me. Things have been proven to me which I thought never could be proven—for example, the concept of absolute freedom, the concept of duty, etc . . . . Thus I was deceived by the apparent consistency of my previous system, and thus are thousands of persons perhaps still deceived.”

<sup>17</sup> “The science of knowledge is very different matter. Its chosen topic of consideration is not a lifeless concept, passively exposed to its enquiry, of which it makes something only by its own thought, but a living and active thing which engenders insights from and through itself and which the philosopher merely contemplate. His role

interprets Fichte in a way that sheds light on the supreme motivation of Fichte in *Science of knowledge*.

As Fichte thought, the main problem that existed throughout Kant's thought system was not the question of the thing-in-itself or his first critique, as Fichte himself had repeatedly acknowledged that he followed Kant's philosophy.<sup>18</sup> Instead, the main issue that immersed Fichte in philosophical reflection was the separation of theoretical reason and practical reason.<sup>19</sup> He thought that Kant could not take a proper approach to explain the relationship between these two. One of the essential issues for Fichte was human freedom. For this reason, he was hostile to Spinoza's interpretations in which the issue of human will and freedom has no place in their philosophical system. Accordingly, Fichte thought that the idealist system,

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in the affair goes no further than to translate this living force to purposeful activity, to observe the activity in question, to apprehend it and grasp it as unity.” (Fichte, 1982,

<sup>18</sup> “I also know with equal certainty that Kant envisaged such a system; that everything that he actually propounds consists of fragments and consequences of such a system, and that his claims have sense and coherence only on this assumption. Whether he had not thought out this system for himself to a pitch of clarity and precision where he could also have expounded it to others or whether he had in fact done so, and simply did not want to expound it, as certain passages seem to indicate, might well, as it seems to me, remain wholly unexplored, or if it is to be looked into, someone else may do it; for on this point I have never expressed any view. However such an enquiry might turn out the eminent author still retains unique credit for this achievement, of having first knowingly diverted philosophy away from external objects and directed it into ourselves. This is the spirit and inmost heart of his philosophy, as it is also the spirit and heart of the Science of Knowledge.” (Fichte, 1982, I 479)

<sup>19</sup> “I can go no further from this standpoint, because I may not go any further; and transcendental idealism thus appears at the same time as the only dutiful mode of thought in philosophy, as that mode wherein speculation and moral law are most intimately united” (Fichte, 1982, I 467)

which Kant formulated in the final sections of the first critique, was preferable to the dogmatic systems that begin with nature. However, Kant's practical philosophy was enlightening him as the sun suddenly shining on dark days; Fichte was not pleased with the separation of the two theoretical and practical reasons. This idea, of course, was formed in his mind under the influence of Reinhold, according to which philosopher must establish a basic principle that can prove the unity of practical and theoretical reasons.

"Fichte comes to believe that the discovery of such a principle will enable him to provide a more solid defense of Kant's moral theory than Kant himself was not able to give".<sup>20</sup>

According to Neuhouser, Fichte's assumptions kept changing in different periods of his teaching. His initial assumption is to show the principle that he can prove the compatibility of theoretical and practical reasons.<sup>21</sup> In the second period, which is the period of writing the science of knowledge, Fichte tries to show that these two intellects (practical and theoretical) should be extracted from a basic principle; consequently, the principle will show the compatibility and unity of the two reasons. Moreover, in the later period, he seeks to draw the identity of the structure of these two.

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<sup>20</sup> Frederick Neuhouser, *Fichte's theory of Subjectivity (Modern European Philosophy)*- Cambridge University Press, 1990, p. 23.

<sup>21</sup> "In his early philosophical writings, Fichte concentrates primarily on the task of demonstrating the unity of reason in the second of the three senses (where both theoretical and practical reason are to be brought together into one system that proceeds from a single first principle) by 1797. However, Fichte comes to have a different understanding of his enterprise, one that embodies the third sense of the unity of reason, according to which theoretical and practical reason are to be comprehended as a single faculty, each of which exhibits the same "structure" of reason in general" (1990, 32).

"First development before 1800 was divided into three major phases: 1) the pre-systematic writings prior to 1794; 2) the Science of Knowledge of 1794; and 3) the system of 1797-1799."<sup>22</sup>

Accordingly, understanding Fichte and his motivations in writing the Science of knowledge provides a proper context to understand the basic principle and basis of Fichte's philosophical system in the direction of the numerous revisions he made in his system better. The issue that arises from these explanations is that Fichte system's basic principle is ultimately based on a practical reason or a based on theoretical reason. For example, in his early writings, he intends to ground the basic principle of practical reason.<sup>23</sup>

In the middle years, his efforts show that he analyzes the unity of consciousness from the perspective of theoretical reason. Accordingly, there is a serious controversy over the interpretation of whether the basic principle of Fichte's philosophical thought, that is, the absolute I or unconditionedness I, should be understood from a practical point of view or a theoretical point of view. Or, to put it differently, the question is whether Kant's spontaneity of consciousness can be considered as a practical determining factor of will and freedom? Or it has only an epistemic role, or it has also provided a ground for volition and freedom? (Determining the will in an independent way of sensibility) (Robert Pippin, Rosefeldt,

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<sup>22</sup> Frederick Neuhouser, Fichte's theory of Subjectivity (Modern European Philosophy)- Cambridge University Press, 1990, p. 34.

