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Fichte and the Body in Action

M. Jorge de Carvalho

- 1 The purpose of this paper is to zoom in on some fundamental aspects of Fichte's transcendental account of the body in action, as laid down in the introductory remarks to his 1798 *Sittenlehre*.¹
- 2 Before we plunge *in medias res* three things should be borne in mind.
- 3 First, what we are dealing with here is a *transcendental* account. This means Fichte focuses on mere *Vorstellungen*, or to be more precise, on what he terms "das System des nothwendigen Denkens".² On the one hand, the point is that, in the final analysis, everything we deal with has the nature of a *Vorstellung* –and that this holds true even for what claims to be more than just a *Vorstellung*. On the other hand, the point is that some *Vorstellungen* are absolutely *necessary*, both in the sense that they must occur (that they are an indispensable condition of *it all*) and in the sense that they are an indispensable condition of *one another* and cannot occur without each other.
- 4 Secondly, it should be borne in mind that in Fichte's view one of these necessary representations is the representation of *efficacious action* (*Wirksamkeit*) – or, to be more precise, of "first-person efficacious action": of *my* efficacious action or of "*meine Wirksamkeit*"³ viz. of what he terms "*efficacy exercised upon something outside of me* [*Wirksamkeit auf etwas außer mir*]"⁴ It is the representation according to which at least some of "my representations have an effect upon the world":⁵ "something objective results from what is subjective"⁶ –"a being corresponds to and follows from our representations",⁷ so that we "take some of our representations to be the ground of a being"⁸ (i.e., of things that supposedly exist independently of any representation).⁹
- 5 Among other things, Fichte draws attention to the fact that the representation of *meine Wirksamkeit* is intrinsically complex: it cannot take place as a single representation of a simple content. In other words, the representation of *meine Wirksamkeit* (of my own efficacy or efficacious action) requires a *manifold* of representations – a complex set of representations that are entailed in it.¹⁰ And here is where the *body* (N.B. *my* body viz. *one's* body) comes into play. Fichte claims that the representation of one's body is part and parcel of the representation of one's *Wirksamkeit überhaupt*: i.e. that the latter

cannot take place without the former, so that the representation of one's body is necessarily *contained* and *posited* in the representation of one's *Wirksamkeit*.

- 6 And this is what “the body in action” is all about. Fichte speaks of the representation of one's own body as a condition *sine qua non* for the representation of one's efficacious action (*Wirksamkeit*). He speaks of my body as a *Vorstellung* – the point being that, in the final analysis, my body is a *complex set of representations*. And he speaks of the body in *action* – the point being that action is more than just a particular feature of one's body among many others: the representation of one's efficacious action is rather the framework within which the representation of one's body is formed – it is *what constitutes one's body (my body) as such*.
- 7 But this is not all. *Thirdly* it must be borne in mind that, in Fichte's view, representing one's own body is not just an indispensable component without which there can be no representation of one's *Wirksamkeit* – as if the latter were just one possible representation among many others. His point is that “without this consciousness of my own efficacy, there is no self-consciousness; without self-consciousness, there is no consciousness of something else that is not supposed to be I myself”.¹¹ In other words, Fichte's point is that the representation of my *Wirksamkeit* is an indispensable condition for the representation of *everything überhaupt* – and that pretty much the same holds true for the representation of one's body: as a necessary component of the representation of one's *Wirksamkeit*, it, too, is an indispensable condition for the representation of *everything überhaupt*; so that according to him the representation of one's own body plays a *transcendental role* in the strictest sense of the term: it is somehow entailed in *all* our representations without exception. In short, one's body is the very opposite of what it seems to be (a contingent, particular, empirical representation): it is necessary, anything but particular and anything but empirical: it is “contained in consciousness as such and is necessarily posited along with it [*im Bewußtseyen überhaupt enthalten, und mit demselben nothwendig gesetzt sey*]”.¹²
- 8 With this by way of introduction, let us now plunge *in medias res*.

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- 9 First of all, Fichte focuses on two representations that are entailed in the representation of one's *Wirksamkeit* – and indeed so much so that they are, as it were, the two poles around which everything else revolves.
- 10 On the one hand, “I act efficaciously” (*ich wirke*) is not possible without some representation of *myself*: it all depends on the fundamental representation of the I viz. of *Ichheit* (*I-hood*) – that is, of subjectivity as such. My *Wirksamkeit* means: “I am the ground of this change”,¹³ i.e.: “that which *knows* about this change is also that which effectuates it”, so that “the subject of consciousness and the principle of efficacy are one”.¹⁴ When I ascribe efficacious activity to myself I ascribe it to what is *subjective* in me. “I posit myself absolutely as active”,¹⁵ so that the action in question “starts with what is subjective, as determining what is objective”.¹⁶ The principle is “das Subjective” – the action in question is originally determined by what is subjective (by *myself*, by what is *subjective* in me) – “and indeed so much so that what is subjective in me is not in turn determined by something else objective but is determined absolutely in and through itself [*nicht wieder durch ein anderes objective bestimmt werden kann, sondern absolut in, und durch sich selbst bestimmt ist*]”.¹⁷

11 When we speak of subjectivity and I-hood it should, of course, be borne in mind that what we are talking about is not entirely free of an *objective* element. Fichte himself emphasizes that “I make a distinction within myself between a knowing subject and a real force, which, as such, does not *know* but *is*.”¹⁸ He points out that what is subjective in me presupposes and requires something objective and *vice versa*, so that “I view the two as absolutely one”.¹⁹ Or, as he also puts it, “I do not know anything about myself without becoming something for myself through this knowledge –or, which is simply to say the same thing, without separating something subjective in me from something objective”.²⁰ And, what is more,

“through this very separation (...) the relation of what is subjective and what is objective to each other is also immediately posited. What is objective is supposed to subsist through itself, without any help from what is subjective and independently of it. What is subjective is supposed to depend on what is objective and to receive its material determination from it alone. Being exists on its own, but knowledge depends on being.”²¹

12 Fichte’s point is of course not that there is such a thing as an absolutely independent being of the I, which is there regardless of whether there is any knowledge (any *Wissen*) or not. He is speaking of the being of *subjectivity itself* – i.e. of the being of *Wissen* viz. of knowledge (i.e. of something that simply does not exist if there is no *Wissen*). In other words, Fichte’s point is precisely that in the case of the I there are not two completely separate elements, subjectivity and objectivity. His point is that *neither of them exists without the other*. His point is that in this case both elements result from a *Trennung* (a separation) that is part and parcel of the representation of I-hood as such:

“they [knowledge and being] are separated only within consciousness [...] and it is only through this separation that the two of them first arise. [...] I am required to bring about a separation simply in order to be able to say to myself “I”; and yet it is only by saying “I” and only insofar as I say this that such separation occurs”.²²

13 We can also express this by saying that the I is of such a nature that I must represent it both as *something I know because it is* and as *something which is only because I know it*: “I know myself because I am, and I am because I know myself [ich weiß von mir dadurch, daß ich bin und bin dadurch, daß ich von mir weiß]”.²³ And when Fichte emphasizes that in this case too what is subjective is supposed to depend on what is objective, etc., he is only stressing the fact that subjectivity or *Wissen*, too, has a cognitive relation to itself, and that this cognitive relation of subjectivity viz. *Wissen* to itself is such that it “witnesses” its own being and sees its knowledge of itself as determined by its own being.

14 But be that as is may (and even if there is no “chemically pure” subjectivity), the crucial point is that in order for there to be any efficacious activity of *mine*, activity must be started and determined by what is *subjective* (not by what is *objective*) in me. The action is *mine* if and only if it stems from *the subjective* in me. If it stems from something else, then the I (the subjective in me) does not start and determine the action in question: even if the I is there and plays a certain role, it is not itself the agent, it is *acted upon* (or it plays the role of the *agent* only insofar as it is *acted upon* –which amounts to saying that it is not the agent at all). The result being that, in the final analysis, the action (the *Wirksamkeit*) is not mine. Or, as Horace puts it, if the action is not started and determined by what is subjective in me, “duc[or] ut nervis alienis mobile lignum”²⁴ –I am not the *agent* of the activity in question; I am just a means (a link in the chain) of something else’s activity (a *puppet* in its hands, as it were).²⁵

- 15 But this is not all. On the other hand, there is a second absolute requirement without which it is impossible to represent such a thing as *meine Wirksamkeit*. As Fichte emphasizes, when I ascribe *activity to myself* “this certainly does not mean that I ascribe to myself activity in general, but rather that I ascribe to myself a determinate activity, precisely this one and not the other [eine *bestimmte*, gerade eine solche, und keine andere]”.²⁶ But an activity “becomes determinate or determined” “merely by having some resistance posited in opposition to it – posited in opposition: that is to say, a resistance that is thought by means of ideal activity and imagined to be standing over against the latter”.²⁷ In short: “Wherever and whenever you see activity, you necessarily see resistance as well, for otherwise you see no activity”.²⁸

