

STUDIES IN GERMAN IDEALISM

**GERMAN IDEALISM  
AND THE PROBLEM  
OF KNOWLEDGE**

by Nectarios G. Limnatis

 Springer

GERMAN IDEALISM AND THE PROBLEM OF KNOWLEDGE:  
KANT, FICHTE, SCHELLING, AND HEGEL

# Studies in German Idealism

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by

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For Monika

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## QUOTATION METHOD AND ABBREVIATIONS

### Kant

Kant's works are cited in the text from the edition Immanuel Kant, *Werke in 12 Bänden*, hrsg. v. Wilhelm Weischedel (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp 1968). References to the German text pertain to the standard A and B pagination, except from the "*New Elucidation ...*" which is cited by page from vol. I, pp. 401–509. English translations (see bibliography) have been modified where necessary. I have used the following abbreviations:

- NE = *Neue Erhellung der ersten Grundsätze metaphysischer Erkenntnis (Principiorum Primorum Congitionis Methaphysicae Nova Dilucidatio)* (Vol. I, pp. 402–509).
- ATT = *Versuch den Begriff der negative Größen in die Weltweisheit einzuführen* (Vol. II, pp. 775–820).
- CPR = *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (Vols. III–IV).
- PFM = *Prolegomena zu einer jeden künftigen Metaphysik, die als Wissenschaft wird auftreten können* (Vol. V, pp. 109–264).
- JL = *Logik* (Vol. VI, pp. 417–582).
- WP = *Welches sind die Wirklichen Fortschritte, die die Metaphysik seit Leibnitzens und Wolf's Zeiten in Deutschland gemacht hat?* (Vol. VI, pp. 583–676).
- MA = *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Naturwissenschaft* (Vol. IX, pp. 7–135).
- CJ = *Kritik der Urteilskraft* (Vol. X).
- TP1 = *Theoretical Philosophy 1755–70*, translated and edited by David Walford in collaboration with Ralf Meerbote (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).
- TP2 = *Theoretical Philosophy after 1781*, translated by Henry Allison, Michael Friedman, Gary Hatfield, and Peter

- Heath; ed. by Henry Allison and Peter Heath (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
- LL = *Lectures on Logic*, translated and edited by J. Michael Young (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

### Fichte

Fichte's works are cited in the text from the edition *Fichtes Werke in 11 Bd.*, hrsg. v. I.H. Fichte (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1971). Pages from the corresponding English translations are also indicated unless these reproduce the original German pagination. Translations have been modified where necessary. I have used the following abbreviations:

- UBW = *Über den Begriff der Wissenschaftslehre oder der sogenannten Philosophie* (1794, 1798<sup>2</sup>), (Vol. 1, pp. 29–81).
- GGW = *Grundlage der gesamten Wissenschaftslehre* (1794, 1802<sup>2</sup>), (Vol. 1, pp. 83–328).
- GEW = *Grundriss des Eigentümlichen der Wissenschaftslehre, in Rücksicht auf das theoretische Vermögen* (1795, 1802), (Vol. 1, pp. 329–411).
- EEW = *Erste Einleitung in die Wissenschaftslehre* (1797), (Vol. 1, pp. 417–49).
- ZEW = *Zweite Einleitung in die Wissenschaftslehre für Leser, die schon ein philosophisches System haben* (1797), (Vol. 1, pp. 451–518).
- BBW = *Bericht über den Begriff der Wissenschaftslehre und die bisherigen Schicksale derselben* (1806), (Vol. VIII, pp. 361–407).
- EVW = *Einleitungsvorlesungen in die Wissenschaftslehre* (1813), (Vol. IX, pp. 1–102).
- UVL = *Über das Verhältniß der Logik zur Philosophie oder transscendentale Logik* (1812), (Vol. IX, pp. 103–400).
- TB = *Die Tatsachen des Bewußtseins* (1813), (Vol. IX, pp. 401–574).
- RA = *Review of Aenesidemus* (1792), in Giovanni, G. di, Harris H.S. *Texts in the Development of Post-Kantian Idealism* (New York: SUNY, 1985), pp. 136–58.
- FIS = *First Introduction to the Science of Knowledge*, In J.G. Fichte, *Science of Knowledge with the First and Second Introductions*, edited and translated by P. Heath and J. Lachs. Cambridge: (Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 1–28.

- SIS = *Second Introduction to the Science of Knowledge*, *ibid.*, pp. 29–86.
- FES = *Foundations of the Entire Science of Knowledge*, *ibid.*, pp. 87–286.
- CCW = *Concerning the Concept of the Wissenschaftslehre or, of So-called “Philosophy”*. In: *Fichte. Early Philosophical Writings*, translated and edited by D. Breazeale (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), pp. 94–135.
- ODC = *Outline of the distinctive character of the Wissenschaftslehre with respect to the Theoretical Faculty*, *ibid.*, pp. 233–306.

### Schelling

Schelling's works are cited in the text from the standard edition F.W.J. Schelling, *Sämtliche Werke in 14 Bänden*, hrsg. v. K.F.A. Schelling (Stuttgart and Augsburg: J.G. Cotta, 1856–61). I have used the available English translations (see bibliography) which reproduce the original German pagination. The only exception is A. Bowie's translation of *Zur Geschichte der neueren Philosophie*. Pages from this translation are therefore indicated in my text as well. English translations have been modified where necessary. I have used the following abbreviations:

- UM = *Ueber die Möglichkeit einer Form des Philosophie überhaupt* (Vol. 1: 85–148).
- IP = *Vom Ich als Prinzip der Philosophie oder über das Unbedingte im menschlichen Wissen* (Vol. 1: 149–244).
- PB = *Philosophische Briefe über Dogmatismus und Kritizismus* (Vol. 1: 281–342).
- AE = *Abhandlungen zur Erläuterung des Idealismus der Wissenschaftslehre* (Vol. 1: 343–462).
- IPN = *Ideen zu einer Philosophie der Natur* (Vol. 2: 1–344).
- STI = *System des Transzendentalen Idealismus* (Vol. 3: 327–634).
- DMS = *Darstellung meines Systems der Philosophie* (Vol. 4: 105–212).
- FD = *Fernere Darstellungen aus dem System der Philosophie* (Vol. 4: 333–510).
- DWV = *Aus: Darstellung der Wahren Verhältnisses der Naturphilosophie in der verbesserten Fichteschen Lehre* (Vol. 7: 50–65).