<sup>23</sup> "At the end of Gebhard review, Fichte explicitly formulates what for him is the central task yet to be accomplished by critical philosophy: It must be proved that reason is practical."

Baumanns, Henrich and Wildt commented on this debate, I will cover and extend this part in an independent chapter on Kant)

Neuhouser's approach to understanding the *Science of knowledge* is based upon the conviction that much of this disagreement can be resolved by viewing the texts of the period from 1793 to 1799 not as representatives of a single coherent system but rather as stages in a tumultuous process of insight, self-criticism, and revision, all of which aimed at the development of a more consistent philosophical position.<sup>24</sup> So the fundamental principles of *Science of knowledge* concerning its theoretical and practical roots will be examined.

Up to this point, two main motivations of Fichte in the formation of *Science of Knowledge* were examined. On the one hand, the unknowability of the basis of the subject's consciousness and spontaneity in Kant were problems for Fichte. On the other hand, there were shortcomings in Kant's integrated intellectual system, such as the separation of theoretical reason and practical reason. Both of these difficulties led Fichte to the analysis of consciousness and self-awareness. In the next section, I examine the characteristics of the principle of self-positing I.

## **2.4. Kant's Denial of Intellectual intuition and Fichte's affirmation of Intellectual Intuition**

First of all, it is crucial to keep in mind that this action that I do, and in fact I know as an act, which is the basic principle of the Fichte intellectual system, is itself the product of the philosopher's abstract thinking. As Alan Wood explains, in my ordinary experiences my

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<sup>24</sup> Frederick Neuhouser, *Fichte's theory of Subjectivity (Modern European Philosophy)*, Cambridge University Press, 1990, p. 33.

actions are definite and determined. And I, who has found myself finite and limited in dealing with others (not-I). In the realm of possibilities, I loses some possibilities and gains other possibilities.<sup>25</sup> But Fichte, as a philosopher, has taken a different path. Fichte has found through abstraction that my ordinary experiences are the product of conditions that must be analyzed through transcendental philosophy.

What Fichte provides as the fundamental principle of the whole doctrine of knowledge: “I acting and positing itself”. So in different revisions he has made to his writing he had used these terms interchangeably, unconditioned I, absolute I, intellectual intuition, Tat-handlung.

According to Kant, intellect (reason) is the field in which objects are shaped and determined through the activity of the mind. And this is while the intuition is immediate awareness. Accordingly, we cannot have intuition in our intellect. But for Fichte, this concept must be understood in a pre-reflective sense. That is, I perceives its presence immediately through the action it performs. But for Fichte, I at the same time, it is acting, it is the product of its action. And to understand this I that produces from its action requires intellectual intuition.

## 2.5. Theoretical Self-positing I

There is controversy over the choice of the most appropriate interpretation of the word Setzen/positing in Fichte’s philosophy. Some consider positing the same as the verb creating. Fichte himself directly and straightforwardly objects such an interpretation, arguing that from the very thought the object won’t be created. According to what we said about the philosopher's abstraction in the previous chapter, this conception of Fichte's philosophy is

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<sup>25</sup> David James, Gunter Zoller, *The Cambridge Companion to Fichte*, Cambridge University Press, 2016, p.172.

inappropriate and has often led to radical conceptions of his philosophy and he has been accused of the philosophy of subjectivity. However, there is a difference between the commentators on how to interpret the three basic principles of the *Science of knowledge*. It should be noted that pre-reflective consciousness does not imply that we cannot have the self-reflection. Wood believes that Fichte has distinguished between self-positing and self-reiteration in places where he has been careful. I believe that one should distinguish between three different moment of I in Fichte's philosophy. 1- The self-positing I in which the subject and the object are unitary and one, both the action and the thing. Self-positing I is an infinite and indeterminate I.

2- I that is practicing its ability of self-reflection through the act of reiteration. Through the principle of identity these two are equal, A (absolutely posited) = A (the object of reflection).<sup>26</sup>

3- The individual I which is finite and limited and determined. It happens when The I posits itself as limited by not-I.  $\sim A = A$ . According to this principle, we have two activity, an act that goes from activity of the I to the not I and the activity that turn back from the not-I to the active I. the second act called 'check' (Anstoss).<sup>27</sup>

In Fichte's position<sup>28</sup>, Frank tries to show that Fichte, by rejecting Kant's object in itself and his concern for uniting theoretical reason and practical reason, came to the conclusion that rational agency was needed as a starting point of any science of knowledge to explain the

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<sup>26</sup> J. G. Fichte, *The Science of Knowledge- With the first and Second Introductions*, (Edited and Translated by Peter Heath and John Lachs), Cambridge University Press, 1982. (p. 103)

<sup>27</sup> Allen Wood, *Fichte's Philosophical Revolution*, *Philosophical Topics*, Fall 1991, Vol. 19, No. 2.