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- 16 Now, on the one hand, this means that no activity can be represented without an object (without the object *it is related to*: without *its* object). On the other hand, it also means that the object in question is necessarily represented as something *objective* – that is, as something of such a nature that in relation to it I (the subjective in me) am “entirely dependent and thoroughly constrained”,²⁹ in the sense that “I have to consider myself purely as a cognizing subject and, in this cognition, entirely dependent upon objectivity”.³⁰ In other words, even if what is at stake is the representation of *subjective* action (i.e. of something started and determined by what is *subjective* in me, so that what is objective is determined by what is subjective, and not the other way around), the very representation of subjective action requires the representation of something *objective*, that is of something that is supposed to be there regardless of whether it is represented or not – and indeed so much so that, in this case, what is subjective (my representation of it) “is supposed to be determined by what is objective, and not vice versa”.³¹ And this is why Fichte speaks of *resistance* – and indeed of resistance to what he terms my *ideal activity*. The point is that the object of my action must be represented as something *being there* in the sense that it *impinges itself* upon my *Vorstellung* and binds my *Vorstellung* to what is there anyway, so that the *ideale Thätigkeit* sees itself *bound by* – and *to*– something *independent of it*.³²
- 17 But this is still not all; for Fichte “develops the distinctive features of this representation of resistance” and “does so merely from the manner in which it originates”.³³ According to him,
- “this resistance is represented as the opposite of activity [als das Gegentheil der Thätigkeit vorgestellt], hence as something that merely endures, lying there quietly and dead [als etwas nur bestehendes, ruhig, und todt vorliegendes], as something that merely *is* and in no way *acts* [das da bloß *ist*, keineswegs aber *handelt*], as something that strives only to continue to exist and thus resists the influence of freedom upon its territory only with that degree of force that is required to remain what it is, but is never able to attack the latter in its own territory [das nur zu bestehen strebt, und daher allerdings mit einem Maaße von Kraft zu bleiben was es ist, der Einwirkung der Freiheit auf seinem eigenen Boden widersteht, nimmermehr aber dieselbe auf ihrem Gebiet anzugreifen vermag]. In short, resistance is represented as *mere objectivity* [bloße Objectivität]. The proper name for something of this sort is *stuff* [Stoff].”³⁴
- 18 But what does this mean? *First*, to avoid any possible misunderstanding, it should be underlined that according to Fichte the said features are what must characterize the object of my efficacious action insofar as it plays this role (i. e. insofar as it is the object

of any such action). Put another way, the point is that, regardless of whether it may play other roles and therefore present other features, as long as it is represented as *something subject to my Wirksamkeit* (as long as it is represented as the *object of meine Wirksamkeit*) it is and must be represented as *mere Stoff*.

- 19 *Secondly*, it should be borne in mind that Fichte is referring to *two kinds* of resistance, not just to one. On the one hand, as pointed out above, the object of my *Wirksamkeit* must resist what Fichte terms the *ideal activity (ideale Thätigkeit)*: we cannot represent the object of one's *Wirksamkeit* without representing it as something that *impinges itself* upon one's *Vorstellung* and binds one's *Vorstellung* to what is there anyway. But, on the other hand, Fichte is also referring to the object's resistance to the *reale Thätigkeit*³⁵—his point is that, even if the object is represented as *mere Stoff*, it must be assigned at least some degree of resistance to *real activity* i.e. of resistance to one's *Wirksamkeit*, so that the latter consists precisely in the power to overcome this resistance. In other words, the object must have its own *density*, as it were; the fact a) that it has its own density and offers at least some resistance to one's *Wirksamkeit* and b) that this resistance is overcome is what *gives reality to one's action* (what makes it *real Wirken, real efficacy, real action*).
- 20 But *thirdly*, it should be borne in mind that these two kinds of resistance are intrinsically connected to each other. The point is that the object's resistance to real activity viz. to one's *Wirksamkeit* is represented as *stemming* from the fact that its independent existence (its being-itself-what-it-is – i.e. the very core of its resistance to the ideal activity) is something intrinsically *bound to itself* and which therefore *resists any interference with itself*. When Fichte contends that the object “strives to continue to exist” (*zu bestehen strebt*) “and thus resists the influence” of *Wirksamkeit* “upon its territory” (*der Einwirkung der Freiheit auf seinem eigenen Boden widersteht*), what he has in mind is this *Gebundenheit* and not something incompatible with its being *mere Stoff* (that is: “etwas nur bestehendes, ruhig, und todt vorliegendes, das da bloß ist, keineswegs aber handelt”³⁶).
- 21 So much for the *I* and *objectivity*. Fichte calls them “the two extremes of the entire world of reason”³⁷ in order to emphasize that all our possible representations lie *between these two extremes*: no representation goes beyond the one or the other, for there is nothing more subjective than the *I*, and nothing more objective than “the absolutely self-positing being (of the material *Stoff*)”.³⁸ In short, the representation of the *I* is as *subjective* and the representation of what Fichte terms *Stoff* is as *objective* as a representation can possibly be. Furthermore, Fichte's point is that neither of these two extremes has to do with a “chemically pure” subject or a “chemically pure” object. Both entail objective as well as subjective elements. As pointed out above, the representation of the *I* entails an indispensable objective component. And, contrary to what may seem, the representation of “the absolutely self-positing being (of the material *Stoff*)” contains an indispensable subjective component. When all is said and done, the difference between these two extremes concerns what might be termed the role played by the subjective and the objective element, their “*relation of forces*” or, as Fichte puts it, “das Verhältnis des subjectiven, und objectiven zueinander” (“the relation of what is subjective and what is objective to each other”).³⁹ In the case of the *I*, the subjective element is the pole around which everything revolves, so that what is subjective determines what is objective. In the case of the object viz. of what Fichte terms *Stoff*, it goes the other way around: what is objective determines what is subjective.

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- 22 But what interests us here is the fact that any representation of *meine Wirksamkeit* must entail the representation of these two extremes and indeed in such a manner that they play the role of the two poles between which everything else takes place. In other words, the representation of *meine Wirksamkeit* covers the distance between the two extremes in question, so that they define the interval – the whole field, as it were – of one’s efficacious action, and the latter is defined by the fact that it reaches *from one extreme to the other*.
- 23 But this is not all; for, on the other hand, Fichte also stresses the fact that the representation of these two extremes does not exhaust the *manifold* of representations that are entailed in the representation of one’s efficacious action.
- 24 In this respect, four things must be borne in mind.
- 25 *First*, all the other representations Fichte refers to fall within the interval between these two extremes, both in the sense that they are less subjective than the one and less objective than the other and in the sense that they have to do with the representation of *what leads from one extreme to the other* (or, as we might also say, with a *chain of mediating instances* between one extreme and the other).
- 26 *Secondly*, this means that all the other representations that according to Fichte are also entailed in the representation of *meine Wirksamkeit* concern, as he puts it, *besondere Ansichten* – particular ways of looking at or particular aspects – of the relation (that is, the separation and correspondence: the *Trennung und Übereinstimmung*)⁴⁰ between what is subjective and what is objective.⁴¹ In other words, what is at stake in each of these various representations is a *particular kind of connection* between the subjective and the objective element: what might be described in grammatical terms as an *inflection or declension des Verhältnisses des subjectiven, und objectiven zueinander* (of the relation of what is subjective and what is objective to each other).
- 27 *Thirdly*, Fichte’s point is that each of these other representations he refers to is as indispensable for the representation of *meine Wirksamkeit* as the two said extremes. The representation of the extremes alone (I-hood and objectivity) is not enough to constitute a representation of *meine Wirksamkeit*: everything depends on the representation of the *transition* from one extreme to the other – i. e. on the representation of the process leading from the I to objectivity.
- 28 *Fourthly*, what characterizes the manifold of representations Fichte refers to is utter *asymmetry*: its *unidirectional* character. *Meine Wirksamkeit* is all about the transition from what is subjective to what is objective – and not the other way around. Fichte expresses this by speaking of the influence (*Einwirkung*) of what is *subjective* “upon the territory of objectivity”, while the latter is unable to “attack the former in its own territory.” The point is that the representation of such a thing as *meine Wirksamkeit* entails a distribution of different roles: it is all about the *subject’s* capacity to *exert influence beyond its confines: in the territory of objectivity*; it is all about the *subject going beyond itself* and, as Fichte puts it, “attacking the object in its own territory”, so that the subject plays the role of the *agent* while the object plays the role of *what is acted upon*.
- 29 The above sets the framework for Fichte’s more detailed description of the manifold of representations that are entailed as *condiciones sine quibus non* in the representation of such a thing as *meine Wirksamkeit*.

