

Chapter One

All consciousness is conditioned by our immediate consciousness of ourselves.

I.

With the permission of the reader, with whom it is our task to reach agreement, I will address him informally in the second person.

(1) You are undoubtedly able to think "I"; and insofar as you do this you will discover that your consciousness is internally determined in a specific manner and that you are thinking of only one thing: viz., precisely what you comprehend under the concept "I." It is this of which you are conscious, and when you think "I" you are not thinking of any of the other things of which you could otherwise well be thinking and of which you may have previously been thinking. — For the moment, I am unconcerned with whether you may have included more or less in the concept "I" than I have. Your concept certainly includes what I am concerned with, and this is enough for me.

(2) Instead of thinking of this particular, determinate [concept], you could also have thought of something else: of your table, for example, or of your walls or your window; moreover, you actually do think of these objects if I summon you to do so. You do this in response to a summons and in accordance with a concept of what you are supposed to think of (which, as you suppose, might just as easily have been some other object, or so I submit). Accordingly, while engaged in this act of thinking, in this movement of transition from thinking of the I to thinking of the table, the walls, etc., you take note of the activity and freedom that are involved therein. Your thinking is, for you, an acting. Have no fear that by admitting this you may be conceding to me anything you may later come to regret. I am speaking of nothing but the activity of which you become immediately conscious when you are in this state — and only insofar as you are conscious of this activity. If, however, you should find yourself to be conscious of no activity at all in this case (and many celebrated philosophers of our own day find them-

selves in just this situation), then let us part from each other in peace at this point, for you will be unable to understand anything I say from now on.

I am addressing myself to those of you who understand what I am saying concerning this point. Your thinking is an acting; and hence, when you are thinking of some specific thing, you are acting in some specific manner. In other words, the reason you are thinking of precisely this is because, in thinking, you have acted in precisely this way; and if, in engaging in this act of thinking, you had acted differently (if you had thought *differently*), then what you are thinking of would be something different (you would be thinking of *something different*). (272)

(3) You should now be thinking of something quite specific: namely, "I." This is a particular thought, and thus, according to the principle just enunciated, you must necessarily think in a particular manner in order to produce this thought. My task for you, intelligent reader, is this: You must now become truly and most sincerely conscious of how you proceed when you think "I." Since our concepts of the "I" may not be exactly the same, I must assist you in doing this.

While you were thinking of your table or your wall, you were, for yourself, the thinking subject engaged in this act of thinking, since you, as an intelligent reader, are of course aware of the activity involved in your own act of thinking. On the other hand, what was thought of in this act of thinking was, for you, not you yourself, but rather something that has to be distinguished from you. In short, in every concept of this type [i.e., in every concept of an object], the thinking subject and what is thought of are two distinct things, as you will certainly discover within your own consciousness. In contrast, when you think of yourself, then you are, for yourself, not only the thinking subject; you are also at the same time that of which you are thinking. In this case the subject and the object of thinking are supposed to be one and the same. The sort of acting in which you are engaged when you are thinking of yourself is supposed to turn back upon or "revert into" yourself, the thinking subject.¹

It follows from this that the concept of the I or the act of thinking of the I consists in the I's acting upon itself, and conversely, such an acting upon itself yields an act of thinking of the I and no other thinking whatsoever. You have just discovered within yourself the truth of the first of these claims and have conceded this to me. If you balk at the second claim and have any doubts about whether we are warranted in affirming the converse of our

1. "dein Handeln im Denken soll auf dich selbst, das Denkende, zurückgehen."

first assertion, then I will leave it up to you to make the following experiment: When your thinking turns back upon yourself, as the thinking subject, does this ever produce any concept other than that of yourself? Can you even think the possibility that some other concept could be produced in this way? — The concept of a self-reverting act of thinking and the concept of the I thus have exactly the same content.² The I is what posits itself,³ and it is nothing more than this. What posits itself is the I and nothing more. Nothing else but the I is produced by the act we have just described; and the I can be produced by no other possible act except the one described.

(273) You can also now appreciate the sense in which you were asked to think of the I. Linguistic signs have passed through the hands of thoughtlessness and have acquired some of its indeterminacy; one is therefore unable to make oneself sufficiently well understood simply by employing such signs. The only way in which a concept can be completely specified or determined is by indicating the act through which it comes into being: If you do what I say then you will think what I am thinking. This is the method that, without exception, we will be following in the course of our inquiry. — Though you may have included many things in your concept of the I which I have not (e.g., the concept of your own individuality, for this too is signified by the word “I”), you may henceforth put all of this aside. The only “I” that I am concerned with here is the one that comes into being through the sheer self-reverting act of your own thinking.

