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Article abstract

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THE DOCTRINE OF MANIFESTATION IN FICHTE'S *PRINCIPIEN* (1805)

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RÉSUMÉ : Cet article considère la position systématique des *Principien* de Fichte (1805), entre la *prima philosophia* qu'est la *Wissenschaftslehre* et les doctrines spécifiques de son application ; la nature, le droit, la morale et la religion. Il examine également les structures systématiques des *Principien*, avec une attention particulière à la doctrine de la manifestation. Il le fait avec une attention soutenue à la philosophie de la religion, puisque les *Principien* déterminent la manifestation par rapport à la relation entre Dieu et le monde, et la relation entre Dieu et le monde par rapport à la doctrine de la manifestation.

ABSTRACT : This article considers the systematic position of Fichte's *Principien* (1805), between the *philosophia prima* that is the *Wissenschaftslehre* and the specific doctrines of its application ; nature, right, morality, and religion. It considers also the systematic structures of the *Principien*, with particular attention to the doctrine of manifestation. It does so with sustained attention to the philosophy of religion, since the *Principien* determines manifestation with respect to the relation between God and world, and the relation between God and world with respect to the doctrine of manifestation.

I. THE SYSTEMATIC POSITION OF THE 1805 *PRINCIPIEN*

On three separate occasions in 1804, Fichte presented private lectures on the *Wissenschaftslehre* in Berlin ; from January 17 until March 29, from April 26 until June 8, and from November 5 to December 31. The first two presentations contain the *philosophia prima* that is the *Doctrine of Science*.² Fichte was guided in these

1. [Translator's Note : I would express my gratitude to the author, Prof. Marco Ivaldo, for his patience across an extended period of preparation, and to Marco Dozzi and Dr. Paolo Livieri for their collaboration on the final form of this article, which appeared originally as "La dottrina della manifestazione nei *Principien* di Fichte," in *Annuario Filosofico*, 5, Mursia (1989), p. 189-220.]

2. Cf. Reinhard LAUTH, "Über Fichtes Lehrtätigkeit in Berlin von Mitte 1799 bis Anfang 1805 und seine Zuhörerschaft," in *Hegel-Studien*, ed. Friedhelm Nicolin and Otto Pöggeler, v. 15, Bonn, Bouvier, 1980, p. 9-50. The reader may consult the *Erste Wissenschaftslehre von 1804*, ed. Hans Gliwitzky, Stuttgart,

expositions by the question of the essence or character of “knowledge in itself,” “pure knowledge,” knowledge as such.

The transcendental formulation of this question, fundamental for any theoretical philosophy, concerns the manner in which we may retrace multiplicity or disunity in knowledge to unity. The *Wissenschaftslehre*, in an initial, “reductive” movement, eliminates any (one-sided and factual) account of knowledge (as exclusively idealistic or realistic), in order to be able to affirm the encompassing character, the undivided unity, of the absolute. In this consists the “doctrine of reason, or truth.” Thus, “being is entirely a self-enclosed singularity (*singulum*) of immediately living being, never outside of itself” (*WL* 1804-II, 160).³ In a second, “deductive” movement, the *Wissenschaftslehre* will resolve the “contradiction” between this undivided and inclusive unity of Being as *singulum*, and the multiplicity or plurality of and in knowledge, by means of a “doctrine of manifestation.” *Philosophia prima* will, first, present the general, constitutive principles of this doctrine, and will articulate the mediating principles within the I of consciousness into four particular or specific subjects; the transcendental doctrine of nature, right, morality, and religion.

The third exposition, according to what remains of the Fichtean manuscript, should have treated the principle of the philosophy of history in particular. This doctrine has an indispensable mediating function in the “application” of transcendental knowledge to the practical activity of a single individual and of society.⁴ Fichte made his scientific exposition more concrete through the concurrent popular lectures on the “philosophical character of the age” (published as *The Characteristics of the Present Age*)⁵ — lectures that were held between November 1804 and March 1805, and that contain a philosophical consideration of concrete human history.

The explicit “doctrine of manifestation,” then, could not be identified with the exposition of the universal principles of manifestation that appear in the *philosophia prima* alone. Nor, however, could the doctrine be reduced to a simple determination of the points of genesis within particular disciplines. It was necessary to go beyond each such one-sided characterization, and to make explicit the *fundamental principles of the particular disciplines*, as (1) the necessary premise for the adequate treatment

Kohlhammer, 1969 [cf. GA, II, 7, p. 33-235]; *Die Wissenschaftslehre. Zweiter Vortrag im Jahre 1804 vom 16. April bis 8. Juni*, ed. Reinhard Lauth and Joachim Widmann, with Peter K. Schneider, Hamburg, Meiner, 1975 (hereafter *WL* 1804-II) [cf. GA, II, 7, p. 289-368]. The third exposition is in *J.G. Fichte Nachlass der Deutschen Staatsbibliothek in Berlin*, III, 7 and Bl. 1-4 of VI, 1 varia 13. [Cf. GA, II, 8.] [References to FICHTE’s *Gesamtausgabe* are provided throughout in square-bracketed Translator’s Notes.]

3. [GA, II, 8, p. 242. *Translator’s Note*: Extant English-language translations will be indicated in subsequent square-bracketed Translator’s Notes. Cf. J.G. FICHTE, *The Science of Knowing*, trans. Walter Wright, SUNY, Albany, 2005, p. 132.]
4. Regarding the systematic position of this “application,” see Joachim WIDMANN, *Johann Gottlieb Fichte. Einführung in seine Philosophie*, Berlin, New York, De Gruyter, 1982, p. 85-131. See also Reinhard LAUTH, “L’idea globale di filosofia in J.G. Fichte,” in Claudio CESA, ed., *La filosofia trascendentale di J.G. Fichte*, and the Preface by Luigi Pareyson, Napoli, Guida, 1986, p. 23-67.
5. *Die Grundzüge des gegenwärtigen Zeitalters* (erste Ausgabe: Berlin 1806), in *Johann Gottlieb Fichtes sämtliche Werke*, ed. I.H. Fichte, Berlin, Veit, 1845-1846, vol. VII; reproduced in Berlin, De Gruyter, 1971; hereafter *SW*), p. 1-256. [Cf. GA, I, 8, p. 141-396. Cf. *The Popular Works of Johann Gottlieb Fichte*, Bristol, Thoemmes Press, 1999, v. 2, p. 1-288.]

of these doctrines and as (2) the equally important moment of “application” of the *Wissenschaftslehre* in the context of lived experience in this variety of its forms. The lectures that Fichte held in Berlin in February and March 1805 explicate this construal of the fundamental principles and their systematic function. They were announced thus by Fichte, as “lectures on the fundamental principles of the doctrines of the divine (of God) and of the internal and external law, (usually) termed natural theology, morality and doctrine of right.”⁶

These lectures⁷ refer immediately to *philosophia prima* and, to its justification of the [doctrine of] manifestation. In the *Principien*, the doctrine of manifestation is approached and explicated methodically as an articulated unity. We will see that the fundamental question animating these lectures concerns the transcendental explication of the existence of a “world.” As soon as we do so, the concept of the “absolute, *ens a se, per se*, the bearer [...] of every living being and life” will arise (3). How it is possible, then, that this *absolute* “apparently externalizes itself, so as to be the cause of a world” (as an external self-manifestation)? How is it possible that this “world” is, from a certain point of view, “external to God” — and thus distinct from him — while yet having to be, from another point of view and in truth (= the truth of the absolute itself, as *singulum*) identical to God?

Manifestation is conceived and articulated by means of constitutive principles of three spheres; religion, morality, and right. These spheres of manifestation had been announced already — as was noted, in the 28th Lecture of the *Wissenschaftslehre* 1804 II — as nature, right, morality, and religion. I would note that (1) the sequence in the *Principien* is inverted, and that (2) the title of the *Principien* does not announce the treatment of the first sphere, the doctrine of the principles of nature as such.

This inversion in sequence can be explained by the peculiar position of a *doctrine of the principles of manifestation* within the transcendental system as represented in the *Principien*. The latter is the Doctrine of Science, as “applied” to specific spheres of the self-actualization of freedom. Therefore it “proceeds” from absolute knowledge, that absolute knowledge that the *Wissenschaftslehre* understands as the “being-there” (*Daseyn*) of God, the “existence of the absolute.”⁸ The doctrine of God, then — as the theory of the “ex-ist-ence of God” — is “in a certain sense identical to the Doctrine of Science itself” (6). It is the “first step” in the explication of the principles of absolute manifestation. The doctrines of morality and law emerge from within the theory of the existence of God, as “secondary” articulations of the theory

6. Communication in the “Königlich privilegierte berlinische Zeitung von Staats- und gelehrten Sachen” of 20 October 1804.

7. Published by Meiner as J.G. FICHTE, *Die Principien der Gottes- Sitten- und Rechtslehre* (Februar und März 1805), ed. Reinhard Lauth, Hamburg, Meiner, 1986. [Cf. GA, II, 7, p. 369-489.]

8. See, e.g., the *Wissenschaftslehre 1805*, ed. Hans Gliwitszky, Hamburg, Meiner, 1984; hereafter *WL 1805*: “I affirm that knowledge is, in itself, absolute [existence] or, what amounts to the same thing, [...] the existence of the absolute” (11). [Cf. GA, II, 9, p. 185.]

of absolute manifestation. In the doctrines' explanatory sequence, they therefore develop "later," and represent two derivative "steps."⁹

At this point, we can recognize a second motive for the inversion of the sequence as well. The *Principien* expound the sequence of *doctrines*, the sequence of the theories of the principles of manifestation. The 28th lecture of the *Wissenschaftslehre* 1804-II¹⁰ presents instead the self-establishment of the form of the *I of consciousness*, although always in view of the justification of the particular disciplines. The I of consciousness proceeds from an inferior principle of self-consciousness (the principle of sensibility) until it reaches a superior level — the point of view of religion — by means of a development through the intermediary levels of right and morality (*WL 1804-II*, p. 281 *sq.*).¹¹ For this reason, we need to *distinguish* a "deduction" of the doctrinal principles, as presented in the *Principien*, and a "phenomenology" of the form of the "effect of reason" (or the I of consciousness), as exposed by the *philosophia prima* of the *Wissenschaftslehre* in its transcendental justification of the being of manifestation. "Deduction" and "phenomenology" have different sequences. Nor should we forget that, in the same *Wissenschaftslehre* 1804, phenomenology is "founded in truth" (*WL 1804-II*, p. 150).¹²

Regarding the absence of an explicit proposal for a treatment of the doctrine of nature we may note the following. As one knows, while Fichte did not accomplish a transcendental theory of nature according to the principles of the Doctrine of Science in an organic and complete exposition, the "materials" for this theory can be found nonetheless throughout several of his works.¹³ Fichte, in other words, did not succeed in realizing the intention that he announced to the Austrian ambassador to Berlin in