- 30 Fichte gives a first and provisional glimpse of this manifold in section 4 of the Introduction. The representation of *meine Wirksamkeit* must include a) a “representation of the *Stoff* that endures while I am acting efficaciously and is absolutely unchangeable thereby” (*die Vorstellung des bei meiner Wirksamkeit fortdauernden und durch sie nicht zu verändernden Stoffes*), b) a “representation of the *properties* of this *Stoff*, properties that are changed by my efficacy” (*die Vorstellung der Beschaffenheiten des Stoffes, die durch meine Wirksamkeit verändert werden*), c) a “representation of this progressive process of change” (*die Vorstellung der fortschreitenden Veränderung*), which continues d) “until the shape that I intended is there” (*bis die Gestalt dasteht, die ich beabsichtigte*).⁴² This first and provisional glimpse (which focuses primarily on the representation of the *object* of *meine Wirksamkeit*) is completed in sections 7, 8, and 9, where more attention is paid to the complexity of what is subjective viz. of what leads *from the subject to the object*.
- 31 In sections 7, 8 and 9 Fichte describes in the following terms the manifold of representations that are required if there is to be any representation of *meine Wirksamkeit*:
- a) The action must be represented in such a way that its starting point is the unified and indivisible I (*das Eine, untheilbare Ich*), insofar as what is subjective in me has the power to reach out beyond its own bounds towards what is objective in me, so that “that which acts upon the body” (viz. upon objective being, upon the *Stoff*) “is what is objective in me, the real force” (*dies objective in mir, die reelle Kraft*).⁴³
- 32 b) I cannot represent this activity otherwise than as the “causality of a concept”:⁴⁴ as “the causality of a mere concept exercised on what is objective, and to this extent the concept in question is not in turn determined by something else that is objective but is determined absolutely in and through itself.”⁴⁵ In other words, this activity cannot be represented otherwise than as the *designing of a concept* (“Entwerfen eines [...] Begriffs”)⁴⁶ – of a concept from which an objective determination is to follow (“aus welchem eine objective Bestimmung erfolgen soll”).⁴⁷ The representation of *meine Wirksamkeit* must take the shape of the representation of being as arising from a concept (“ein Seyn aus einem Begriffe”).⁴⁸ In short, my activity must be represented as a *Zweckbegriff* (as the *concept of an end*).⁴⁹ Or, as Fichte puts it, I must “presuppose a concept designed by myself [einen von mir selbst entworfenen Begriff], which is supposed to guide my efficacious acting and in which the latter is both formally grounded and materially determined”.⁵⁰
- c) But this is not all. As Fichte points out, I cannot represent *meine Wirksamkeit* without adding something else –namely “the representation of a will” (*die Vorstellung eines Willens*).⁵¹ As he puts it, it is indispensable that the concept itself appears to me as something objective (*daß der Begriff selbst mir als etwas objectives erscheine*);⁵² that is, I must also represent the transition from the *Zweckbegriff* as such to its *realization*. I must represent the *change* by means of which the *Zweckbegriff* becomes more objective than itself (this is what Fichte is talking about when he writes that “the concept of an end, viewed objectively, is called an act of willing”;⁵³ i.e., I must represent *myself as really acting* or my *Zweckbegriff* as *having a real effect upon what is objective* (*auf den Stoff wirkend*).⁵⁴ Or, as Fichte also puts it, I must represent something subjective in me as transformed into something objective, the *concept of an end* as transformed into a *decision of the will* (*ein Subjectives in mir selbst sich in ein Objectives, der Zweckbegriff in einen Willensentschluß*).⁵⁵ In short, I must represent a *second positing* of the *Zweckbegriff* –the

one by means of which it reaches out beyond its own bounds towards what is objective and has an effect upon *Stoff*.

- 33 d) “Now I am supposed to have an effect upon [...] *Stoff*. But it is impossible for me to think of this *Stoff* as being affected by anything other than something that is itself *Stoff*” (*aber es ist mir unmöglich eine Wirkung auf ihn zu denken, außer durch das, was selbst Stoff ist*).⁵⁶ “Consequently, since I do – as I must – think of myself as having an effect on this *Stoff*, I also become for myself *Stoff* (*wie ich mich daher, wie ich muß, wirkend denke auf ihn, werde ich mir selbst zu Stoff*); and insofar as I view myself in this way, I call myself a *material body*. Viewed as a principle of efficacy in the world of bodies, I am an articulated body (*bin ein artikulierter Leib*); and the representation of my body is itself nothing but the representation of myself as a cause in the world of bodies and is therefore indirectly only a certain way of looking at my own absolute activity” (*und die Vorstellung meines Leibes selbst ist nichts anderes, denn die Vorstellung meiner selbst, als Ursache in der Körperwelt, mithin mittelbar nichts anderes, als eine gewisse Ansicht meiner absoluten Thätigkeit*).⁵⁷
- 34 In this regard, Fichte emphasizes two points.
- 35 On the one hand, he stresses the fact that “the will is supposed to exercise [...] an immediate causality upon my body”, so that “the body as an instrument, that is, the articulated body [die Artikulation] extends only as far as this immediate causality of the will extends”.⁵⁸ The will is therefore also different from the body, and it appears as not being the same as the body (*der Wille wird daher vom Leibe auch unterschieden; erscheint daher nicht als dasselbe*).⁵⁹ In other words, what constitutes one’s body as such is first the fact that it is represented as *Stoff* and secondly the fact that the *Stoff* in question is represented as *directly* controlled by one’s will, so that the will can have an *immediate* effect upon it.⁶⁰ One’s body is that part of the field of objectivity (i. e., that part of what is represented as exterior to one’s will and exterior to one’s I-hood) that can be immediately acted upon by one’s will. In short, one’s body has to do with the representation of “something subjective in me transformed into something objective”, only that this time what is at stake is not the transformation “of a *Zweckbegriff* into a *decision of the will*”, but rather “the transformation of the latter into a certain modification of my body”.⁶¹ The emphasis is therefore on the contrast between *Wille* and *Stoff* viz. between *will* and *body*.
- 36 But, on the other hand, Fichte also emphasizes a second point. He writes: “This distinction, however, is nothing more than yet another separation of what is subjective from what is objective, or more specifically, it is a particular aspect of the original separation. In this relationship the will is what is subjective and the body is what is objective (*der Wille ist in diesem Verhältnisse das Subjective, und der Leib das Objective*).”⁶² And in section 9 he speaks of something that “is entirely the same (...), simply viewed from a different side” (*ganz dasselbe (...), nur angesehen von einer anderen Seite*) – so that “the causality of the concept with respect to what is objective” appears, “respectively, as will and as body when viewed from different sides”.⁶³ The point seems to be the following: my body is not just that part of the realm of *Stoff* which is represented as being immediately under the power of my will (and which therefore can be immediately changed by my will). If this were all there were to it, then the body would *not* appear as *part of me* – it would *not* be *endowed with I-hood*: it would not be *my* body. It would appear as the *nearest part* of what is *exterior* or as the first field of implementation (viz. as the permanent exterior instrument for the implementation of) my will. But the

point is that what constitutes my body as such is not only this, but rather an *equation* between *will* and *Stoff*: an equation owing to which my acts of will and the immediate material starting points of my intervention in the realm of *Stoff* are *equated with each other*. In short, what constitutes *my* body is the fact that I represent such a thing as *Stoff* with will (with *my* will) or my will as *Stoff* (and this means *Stoff* with I-hood or I-hood as *Stoff*). In section 8 Fichte insists on this point almost *ad nauseam*:

“wie ich mich daher, wie ich muß, wirkend denke auf ihn, werde ich mir selbst zu *Stoff*; und inwiefern ich so mich erblicke nenne ich mich einen materiellen Leib. Ich, als Prinzip einer Wirksamkeit in der Körperwelt angeschaut, bin ein artikulierter Leib, und die Vorstellung meines Leibes selbst ist nichts anderes, denn die Vorstellung *meiner selbst* als Ursache in der Körperwelt”.⁶⁴

37 The emphasis is therefore not on the contrast between *Wille* and *Stoff* (*viz.* between *will* and *body*), but on the contrast between *myself* (*including my body*) and *what is exterior*.⁶⁵

38 e) But this is not all. The manifold of representations that are required if there is to be any representation of *meine Wirksamkeit* must include still other elements. Fichte focuses on what he terms “my actual causality” (*meine wirkliche Kausalität*), and “the change that it is supposed to ensue thereby in the sensible world” (*die Veränderung, die dadurch in der Sinnenwelt erfolgen soll*).⁶⁶ And not surprisingly he contrasts the modifications of my body with all other modifications in the realm of *Stoff* (*i.e.* with the whole range of non-immediate effects of my will upon what is exterior to me).

“Insofar as something subjective in me is transformed into something objective, the concept of an end into a decision of the will, and the latter in turn into a certain modification of my body: to this extent, I obviously represent myself as changed. But this last item that I attribute to myself, my physical body, is supposed to be connected with the entire world of bodies; and thus if the former is intuited as changed, so is the latter necessarily viewed as changed as well.”⁶⁷

39 In other words, any representation of *meine Wirksamkeit* must include a representation of the *connection* between *my body* (that is *my will as body*) and *the exterior* – or, to be more precise, it must include a representation of my body as a centre of *action upon other bodies viz. other Stoff*.

40 And in this respect Fichte emphasizes two points. On the one hand, he repeats and explains his thesis concerning what is changeable and unchangeable in the realm of *Stoff*, insofar as *Stoff* is acted upon by my will and constitutes the object of my action:

“The thing that can be changed as a result of my efficacy, that is the specific constitution or the properties of nature, is entirely the same as that which cannot be changed; *i.e.*, it is mere matter, simply viewed from a different side – just as, above, the causality of the concept with respect to what is objective appeared, respectively, as will and as body when viewed from different sides. Viewed subjectively and in connection with me as an active subject or agent, what is changeable is nature; what is unchangeable is this same nature, viewed entirely and solely objectively, and this is unchangeable for the reasons indicated above.”⁶⁸

41 On the other hand, he points out that my body is represented not just as a centre of action upon *some* other bodies, but as a centre of possible action upon *all of them* (upon the whole realm of *Stoff*). In other words, not just part of the latter is represented as being in connection with my body –that is with me– *as an active subject or agent*: what characterizes the representation of my body is a *universal network* of possible actions connecting it with *everything else*, so that everything else (and this means all *Stoff*) is represented as a possible object of *meine Wirksamkeit*.⁶⁹

