In-Person Philosophy:
A Comparative Study of Fichtean and Husserlian Methodology

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ABSTRACT: Fichte and Husserl both distinguish a properly philosophical or transcendental consciousness from natural or ordinary consciousness. The principal aim of this study is to provide clarification into the character of this philosophical consciousness, while simultaneously using this common idea as a means of establishing correspondences between the philosophies of Fichte and Husserl. The first section explicates certain relevant features of Husserl’s phenomenology, such as the reductions and his theory of intuition, while the second section offers an exposition of significant aspects of Fichte’s Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo, with special attention given to Chapter 8 of this text wherein Fichte’s theory of intellectual intuition finds elaboration. The final section reconstructs a “double-method” interpretation of transcendental philosophy according to which reason and the philosopher’s self-observations converge to produce a well-grounded philosophical science. Furthermore, a theory is outlined that interprets philosophical consciousness as a “subjective experience” that is grounded in a non-reflective immediate consciousness of spontaneity.

Fichte and Husserl both insist that their respective philosophies, the Wissenschaftslehre and phenomenology, must be performed in person by any would-be practitioners. The goal of the following study is to draw out the implications of this demand for “in-person philosophizing,” and to use this demand as a basis for comparing the philosophical methods of Fichte and Husserl. In particular, Husserl’s method of reduction, both transcendental
and eidetic, and his associated theory of intuition, will be compared with the
method utilized by Fichte in the *Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo*, an
interpretative explication of which will be provided below.¹

Because for both Fichte and Husserl what is obtained by means of in-
person philosophizing is primarily access to transcendental subjectivity, this
study will also attempt to specify the conception of transcendental subjectivity
at play in each of these philosophies. To the extent that the in-person
requirement would seem to entail that these philosophical methods do not rely
solely upon rational deduction or logical proofs, which could be
communicated and examined externally or mediatly, it will also be necessary
to address the role and legitimacy of rational deduction within transcendental
philosophy. This, of course, is in addition to the primary investigation into
just what else it is, aside from rational thinking, upon which the philosophies
of Fichte and Husserl rely.

Beginning with their general conceptions of philosophy, one finds that
Fichte and Husserl agree on several main points. First is their conviction that
philosophy must be scientific, which is understood by each in a Cartesian
fashion. In other words, both Fichte and Husserl affirm that philosophy must
begin with what is absolutely undeniable, namely the apodicticity of
immediate consciousness. Thus Husserl declares the proper field of
phenomenological research to be the absolute immanence of pure, i.e.,
reduced, consciousness, while for Fichte philosophical research begins with
the fact/act or *Tathandlung* of the I's absolute self-positing. We shall
examine these starting points presently.

Both Fichte and Husserl also see philosophy as essentially distinct from,
but yet still related to (in the sense of grounding the possibility of) the natural
or positive sciences; and thus they both distinguish a properly philosophical
attitude and philosophical consciousness from mundane or dogmatic natural
attitude and ordinary consciousness. The present study proposes to
investigate this philosophical consciousness.

Additional general coincidences in their conception of philosophy include
agreement on the epistemological focus of philosophy, although for neither
Fichte nor Husserl does this preclude a problematizing of the ontological
implications of their philosophies. Finally, to the extent that they both
understand their philosophies as transcendental, Fichte and Husserl share a
theory of the constitution of objectivities within pure consciousness, or what
is the same thing, a theory of transcendence in immanence, although these
latter terms must be carefully elucidated within the context of each philosophy
before any substantive use can be made of them.

Another intriguing similarity between Fichte and Husserl is the fact that
they frequently reformulated their presentations of their philosophical
methods. In both philosophies this is due primarily to two factors: on the one
hand is the problem of using a worldly or mundane language to present and
describe what is ultimately transcendental and extra-mundane; on the other hand is the fact that their presentations were never intended to be sufficient in and of themselves for making one familiar with the transcendental realm, but rather were always supposed merely to be instructions for how to perform the steps that would lead one to a direct and in-person “experience” of transcendental subjectivity. Thus it is necessary not only to understand the presented description of these philosophies, but more importantly, it is equally necessary to do or perform what is described. And this doing can only be accomplished “in person.” Once one has actively achieved access to transcendental subjectivity, then one may become witness to the constitutive acts of transcendental subjectivity that occur, as it were, “before one’s very eyes,” as both Fichte and Husserl are fond of saying.

In what follows, first Husserl’s and then Fichte’s philosophy will be examined with the intention of drawing out and appraising the mode of access to the transcendental/phenomenological realm. The results of these preliminary investigations will then be examined with a special emphasis upon gaining a more comprehensive understanding of just what type of consciousness this philosophical or transcendental consciousness is, as well as upon what implications this may have for philosophy more generally. Also under consideration will be the scientific legitimacy of in-person philosophy, including the possibility of universal and necessary knowledge resulting from such philosophy. The place and appropriateness of rational/logical deduction within in-person transcendental philosophy will also be discussed.

I. Husserl’s Transcendental Phenomenology

Two interrelated ways of understanding the description “in-person” as applied to philosophy can already be discerned in Husserl’s celebrated maxim, “to the things themselves.” On the one hand is a reference to the fact that the focus of phenomenological observations and analyses is to be upon that which presents itself “in person” to the phenomenologist. On the other hand is the tacit complementary implication of a certain “in-personness” on the part of the philosopher. It is important to note that “in-person” does not have exactly the same meaning when applied to the philosophizing subject as it does when applied to the object of that philosophizing, even though the two meanings are necessarily correlated. More to the point, the transcendental philosopher is “in person” in an active sense in that it must do or perform certain activities “in person,” while the object of philosophy is “in person” in a passive sense of being present “in the flesh” or immediately given to the philosopher. It is primarily this active in-personness upon which the present investigations are focused. In other words, this study proposes to examine what it is that the transcendental philosopher must do “in person” in order to encounter firsthand the object of philosophical consciousness.
One of the first things a phenomenologist-in-training must do, assuming one is sufficiently motivated or philosophically inclined, is to shed the naivety of one's everyday way of being among and relating to objects, and willfully accomplish a transition from the natural attitude to the philosophical attitude. One point that should be made concerning such a change in attitude is that even though it is in a certain sense something accomplished all at once, it is nonetheless never something that is accomplished once and for all. This is due to the habitual pull of the natural attitude and the concomitant unnaturalness of the philosophical attitude. Thus not only is such a transition something the phenomenologist must do, it is also something the phenomenologist must continuously do, and this by sheer force of will. This situation is perhaps instructive with respect to the enigmatic relation between the empirical and the transcendental subject, and for this reason we will return to it below. But first this shift in attitude must be examined in more detail.