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9. [Translator's Note : The author has dedicated several important works to the theme of Fichte's philosophy of religion. The present article has been selected for translation for the way in which it contextualizes the philosophy of religion within the systematic structure of Fichte's philosophy in this, its *mittlere Phase*, in a text virtually unknown in English-language scholarship. For the philosophy of religion proper, see IVALDO's following (selected) texts : "Fichte interprete del prologo giovanneo," *Annuario filosofico*, 27, ed. Claudio Ciancio, Giovanni Ferretti, Giuseppe Riconda, Milano, Mursia (2011), p. 165-180 ; "Fichte : Lineamenti della dottrina della religione," *Archivio di storia della cultura*, XXV, ed. Fulvio Tessitore, Liguori, Napoli (2012), p. 15-31 ; "Figure della filosofia della religione nel pensiero di Fichte," *Archivio di Filosofia* (2007), p. 97-112 ; "La filosofia della religione di Fichte," in C. ANGELINO, ed., *Filosofi della religione*, Genova, Marietti, 1999, p. 167-197 ; "L'idea della Trinità nella *Staatslehre* di Fichte," in Claudio MORESCHINI, ed., *Trinità in relazione : Percorsi di ontologia trinitaria dai Padri della Chiesa all'Idealismo Tedesco*, Panzano in Chianti, Edizioni Feeria - Comunità di San Leolino, 2015, p. 249-268 ; "Johann Gottlieb Fichte : Gesù 'punto fondamentale e punto di unità della storia' (*Staatslehre* 1813)," in S. ZUCAL, ed., *Cristo nella filosofia contemporanea. I. Da Kant a Nietzsche*, San Paolo, Cinisello Balsamo, 2000, p. 129-158.]
10. [Translator's Note : See Translator's Note 3, above. For the author's account of the WL 1804-II, and of this 28th Lecture in particular, see, for example : "La struttura della filosofia fichtiana. Analisi della *Wissenschaftslehre* 1804," *Giornale di metafisica*, nuova serie, VI (1984), p. 359-396 ; and "Praktische Momente in der *Wissenschaftslehre* 1804/II," in J.-C. GODDARD, A. SCHNELL, ed., *L'être et le phénomène. La doctrine de la science de 1804 de J.G. Fichte*, Paris, Vrin, 2009, p. 239-249.]
11. [Cf. GA, II, 7, p. 304-311.]
12. [Cf. GA, II, 8, p. 228.]
13. The systematic analysis of these "materials" for a transcendental doctrine of nature has been effected by Reinhard LAUTH in his *Die transzendente Naturlehre Fichtes nach den Prinzipien der Wissenschaftslehre*, Hamburg, Meiner, 1984. One may also consult Francesco MOISO, *Natura e cultura nel primo Fichte*, Milano, Mursia, 1979.

May 1812, to “expose soon a philosophy of nature, and perhaps, then, also a philosophy of mathematics.”¹⁴ Importantly, philosophy of nature would have represented the “fourth” moment in the doctrinal series, after the philosopher’s “first” step in 1806 (the *Doctrine of Religion*), and after the “second” and “third” steps (the doctrines of right and of law) in 1811 and 1812 (although several elaborations of the *Doctrine of Science*, from the 1805 *Erlangen Wissenschaftslehre* to the *Presentation of the General Outlines of the Wissenschaftslehre* of 1810 could almost be considered in the context of the doctrine of religion). The *Principien* almost “foretell” this disrupted path, announcing only three steps of the doctrinal sequence. (One cannot exclude a contingent motivation, of course — e.g., Fichte’s intention to drastically differentiate the transcendental philosophy of that period [1804-1805] from *Naturphilosophie*, for postponing an explicit conceptual determination of the transcendental approach to nature.)

Does this then imply that a transcendental doctrine of nature is completely absent from the *Principien*? One need not respond affirmatively; not only for the “material” reason that philosophical concepts of nature are present in the *Principien* (as we shall see), but above all for the “systematic” reason that such concepts cannot but be present and operative in the transcendental explication of the “world.” The doctrinal sequence can abstract contingently from an explicit treatment of one or another particular doctrine. This doctrinal sequence, however, must always “presuppose” manifestation in its complete articulation and, for this reason, must necessarily refer to the “system of the natural world” — elucidated, at least in outline, transcendently. The *Principien* prove this fact, such that it is not wrong to say that the doctrine of nature is examined within them. There are other issues that should be indicated and that could contribute to the further explication of the (contingent) reason why an account of the doctrine of nature is not announced in the *Principien*. The aspect that I will emphasize, however, will allow us to explain the important (“applicative”) position of the explicit doctrine of manifestation as exposed by the *Principien* within the systematic structure of the Doctrine of Science.

In the period that precedes the *Principien* (including the initial years in Berlin, before the call to Erlangen — and, from a political point of view, the years that precede the fall of Prussia to Napoleon), Fichte exposed, according to transcendental principles, a system of the Doctrine of Science that founded the theory of the absolute knowledge, the theory of the absolute, the theory of the absolute knowledge as manifestation of the absolute (cf. mainly *WL 1801-2* and *1804-II*). Contemporaneously with the elaboration of the *Principien*, as we have intimated, Fichte confronted the question of *history* as a system of the concrete human actions in time. The spiritual-political situation of his era required Fichte to identify the categories for the “application” of transcendental knowledge to lived experience. In the face of the German crisis, the problems of the “practical” sphere (moral, educational, juridical, political)

14. J.G. FICHTE, *Briefwechsel*, ed. Hans Schulz, Leipzig, Haessel, 1925 (i), 1930 (ii) (second edition, Hildesheim, Olms, 1967), vol. II, n. 637, p. 583. [Cf. GA, III, 8, p. 6.]

— problems perpetually present within Fichte’s philosophical investigations¹⁵ — re-emerged as central after his ‘focus’ on founding epistemological principles in the first Berlin years. Now, the doctrine of history will assume a crucial function toward this “application” of transcendental knowledge ; in its systematic moment it will “justify” the concept of history, and in its “phenomenological” moment it will generate the criteria for a practical orientation in the present age.

The doctrine of history, however, also presupposes and intersects with other doctrines. We can conceive the system of human activity in time only if we possess the concept of time and if we know what action and interaction are ; on the other hand, time, action, and interaction manifest themselves in lived experience always according to an historical dimension that qualifies them and makes them concrete. For this reason, one cannot elaborate a doctrine of history without developing, concurrently, at least the principles of an explicit doctrine of manifestation. It is *this latter* task that determines the course of the *Principien der Gottes- Sitten- und Rechtslehre*, which offers the indispensable theoretical infrastructure for the elaboration of the theory of history, as the Doctrine of Science “applied” to the particular spheres of manifestation, the explicit doctrine of manifestation.

History is not a sphere that stands next to the other four. It rather is a horizon in which religion, morality, society, and nature manifest themselves. It is also, and at the same time, a “formation” progressively actualized through the interaction of religion, morality, society, and nature. To confront the question of history without confronting the explicit theory of the principles of manifestation would have entailed an unlicensed inference, a fall into an “empiricism” of history that the *Principien* wants most to avoid. It is necessary to add, though, that the “step” of the philosophy of history is indispensable for a satisfactory treatment of the material disciplines themselves, to “concretize” the doctrine of the *principles* of the manifestation in the doctrines of the *contents* of the same manifestation, and in this way to complete the system. The *Principien* accompany, and, as a totality, offer a background and basis for the treatment of the theory of history, which in its turn will open up to an additional elaboration of the material subjects whose fundamentals are anticipated in the *Principien*.

The urgency of these questions related to the “practical” sphere, and this need to advance the transcendental conception of history, evince why Fichte decided to omit from the *Principien* an explicit thematization of the principles of the doctrine of nature. The intention to keep his distance from *Naturphilosophie* in his choice of formal objects, and Fichte’s decisive “political” interest, conspire to effect a deferral of the construction of an organic theory of nature according to the principles of the *Wissenschaftslehre*. As we know, this deferral will have significant repercussions, in the

15. Cf. Luigi PAREYSON, *Fichte. Il sistema della libertà*, 1st ed. 1950, under the title *Fichte* ; 2nd augmented ed. Milan, Mursia, 1976 ; “A careful examination of the unfolding of Fichte’s thought and intentions from the time of his youth shows clearly that the fundamental and original needs from which he moves are religious, political and speculative” (73).

delineation of Fichte's philosophical profile among the cultivated public and in the reception and diffusion of transcendental philosophy.¹⁶

II. METHOD AND STRUCTURE

The *Principien* consist of 23 lectures. They proceed “neither *absolutely* nor *partially* analytically, but purely deductively” (3).¹⁷ We find here a distinction between a transcendental “analytic” and a transcendental “deductive” method that must be explained. If the method moves from a manifold of particulars and returns to a universal unity, it is reductive, ascending, “analytic.” The particular is, progressively, “reduced” to more general concepts, until the element common to the different, particular, disjunctions is clarified at the conclusion of the ascent (by means of the “analysis” of the context of the multiple in its principles). The opposite path proposes a descent, and is synthetic, or “deductive.” It proceeds from the clarified universal element and descends through successive syntheses towards the thematization of the structure and order of the particular, genetically deducing the fundamental disjunctions from unity.

The reductive, ascending, “analytic” method is performed by the *philosophia prima* of the *Wissenschaftslehre* in the construction of the “doctrine of reason and truth.” The complex unity of pure knowledge is analyzed progressively into its fundamental terms until a genetic point of knowledge can be determined from absolute truth-unity. The descending, synthetic, “deductive” method is adopted by the *philosophia prima* of the Doctrine of Science in the construction of the “doctrine of manifestation.” The genetic point is developed into a comprehension of pure knowledge as a manifestation of absolute truth-unity until that point that it can obtain a justification of the (one and many) structure of the I of consciousness. The same procedure is at work in the Doctrine of Science insofar as “applied” : in the latter, one is to further prosecute the path towards particular concrete instances of knowledge, and therefore to “deduce” their synthetic articulation. The descending, applicatory path is completed by the determination of the *a priori* principles of the particular spheres of knowledge (religious, moral, social-judicial, natural, and historical, in the aforementioned acceptance). The factual determination of such concrete knowledge does not derive from a philosophical deduction, but has rather to be perceived, progressively, *a posteriori*.

This depiction of these two methods of transcendental knowledge allows one to understand why the *Principien*, as a reflection that expounds systematically the foundations of applied knowledge, unfold through the synthetic-deductive, and not the analytic, method. They “proceed from knowledge, from the principle of unity and distinction of the three concepts [of God, of morality, of law] [...]. What is knowledge ? [...]. Answer : the existence (*Daseyn*) of the absolute [the result of the

16. Cf. Reinhard LAUTH, “I mutamenti dell’immagine della “Dottrina della scienza” negli ultimi 40 anni,” in *La filosofia trascendentale di J.G. Fichte*, p. 85-102.

17. [Cf. GA, II, 7, p. 378.]

philosophia prima] [...]. Now we need to [...] stay within, and proceed from, knowledge, from this very immediate existence of God” (5).¹⁸ “Given” the existence of God (or absolute knowledge, as evinced in *philosophia prima*) it is necessary to make explicit “deductively” the principles of manifestation (in the doctrine of God, of morality, of right and, here, if only in outline, of nature).

