

Naturalism also contribute their mite to the area of methodology in modern education.

The education of the present times can only be summed up as one which the entire context of any pupil's educative experience is changing fast and constantly. The very idea of a complete preparation of life is becoming illusory, and education can only be of conditional value in the light of kaleidoscopic new situations (Thakur, 1977: 64). New items of learning claim priority, new constellations of subjects provide new insights and the primacy claimed by science and technology is already being challenged by the human and social sciences. In such a scenario Eclecticism, leading to an emergent synthesis, alone can guide us and form the basis of our education system.

#### NOTES AND REFERENCES

- Bigge, Morris L.: *Positive Relativism—An Emergent Educational Philosophy*, New York, Harper Row Publishers, 1971.
- Durant, Will: *The Story of Philosophy*, London, Ernest Benn Limited, 1948.
- Hocking, William Ernest: *Types of Philosophy*, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1939.
- O'Connor, D.J.: *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967.
- Power, Edward J.: *Main Currents in the History of Education*, New York, McGraw Hill Book Company, 1970.
- Radhakrishnan, S.: *Eastern Religion and Western Thought*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Ross, James S.: *Groundwork of Educational Theory*, Kolkata, Oxford University Press, 1972.
- Thakur, A.S.: *The Philosophical Foundations of Education*, New Delhi, National Publishing House, 1977.
- Whitehead, A.N.: 'Dialogues', quoted in *Bloomsbury Keys Quotations*, ed. F. Alexander, Bangalore, Panther Publishers, 1997.

## Fichte—The Forgotten Philosopher

DAYA KRISHNA

Jaipur

Fichte's *Science of Knowledge* was published in 1789 in Leipzig, Germany, just eight years after the second edition of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* was published in that country. Yet, while Kant's work is known all the world over, Fichte's is still an unknown quantity, hardly known even amongst the cognoscenti who are supposed to be familiar with western philosophy in general and modern philosophy in particular.

It is time that this deficiency is remedied, and the recent new translation of the work by Peter Heath and John Lachs and published by the Cambridge University Press, 1982, provides us just the opportunity for doing that.

Fichte's is a strange work, perhaps unique in the history of philosophy as it takes us, step-by-step, through the process by which 'thinking' reaches the conclusion in a dialectically developing manner, reminding us both of Plato in the way that Socrates develops his argument in the *Dialogues* and of the manner in which Hegel unfolds the progress of Reason in his *Phenomenology of the Spirit*.

But Plato, though he knew of Dialectics, did not use it systematically. His was a piecemeal approach, taking each concept individually and trying to understand it through an analysis which was dialectical in nature. Hegel's, on the other hand, was a systematic approach but it started from 'Being' or rather what Aristotle called 'Being-qua-Being' or 'Pure Being' which was neither 'this' nor 'that' and hence was as good as 'Nothing'.

The 'Being' of Hegel, however, though the most 'universal' of 'universals' has no 'self-evident' certainty in it as it is not 'self-grounded' as Spinoza's 'Substance' or Descartes' 'Dubito' or rather 'Cogito' as he called it. The difference between the two is enormous, even though it

has not been noticed, Spinoza's 'Substance' has only a 'definitional necessity' while that in Descartes is an 'existential' one. The real ontological argument in Descartes is the one relating to the self and not the one relating to God, even though he thought otherwise.

Fichte opts for the Cartesian move but grounds it in the self-certifying necessity of logic without which self-reflective thought which is another name for 'philosophy' cannot move. For him, 'I think' is secondary to 'I am' and the latter reflects and is reflected in the logical law of identity which Aristotle had formulated as 'A is A' or as Fichte puts it 'A = A'. The former, that is 'I am', is more fundamental for him than the latter, as the latter only formulates the former at the reflective level. But this formulation can only be in the form 'I am I' or 'I = I' which surely is different from the foundational existential reality embodied in the statement 'I am'.

Kant had already drawn attention to this distinction but did not know what to do with it. He had made a four-fold distinction in this context. Besides the 'self-as-it-is-in-itself', he had drawn the distinction between 'I-as-I-appear-to-myself', 'I-as-I-am-conscious-of-myself' and what he called 'I am'. The last, strangely, as Fichte recognized, is not a judgement proper or rather not a judgement at all. He called it a 'thetic judgement', perhaps because it is a sheer assertion without any predication at all. It is what he called the 'self's positing of itself' which, like the 'performatives' of Austin, brings into 'being' that which it talks about. Perhaps, the word 'posit' does not convey exactly what is meant and the word 'assert' or 'affirm' would convey better the sense conveyed by the German word 'Setzen'.