As concerns the "natural attitude," one must make the very important, but all-too-often overlooked, distinction between what could be described as a pre-philosophical natural attitude or naive attitude on the one hand, and a philosophical but pre-phenomenological natural attitude on the other. The former is our natural or everyday way of being a human subject, which is temporally prior to the philosophical turn, that is, our way of taking up and relating to objects of experience prior to any acquaintance with the "riddle of transcendence" and its associated skepticism. The most important consequence of becoming aware of the problem of transcendence is that one thereby becomes thematically aware for the first time of our belief in being. Such an awareness of the belief in being is a prerequisite for the philosophical natural attitude, such as that of empiricism and philosophical naturalism, wherein objects are explicitly taken to be real existents transcendent to the experiencing subject, or equivalently, as things-in-themselves. In the pre-philosophical natural attitude or naive attitude objects are taken to be neither real nor ideal explicitly, as such a position-taking is possible only once a belief in being has been made thematic.

Interestingly, both Husserl and Fichte refer to those who participate in the philosophical natural attitude as "dogmatists," in opposition to themselves as transcendental and thus properly critical philosophers. But just what is this proper philosophical attitude?

First of all, the philosophical attitude proper or phenomenological attitude, which for Husserl is the attitude of the transcendental reduction, involves freely and willfully putting into effect the decision to accept only what is given immediately to consciousness, and thus with a radical consistency to remain within the absolute givenness of consciousness. Consequently, any dogmatic assumptions concerning the reality of transcendent objects or things-in-themselves must be put out of play or bracketed, and philosophy
must from now on be focused exclusively upon, and is allowed to accept, only what is given in consciousness, and only as it is given therein.

It is certainly possible to understand this properly philosophical attitude or phenomenological attitude as a restriction to the sphere of immanence, but in doing so one must be extremely careful not to assume this to be the same immanence as is associated with the pre-phenomenological natural attitude. The sphere of immanence at the phenomenological level is the sphere of transcendental subjectivity, which is to be distinguished from the immanence of the psycho-physical human subject. The former belongs to a philosophically purified subjectivity, namely the subject that performs the transcendental reduction and for whom transcendence is meant transcendence only; in other words, it is the immanence of a subject who is extra-worldly insofar as the belief in the being of the world has been inhibited precisely by this subject and for whom it is therefore inconceivable that something could be radically "outside" of it. The latter, i.e., the immanence of the philosophical natural attitude, is that belonging to the empirical subject for whom there are indeed transcendent objects, which is precisely the crux of the problem of transcendence. In the latter case both the objects and the subject of experience are understood as mundane, and it is the possibility and nature of their relation that is addressed in the philosophical natural attitude.

Intimately associated with this restriction to the immanence of transcendental subjectivity in the phenomenological attitude are the related theories of the intentional structure of consciousness and of the transcendental constitution of objects. Once the restriction has been made to what is purely and immediately given within reduced or transcendental consciousness, the phenomenologist has no recourse but to reinterpret the riddle of transcendence on this new level, such an interpretation resulting in a shift of epistemological focus. No longer is it philosophy's task either to justify or to deny the possibility of the knowing subject reaching a "real" object of knowledge. Rather, philosophy (in the form of phenomenology) can only attempt to describe and understand how objects come to be meant as real by the knowing subject, or, how knowledge comes to be taken as valid. And it can do this only by observing and analyzing the system of acts of transcendental or constituting consciousness.

Turning now to Husserl's theory of intentionality, which he adapted from Brentano, we find it commonly described as the theory that all consciousness is consciousness of something, this something being the intentional object of consciousness. The intentional act of consciousness, which Husserl will designate as the noesis (cogito), and the intentional object of consciousness, which Husserl designates as noema (cogitatum), are inseparably correlated and irreducible to one another. And it is precisely this intentional structure of consciousness that makes possible the achievements of phenomenological science. In other words, scientific progress is made in phenomenology by
means of intentional analyses, i.e., inquiries into the processes of transcendental constituting consciousness on the basis of the intended object as Leitfaden or transcendental clue. Constitution for Husserl is the generative process of meaning- or sense-formation that occurs in transcendental consciousness. And it is primarily this process, the process by means of which, among other things, the object of experience comes to be meant as real or transcendent, that an epistemologically shifted phenomenology aims to elucidate.

So much, then, for the general parameters of the phenomenological project, for what is supposed to happen. But the elemental question that must be considered with respect to in-person philosophy is: Just how does this intentional analysis take place? What is it that the philosopher actually does in order first to gain access to transcendental consciousness and then to observe and analyze its processes? It is in undertaking to answer this question that one encounters Husserl's theory of intuition.

We can begin to understand intuition in Husserl's philosophy by characterizing it as a presentation within consciousness. This is to say that "something" presents itself within intuition to consciousness. Intuition is also depicted in phenomenology as what is decisive for the differentiation of a fulfilled intention from an empty intention. The notion of an empty intention can be traced back in Husserl's work to the related notion of significations or signitive intentions in the Logical Investigations and even back to the symbolic intention of numbers in The Philosophy of Arithmetic, both of which Husserl contrasted with intuitive intentions.

Although ordinary sense perception may serve as a model or even the paradigm of intuitive presentation, intuition is conceived by Husserl more broadly than perception. Another possible form of intuition, eidetic insight (Wesenshau), is the source of much of the controversy concerning Husserl's theory of intuition. But before turning to a consideration of this form of intuition, it will prove instructive first to take a closer look at perception. One of Husserl's most productive discoveries or recoveries was that of the adumbrated character of all perceptions of material or spatial objects, such objects being never available to consciousness all at once or adequately. Rather, the perceiving subject directly perceives at the most only a couple of sides of the object at any one time, the remaining sides being merely apperceived or co-intended. Husserl describes these apperceived sides or aspects of perspectively modified perceptual objects as emptily or signitively intended, while the directly perceived aspects are intuited or intended-as-fulfilled. Thus, as always and necessarily a mixture of empty and fulfilled intentions, perception is inherently unable to attain perfect adequacy with respect to the whole object. Nevertheless, there are degrees of (non-perfect) adequacy that are available thanks in part to the temporal nature of perception. That is to say, intentions or co-intentions that are at first empty may become
fulfilled as the perceiving subject continues to become acquainted with its object. It is in consideration of this temporal-process character of perception that Husserl is able to bring out and analyze certain kinesthetic motivations and capabilities in relation to perceptual consciousness.

