

Marquette University

e-Publications@Marquette

Philosophy Faculty Research and Publications

Philosophy, Department of

1994

The Wissenschaftslehre of 1801-1802

Michael Vater

Follow this and additional works at: https://epublications.marquette.edu/phil_fac



Part of the [Philosophy Commons](#)

The Wissenschaftslehre of 1801–1802

MICHAEL G. VATER

Fichte spent the early months of 1802 putting his notes from the autumn 1801 lectures on the *Wissenschaftslehre* into publishable form (*Presentation of the Science of Knowing, 1801–1802*).¹ He had apparently formed a plan to rework his system in the closing days of 1800. Disputes with his sometime disciple Schelling (which the latter initiated by assigning a positive role to nature in his *System of Transcendental Idealism* and which was exacerbated by frank comments in letters on both sides) forced Fichte to alter the external shape of the *Wissenschaftslehre* he had offered in lectures from 1796 to 1799. The *Wissenschaftslehre* had been conceived as a practical-theoretical whole. In the reworking of 1801–1802, a “System of the Spiritual World” was added (presumably this is the untitled, second part of the *Presentation*) in order to insure that the final individuation of the subject is secured by ethical agency alone, within the spiritual context of a community of ends and agents, and not by the concretion and materialization that mark the natural processes.² Fichte’s edited manuscript shows him in command of a clear idea of his difference with Schelling on the status of nature: Spirit, its agency, its individuality, its moral responsibility, are for him supervenient upon natural being, but *toto caelo* different from it and hence irreducible to it. For Schelling, however, the conscious process is but a repetition on a higher level (*Potenz*) of the activities deployed and synthesized in the construction of space and matter. The *Presentation* manuscript, with its harsh digressions on the dangers of the “new Spinozism,” shows an equally sharp appreciation on Fichte’s part of the inadequacies of Schelling’s logic of indifference. With his *Darstellung meines Systems* (1801), Schelling attempted to explain the relation between the absolute and appearance as ultimate non-difference, *Indifferenz*. Fichte adamantly rejects this pantheistic turn, though he is not able to offer a clear alternative to it, preferring to stick with the insoluble Spinozistic problem of “deducing” the undeducible conditions of finitude.

Despite these conceptual advances, the 1801–1802 *Wissenschaftslehre* fails to resolve the weightiest conflict that surfaces in letters between Fichte and Schelling from November 1800 to October 1801, the question of whether philosophy in the transcendental tradition must originate from a *Sein* (being) or from a *Sehen* (seeing). Fichte begins the new *Wissenschaftslehre* with a resolve to explore the domain of knowing alongside, but dissociated from, the absolute. He acknowledges that knowing includes a being, which, within knowing, is counterpoised to freedom, but this is just a being-ly element within knowing, and not to be identified with the absolute, which stands off by itself alone, unrelated. Plainly Fichte intends to produce an idealistic philosophy, not a realism.³ Yet by the end of the manuscript's second part, Fichte invokes an unintelligible, indescribable determination by "absolute being" as the final ground of factual determination; being both individuates and harmonizes the monadologically organized spirit-world.⁴ Has Fichte been drawn into Schelling's view that the system-principle must be a being, not a mere seeing? Is the idealism of the *Wissenschaftslehre*, its grand vision of sight seeing itself, intelligence understanding itself as its own ground, here compromised in favor of some metaphysical antinature or transcendent city of God? The manuscript indicates Fichte loosening his grip on his hitherto basic concern with freedom both as the foundation of metaphysics and as an interpretation of human agency. The Fichte of 1801–1802 is a Spinozist, though some Leibnizean nostalgia for the spiritual is evidenced by the reintroduction of Kantian moral dualism; the intelligence that empirically perceives human agency as sequences of acts and effects *also* thinks them as corresponding acts of will. This Fichte seems a far cry from the thinker of 1794 who rescued transcendental idealism and mobilized it for the defense of freedom by rejecting the thing-in-itself.

In this paper I shall direct attention to three areas of disagreement between Fichte and Schelling in 1801–1802: (1) the status of being in idealistic philosophy, (2) the standing nature has within a transcendental account of human knowing, and (3) the nature of intellectual intuition and the sort of logic, differential or nondifferential, that links human consciousness to the absolute. Before these topics can be directly addressed, some account of the *Presentation* must be furnished. Fichte's inability to ready the edited lectures of 1801 for publication in 1802 and his two-year lag in sizing up his own standing in the eyes of his self-appointed improvers, the brethren of the *Critical Journal*, kept the philosophic public from timely knowledge of their contents. Space will permit only an overview of what Fichte calls the first synthesis; the nature of this synthesis leads directly into Fichte's disagreements with Schelling and Hegel.

THE FIRST SYNTHESIS

The Method of the Science of Knowing

Fichte begins with a description of the concept of *Wissenschaftslehre*. Knowing is formally defined as intuition, a unifying overview, a comprehension of a manifold of presentation (SW, II, pp. 6–7, 21).⁵ *Wissenschaftslehre* is “knowing of knowing,” the unitary comprehension of all possible intuitions, one in-seeing gaze; it is not a compilation of propositions or a systematization of different concrete knowledges (SW, II, p. 12). It is not the object of knowing, but the form of knowing: “[I]t is our tool, our hand, our foot, our eye, not even our eye, but just the clarity of the eye” (SW, II, p. 10).

The Possibility of Synthesis

After this prefatory bit of conceptual analysis, the *Wissenschaftslehre* unfolds as transcendental analysis of five (possibly six) syntheses, one packed inside the other like Chinese boxes. Synthesis has material and formal aspects; it is a synthesis of contradictory elements in order to comprehend their togetherness. The first and most general synthesis (the outermost box) comprehends knowing in all its generality.⁶ There is no generation of this highest synthesis, as in the three originary positings of the *Foundations of the Entire Science of Knowledge* (1794); only transcendental or possibilistic explanations are proffered.⁷

The first and comprehensive synthesis, knowledge in general, is possible *materialiter* because of incompatible elements furnished by the lower syntheses it contains. Opposites branch out underneath it like the root system supporting the photosynthesis and respiration of the visible plant. This pattern of a material integration of direct opposites continues through the subsyntheses or nested boxes. The elements of the last synthesis or inmost box are as contradictory as those of the first; the members of the ethical order are potentially antagonistic individual agents. Each is both I and world, hence the sole concretion of freedom. But the I appears as already broken into a coordinated plurality of wills, each constrained to perceive the same world and act upon it according to some general or social agenda. Both its individuality and its coordination into a harmonized order are founded on an ultimate facticity, a determination from without. The appearance of the I as *individual* will is an unintelligible limitation, says Fichte, for all explanation must stop in this idea of a closed system of intelligences, each determined to its unique but coordinated point of view by an absolute being or God (SW, II, pp. 152–53). The I ultimately confronts the “that” of its plurality, sociality, and extrinsic determination; knowing rests on these ultimate hard facts (apparently unified into an onto-theological postulate). *Wissenschaftslehre*

can advance to this point in thought, but there it must abandon its proper task of the investigation of I, of freedom.