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- 42 The above enables us to highlight some main features of Fichte's account of *meine Wirksamkeit*, in particular the following:
- 43 a) Fichte depicts a *continuum* of mediation between the two extremes, I-hood and objectivity, and the gradual transition from the more subjective and less objective to the less subjective and more objective. The main steps of this transition are 1) the subjective in me (I-hood), 2) the *real force* in me, 3) the *Entwerfen von Zweckbegriffen*, 4) my will viz. my *Willensentschlüsse*, 5) my body, 6) my body's action upon other bodies, 7) the action of other bodies upon other bodies. Furthermore, all subjective action upon *Stoff* – and this means both 5), 6) and 7) – takes place in the realm of 8) *what is changeable in objectivity*, as opposed to 9) *what cannot be changed* – the point being that the former is more subjective and less objective than the latter, since the latter defines itself by the fact that it remains *completely out of reach of any subjective action*.
- 44 b) This continuum shapes the inner structure of *meine Wirksamkeit*: the *wave of my action*, as it were; and the point is that 2) includes 1), while 3) includes 1) and 2), and 4) includes 1), 2), and 3) – and so on and so forth; pretty much the same holds true for 7), since the action of other bodies upon other bodies that is at stake here is the one that results from *my body's* intervention upon other bodies (i.e., from 6); as for 9), even if it is all about something completely impervious to subjective action, it cannot be represented without representing the whole sequence from 1) to 8).
- 45 c) This continuum has to do with a transition from the *one* (I-hood: *das Eine, untheilbare Ich*) to the *many*. *Multiplicity* comes into play in the transition from 1) to 2), while 3) – the designing of *Zweckbegriffe* – stands not only for a new development step, but for one that is intrinsically related to *multiple Zweckbegriffe* – to a *manifold* (and indeed to a “big bang”) of possibilities; as pointed out above, 4) (*will viz. my Willensentschlüsse*) has to do with a *second positing* of 3), and there is no assignable limit to the representation of the manifold of *Stoff viz. of my immediate and mediate action upon it*. On the other hand, it should also be noted that the successive links of this continuum (viz. of this chain) of *meine Wirksamkeit* move *further and further away from the “source”*, namely from the *subjective in me* (viz. the most subjective in me: *I-hood* itself), but in such a way that *they never lose the connection with it*, so that *they all bear the imprint of something subjective*.
- 46 d) All *subsequent* components of this continuum have to do with the *fulfilment* of an essential feature of the *preceding* ones, namely the fact that each of them *goes beyond itself* and implies *something more than itself*. In other words, each new step is something the preceding components were already *directed to* and were already *all about*; the result being that 2) *expresses and fulfils* 1), insofar as 1) goes itself beyond itself and implies something more than itself, 3) *expresses and fulfils* 2) – and therefore 1) – insofar as both 1) and 2) go beyond themselves and imply something more than themselves, and so on and so forth.
- 47 e) On the whole, Fichte's *continuum of meine Wirksamkeit* is divided into *two segments*: the first is characterized by the fact that it belongs to the realm of *subjectivity*, while the second belongs to the realm of *objectivity*. The point is that, even if 2) is more objective than 1), and 3) is more objective than 2) (so that, for instance, one's will is more objective than the designing of *Zweckbegriffe*), the fact remains that the result of this *Objektiverwerden* (the result of this something-subjective-being-turned-into-something-more objective) – namely, in this case, one's will – is still something *essentially subjective*.

And in this regard the representation of *my body* marks the *turning point*. From 1) to 4) (that is from I-hood to will) all *Objektiverwerden* remains *in the confines of subjectivity*. Conversely, from 6) to 9) all stages of development of *meine Wirksamkeit* are characterized by the fact that they are supposed to take place *beyond the confines of subjectivity*; so that what characterizes them is an *inversion of the relation of forces* between what is subjective and what is objective, the result being that even if there are still some subjective components, these have the nature of *subjective elements in the realm of objectivity*. In short, the representation of *my body* makes the *transition* from the field of subjectivity (where all *objective* elements are something objective *in the realm of subjectivity*) to the field of objectivity (where all *subjective* elements are something subjective *in the realm of objectivity*) – and *combines both realms*.⁷⁰

- 48 f) But this is not all. What characterizes the representation of my body is not just the fact that in this case the *Objektiverwerden* (*the turning of something subjective into something objective*) goes beyond the confines of subjectivity, so that nothing less than *Stoff* is involved. As mentioned before, Fichte's point is that my body is characterized by what we have termed an *equation* between *will* and *body*, *I-hood* and *Stoff*. In other words, in Fichte's view the representation of my body is intrinsically complex in the sense that it includes both the representation of the *difference* between my *will* and *Stoff* (and therefore between my will and that part of the realm of *Stoff* that is immediately subject to its influence) and the representation of their *equation* viz. of their complete *permeation* (i.e. of something that is *uno tenore* will and *Stoff*, *Stoff* and *I-hood*).⁷¹

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- 49 Now, all this may give the impression that one's body is just a particular *link* in the middle of this very complex set of representations: a representation among many others, a particular form of *declension des Verhältnisses des Subjectiven, und Objectiven zueinander*: something *circumscribed* and therefore *isolable*.
- 50 But this impression proves to be misleading.
- 51 On the one hand, Fichte's point is precisely that my body is not just an intermediate instance between the more subjective and the more objective components of the said continuum. His point is that such a thing as the representation of my body is intrinsically complex and presupposes (and contains in itself) *the whole sequence, from the representation of I-hood to the representation of my will*. In other words, the representation of my body is not possible without the representation of I-hood, without the representation of myself as a real force, without the designing of *Zweckbegriffe*, without the representation of my will –and then, of course, a) without the representation of a sphere of “immediate causality of the will” viz. of immediate material starting points for my intervention in the realm of *Stoff* and b) without the above-mentioned representation of the *equation* between all these terms (of their complete *permeation*, i.e. of something that is *uno tenore* I-hood, real force, etc. –and *Stoff*). And the point is that none of these representations can occur separately, that they all entail and imply each other.
- 52 This is a very rough outline, and among other things it should be noted that everything depends on three crucial points: on the one hand, it all depends both a) on the connection between what might be termed the *manifold of my will* (the “*inner keyboard*” of my will viz. the “*inner keyboard*” of my possible *Willensentschlüsse*) and the narrower

manifold of “immediate causality of my will” (the narrower manifold of immediate material starting points for my intervention in the realm of *Stoff*, that is, the “inner keyboard” Fichte’s *articulate body* is all about) and b) on the fact that these two “inner keyboards” are equated and represented as *one*; on the other hand, it also depends c) on the fact that the narrower manifold of “immediate causality of my will” (the narrower manifold of immediate material starting points for my intervention in the realm of *Stoff*) is represented as something *stable*, so that all my possible action is mediated by the *very same* set of material starting points (by a *stable* portion of *Stoff*, etc.)⁷²

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- 53 But we have no time left to examine this point in any detail. Instead, we would like to emphasize that there is still another reason why *my body* is not just a representation among many others. As pointed out above, in Fichte’s view, the representation of *my body* includes the representation of its relation with everything else (at least with everything else in the realm of *Stoff*) – and this all-encompassing net of connections is as constitutive of *my body* as all the above. This is what Fichte’s description of 6), 7), 8) and 9) is all about. Fichte’s claim is that the representation of *my body* is entailed in the representation of the whole realm of *Stoff* viz. of the whole realm of objectivity, insofar as the latter is represented as the realm of *meine Wirksamkeit*. So that, contrary to what may seem to be the case, *everything else* is intrinsically related to *my body* and defined in terms of its connection with it; the result being that the realm of objectivity has the shape of what might be described as a *centred multiplicity* or a *centred manifold*: a multiplicity of concentric circles of objectivity, as it were, revolving around *my body*, and constituted in such a way that everything in them defines itself a) both by being and by not being changeable, i.e. both by being and by not being subject to my action (that is to the action of *my body*) and b) by various degrees of *proximity and distance* (N.B. of *action-related* proximity and distance) to their being acted upon by *meine Wirksamkeit*, that is by *my body*.
- 54 The combination of these two insights shows that *one’s body* is not just an *inflected form* among many others in the framework of what we have termed the *declension des Verhältnisses des subjectiven, und objectiven zueinander* (the *declension* of the “relation of what is subjective and what is objective to each other”). Fichte’s point is that *my body* is essentially constituted both by a) all the other *inflected forms* that make it possible and pave the way for it (namely the I, the I’s *real force*, the designing of *Zweckbegriffe*, and *my will*) and b) by all the other “inflected forms” of the said relation *my body* is intrinsically related to (namely the realm of *Stoff* – and in this realm both what is changeable and what is unchangeable, that is, both the more subjective and the more objective side of it). In short, *my body* – this particular inflected form of the said relation – *recapitulates* and *anticipates all the other* inflected forms, and indeed so much so that it is defined by (and by the same token defines) all of them.⁷³
- 55 We must insist on this point. According to Fichte, there is something *global* about *my body*, both a) in the sense that *it defines itself by its relation to everything else* and b) in the sense that *everything else defines itself by its relation to it*. But this is not all – and in a way it misses the decisive point. For the decisive point is that *my body* has a *global character* or a *global bearing* in the sense that it plays the role of *the centre around which everything*

else revolves: everything else “orbits” my body and is essentially defined by its *practical* – i.e. by its *action-related* – connection with it.