(4) The propositions that have been advanced are the immediate expression of the observation we have just made, and these propositions could arouse

2. “erschöpfen sich gegenseitig.” Literally: “mutually exhaust one another.”

3. “Das Ich ist das sich selbst Setzende.” The verb *setzen* (“to posit”) is a basic term in Fichte’s technical vocabulary. It is the most general term one can employ to refer to the *act of consciousness* itself. Any object of consciousness — whether real or imaginary, whether an external object or the I itself — is therefore “posited by the I.” Taken by itself, the verb *setzen* does not necessarily imply any “constitution” or “creation” of the object of consciousness; it simply signifies that the conscious subject — whether freely or under compulsion — “puts” or “places” something within its field of awareness. “To posit” something is thus an essential condition for “being conscious” at all (though it does not follow that we are, in fact, always explicitly aware of all of the acts of positing involved in, for example, our everyday consciousness of objects; on the contrary, Fichte contends that we are typically unaware of many of these acts of positing — which can thus be described as occurring “unconsciously” — and become aware of them only through philosophical reflection).

doubts only if one were to consider them to be anything more than the immediate expression of the same. I maintain that the I comes into being only through a self-reverting act of thinking, and when I say this I am not talking about anything except what can come into being purely by means of an act of thinking. All I am talking about here is what immediately appears within my consciousness whenever I think in the manner indicated, and if you too think in this manner, then this will immediately appear within your consciousness as well. In short, I am talking only about the concept of the I. Here I am not yet in the least concerned with any “being” the I may have apart from this concept. At the appropriate time we will see whether and to what extent one can talk about any being of this sort at all. In order to shield the reader against any possible doubts that might arise, and in order to protect him against the danger of seeing, in the course of this inquiry, a previously conceded proposition subsequently employed in some sense that he did not wish to concede, I will amend the propositions just established (viz., “the I is an act of self-positing” and other similar propositions) by adding the phrase “for the I.”

At the same time I can also explain the reason for the reader’s concern about perhaps having conceded too much. But I will do so only if the reader will promise not to allow himself to become distracted thereby, for this entire remark is a merely incidental one which really does not belong here, and I add it merely in order to avoid leaving any point obscure, even for a moment. — It was asserted that your I comes into being only through the reversion of your own act of thinking back upon itself. You probably harbor in some small corner of your soul the following objection to this claim: Either, “I am supposed to think, but before I can think I have to exist”; or, “I am supposed to think *of myself*, to direct my thinking back upon myself, but whatever I am supposed to think of or to turn my attention back upon must first exist before it can be thought of or become the object of an act of reverting.” In both of these cases, you postulate an existence of yourself that is independent of and presupposed by the thinking and being-thought-of of yourself.⁴ In the former case, you postulate the independent existence of yourself as the *thinking subject*; in the latter, the independent existence of yourself as *what is to be thought of*. In connection with this objection, first simply answer for me the following question: Who is it that claims that you must have existed prior to your own act of thinking? It is undoubtedly you yourself who make this claim, and when you make such a claim you are undoubtedly engaging in an act of thinking. Furthermore, as you will also

4. “postulirst du ein von dem Denken und Gedachtseyn deiner selbst unabhängiges, und demselben vorauszusetzendes, *Daseyn* deiner selbst.”

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claim, and as I am only too ready to concede, this is a necessary act of thinking, one that forces itself upon you in this context. One nevertheless trusts that it is only insofar as and only inasmuch as you think about this existence that has to be presupposed that you possess any knowledge of it. It follows that this existence of the I is also nothing more than a posited being of yourself, that is, a being that you yourself have posited. If we examine it closely enough, therefore, we will find that the fact with which you have confronted us amounts to no more than this: *In addition to the act of self-positing which you have at present raised to clear consciousness, you must also think of this act as preceded by another act of self-positing, one that is not accompanied by any clear consciousness, but to which the former act refers and by means of which it is conditioned.* Until such time as I have had a chance to explain to you the fecund law in accordance with which this occurs, you can avoid becoming misled by the fact to which you have called attention if you will keep in mind that it asserts no more than what has just been stated.

II.

Let us now shift to a higher speculative standpoint.