<sup>28</sup> David James, Gunter Zoller, *The Cambridge Companion to Fichte*, Cambridge University Press, 2016.



ontology and logic of philosophy. To clarify the discussion, we will analyze the meaning of Setzen in Fichte's philosophy, which will also shed lights on further discussions of the next chapter. Frank subtly states that if the source of analysis is based on a system of logic or ontology itself. It will be difficult to analyze morality and freedom of reason and consequently rational agency. That is why Fichte puts his basic principle as the principle that considers and starts rational agency, and Fichte's idealism must be understood in the light of this movement.

The widespread misunderstanding that existed until a few decades ago about Fichte's philosophy and the accusation of extreme subjectivism stemmed from the misconception Setzen was equated with creation. Charles Everett, however, argued that we have two kinds of logical affirmation, one in which a positive result is inferred and the other in immediate form. He saw Setzen as a kind of immediate affirmation. But as can be seen from the text of Science of knowledge, much of the act of self-positing is obtained through inference.

As Frank acknowledges, in the post-Leibniz tradition, the word Setzen was used in such a way that its ontological and logical functions were intertwined. Its meaning and role in fact was, "determine a thing for a reason" and "act of positing commit one to another". But this entanglement was removed by Kant. , And he distinguished between the real predicate and the existential predicate. We have already said that one of the main concerns of Fichte was to unite theoretical reason and practical reason, and in the last corrections of the doctrine of knowledge, he considered his basic principle to be practical rather than theoretical. As Fichte believes, one of the problems with this division of theory and practice in Kant was because of the distinction he made in the real and ontological predicate. For this reason, it became clear to Fichte that his basic principle must be based on rational agency and that inference and commitment could be drawn from it.

## 2.6. I posited itself as not-I and social self-consciousness

Fichte believes that In order to be able to have an individuated self, it is necessary for the self to be aware of its own limitations. Understanding this limitation occurs through an reciprocal relation between the active self and the obstacles that the I encounter in the world that give rise to a concept in philosophy of Fichte that is called check (Anstoss). To explain this concept in more detail, I use the distinction that Allen Wood has made between ‘act of self-positing’ and ‘reiteration of positing’.<sup>29</sup> Under this distinction we must know that when I posits itself, we are not dealing with one action, but two modes of action here. One is an action that arises from I’s activity and directed to the not-I (act of self-positing), the second action turns back to I from the act of not-I (reiteration of positing).

Contrary to the usual tradition in which the analysis of consciousness takes place in the form of events that are occurred in our isolated minds, Fichte speaks of the social and embodied nature of consciousness. As mentioned earlier, self-activity of the I for Fichte is not the primary principle as the creation of all things from nothingness, but he considers self-activity of the I as a part of the implicit permanent activity of self-ascription. Self-ascribing itself has two theoretical and practical aspects. The first refers to my tacit experiences in the world, and the second to the actions that I, as the author, perform with intention. My actions also have two special forms. The first is deed, the actions that change the world or the change in my situation and the *handlung* are the actions that I do intentionally. For example, when I study, I shake my legs without knowing it. This is a change that occurs both in my condition and in the air flow around my legs in the world. But if I did the same leg shakes as an exercise more quickly, I had a special intention of what I did. According to Fichte, if it were not for others to attribute the second type of my actions (*handlung*) to me as the performer of this

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<sup>29</sup> Allen Wood, Fichte’s Philosophical Revolution, *Philosophical Topics*, Fall 1991, Vol. 19, No. 2.

action, In that case, the difference between deed and handlung will fade away. As a result, if someone does not attribute my actions to me, I cannot relate myself to my actions, as it is claimed, the self- activity of I is a form of on self-ascription, and without it, self-awareness will not occur.

## **2.7. Embodied self-consciousness and self-positing as self-locating**

In terms of body composition, it is a means by which we communicate with the world and is a means of interaction. To show the activity of the I and its movement towards the outside world, it is necessary for my living body to turn my intentions and motivations in the world into action. Contrary to the Cartesian tradition, which cogito considers to be the condition of any thought in the world and believes that consciousness without the body can go its own way, Fichte claims that self-awareness is not possible without the body. Because the ‘I’ positing the not-I is created through the active and reactive forces on the body. One of the important features that the body has for Fichte is that the body provides the possibility of self-identity due to its endurance in time.

And in his view, the body has fixed features but various possibilities for mobility, so that the body is a articulation of freedom in human. The wider the variety of movements that can be found in a creature the higher would be a person's degree of self-awareness.