- AEN = *Aphorismen zur Einleitung in die Naturphilosophie* (7: 140–97).  
 PU = *Philosophische Untersuchungen über das Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit* (Vol. 7:331–416).  
 W = *Die Weltalter. Erstes Buch* (Vol. 8: 195–344).  
 UZ = *Ueber den Zusammenhang der Natur mit der Geisterwelt* (Vol. 9: 1–110).  
 GNP = *Zur Geschichte der neueren Philosophie* (Vol. 10: 1–200).

## Hegel

German citations of Hegel are cited in the text from the edition Hegel G.W.F. *Werke in 20 Bänden*, Redaktion Eva Moldenhauer und Karl Markus Michel (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1970). Where available, references to English translations (modified when necessary) are also provided in the text as English texts do not reproduce the German pagination. I have used the following abbreviations:

- DZ = *Differenz des Fichte'schen und Schelling'schen Systems der Philosophie* (Vol. 2: 8–138).  
 VSP = *Verhältnis des Skeptizismus zur Philosophie. Darstellung seiner verschiedenen Modifikationen und Vergleichung des neuesten mit dem Alten* (Vol. 2: 213–76).  
 GW = *Glauben und Wissen* (Vol. 2: 287–434).  
 WDA = *Wer denkt abstrakt?* (Vol. 2: 575–81).  
 PG = *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (Vol. 3).  
 WL1 = *Wissenschaft der Logik, I* (Vol. 5)  
 WL2 = *Wissenschaft der Logik II* (Vol. 5).  
 R = *Philosophie des Rechts* (Vol. 7).  
 ENZ1 = *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften I* (Vol. 8).  
 ENZ2 = *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften II* (Vol. 9).  
 ENZ3 = *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften III* (Vol. 10).  
 RI = *Rezension: Der Idealrealismus. Erster Teil. Von A.L.J. Ohlert* (Vol. 11: 467–86).  
 VGP1 = *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie I* (Vol. 18).  
 VGP2 = *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie II* (Vol. 19).  
 VGP3 = *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie III* (Vol. 20).

- A: = *Who thinks abstractly?* in Kaufmann W. *Hegel. Reinterpretation, Texts, and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1965), pp. 460–65.
- Diff: = *The Difference between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy*, trans. H.S. Harris and W. Cerf (Albany: SUNY Press, 1977).
- EL: = *The Encyclopaedia Logic*, trans. T.F. Geraets, W.A. Suchting, H.S. Harris, (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1991).
- ETR: = *Early Theological Writings*. Trans. T.M. Knox (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948).
- HP1-3: = *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*. 3 Vols. Trans. E.S. Haldane., F.H. Simpson (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995).
- LT: = *Hegel: The Letters*, trans. C. Butler and C. Seiler (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984).
- PN: = *Hegel's Philosophy of Nature*, ed. and trans. M.J. Petry. 3 Vols. (New York: Humanities Press, 1970).
- PM: = *Hegel's Philosophy of Mind*, trans. W. Wallace, together with the Zusatz in Baumann's text (1845) trans. by A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971).
- PR: = *Hegel's Philosophy of Right*. Trans. T. M. Knox (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952).
- PS: = *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*. Trans. A.V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977).
- RSP: = *On the Relationship of Skepticism to Philosophy*, trans. H.S. Harris, in Giovanni G. di, Harris H.S. *Between Kant and Hegel: Texts in the Development of German Idealism* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1985).
- SL: = *Hegel's Science of Logic*, trans. A.V. Miller (London: Allen & Unwin, 1969).

## INTRODUCTION

The movement of German idealism culminates in the revelation of the reflective boundaries of theoretical knowledge. The history of the most important intellectual developments thereafter could be described, following a recent remark of Jürgen Habermas, as a history of the de-transcendentalization of the cognizing subject.<sup>1</sup> In this context, the epistemological interpretation proposed in this book must be specifically understood. Examining the problem of knowledge in the development of German idealism, it aims not at an epistemology of the Cartesian type, and even less at a formal logical analysis of knowledge which lacks the reflective element of the devices it employs as “the search for the immutable structures within which knowledge, life, and culture must be contained.”<sup>2</sup> These “structures” do not only condition the process of knowledge, they are themselves conditioned. There is thus an unsurpassable circle in this process, a circle which German idealism brings to the surface and profoundly scrutinizes.

Therefore, the task is to reflectively account for the historical horizons in which cognition arises (being ultimately thereupon dependent), instead of searching for an ultimate Archimedean point for its deduction. Rather than searching for inexplicably transcendental concepts, this argument points to their determination from within a given *Lebenswelt*. It does not renounce but rather redefines objectivity, by seeing the subject as a coming-to-know-itself totality.<sup>3</sup>

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1 J. Habermas, *Wahrheit und Rechtfertigung. Philosophische Aufsätze* (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1999), p. 186.

2 R. Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1979), p. 162.

3 See in Habermas: “Dieses Subjekt wird als Ein und Alles, als Totalität gedacht, die “nichts außer sich haben kann.” J. Habermas, *Wahrheit und Rechtfertigung*, p. 222.