- 56 But there is something inaccurate in this account. To be more precise, one must say a) that everything else revolves *around the I* and b) that everything else defines itself by the particular way it revolves *around the I* – so that the latter is the real *centre* of the *centred manifold* we are talking about. As for *my body*, it defines itself both a) by the fact that it, too, revolves around the I (that it revolves around my I-hood, my activity, my *Zweckbegriffe*, my will), so that it is *intrinsically I-related*, and b) by the fact that it is *equated* with the I and therefore *partakes of its protagonist role* – the result being that everything else *in the realm of Stoff* revolves around *my body*. In other words, *revolving around my body is the way all Stoff revolves around me*. And everything in the realm of *Stoff* defines itself by different ways of being related to my articulated body and what it stands for. On the one hand, all the different components of the realm of *Stoff* have in common the fact that they are *intrinsically body-related* (N.B.: *my-body-related*) and revolve around my *articulated body*. On the other hand, they differ from one another both a) by their particular relation to my *Zweckbegriffe* and b) by their different position with respect to my articulated body (*viz.* to what Fichte terms the various “starting points” the articulated body is made of) – that is, they differ from one another by the “direction of action” in which they are to be found and acted upon and by their “practical distance” (by different degrees of proximity and distance) to my articulated body (*viz.* to the “starting points” it is made of): by the fact that they have to do with *short-range* or *long-range* action, etc.
- 57 As mentioned before, this is a crucial point. Fichte emphasizes that what appears to us is not just a *manifold* (which as such could be *de-centred* or *a-centred*, *multi-centred* or whatever). On the contrary, the manifold appearing to us is of a very particular nature: it has a *centred character* and is *decisively shaped by this feature*. On the one hand, *everything* in it is *intrinsically I-centred*; and on the other hand, the whole realm of *Stoff* is *intrinsically my-body-centred*. The bottom line is that these two phenomena are closely connected with each other; for my body plays the said role in the realm of *Stoff* precisely because it is *equated* with *me* – that is, because it is *my body*.⁷⁴

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- 58 But this is not all. There are still two further points to take into account.
- 59 The first has to do with *finitude* *viz.* with the fact that *my body* is *finite*. As mentioned before, my body represents a “bottleneck”, so to speak, in at least two senses. On the one hand, the sphere of my articulated body (the “inner keyboard” of what Fichte terms the immediate “starting points” of my action: the sphere of *Stoff* *directly subject to my will*) is much narrower than the realm of my *Zweckbegriffe* – and indeed of my will. On the other hand, the sphere of my articulated body (the part of the realm of *Stoff* that is *directly* subject to my will) is also *immeasurably smaller* than the whole realm of *Stoff*. As a matter of fact, it comprises only a *very tiny portion* of it.
- 60 Let us take a closer look at this.
- 61 On the one hand, the point is that the sphere of my immediate action is limited: it does not extend throughout the whole realm of *Stoff*. The latter is *divided in two*, not only because, as mentioned before, it comprises both what can be changed and what cannot be changed,⁷⁵ but also because it falls into two parts: a) the realm of *what is directly*

subject to my will, and b) the realm of what is not directly subject to my will.⁷⁶ And this is what Fichte's characterization of the various points my articulated body is made of – namely their characterization as “starting points” – is all about: they are not only points of intervention in the realm of *Stoff*, they leave room for and give rise to further intervention or further action (further transformation of the realm of *Stoff*). In other words, the point is that there is no such thing as a sphere of direct intervention as wide as the whole realm of *Stoff*: there is no such thing as a total body. Or, as we can also put it: a significant part of the realm of *Stoff* is not my body.⁷⁷ But, on the other hand, this is not all; for what characterizes my articulated body is not only the fact that it is just a part of the realm of *Stoff*: it is rather the fact that it represents only a very small part of the said realm. And the question is: is this just a matter of fact or is there something more to it? In Fichte's view it is more than just a matter of fact. The relative smallness of one's body is intrinsically related to the possibility of further actions viz. of complex actions. The greater the sphere of direct intervention (i. e. the greater the sphere corresponding to my body), the smaller the room left for the continuation of my action viz. for further action. The smaller the sphere of direct intervention (i.e. the smaller the sphere corresponding to my body), the bigger the room left for the continuation of my action viz. for further action. In other words, if my body were much bigger (and a fortiori if the whole realm of *Stoff* played the role of my body), the remaining scope for further action viz. for complex action (the scope for possible action) would be much narrower. Most possible actions would be accomplished *uno tenore, in one fell swoop*. And pretty much the same holds true for the relationship between my body and the manifold of my *Zweckbegriffe* viz. between my body and my will. The point seems to be that there is a correlation between the smallness of my body and the realm of possible action. One might also say that there is an inverse proportion between the size of my body and the realm of possible action.

- 62 In the *Sittenlehre* 1798 Fichte does not address this question in connection with the finite size of my body. But he suggests something along these lines when he discusses the question as to whether my body must be represented as something *movable*.
- 63 This brings us to the second point, namely the fact that, according to him, in order to play its role as an essential component of *meine Wirksamkeit*, my body is, and has to be, represented as *movable (beweglich)* – and indeed as something *movable in many different ways (eine mannichfaltige Beweglichkeit)*.
- 64 Let us take a closer look at this.
- 65 In §7 following on from his analysis of what he terms “Rang A” (“group A”),⁷⁸ Fichte depicts a chain of “practical crossroads”, or rather a *complex network of chains of “practical crossroads”* that forms the structure of every *continued* (viz. of every *complex*) *action*:

“To each of those points, moreover, several other points attach themselves, and in and through these new points, mediated through the former ones, the I is able to become a cause in manifold ways. I said that *several [points are attached] to each one [of the starting points]*: for if, starting from each of these points, one could act in only one way, then there would be no free acting beginning from the point in question, and thus there would be no second acting at all, but only a continuation of the first. Let us call this system [of secondary points attached to the original starting points] “group B”. To each single point of group B there are attached, in turn, several points of a third group, group C; and thus, to illustrate this with an image, around a fixed middle point there is described an infinite circular area, within which each point can be thought of as bordering upon infinitely many others.”⁷⁹

66 Later on, in §9, he sums up his views on this topic in the following terms:

“As a product of nature, therefore, I am matter; more precisely and in accordance to what was said above, I am organized matter that constitutes a determinate whole: *I am my body*.

Furthermore, my will is supposed to be able to unite with me the things of nature or to bring them into a relationship with me. This union or relationship is connected with certain parts of my organized body, and my body is the immediate instrument of my will. The parts in question must therefore stand under the dominion of my will; and, since we are talking about spatial relationship, then these parts [of my body], as parts, i.e., in relation to the whole of my body, must be movable, and my body itself must be movable in relation to nature as a whole. Moreover, since this movement is supposed to depend on a freely designed and indeterminately modifiable concept, my body must be movable in many different ways – Such a construction of the body is called articulation. If I am to be free, then my body must be articulated.”⁸⁰

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67 We have no time to discuss these matters in any detail. But it is important to highlight some key points.

68 *First*, Fichte emphasizes that the relation between my body and the changes it gives rise to in the realm of *Stoff* is not such that my body can do no more than trigger changes in its immediate surroundings and powerlessly watch as these changes unleash a chain of effects. On the contrary, the “inner keyboard” of the above mentioned “starting points” (the “starting points” the articulated body is made of) is, as it were, a *changeable keyboard*: my body has the possibility to change what it is immediately attached to (it is able to change its own situation: to change its connections –i. e., to change its relation to other components of the manifold of *Stoff*). And this means that I can move my *sphere of direct intervention* to another area of the realm of *Stoff* and thereby change what can be immediately changed by my body; which in turn means that my efficacious action (*meine Wirkung*) upon *Stoff* can be *controlled* and *steered* in a *sequence of interventions*. And this makes all the difference: actions differ from one another not only because they have different starting points (and are, as it were, the rigid result of their starting points);⁸¹ actions differ from each other because there is such a thing as *chains of actions*⁸² (constituted in such a manner that action B is made possible by action A, action C is made possible by action B, action D is made possible by action C, etc.). In other words, actions can be multiplied because they take different *routes* or follow a different combination of steps. The very same manifold of *Stoff* is multiplied, as it were, by *different ways of touring it* –that is, the very same field of possible action is multiplied by a *variety of courses of action*; the result being what might be described as the *practical* (viz. the *action-related*) counterpart of Leibniz’s idea of *perspectival multiplication*.⁸³

69 *Secondly*, this is what Fichte’s description of the connection between what he terms “Rang A” (one’s immediate “starting points” –i. e., *my body*) and what he terms “Rang B”, “Rang C”, “Rang D”, etc., etc.,⁸⁴ is all about. *Complex action* has the form of a very intricate network of possible changes of the position of *my body* relative to the other components of the realm of *Stoff* (that is, a very complex network of modifications of the *distance* between *my body* and the other components of the realm of *Stoff* – and this means a very complex network of possible *changes of what can be immediately changed* by the “starting points” of *my Wirksamkeit*).⁸⁵ Fichte speaks of a *complex network of “practical*

crossroads”, leading to “practical crossroads”, leading to “practical crossroads”, etc. Or, to be more precise, he speaks of a network of “practical crossroads” constituted in such a way that *each* path leads, in turn (and leads *immediately*) to a further “practical crossroad”, and so on and so forth. As a result, the realm of *Stoff* (that is, the field of *meine Wirksamkeit*) has the form of the “infinite circular area” (the *unendliche Cirkelfläche*) –the immense complex of concentric circles– he alludes to. And the point is also that this complex of concentric circles is *changeable* –and that change is what it is all about. In a way, this complex *always has the same centre*, for its centre is *my body*. But the point is that *the centre* –namely *my body*– can *move its position* and thereby *change the form of the whole complex*.