(1) "Think of yourself, and pay attention to how you do this": This was my first request. You had to attend to yourself in order to understand what I was saying (since I was discussing something that could exist only within yourself) and in order to discover within your own experience the truth of what I said to you. This attentiveness to ourselves in this act was the subjective element common to us both. What you paid attention to was the manner in which you went about thinking of yourself, which did not differ from the manner I went about thinking of myself; and this was the object of our investigation, the objective element common to us both.

Now, however, I say to you: pay attention to your own act of attending to your act of self-positing. Attend to what you yourself did in the inquiry you have just completed and note how you managed to pay attention to yourself. What constituted the subjective element in the previous inquiry must be made into the object of the new inquiry we are now beginning.⁵

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(2) The point that concerns me here is not all that easy to grasp. Yet if one fails to grasp it, then one will fail to grasp anything, since my entire theory is based upon this. Perhaps, therefore, the reader will allow me to guide

5. As a comparison with § 1 of Fichte's lectures on "Foundations of Transcendental Philosophy (*Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo*)" reveals, Fichte is here simply

him through the entrance and to place him just as close as possible to what he is supposed to observe.

When you are conscious of any object whatsoever — of the wall over there, let us say — then, as you just conceded, what you are really conscious of is your own act of thinking of this wall, and only insofar as you are conscious of this act of thinking is any consciousness of this wall possible. (275) In order for you to be conscious of your own thinking, however, you must be conscious of yourself. — You say that you are conscious of yourself; in saying this, you necessarily distinguish your thinking I from the I that is thought of in the act of thinking the I. In order for you to be able to do this, however, the thinking subject within this act of thinking must, in turn, be the object of a higher act of thinking, for otherwise it could not be an object of consciousness. At the same time, you also obtain thereby a new subject, one that is conscious of what was previously the being of self-

repeating the classroom instructions he was accustomed to give to his own students. Hendrik Steffens, who was present as a student for some of Fichte's lectures during the winter semester of 1798/99, included in his memoirs the following account of the listeners' puzzled reaction to these same instructions:

"I cannot deny that I was awed by my first glimpse of this short, stocky man with a sharp, commanding tongue. Even his manner of speaking was sharp and cutting. Well aware of his listeners' weaknesses, he tried in every way to make himself understood by them. He made every effort to provide proofs for everything he said; but his speech still seemed commanding, as if he wanted to dispel any possible doubts by means of an unconditional order. 'Gentlemen,' he would say, 'collect your thoughts and enter into yourselves. We are not at all concerned now with anything external, but only with ourselves.' And, just as he requested, his listeners really seemed to be concentrating upon themselves. Some of them shifted their position and sat up straight, while others slumped with downcast eyes. But it was obvious that they were all waiting with great suspense for what was supposed to come next. Then Fichte would continue: 'Gentlemen, think about the wall.' And as I saw, they really did think about the wall, and everyone seemed able to do so with success. 'Have you thought about the wall?' Fichte would ask. 'Now, gentlemen, think about whoever it was that thought about the wall.' The obvious confusion and embarrassment provoked by this request was extraordinary. In fact, many of the listeners seemed quite unable to discover anywhere whoever it was that had thought about the wall. I now understood how young men who had stumbled in such a memorable manner over their first attempt at speculation might have fallen into a very dangerous frame of mind as a result of their further efforts in this direction. Fichte's delivery was excellent: precise and clear. I was completely swept away by the topic, and I had to admit that I had never before heard a lecture like that one." Quoted in Erich Fuchs, ed., *Fichte im Gespräch*, vol. 2 (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1980), p. 8.

consciousness.⁶ I now repeat this same argument over and over again, as before, and once we have embarked upon such a series of inferences you will never be able to point to a place where we should stop. Accordingly, we will always require, for every consciousness, another consciousness, one that takes the former as its object, and so on, forever. In this way, therefore, we will never arrive at a point where we will be able to assume the existence of any actual consciousness. — You are conscious of yourself as an object of consciousness only insofar as you are conscious of yourself as the conscious subject; but then this conscious subject becomes, in turn, an object of consciousness, and you must then, once again, become conscious of yourself as the subject who is conscious of this object of consciousness — and so on, *ad infinitum*. How could you ever arrive at any original consciousness in this way?

527 In short, consciousness simply cannot be accounted for in this way. Once again, what was the gist of the line of reasoning we just pursued, and what is the real reason why the nature of consciousness could not be grasped in this way? The gist of the argument was as follows: I can be conscious of any object only on the condition that I am also conscious of myself, that is, of the conscious subject. This proposition is incontrovertible. — It was, however, further claimed that, within my self-consciousness, I am an object for myself and that what held true in the previous case also holds true of the subject that is conscious of this object: this subject too becomes an object, and thus a new subject is required, and so on *ad infinitum*. In every consciousness, therefore, the subject and the object were separated from each other and each was treated as distinct. This is why it proved impossible for us to comprehend consciousness in the above manner.