The formal possibility of the most general synthesis is more difficult to discuss. Knowing, materially a synthesis of being and freedom, is both associated with and dissociated from what Fichte calls "the absolute." Since nothing can be said about the absolute without destroying its absoluteness, no definite assertions can be made about the relation of the absolute (that is, absolute being) and absolute knowing. Says Fichte,

The absolute is neither being nor is it knowing, neither the identity of both nor their indifference. It is simply just the absolute. Since we cannot come any closer to it than knowing, either in the *Wissenschaftslehre* or in any other possible mode of knowledge, the *Wissenschaftslehre* cannot start with the absolute but must proceed from absolute knowing. (SW, II, pp. 12–13)

Knowing is *sui generis*; *Wissenschaftslehre* has to take its stance within it and forego any attempts to explain it from the outside. How does one get to or start from absolute knowing? It is undoubtedly present in our intuition as the *form of knowing*, so appeal can be made to the thinker's experience (SW, II, p. 13). How do we come to focus on knowing itself in our knowing? By abstraction, in the universality constructed in and through pulling away from the details of particularity and accounting its particularity the less (SW, II, p. 15). The power of abstraction depends on intellectual intuition, the unity of spontaneity/freedom and conditioned knowing that is given inside consciousness (SW, II, pp. 32–33). How is the ground of possibility of intellectual intuition itself to be gauged? Apparently it must be initially *assumed* that knowing is compounded out of not-knowing, out of the togetherness of freedom and being (SW, II, p. 18). Later, when the free or for-itself character of the philosophic process comes to the fore and itself impels the *Wissenschaftslehre's* reflection, the assumption can be deemed warranted.⁸

Synthesis A. "Absolute Knowing"

Knowing, which is both our object and our element, is a synthesis of two absolute qualities: being and freedom. Fichte remarks that this makes *Wissenschaftslehre* at once a monism and a dualism. On the formal side, it is monism, since knowing is a fusion, a coalescence of the different. On the material side, it is a dualism, since knowing is the coincidence or penetration of freedom and being, each the non-being of the other (SW, II, p. 81).

Formally, knowing is unifying penetration, bringing to light, I-ness: *thought*. Materially, it is a wavering between being and freedom, a flickering unification, but no suspension, of the two that cannot be brought together: *intuition*. In calling the *Wissenschaftslehre's* object the identity of thought and

intuition, Fichte envisions knowledge as an indefinitely dense and detailed structure capable of indefinitely regressive analysis. It is analogous to the complex self-similar structures of fractal geometry and nonlinear mathematics that occupy some contemporary mathematicians and physicists. But it seems unlike the dense order of these systems (which are dubbed “chaotic,” although they are generated by simple mathematical functions), for the logic (or nonlogic) of *hiatus* that Fichte applies both to his absolute and to its expression in knowledge seems to evade all formulation.⁹

Reflection undertakes the development of this most general synthesis; it works both material sides of the synthesis, freedom and being, proving them to be transcendental conditions for synthesis precisely by conceptually specifying them.¹⁰ It is difficult to see in the 1801–1802 *Wissenschaftslehre* exactly why reflection impels the analytic unpacking of these contents.¹¹ One can generally say that freedom is at work here. It is present materially, as one element of the synthesis. Reflection also seems present, primitively perhaps, in the formal aspect of the synthesis, the hiatus between freedom and being, their contingent identification and separation. Nonetheless, reflection gets posited as an element of the system of knowing only when the for-itself character of freedom explicitly comes to the fore in Synthesis B.

I shall return to the theme of hiatus in the most general synthesis. First I wish to point out some conceptual debts to Spinoza in Fichte’s 1801 rethinking of *Wissenschaftslehre*. The most global is found in Fichte’s presentation of knowing as a first and abiding synthesis; his *Wissen* translates, in piecemeal and dispersed fashion, Spinoza’s compact conception of *substantia*: that which is in itself and is conceived through itself.¹² One element of knowledge, being, simply *is what it is*; the other, freedom, simply *is because it is* (SW, II, p. 16). While for Spinoza substance is *causa sui*—it is what it is because it is—for Fichte knowing contingently oscillates between the *what* and the *that*, connecting fact and grounding in a manner that permits the *why* to fly free of any *what*. Reflection, says he, has its possibility in knowing’s necessary union of being and freedom, but “its absolute being is freedom” (GA, II, 6, pp. 175, 30–33). Reflection’s dynamic comes from its being substance in flight from substantiality.

Another complexity in the conceptual schemes of the 1801–1802 *Wissenschaftslehre* stems from the incorporation of the Spinozistic contrast between *necessity* and *contingency*. Fichte follows Spinoza in conceiving necessity as constraint. Knowing is defined, in terms of its components, as a contingent identification of being and freedom, while it is defined formally as their fusion, even the constitution of a new quality (SW, II, pp. 17–18). Being supplies the characters of substantiality, perdurance, and determinacy to the synthesis of which it is an ingredient, but above all it supplies the feature of *constraint* (*Gebundenheit*). Being is grounding perceived from the outside, as

what is necessitated, constrained. The constraint feature comes to the fore most tellingly in feeling (*Gefühl*) (SW, II, p. 64) and in sensible affects (*Gefühle*) like red and green, where one and the same body of contents appears doubly or is counted twice over, once internally as "affects," and again externally as "sense-data" (SW, II, pp. 123–25). Being thus appears inside knowing as constraint, as necessitation manifested in the feel of inalterable reality.

Fichte also follows Spinoza in conceptualizing freedom as a form of necessitation or constraint. But he is unable to characterize it as the full internal necessitation of substance; it is instead the simultaneous presence and lack of constraint, determinate contingency. Freedom is based, as we have said, in that general feature of grounding, the why. Being just as much a form of grounding as is constraint, freedom falls inside the same conceptual class as does necessity, being aptly described as "necessitated contingency" (SW, II, pp. 56–57). In sketches for the 1801 system Fichte wrote: "Die Freiheit ist in sich zufällig—u. sie setzt sich diesem zufällig seyn zu folge für sich zufällig."¹³ Freedom is positing in the mode of contingency.