Fichte’s emphasis on the embodied self-consciousness, as well as his pre-reflection promise, is another proof of the claim that for Fichte self-consciousness it cannot be reflective and objective. In his article<sup>30</sup>, Franks offers a different reading of the meaning of positing, which is relevant to this discussion and future discussions. Frank believes that positing should

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<sup>30</sup> David James, Günter Zöller (Cambridge Companions to Philosophy), The Cambridge Companion to Fichte- Cambridge University Press, 2016, Fichte’s Position: Anti-subjectivism, Self-awareness and self-location in the space of reason, Pual Franks. P.394.

be understood as a self-locating in the space of reasoning. If we assume that the science of knowledge project has been formed to answer the question of what is the ground for reflexive self-ascription? Or, to put it better, what is the basis of rational agency? The possible answer of Fichte is that the act of self-positing itself is a form of self-locating in an empirical and reasoning space that is implicitly at work and is clarified and make itself explicit whenever necessary. One of the characteristics of self-awareness is its embodiment and sociality, and it seems that there is a logical parallel between self-positing act and self-locating in the empirical space, which also confirms the agency of the subject. According to Frank, the concept of agency and positing can be understood in terms of spatiality.

## 2.8. Self-positing I as Nonrepresentational Self-awareness

As Dieter Henrich in his famous article, "Fichte's original insight", states, the problem that Fichte finds regarding his ancestors' wrong method of formulating the 'self' is remarkably distinctive. As Henrich argues, from Descartes to Kant, they were amazed by the concept of 'I' and self, and each tried to establish the foundation of their thought based on the concept of 'I'.

"Thus, in Descartes' case, self-consciousness was the basis of evidence, in Leibniz, of categories in Rousseau and Kant, of judgments."<sup>31</sup>

However, Fichte opened a new path and explained that all the predecessors' attitude towards consciousness and self is based on the **theory of reflection**.

"We become conscious of the consciousness of our consciousness only by making the latter a second time into an object, thereby obtaining consciousness of our consciousness, and

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<sup>31</sup> Kristin Gjesdal (Editor), (Key Debates in the History of Philosophy)-(Debates in Nineteenth-Century European Philosophy- Essential Readings and Contemporary Responses, Routledge, 2016, p.37.

so on ad infinitum. In this way, however, our consciousness is not explained, or there is consequently no consciousness at all if one assumes it to be a state of mind or an object and thus always presupposes a subject but never finds it. This sophistry lies in the heart of all systems hitherto, including the Kantian."<sup>32</sup>

According to this circular method, the subject 'I' can never be grasped, and we will eventually fall into the trap of assuming an objective 'I' instead of the subject 'I'. As Christian Klotz argues, the solution that Fichte finds was the "unconditionedness of the 'I'." (65, 2016). In the following, I will try to enumerate some crucial moments of the *Science of Knowledge* to the point briefly that it reaches the idea of my unconditionedness of 'I'.

To describe the steps, Fichte takes to approach the idea of self-positing, some historical context and explanation should be reported. Neuhouser, in *Fichte's theory of subjectivity*, explains that "for Fichte (as well as for Kant), the self-consciousness constitutes the most basic condition upon which the possibility of all empirical knowledge depends."<sup>33</sup> This quote exhibits the crucial role of self-consciousness in all analysis of Fichte and Kant's attempt to show the extent of structuring our knowledge of the world based on the knowledge that we have of ourselves. The account of self-awareness that Fichte builds it at first, as Neuhouser explains, is non-representational. For an understanding of this outcome in philosophy, the conflict between Reinhold and Schulze should be sketched. Reinhold considers that consciousness should be the highest principle of Kant's critic. In every consciousness of x,

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<sup>32</sup> Kristin Gjesdal (Editor), (Key Debates in the History of Philosophy)-(Debates in Nineteenth-Century European Philosophy- Essential Readings and Contemporary Responses, Routledge, 2016, p.40.

<sup>33</sup> Frederick Neuhouser, *Fichte's theory of Subjectivity* (Modern European Philosophy), Cambridge University Press, 1990, p. 68.

there is a subject that is conscious of X, and there is an object which is X, but also we have something extra here, which is a representation of X in our consciousness. Following Reinhold's articulation, "I recognize my representation of an object as distinct from myself, the representing subject."<sup>34</sup> Reinhold's idea implies two critical features in consciousness which are in progress. On the one hand, the Subject **distinguishes** itself from object and representations. On the other hand, "every representation is related to a subject".<sup>35</sup> Schulze rejected this idea that if all of this process occurs within the consciousness, consciousness should recognize the Subject.

"Schulze's criticism implies that the defender of Critical philosophy must reject Reinhold's claim that the structure of representational consciousness is the structure of all consciousness and must provide an account of the self-awareness involved in representational consciousness instead avoid the infinite regress into which any account based on Reinhold's model inevitably falls."<sup>36</sup>

To frame it more explicitly, I am as a subject, conscious of X and conscious of myself that thinking about X, I understand that the precondition of being conscious of myself, is that my way of thinking must be conscious of myself in the first place. During this process, I cannot be counted as an object in any way, since understanding myself as an object requires another subject to understand this relation. So in Reinhold's idea of representational

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<sup>34</sup> Frederick Neuhouser, *Fichte's theory of Subjectivity (Modern European Philosophy)*, Cambridge University Press, 1990, p. 71.

<sup>35</sup> Frederick Neuhouser, *Fichte's theory of Subjectivity (Modern European Philosophy)*, Cambridge University Press, 1990, p. 71.