(276) Yet consciousness does exist. Hence, what was just claimed concerning it must be false, and this means that the opposite of this claim is true; that is to say, there is a type of consciousness in which what is subjective and what is objective cannot be separated from each other at all, but are absolutely one and the same. This, accordingly, would be the type of consciousness that is required in order to explain consciousness at all. Let us now, without any further elaboration of this point, return straightaway to our inquiry.

(3) When you did as we asked and thought, first of objects that are supposed to lie outside of you, and then of yourself, you undoubtedly knew

6. "das vorhin das Selbstbewusstsein war." I.e., one's previous self-consciousness now becomes the object of a new higher-level act of reflection, which thus requires the positing of a new subject.

that you were thinking, what you were thinking, and how you were thinking. You must have known these things, for we were able to discuss this with one another, as indeed we have just done.

How then did you manage to obtain this consciousness of your own thinking? "I knew it immediately," you will reply. "My consciousness of my own thinking is not, as it were, an accidental feature of my thinking, an additional something that is posited only afterwards and subsequently connected with my thinking; instead, such consciousness is inseparable from thinking." — You will and must answer my question in this way, since you are quite unable to think of your thinking without having any consciousness of it.

Thus, from the very start, we could have discovered the type of consciousness we were just seeking, a consciousness in which what is subjective and what is objective are immediately united. The consciousness in question is our consciousness of our own thinking. — Hence you are immediately conscious of your own thinking. But how do you represent this to yourself? Evidently, you can do this only in the following way: Your inner activity, which is directed at something outside of you (viz., at the object you are thinking about), is, at the same time, directed within and at itself. According to what was said above, however, self-reverting activity is what generates the I. Accordingly, you were conscious of yourself in your own act of thinking, and this self-consciousness was precisely the same as your immediate consciousness of your own thinking; and this is true whether you were thinking of some object or were thinking of yourself. — Self-consciousness is therefore immediate; what is subjective and what is objective are inseparably united within self-consciousness and are absolutely one and the same.

The scientific name for such an immediate consciousness is "intuition,"⁷ which is the name by which we wish to designate it as well. The intuition we are now discussing is an *act of self-positing as positing* (that is, as positing anything "objective" whatsoever, which can also be I myself, considered as a mere object); by no means, however, is it a mere *act of positing*, for then we would find ourselves once again entangled in the previously indicated impossibility of explaining consciousness. As far as I am concerned, everything depends upon one's understanding and being convinced of this point, which constitutes the very foundation of the entire system to be presented here.

7. See Kant's definition of "intuition" as the mode of cognition [*Erkenntnis*] in which "a cognition is immediately related to its object" (KRV, A19/B33).

(277) All possible consciousness, as something objective for a subject, presupposes an immediate consciousness in which what is subjective and what is objective are simply one and the same. Otherwise, consciousness is simply incomprehensible. Unless one has grasped the subject and the object in their unity right from the start, one will forever seek in vain to discover any bond between them. For this reason, any philosophy that does not begin at the point where the subject and the object are united will necessarily be superficial and incomplete; it will be unable to explain what it is supposed to explain, and hence it will be no philosophy at all.

This immediate consciousness is the intuition of the I just described. The I necessarily posits itself within this intuition and is thus at once what is subjective and what is objective. All other consciousness is connected to and mediated by this immediate consciousness, and only through this connection with immediate consciousness does it become consciousness at all. (278) Immediate consciousness alone is unmediated and unconditioned by anything else. It is absolutely possible and is quite simply necessary if any other consciousness is to occur. — The I should not be considered as a mere subject, which is how it has nearly always been considered until now; instead, it should be considered as a subject-object in the sense indicated.