The first lecture offers a prolegomena to the real deduction. Fichte explains the starting point of the *Principien* from the standpoint of absolute knowledge and illustrates what he means by doctrine of God, of morality, and of right. The remaining twenty-two lectures can be divided in four main parts. The first part (Lectures 2-7) offers an elucidation of knowledge as *Daseyn*, as “external,” an “existential act” or image of the absolute. For this reason, these lectures unfold by virtue of an “objectification” of manifestation, as a determination thereof through laws that are confirmed in the act of determining. The second part (Lectures 8-13) realizes a “geneticization” of the reality explained until this point through “objectification,” the “existential act.”¹⁹ This genetic explanation is elaborated initially through a sequence of theoretical moments, which proceed from the initial moment of sensibility to the crowning moment of absolute reflection.²⁰ The third part (Lectures 14-17) continues this genetic explication of the existential act, but from the standpoint of its practical constitution. Such a practical-genetic explanation makes clear that absolute intelligence is the result of a “categorical imperative” that structures absolutely the *Daseyn* of the absolute. To afford the actualization of it, one justifies the factual existence, and articulation, of a juridical world. The fourth part (Lectures 18-23) concludes the “synthesis” of the *Principien* through the development of the moments of factuality, proceeding from this “must” to “absolute knowledge.”

III. OBJECTS AND APPROACH

The objects of the *Principien* are the doctrines of God, of morality, of right — and are, more precisely, the “deduction” of their respective principles. These are elaborated not in an isolated, but in an *explicitly unitary*, way that allows us to avoid falling into confounded treatments. The purpose is always to present *the* explicit theory of manifestation.

In a first instance : *doctrine of God*. The term “God” signifies “for us [in the doctrine of God] what it has always signified, in authentic Christianity and in general among all those who think this concept self-consciously ; the absolute, *ens a se, per*

18. [Cf. GA, II, 7, p. 380.]

19. [*Translator’s Note : Existential Akt*. The author’s neologism, “geneticization,” incorporates, in order to explain, a series of Fichtean technical terms ; “genetisch deducieren,” “genetisch durchdringen,” “genetisch erklärbar machen,” and “genetisch ableiten.” The specific term “Genetisch-Erklärung” is the closest to the author’s specific usage in this passage. See, for example, GA, p. 414 : “Somit wird durch das Wesen der Einsicht in die Erklärung selber, alle weitere Genetisch-Erklärung abgewiesen : diese Genesis ist die absolute.”]

20. [*Translator’s Note* : Throughout this essay, “absolute reflection” will translate “assoluto intelligere”/“Intelligieren.”]

se” (3).²¹ In the contemporaneous *Grundzüge des gegenwärtigen Zeitalters*, this is clarified as “the one true essence, existing absolutely through itself, is what in every language is termed God” (*SW* VII, 129).²² Here we have a ‘transcendental assumption’ of lived experience, and in this case, of religious experience; philosophy shares the concept of God with religious experience, yet the latter “precedes,” and is independent of, the former. The concept of God announces absolute unity with a different “intentionality” in religion and in philosophy, respectively. I will treat below, more extensively, the form of this ‘transcendental assumption.’ The problem that the doctrine of God must elaborate is that of the manifestation of God, of the relationship between God and God’s “exterior,” or of the unity and diversity between God and “world”: “[...] the task is important: to understand the unity and diversity of God and world, a task [...] has not been solved by any philosophy to date” (20).²³

One could say that the doctrine of God has the task of elaborating the “existence of God,” the theory of the “external” manifestation of God. The shared appurtenance of this theme with traditional metaphysics should not obscure the distinctiveness that characterizes the transcendental approach. In the transcendental doctrine of God, there is no question of retracing the existence of an effect to the existence of a first cause. According to an intention shared with the doctrine of Spinoza,²⁴ transcendental doctrine intends instead to justify the effect by moving or departing from the cause *genetically*: “[...] the Doctrine of Science — in fact — does not ground itself through the testimony of experience but by means of its deduction” (*Grundriss des Eigenthümlichen der WL*; *SW* I 334).²⁵

The transcendental doctrine of God thus supposes the concept of God as obtained, immanently, in *philosophia prima*, through the radical self-clarification of the “fore-knowledge” of reason.²⁶ (It is at this point that the distinction between transcendental philosophy and the *Ethics*, which begins immediately from God, emerges.) The concept of God is, as we have seen, the absolute; *ens a se, per se*. The transcendental doctrine of God, acknowledging this concept as the *being* of God, examines how the “exteriorization” of this self-inclusive *being* could be justified, and how a manifestation of the absolute — which, as *ens a se, per se*, single and self-inclusive — could be thought. On the basis of this positing of the concept (= being) of God, the

21. [Cf. GA, II, 7, p. 378.]

22. [Cf. GA, I, 8, p. 296.]

23. [Cf. GA, II, 7, p. 394.]

24. See, for example *Die Wissenschaftslehre; Vorgetragen im Jahre 1812*, in *J.G. Fichtes nachgelassene Werke*, ed. I.H. Fichte, reproduction, Berlin, De Gruyter, 1971, vol. X; “[...] the best starting point for [a deduction of the content of the Doctrine of Science] is the system of Spinoza” (326). [Cf. GA, II, 13, p. 35-189.] Regarding this problematic relation the reader may see Reinhard LAUTH, “Spinoza vu par Fichte,” *Archives de Philosophie*, 41, 1 (1978), p. 27-48.

25. [GA, I, 3, p. 46.]

26. On the relationship between such a “fore-knowledge” and any explicit or accomplished “knowledge” and its constitutive role in transcendental investigation, the reader may see Franz BADER, “Transzendentalphilosophische Überlegungen zur ‘negation negationis’ und zur mystischen Einigung,” in Margot SCHMIDT, Dieter R. BAUER, ed., *Grundfragen christlicher Mystik*, Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt, Frommann-Holzboog, 1987, p. 193-220.

transcendental doctrine of God must then elaborate its “ex-ist-ence,” its “external” manifestation. This manifestation (which, in the language of the *Principien*, is termed “one world”) is “external to God”, and therefore *distinct* from God, but in another sense, and in truth, is the manifestation of *God*, and therefore *one* with God. Between God and world we have neither an immanence, nor a transcendence of any “objectivistic” type, but a “trans-immanence” (a transcendence and an immanence of a transcendental type).²⁷

In a second instance : *doctrine of morality (Sittenlehre)*. In this case, too, we have a ‘transcendental assumption’ of lived experience, which is also and at the same time its ‘re-elaboration.’ Reflection here will take into consideration all that we intend, in everyday experience, by *Sitte* (customs, habits, but also the living context of existence as such). Fichte describes the empirical concept of *Sitte* in this way ; “*that which is customary in one or another circumstance* signifies that which is most habitual within the sphere of human action, that upon which most are able to agree, and that with respect to which other cases represent only exceptions, that which one countenances as typical, and thus depends upon, *a priori*” (4).²⁸ The doctrine of morality “raises” this concept to the level of a philosophical *a priori*, to the level of a *principle*. The philosophical concept of *Sitte* is therefore : “[...] that which absolutely *a priori*, according to the law of reason, *should (soll)* be the common element in human action [...], that which absolutely all must do as if there were a single reality and if there is to be a single will and a single power.” The doctrine of morality (*Sittenlehre*) is the theory of the “absolute *habitus (Sitte)* of reason,” the categorical element within practical activity.

In a third instance : *the doctrine of right*. One must distinguish between doctrine of morality and doctrine of right. While the first has free activity as its object, the second refers not to activity, but to “being, to a fixed and determinate situation : the stable and reciprocal relation between several rational individuals, understood as natural forces.” The *pure* doctrine of right abstracts from the conditions and the modalities of the *realization* of the concept of right (the reciprocal relation of rational beings) and attempts only the complete determination of the concept itself, as such. The *necessity* of this abstraction, in order to generate a philosophical science, evinces the interdependence of right and other spheres of manifestation (nature, morality, religion, history, and politics). The *possibility* of this abstraction, and this focus on the clarification of the concept, evinces instead the autonomy of the philosophical science of right with respect to these other particular disciplines.

As above, the treatment of the *Principien* is directed toward ‘objects’ already ‘given’ in the context of lived experience (religion, moral custom, and social organization). The *Principien* practice a ‘transcendental assumption’ with respect to those

27. On this point, regarding the transcendental reconsideration of the transcendence-immanence distinction, see Franz BADER, “Zu Fichtes Lehre von prädeliberativen Wille,” a paper given at the Zweite Fichte-Tagung, Deutschlansberg, 1987, published in Albert MUES, ed. *Transzendentalphilosophie als System. Die Auseinandersetzung zwischen 1794 und 1806*, Hamburg, Meiner, 1989.

28. [Cf. GA, II, 7, p. 379.]

objects, congruent with its particular systematic position as a doctrine of applied science.²⁹ This signifies ; (i) that the elaboration “proceeds from knowledge, from the principle of unity, and from the distinction between these three concepts [God, morality, law], which is as such the unifying principle of the totality of our research” (5) ; (ii) that regarding the *content* we thus move within the territory of the “pure Doctrine of Science,” of philosophy, and not within that of a knowing-within-experience (of a particular science, of history, et cetera) ; (iii) that *in any case*, this treatment, because it does not attend to the pure process or activity of knowledge as such, but rather develops as a knowledge of concepts already known in and through history, must assume an “artificial direction,” a *form* distinct from that of the ‘pure Doctrine of Science,’ with which nonetheless it shares content. One could clarify its form in this way : it is to attend to the pre-philosophical phenomenon, in order to assume and to justify, philosophically, its concept ; “*application* [signifies] [...], to the Doctrine of Science, the application [of concepts] to a *materium* given externally *before* our inquiry, that however *within our inquiry* does not remain [so] given, but rather develops in its turn from knowledge.”

The *Principien* elaborate the three doctrines that are, at the level of their principles, its proper objects. Each is deduced, in an intentionally unitary way, through an elaboration of the “point of unity of these three different points of view.” This institutes a particular relationship among the three subjects that must now be illustrated. We have used the expression “proceeds from knowledge.” Knowledge is, in its proper unity, in itself and for itself — abstracting from the diversity of its [objective] determinations — the *Daseyn* of the absolute. The pure Doctrine of Science affirms precisely this, in its consummation as a doctrine of manifestation within *philosophia prima*. To ‘proceed from’ knowledge is thus to proceed from the “existence” of the absolute, and to elaborate it systematically. This evinces — as we have seen, above — that already ‘from the first step,’ already in the scientific form of the doctrine of the *Principien* itself, one finds oneself involved in the articulation and explication of doctrine of God. The transcendental doctrine of God is, in a certain respect, the Doctrine of Science itself : it ‘is’ because it treats the same content as does the *philosophia prima* ; it is so in ‘a certain respect,’ because it develops at the level of an “application,” thus raising in this way the problem of a transcendental account of the “one world.”³⁰

We have, then, the other two doctrines, of morality and of right (and, as “presupposed,” of nature). Each belongs intrinsically to the *Daseyn* of the absolute, and in this sense constitutes an “integrated element within (*partes integrantes*)” the doctrine

29. Cf. Reinhard LAUTH, *Einleitung to the Principien*, cit. p. IX-XIX ; and also cf. Joachim WIDMANN, *J.G. Fichte*, p. 87.