All three of these Spinozistic models—substance as self-grounding, freedom as a form of necessitation (namely, determinate contingency), and necessity as constraint—color Fichte's picture of knowing. The contrasting "feels" of constraint and contingency characterize the why or grounding aspects of knowing as a whole. One or the other will predominantly shade each of knowledge's more determinate subsyntheses. In particular, the constrained freedom of determinate contingency will cradle the individual centers of consciousness (and being) whose possibility the *Wissenschaftslehre* explains. It is as if Fichte kept before his eyes throughout the process of composition the conceptual contrast of Spinoza's seventh definition:

That thing is said to be free [*liber*] which exists solely from the necessity of its own nature and is determined to action by its own self alone. A thing is said to be necessary [*necessarius*] or rather, constrained [*coactus*] if it is determined by another thing to exist and to act in a definite way.¹⁴

In the universe of Fichte's knowing (which is perfectly general or categorial, and within which both individual consciousness and *Wissenschaftslehre* as philosophical analysis will be constructed by reflective analysis), nothing is fully necessary in the sense of simply being, but nothing is fully unconstrained either. Nothing in the concept-world the *Wissenschaftslehre* constructs is *causa sui*, yet nothing is without a why. Necessitated contingency is the category Fichte interposes between the dissociated Spinozistic conjuncts of substance, the what and the why.

Necessitated contingency will not stay still, however. What the name names dissolves itself, negates itself, explains only in its inexplicability; it

signals the disappearance of the why of grounding. For Fichte in 1801–1802 this contingency of grounding, the present and vanishing why, is the hiatus interposed between being and freedom, external constraint and self-determination. Though knowing is initially presented as an abiding and inalterable synthesis, global and in a sense finished, its logic and reality is a dynamic chasm between these factors. The possibility of consciousness rests on this chasm or hiatus, which makes it always a synthesis not finished but yet to be effected. In a lapidary text in which he announces that, despite the fear of nettlesome logicians, philosophy must face the task of thinking through the contradiction of being and non-being, Fichte explains the alternatives available to philosophy, either to annihilate the oscillating dance of knowing in the sameness of thought (being, strict necessity) or to move within the hiatus characteristic of freedom:

We are here looking for everything inside knowing, for we espouse the *Wissenschaftslehre*. So absolute being was absolutely nothing for us, as was absolute thought itself—the constraint and intrinsic rest that cannot escape itself, the absolutely inalterable element in knowing. In thought, intuition exterminates itself. In our present position, therefore, absolute freedom is absolute unrest, mobility without a fixed point, flight into itself. Here thought annihilates itself—the absolute *hiatus* and *saltus* in knowing we mentioned above, which occurs in all cases of *freedom* and *coming into being* and in all cases of necessitated *actuality* as well. It is clear that by just such a positive non-being of its self knowing penetrates to absolute being. That, taken solely and singly, it is nothing is clear and admitted by all, as is the fact that neither of the members [of the absolute synthesis] we advance is anything for itself. This is the crucial point in absolute knowing. (SW, II, p. 53).

This text points out the dialectical, spontaneous character of intuition or activity at a categorical stage much earlier than the analysis/deduction of individual consciousness (presentation coupled with focused and reflexive awareness). It ascribes this spontaneous feature generally to the phenomena of constrained consciousness: freedom, decision, encounter with fact. These are all instances of a general event, *knowing as chasm*, the non-being of being. It is a distinctive feature of this version of *Wissenschaftslehre* that Fichte conceives this chasm as a general feature of what is or what happens. It is not just a qualification of some determinate mode of consciousness; instead, consciousness gestates within this movement of nonformulable freedom, this non-being that is knowing. The suggestiveness, abstractness, and obscurity of Fichte's attempt in 1801–1802 to conceive of the metaphysical conditions for the spontaneity and contingency of consciousness is evident. His task is ultimately paradoxical: to elucidate the conditions of spontaneity. It is at any rate a different approach than the widely known and widely misunderstood

path of “deductions” from logical principles or extrapolations from empirical psychology that Fichte followed in 1794.

FICHTE'S DISPUTES WITH SCHELLING

We turn now to three features of the Fichte-Schelling disagreement that have a bearing on the 1801–1802 *Presentation*. The history of the dispute stretches from the autumn of 1800, when Fichte read what Schelling had made of the *Wissenschaftslehre* in his *System of Transcendental Idealism and General Deduction of Dynamical Processes*, through the early months of 1802, when both writers were preparing to make the squabble public, Schelling in his *Bruno*, Fichte in the manuscript of his recent lectures. Fichte is initially offended by Schelling's substantializing of the metaphor contained in the concept of *potentiation*—in Schelling's hands, a mapping of identical structures across different levels of phenomena or different stages of their generation. He is more upset at the conclusion this leads Schelling to, the equal reality of nature and consciousness as products of the I's constructive activity (Fichte to Schelling, 15 November 1800).¹⁵ Further exchanges deepen Fichte's hesitations about the correctness of his protégé's path. With the publication of Schelling's *Presentation of My System* in 1801 and the indications (that is, the “My” in the title and the slavish imitation of Spinoza's axiomatic style) of Schelling's departure from the bank of Criticism toward the opposite shore of dogmatism, Fichte denounces the new philosophy to its author as lacking any evidence or epistemological foundation (Fichte to Schelling, 31 May–7 August 1801).¹⁶ By this time Fichte and Schelling had made plain to one another three distinct areas of disagreement: the standing of being in transcendental philosophy, the role of nature in freedom, and the possibility of a logic fit to comprehend the absolute.