<sup>36</sup> Frederick Neuhouser, *Fichte's theory of Subjectivity (Modern European Philosophy)*, Cambridge University Press, 1990, p. 72.

consciousness, self-awareness in every representation cannot construe any convincing explanation. Fichte's task was to establish a nonrepresentational self-awareness to tackle this problem of regress.

"In order to save what he takes to be the critical doctrine that every representation of an object is related within consciousness to the subject of consciousness, he must find a way to characterize this relationship that does not rely on the structure of representational consciousness, in which the subject of awareness is always distinct from what it represents."<sup>37</sup>(The same problem exists in the contemporary debate of self-knowledge that should be examined much more in detail. However, so many self-knowledge accounts consider Subject I as an object, for instance, an account of inner-sense or phenomenal self-knowledge.)

So far, we have understood what makes Fichte take some further steps to reformulate self-awareness in a sense different from Reinhold's representational consciousness.

What characteristics have this new account of self-positing I and in what way Fichte's self-awareness avoids falling into the same vicious pattern of Reinhold's account.

Fichte claims that the self-positing I has a salient quality, immediacy. By immediacy Fichte tends to prove that this sort of immediate awareness of self is implicit and unarticulated. And this implicit understanding of I in thinking an object is very different from when we pay attention to ourselves. The former is a self-positing act of I, and the latter is the self-consciousness in its complete form.

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<sup>37</sup> Frederick Neuhouser, *Fichte's theory of Subjectivity* (Modern European Philosophy), Cambridge University Press, 1990, p. 74.

"The self-positing subject does not observe "itself," at least not in the sense that it attains a "picture" of itself as if regarding its image in a mirror." Continuing with the conscious Subject never succeeds in making itself into its object. Instead, its "self-observation" refers merely to consciousness's awareness of its states, that is, to its awareness that it is aware.<sup>38</sup>

The precise definition of self-awareness's immediacy would be our sense of self-awareness when our consciousness is directed toward external objects that are implicit, not evident, and graspable. However, we can have an immediate awareness that this consciousness is conscious of X in my consciousness. This newly reformulated self-awareness does not have any direct access to the object but access to the act of thinking. The thinking that I, as an agent of the act, do the act of thinking.

## 2.9. Fichte's original insight and his revisions of Self-positing I

Günter Zöller's particular interpretation of Henrich's article (Fichte's original insight) explains three different stages of formulations of self-positing I in Fichte thinking. The first stage is an attempt to understand an aspect of I that is self-producing. At this stage, the focus is on I's activity and the fact that I can understand I simultaneously as "I" begins its activity. In the second stage, Fichte tries to emphasize the constitutive structure of "I". In this step, the problem is not about conceptualizing I, but the existence of I in consciousness. The latter stage is a stage which Zöller calls "An activity into which an I is inserted".<sup>39</sup> This stage points to the union of practical activity and theoretical seeing and knowing this act. In the second

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<sup>38</sup> Frederick Neuhouser, *Fichte's theory of Subjectivity (Modern European Philosophy)*, Cambridge University Press, 1990, p. 80.

<sup>39</sup> Kristin Gjesdal (Editor), *(Key Debates in the History of Philosophy)-(Debates in Nineteenth-Century European Philosophy- Essential Readings and Contemporary Responses*, Routledge, 2016, p.51.



version of this text, with a detailed analysis of each of Fichte's revisions, I try to establish similarity with contemporary discussions in the field of self-knowledge. Also, different readings of the characteristic of Tat-handlung/fact-act and its reflective activity will be considered. Besides, the relationship between the principle of identity of  $I=I$  and its relationship with the self-positing feature of I and its link to transparency account of Richard Moran will be discussed in detail.

## 2.10. Practical Self-positing I

In this section, we will examine the relationship between the practical subject and the sub-principle itself. The question that Fichte is dealing with here is whether it is possible to prove a form of self-determination that is not dependent on forces outside the subject itself. A self-determination that can be obtained from the very act of self-positing I. Or, to be more precise, is it possible to explain the intertwined network of the subject's behavior not on the basis of external incentives but within the only principle of the Science of knowledge? The principle was to be the theoretical and practical basis for explaining the freedom of the subject. Fichte's answer is positive, and he believes that the ability to reflection, or his reflective self-awareness, gives him the ability to manipulate incentives and desires and to transform them into a resolute act. Fichte sees the ability of man “tearing away” himself and self-reverting as the reason why the subject can judge and decide independently of the external forces imposed on him.

“By means of reflection ... the individual tears himself away from the natural drive and makes himself independent of it (*stellt sich unabhängig von ihm hin*) as a free intelligence; he

thereby obtains for himself the capacity to postpone the self-determination and, with this, the capacity to choose between various ways of satisfying the natural drive.”<sup>40</sup>

But what is the criterion for making decision or affirming or negating external incentive? He speaks of a conceptual framework of *Zweckbegriff* or Purposive concept. With this purposive concept, the subject eliminates his uncertainties and perform definite actions. Through the power of reflection that self-consciousness has, the subject can form a network of beliefs and gain his self-determination internally. However, the fundamental principle finds itself as a will, and its action and self-positing arise from itself and not from an external source.

