

Fichte and/or Hegel.

Differences, Similarities, Possible Dialogues

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Situated in the constellation of post-Kantian philosophy, Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre* and Hegel's absolute idealism certainly belong to the most elaborated systematic conceptions of the epoch of Classical German Philosophy. Marking the bifurcation of two distinctive ways after Kant, up to our very present, Fichte and Hegel are often interpreted as two alternatives between which one would have to choose: Whilst, from a Fichtean perspective, Hegel's speculative philosophy may be rejected as a metaphysics that disregards the strict criteria of transcendental foundation, from a Hegelian perspective, Fichte's transcendental idealism may be seen as just a link in the genealogy between Kant and Hegel that, in a limited way, indeed may have its legitimacy, but that, at the same time, also should be overcome at the end. These settings, however, tend to oversee the much more complex ongoing dynamics and possible connections in the tension-filled process between Fichte and Hegel. One hereby should not only take into consideration that Hegel's critique of Fichte – as outlined starting from Hegel's *Difference between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy* (1801) and, as a critique of the Kantian-Fichtean conception of right and morality, the *Essay on Natural Law* (1802/03) – points to Fichte's early Jena period. A critical re-evaluation of Fichte's entire philosophical work, including his later Berlin period – with its more and more relevant emphasis on the terminology of the absolute instead of that of the I's subjectivity as well as on intersubjectivity – never has taken place from Hegel's part. It also is worth noting that Fichte's critique of objective idealism focuses on early Schelling (who, at this time, was accompanied by Hegel). However, from its part as well it has never had the opportunity to criticize Hegel's mature overall conception, which was developed only after Fichte's death in 1814. Notwithstanding its rejection of subjective idealism, it is characteristic for Hegel's absolute idealism that, in it, subjectivity and finitude – as ascribed to Fichte's position – are not just overcome, but play a constitutive role as a persistent moment without which speculative infinity could not be thought at all. Furthermore, Hegel's turn towards a speculative logic, with all the differences hereby at stake, indeed shares many motives and concerns with Fichte's particular conception of transcendental logic as the critique of a merely formal and static logic. And for both of them, in their practical philosophy, the overcoming of a formalist morality towards a concrete material ethics, combined with the systematic relevance of a philosophy of history, becomes more and more central after 1800. Even if a closer reading of this constellation, finally, must re-confirm a profound difference between the two conceptions – of Hegel's speculative logic and ethical conception *on the one hand*, of Fichte's transcendental philosophy and the pertinent role of the moral 'Ought' and a more utopian dimension in his practical philosophy (as harshly criticized by Hegel) *on the other hand* –, it surely can provide a much more specified, subtle, and complex picture. According to this, Fichte and

Hegel may not that much operate as the representatives of two fix positions but rather as the participants of an ongoing dynamic project – constitutive for the entire epoch of Classical German Philosophy and the common problems and questions it faces – full of tensions, convergences, and possible bridges

Against this background, the present special issue of the journal *Fichte-Studien* is interested in approaches that critically re-examine the connections between Fichte and Hegel both in their differences and in their similarities and possible dialogues.

Proposals for papers may include (but do not have to be limited to) the following topics:

- Re-examinations of Fichte's and Hegel's overall systematic conceptions and frameworks of transcendental idealism/logic and speculative idealism/logic as well as of the differences and/or similarities between specific portions and concepts in them – such as (transcendental/logical) subjectivity, the status of the absolute and the idea (resp. ideality) in both conceptions, or the understanding of system/systematicity, method, nature, or religion.
- Re-examinations of the status of reality/the real in both conceptions, resp. of the relationships between idealism and realism at stake.
- Comparisons between Fichte's and Hegel's practical philosophy with regard to their, in each case, constitutive systematic functions – i.e., the fundamental role of praxis – and both to their differences and common interests – such as the status of morality, ethics, practical reason, and ideality, the struggle for a material ethics and a philosophy of history in its systematic relevance, or the concerns with other practical issues such as the French Revolution and its contradictory process and global impacts (including, particularly, its impacts on Germany), economy, political acting/subjectivation, or the problem of war and peace.
- Settings that relate the process between Fichte and Hegel to other important figures of Classical German Philosophy – such as Kant, Schelling, or Jacobi.
- Propositions for how we should deal with the constellation between Fichte and Hegel with regard to our own present – both in its theoretical and practical debates and challenges – and for what actually could be the critical potential and relevance of this constellation.

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