In any case, once one starts with the absolute self-certitude of 'I am', the problem is what to do next. It should be remembered at this point that the 'I' being talked about is not a substance as it has no properties. In this, it is unlike Spinoza's substance which is supposed to have 'attributes' and cannot be thought without them.

But what is perhaps even more important than this is that the 'I' of the 'I am' is not an 'object' of reflection or reflective awareness as then it would become in Kantian terminology either 'I-as-I-am-conscious-of-myself' or 'I-as-I-appear-to-myself'. In fact, one wonders what Fichte, or even Kant, would say to the formulation 'I am I', as the second 'I'

is not exactly a predicate nor the pure self-positing of the self as the first seems to be. It is *not* a 'posit', but a positive assertion analogous to that of the 'I am' but of a radically different kind, though seldom seen as such and usually confused with it. It is, to use Kant's term, 'I-as-I-am-conscious-of-myself', half-way on the road to 'seeing' oneself as an 'object', but not yet achieving that 'objecthood' which comes with what has been called the 'empirical ego'.

Fichte does not clearly distinguish between these different stages as Kant does. But he is aware of the complexity involved in the assertion or 'positing' which Kant is not. The assertion is an 'act', a 'determination', a 'limitation' and hence points to, or rather presupposes in the Kantian 'transcendental' sense of the term, that which is 'unbounded', 'undetermined', 'infinite' and yet which itself has become to some extent at least the 'opposite' of these by the very fact that 'I am' has been asserted or posited. Yet, it is not clear to what extent it has been 'limited', but *only* that it *must* have been so limited by the very fact of the situation. Fichte introduces the notion of 'divisibility' or 'quantitative limitation' to denote this.

Kant had already opened the way to this by his strange and enigmatic postulation of the judgement he called 'infinite' which occurs under the heading of 'quality'. This judgement is a strange concoction as it is, in a sense, both affirmative and negative at the same time. Taking a cue from Aristotelian logic, where a technique was invented to change a negative proposition into its corresponding affirmative, Kant picked up the same but 'saw' in it what the Aristotelians had not seen. The negative predicate which was formed out of the negation and *affirmed* of the subject contained practically an infinite multitude of membership 'excluding' only those which belonged to the class which the negative judgement had *denied* of the subject. Any negative predicate formed from 'p' such as 'not-p' will contain in it everything except 'p' and hence will be 'infinite' in character. The judgement 's is not-p' unlike 's is p', therefore, was said by Kant to be 'infinite' or '*unendlich*' as he called it in German. But he also saw that in spite of its being 'infinite' it introduces a limitation and hence called the corresponding category 'limitation'.

Fichte saw the transcendental possibilities of the Kantian innovation and suggested that the counter-assertion or the counter-positing of 'not I' was involved in the very positive assertion of 'I am' which was the primordial fact one encounters when one embarks on the process of self-conscious reflective activity which was 'reflective' in character and hence was called philosophy. But the moment one sees this, one is faced with the problem of the interrelationship between the two and the quantity and extent of the influence, effectivity or determination of each by the other.

Kant had opened the way for that also. In his discussion of judgement and categories under 'Relation', he had mentioned the categorical, the hypothetical and the disjunctive judgement along with the corresponding categories of inherence, causality and reciprocity respectively. Inherence, it should be remembered, is a relation between substance and 'accidence' while causality is a relation between cause and effect. As for 'reciprocity', at least for Kant, it is *not* what is called 'circular causation', but a direct result of the fact that the disjunctive judgement *divides* the totality into two parts through unbounded negation which, though excluding each other because of this, still form a totality which exhausts the universe, at least logically. Kant, of course, did not anticipate the logical possibility of 'non-exclusive' disjunction accepted in modern logic, nor did he see that pure dichotomous division does not obtain in the empirical domain as there it always gives rise to fuzzy boundaries, an observation that has given rise to what are called 'fuzzy logics' in recent times.

But Fichte somehow seems aware of this, as he continuously talks of the shifting boundaries between the 'I' and the 'not-I', or the self and the not-self. The very notions of quantitative and qualitative variation within and between the self and the not-self involve this. Besides, the continuous transition and variation in the use of the concepts to describe the shifting shades of the interrelationship attests this. And, everything comes in a pair, for it is a *relation* between the self and the not-self where each is defined by the other, at least within the framework of Kant's critical philosophy which he unreservedly accepts. But there still remains an asymmetry between the two which Fichte does not know how to deal with.