- 70 *Thirdly*, all this means that, in the final analysis, *every single component* of the realm of *Stoff* is represented as a possible object of an *immediate* action of *my body* upon it –and this is so even if the *Stoff* in question is *at a huge distance* from *my body* (so that an *immediate* action upon it presupposes an *immense* –and even a *de facto impossible*– “voyage”);⁸⁶ for the fact that the “voyage” viz. the action in question cannot be performed does not change the way I represent distant *Stoff*: it is still represented as the object of a possible *immediate* action (as something I *would be able to act immediately upon*, if the distance separating it from *my body* could be negotiated). And so the bottom line is this. On the one hand, every object defines itself by this *possibility of immediate action upon it*. On the other hand, *my body* is not least defined by its connection with this infinite field of *possible immediate action* (with the *unendliche Cirkelfläche* –the “infinite circular area”– of possible *immediate Wirkung* Fichte refers to). In short, *my body* defines itself as the “thing” that can bring itself to *immediate action* or *immediate Wirkung* upon everything else.
- 71 *Fourthly*, as the above quotes from §§ 7 and 9⁸⁷ clearly show, all this has to do with the connection between *my body* (viz. what Fichte terms *Artikulation*) and *Freisein* viz. *freie Wirksamkeit*. Fichte’s point is the correlation between a) *my body* as a *finite articulated body* and b) *the utmost multiplication of the field of possibility*. In other words, Fichte tries to show that there is an intrinsic correlation between *my body* (this tiny piece of *Stoff* –that is, Pascal’s “reed”⁸⁸) and the *maximum expansion of the realm of possibility* viz. the *maximum diversity of possible action*. In Fichte’s view, the former is a condition of possibility for the latter.

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- 72 But we must conclude. To be sure, this is not the whole story of Fichte’s account of *my body* –both because it had to be somewhat simplified and because there are other equally important developments, and other chapters to this story. But I think it is a crucial part of the story and one that can be told in twenty-something pages.

NOTES

1. SSL, GA I/5, 21-30 (FSW IV, 1-12). If not mentioned otherwise, all emphasis in original.
2. SSL, GA I/5, 22 (FSW IV, 2).
3. SSL, GA I/5, 22. (FSW IV, 3.). I follow Breazeale and Zöller's translation with very slight changes. Cf. Fichte, J. G., *The System of Ethics According to the Principles of the Wissenschaftslehre*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005.
4. SSL, GA I/5, 29 (F SW IV, 12).
5. SSL, GA I/5, 21 (FSW IV, 2): "[...] daß wir auf die Welt wirken können."
6. SSL, GA I/5, 21 (FSW IV, 2).
7. SSL, GA I/5, 22 (FSW IV, 2): " [...] daß mit unsern Vorstellungen ein Seyn übereinstimme, und daraus folge [...]"
8. Ibid.: " [...] einige unsrer Vorstellungen für den Grund eines Seyns zu halten [...]"
9. In this respect Fichte highlights what he considers to be a *one-sided approach* to the central question of the connection between our representations and what is supposed to exist "in itself". First, he emphasizes that there are two sides to this question: "The first way in which what is subjective and what is objective are unified, or viewed as harmonizing, is when *I engage in cognition*. In this case, what is subjective follows from what is objective; the former is supposed to agree with the latter. *Theoretical* philosophy investigates how we arrive at the assertion of such harmony. – [The second way in which what is subjective and what is objective are unified is] when *I act efficaciously [ich wirke]*. In this case, the two are viewed as harmonizing in such a way that what is objective is supposed to follow from what is subjective [...]. Practical Philosophy has to investigate the origin of the assumption of such a harmony" (SSL, GA I/5, 21; FSW IV, 2). Secondly, he highlights the *one-sidedness of the more common approach*: "Up until now only the first of these questions, the one concerning how we might come to assert the correspondence of our representations with things that supposedly exist independently of those representations, has been raised. Philosophy has as yet not even so much as wondered about the second point, that is, about how it might be possible to think of some of our concepts as capable of being presented [darstellbar] and, in part, as actually presented in nature, which subsists without any help from us. People have found it quite natural that we are able to have an effect upon the world." (SSL, GA I/5, 21; FSW IV, 2). To be sure, this is not the place to dwell on the *double "transcendental" wonder* Fichte refers to and on the connection between this *double "transcendental" wonder* and the two branches of *Transcendental Philosophy*, as Fichte conceives it: *theoretical* and *practical* philosophy. But it should be noted that the whole point in Fichte's views on these matters is that, although theoretical and practical philosophy must follow separate paths, *meine Wirksamkeit* plays a pivotal role in both of them.
10. Cf. SSL, GA I/5, 22 (FSW IV, 3): "Welches Mannigfaltige ist in dieser Vorstellung meiner Wirksamkeit enthalten; und wie mag ich zu diesem Mannigfaltigen kommen?"
11. Ibid.: "Ich finde mich, als wirkend in der Sinnenwelt. Davon hebt alles Bewußtseyn an; und ohne dieses Bewußtseyn meiner Wirksamkeit ist kein Selbstbewußtseyn; ohne dieses kein Bewußtseyn eines andern, das nicht ich selbst seyn soll."
12. SSL, GA I/5, 23 (FSW IV, 4).
13. SSL, GA I/5, 23 (FSW IV, 3): "Ich bin der Grund dieser Veränderung". See also SSL, GA I/5, 22-23 (FSW IV, 3): " [...] so liegt noch etwas in der Vorstellung von meiner Wirksamkeit, was mir schlechthin nicht von außen kommen kann, sondern in mir selbst liegen muß, was ich nicht erfahren, und lernen kann, sondern unmittelbar wissen muß; dies, daß ich selbst der letzte Grund der geschenehen Veränderung seyn soll".

14. SSL, GA I/5, 23 (FSW IV, 3): “Ich bin der Grund dieser Veränderung, heißt: dasselbe und kein anderes, welches um die Veränderung weiß, ist zugleich auch das Wirkende; das Subject des Bewußtseyns, und das Prinzip der Wirksamkeit sind Eins.”
15. Cf. SSL, GA I/5, 27 (FSW IV, 9): “[...] Es ist jetzt auch die zweite der oben aufgeworfenen Hauptfragen beantwortet; wie komme ich dazu, anzunehmen, daß ein objectives aus einem subjectiven, ein Seyn aus einem Begriffe, erfolge; [...]. Diese Annahme kommt nemlich daher, weil ich mich absolut als thätig setzen muß [...]”
16. SSL, GA I/5, 27 (SW IV, 9): “Dies alles bedacht, läßt meine Thätigkeit sich nur so setzen, daß sie ausgehe vom subjectiven, als bestimmend das objective (...)”.
17. SSL, GA I/5, 27 (FSW IV, 9).
18. SSL, GA I/5, 23 (SW IV, 4): “Ich setze mich als thätig, heißt [...]: ich unterscheide in mir ein wissendes, und eine reelle Kraft, die als solche nicht weiß, sondern ist [...]”
19. Ibid: “[ich] sehe aber beides als schlechthin Eins an.”
20. SSL, GA I/5, 24 (FSW IV, 5): “Ich weiß nicht, ohne etwas zu wissen; ich weiß nicht von mir, ohne eben durch dieses Wissen mir zu Etwas zu werden; oder, welches dasselbe heißt, ein subjectives in mir und ein objectives zu trennen.”
21. SSL, GA I/5, 24 (FSW IV, 5): “Ist ein Bewußtseyn gesetzt, so ist diese Trennung gesetzt: und es ist ohne sie gar kein Bewußtseyn möglich. Durch diese Trennung ist unmittelbar zugleich das Verhältniß des subjectiven, und objectiven zueinander gesetzt. Das letztere soll bestehen ohne Zuthun des subjectiven, und unabhängig von ihm, durch sich selbst; das erstere soll abhängig seyn vom letztern, und seine materielle Bestimmung nur daher erhalten. Das Seyn ist durch sich selbst, das Wissen aber hängt ab vom Seyn [...]”.
22. SSL, GA I/5, 24 (FSW IV, 5): “Die wichtigste Einsicht, welche wir dadurch erhalten, ist folgende. Wissen, und Seyn sind nicht etwa außerhalb des Bewußtseyns und unabhängig von ihm getrennt, sondern nur im Bewußtseyn werden sie getrennt, weil diese Trennung Bedingung der Möglichkeit alles Bewußtseyns ist; und durch diese Trennung entstehen erst beide. Es giebt kein Seyn, außer vermittelt des Bewußtseyns, so wie es außer demselben auch kein Wissen, als bloß subjectives und auf ein Seyn gehendes, giebt. Um mir nur sagen zu können: Ich; bin ich genöthigt, zu trennen; aber auch lediglich dadurch, daß ich dies sage, und indem ich es sage, geschieht die Trennung.”
23. Ibid.
24. Horace, *Satirae*, II, vii, 82.
25. We leave aside the question of whether this “puppet” is still an “I”, or whether the very fact that it is reduced to being a mere “puppet” and “transmission belt” entails nothing less than the complete removal of the “I” as such, for the latter cannot be dissociated from its *Wirksamkeit* – that is, from its role as an *agent*; so that there is a contradiction in representing the I as this “puppet” or this puppet as an “I”.
26. SSL, GA I/5, 25 (FSW IV, 6).
27. SSL, GA I/5, 25 (FSW IV, 7): “Was heißt nun das; eine *bestimmte* Thätigkeit, und wie wird sie zur bestimmten? Lediglich dadurch, daß ihr ein Widerstand entgegengesetzt wird; entgegengesetzt, durch ideale Thätigkeit; gedacht, und eingebildet, als ihr gegen über stehend.”
28. SSL, GA I/5, 25 (FSW IV, 7): “Wo und in wiefern du Thätigkeit erblickst, erblickst du nothwendig auch Widerstand; denn außerdem erblickst du keine Thätigkeit.”
29. SSL, GA I/5, 25 (FSW IV, 6): “[...] ganz abhängig, und durchaus gezwungen [...]”. Cf. SSL, GA I/5, 98 (FSW IV, 96): “Was in der Wahrnehmung der Wirksamkeit vorkommt, ist die Synthesis unsrer Thätigkeit mit einem Widerstande. Nun ist unsre Thätigkeit, als solche, wie aus dem obigen bekannt ist, kein Mannichfaltiges, sondern absolute reine Identität; und sie selbst ist nur durch Beziehung auf den Widerstand zu charakterisieren. Mithin müßte das zu unterscheidende Mannichfaltige ein Mannichfaltiges des Widerstandes seyn.”