Another pertinent topic in Husserl’s phenomenology is that of evidence, and while it is a relatively straightforward matter to comprehend the role evidence is to play therein, it is an altogether different matter to come to a genuine understanding of just what evidence is. Evidence is related to the ideas of adequation and fulfilling intentions discussed above with regard to perception. And it is related as well to Husserl’s “principle of all principles,” which is best quoted directly: “every originary presentive intuition is a legitimizing source of cognition, [...] everything originally presented to us in ‘intuition’ (as it were, in the flesh) is to be accepted simply as it presents itself, but only within the limits within which it is presented”.

Despite the relatively enigmatic character of Husserl’s description of this highest of all principles, the “in-the-flesh” quality does come across, and is what we described above as passive in-personness. Basically, what Husserl has done is take the principle implicit in our common sense way of dealing with the question of legitimacy (truth, factuality) on the everyday level, namely, that we accept as legitimate only what we can see with our very own eyes, so to speak, and make it explicit and philosophically purify it, i.e., interpret it in accord with the transcendental reduction, which allows a broadening of the principle such that it is no longer limited to sensuous perception or ordinary experience. It is only this broadening that allows the principle to apply to itself and thus to be self-grounded in a certain sense, which is de rigueur for scientific philosophy in the Husserlian sense.

By relating Husserl’s principle of all principles to the common-sense principle of seeing something with one’s very own eyes, we can “see” that Husserl at least comes by his pervasive visual metaphors honestly, that is, as a direct carry-over from ordinary language and everyday life. One such instance would be Husserl’s reference to legitimizing originary intuition as an “insight” [Einsicht]. It might be objected that Husserl uses visual metaphors all too frequently and casually. Nevertheless, we can at least take advantage of their similarly broadened use in ordinary language to assist us in understanding Husserl’s broadened principle of principles, because just as in ordinary language when we say to someone, “I see what you mean,” we are not referring to an actual visual sense perception, but rather to a comprehension in thought or a mutual understanding, so also in Husserl’s eidetic intuition or seeing of essences there is implied no actual visual sense perception, but rather something else. But just what else? And is it something else entirely?

The process by which the phenomenologist is able to “see what something means” in a transcendentally reduced sense is that which Husserl variously
calls “ideation” or “imaginative/eidetic variation.” What should be well noted here is the process character of eidetic variation or ideation. Just as the transcendental theory of constitution belies any idea of perceptual experience as something that occurs all at once or in a single shot, so too should Husserl’s theory of ideation belie any idea of eidetic intuition as something that occurs in a single “glance.” Rather, the phenomenologist must purposefully “constitute” an essence and bring about an intuitive fulfilment of the basic concept of that essence within his or her consciousness.

It should also be noted that ideation is not reducible to any sort of induction or abstraction from individual empirical instances. Even though eidetic variation begins with and thus has as a necessary condition an individual instance, which is taken as an exemplification of an essence, there is also a necessary role to be played by the imagination. This is because it is precisely by means of the phenomenologist’s imagination that the variation occurs. The exemplary individual instance is repeatedly altered in one’s imagination in an experimental fashion, and gradually what remains the same in each slightly altered imaginary instantiation of the particular essence, i.e., the invariant core of what is required in order for the “object” to be what it is, is synthesized into a “concrete” or intuitively fulfilled essence.

It was mentioned above that eidetic variation always begins with an individual instance, but this instance is not necessarily perceptual in origin. Rather, the initial instantiation, in addition to all the subsequently modified instantiations, could just as well be provided by the imagination. This is the case not only for fictional objects, such as a centaur, but for factual objects as well. Excluded from what could be eidetically determined would be only logically impossible or self-contradictory objects, such as a round square, and this simply because there could be no proper essence of such “objects.”

We begin to see, then, the decidedly Socratic nature of eidetic intuition as conceived by Husserl, namely that the concern is with essences as consolidations of what is properly meant by a particular concept. Hence the similarity to Socratic “What is X?” questions.

It should also be clear to anyone who undertakes a serious study of Husserlian phenomenology that Husserl did not subscribe to any sort of Platonic realism concerning essences, although one might still lament his somewhat careless locutions in this regard. But even if not a Platonic realism, there is nonetheless a certain sort of transcendency pertaining to essences in Husserl’s philosophy. This is due to the fact that essences are reducible neither to the acts of imaginative variation performed by the phenomenologist, nor to the individual instantiations themselves. But, then again, just as all “objects” are inseparable from constitutive processes, essences are equally inseparable from these acts and instantiations. Thus there would seem to be (at least) two senses of transcendence operating on the philosophical level, the one pertaining to perceptual objects, and the other to essences, both of which
are necessarily immanent, and this is in correlation with (at least) two types of intuition, namely sensible and categorial.

As a final note it should also be mentioned that Husserl distinguishes two types of categorial intuition: formal-categorial intuition, which grounds or provides evidence for logical principles or analytic judgments a priori, and material-categorial intuition, which grounds or provides evidence for judgments concerning concrete essences or what would be synthetic judgments a priori. Eidetic intuition, then, would be a material-categorial intuition in Husserl’s terms. Husserl also worked with a very general conception of an object, namely as a synthetically unified or coincident subject of possible predications. Thus essences could qualify as objects without thereby invoking the name of Plato.

II. Fichte’s *Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo*

The proper task of philosophy, according to Fichte, and the task he thus assigns to his *Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo*, is to answer the question: “Why do we assume that actual things exist, beyond and in addition to our representations?”7. Notice how Fichte’s formulation of philosophy’s proper question already indicates a shifted epistemological concern. Rather than an anti-skeptical defense of the possibility of genuine knowledge, the *Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo* will provide a “genetic” account of objective experience, that is, it will explain step-by-step how a real object comes to be constituted within the I’s (or experiencing subject’s) consciousness8.

Although Fichte frequently contends that he is simply carrying out Kant’s project to its full fruition, and that their projects deviate primarily in word rather than in spirit, it is also the case that Fichte takes advantage of any opportunity that presents itself to boast of the superiority of the *Wissenschaftslehre* over Kant’s philosophy9. Perhaps the most significant improvement that Fichte claims for the *Wissenschaftslehre* is its elimination of any need to appeal to things-in-themselves in its account of experience. It is thanks above all to the cardinal role played by *feeling* in this account that Fichte is able to make good on such a claim10.