The Status of Being in Transcendental Philosophy

The status of being in transcendental philosophy is central to the philosophers' controversy. Commenting on Schelling's new and “personal” system, Fichte remarks that the new philosophy has being or an absolute real-ground as its principle, even if that principle bears the name “reason.” Philosophy must proceed from a *seeing*, not a *being*. If it proceeds from anything other than a living intuition, it is realism and is hence unable to explain freedom, spontaneity, or consciousness (Fichte to Schelling, 31 May–7 August 1801).¹⁷ Schelling replies (3 October 1801) that the formula that Fichte advances for the principle of idealistic philosophy, “the identity of thought and intuition,” designates not just the indifference or identity of philosophy's highest principle, but simultaneously the *highest sort of being*. The “being” that offends Fichte is being understood as derivative, different,

posited for itself, finite, and conditioned. Says Schelling, “To you ‘being’ seems to mean the same thing as ‘reality,’ even factuality [*Wirklichkeit*]. But being in the eminent sense has no more opposite, since it is in itself the absolute identity of the ideal and the real.”¹⁸

How does the dispute over being show up in Fichte’s 1801 revision of the *Wissenschaftslehre*? As in the 1794 and 1796–99 versions, which strove to exhibit spontaneity at work inside consciousness’s construction of reality, Fichte indeed sets out to work in and from a *Sehen*, a live intuition, though he somewhat obscures the vitality of his principle by calling it *Wissen*.¹⁹ Nevertheless, he frames his account of the free-and-constrained nature of knowing with appeal to a transcendent being that cannot be brought within the scope of *Wissenschaftslehre*: The work commences with the mention of an absolute beyond absolute knowing, an absolute that cannot even be qualified or brought into relation to knowing without destroying its absolute standing (SW, II, p. 13). And the work closes with an inexplicable relating of the whole universe of finite centers of will to an absolute but developing being. This being ultimately locates and individuates a finite agent’s perceptions, perhaps by direct determination. This relationship of finite knowing to absolute being, though, cannot come to light in the agent’s perception-based cognition, but “must stay hidden to all eternity” (SW, II, p. 150). Both of these texts seem to refer to being as realistically conceived, being that absolutely is what it is (before and without reference to any why). By contrast, the sort of being the *Wissenschaftslehre* comprehends as an ingredient in knowing—one direction, as it were, of intuition, a gesture of activity toward rest and stability—seems to connote only variable and relative quality, the sort of being that is what it is only to the degree it is constrained, limited, and determined by another. This relative being, which is properly studied by the science of knowledge as *one* element in knowing—the being counterpoised to freedom in material freedom, the being counterpoised to freedom in knowing in general—could equally well bear the Spinozistic denomination “necessity.”

What motivated Fichte’s introduction of an apparently transcendent sense of being or brute reality into his philosophy, hitherto dedicated to exploring the moment of spontaneity or agency within human knowing? Several answers seem plausible: The introduction of being serves (1) to limit philosophy’s pretensions, (2) to unify the field of explanation, and (3) to justify the “undeducible” moment of finitization or individuation of consciousness.

As to the first possibility, perhaps the epistemological modesty of Criticism combined with the more ancient reluctance of negative theology to name or locate transcendence together urge Fichte to specify at the beginning of *Wissenschaftslehre* where philosophy cannot go and what it cannot explain. Talk of the absolute in the 1801–1802 text might thus serve the same

function as Kant's more precise simile of the uncharted and unknown seas that surround the populated island of experience.²⁰

As to the second possibility, perhaps Fichte saw a need to finally anchor the branching antithetical opposites supposedly held in "synthesis" in some asserted but not investigated point of unity. The nonlogic of chasm and hiatus that connects, if that is the proper word, freedom and being together universally in knowing, and specifically within every more concrete form of consciousness such as decision or ethical action, can at least be said to be tamed or domesticated in the postulated absolute or being.²¹ In both these cases, the asserted absolute, though a surd within the system, has a sense for the system: absolute limit.

As to the third possibility, Fichte has at this system's end a palpable need for an explanation of the factual individuality-cum-sociality of consciousness, just as the 1794 *Foundations* stood in need of a deduction of the hard and fast character of presentation's contents. This *Wissenschaftslehre* has no deduction of presentation as the I's self-affection; no singular I plots its own surprise party in an *Anstoß* (check). Instead the I is nonatomic, communal, originally given in plurality, individuated only in and with the interaction of a community of perceiver-agents. A Leibnizean cosmic harmonizer is needed to coordinate all this community's subjects in their perceptions of action and effects and in their denomination of purposes. For unless the monad-subjects redescribe natural sequences of actions as having identical starting and stopping points, as originating in the same intentions, and as accomplishing the same purposes, the community may well be reciprocally conditioned but it will not be ethical (GA, II, 6, p. 279). Fichte boasts that this Leibnizean solution that he offers in 1801–1802 to the questions of individuation, interaction, and the moral significance of actions (primarily determined as physical events) is really quite elegant. It explains all at once the hang and fit among various items of cognition, the concordance of the wills of a multitude of free beings, and even the harmony between the sensible and the intelligible worlds (SW, II, p. 150). Yet Fichte is aware that it is a step into the transcendent, however negatively conceived, and thus an exit from the stance of knowing, that is, from the stance of philosophy itself as the *Wissenschaftslehre* had at least formerly conceived it.²²

The Role of Nature in Freedom

As soon as Schelling started to develop a philosophy of nature under the umbrella of transcendental philosophy in 1797, Fichte became concerned about what role nature could play in a philosophy focused on the freedom and domain of human action. Fichte forcefully expressed these doubts to Schelling after the publication of the *System of Transcendental Idealism* in 1800; at that time Schelling had not yet come to regard nature and spirit as

opposite and equal manifestations of the absolute. In Fichte's eyes, however, the *System* had located the genesis of consciousness inside an already constituted autonomous realm, a "nature in itself," as it were. He undertook to lecture Schelling that the philosopher's task is to show that both worlds, real and ideal, nature and consciousness alike, appear only as constructions of the I's real-ideal activity. Transcendental idealism both can and must posit nature absolutely through a fictional construction from idealistic principles. According to Fichte, Schelling strayed in seeming to grant to nature a real and independent source of activity (Fichte to Schelling, 15 November 1800).²³ Schelling's reply notifies Fichte that his concerns are *not* misplaced. Nature is as real as consciousness, claims Schelling, and philosophy of nature is every bit as valid an enterprise as is philosophy of consciousness, not because nature is just an alternate construction of the path of real-ideal activity, or even a "fictional" construction, as Fichte had suggested, but because nature and consciousness *are one and the same thing*. The I given in intellectual intuition is but a higher power (*Potenz*) of the productive activity of nature (Schelling to Fichte, 19 November 1800).²⁴ Schelling seems to regard nature as a stage in the evolution of spirit, a precondition for consciousness.