30. The *Wissenschaftslehre* most generally, elaborates a transcendental justification of knowledge (a “ground”) which does not belong as such to the *philosophia prima* and that therefore distinguishes it from the doctrine of God in a strict sense. For this reason it is justified to posit this identity as obtaining only ‘in a certain respect.’ On the theme of the Doctrine of Science as a transcendental justification of knowledge, see the Introduction to vol. I of Franz BADER, *Die Ursprünge der Transzendentalphilosophie bei Descartes*, Bonn, Bouvier, 1979 ; and Marek J. SIEMEX, *Die Idee des Transzendentalismus bei Fichte und Kant*, Hamburg, Meiner, 1984.

of God. What, then, will offer the transcendental foundation of their distinction, and of the specificity of their spheres? The position of the *Principien* regarding this problem is as follows. (1) From the point of view of absolute knowledge, there is no doctrine of morality, or doctrine of law, *as particular or autonomous sciences*. The recognition that the concepts within these doctrines are to be incorporated within the structure of absolute knowledge, however, is the result of a reflective judgment. (2) If this reflective judgment — which repositions the concepts of morality and right as levels within the self-actualization of knowledge — is left aside, then *the specific, autonomous point of view* of the two particular philosophical sciences appears. In other words, the appearance of the particular philosophical sciences of morality and right (one should not think of morality and right as elements within lived experience, of course, prior to philosophy itself) would be justified as a “basic” level of knowledge — not raised, by mean of such a reflective judgment, to a complete degree of self-clarification. (3) In the doctrine of God, every doctrine of right and morality disappears as an *absolute* point of view, in the sense that the doctrine of God — which is ‘in a certain respect,’ the *Wissenschaftslehre* itself — holds or includes within itself, and for this reason relativizes, the constitutive concepts of the particular points of view.

The doctrines of morality and right come to assume a status of relative autonomy — or of dependence — in which their specificity is preserved. The *philosophia prima* already contains within itself their concepts (cf. the 28th lecture of the *WL 1804-II*). Therefore, the doctrine of God (understood as the doctrine of the “ex-ist-ence” of God) “precedes” its explication — as the actual procedure of the *Principien* makes clear. In their mutual relation, the doctrines of morality and of law maintain a level of only partial comprehension, that is transcended only by the consummation of philosophical abstraction, the result of the free reflection that, from a “phenomenological” standpoint, requires the givenness of the more “basic” levels (cf., the “gradation” that is exposed in the 28th lecture of the *WL 1804-II*³¹ and the relation considered above between the doctrinal, and the “phenomenological” series). From the standpoint of the elaboration of “principles,” the foundations of the doctrines of God, of morality, of right can be treated “only reciprocally, each through the other, by means of their unity and, at the same time, their opposition” (8).³² This intentionally unitary (and, for this reason, necessarily relational) treatment allows us to avoid “the typical confusion of doctrine of religion and doctrine of morality, and of this [latter] with the doctrine of law,” and to advance each in their distinction, coherently.

IV. THE OBJECTIVE FORM OF MANIFESTATION

In order to elaborate the explicit doctrine of the principles of manifestation, we must first evince *the transcendental content* that results from *philosophia prima*; absolute knowledge, the “existence” of the absolute. The first movement — which

31. [Cf. GA, II, 8, p. 410-412.]

32. [Cf. GA, II, 7, p. 385.]

corresponds to the first part of the *Principien* (Lectures 2-7) — consists in a clarification of the objective figuration of the “existence” of the absolute (‘objective’ not in any reificatory way, of course, but in an acceptation that we will defer, for the present, in order to illustrate the genesis thereof). The transcendental vision of this content develops across a sequence of moments that, given the complexity of the text, requires a preliminary presentation of its formal structure. To this presentation we will interpolate some distinctions introduced by Fichte (or at least suggested by the editor) in the text of the lessons.

We can distinguish three series, each of which is possessed of seven moments. The first series incorporates the second and the third lectures ; the second series incorporates the fourth and the fifth lectures. The third series includes the sixth (which itself contains six moments) and the seventh (which can be understood as a consummating moment) lectures. The series develops from a particular point of origin : “[...] knowledge = absolute genesis, immanent force ; from itself, for itself, through itself ; that is, according to its constructed image, a self-referring to its own intrinsic being, in itself, from itself, through itself [...] *external* to the Absolute [...]. External here = to exist (*Daseyn*) externally, existence” (8).³³

This point of origin is developed, across the series, into a unity in difference (*unità-duale*), unfolded across a ‘transcendental dialectic,’ through an interactivity accomplished by means of the reflexive deepening of the bipolarity itself : origin-reconstruction, internal-exteriorization, content-form, *Was-Wie*. Each group of series represents an increasing degree of comprehension of the unity-duality (and thus of the existence of the absolute). The first series constructs a comprehension of the ‘act of existence.’ The second sequence effects an elucidation of the reflexivity immanent within the ‘act of existence.’ The third sequence thematizes the external appearance of the ‘act of existence’ as an articulated unity of form and content, being and image, and clarifies [the relation between] essence and the function of freedom. Therefore, the third sequence does not close us off from, but ‘opens’ us onto, that of freedom. The transcendental dialectic, as a dialectic of freedom, presents itself essentially as an ‘open dialectic.’³⁴

33. [Cf. GA, II, 7, p. 385. *Translator's Note* : The German here is as follows : “Wissen = absolute Genesis, immanente Kraft, aus sich von sich durch sich : - u. zwar nachconstruierend, Bild, sich drum beziehend auf ein inneres Seyn derselben, an sich von sich durch sich, was wieder dasselbe sagt. <2>Aussen <1>des Absoluten. (als des in eigner Kraft von sich pp.) Aussen = äusseres Daseyn, oder Existenz.” For more extensive treatments by the author of the theme of the image in Fichte, in addition to major sections of two of his monographs on Fichte — *I principi del sapere : La visione trascendentale di Fichte*, Bibliopolis, Napoli, 1987, and *Fichte*, Brescia, La Scuola, 2014 — see “L’immagine immaginante. Sulla teoria dell’immagine nell’ultimo Fichte,” in Giuseppe CANTILLO, Claudio CIANCIO, Aldo TRIONE, Federico VERCELLONE, ed., *Ontologia dell’immagine*, Roma, Aracne, 2012, p. 97-110. See also “L’immagine nell’ultimo Fichte : Aspetti di una fenomenologia,” in E. BACCARINI, M. D’AMBRA, P. MANGANARO, A.M. PEZZELLA, ed., *Persona, Logos, Relazione. Una fenomenologia plurale. Scritti in onore di Angela Ales Bello*, Roma, Città nuova, 2011, p. 73-88.]

34. On this concept of transcendental dialectic the reader may consult Reinhard LAUTH, “L’origine dell’dialettica nella filosofia di Fichte,” *Annuario filosofico*, 3 (1987), p. 83-99. See also Klaus HAMMACHER, “Problemgeschichtliche und systematische Analyse von Fichtes Dialektik,” in ID., ed., *Der transcendenteale Gedanke. Die gegenwärtige Darstellung der Philosophie Fichtes*, Hamburg, Meiner, 1981, p. 388-406.

First series. We first direct our attention to the content (*Was*). Knowledge is ‘external,’ the existence of the absolute. This principle is derived from intellectual intuition; “one has understood correctly if one understands that knowledge and [...] the existent (*Daseyn*) stand in an immediate unity, and that their immediate identity yields at one and the same time the being-for-itself of knowledge” (9).³⁵ In the *Erlangen Wissenschaftslehre*, written only a few months earlier, in Summer 1805, we find the formula: “[...] in itself, knowledge is the absolute [existence] [...], or the existence of the absolute [...]” (*WL* 1805, 11).³⁶

Knowledge, however, does not represent the existence of the absolute in any purely factual manner. Mediate self-consciousness pertains to the position of the existence of the absolute; it is a ‘position’ that one apprehends as such and, in this sense, as “existing”: “[...] the external, or, the existence (*Daseyn*), of the absolute is nothing, if not this; it is, for its part, exteriorized, realized [as external] — as an entity complete in itself and yet projected externally, and in precisely this externalization, both unified and delimited”³⁷ (10).³⁸ Here appears the *double series* according to which the following treatments of the objective figure of manifestation will be delineated. Knowledge is, *in itself*, both position and reflexivity, both existence and self-positioning, both existence as such and the existence-of-this-existent, both immanence and projection. This bipolarity, which permeates the ‘transcendental dialectic,’ is also formulated in another important way: if knowledge of knowledge is consciousness, then “there is no knowledge without consciousness and vice versa; both represent the existence of the absolute; the first immediately, the second mediately” (*ibid.*).

If, on this basis, one were to extract an initial synthetic result with respect to the *Was* of the existence of the absolute, one would obtain a structure with four elements. The first three elements — identity, difference, relation — concern the *Daseyn* of the Absolute. The fourth is the Absolute as such, in itself. Let us examine this last [element]. First, *Daseyn* is self-position, absolute genesis, immanent power, the identity of self with self. Second, it is such “insofar as” it “externalizes” itself. Third, in its “self-externalizing,” it depicts itself externally, and in doing so it connects, through “an external activity,” the external and the internal. Fourth, it is *all of this* as *Daseyn* of the absolute; in this way (as an “internal external”) it is the existence of the absolute, *relation* to pure being (cf. *WL* 1805 16).³⁹

The first series must lead to a second stage, and pass from the *Was* to the *Wie*, from content to form. This passage — which is at the same time the accomplishment of a new ‘point of view’ — will result if one confronts the “contradiction” between content and form that apparently emerges precisely at this point. Importantly, this

35. [Cf. GA, II, 7, p. 384.]

36. [Cf. GA, II, 9, p. 185.]

37. [*Translator’s Note*: The German here is as follows; “Das Aussen oder das Daseyn des absoluten ist nicht, es sey denn <2>a l s <1>solches d. h. es werde wiederum, <2>geäussert, - <1>existentiirt, - als eine in sich Geschlossenheit nach aussen projicirt, und darin umfaßt, u. begrenzt.”]

38. [Cf. GA, II, 9, p. 185.]

39. [Cf. GA, II, 9, p. 190.]

“contradiction” within the dialectic of freedom, does not take form either as an ‘opposition between contradictories’ (the first true, the second false, any third excluded), nor as an ‘opposition between contraries’ (two false terms, a third true term), but rather as an ‘opposition between sub-contraries,’ in which the terms can be unified *if* one intends them as two different points of view on a single, self-same content (the “act of existence”) (*Existential Akt*). In fact, Fichte explains in conclusion that ‘the affirmation of a contradiction is based upon a unilateral point of view’ (13),⁴⁰ one that the dialectic of freedom has the ‘task’ to resolve.

The ‘contradiction’ appears between the content and the form, or between the ‘object’ and the ‘fact’ of intellectual intuition. The ‘object’ ; knowledge is absolutely the *Daseyn* of the absolute, and from this the being-there of knowledge follows immediately, as contained within it. The ‘fact’ ; we *see* all of this. The “contradiction” ; how is this additional vision of the accomplished activity of *Daseyn*, if *Daseyn* is already purely complete and self-contained, possible ? If the self-containedness of *Daseyn* is true, an additional “external” vision, which would contradict its completion, is not possible ; while if the [additional] vision obtains, the completion is interrupted and therefore untrue — in which case there can be no vision of the completion.