What should be noted with respect to the current comparative study is that Fichte’s decision to limit himself in generating an account of experience to what is “present within consciousness”11, and to avoid an appeal to anything, such as the thing-in-itself, that is by definition transcendent to consciousness, is in effect an anticipation of Husserl’s theme of transcendental reduction. In other words, Fichte, just as Husserl after him, elected to restrict the working materials of his philosophy to the proper content of the sphere of immanence, to what is present as such within consciousness; and just as with Husserl, this was done in the name of the scientificity of philosophy.
Of course, as mentioned previously, one must be extremely careful to specify what “immanence” means within the context of the particular philosophy. Is the immanence to which Fichte restricts his philosophy that of the transcendental subject or that of the actual I? Precisely because of the enigmatic and problematic relation between the transcendental and empirical subject in transcendental philosophy, this question is not so easy to answer, especially considering that Fichte did not self-consciously formulate a specific method in terms of immanence and transcience as did Husserl. But this question goes directly to the heart of our in-person thesis and thus cannot be brushed aside. Before we can attempt to answer this question in any authentic manner, though, we must first become better acquainted with Fichte’s Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo.

The Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo is what is referred to in Fichte scholarship as the later Jena Wissenschaftslehre, as it is the second presentation of the foundations of his system of transcendental idealism developed during his five-year tenure in Jena, the first presentation being composed of the more familiar Grundlage der gesamten Wissenschaftslehre or Science of Knowledge¹², along with the Grundriß des Eigentümlichen der Wissenschaftslehre in Rücksicht auf das theoretische Vermögen or “Outline of the Distinctive Character of the Wissenschaftslehre with Respect to the Theoretical Faculty”¹³. As the Grundlage of 1794/5 was the only version of his system published during Fichte’s lifetime, the Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo exists solely in the form of student transcripts of certain of Fichte’s lecture courses at the University of Jena dating from 1796 to 1799.

The nineteen lectures that comprise the Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo are divided by Fichte into an “ascending portion” (Chapters 1-13) and a descending portion (Chapters 14-19). The ascending portion is structured as a gigantic transcendental argument that begins with an absolutely undeniable first principle or postulate, and then derives exhaustively the series of necessary conditions for the possibility of this first principle, while the descending portion reconstructs out of these necessary conditions, starting from the ultimate or final condition, the main features of the I’s empirical consciousness or objective experience.

As previously mentioned, the starting point or first principle of Fichte’s philosophy is the self-positing of the I, which Fichte neologizes as Tathandlung or fact/act in the Grundlage. The reason that Fichte so names the I’s self-positing is that it is an act that is in fact performed by all Wissenschaftslehrens-in-training, and as their first philosophical act it is what marks the threshold between ordinary and philosophical consciousness.

The specific task that Fichte assigns to his students is to “(c)onstruct the concept of the I and observe how you accomplish this”¹⁴. This task is realized in the following manner: first Fichte instructs his students to attend to any object, giving the wall or the stove as examples of a possible object. Next he
points out the necessary distinction between the object of their current conscious attention and themselves as the subjects who are conscious or who are doing the attending. Normally, while consciously attending to an object the subject's conscious activity is ignored or forgotten. "In thinking about an object one disappears into the object; one thinks about the object, but one does not think about oneself as the subject who is doing this thinking." But in order to "lift oneself to the viewpoint of philosophy," or to accomplish the task of constructing the concept of the I, one must willfully direct one's conscious attention away from the object and precisely toward the activity of consciousness itself, in which case the activity of consciousness becomes self-reverting such that the subject and object of the act of consciousness are no longer distinct, but rather necessarily converge into one subject-object which is precisely the I.

The former awareness, the awareness of the wall or stove, is a "sensible intuition" in Fichte's terms, while the latter awareness of the activity of consciousness in the sensible intuition is what Fichte calls an "intellectual intuition." As a simple intuition of the I's ideal or intuiting activity an intellectual intuition is a formal intuition in that it lacks any material content. The other essential difference between sensible and intellectual intuition is that the intellectual intuition is freely and willfully initiated by the I and will not occur otherwise, while the sensible intuition occurs automatically as long as the conditions for its possibility (to be discussed below) are met. Thus Fichte characterizes both the sensible intuition and its object, which is the not-I, as "given," meaning that they are in a certain sense found by the philosopher, while he characterizes both the intellectual intuition and what comes into being by means of intellectual intuition, which is the concept of the I, as "intended," meaning that they are willfully brought to consciousness by the philosopher. Fichte's term for such willful or free activity is "real activity."

It may seem that sensible intuition should also be considered a real activity insofar as Fichte's first request to his students was to intuit purposefully the wall or stove, and thus willfully to engage in a sensible intuition, but in fact all that the students did in this case was to meet the conditions for the possibility of sensible intuition, while the sensible intuition itself occurred automatically and beyond their conscious control, which is to say that there is a certain passivity on the part of the subject of a sensible intuition that is precisely lacking in the case of an intellectual intuition. That said, it is nonetheless true that real activity is one of the conditions for the possibility of sensible intuition. To be precise, what is needed in order for sensible intuition to occur is a felt limitation of the I's real activity. Fichte utilizes the concept of a "drive" [Trieb] to explain this relationship between real and ideal activity.
According to Fichte, the I naturally possesses both a drive to real activity or a “striving” and a drive to ideal activity or a “reflection drive.” Fichte compares the drive to real activity to a compressed steel spring and describes it as a “constant inner disposition to overcome what resists it” \(^{19}\). And just as the compressed spring contains two opposed forces, so too does striving contain both activity and resistance together. Thus the I’s real activity is always already a limited activity (Fichte refers to it as an “original limitation”), and it is precisely this limited real activity that is the sufficient condition for the possibility of sensible intuition, which occurs due to the I’s drive to ideal activity or reflection drive.

The chapter of the *Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo* that quite clearly pulls together all of the elements we have discussed thus far is Chapter 8, which is one of the most important chapters for understanding this text, and for this reason it will prove useful to provide a brief explication of this chapter\(^{20}\). Most noticeably, it is in Chapter 8 that Fichte establishes the necessary interdependence between the I’s self-awareness and the I’s awareness of a not-I, and thus this chapter serves both as Fichte’s refutation of idealism and as a refutation of dogmatism\(^{21}\).

It should be noted that feeling, which plays an essential role in Chapter 8, was already introduced into the deductions of the *Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo* by Fichte in Chapter 6, where it is described as an “immediate (material) consciousness” produced through the I’s limited activity or drive\(^{22}\). The importance of feeling is that it provides freedom with a manifold for choice, which Fichte previously determined was necessary for constructing a goal concept, itself a condition of the I’s free activity.

The account given in Chapter 8 of how the I becomes simultaneously self-aware and aware of a “real” object is interpreted as follows: the I’s real activity is curbed or limited (this is what Fichte calls the I’s “original limitation”)\(^{23}\). The I feels this limitation of real activity (= feeling A) and because of the I’s reflection drive, which is automatically activated whenever the real activity is limited, this original limitation of real activity duly occasions the activation of ideal activity. This ideal activity Fichte labels intuition Y, which is a sensible intuition grounded in feeling A.