Fichte had little patience with this enhancement of nature's status, though he did refrain from displaying his displeasure. A letter written on 27 December 1800, but left unsent, bluntly proclaims that though nature can indeed be explained by analogy with consciousness, consciousness is the prime analog in the comparison; consciousness itself cannot be explained from the basis of nature.²⁵ His redrafted reply promises that the new *Wissenschaftslehre* will settle the issue by providing a "system of the intelligible world" (Fichte to Schelling, 27 December 1800).²⁶

The manuscript of the *Presentation* whose very title (*Darstellung der Wissenschaftslehre*) indicates a reply to Schelling's *Darstellung meines Systems*, returns time and again to comments on nature that are critical, sometimes even derisive, of Schelling. Nature, writes Fichte, is only the domain of quantifiability, its stuff all alike, incapable of qualitative differentiation. If one can perhaps think of it as originating in some primordial freedom, one will certainly never perceive it as having arisen from freedom (SW, II, p. 82). Nature itself cannot compel the observer to view it as anything higher than a system of mechanical drives, nonlocal forces pervading the whole field and determining every point within it, without being located in individual points and agents. Now such a system of mechanical agency can, if interpreted from the ethical point of view, be viewed as a possible substrate for knowing or a basis for purposive agency, but it carries in itself no spark of knowing or freedom. Fichte underscores the difference between the *Wissenschaftslehre*'s ethical standpoint and Schelling's new naturalism in direct comment:

At any rate here is one of the points of difference, or better, a consequence of the one point of difference, between the true idealism of the *Wissenschaftslehre* and the new Spinozistic system. Knowing is supposed to come about as a necessary result of nature, a higher power of nature—taking the term in a sense that stretches all the way to empirical being. But this contradicts the inner nature of knowing, which is to be absolute origination, a coming into being from the substance of freedom, not of being. (SW, II, pp. 130–31)

The only role for nature in the *Wissenschaftslehre* is as a backdrop for the perception of spiritual individuality and community. It is just the infinitely steady, undifferentiated, self-similar domain of quantifiability, open in a purely external way to perceptual chunking into bodies. The very homogeneity of physical nature indicates its inferiority, or rather the incommensurable difference between it and the moral world, whose citizens are both plural and singular in their reciprocal interactions but are not all alike (SW, II, pp. 143–44). It is the “spirit-world” or ethical order in which the agent is finally defined, in which knowing is ultimately concretized into a system of unique individuals. Fichte is emphatic that qualitative significance cannot emerge from the quantitative monotony of nature; agency, purpose, individuality are alien features superimposed on the natural grid of mechanism.

Fichte countered Schelling’s “new Spinozism” with his own Leibnizean move, the postulation of the spirit-world. The postulate envisions each agent being assigned a point of view in a reciprocal field of communal interaction, a simultaneous endowment of individuality and purposiveness. Fichte seems satisfied that this closes the case on the pretensions of nature; it is mere basis, nonlocalized extended something, a field of plastic reactivity to force, the empty backdrop for knowing. But is he aware of the schism he introduces into the *Wissenschaftslehre* with this postulate? Has he reflectively faced the possibility that his insistence on the sui generis character of agency and purposiveness in the face of Schelling’s naturalism will return his philosophy to onto-theological grounds rather than to transcendental or phenomenological ones?

The final stance of the 1801–1802 *Wissenschaftslehre* seems frankly dualistic. Fichte simply places alongside the domain of mechanical action another order in which responsible action is conceivable. In the one territory, “I do not act, the universe just acts in me” (SW, II, p. 130); in the other, my acts *are thought* to have larger significance, although I as individual agent-knower can only *feel* this. I must, as a center of consciousness emergent from feeling, assume that I initiate actions and take responsibility for their effects. The whole necessity for this latter assumption, however, stems from my empirical situation. Can Fichte provide a systematic or philosophically analyzable link to connect mechanical world-states to the morally significant acts that are supposed to be their “intelligible world” redescriptions?

Fichte is able to explain the workings of agency and ethical responsibility in the “spirit-world” in the limited sense that he can link the individualization of the I as finite will to communal interdetermination. For the freedom of the agent appears or enters the consciousness of that agent only when contrasted to a twofold determination or mediation of his or her will: (1) The I’s perception of freedom or agency is conditioned by its appearance within a world lacking freedom and self-activity, dead nature; and (2) this consciousness of agency is itself intersubjectively mediated, constituted as individual through interaction with other free agents who together make up the one universal knowing, of which the individuated I, in its cognition and in its deeds, is but one determined part (SW, II, pp. 139–41). The category of community emerges as the final determinant of activity and the defining category of the postulated spiritual world. Reality is, in the final analysis, intersubjective for the *Wissenschaftslehre*; only the ethical explains the ethical.

If the 1801–1802 *Wissenschaftslehre* rejects Schelling’s new naturalism on the basis of a postulated supervention of a sui generis moral order, how far does the “new” *Wissenschaftslehre* remain faithful to its announced task of investigating knowing from the standpoint of knowing, that is, from freedom and agency? Or how much does it overreach Critical heuristic investigations and, in the absence of guiding phenomena, think its way into a metaphysical beyond? Fichte admits he can furnish no properly transcendental or possibilistic account of how a community of free agents codetermine one another to the stance of a plurality of finite agent-knowers. The *Wissenschaftslehre* proper must end with the transcendentially justified proposition “No ethics, no cognition,” since no free entity can come to consciousness alone, without the attendant awareness of the influences of a community of other free beings upon it (SW, II, p. 143). But this final chapter in the heuristic account of cognition or transcendental philosophy leads to and leaves open questions of a frankly metaphysical character that still seem to very much interest Fichte—questions about the harmony or complementarity of things and cognition, the interworkings of a multitude of free beings, the ultimate harmony of the sensible and the intelligible worlds. The solution to these questions is not available to *Wissenschaftslehre*, and it is not to be found in the structure of perception, “but in its relation, hidden to all eternity, to absolute being” (SW, II, p. 150). The tone of Fichte’s remark suggests not the caution of a good Kantian encountering the limits of explanation at the limits of experience but the willingness of the adept ready to tread eternity’s hidden paths.