“How can the unity of our cognitive–perceptual and of our practical, reality-transforming relation to objects be adequately described and explained?”<sup>41</sup>

It is Fichte’s fundamental claim that a subject is not just what it is, like a ‘thing’, but is essentially engaged in some self-referential activity through which it is ‘for itself’ what it is.

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<sup>40</sup> Frederick Neuhouser, *Fichte's theory of Subjectivity (Modern European Philosophy)*, Cambridge University Press, 1990, p. 125. Compare with this quote of Korsgaard: "A lower animal’s attention is fixed on the world. Its perceptions are its beliefs and its desires are its will... But we human animals turn our attention on to our perceptions and desires themselves, on to our own mental activities, and we are conscious of them... I desire and I find myself with a powerful impulse to act. But I back up and bring that impulse into view and then I have a certain distance. Now the impulse doesn’t dominate me and now I have a problem. Shall I act? Is this desire really a reason to act?" Matthew Boyle, *Making up our mind and the activity of reason*, *Philosophers’ Imprint*, Volume 11, No 17, December 2011.

<sup>41</sup> (Cambridge Companions to Philosophy), David James, Gunter Zollner- *The Cambridge Companion to Fichte-* Cambridge University Press, (2016) *Fichte’s Explanation of the Dynamic Structure of Consciousness in the 1794- 95 by Christian Klotz*) p. 66

This being 'for itself' is constitutive of the subject both under the aspect of its existence and under that of its determinations.

## Chapter Three – Agentialists and active self-knowledge

### 3.1. Making up our mind

Among the living things on earth, it seems that man has the ability to make up his mind. This means that this is the only human being who needs at least one thing more than natural impulses and motives to act and decide and even desire. It can be his agency and his freedom that results in his ability to analyze rationally his environment and social space. He can pose the question of why against his desires and pause and distance himself, ponder, think of other options, and even eventually refuse to quench his desire. It is man who behind his every action, there are intertwined chain of logical relationships between different types of beliefs, leading him to adopt a final decision or belief. This kind of freedom and agency that we are talking about does not arise from the discussion of will and intention and authority, but refers to a specific ability in man. Ability to reflect. This ability to reflect on beliefs and actions and to distance oneself and look at oneself enables one to make a noticeable distinction between what natural laws impose on him and what he does. Agentialists have emphasized this special human ability to reflect and how the role of reflection in shaping beliefs and judgments enables man to manifest his rational agency.

### 3.2. Two distinct models of self-knowledge

What is to be found in Kant's idea of self-consciousness<sup>42</sup> that made Agentialist thinkers do such a backward investigation?

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<sup>42</sup> One of my concerns in this project is terminologies that seem to be used interchangeably, as a rule, in the text of Kant or Fichte himself, there is no explicit reference to the concept of self-knowledge while talking about self-awareness and self-consciousness. But the concept used correlatively with this term is more closely related to the

In an attempt to solve one of the fundamental criticisms against Moran's theory (transparency), Matthew Boyle finds the key to the puzzle in Kant. As he claims, according to Kant's articulation of the knowledge that we possess about ourselves, self-knowledge cannot be reduced to one sort and we have two distinct forms of Self-knowledge one is the knowledge of inner-sense/ empirical apperception (knowledge of our passive being and corresponding with receiving our sensation) and knowledge of pure apperception (knowledge of our active being or spontaneity, corresponding with our judgements and thinking). Also as Boyle poses, Kant claims for fundamental dependency between these two, in a way that without pure apperception there would be no knowledge of inner sense. Without the knowledge of apperception we cannot recognize ourselves as human being.<sup>43</sup> According to this formulation, Matthew Boyle can show one of the fundamental cruxes in the whole discussion of his theories of self-knowledge, the one which he called it the 'uniformity assumption',<sup>44</sup> and considers its solution in rejecting the idea of an integrated theory which can include all forms of self-knowledge and admitting different forms of self-knowledge. I will turn back to this discussion at length in the following chapters. Now I want to discuss about those parts in *critique of pure reason* that Kant differentiates between these two sorts of knowledge.

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equivalent of self-knowledge in the discussion of the contemporary analytic philosophy than the concept of self-consciousness in the contemporary debate of philosophy of mind.

<sup>43</sup> Matthew Boyle, "Two Kinds of self-knowledge", philosophy and phenomenological research, Vol. LXXVIII no. 1, January 2009.

<sup>44</sup> "We could call this the Uniformity Assumption, for it amounts to the demand that a satisfactory account of our self-knowledge should be fundamentally uniform, explaining all cases of "first-person authority" in the same basic way." (Boyle, 2009)

### 3.3 Two ways of expression: Manifestation versus Representation

Imagine a well-trained parrot learns to manifest he is in pain when it is. He simply cry out and shout I am in pain. But a competent speaker have this ability of self-ascribing through which can represent that she belongs to a certain natural kind that can represent her state and disposition through inference and observation While in case of parrot this condition which is a minimal condition of distinction cannot be met and we are not sure when he expresses his pain does he really mean it or not because he doesn't understand what he says actually.