Fichte refers to this change in the I whereby ideal activity becomes activated or engaged as an “alteration” in the I’s state. And according to Fichte, the I feels this alteration as a limitation of ideal activity (= feeling B). The reason that this alteration is felt as a limitation of ideal activity is that to the extent that the ideal activity automatically copies the limitation of real activity or feeling A, the ideal activity is itself thereby limited. Fichte describes feeling B, the feeling of the limitation of ideal activity, as a feeling of “intellectual compulsion”\(^{24}\).

Once again, this feeling (=B) makes possible an intuition, labeled by Fichte as intuition X, which is an intellectual intuition of the limited ideal
activity in sensible intuition Y. Only this time the intuition does not follow automatically from the feeling, but rather occurs as a result of an act of freedom. Only if the I freely reflects upon the above-mentioned alteration in its state will intuition X arise, and it is only by means of intellectual intuition X that either intuition Y as such or the I itself as ideally active can become an object for the I.

Note that Chapter 8 is simply a detailed explanation of the act of self-positing or Tathandlung performed by Fichte’s students at the very beginning of the Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo. There the students had freely to “wrench” their conscious activity out of the object (noema) into which it was absorbed in the sensible intuition, namely the wall or stove, and direct it onto the conscious activity (noesis) per se. According to Chapter 8 this is possible only because there is a feeling of the limitation of ideal activity or a feeling of alteration (feeling B) that occurs as a result of the automatic activation of the sensible intuition. Thus it is only because there is a felt compulsion of the intellect or ideal activity in the sensible intuition that the freely wrenched away excess ideal activity has anything to intuit in intellectual intuition X.

In sensible intuition Y the object of the intuition simply “hovers” before the I, it has what could be called objective validity or, more simply, objectivity; that is, it is a mere intentional object or an object in the most general [höchsten] sense. But it does not yet have being or what could be called objective reality. The situation with the I is the reverse, namely, the I has being or reality, it is real and active, but it is not yet an object for itself, it has not yet achieved noematicity.

It is by means of intellectual intuition X both that the object or not-I acquires reality and that the I acquires objectivity or objective validity. Thus it is only subsequent to intellectual intuition X that both the object of the sensible intuition and the I are completed beings or are objectively real. It is also by means of intellectual intuition X that the I becomes aware of sensible intuition Y precisely as a representation. But rather than undermine the reality of the not-I, this realization on the part of the I is in fact a necessary condition for the I’s taking the object explicitly as real. In other words, it is only if the I is aware of its ideal or representing activity as such, as an activity, that it will attribute the limitation of this activity precisely to something outside that activity, namely, the not-I. Another way of putting this, which makes the reciprocity quite apparent, is to say that the not-I becomes something that limits at the same time that the I becomes something that is limited. Neither of these can occur, however, unless the I intuits its ideal activity precisely as such, which it does by means of intellectual intuition. But because intellectual intuition is a free act of reflection on the part of the I, Fichte is indeed entitled to claim that freedom is the ultimate ground of both the I’s self-consciousness and its objective experience, that is, its
representations accompanied by a feeling of necessity, this feeling of necessity being the feeling of intellectual compulsion or feeling B.

Because this intellectual compulsion of the ideal activity is something to which the I can freely choose to submit itself or not, it is not an absolute compulsion. Rather, Fichte says, it is conditional "upon whether our representations are supposed to possess truth". If the representing subject is interested in truth, if she is concerned whether her representations are accurate or "correspond with the thing", then she must test for a limitation of ideal activity. Borrowing Husserlian terminology, the representing subject must check whether the intention, the object of sensible intuition that at first merely "hovers" before the subject, is empty or fulfilled. Notice also that only if the subject is interested in truth will the I become objectively self-conscious.

If, as Fichte proposes, the I becomes aware of its ideal activity per se by means of an intellectual intuition of its limited ideal activity in a sensible intuition, then how is it that the I becomes aware, if it does at all, of its intellectual intuition? Is Fichte's account to succumb to an infinite regress? Fichte's answer is that "[i]ntuition X becomes mine by means of an immediate {self-} feeling," while intuition Y becomes mine only by means of intuition X. The reason that the I is aware of intellectual intuition X immediately is that intuition X is accomplished by means of freedom, it is something the I does willfully and intentionally. Thus it is only because the I's ideal activity becomes practical or real activity in intellectual intuition X that the I can be immediately aware of this activity. The ideal activity in the sensible intuition, on the other hand, does not become real activity because it occurs automatically, rather than willfully. Hence the I can become aware of sensible intuition Y only mediately or indirectly, that is, by means of an immediate awareness of its freely performed intellectual intuition.

Now that we have gained this minimally required acquaintance with Fichte's Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo, we will turn to the final section of our study, which is more reconstructive than explicative, where we will make a number of interpretative proposals with regard to our in-person thesis. Several of these proposals will concern the immediate consciousness of doing or self-feeling that was just introduced.

III. In-Person Philosophy

An essential element of our in-person thesis is the proposal that something other than and in addition to rational deduction is at work in a fundamental way in the philosophies of Fichte and Husserl. Accordingly, I will now offer an interpretation of Fichte's method in the Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo that will be referred to as the "double-method" interpretation. The basic idea here is that reason and self-observation work hand-in-hand to produce a well-
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grounded philosophical science. In particular, the philosopher rationally deduces the necessary conditions for the possibility of the first principle (in the case of the *Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo* the first principle is the *Tathandlung* or act of self-positing) and then using these rationally deduced actions or states of the I as *Leitfaden* or clues that guide each philosopher's own self-observation, the philosopher proceeds to uncover within his own consciousness precisely the actions/states that reason claims to be necessary.

A certain affinity is noticeable between this as an interpretation of a philosophical method and the above discussion concerning truth. Just as the experiencing subject who was interested in truth had to test whether the object of the sensible intuition that merely hovered before the I was real or not by willfully checking for a feeling of intellectual compulsion or limitation of ideal activity, so here too the philosopher must test whether an action/state that reason declares to be a necessary condition of the *Tathandlung* is real or not by willfully searching for the presence of such an action or state within his own consciousness. Of course, it is still to be determined just what is meant by "real" in each of these cases.

Fichte himself addresses the question of the reality status of the actions deduced in the *Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo* and distinguishes two senses of what it means for something "actually to exist." Clearly the necessary actions deduced in the *Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo* do not exist in the sense of a "being within experience [or as] an occurrence in space and time." As Fichte points out, if these actions are to provide the foundation or ground for objective experience, then they cannot be a part of that experience. Hence, Fichte affirms that "[t]he assertions of the idealist possess reality for the philosopher and are themselves the results of necessary thinking." Or again: "[t]hese actions do possess reality for the person who raises himself to the philosophical level; that is, they possess the reality of necessary thinking [...]".