The sole type of being of the I with which we are here concerned is the being it possesses within the self-intuition we have now described; or, more rigorously expressed, the being of the I with which we are concerned is the being of this intuition itself. I am this intuition and nothing more whatsoever, and this intuition itself is I. This act of self-positing is not supposed to produce an I that, so to speak, exists as a thing in itself and continues to exist independently of consciousness: Such a claim would undoubtedly be the greatest of all absurdities. Nor does this intuition presuppose an existence of the I as an (intuiting) thing, independent of consciousness. Indeed, in my opinion, such a claim would be no less absurd than the previous one; though, of course, one should not say this, since the most famous philosophers of our philosophical century subscribe to this opinion. The reason I maintain that no such existence [of the I] has to be presupposed is as follows: If you cannot talk about anything of which you are not conscious, and if, however, everything of which you are conscious is conditioned by the self-consciousness here indicated, then you cannot turn around and allow this self-consciousness to be conditioned by some determinate object of which you are conscious: viz., the alleged existence of the I apart from all intuiting and thinking. Either you must admit that you are here speaking of something without knowing anything about it (which you are hardly likely to do), or else you must deny that all other consciousness is conditioned by the self-

consciousness in question (which, if you have understood me at all, you will be quite unable to do). — At this point, therefore, it also becomes obvious that, through our very first proposition, one has unavoidably adopted the standpoint of transcendental idealism — not just for the case in question, but for all possible cases — and that understanding this proposition is exactly the same as being convinced of the truth of transcendental idealism. 530

The intellect thus intuits itself only as an intellect, or as a pure intellect; and it is precisely this self-intuition that constitutes its essential nature. (278) Accordingly, in the event that there might turn out to be some other type of intuition as well, we are entitled to designate the type of intuition we have been discussing here “intellectual intuition,” in order to distinguish it from any other type of intuition. — Instead of “intellect,” I prefer to use the term “I-hood,” because, for anyone capable of the least bit of attentiveness, this term indicates, in the most direct way, the self-reverting of activity.*

* The word “self” has frequently been employed of late to designate this same concept.⁸ If my derivation is correct, all the words in the family to which the word “self” belongs (e.g., “self-same,” “the same,” etc.) signify a relationship to something that has already been posited, though only insofar as it has been posited through its mere concept. If what has been posited is I, then the word “self” is formed. Hence the word “self” presupposes the concept of the I, and everything that is thought to be absolute within the former is borrowed from the concept of the latter. Perhaps in a popular exposition the term “self” is more convenient, because it adds a special emphasis to the concept of the I as such, which — after all — is always obscurely thought of along with the word “self.” Such an emphasis may well be required by the ordinary reader, but it seems to me that in a scientific exposition one should employ the term that designates this concept in the most immediate and proper way. — In a recently published work intended for the public at large, however, the concept of the self is distinguished from and opposed to that of the I, and a sublime theory is derived from the former and a detestable one is derived from the latter, even though the author of the work in question must know, at least as a historical fact, that the word “I” has also been taken in a quite different sense and that a system in which there is no place at all for the detestable theory in question is currently being erected upon the concept to which the word “I” (taken in this latter sense) refers. It is simply incomprehensible what purpose is supposed to be served by this — so long, that is, as one neither wishes nor is able to assume any hostile intent on the part of the author in question.

8. This appears to be a specific allusion to a comment by Johann Christian Gottlieb Schaumman (1768–1821), professor of philosophy at Gießen, that the word *self* “seems to me to be purer and more precise than ‘I.’” See Schaumman’s *Versuch eines neuen Systems des natürlichen Rechts* (1796), p. 133.

9. “Z.B. Selbiger, u.s.w. derselbe, u.s.w.” (“self” = *Selbst*.)

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III.

Let us now direct our attention to yet another circumstance involved in observing the activity we have been asked to perform. What follows, however, should be treated as no more than a provisional remark from which nothing will be immediately inferred and the implications of which will become apparent only later. Nevertheless, we cannot let this opportunity pass without adding the following remark.

(279) You discovered yourself to be active both in the act of representing an object and in the act of representing yourself. Now look again very carefully at what occurred within you when you entertained the representation of this activity. Activity is "agility" or inner movement; the mind here tears itself away from something absolutely opposed [to activity] — a description that is by no means intended, as it were, to make comprehensible what is incomprehensible,¹⁰ but is instead designed to call attention more forcibly to an intuition that is necessarily present within everyone. — This agility is intuited as a *process by means of which the active force wrenches itself away from a state of repose*, and it can be intuited in no other way. And if you actually accomplished what we asked you to do, this is in fact how you intuited this agility.