Arriving in this stage Boyle asks us to differentiate two different sense of expressing our pain only like parrot wise case which is a kind of manifestation sense or the competent speaker that can use her ability of reflection to a representation sense. And our avowal reflects a certain sort of representing our self-ascriptive ability as a rational animal being who can make up his mind.<sup>45</sup>

He then tries to explain why Moran's transparency theory is fundamental precisely because it can have such a distinction by default and unlike the expressionists who object to Moran's theory, they ignore the most obvious distinction between manifestation and representation. Boyle then claims that all scholars in their field of self-knowledge have implicitly accepted the uniformity assumption, while using Kant's views he wants to claim that we have at least two completely different and fundamental types of our self-knowledge.

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<sup>45</sup> "In §4, I argue that a satisfactory account of self-knowledge must account for the distinction between behavior that merely manifests the presence of a certain mental state and behavior that expresses a representation of oneself as in a state of the relevant sort."

## Chapter Four – pre-reflective self-consciousness

Under the influence of Heidelberg school, different but effective divisions have been made for us about self-knowledge. It should be noted that this tradition developed under the influence of Heinrich Dieter's discussions and his particular reading of the tradition of German idealism, especially the concept of consciousness in Fichte. And the roots of these issues can be traced back to the original discussion of Fichte. One of the important divisions formed in this tradition is the division between the egological and non- egological self. In the first case, the analysis proceeds on a personal and subjective level, using the personal pronoun of I. While in the second form, self-awareness is examined on an impersonal level and as an episode or a stream of consciousness in the mind. In the second division, which is closely related to our project and provides a good descriptive basis, Self-awareness comes in two forms of non-introspective reflection and pre-reflective self-consciousness. According to non-introspective model, this is how to achieve self-awareness, the unconscious mental state becomes aware of itself or through higher order mental state or through a modified (the objection of numerically distinct state of mind) and alternative model of same order mental state.

One permissible objection to higher order theory, which same order theory has tried to address it (regardless of how successful it was) was that in order for content to be relevant to one-to-one tools, it requires at least some awareness or familiarity. He already has the ability to establish an equal relationship between these two mental states. In order for the represented (content) to correspond one by one to what it representing (vehicle), it requires at least some prior knowledge or familiarity that can establish an equal relationship between these two distinct mental states. In the language of today's analytical tradition without self-familiarity,

how the higher order that must perform the act of reflecting in its practice, prevent itself from being hetero-directed?

This fundamental recognition of the fact that every representations belongs to I (self-ascription) is something that Matthew Boyle tries to justify with the help of Kant's views on spontaneity and to defend Moran's Agentialist position.

I will discuss later whether Kant's position is safe from this objection and, if not, what alternative can be offered. The above objection applies to any theory that considers self-consciousness as a product of reflection. This critique was first proposed by Fichte, as discussed by Dieter Henrich in Chapter 2. To solve the regression problem that is generally encountered in any theory that explains itself based on reflection Influenced by Dieter Heinrich's discussions, a form of pre-reflection was came into play as a justified explanation for theory of self-awareness. Influenced by Dieter Heinrich's discussions, a form of pre-reflection was explained as an alternative to the Higher-order and same- order theories. This theory seeks to explain that a proper theory of self-knowledge requires that the subject, as is doing the act of presenting, know that what he is referring to is he himself.

“I posits itself as itself”

What I am going to argue about is the trait that Dieter Henrich mentions in his famous article “Fichte’s Original Insight”, later known as pre-reflective self-consciousness. This principle is derived from the third modification of the first principle of the *Science of Knowledge*,

“The I is a power into which an eye is inserted”

This principle shows that this form of pre-reflection, which is a kind of self-feeling, precedes Boyle's interpretation of Kant's principle of spontaneity. In defending the distinction between representation and manifestation of the self, Boyle defends Moran's principle of transparency, arguing that, based on Kant's distinction between receptivity and spontaneity,



one can argue for the inclusion of this principle as well as its fundamentality. As it has been argued before, there are objections to reflection theory as well as Kant's theory. So does not Boyle's claim to the fundamentality of transparency theory be undermined by applying this Kantian distinction?

I believe that if pre-reflection theory can be justified at the non-egological level as well, it can find a better basis for solving the problem of limited application.

To explain pre-reflection precisely, we must refer to a form of self that is revealed to itself not through the process of objectification but through implicit self-disclosure in experience. So this theory is free from any concepts such as higher-order consciousness and the same-order consciousness or any transitivity from unconscious to conscious. Rather, this pre-reflective awareness refers to the same ordinary experiences we have in the world. Experience being in a world that forms an intertwined chain of actions and reactions. So what the proponents of this theory actually emphasize is that it is a kind of implicit self-disclosure which is associated with our being in the world.