It is certainly possible that what Fichte means here is simply that the philosopher understands the rational force of the deductions and that this necessity of rational thought exhausts the mode of reality of these actions. But Fichte also refers to how the system of idealism becomes "comprehensive and complete" precisely by means of an expansion of the philosopher's consciousness. According to the double-method interpretation what this would mean is that as a series of rationally deduced actions/states the system of idealism initially existed in a state of incompleteness, or we could say it merely "hovered" before the philosopher, but then as the philosopher
discovered or found evidence of these actions within his own consciousness the system would thereby become complete by means of this expansion of the philosopher’s consciousness. Such an interpretation would seem to be supported by the following quote from the second introduction:

in order to understand this system, one has to reproduce within oneself all the actions examined here. For the system does not enumerate a series of facts, which are simply given as such; instead, it presents a series of actions, while at the same time observing that upon which this series depends. [...] {one can grasp the truth of this system only by reproducing these actions for oneself and producing these self-observations within one’s own consciousness.} 32

Thus it would follow that if the philosopher is interested in truth she must do and complete the *Wissenschaftslehre* for herself by producing fulfilled intentions out of the empty or unfulfilled concepts of the actions deduced by reason. As Fichte remarks, “{[o]ne of the features of this system is that it cannot be learned in a historical manner.} It cannot be grasped merely by reading and study. Every person must produce it within himself [...]”33.

Several important questions arise along with this double-method interpretation. One such question concerns the nature of philosophical consciousness and the type of experience associated therewith. Another concerns the differences and interrelations between philosophical and ordinary consciousness, while still another question addresses the scope and validity of any method that is based upon self-observation.

Fichte takes up the latter question directly and affirms that even though “[t]he system can only call upon everyone to look within himself while observing how this is accomplished,” the *Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo* nevertheless “lays claim to universal validity and asserts that every rational being must behave in the manner it describes.” Fichte defends the right of the *Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo* to make such a claim:

for if one supposes that the essence of reason really does consist in self-positing, then all of those actions whose necessity is established by showing that they follow from this act of self-positing can equally be said to follow from the nature of reason itself, and therefore, every rational being must acknowledge the correctness of the system.”34
It would seem as though for this defense to work Fichte must still establish that self-positing is indeed the essence of reason, but within the context of the double-method interpretation this would be superfluous. The Tathandlung or act of self-positing, to the extent that it is a self-activity on the part of the philosopher/ I, possesses its foundation within itself and is thus “absolute” 35.

But for a philosophical system to be rigorously scientific all the elements and steps of that system must carry the same certainty as the first principle. Traditionally, reason and rational deduction have been solely responsible for establishing such necessary connections. But according to the present interpretation, a radically grounded philosophy should go one step further.

In other words, according to the double-method interpretation, instead of appealing to God to guarantee the veracity of carefully made rational judgments, as Descartes did, Fichte appeals to an independent verification of the claims of reason. And precisely because the rational deductions in the Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo concern the actions and states that are conditional for the possibility of an actual instance of self-activity on the part of the I, these actions/states should all be expected to be part of the composition of the I’s consciousness. Of course, this in itself does not guarantee that these necessary actions are consciously accessible in any way.

But then again, according to the present interpretation, it is precisely the accessibility and reality of these actions that seems to account for the difference between philosophical and ordinary consciousness. In terms of accessing these actions/states the philosopher has a two-fold advantage over the ordinary or actual I: first, the philosopher has the rational deductions of these actions as a clue to guide his self-observations, without which they might simply go unnoticed; and second, the philosopher is interested in the truth of these deductions. In Chapter 1, which is the only place he mentions it in the Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo, Fichte characterizes “philosophical genius” as “[b]eing conscious of intuition” 36.

Within the context of the present interpretation this is taken as a reference to the philosopher’s ability to become conscious of the activities of consciousness that comprise the act of sensible intuition, or equivalently, to be conscious of the acts of constituting subjectivity. But we have yet to
account for the possibility of such philosophical consciousness or even to establish precisely what it is, to a consideration of which we will now turn.

As a corollary to the double-method interpretation, the following terminological distinctions are proposed:

first, it is suggested that we refer to the type of experience that the *Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo* is supposed to explain or ground, or of which it is to provide an account, namely the type of experience pertaining to the natural attitude wherein things are assumed to exist "beyond and in addition to our representations," as "objective experience." Sensible intuition would be the root of such experience, which would include "inner objective experience" based upon what Kant called inner sense, in addition to "outer objective experience," which would be based upon what Kant called outer sense. Second, this would then make available the designation of "subjective experience" for the experience pertaining to the philosophical or transcendental attitude, the root of which would be what Fichte calls intellectual intuition. The main advantage of this particular terminological distinction is that it allows for the ground of objective experience to lie outside that experience, namely within subjective experience, without thereby reducing such a ground to a fictional status. In other words, it allows for a richer sense of "reality" than one restricted to perceptual experience. In Kantian terms, it allows for noumenal as well as phenomenal reality.

In addition to sensible and intellectual intuition, Fichte also refers to what he calls "immediate consciousness," which he says is the "foundation of all consciousness," as well as "the subjective factor [das Subjective] in all consciousness". According to an interpretation developed by the present commentator, immediate consciousness would be termed a "non-experiential (subjective) consciousness" and is ultimately an awareness of our doing or initiating of activity. We can never become explicitly or experientially conscious of our doing or self-determining as such, precisely because as reflectively captured it is no longer active doing, but rather becomes something in repose, a mere concept of doing, a power, or what Fichte calls "determinability." The closest we can come to accessing immediate consciousness is through an intellectual intuition of the I's limited ideal activity, and this because the intellectual intuition is a real activity of the I, it is something done purposefully and willfully, it is an act of freedom or
spontaneity, and thus, as discussed previously, it is something of which the I has an "immediate {self-} feeling" 39. And it is precisely this feeling of spontaneity that accounts for the possibility of philosophical consciousness. In other words, it is because the philosopher freely and willfully attempts to reproduce the rationally deduced actions within her own consciousness that these normally unnoticed actions are able to be accessed by the philosopher. A further aspect of the present interpretation of Fichte’s *Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo* is the idea that an immediate consciousness of doing continually underlies and makes possible our reflective consciousness, and that even when this reflective consciousness is self-reverting, as it is in the *Tathandlung*, it is always one step removed from the immediate consciousness as such. Nevertheless, it is, I argue elsewhere, precisely this continual immediate consciousness or feeling of doing that grounds the I’s transcendental unity of apperception and allows for a unity between the empirical subject, the transcendental subject and the transcendental philosopher 40.