The Possibility of a Logic Fit to Comprehend the Absolute

The central item on which Fichte and Schelling differed in this period was Schelling’s newly minted idea of the absolute as an “indifferent” or non-differentiated union of opposites. Fichte understood that it did not matter whether one called the opposites subjectivity and objectivity or intuition and

thought; what mattered was the quality of their union or identification. With the concept of indifference, Schelling claimed to be able to unite radical opposites such as nature and consciousness without canceling their opposition but only suspending it. If opposite orders of phenomena were indifferently related, one could ascend the hierarchy of instances or "powers" of this relation of indifference to an absolute identity, an original principle that indifferently contains all oppositions.²⁷ Fichte might object to this logic of relation in two ways. He could claim that "indifference" was but a verbal overcoming of differences that really left standing previous polarities such as nature and consciousness, or real and ideal activity. (Were that the case, Schelling's identity-philosophy would offer nothing but a repackaging of disparate empirical contents, empirical psychology overlaid upon mechanistic physics. It would then be pseudo-Spinozism, an account of finite bodies and empirical affects, with no mention of power or substance.) Or he could object that "indifference" abolished differences that cannot or should not be suppressed. Neither Fichte's letters nor the 1801–1802 manuscript indicate that he thought the philosophy of indifference was pseudo-Spinozism; instead he thought identity philosophy was precisely and thoroughly Spinozism.²⁸

Why should Fichte take identity philosophy for Spinozism? Despite the ponderous appearance of "deductions" and long categorical analyses that burden all versions of the *Wissenschaftslehre*, Fichte was abidingly aware of the inexplicability of the freedom or spontaneity that was his intense focus of concern. Consequently, he thought that if transcendental philosophy followed Schelling's path, positing nature as a lesser version of the free agent and granting that agent only the standing of an activity emergent from a natural basis, then the whole possibility of spirit or conscious agency would be destroyed. If spirit could be explained by a simple logic of identity or non-difference, the dark knots underlying both cognition and cognition's drive to explain itself as *Wissenschaftslehre* would be cut. Formal freedom, or the self-contradictory attempt to be self-grounding, that which prods knowing to unfold into more determinate form under the gaze of philosophical reflection, would be undercut if spirit were naturalized à la Schelling. So, too, would the nullity of chasm and hiatus, which shows up in the heart of material freedom, be undercut, as well as the later categories of contingency and spontaneity, and even that of grounding itself, as the 1801–1802 text analyzes them. There would be no necessity for spirit's self-description in *Wissenschaftslehre*, no possibility of even indicating the way the individual I is rooted in the collective I of the community and its history. Fichte sees clearly that *spirit observed is not observed to be spirit*. Without the internal and self-generated depiction of its own activity, the consciousness that Schelling thinks has been accounted for as an emergent feature of organic nature will

be just a part of nature. What is for itself must discover in and for itself its own sort of self-originated being. No loans from mechanism can substantiate the flickering presence of intuition.

Fichte's rejection of Schelling's logic of indifference seems to be an almost instinctive defense of the uniqueness of freedom; the spontaneity that is phenomenally evidenced in agency, responsibility, and the origination of purposive programs is undercut if it is viewed as an instance of something else that is not essentially spontaneous. Fichte also perceived that following the thread of Schelling's logic would lead transcendental philosophy toward an absolute philosophy whose territory was not limited to the phenomena of consciousness. I suggested above that this latter prospect did not necessarily scare Fichte off.

Fichte directly comments on Schelling's indifference schema in two passages of the 1801–1802 manuscript. In the first, Fichte charges that indifference annihilates absoluteness by transmuting quality into mere relation; if opposites are so joined that their opposition is no longer exclusive, the qualitative character of opposition as such vanishes and is replaced, as Schelling rightly says, by a quantitative difference—in–indifference.²⁹ Fichte is particularly concerned that, in the widest categorial framework, one of the absolute qualities made to so evaporate is freedom. Says Fichte,

It is accordingly a great error to describe the absolute as the identity of the subjective and the objective. This description essentially incorporates the old original sin of dogmatism, namely that the objective wrongly enters into the subjective. (SW, II, p. 66)

Fichte goes on to argue that, while it is correct to say that freedom and being are identified in *material freedom* and that this conjunction of opposites forms one side of knowing, their difference is never simply abolished. Identity philosophy, if it would simply identify them, is nullity philosophy.

A later passage recalls this analysis of indifference as equivalent to Spinozism and repeats the charge that the new philosophy confounds the finite with the infinite. The intransitory simply cannot enter the transitory. Fichte goes on to condemn the related mistake of interpreting the world as the expression of or the mirror of the absolute. Schelling did not directly espouse the position Fichte here calls "this half-thought that recurs from age to age" (SW, II, p. 87) until he published his *Bruno* in 1802, though some statements in the *Presentation of My System* suggest this view.³⁰ Fichte corrects this perennially mistaken view: The world is *not* the expression of the absolute; the world has no expressible relation to the absolute whatsoever. What the world does express is the contradiction at the heart of formal freedom—that knowing self-contradictorily strives to be its own reason and hence incorpo-

rates the ultimate contradiction, the struggle between being and non-being. Like freedom, the world is for itself alone, a self-enclosed domain alongside being or the absolute (SW, II, p. 82).

These criticisms of Schelling's newly muted identity philosophy all center on the danger it poses for the qualitative singularity of freedom or spontaneity. The fact that Fichte rejects it as identity philosophy or Spinozism, while he is not explicitly critical of Schelling's convoluted logic of indifference, recalls a similar evasion of ordinary logic on Fichte's part, when he installs a chasm, hiatus, or *saltus* in the core of material freedom. The hiatus signifies a gap in knowing, a point of unrest, mobility, positive non-being; it is in virtue of this gap that knowing penetrates being. The function of this gap is to make the free element in knowing immune to being logically discounted as self-contradictory. Hiatus is not a logical function and generates no connective; it is not disjunction but nonconnection, empty space, absence of relation. If the opening of such a gap is, as Fichte seems to suggest, an essential moment in the only account of consciousness that philosophy can offer, if only nonrelation can conceptualize the possibility of contingency, then the occurrence and extent of the gap are not subject to calculation. I doubt, however, whether such negative logic is employable in constructing notions of "freedom" and "grounding" useful in elucidating cognitive and ethical contexts.³¹

From Fichte's reaction to Schellingian themes of being, nature, and the indifferent character of the absolute, it seems clear that though he wants to offer a system of human cognition and action under the rubric of knowing, Fichte's primary interest is still in defending the spontaneous, for-itself, unconstrained or free moment in knowing. The possibility of freedom is to be defended, even if it involves the suspension or qualification of ordinary logic in the definitions both of material and formal freedom. Fichte also stresses the lived aspect of freedom. Philosophy can but delimit conditions of possibility, so freedom must be enacted if it is to be comprehended. Philosophy can conceptually indicate the territory where individuality and communal social determination intersect, but that freedom is only possible *in that communal location* and must be experienced there alone. But for all this, the 1801–1802 *Presentation* shows a Fichte closer to dogmatism than the Fichte of 1794, for he acquiesces in locating free knowing alongside a being outside of and inimical to knowing. The absolute being that is the limit, term, and final determiner of consciousness in this system is more foreign to freedom than necessity's constraint; it is a brute positivity that reduces all the play, contingency, or internal nullity of freedom to insignificance. This same absolute being is invoked, at the limit of systematic philosophy, as the final condition of knowing, the ultimate individuater, the final determination. Freedom is bounded by an ultimate facticity. In this version, *Wissenschaftslehre* succeeds more as metaphysical system than as defense of freedom.