The dissolution of the contradiction will be obtained through a deepened comprehension of knowledge (and of the relation between consciousness and knowledge). Knowledge — and this is the central point — is a self-conscious formation process (*un formarsi consapevole di sé*), a “self-formation” (*farsi*) which includes the concomitant consciousness of its “seeing of itself” (*vedersi*). No knowledge without consciousness, no consciousness without knowledge. Consciousness “forms itself,” but does so within the absolute manifestation of knowledge. Absolute knowledge remains absolutely within itself, but this completeness cannot be understood in any reified sense ; instead, it is the act of knowledge self-conscious of its activity ; it recurs to the self-formation of consciousness (here we have, for example, the annunciation of the structural inter-subjectivity of reason). The “contradiction” is thus resolved : *Daseyn* is completed within itself, but this completeness is a “self-vision,” a “self-exteriorization” ; the seeing is the exteriorization of *Daseyn*, and therefore its immanent self-actualization.

At this point we can clarify the synthetic result of the second step, and conclude the first series. The *Daseyn* of the absolute should properly be termed an “existential act” (*Existential Akt*). It is a living act, not a “fact”, an active positing of freedom, not a necessary modality of a substance. It is “absolutely from the absolute, for it and through it,” and is therefore the realization of it, the act of existing. The existential act has a being and a form ; it is an “internal life” that manifests itself, that “expounds” a “product” of its own. The immanent “being” of knowledge is light, intellectual transparency, self-intellection articulated in “rays of light,” an active ordering of forms, ideas. The “product” of the immanent being of the light is an “I.” The I is the

40. [Cf. GA, II, 7, p. 387.]

original manifestation of the light, that which “is projected” of immanent being, the “immediate representation of originary reality” (*WL 1805 77*).⁴¹ The essence of the I is freedom.

Ultimately, the existential act is completed purely within itself, and is, at the same time, this “insofar⁴² as,” and therefore a return to self. This “insofar as” is “the exposition, through the I, of its inner essence (*interna essenza*)” (*WL 1805 82*). Therefore the existential act of this dual relation “posits itself”, externalizes itself, and the autonomous “product” of this externalization is *freedom*. The first series thus applies itself to freedom. The doctrine of manifestation, as the explicit doctrine of the existence of the absolute, is the theory of the “existential act” of freedom, of the realization of originary freedom.

Second series. In the second series too, reflection works over the “existential act.” Here, we are to focus our attention on the “external” aspect of the act, on the moment of manifestation. We should not forget the original problem ; to explain the difference, and the unity, between the absolute and its “external” manifestation, between God and “world” (20).⁴³ We have two series : content and form, [inner] completion and “insofar as,” position and return, immanence and exposition. This structure must be further developed.

The existential act is absolutely an act — living, active, complete in itself. At the same time, the existential act is an act that “externalizes” itself, as we have seen ; it is a plenitude that posits itself “as” such, an “exterior” immanence. This “external aspect” is the *image*. Its “existing” is therefore immanent genesis *and* imagination, act and the figuration of the act, light and reenactment. The dual relationship that we have established regarding the act applies, given the structure of *Daseyn*, also to the image. Knowledge is the image and “as” such ; therefore knowledge is, “*insofar as*” it is manifest in an image. This image is not simply posited, but is at the same time self-intuition ; it is posited as a self-intuition at one and the same time. To the “exterior” of the act, the “interior” belongs ; to the image [belongs] the self-reflection ; to the “exterior” figure, self-intuition [belongs]. For this reason, the existential act is the “living element” that is, in an immediate unity, both image and self-return, “exterior” and “interior.”

In the second series, too, however, a “contradiction” — that the transcendental dialectic of freedom must resolve — presents itself. The “contradiction” emerges from the following. Knowledge is “external,” and is “external [insofar] as external.” It is image and [is] image [insofar] as [it is] image, and therefore [also, to that same degree] self-intuition, return. Knowledge, then, is an emergence from itself (accord-

41. [Cf. GA, II, 9, p. 244.]

42. [*Translator’s Note* : The English-language reader can find a complementary and greatly extended account of this As- (*Als*-) structure of consciousness in Fichte’s *mittlere Phase* in “The Speculative Structures of the 1807 *Wissenschaftslehre*,” the present translator’s synthesis and translation of *Le Strutture Speculative della Dottrina della Scienza : Il pensiero di J.G. Fichte negli anni 1801-1807*, by Gaetano RAMETTA, Genova, Pantograf, 1995, published in *Idealistic Studies*, 37, 2 (September 2007), p. 121-142.]

43. [Cf. GA, II, 7, p. 394.]

ing to its principle), but it is an emergence that (according to its content) it is *not* an emergence from itself. In its being, a sequence (a self-exteriorization) is included that it *not* a self-exteriorization. Once again the “contradiction” appears between form and content, the “exterior” and the “interior.” Yet again, the untangling of the “contradiction” needs to obtain by means of a more profound comprehension of knowledge, of the being of the existential act, of freedom.

The solution of the “contradiction” can be explicated as follows : if the existential act is to be (*soll*) exterior, insofar as it is interior, there must (*muss*) be an exterior expression of the same existential act. This exterior expression includes within itself a duplicity : it contains the projection of pure being, and contains its “vitality” ; the “exterior” and the “interior”, the act and the light, all at once. This exterior expression is the *I*, freedom, because it is never the pure being-there of the existential act, but it is being-there *as* being-there, reflexivity. Freedom makes possible an internal exteriority, an internal that exteriorizes itself without losing itself. The *I* is the “site” in which the “existing” exists *as* such, and such that the interior and exterior do not exclude the other reciprocally, but rather reveal themselves as two sides of the same act : the “existential act of the existential act.” We should observe finally that : 1. freedom is nothing *in itself*, as absolute, but is a “modification of the light,” the expression of the existence of the absolute ; 2. nonetheless, we have seen that *if* the light should (*soll*) appear, it must (*muss*) contain (*esservi*) freedom : freedom belongs to the structure of original manifestation, as the position of an absolute *Soll*.

Third series. This series thematizes in precise terms the essence and role of freedom in the “existing” of the absolute. The specific being of the “existential act” is in its pure form absolutely “external,” and it is so as “substantial light,” and as freedom. Knowledge in its unity, in itself and for itself (absolute knowledge), is the free position of intellectual light, of truth, and it is truth that manifests itself in freedom. Freedom obtains necessarily in the manifestation of light ; the irradiation of the light, the being (-there) of knowledge, “carries within itself the *freedom of the I*” (26).⁴⁴ It follows that freedom “is not the first element of knowledge,” since the first element is light, its genuine ideal structure, the *logos*. Nonetheless, the first constituent of the light is freedom. In other words, freedom is “necessary” in and to the revelation of the *logos*, and therefore — as we have said — it belongs to the structure of original manifestation.

This freedom is *real* as the freedom of the manifestation of freedom, or it is not. Freedom is *in* manifestation, and it is at the same time the freedom *of* manifestation, the manifestation of manifestation. This is the source of its ambiguous relation to truth. The real *I* — the *I* that one discovers as free — in knowing itself *as* manifestation, is at that point the direct expression of the exteriorization of the absolute, of real knowledge. But if one simply “believes” in the manifestation, or posits it *as* the absolute, one falls into error. It follows that knowledge as freedom, its autonomous self-genesis — act — is at the same time the free genesis of the truth in itself, it is its

44. [Cf. GA, II, 7, p. 399.]

“exhibition”), the exposition of light. But at the same time this point of genesis announces that this exposition of the light is the annihilation of the I as absolute, its “position” as an expression of the original manifestation.

In its internal existence, the I is but the image of the “existential act,” which is itself, in turn, genesis and image. This being-image of the I is a “figuration” (*bilden*) of the I, an acting “figuration” of truth. In itself, the I is precisely this : not the truth, but the (free) “task” to give form (*figura*) to its manifestation. Now, “I = world” — not in the subjectivistic sense that the world would be a product of the I, but in the sense that an ordered context of experience appears only “in” the figure that is the I (beginning, as we will see, from an absolute *Soll*). Therefore, “the annihilation of the I = God in us” (29).⁴⁵ This self-knowledge, that we are not absolute (*nulla-dissoluto*), but rather only the image of the “existence” of God, is an opening ; it returns the “world” (*I*) to manifestation as a pure “exterior” thereof, and [returns] the manifestation to the origin as the “presence” of God (the “existence” of the absolute) in the image. The absolute is “in itself free” — radical freedom, original, immanent to itself. Between this immanence and the “existential act” there is no necessary implication. Nor is the “existential act” a sort of voluntary product of arbitrary will. It is an act-of-freedom. “Existence” — “creation”⁴⁶ — is an act-of-freedom.

If, in this way, the “existential act” is the “exteriorization” of the absolute, the “absolute fact” (“fact” here in the sense of *Daseyn*, “ex-ist-ence”). Freedom is connected to this “absolute fact” by an inner necessity. Freedom is the determination of the “existential act” and can be posed only from within its horizon ; freedom *in the light*. It is thus intended as a “power” (*Vermögen*), which remains within itself as an effective power (*potenza di effettuazioni*), determinability. The *Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo* explains this moment in this way ; “one could call this the state of repose, or the power to determine ; potency is not activity but that through which alone activity is possible.”⁴⁷ Lastly, this determination of “power” provides the fac-

45. [Cf. GA, II, 7, p. 403.]

46. Fichte’s sometimes caustic argument against creation is directed against an idea of creation as a “voluntary,” “deliberated,” “successive” [causal] act, understood as obtaining in a temporal form : it is not directed against creation as a *constitutive* act-of-freedom. In the sixteenth lecture of the *WL 1804-II*, this is conceived through the concept of an act of the absolute’s self-construction, the principle of which cannot be outside of the same absolute, but only within it, absolutely. Fichte conceives this act of freedom as the coincident point of self-relation of the absolute and of an original manifestation of its (originary “existing”). Regarding the “critique of creationism” cf. Luigi PAREYSON, *Fichte. Il sistema della libertà*, p. 361-362.

47. *Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo. Kollegnachschrift K. Chr. Fr. Krause 1798/1799*, ed. Erich Fuchs, Hamburg, Meiner, 1982, p. 39 (from hereafter *WL nova methodo*). [Cf. GA, IV, 3, p. 353. *Translator’s Note* : For this passage, the English-language reader may consult *Fichte : Foundations of Transcendental Philosophy. Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo* (1796/1799), Daniel Breazeale, trans. and ed., New York, Cornell University Press, 1992, p. 126-127. “One could call this state of repose or this determinability an ‘ability’ or ‘power’ (*Man konnte diese Ruhe oder diese Bestimmbarkeit Vermögen nennen*), [...]. A power is not the same as that which possesses it ; i.e., it is not a substance. We say that a substance possesses a certain power, which is thus one of its accidental properties. Nor is a power the same as an activity. A power is not an action ; it is that by means of which action first becomes possible. When an activity is grasped by means of concepts it is transformed into a state of repose. Power, repose, and determinability are one and the same. The I in a state of repose is the same thing as (activity considered as) determinability, for a passive state of repose has the same character as a determinable activity. If one removes what is de-

ticity, the objectivation, of the substantial light. The first part of the *Principien* obtains its result — the determination of the objective figure of manifestation, the exposition of the constitutive moments of [its] factuality — in this way. Through the clarification of the “existence” of the absolute (= doctrine of God) as “existential act,” insofar as light and freedom in the light, we are able to describe the essence of the I as image, projection of the light and figurative power of the substantial light in effectuations, forms.