In compliance with my summons, you thought of your table, your wall, etc.; and after you had succeeded in actively producing within yourself the thoughts of these objects, you then remained caught up in a state of peaceful and unchanging contemplation of them (*obtutu haerebas fixus in illo*,¹¹ as the poet says). Next I asked you to think of yourself and to take special note of the fact that this act of thinking is a kind of doing. In order to do this, you had to tear yourself away from your state of contemplative repose; that is to say, you had to tear yourself away from that determinacy of your thinking and determine your thinking differently. Moreover, you were able to notice that you were active only insofar as you took note of this act of wrenching yourself away and this act of altering the determinacy in question. I can do no more here than appeal to your own inner intuition; I cannot exter-

10. "Thätigkeit ist Agilität, innere Bewegung; der Geist reisst sich selbst über absolut entgegengesetzte hinweg; — durch welche Beschreibung keinesweges etwa das unbegreifliche begreiflich gemacht." (Note: *unbegreifliche* = "incomprehensible," in the sense of "incapable of being discursively grasped by means of concepts.")

11. "You were clinging transfixed in that gaze." Freely quoted from Virgil, *Aeneid*, I, 495.

nally demonstrate to you something that can exist only within you.

The result of attending to oneself in the requested manner would be this: One discovers oneself to be active only insofar as one opposes to this activity a state of repose (in which the inner force is arrested and becomes fixed). (We should mention in passing that the converse of this proposition is true as well: One cannot become conscious of a state of repose unless one posits an activity. Activity is nothing apart from repose, and vice versa.)¹ Indeed, this proposition is universally true and will later be established in its universal validity: viz., that no matter what is being determined, all determination occurs by means of opposition. Here, however, we are concerned only with the individual case before us.)

What then was the particular determinacy of your thinking which, as a state of repose, immediately preceded that activity by virtue of which you thought of yourself? Or, more precisely, what determinacy was immediately united with that activity, in such a way that you could not perceive the one without perceiving the other? — In order to indicate the action you were supposed to perform, I asked you to think of *yourself*, and you were able to understand me without any further ado. Accordingly, you knew the meaning of the term "I." But you did not have to know, and I assume that you did not know, that the thought of the I is a thought that comes into being by means of a reversion of activity upon itself. This is something you first had to learn. Yet, according to what we have already said, the I is nothing but a self-reverting acting, and a self-reverting acting is the I. How then could you have been acquainted with the I without also being acquainted with the activity by means of which the I arises? This is possible only as follows: When you understood the word "I," you discovered *yourself* (i.e., *your acting as an intellect*) to be determined in a particular manner, yet you did not explicitly recognize what was determinate in this case as *an acting*. Instead, you recognized it only as a *determinacy* or a *state of repose*, without actually knowing or even inquiring into the *origin* of this determinacy of your consciousness. In short, when you understood me, this determinacy was immediately present. This is why you understood me and were able to give an appropriate direction to the activity that I summoned you to perform. The determinacy of your thinking produced through thinking of yourself¹² therefore was and necessarily had to be that state of repose from which you wrenched yourself into activity.

This may be expressed more clearly as follows: I asked you to "think of

12. "Die Bestimmtheit deines Denkens durch das Denken deiner selbst."

yourself," and when you understood this last word you also engaged — *in the very act of understanding it* — in that self-reverting activity that produces the thought of the I. But you accomplished this without realizing what you were doing, for you were not paying any special attention to this. And this was the origin of what you discovered within your own consciousness. I then asked you to pay attention to how you were able to accomplish this. You then engaged once again in the same activity in which you had engaged previously, but this time you did so with attentiveness and consciousness.

Inner activity, grasped in its state of repose, is generally called a "concept." Consequently, what was necessarily united with the intuition of the I was the concept of the I; and without this concept any consciousness of the I would have remained impossible, for it is this concept that first completes and comprises consciousness.

A concept is never anything other than the very activity of intuiting — simply grasped, not as agility, but as a state of repose and determinacy. This is true of the concept of the I as well. The concept of the I is the self-reverting activity, grasped as something stable and enduring; thus it is in this way that the I as active and the I as the object of my activity coincide.

(281) Nothing is present within ordinary consciousness but concepts; by no means are intuitions as such ever encountered there, despite the fact that concepts arise only by means of intuitions (though this occurs without any consciousness on our part). Only through freedom can one lift oneself to a consciousness of intuition, as has just been done in the case of the I. Every conscious intuition, moreover, is related to a concept, which indicates the particular direction freedom has to take. This explains how, in every case, as in the particular case we have been examining, the object of intuition can be said to exist prior to the intuition itself. The object in question is precisely the concept. From this discussion, one can see that the concept is nothing but the intuition itself, grasped as a state of repose and not as such, i.e., not as an activity.¹³

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13. With the (unfulfilled) promise "(To be continued in future issues)," the fourth and final published installment of *An Attempt at a New Presentation of the Wissenschaftslehre* concludes at this point.

Review of the Journal for Truth