NOTES

1. For a detailed account of the circumstances of the composition of the manuscript now titled *Darstellung des Wissenschaftslehre aus den Jahren 1801–1802* (*Presentation of the Science of Knowing, 1801–1802*), see the editors' preface in *J. G. Fichte: Gesamtausgabe der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* (hereafter GA) (see page 235), pp. 107–28.
2. See the announcement of the *nova methodo* lectures, GA, IV, 2, p. 17, for Fichte's description of the holistic practical-theoretical approach. Schelling's *System of Transcendental Idealism* identifies the dynamic structures of nature with the transcendental acts that make up the I, though it goes on to maintain that only as *will*, individuated within a community of agents constrained by nature and history, does intelligence come to self-intuition; see *Schellings Werke*, ed. M. Schröter (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1965), vol. 3, pp. 450–54, 527–31. Fichte objects to Schelling's procedure in a letter of 27 December 1800, and promises to remedy the defect with a "transcendental system of the intelligible world." See *Fichte-Schelling Briefwechsel* (hereafter FSBW), ed. W. Schulz (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1968), p. 116.
3. See part 1, §5 of *Presentation*, which makes plain the difference between knowing, which *Wissenschaftslehre* can investigate, and the absolute, to which no philosophy has access, in *Fichtes Werke*, edited by I. H. Fichte (hereafter SW) (see page 235), II, pp. 12–13.
4. Fichte offers this summary passage: "Lastly, what was the ground of this idea of a closed system of mutually determined intelligences, determined in the pure thought of reason-intuition, and the perception-thought derived from it? It was absolute being itself, which contains and conditions knowing—and is hence an absolute mutual penetration of the two. The deepest root of all knowing is, therefore, the unreachable union of *pure* thought and the I's thought we have described, the absolute principle inside perception. This [union] equals the moral law, the most exalted case of all intuition, since it grasps intelligence as its own absolute real-ground. This union is absolutely not a matter of this or that kind of knowing, but absolute knowing, simply as such. How, within it, one arrives at *this or that knowing* we shall explain at some point. This union becomes absolute knowing only under the condition of absolute *being*, even inside *knowing itself*; just as surely as knowing is knowing does absolute being subsist in it. And in this way absolute knowing and being are united; the former enters the latter and unfolds into the form of knowing, making it absolute. One who understands this is master of all truth; for him there remains nothing inconceivable" (SW, II, p. 153). This and other passages seem to speak of intelligence itself and correlate it with being itself. Whether "intelligence" and "being" are conceived categorically or substantively seems ambiguous in particular texts; the general context of *Wissenschaftslehre*, however, would rule out any hypostatization of the concepts.
5. All texts cited in parentheses refer to Fichte's *Presentation of the Science of Knowing, 1801–1802*. Citations in this paper are generally to SW, whose editor filled out abbreviations and inserted connectives to produce a readable version; everything included in SW is reproduced in GA. SW's editor omitted some passages he felt were repetitive; they are restored in GA.

6. The *Presentation* comes from Fichte's hand with the following structure: Four prefatory sections are devoted to the concept of the "science of knowing." Part 1 bears the title "Absolute Knowing." It was divided into sections by the author himself to a certain point (§§1–15). The younger Fichte and the editors of the GA divide the manuscript differently past that point, the latter taking references to daily working sessions as natural dividing points. Part 2 is untitled, but culminates in the theory of the spirit-world or ethical world order.

The highest and abiding synthesis (Synthesis A, "Knowing") takes up §§5–19 in SW and §§5–16 in GA. Synthesis B ("Quality and Determinancy") occupies §§20–29 in SW and §§17–20 in GA; it contains the most obscure lines of argumentation found in the whole work. Part 1 in fact appears to trail off into directionlessness. The syntheses that comprise part 2 are stated more succinctly, without the ponderous apparatus of a strict transcendental deduction. Synthesis C, which recounts the specification of knowing to the categorial points of "Quantity and Space," takes up §§30–34 in SW, and §§1–2 of part 2 in GA. Synthesis D, which elaborates the work of the principle of "Concretion and Discretion" in ongoing determination, takes up §§35–38 in SW, and §§3–5 of part 2 in GA. Synthesis E, which corresponds to the "Deduction of Presentation" in the 1794 *Foundations of the Entire Science of Knowledge*, arrives at the determinacy of empirically determined individuality, "Perception" and the upsurge of the "Sensible World"; it occupies §§39–41 in SW and §6 of part 2 in GA. The final stage, which surpasses Fichte's typical fivefold scheme of syntheses, may be viewed either as yet another synthesis (Synthesis F) or just as an alternate point of view upon the sensible world of Synthesis E. This section returns to the theme of individuation in the guise of communal codetermination of agents within an "Ethical World-System"; it also provides meta-comment clarifying the relation between the natural and the intelligible world. This final or alternate synthesis covers §§42–48 in SW and §§7–8 of part 2 in GA.

7. See SW, I, pp. 91–109. The distinction between formal and material elements of synthesis, to which Fichte constantly refers in the manuscript of 1801–1802 but which he leaves undeducted and unexplained, might be illuminated by a glance back to the *Grundsätze* of the *Foundations*. The first and third principles are positings and are principles governing all intra-systematic positing; the second principle is a counterpositing and is the principle of all counterpositings. Now in the 1801–1802 framework, let us say we have a synthesis M: The *formal* element of M denotes what M is and does, while its *material* element derives from (and, upon analysis, unpacks into) a contradiction of, or oscillation between, two opposite factors, N and \sim N. If our M is freedom, Fichte says that formal freedom is self-grounding, while material freedom is the coincidence of opposites or the flickering between opposites that is intuition (SW, II, p. 25). That a synthesis, as discussed in 1801–1802, has both formal and material constituents means, therefore, that it has thetic or self-founding components, which make it ultimately substantive or irreducible to other factors, and antithetic components, which allow for progressive elucidation of the conditions of its possibility. Ultimately, Fichte views thetic-synthetic entities or acts (knowing in 1801–1802, freedom in 1794) as their own sufficient conditions; philosophical analysis can discover only series of increasingly fine (and less explanatory) necessary conditions.
8. See the whole argument of §16, SW, II, pp. 32–33.
9. The Mandelbrot Set, the most impressive visual specimen of deep or chaotic order, is generated by the repeated application of the formula $z \rightarrow z^2 + c$, where