V. THE GENETIC EXPLICATION OF MANIFESTATION

In the second part of the *Principien* (Lectures 8-13), a “genetic deduction” or “genetic explication” (40-41),⁴⁸ of the moments that the first part had “described” in their objective figuration, is performed. Why this passage from factuality to genesis, from description to explanation ?

There is an initial motive, a general ordering principle, that the *Principien* presupposes. ‘Transcendental’ philosophy is such because it is able to adduce a genetic explication of any factual moment, and thus establish the transcendental basis of any such factual moment as the objectification of the ‘existence’ of the absolute. There is a second motive, that the *Principien* illustrates, and that concerns the concrete expression of the first motive regarding the problem that we are developing. We have attempted to “describe” absolute knowledge (the explicit moment [as above], the “saying”). But absolute knowledge is not the result of our “description.” It lies rather at its origin, and is active within it (the foundational moment, the “acting”). We have a “contradiction” between the “saying” and the “acting” (34, 39)⁴⁹ that the Doctrine of Science, insofar as transcendental, has to resolve. We must “say” explicitly the effective action, and the effective action needs to be said, “explained.”

In other words, the immanent genesis of absolute knowledge needs to be “explained” and, correlatively, its facticity determined genetically : “[...] only through the explanation of conscience (= absolute knowledge), and only through an explanation that is absolutely complete within itself, can one reach an absolute as absolute, God” (45).⁵⁰ This genetic passage, therefore, is a necessary moment of the construction of the doctrine of God : “[...] knowledge sets itself the task of genetically deducing itself — its pure facticity. For the solution of this task it is absolutely necessary that [knowledge] reflect itself, afford a [self-]comprehension” (40).⁵¹

terminate from an activity, then it remains merely determinable ; in other words, it is a power-that is to say, that which makes an action possible-or an activity in a state of repose that cannot be further explained but can only be grasped conceptually. This is how activity becomes a state of repose or a power or determinability [...].”

48. [Cf. GA, II, 7, p. 412-413.]

49. [Cf. GA, II, 7, p. 407, 411.]

50. [Cf. GA, II, 7, p. 417.]

51. [Cf. GA, II, 7, p. 412.]

This self-comprehension needs to show not only *that* the “existential act” is the realization of substantial light and freedom in the light — but [also] *how* this comes to be, through which steps of reflection absolute knowledge constitutes itself. Above, we described a fact and obtained the position of the I ; now, we have to ‘explain’ the I and on that basis obtain an understanding of its facticity. In other words, the I must ‘explain’ itself and, thereby, proffer also a genetic explanation of its absolute facticity. We know that the fact is an “act” ; we see how it “acts” in order to constitute itself as such. This implies a complete sequence of theoretical and of practical moments, in reciprocal relation, such that only at the conclusion of the *Principien* can the ‘explanation’ be effected satisfactorily. In the second part of the *Principien* — that we will now consider — the theoretical moments are [so] explicated, but with respect to the *unity of their content*, and therefore in synergy with practical moments, as the fundamental position that “feeling” (*Gefühl*)⁵² assumes already attests.

The structure of genetic explication is constituted by the interaction of two poles : projection and reflection :

[...] the genetic explication is according to its *essence* a totality (*Ganzes*) [of constitutive moments], complete in itself [...]. What lies within this explanation [...]; in the first place, [the] objective projection, whose terms, *principium* and *principiatum* — since they are *materialiter* completely identical, and are distinguished only through a further, subsequent distinction — need to be assumed as a unity. However the *projection*, as an exposition, posits the external as external = reflection. In the explanation, as a completed whole, reflection absolutely resides, for its pertinence to the form (41).⁵³

Through the thematization of the projective and the reflective poles, we obtain the moments of feeling (*sentimento*), of seeing (*Schauen*) and of “intuition” (*intendere*) (*Anschauung*), and finally of pure apperception and of absolute intelligence. The sum of these moments yields the totality of the genetic account ; together, and at the same time, they show the way in which absolute knowledge constructs itself in its theoretical form, in interdependence with its practical form.

Let us begin with projection, by which is intended the projection of freedom. If there is freedom (and there should [*soll*] be freedom, as we will consider below) it is the “capacity,” the “potency” to create effects. If we abstract from this “capacity,” and consider freedom in its projection, as absolutely “external,” we have the projection simply “as such,” as “qualitatively determined,” in which the “external” is simply coincident with the “thing.” This “external” point is called in the *Principien*

52. Therefore we have two series : descriptive and explicative, or factual and genetic. The two series are *within the content* ; they are respectively description and explication of the “existing” of the absolute. Therefore they are *both* real and (distinctly) philosophical. Here, a distinction between the two series of the theoretical part of the *Grundlage der gesamten Wissenschaftslehre* is perceptible. There, the first series is “philosophical,” and the second series is “real.” (The influence that the *Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo*, from 1796-1799, has had is similarly perceptible). However, an affinity with the two series of the *Grundlage* remains, for the fact that in the *Principien*, the first series evinces the “fact,” and the second the “act”. Regarding the theme of the two series, between the *Grundlage* and the *WL nova methodo*, see Luigi PAREYSON, *Fichte. Il sistema della libertà*, p. 136, 298.

53. [Cf. GA, II, 7, p. 413.]

an *actus mere et simpliciter* — neither the act of the absolute, nor the act as act (a reflective act), but simply as the position of freedom.

The “subjective” expression of this simple “[to be] as such” is “feeling.” Feeling is the unity of a duality, a unity of projecting and projected. Since it is *in the projection of freedom* it is activity, simple *positing*, the expression of an *actus mere et simpliciter*. At the same time, however, feeling is the “external” point of the same projection, and is therefore a “non power,”⁵⁴ the “simple remaining and residing within itself” of the I, a *simple* position (38).⁵⁵ We can illustrate this aspect in the following way. We need to “explain” the genesis of factuality, to explain facticity (knowledge as such) genetically. The genesis of the fact finds its “external” coupling point, its “limit” *not* in a mere fact intended in any reified way, but in a simple and precise act — that nonetheless does not “act,” but rather remains within itself, the “being” of which is its being-felt. Again in the *Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo* we find a clear representation of this moment : “[...] feeling is a pure position of the determinacy of the I [...]; a final determination thereof [...]; absolutely what, and why, it is” (*WL nova methodo* 69).⁵⁶

The structure of the genetic explanation is given by the interaction of a projective pole and a reflecting pole. We should pause over on this [notion of a] pole, and on the role of reflection in the establishment of the genetic “explanation.” Reflection is the self-penetration of the “existential act,” beginning from its basic level of *actus mere et simpliciter*, of feeling. It is at the same time an intuition and an intention (*Schauen* and *An-schauen*), and the connection of both (“the reflection of reflection”). To reflect the projected implies immediately “to see it” ; to intuit this “vision” implies “to intend” the projected in its determinacy. “‘Seeing’ identifies intentionality” ; the “intending” distinguishes and “objectifies” the determination. Reflection, in its completeness as self-conscious, the “reflection of the reflection,” is the unity of “seeing” and “intending,” of intentionality and determination. Reflection reproduces on a

54. Cf. *Grundlage der gesamten Wissenschaftslehre*, in *SW* I 289 [cf. GA, 1, 2, p. 419] : “the expression of the non power in the I is termed sentiment.”

55. [Cf. GA, II, 7, p. 410.]

56. [Cf. GA, IV, 3, p. 377-378. *Translator’s Note* : The English-language reader has access to this full passage from the *WL nova methodo* in the translation of Daniel Breazeale : “How is it possible for the I, in advance of all acting, to possess a cognition of the possible modes of action (in order to construct for itself the concept of a specific mode of acting) ? These possibilities of action require that something positive and incapable of further analysis be present within the manifold-(something that simply is what it is, whose being must lie in something determinate) something by means of which the manifold itself first comes into being. (In short, we must assume) that there have to be certain basic or elementary qualities. A feeling is just such an elementary quality ; it is a determinate, limited state of the entire I, beyond which the I cannot go. Feeling is the ultimate limit (of consciousness) and cannot be further analyzed and assembled. (One cannot go beyond feeling. No action of the I can go beyond feeling, precisely because the entire I is limited at this point : Its ideal and real activities, along with everything contained in the I, are here constrained, and thereby the entire power of the I is originally limited. That which is supposed to be originally limited or constrained cannot be further analyzed and then assembled anew.) *A feeling simply is what it is and because it is*. What is given through feeling is the condition for the possibility of all acting on the part of the I ; feeling provides the I with its sphere of action, though not with its object” (*Fichte : Foundations of Transcendental Philosophy. Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo*, 1796/1799, New York, Cornell University Press, 1992, p. 177 ; Italics added.)]

higher level, and in this way, the unity of the duality represented on a basic level by feeling. This latter unified projecting and projected, the latter understood as the “external,” simple, determination. Reflection “works upon” feeling and constructs a higher unity of projecting and projected insofar as it unifies intentional vision and that which is intended, seeing and its essential determination.

Genetic explication has in itself a dual significance. In fact “to explain” can mean both to underline the *genesis* of something, and to offer a *description of the essence* of what is under consideration. This second meaning of explication needs to be taken into consideration. We need to penetrate the essence of the absolute knowledge. We have seen that feeling is an immediate unity, a simple identification with “being” as determined in this or that way, the *actus mere et simpliciter* of an I, which thus appears in the form of immediate identity. I “feel” means : I am the one who feels [this] “being” ; I identify myself (= form) in the simple position of a determination. But the I is not only this, its “formal” dimension. It is the *principle* of the projection, the *irradiation* of the understanding. As Kant had already seen, even if not fully, no intentional perception would be possible without pure apperception.⁵⁷ To illustrate this point, the Second Introduction to the *Doctrine of Science* explained that no consciousness is possible without self-consciousness : “[...] all consciousness is determined through self-consciousness ; this means that everything that obtains within consciousness is *founded, given, introduced* through the conditions of self-consciousness [and not only ‘conditioned,’ as Kant supposed, due to his limited insight]” (*Zweite Einleitung in die WL, SW I 447*).⁵⁸ In the language of the *Principien* : no “objective” sensibility (= intuition) is possible without “self-intuition” (= intellect). The “external,” projective term of knowledge is “sensibility” ; its source, its “inner” “root,” is “self-intuition,” pure apperception.

Knowledge in itself is internal and external at the same time, in absolute essential unity. The determination of this organic unity in its essence, and in its dynamic articulations, is the terminal problem of genetic explanation. After pure apperception we must thematize this moment of absolute reflection. We have two dimensions, as we have seen ; internal and external, apperception and intuition. Knowledge is the active genesis and, at the same time, the unification of both : “[...] the intuited is the absolute self-penetration of knowledge in its highest apex, without presupposition ; therefore the absolute exteriorization, intuition, is the apperception of the absolutely and

57. Cf. Immanuel KANT, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, 2nd ed., in *Akademie-Text-Ausgabe*, vol. III, reproduction, Berlin, De Gruyter, 1968, p. 108 sq.