Our in-person thesis with respect to Fichte’s *Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo* thus primarily consists in the idea that the philosopher’s evidential verification of the results of reason’s deductions is an essential and indispensable part of the *Wissenschaftslehre* as a scientific and well-grounded philosophy. Furthermore, it is claimed that the philosopher is able to access these rationally deduced actions/states precisely because the rational deductions provide important clues, which guide the philosopher’s self-search, and because the philosopher is specifically interested in the truth of these deductions. The suggestion was also made that underlying both sensible and intellectual intuition, as forms of reflective consciousness, is a non-reflective immediate consciousness of doing or self-determining, a non-thetic awareness of what Fichte calls the I’s real activity, and that it is ultimately this immediate consciousness that makes possible both the actual I’s sensible intuition of real objects and the philosopher’s intellectual intuition of real actions/states of constituting consciousness. A more comprehensive study of the *Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo* would show that whereas the former occurs as a result of the actual I’s intellectual intuition of its limited ideal activity in sensible intuition, the latter occurs as a result of the philosopher’s intellectual intuition of the self-limited ideal activity in willing 41.

Our final task is now to bring Husserl back into the picture to determine what correspondences there may be between the in-personness of his philosophy and that of Fichte’s *Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo*. As mentioned previously, the in-personness of Husserl’s philosophy is centered on the idea of presence. The phenomenologist is prohibited from accepting or referring to anything that does not present itself in pure self-givenness to the consciousness of the phenomenologist. In Fichte’s philosophy this pure givenness is accessed by means of an act of abstraction, but “abstraction” here
does not mean a method of conceptual manipulation. Instead, abstraction refers to a self-manipulation of the philosopher's conscious attention. To abstract from something means to not pay attention to that something, to bracket or suspend that something as such. Recall how Fichte's students abstracted from the object of the sensible intuition and attended instead to the ideal activity in that sensible intuition. Perhaps we can understand Husserl's transcendental reduction as well in terms of such a modified notion of abstraction, namely that the phenomenologist would "abstract" from the presupposed being of the objects of experience and focus her attention instead upon the intentional structure of that experience. In both of these instances of abstractive consciousness the philosophers become, in Husserlian terms, "non-participant observers," that is, they no longer participate in the belief in the being of experienced objects. Thus there is introduced a specifically philosophical reflection, a higher-order reflection, which results in a transformed or "expanded" consciousness on the part of the philosopher. In Fichte's philosophy, for example, while the actual I is aware of itself only as active, which is why it attributes a limitation of its activity to a transcendent not-I, the philosopher is aware of the I as both active and as self-limited, which is why the philosopher understands the not-I as something that is merely meant as transcendent by the actual I. Similarly in Husserl's philosophy: while in the natural attitude the experiencing subject takes the object to be transcendent only, whereas the phenomenologist understands the object specifically as a transcendence in immanence. In other words, in both Fichte's and Husserl's philosophy the philosopher is aware of the experienced object in a richer way, namely as a constituted object. This then opens up a new realm of possible "experience" for the philosopher: the sphere of the activity of transcendental or constituting consciousness.

But what does this imply about the relation between the empirical subject, the transcendental subject, and the transcendental philosopher? The first point might be that the transcendental philosopher must not cease to be an experiencing subject if she is to access these activities of constituting consciousness within her own consciousness. In other words, the constituting activities must be ongoing if they are to be thus discoverable. A second point might follow from this, namely, that the unity between the transcendental and empirical subject is to be located precisely within the person of the transcendental philosopher, and further that the transcendental and empirical subject are nothing other than concretely abstracted aspects of the transcendental philosopher as an "experiencing" subject, "experience" understood here in a broader sense that would include both objective and subjective experience as discussed previously. And one might even want to make a third point, namely that we are all at least potential philosophers insofar as the activities of our constituting consciousness are theoretically accessible to anyone who is philosophically inclined, that is, who is interested
in truth and is willing to make the effort to expand his consciousness by means of a transcendental reduction.

According to the present interpretation of Fichtean and Husserlian methodology, the realm opened up by the transcendental reduction, that is, the sphere of transcendental consciousness and transcendental subjectivity, provides the grounding evidence for the assertions of transcendental philosophy. But the other essential aspect of transcendental philosophy is its claim to universality. In Fichte's philosophy the universality arises from the fact that the conditions for the possibility of the first principle are rationally deduced, which for Fichte means that they are generated in accord with the "basic law of reason," i.e., the principle of opposition. Universality pertains to the assertions of phenomenology, on the other hand, by grace of the eidetic reduction. Although Husserl does not isolate a basic law of reason as the modus operandi of the eidetic reduction, the process of ideation is nonetheless a rational process that is consonant with the methods of the mathematical sciences.

Such a use of reason in transcendental philosophy provides support for transcendental philosophy's claim to universality and necessity precisely because it allows transcendental philosophy to become an a priori science. But notice that to be in accord with the present interpretation of transcendental philosophy "a priori" would refer specifically to a judgment made independently of objective experience, but not necessarily independently of subjective or transcendental experience. And although there are certainly specific and important differences between Fichte's rational deduction and Husserl's eidetic analyses, the concern of both is ultimately to ascertain the structures of transcendental subjectivity or constituting consciousness, and thus to establish the a priori of objective experience.

In an important sense the in-person character of the philosophies of Fichte and Husserl contributes to the scientifi city of these philosophies, that is, insofar as both Husserl's ideation and the rational deductions and self-observations that comprise the double method of Fichte's Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo are repeatable, and thus testable, procedures of philosophical experimentation. Of course, they are repeatable only in-person by individual philosophers.

Regarding the question of whether the use of reason within transcendental philosophy is critically justified, it should be pointed out that because reason can never be thoroughly or exhaustively critiqued, precisely because it can never be put entirely out of play, it may be that some such double method that could provide an extra level of validation or an independent verification of what is obtained by means of rational thinking is the next best thing to the unachievable wholesale critique of reason. But in order for the validation to be truly independent of reason, it would need to be accomplished by means of something entirely other than thinking. In Fichte's Wissenschaftslehre
According to the present interpretation, this verification takes place ultimately by means of immediate consciousness or feeling, which is indeed something entirely other than thinking. Husserl, though, adamantly rejected any suggestion of a correspondence between evidence and feeling. But did Husserl understand feeling in the same way as Fichte? Is there not room in Husserl’s phenomenology for a feeling of intellectual compulsion or a feeling of one’s own freedom and self-activity, not as an accidental attachment to an experience of evidence, but as the hyletic core of such evidence?