30. SSL, GA I/5, 25 (FSW IV, 7): “[...] daß ich mich als bloß *erkennendes*, und in dieser Erkenntniß von der Objectivität ganz abhängiges Subject betrachten muß.”
31. SSL, GA I/5, 26 (FSW IV, 8): “[...] daß das subjective durch das objective bestimmt seyn soll, nicht aber umgekehrt [...]”. See also SSL, GA I/5, 25 (SW IV, 6): “[...] d. h. das subjective erscheint in ihr als ganz und durchgängig, und ohne sein Zuthun, bestimmt.”
32. N.B. The point is not that the object of my efficacious action must be something that is there independently of any representation (as if I had access to any such thing), but rather that the representation of my *Wirksamkeit* must take the representation of its object as something *resulting from* and *corresponding to* what is there regardless of whether it is represented or not.
33. SSL, GA I/5, 25 (FSW IV, 7).
34. SSL, GA I/5, 25-26 (FSW IV, 7).
35. See in SSL, for example, GA I/5, 40 (FSW IV 22), GA I/5, 87 (FSW IV, 81), GA I/5, 133 ((FSW IV, 140).
36. SSL, GA I/5, 25 (FSW IV, 7).
37. SSL, GA I/5, 28 (FSW IV, 10): “[...] die beiden Enden der ganzen Vernunftwelt.”
38. Ibid.: “[...] ein absolutes durch sich selbst gesetztes *Seyn* (des materiellen Stoffs).”
39. SSL, GA I/5, 24 (FSW IV, 5).
40. Viz. the *separation and unification* (*Trennung und Vereinigung*). Fichte also speaks of “trennen, und doch als Eins ansehen” (SSL, GA I/5, 26/FSW IV, 8).
41. Cf. SSL, GA I/5, 21 (FSW IV, 1). See also SSL, GAI/5, 24, 26, and 29 (FSW IV, 6, 8, and 11).
42. SSL, GAI/5, 22 (FSW IV, 3).
43. SSL, GA I/5, 27 (FSW IV, 9): “Nun soll *ich*, das Eine, untheilbare Ich, thätig seyn; und das, was auf das Object wirkt, ist ohne allen Zweifel dies objective in mir, die reelle Kraft.”
44. Cf. SSL, GA I/5, 27 (FSW IV, 9): “[...] diese Thätigkeit nicht anders breschreiben kann, denn als eine Kausalität des Begriffs [...]”. He also speaks of “Kausalität durch den Begriff” (Ibid.)
45. SSL, GA I/5, 27 (FSW IV, 9): “[...] als eine Kausalität des bloßen Begriffs auf das objective, welcher Begriff in sofern nicht wieder durch ein anderes objective bestimmt werden kann, sondern absolut in, und durch sich selbst bestimmt ist.“
46. SSL, GA I/5, 27 (FSW IV, 10).
47. Ibid.
48. SSL, GA I/5, 27 (FSW IV, 9).
49. Cf. SSL, GA I/5, 27-28 (FSW IV, 9-10).
50. SSL, GA I/5, 27 (FSW IV, 9): “[...] nach welchem die *Wirksamkeit* sich richten, und durch ihn sowohl formaliter begründet als materialiter bestimmt seyn soll.”
51. SSL, GA I/5, 28 (FSW IV, 10).
52. SSL, GAI/5, 28 (FSW IV, 10): “Aus dem Begriffe erfolgt ein objectives. Wie ist dies möglich? Und was kann es heißen? Nicht anders, als daß der Begriff selbst mir als etwas objectives erscheine.”
53. SSL, GAI/5, 28 (FSW IV, 10-11): “Aber der Zweckbegriff, objectiv angesehen, wird ein *Wollen* genannt, und die Vorstellung eines Willens ist gar nichts anderes, als die nothwendige Ansicht des, selbst nur um unsrer Thatigkeit bewußt zu werden, gesetzten Zweckbegriffs. Das geistige in mir, unmittelbar als Princip einer *Wirksamkeit* angeschaut, wird mir zu einem Willen.”
54. SSL, GA I/5, 28 (FSW IV, 11).
55. SSL, GA I/5, 29 (FSW IV, 11).
56. SSL, GA I/5, 28 (FSW IV, 11). The question is, of course, whether this principle does not equally apply to the connection between my *will* and my *body* (i.e. between my will and that part of the realm of *Stoff* that corresponds to my body). In other words, if my will is to have any effect upon *Stoff*, it seems inevitable that, at some point or other, my will (that is what is subjective) must affect *Stoff* (what is objective) *without the help, or mediation, of any Stoff*. Fichte’s point seems to be that there must be some kind of *gradual development* and a particular kind of intermediate

link bridging the gap between the two realms in question: in order for my will to have any effect upon *Stoff*, it must have, as it were, *some Stoff of its own*.

57. Ibid.

58. SSL, GA I/5, 28-29 (FSW IV, 11): “[...] und nur so weit, als diese unmittelbare Kausalität des Willens geht, geht der Leib, als Werkzeug, oder die Artikulation.”

59. SSL, GA I/5, 29 (FSW IV, 11).

60. As opposed to the *Stoff* that can be changed by one’s will only indirectly, namely by means of the change of some other *Stoff*.

61. Cf. Ibid. The full text is quoted in note 67 below.

62. Ibid.: “Aber diese Unterscheidung ist nichts anderes, denn eine abermalige Trennung des subjectiven und objectiven, oder noch bestimmter, eine besondere Ansicht dieser ursprünglichen Trennung. Der Wille ist in diesem Verhältnisse das subjective, und der Leib das objective.”

63. SSL, GA I/5, 29 (FSW IV, 12): “Das durch meine Wirksamkeit veränderliche Ding, oder die *Beschaffenheit* der Natur ist ganz dasselbe, was das unveränderliche, oder die bloße Materie ist; nur angesehen von einer andern Seite; eben so wie oben die Kausalität des Begriffs auf das objective, von zwei Seiten angesehen, als Wille und als Leib erschien.”

64. SSL, GA I/5, 28 (FSW SW IV, 11) (italics added).

65. So that the body, as Fichte puts it, is “the last item that I attribute to myself”: “[...] das letzte, was ich zu mir rechne [...]” (SSL, GA I/5, 29, FSW IV, 12) Incidentally, it should be noted that what we are dealing with here is Fichte’s 1798 answer to a question raised by him in the second of his 1794 *Vorlesungen über die Bestimmung des Gelehrten*: “[...] mit welcher Befugniß nennt der Mensch einen bestimmten Theil der Körperwelt *seinen* Körper? wie kömmt er dazu, diesen seinen Körper zu betrachten, als seinem Ich angehörig, da er doch demselben gerade entgegengesetzt ist?“ (“by what authority does man call a particular portion of the physical world his body? how does he come to consider this body as belonging to his Ego, whereas it is altogether opposed to it (...)?”). (SSL, GA I/3, 34; FSW VI, 302). The translation is borrowed from Fichte, J. G., *The Vocation of the Scholar*, tr. W. Smith, London, J. Chapman, 1848, 26-27. It is almost needless to add that a) much of what Fichte says on this topic in the SSL has a close parallel both in his GNR (particularly in its *first part*) and in the *Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo*, and b) the latter focus on other important aspects of the question. Moreover, there are also other significant developments in Part II of the SSL itself. But a complete analysis of all relevant aspects would go far beyond the scope of this paper. We must concentrate on Fichte’s 1798 *introductory remarks* and leave out everything (or almost everything) else.

66. SSL, GA I/5, 29 (FSW IV, 11).

67. SSL, GA I/5, 29 (FSW IV, 11-12): “Indem ein subjectives in mir selbst sich in ein objectives, der Zweckbegriff in einen Willensentschluß, und dieser in eine gewisse Modification meines Leibes verwandeln soll, stelle ich ja offenbar mich selbst vor, als verändert. Aber das letzte, was ich zu mir rechne, mein körperlicher Leib, soll in Verbindung mit der gesamten Körperwelt stehen; wie daher der erste als verändert angeschaut wird, wird nothwendig auch die letzte so erblickt.”

68. SSL, GA I/5, 29 (FSW IV, 12): “Das durch meine Wirksamkeit veränderliche Ding, oder die *Beschaffenheit* der Natur ist ganz dasselbe, was das unveränderliche, oder die bloße Materie ist; nur angesehen von einer anderen Seite; ebenso wie oben die Kausalität des Begriffs auf das objective, von zwei Seiten angesehen, als Wille und als Leib erschien. Das veränderliche ist die Natur, subjectiv, und mit mir, dem thätigen, in Verbindung, angesehen; das unveränderliche,

dieselbe Natur, ganz und lediglich objectiv angesehen, und unveränderlich aus den oben angezeigten Gründen.”