58. [*Translator’s Note* : The author intends *SW I*, 477, cf. *GA*, 1, 4, p. 229, a passage translated into English by Heath and Lachs as follows : “[...] according to Kant, all consciousness is merely conditioned by self-consciousness, that is, its content can be founded upon something outside self-consciousness ; now the results of this foundation are simply not supposed to *contradict* the conditions of self-consciousness ; simply not to eliminate the possibility thereof ; but they are not required actually to *emerge* from it. According to the *Science of Knowledge*, all consciousness is determined by self-consciousness, that is, everything that occurs in consciousness is founded, given, and introduced by the conditions of self-consciousness ; and there is simply no ground whatever for it outside self-consciousness. — I must explain that in our case the *determinacy* follows directly from the *fact of being conditioned* [...]” (*J.G. Fichte : Science of Knowledge*, trans. and ed. Peter Heath, John Lachs, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1970, p. 50).]

completely external : both reside together in knowledge, and constitute its essence” (55).⁵⁹ This essence of knowledge

is absolutely, as a one, immutable. It is not a fact that simply remains itself ; it is rather a generation (*scaturire*) of and from itself, and *is* within this generation [...]. The *essence* is an absolute qualitative unity, and absolutely excludes any distinction and division. Division can *follow* from it, however ; [division] represents not essence, but rather what follows therefrom. The essence is the unity, a generation from itself : it [is] not the *what* [the determinate content] of the generation. For how could multiplicity be absolute *materialiter* ? It would be a passing into nothing. One should always have the point of unity, under which to bring, and to keep [the multiplicity]. This must absolutely be comprehended, because it is absolute reflection (*Intelligieren*) (57)⁶⁰ [itself].

Absolute reflection is not consciousness, but is rather its absolute condition. Between absolute reflection (*Intelligieren*) and consciousness there obtains a hiatus, a separation. Absolute reflection is the genetic unity of multiplicity ; consciousness is multiplicity-in-unity. Reflection (*riflessione*) overcomes the hiatus, and confirms itself as an essential, constitutive structure of genetic explanation : “[...] according to the form of all reflection, the absolute [reflection] presents [in the form of the] *in quantum* that which in absolute reflection obtains *internally* [...]. Now, what does this reflection present in its *in quanto*, or form ; what is it, in itself and in its essence ? Response ; the fulfillment of the absolute hiatus. This is absolute knowledge” (58).⁶¹ The overcoming of the hiatus between absolute reflection and consciousness, as posited by reflection, is the form of absolute consciousness. Again, and now more clearly ; no knowledge without consciousness, no consciousness without knowledge, *by means of reflection*. Reflection posits the active root of absolute consciousness in its factual being. However — and here we have the thematic principle for the transition to the third part of the *Principien* — if the explanation of absolute consciousness resides in the difference represented by reflection, the position of the reflection is free, and refers to the being of an I.

Within this point of view, we may also obtain a clarity regarding the principled status of the doctrines of God and of morality. Morality requires time ; God is above all time. In the doctrine of morality we thematize manifestation in its living articulations, the action of the I in time. In the doctrine of God, we thematize “absolute intelligence” as the existence of God. All that belongs to the sphere of temporal intuition (and therefore to the sphere of the “world”) is only a *condition* for being of absolute intelligence. The existence of God is therefore the principle through which we can explain (“teleologically”) the being of the “world” ; the being of the “world” is “relative” to the existence of God, “dependent” upon thereupon (cf. 62).⁶²

59. [Cf. GA, II, 7, p. 427.]

60. [Cf. GA, II, 7, p. 429.]

61. [Cf. GA, II, 7, p. 430.]

62. [Cf. GA, II, 7, p. 433.]

VI. THE PRACTICAL GENESIS

The conclusion of the genetic explanation positions again the issue with which the treatment of the *Principien* began ; that of the relation between God and world, in order to explain manifestation. The itinerary we have traversed allowed us to underline the determining genetic moments in the constitution of manifestation, from the projection of freedom, to the activity of reflection, through the qualitative unity of absolute thinking. Having obtained this structure, we can now ask ; *why* does manifestation come to be in its factual articulation ? The third part of the *Principien* treats this question. This third part is introduced already in Lecture 13 with the exposition of the genesis of the consciousness of the I in time, as we have just considered. It continues until Lecture 17, by highlighting the practical genesis (that begins from a categorical “must”) of the position of knowledge (and of the known “world”). The *Principien* then pass from the *that* (the objective figure of the manifestation, in the First Part), to the *how* (the genetic explication, in the Second Part) to the *why* of manifestation (the practical genesis, in the part that we will treat now). But certainly the practical principle *determining* the “world” was already operative from the beginning, as it is in the essence of the transcendental constitution of appearance, and as will be seen in the concrete development of the treatise.

We have in fact always proceeded on the basis of the following assumption : if the “existence” of the absolute (= absolute intelligence) should (*soll*) be posited, then the external, as external (= consciousness) must (*muss*) also obtain ; if one is to be given, then the other is necessary. The development of the argumentation has unfolded, then, from a “problematic *Soll*.” Such an *hypothetical* assumption refers us back, in order that it receive a genetic explanation, to a *categorical* evidence, in order that the absolute *be as such*, by a “necessity” neither factual nor apodeitic, but genetic, from freedom. The entire assumption would go as follows ; if there is to be “existence,” there must be exteriority as such ; *but* the absolute *should* absolutely be as such, as “existing” (*das absolute soll schlechthin seyn*). Therefore, exteriority as such, consciousness “must” (*müsste*, toward the genesis of freedom) obtain. The hypothetical *Soll* gives the maximum of intuition, toward the construction of knowledge. The categorical *Soll* gives, in its turn, the maximum of the genesis of intuition, of the intellection of the essence of knowledge : “[...] intelligence as such is the result of the absolutely categorical must of the existence of the absolute” (63).⁶³

Some essential consequences develop from this genetic point. The categorical *Soll* (= in order that *Daseyn* obtain ; in order that the absolute manifest itself) is the absolute principle of existence, the foundation of the “existential act.” The *Soll* is the principle of the “opening” of the absolute ; “through an absolute *Soll*, the absolute, eternally complete in itself = God, [is] the foundation of light, and, in it, of the world” (121). The categorical *Soll* is a “root” of knowledge. The absolute does not derive from knowledge, but derives absolutely from itself (and this is a crucial point). The absolute comes, as *Soll*, “categorically” to existence ; the categorical *Soll* manifests

63. [Cf. GA, II, 7, p. 434.]

itself as the law of reason-freedom ; in which “should” is contained the principle of the facticity of intelligence, the existence of knowledge. The absolute manifests itself (= we possess its manifestation) and it manifests itself as *living* through the absolute necessity of its existing — one could say, in the categorical appeal to exist “in him” (as moral beings). It manifests itself as living, in the categorical appeal, as above ; only a philosophy founded on the absolute *Soll* is — without dogmatism (in which Spinoza remains imprisoned) and without skepticism (to which Kant remains exposed, since he did not reach the *unitary* principle of knowledge).

Moreover, the actuation of the law of reason-freedom, or of the *Soll* as a “root” of knowledge, includes the positing of a “factual” condition (in the sense of “transcendental fact”) for such an actualization, and this is *consciousness* : “[...] intelligence posits [...], as a condition for the possibility of its being, reflection or *self-consciousness* [...]. This self-consciousness is [...] the creation of the absolute being of knowledge [...]. The entire absolute consciousness = I, hence the I as positing itself absolutely” (65).⁶⁴ Absolute reflection, opened by the categorical *Soll*, posits this I, or knowledge, or absolute consciousness, as “nothing” in comparison to the absolute : it posits it as *related* to the absolute *Soll*, or — to use an expression of the *Principien* — as “the duty to duty as a duty”⁶⁵ (= the task to actualize freely the law of reason as such : this is the essence of knowledge) (69).⁶⁶ “Knowledge only exists for this, because God exists in it, which is to say, because God must be known. Otherwise knowledge exists for nothing, and is not itself ; therefore : knowledge in itself is divine knowledge, and any other [form of] knowledge outside of this is nothing, and empty” (*ibid.*). Now, this divine knowledge is absolutely not “closed, arid, and dead,” but rather “must be.” Its law is the law of reason, the should-be of reason (in a practical-theoretical sense) — that reason be (manifest itself), that God should be known : this is the genetic nucleus of knowledge and of real life.

Divine knowledge, as the task of absolute reflection, is the “absolute withholding of the nothing from being, and [the assertion of] its consistence [therein].” That God is known means ; the nothing (for us) is “posited” and at the same time linked absolutely to “being.” The existence of God (absolute intelligence, absolute knowledge as such) obtains, precisely because it is opened by an absolute *Soll*, the contemplation of the possibility-of-nothing (or that the *Soll*, the sense, not be realized), [which is] the taking away of this possibility and position of “being.” After having investigated the essence of the categorical *Soll* and its fundamental meaning for the constitution of manifestation, we need to consider how the I (which, we have observed repeatedly, is the conditional position for the actualization of the task of reason) realizes that task, or, with which sequence of practical moments (that repeat in a certain way the sequence of theoretical moments) it does so.

64. [Cf. GA, II, 7, p. 437.]

65. [*Translator's Note* : Fichte's German here is “Jenes soll ist ein soll des Soll als soll.”]

66. [Cf. GA, II, 7, p. 440.]

The absolute position of the *Soll*, as absolute binding of the nothing, lays out a “being” which presents itself within the I as a fundamental tendency, an *impulse* (*Trieb*). The basic level of the projection of freedom (in the second part) is being-feeling; the practical basic level of the position of the *Soll* is in the I as a being-impulse, an absolute tendency (to reason-freedom), which impedes the fall into nothing. Between feeling and impulse there is a strict connection: “[...] *the feeling of being* (*SeynsGefühl*) and feeling of the *impulse* (*TriebesGefühl*): [unity] at one and the same time” (72).⁶⁷ No “being” (feeling) without impulse, and vice versa; no impulse without feeling, and an “objectual” resistance. As feeling is “worked upon” by reflection, so impulse is elaborated within the I: [it] is taken up into self-feeling and reflected in self-consciousness. The “genetic explanation” (in the second part) amplifies itself in this way, through the explanation of its necessary practical elements: the moments of reflection are *practical*-theoretical moments, the elaboration of the impulse.

We can distinguish two dimensions of the I and, correlatively, two valences of the “must.” The first dimension is of the I as a principle of representation, which comes to consciousness from impulse in the form of a “must,” as a pure tendency. The second dimension is that of the I, as the principle of the position of free intentions, which comes to consciousness of “duty as duty” as a categorical imperative. The first dimension is placed within the second, in the sense that the position of the impulse (of the I as a tendency, and as a principle of representation) is made possible, as a principle, by the position of the categorical “must” in the I. What is the relation between the two dimensions? The question is of real relevance for the construction of the *Principien*. In fact, the sphere of the tendencies and of representation provides the sensible world, or, better, the sensible dimension of manifestation (here we have the theoretical connection to the transcendental doctrine of nature, as in paragraph 1). The sphere of the categorical imperative yields the moral world, the foundational moral dimension of the manifestation of the absolute.