Fichte rightly realized that the basic principle of the *Science of Knowledge* perceived through intuition must be both subject and object. Although this distinction is very difficult for Kant to accept that the subject can receive intuition while being spontaneous, Fichte knows that any fall into the theory of reflection is troublesome. The subject can still be receptive at the same time as it is an act and striving, which can perceive its pure action. When he speaks in the explanation of the second principle of positing, 'I posit not A', we realize that Fichte's analysis is highly ontological analysis. In the sense that I give my action to the world as an active subject and I know myself from experience of my free action in the world. The important moments (check-embodied consciousness) that Fichte has in the evolution of his self-consciousness show to what extent Fichte's self-awareness is affected by his experience of constant action in the world. So we can, like Dieter Henrich and Heidelberg

school, see Fichte as a defender of a form of pre-reflective self-awareness. In the sense that the subject is engaged in the world and with the world through his actions. So the pre-reflective self-awareness means that the subject achieves a state of self-disclosure by actively engaging in the world and experiencing it.

Fichte believes that In order to be able to have an individuated self, it is necessary to be aware of its own limitations. Understanding this limitation occurs through an reciprocal relation between the active self and the obstacles I encounter in the world that give rise to a concept in philosophy of Fichte that is called check (Anstoss). (Previously discussed) The social and embodied aspect of Fichte's philosophy reinforces the claim that his pre-reflection theory has survived throughout his revisions and different thought periods and is deeply ingrained in his mind.

## Chapter Five – Fundamentality of Pre-reflective theory

### 5.1. State-luminosity Vs subject-luminosity

As I mentioned before, considering the pre-reflection approach, we must also accept some kind of passivity in subject because pre-reflection always accompanies you with a self-feeling. And yet this theory cannot provide a viable alternative to the Moran and Boyle argument because it does not recognize agency. Although we know that unconditioned I has both objective and subjective aspects. I try to bring a more appropriate logical argument in strengthening the agency of the basic principle of the *Science of Knowledge*, and Show the fundamentality of this pre-reflective self-awareness that can also maintain its agency position. To formulate the discussion I use the distinction between state-luminosity and subject-luminosity.

In state-luminosity necessarily, if a subject S has a conscious state C, S is aware of C and in Subject-luminosity, if a subject S has a conscious state C, S is aware of being the subject of conscious state C. The difference between the first form and the second is that in subject-luminosity the subject is aware that he himself is the subject in all these states. If we can prove that the subject-luminosity exists in pre-reflective consciousness, we can justify self-ascription and self-reference. So the fundamental question I am going to answer here is whether the subject-luminosity is possible for pre-reflective consciousness? Because if the answer is yes, then you can defend a kind of self-ascription. Howell's proposed solution is a form of affordance in Gibson's theory. According to Howell's idea, in every experience there is at the same time a standing belief. The content of this standing belief is that I have the ability to realize that the content of this experience belongs to me and I can attribute it to myself. The important point is that this belief is not the product or output of higher-order theory or reflection, it is a capability that experience itself enables for us. As according to pre-

reflection theory, the possibility of bodily experience in the world gives us the ability of self-locating in empirical space through which we can consider ourselves the subject that can own the experiences.

## **5.2. An alternative answer for Boyle**

What Boyle wants to prove is to show that the ability to express one's mental states like a competent speaker comes from the ability of deliberation. (What Moran emphasizes) Moran refers to the ability of deliberation as the relationship between the contents of the mind and seems to be the most fundamental way to deliberate is the ability of self-ascribing. In other words, the ability of self-conscious predicating is the most basic principle in showing how deliberation is possible, and how we can make up our minds which indicates our rational agency.

Boyle believes that because this kind of self-knowledge that Moran offers and he himself tries to defend, has no justificatory ground for knowledge of our sensations and appetites, it undermines the uniformity assumption. According to this assumption, the most appropriate theory of self-knowledge should be able to provide a justificatory ground for all forms of self-knowledge. And only then can it claim to be fundamental. Accordingly, using the Kantian distinction between spontaneity and receptivity, Boyle argues that the unity assumption is wrong, and that we must respect the possibility of different kinds of theories of self-knowledge.

But I believe that by accepting the position of pre-reflective self-awareness and applying the Howell reading of subjective luminosity, one can recognize Moran and Boyle's claim while maintaining uniformity assumption. Because Boyle is involved in a debate with expressionists on the issue of self-ascription and by supporting Moran, and his theory of transparency he focuses on the power of human judgment and deliberation and commitments.

Pre-reflection theory of self-awareness both considers human agency in gaining any primary experience and is more inclusive and enables the ability of self-ascribing, which is a condition for any making up our minds mind and deliberation.

## Concluding Remarks

In this project, I tried to show that in the history of philosophy, there is an important moment in the discussion of self-awareness that has influenced all our subsequent discussions in the current discussions of self-awareness. That moment is belong to the time when Fichte rejects the reflection theory of self-awareness and tries to offer better alternatives for understanding the problem of self-awareness .The contemporary readings of Dieter Henrich rekindled the debate over the importance of what Fichte said. Influenced by Fichte and later by Sartre, a current has been formed in the analysis of the concept of self-consciousness, which is called the theory of pre-reflective consciousness. I tried to examine the relationship of this tradition with contemporary currents in analyzing the concept of self-knowledge. And I tried to show how Fichte's insights can untie even small knots in the current discussions of self-awareness and self-knowledge, or at least turn their attention to different issues.

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