69. It is to be noted that in his introductory remarks Fichte leaves out his own views on the *organized* body and on the connection between what he terms the *articulated* and the *organized* body. Cf. SSL, GA I/5, 29 (FSW IV, 11): “This preliminary survey does not include that aspect of my body known as *organization* [Organisation]”. On the *organized* body and on the connection between the *articulated* and the *organized* body, see notably SSL, GA I/5, 44, 124f., 234f. (FSW IV, 29, 127f. 261f.), GNR §6, GA I/3, 373ff. (FSW III, 77ff.), WL-nm §§ 11, 14, and 19, GA IV/2, 108ff., 155ff., 256ff., and GA IV/3, 418ff..

70. In other words, *my body* is where the two realms –the realm of *subjectivity* (I-hood, my activity, my *Zweckbegriffe* and my will) and the realm of *objectivity* (the realm of *resistance* to what is subjective, i.e. the realm of *resistance* to me, to my activity, to my *Zweckbegriffe*, and to my will)– *come into contact with each other*.

71. Put another way, *my body* stands out as being at the same time a) something *opposed to subjectivity* (I-hood, my activity, my *Zweckbegriffe* and my will) – for it is *Stoff*: it belongs to the realm *resistance* to what is subjective, it is made of *resistance* to me, to my activity, to my *Zweckbegriffe*, and to my will – and b) something *equated with subjectivity* (something *equated with me*, with *my activity*, with my *Zweckbegriffe* and with *my will*). Fichte does not put it in these terms, but it can be said that what distinguishes *my body* is the fact that it has, as it were, the nature of an *oxymoron*.

72. In § 7 (SSL, GA I/5, 99-100, FSW IV, 98) Fichte depicts this stable set of starting points (that is, one’s *articulated* body) as follows: “The idea governing the deduced series is as follows: First of all, there has to be some starting point where the I departs from its original limitation and exercises causality for the first time and immediately; and if it were for some reason impossible to carry the analysis all the way back to this original starting point, there then might also appear to be a *plurality* of starting points. Insofar as each of these points is supposed to be a starting point, the I is at each such starting point an immediate cause, through its will, and there are no intermediate elements through which it first has to acquire such causality. If the I is ever to be a cause at all then there must be such starting points. [...] we call these points, when thought of collectively, our articulated body; and our articulated body is nothing but these same [starting] points [of efficacious acting in the world], presented in and realized through intuition. Let us call this system of the first moments of our causality group A”. (Die Idee der deducierten Reihe ist folgende. Es muß zuörderst einen Anfangspunkt geben, in welchem das Ich aus seiner ursprünglichen Beschräntheit herausgeht, und zuerst und unmittelbar Kausalität hat; welcher, wenn es aus irgend einem Grunde unmöglich seyn sollte, so weit zurück zu analysiren, auch wohl als eine *Mehrheit* von Anfangspunkten erscheinen könnte. In wie fern es Anfangspunkte seyn sollen, ist es in ihnen das Ich unmittelbar durch seinen Willen Ursache; es giebt keine Mittelglieder, um nur erst zu dieser Kausalität zu gelangen. Solche erste Punkte mußte es geben, wenn das Ich überhaupt je Ursache seyn sollte. Diese Punkte zusammengedacht nennen wir [...] unsern articulirten Leib: und dieser Leib ist nichts anders, als diese Punkte durch Anschauung dargestellt und realisiert. Man nenne dieses System der ersten Punkte unserer Kausalität den Rang A.)

73. Or, to put it in the terms used by Fichte, *my body* is not just an *Ansicht* of the said *Verhältnis* (of the “relation of what is subjective and what is objective to each other”) among the other *Ansichten* Fichte refers to. The point is that this particular *Ansicht* – *my body* – is such that it both *recapitulates* and *anticipates* all the others.

74. In other words, Fichte puts his focus on the kind of *centred multiplicity* Hierocles alludes to in his famous *concentric circles* (STOBAEUS, *Anthologium*, IV, ch. 27, sec. 23) – basically the very set of phenomena Heidegger later termed *das Umhafte*. See notably HEIDEGGER, *Gesamtausgabe* 61, 96f., 129, *Gesamtausgabe* 62, 91ff., *Gesamtausgabe* 63, 86, 102, *Gesamtausgabe* 64, 20ff., *Gesamtausgabe* 20, 230f., 308f., SZ, 101ff. On the connection between Fichte's views on this subject and Stoic οἰκειώσις, see CARVALHO, M. J., “The Concept of Drive in the *Sittenlehre* (1798) – Fundamental Aspects of Fichte's ‘Doctrine of Oikeiosis’”, in *Philosophy Today* 52 (2008), 298-310.

75. This equally holds true for my body: as *Stoff*, it includes both elements.

76. In the final analysis, this second division amounts, of course, to a *subdivision* of the realm of *what can be changed*.

77. The fact that there is a sphere of direct intervention does not in itself mean that this sphere must be *finite*. In this sense, my *body could be infinite*. And the point is that *it is not*.

78. That is, the system of “starting points” the articulate body is made of – see note 72 above.

79. SSL, GA I/5, 100 (FSW IV, 98-99): “An jeden dieser Punkte knüpfen sich nunmehr andere Punkte an, in denen vermittelt der ersten das Ich auf manichfaltige Weise Ursache werden kann. Ich sage an *Jeden Mehrere*; denn wenn von jedem aus nur auf *Eine* Weise gehandelt werden könnte, so würde von ihm aus nicht frei gehandelt, und es wäre überhaupt kein zweites Handeln, sondern nur das fortgesetzte erste. Man nenne dieses System den Rang B. An jedes Einzelne von Range B. Und wieder angknüpft mehrere Punkte eines dritten Ranges C., und so wird, um ein Bild zu geben, um einen festen Mittelpunkt eine unendliche Cirkelfläche beschrieben, in welcher jeder Punkt als mit unendlich vielen grenzend gedacht werden kann.”

80. SSL, GA I/5, 123 (FSW IV, 127-128): “Nun ist das, was im Raume ist, und denselben ausfüllt, Materie. Ich bin sonach, als Naturprodukt, Materie; und zwar nach dem obigen organisierte Materie, die ein bestimmtes Ganzes ausmacht. *Mein Leib*.

Ferner es soll in der Botmäßigkeit meines Willens stehen, Naturdinge mit mir zu vereinigen, oder in ein Verhältniß mit mir zu bringen. Nun bezieht diese Vereinigung oder dieses Verhältniß sich auf Theile meines organisierten Leibes; und dieser mein Leib ist das unmittelbare Instrument meines Willens. Mithin müssen diese Theile unter der Herrschaft meines Willens stehen, und da hier vom Verhältnis im Raume die Rede ist, sie müssen als Theile, d. i. in Beziehung auf das Ganze meines Leibes, beweglich, und mein Leib selbst in Beziehung auf das Ganze der Natur, beweglich seyn. Es muß, da diese Bewegung abhängen soll von einem frei entworfenen und ins unbestimmte modificirbaren Begriffe, eine mannichfaltige Beweglichkeit seyn. – Man nennt eine solche Einrichtung des Leibes *Articulation*. Soll ich frei seyn, so muß mein Leib articulirt sein.”

81. In which case *my action* (N.B.: *my action proper*) would not go beyond the first step; everything else would be the work of *Stoff* itself.

82. *Viz. complex actions*.

83. See notably LEIBNIZ, G. W., *Monadologie*, 57, in: *Die philosophischen Schriften*, ed. C. I. Gerhardt, Berlin, Weidmann, 1875-1890, repr., Hildesheim, Olms, 1978, 616: “Et comme un même ville regardée de differens côtés paroist tout autre et est comme *multipliée perspectivement*, il arrive de même, que par la multitude infinie des substances simples, il y a comme autant de differens univers, qui ne sont pourtant que les perspectives d'un seul selon les differens points de veue de chaque monade.” See also *Discours de Métaphysique* IX, in: *Die philosophischen Schriften*, IV, 434: “De plus toute substance est comme un monde entier et commun miroir de Dieu ou bien de tout l'univers, qu'elle exprime chacune à sa façon, à peu près comme une même ville est diversement représentée selon les differentes situations de celui qui la regarde. Ainsi l'univers est en quelque façon multiplié autant de fois qu'il y a de substances, et la gloire de Dieu est

redoublée de même par autant de representations toutes differentes de son ouvrage.” Cf. *Die philosophischen Schriften* I, 69, and III, 623.

84. We might also say: the first, the second, the third, the fourth circle, etc.

85. That is, a very complex network of modifications of the distance between my body and the other components of the realm of *Stoff*.

86. That is, an *immense* – and *de facto impossible* – action.

87. See above footnotes 79 and 80.

88. Cf. PASCAL, fr. 200 (Lafuma)/347 (Brunschvicg). See also 113 (Lafuma)/348 (Brunschvicg).

ABSTRACTS

This paper deals with some fundamental aspects of Fichte’s transcendental account of the body in action, as laid down in the introductory remarks to his 1798 *Sittenlehre*. Fichte claims that the representation of one’s body is part and parcel of the representation of “first-person” efficacious action or of one’s *Wirksamkeit überhaupt*. In his view, the latter cannot take place without the former, so that the representation of one’s body is necessarily *contained* and *posited* in the representation of one’s *Wirksamkeit*. Conversely, action – i. e. *meine Wirksamkeit* – is more than just a particular feature of one’s body among many others: the representation of one’s efficacious action is rather the framework within which the representation of one’s body is formed – it is *what constitutes one’s body (my body) as such*. This paper tries to zoom in on the very complex set of representations that, according to Fichte, are entailed in the indissoluble unity of this fundamental representation: “*my efficacious action/my body*”.

INDEX

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