Among the implications of the interpretation of transcendental philosophy that has been outlined in this study is the implication that the transcendental philosopher is essentially and necessarily a feeling subject, as well as a free subject, and that transcendental philosophy cannot be reduced to a process of rational thinking. But neither does transcendental philosophy need to reject reason in the name of an extreme critique. Rather, if the double-method interpretation is indeed a viable interpretation of transcendental philosophy, then it provides a way to recast the tension between empiricism and rationalism, that is to say, it offers a new understanding of the synthetic a priori.
Notes


References to Fichte’s *Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo* will give first the page number of the English translation, followed, if applicable, by the page reference from the Krause edition in square brackets, and then, if applicable, by the page reference to the *Gesamtausgabe* edition in braces.

Note: translated textual quotes that contain passages from both the Halle manuscript, which is contained in the *Gesamtausgabe* edition, and the Krause manuscript, will, in keeping with the translator’s convention, enclose the Halle additions in braces. The original source of unmixed passages can be determined by whether the German page reference is enclosed in brackets (Krause) or braces (Halle).


4 For the purposes of establishing correspondences between the philosophies of Husserl and Fichte, a comparative study of Husserl’s treatment of the kinesthetic and Fichte’s elaborate analyses of a “system of sensibility” in his *Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo* would be instrumental.

6 The idea of a process of constitution, either eidetic or perceptual, can only be fully elaborated in conjunction with an analysis of time and time-consciousness. According to Fichte, temporality is the “most important point of transcendental philosophy. {If you can only understand how time arises, then you will understand the origin of everything else}” (380 [192] [197]. And, as is well known, Husserl was highly preoccupied with developing an analysis of time consciousness and time constitution.

7 Fichte, Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo, p. 78 [4].

8 Fichte’s use of the term “genetic” is always associated with an explanation of the “how” of something, especially with how something comes about or originates. As Fichte says, to give a genetic account is to “proceed […] by self-observation of the ‘how’” (121 [33]), and a genetic understanding of objective representations, for example, means an “understanding of how it is that we come to assume that something external to us is given” (242 [103]), or we can have a “genetic understanding of the origin of our representations” (380 [192]). Fichte also says that “[w]e now wish to provide a genetic description of how we become conscious of something that has been produced” (386 [195]). “Genetic” for Fichte is also associated with letting something occur before our very eyes, “[i]n this way, {time arises before our very eyes:} we obtain a genetic understanding of the origin of time […]” (366 [185] [187]).

9 “Wissenschaftslehre” is the general name for Fichte’s philosophical project, rather than for any particular presentation of it.

10 For an excellent study of this topic see Claude Piché, “The Role of Feeling in Fichte’s Rejection of the Thing In Itself,” Idealistic Studies, 28 (1998), pp. 71-82.

11 J.G. Fichte, “First Introduction” to An Attempt at a New Presentation of the Wissenschaftslehre, in Introductions to the Wissenschaftslehre and Other Writings, Daniel Breazeale, ed. and trans., Indianapolis, IN and Cambridge, Hackett, 1994, p. 14.


14 Fichte, Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo, p. 119 [34].

15 Fichte, Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo, p. 110-1 [29].

16 Fichte, Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo, p. 110 [29].

17 Notice the implicit theory of intentionality here insofar as Fichte distinguishes between the object of consciousness, or noema in Husserlian terms, and the conscious activity or noesis. Fichte also explicitly maintains that “[w]henever a consciousness is assumed, an object of consciousness is also assumed” (152 [54]).
20 Within the confines of the current study it is impossible to elucidate all the steps and subtleties of Fichte’s deductions in the *Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo*. The present explication is thus limited to only some of the major steps that are directly relevant to our in-person thesis. For a much fuller explication of the entire argument of Fichte’s *Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo*, with a special emphasis on the role of feeling and a theory of the Body therein, the reader is invited to see my “Feeling One’s Way Through Fichte’s *Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo*,” Diss. University of Kentucky 1999.
23 There is at least one other meaning of "original limitation" in the *Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo*, which is associated with the pure will and the feeling of ought. See especially Chapter 13.
24 “Denkzwang.”
25 Fichte claims that even though ideal activity may be limited in intuition, “some ideal activity still remains nevertheless, and this is what produces intuition X or the intuition of oneself” (212 [85]). In other words, in the sensible intuition ideal activity is limited but not canceled.
26 Fichte, *Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo*, p. 199 [85].
27 Fichte, *Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo*, p. 218 [89].
28 Fichte, *Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo*, p. 218 [97].
29 “unmittelbares {selbst-} Gefühl,” Fichte, *Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo*, p. 211 [92] [85].
30 Fichte, *Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo*, p. 104 [25-6].
31 Fichte, *Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo*, p. 104 [23-4], [26], [23], respectively.
34 Fichte, *Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo*, p. 101 [21].
36 Fichte, *Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo*, p. 117 [33].
37 In a work in progress I interpret the noumenal of Kant’s transcendental philosophy precisely in terms of an immediate awareness of doing or practical activity.
38 Fichte, *Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo*, p. 128 [37]. See also p. 125 [38].
39 Feeling in general is described by Fichte as a form of immediate consciousness, and although he makes reference to many different instances of feeling, these tend to fall into two main groups, namely, feelings of activity and feelings of limitation. Unfortunately, within the confines of the present study it is not possible to engage in a discussion of the specific roles of feeling in Fichte’s *Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo*, even though there is indeed much to be gained by such an examination. If we were able to delve into a more detailed explication we would find, for example, Fichte distinguishing two feelings of activity, namely a feeling of the I’s self-determining by thinking, which Fichte describes as an “intelligible feeling” ([*intelligibles Gefühl*] (Fichte, *Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo*, p. 264 [127])) and a feeling of the I’s self-determining by sensuous energy or a sensible feeling. And we have already encountered in our explication of Chapter 8 two feelings of limitation, namely feeling A or a feeling of the limitation of the I’s real activity and feeling B or a feeling of the limitation of the I’s ideal activity. All of these feelings are analyzed and synthesized by the I in the process of the constitution of objects of experience.


41 A full understanding of this would require a discussion of the role of the *pure will* in the *Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo*, which unfortunately exceeds the parameters of the present study.

42 “Every intellectual experience, indeed every experience whatsoever, can be made into an object of pure seeing and apprehension while it is occurring. And in this act of seeing it is an absolute givenness.” Husserl, *The Idea of Phenomenology*, p. 24 (*Die Idee der Phänomenologie*, p.31).

43 It is interesting to note that by means of a “reduction” and an “abstraction” the philosopher’s consciousness is not decreased, but rather expanded and enriched.

44 Fichte borrows the principle of opposition from Salomon Maimon. For more information see translator’s footnote #27 in Fichte, *Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo*, p. 116.