Now, both spheres of manifestation are, each for the other and *even if by different titles*, “principles.” The tendency is a “factual principle,” in the sense that it is a possibility-condition of there being-factually-active for the I of the categorical imperative. There can be no *position* of the imperative *for the I* if not in relation to the sphere of the tendencies that “must” be coordinated by it. At the same time, the categorical *Soll* is a constitutive “telological principle,” in the sense that it establishes the “intention,” the “purpose” of being within the entire sphere of perception (nature, force, sensibility, representation): “[...] the absolute *Soll* [...] is the purpose of the being of perception; the latter exists only in function of the former. The point can be made in the following terms; the categorical imperative, or the moral world should be, [should] absolutely be; but it cannot be, if [there] is no perception or the sensible world” (78).⁶⁸ Rather than address two “worlds” we must address instead “one

67. [Cf. GA, II, 7, p. 443.]

68. [Cf. GA, II, 7, p. 449. *Translator’s Note*: Fichte’s German here is: “[...] das absolute soll, [wie es eben aufgestellt wurde,] ist der Zweck des Daseyns der Wahrnehmung, und sie ist da lediglich um des ersten

world,” in which the sphere of morality is the constitutive teleological principle (= determinative of the being of perception), and in which the system of perception offers, for its part, the “context” for the actualization of moral-being.

In this connection, the doctrine of right functions as the articulation between nature and moral-being ; in fact, nature is not immediately apt as the context for morality ; this is particularly visible in the case of the relation between human beings (as both free beings and natural forces), who can prevent each other, reciprocally, from the actualization of moral ends. Right (and the doctrine of right) — as a determination and limitation of the reciprocal action of finite rational beings — functions as an indispensable mediation by which to organize nature so that it could be a context (*ambiente*) for morality.

The absolute *Soll* is the *constitutive* principle of the entire being of the I. It is not only the determination of absolute reason (the law of reason), but is, also and at one and the same time, the expression of the absolute itself in the I (the moral law). The absolute “lives in us” through the *Soll*, in the manifestation of the moral law. Therefore, the consciousness of the absolute *Soll* (in the sense of the perception and clear consciousness of the absolute necessity that it be) indicates the absolute scope of all existence. This scope is the foundation of all knowledge and of the existence of a “world” : presented with the absolute that manifests itself in the position of the moral law within us, the “one world” justifies itself as a factual “having to be” *until* — teleologically — the categorical moral duty becomes real. Only this constitutive teleology gives the content to the divine life, the “sense” of manifestation, the (genetic) “why” of its entire being.

VII. THE SYNTHESIS OF FACTICITY

The fourth part of the *Principien* (Lectures 18-23) develops a synthetic comprehension of facticity in a most general acceptance, beginning from the unity of the principle [just] obtained, from the *Soll* as the absolute end of existence. The determination of “sense” (as attained in the third part) affords a return to the theme of the content of manifestation from a deeper point of view. This also affords a more organic and articulated (synthetic) vision of the moments previously explicated (in the first and in the second part).

To say that the absolute opens itself up, as absolute *Soll*, to manifestation implies the following : knowledge does not produce the absolute from itself, either immediately or mediately. Rather, the absolute generates itself from itself, and from itself it generates its “ownmost power” in knowledge. It expresses itself as “pure thought,” the thought of the absolute *Soll* in knowledge, “divine thought” (91).⁶⁹ This “divine thought,” which manifests itself as a categorical schema, is the genetic nucleus of absolute existence, as we have already seen.

Willen. Und die Sache steht nun so : Der kategorische Imperativ oder die sittl. Welt soll selbst seyn[,] absolute seyn ; aber er kann nicht seyn, wenn nicht die Wahrnehmung oder die sinnl. Welt ist.”

69. [Cf. GA, II, 7, p. 461.]

In the exteriorization of the existence of the absolute, the nothing is blocked, delimited, and it is delimited as nothing, as the tendency to flow into nothing. The schema of this tendency is a line, is time as “empty.” In other words, the divine scheme is absolute thought ; the scheme of nothing is time, as a tendency to nothing held in check by the divine — and therefore “empty” — scheme, a pure temporality absolutely receptive to its fulfillment. “Absolute light [absolute intelligence] carries with it, in its original generation, the schema of time, and the *real I*, comprehended by [divine] life, is always posited as itself replete (*gefüllt*) within an empty time” (86).⁷⁰

Correctly understood, the I attributes to itself this “reconstruction,” while its being “comprehended by life” (= its being categorically determined by the absolute *Soll*) constitutes the “preconstruction” which the reconstruction always presupposes. Here the temporal scheme is active. Reconstruction is an “accidental repletion (*Füllen*) in an *empty* time,” the determination of moments appositively and correlatively in relation to the absolute I (= pure thought, light). In reconstruction (practical-theoretical), the empty scheme is filled progressively by the *positions of the I* ; or, in other terms ; the reconstructing I constructs itself within “the time of the absolute I,” in the pure schema. The reconstruction is temporalizing, and is the expression of the freedom of the I in relation to the pure thought. The freedom of the I — intended as freedom as such, and not as an arbitrary will — is a temporalizing principle according to the schema (in the absolute I). Therefore it is a mediate effect of the absolute life, the mark of the absolute in us.

The pure thought, time, I-freedom ; the “synthetic” moment of the final part of the *Principien* articulates and develops these fundamental elements until it attains — as we have said — a comprehensive explication of the facticity of manifestation. We can distinguish two moments : from pure thought to consciousness, and from the determination of consciousness to the synthesis of the “world.” In the formulation of the first moment, we move from the constitutive principle of the entire account ; the absolute manifests itself, and it manifests itself as “pure thought,” divine thought, the divine idea.⁷¹ Pure thought is a unity ; the expression of unity, the manifestation of the idea in reflection, the point of genesis of categorical disjunctions (being, not being, becoming are articulation of a single pure thought — of light — in the “insofar as” of reflection).

The foundation of the “insofar as” is the “absolute should.” The expression of the divine idea is not the result of a “necessity,” but of an original “freedom” — that is not deducible, and that expresses itself in the position of the law of reason-freedom ; “the exterior existential form, and its condition, the *insofar as* of knowledge, is the result of an absolute *should* within the absolute [...]. By analogy, and with us ; *should*

70. [Cf. GA, II, 7, p. 456.]

71. [Cf. GA, II, 7, p. 461.] See, for example, in the nearly contemporaneous *Über das Wesen des Gelehrten und seine Erscheinungen im Gebiete der Freiheit* lectures (1805), in *SW VI* : “[...] this superior foundation of manifestation in its highest universality can be called, more appropriately ; the divine idea” (351) [Cf. GA, I, 8, p. 64.]

is a *thought* : therefore the divine thought is a foundation" (91). Thinking — even the thinking that we are now practicing in a systematic elaboration — is nothing but the "insofar as" of the *Soll*, the reflection of pure thought, the "objectification" of the divine idea "which absolutely should be." Thinking is intuition and its origin, the being of thought and the genesis of the being of thought, thought and the thought of thought, together. The figuration of objectivity is constituted by means of the interaction of these fundamental dimensions ; through the position of the objectifying intuition (being), the geneticization of intuition ; through the construction of the being of thinking (as an auto-intelligence), consciousness of thinking (which, with the unifying member — absolute reflection — will yield a quintuple synthesis). Determinate intuition and thought are differentiated in [their] relation to the *Soll*. The I as "living existence" is the absolute unification of both characters : of the continuity of intuition, and of the distinction of thought. This manifestation is the construction of consciousness in time. Definitively : no I, no consciousness, but also : without self-awareness of thought in act — as has been now explicated — or without consciousness, no I is possible.

In the second movement — with which we reach the completion of the synthesis — we depart from conscience [in order to] elaborate its constitution. We have seen that the *Soll* is for the I "the duty to duty as a duty,"⁷² a task of realizing freely the law-of-reason. Conscience is, as such, conscience of the "the duty to duty as a duty" ; this task is therefore its own *being*. Now, conscience is "existence" ; the *Soll* is the "significance, essence, and end"⁷³ of that existence. The intelligence of the *Soll* is *thought*. We have a bipolarity that presents itself as constitutive of facticity, between existence (conscience, I) and thought (of the *Soll*, the absolute existence, light). The thought of the *Soll*, of the absolute end of existence, should (*soll*) be ; then the I must (*muss*) be posited as a factual principle not of thought in itself (which is self-positing), but of the *existence* of thought itself, of the realization of the task of reason.

Now, the I is "one" in the sense that its very being is the consciousness of the reason-freedom that *must* be, the existence of which the I itself is a factual expression. The I manifests itself as a "system of the I" ; this consciousness in fact yields, as we have seen, the manifoldness of temporal succession, and thus a series for the I, as the re-apprehensions ("repetitions") of a single consciousness in time. In immediate consciousness, we possess unity : from this derives the identity of the "vision of the world" ; that posits "the world" and vice versa — given the laws of intelligence and of reflection that follow from the self-consciousness of reason (and this is the point of constitution of the concept of nature, cf. para. I). But the conscience of the "must" in temporal succession includes the multiplicity of the same unity, the "repetition" of the single law in a multiplicity of individuals. A problem arises ; what is the relationship between the system of the I in time (as manifold) and the single law of reason,

72. [Translator's Note : As above, "the duty to duty as a duty" translates Ivaldo's "devi del devi in quanto devi" and Fichte's "Jenes soll ist ein soll des Soll als soll."]

73. [Cf. GA, II, 7, p. 473.]

between the multiplicity of actions in the world and the absolute “must”? In other words ; which is the sense of the unity of the world, with regard to the absolute ?

The guiding thread of a response is offered by the consciousness of the freedom of the I, the factual position of the consciousness of pure thought (of the “must”). In this consciousness, intuition is posited, and it is posited *as (in quanto)* intuition ; the aperture of intentionality is posited under a different profile, and is posited *as intellectual (in quanto tale)*. The “as such” does not derive from intuition, but rather from “absolute productivity.” In relation with pure intuition, it is a “free and independent” production : the pure expression of reflexivity. To attain to an awareness of the freedom of the I is not simply to posit the “insofar as,” but rather to penetrate intellectually its essence, to elevate oneself to the consciousness of pure thought, to reflect reason absolutely. As it is recorded in the contemporaneous *Grundzüge* : “[...] the true and real end of the existence [of humanity] is not *being*-rational, but *becoming*-rational through freedom” (*SW VII 133*).⁷⁴ Consciousness “must” raise itself from projection to absolute reflection (as philosophy, too, must do) ; consciousness (in its manifoldness) “must” become the unity-of-reason. This, therefore, is the end of factual existence, an end that is not a necessary destiny, but instead a *law of freedom*.

If God is absolute *ens a se, per se*, why [is there] “a world,” an external [self-] manifestation ? We can formulate, again and conclusively, the originary question of the doctrine of manifestation as exposed in the *Principien* in this way. The response that we now can articulate, at the conclusion of our treatment, would be as follows ; the sense of manifestation is that God must (*soll*) be known ; the sense of existence is disclosed as an absolute task. This task prescribes unity-with-God (the *Religionslehre* will say : love). At the same time : this task is, and is *only*, “in freedom.” The principal articulations of manifestation (religion, morals, right, nature ; the historical horizon), and the doctrines that make them thematic, must therefore be conceived as projections of this absolute task. The development of their content is the object of the particular subjects of the Doctrine of Science, the significance of which, now, after the point of unity established by the *Principien*, can be better comprehended and evaluated.

74. [Cf. GA, 1, 8, p. 299.]