- z starts at 0 and c is the point at hand. See James Gleick, *Chaos: Making a New Science* (New York: Penguin, 1987), p. 231n.
10. Fichte's method is convoluted in all his various presentations of the *Wissenschaftslehre*. In the 1801–1802 *Wissenschaftslehre* the analytic march of the deductions listed under the heading of the five (or six) syntheses does two things at once: (1) it shows that the material antagonists that are the elements of the syntheses are the only possible candidates for synthesis, and (2) it advances the categorical specification of each of those members. The first task is transcendental deduction, the second categorical deduction ("logic," in Hegel's sense of the term). They are held together not by any methodological elegance on Fichte's part, but because the *Wissenschaftslehre* demands that he prove that *knowing, the ultimate synthesis of being and freedom, can take place only as a harmonized world of plural, sometimes antagonistic, individual wills*.
 11. The abstract categorical approach to the analysis of knowledge in the 1801–1802 manuscript is in surprising contrast to the consciousness-centered reconstruction of the *Wissenschaftslehre* offered in the *nova methodo* lectures of 1796 and thereafter. Those lectures stress the origination of the contents of consciousness in activity and the free character of philosophy, while the Kantian sense of freedom as spontaneity and self-causation is absent from the later text. See *Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo*, Einleitung, §§1–8, GA, IV, 2, pp. 17–27.
 12. Benedict de Spinoza, *Ethics*, trans. Gutman (New York: Hafner, 1949), 1: def. 1.
 13. "Zur Ausarbeitung der Wissenschaftslehre von 1801/02," GA, II, 6, p. 69.
 14. Spinoza, *Ethics*, 1: def. 7.
 15. FSBW, p. 105.
 16. FSBW, pp. 124–25.
 17. FSBW, p. 126.
 18. FSBW, pp. 133–34.
 19. I have typically translated *Wissen* as "knowing" rather than "knowledge" to suggest the Fichtean perspective wherein the cognitive series is first an activity, then an agent or knower, then a something known, and only last and remotely a finished body of cognition or a subject-matter.
 20. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A235–36/B294–95.
 21. If Fichte wants to make this move to bracket the antithetical power of hiatus or chasm within a postulated but categorically unexplained transcendent unity, he is either pulled back toward Spinozistic metaphysics with its ultimate category contrast of the finite and the infinite or pulled forward toward Schelling's identity philosophy with its preoccupation with identity and difference. The same problem hovered around the 1794 *Foundations*, in the contrast between the absolute positing of the first principle and the absolute counterpositing of the second. Fichte solves the problem in 1801–1802 as he did in 1794: *Wissenschaftslehre* takes its stand in the abiding synthesis of knowing (where synthesis is both chasm and unity) or in the limited positing of the empirical I. Fichte is not assimilated to either Spinozistic or Schellingean metaphysics in 1801–1802 because, as earlier, his commitment to investigate freedom keeps him phenomenologically focused on individual, worldly, and intersubjective consciousness, even when his transcendental apparatus for explaining it seems, on account of its abstract or categorical approach, to push him beyond experience.
 22. See GA, II, 6, p. 279.
 23. FSBW, p. 105.
 24. FSBW, pp. 107–8.

25. FSBW, p. 114.
26. Fichte there writes, "I believe I understand you quite well, just as before. Only I don't think these assertions {about the equality of nature and consciousness} follow from the formerly admitted principles of transcendental idealism. Indeed they contradict them. . . . In a word, there is lacking as yet a *transcendental system of the intelligible world*. Your statement that the individual [I said the I; there is a difference] is only a higher power of nature I can count as correct only under the condition not only that I posit this nature not merely as phenomenon [I do just that, on grounds appropriate to my system] but also that I *find something intelligible within it*. The individual is *generically* the lower power of this intelligible {world}; something in it stands as a determinable factor toward a determining one which is its higher power. [This will all be explained shortly.] It is only by means of this system of intelligibles that we can thoroughly understand this and our other differences and come to agreement about them" (FSBW, p. 116. Material in square brackets is by Schelling; my interpolations are in scroll brackets).
27. See Schelling's *Darstellung meines Systems der Philosophie* (1801), §§7–46, for Schelling's reinterpretation of thethetic identity of the *Wissenschaftslehre's* first principle, $A = A$, as the quantitative indifference of opposites, symbolized by the line linking opposite poles of a magnet. *Schellings Werke*, ed. Manfred Schröter (Munich: Beck, 1965), vol. 4, pp. 117–37.
28. I think the charge of pseudo-Spinozism or, more broadly, pseudo-metaphysics, may be used as a touchstone for all the post-Kantian transcendental systems. Such systems either "solve" philosophically insoluble conceptual paradoxes by sewing James's *Principles of Psychology* and Newton's *Principia* into one binding, or else they metaphysically transgress Kantian cautions and engage in philosophically proper but experientially reductive solutions, materialist and spiritualist alike. Philosophers evidently lack Solomon's wisdom.
29. Consider Schelling's proof for Proposition 45 of the *Darstellung meines Systems*: "There is nothing in itself except absolute identity. But this identity is posited infinitely under the form of subjectivity and objectivity [taking A as subjectivity or as objectivity]. Hence also to infinity (for example, in some definite point) neither subjectivity nor objectivity can be posited for itself, and if quantitative difference ($A = B$) is posited, it is posited only under the form of a preponderance of one over the other; this holds for the whole as much as for the part. But there is no reason that one should be posited as preponderant over the other. So both must be posited as prevailing at the same time, and this again is inconceivable unless both reduce to quantitative indifference. Therefore neither A nor B can be posited in itself, but only the identical with subjectivity and objectivity prevailing at the same time and the quantitative indifference of both" (*Schellings Werke*, vol. 4, pp. 136–37).
30. See *Schellings Werke*, vol. 4, pp. 122–23.
31. Fichte's hiatus, Schelling's indifference, and the infinity of Hegel's *Jena Logic* are all attempts to employ negative logic (or, less charitably, nonlogic) to press the discordant texts of matter and mind together onto one palimpsest. Hegel's mature concept of negativity is a more successful logical pan-operator because the basic paradox of relation-that-is-nonrelation has there been psychologized. One wonders, however, if we really understand all things better by pointing to our self, which we do not understand. See G. W. F. Hegel, *Jenenser Logik, Metaphysik, und Naturphilosophie*, ed. G. Lasson (Munich: Beck, 1967), pp. 31–32.