The asymmetry is two-fold: the first relating to the indeterminate, almost infinite extent of anything that is defined purely negatively by exclusion, the second by the fact that 'freedom' seems to belong *only* to the self or the 'I' which in asserting or positing itself proclaims it as loudly as anything can. The 'am' of the 'I am' does just that. The 'free act' which evidences this freedom is, as Fichte is careful to point out, without any 'object' just as the 'I' which is posited has no predicate. This is the most primordial ontological 'performative' to use a term from Austin, on which everything seems to be based at least in a phenomenological existential perspective whose first draft Fichte's *Science of Knowledge* is, long before Husserl used the term and laid claim to be the original founder of that type of 'philosophizing' in philosophy.

But in spite of these basic asymmetries, there is a strange element in Fichte's thought which not only mitigates, but runs counter to it as it tends to nullify the 'opposition' produced by the analysis. The very fact that there is a primordial 'act' involved in the assertion or positing of the self implies, for Fichte, that the self must have been 'formed' or 'determined' by this act to some extent and hence must have had an element of 'passivity' which is opposed to it. In fact, at a deeper level, even though Fichte does not seem to see it at least as clearly as he could have, the not-self or the not-I is within the 'self' or the 'I', or rather an integral part of itself. But if it is so, the 'opposition', though genuine at every level, is ultimately secondary as even its possibility is sustained by the underlying unity which supports it. Without this underlying unity, the opposing elements would fall completely apart and thus cease to be opposites, as to be 'opposite' they have to be conjoined and 'felt' to be such. And, it is this 'feeling' that provides the dynamic force for the attempt at its overcoming which leads Fichte's thought in a direction that Kant never took.

The dynamic direction that this gives to his thought makes not only the boundary between self and not-self ever-changing but brings imagination and time into the picture which is perhaps unique in the history of thought on the subject.

Kant had already brought both in the centre of philosophical discussion, but not in the way Fichte did. Time, for him, was an *a priori* form

of inner sensibility, but not of the infinite outward movement of the self in its striving to resolve the opposition it continuously encounters in its 'reflection' on itself which is an intrinsic and inalienable feature of self-consciousness.

But self-consciousness does not have only the so-called 'outward' movement necessitated by the awareness of the not-self and the 'conflicting oppositions' this awareness engenders but also that 'reversion' or 'turning back' into itself which is another side of the same situation. Fichte does talk of this but does not see that this involves as much an 'infinite' movement 'inwards' as the outward movement about which he writes so eloquently. Perhaps he did not do so as the distinction between the 'self' and the 'not-self' cannot be drawn sharply in the inward direction and is, in any case, relative in character. This point has been grasped and powerfully argued for in some traditions of Indian philosophizing as that of *Sāṃkhya* but in Fichte it is, or ought to be, a necessary consequence of the insight that the self and the not-self are related by a 'reciprocal inter-determination' which affects them at every level.

The 'feeling' which gives rise to this perennial attempt at a 'reconciliation of opposites' is not that of pain or suffering, as has been asserted *ad nauseam* in the Indian tradition, but rather that of 'dissatisfaction' with what one apprehends 'reflectively' as obtaining at every level of self-consciousness. There is thus felt a 'drive' arising from within and a 'demand' shaped by 'imagination' resulting in a 'longing' for 'something', a sort of 'know-not-what-I-want' impelling one 'outward' and 'onward' into the future and thus getting involved or caught in the endlessly stretching infinity of time.

But neither the 'demand' nor the 'longing' is ever satisfied as it always meets a 'check', to use Fichte's phrase, and results many a time in the self's reverting back to itself in what he calls the 'return-journey' by which the self seems to seek itself. Both the 'journeys' are in a sense 'unending' though, for some reason, Fichte does not seem to think so about the latter. Perhaps, this is because he had started with the self-as-positing-itself or the 'I-am' as asserting itself. But this, though 'absolute' and 'unconditioned' in a certain sense, finds also a 'check' not in any external sense, but within itself as, firstly, the 'act' is hardly

an act as it has no power of any kind and, secondly, the so-called 'I' is as empty as it can be. The 'act', to use Fichte's phrase, has no 'object' or rather end or purpose or 'objective' and hence the question of 'being efficient' or 'effectivity' cannot even arise. As for the 'I', it has not and can have no predicate and hence is as 'vacuous' as the 'act' which it is supposed to perform.

It is not that Fichte is not aware of this but, basically, he does not know what to do with this. Is this the 'real' self which one has to 'realize', the self which has no predicates and no 'object' as it alone is, without even the sense of the 'I' which, as he sees rightly, has to have a 'not-I' to distinguish itself from. This, for him, is sheer nothing, though he also calls it 'the absolute' many a time. But even if one accepts that this equation of the 'absolute' with 'nothing' is correct, as Hegel said later of Spinoza's 'substance', there still remains the problem as to why in the 'striving towards an ever-extending infinity', it is *only* the not-self that demands or requires that it 'ought' to be moulded or shaped or patterned according to the 'ideals' or the so-called 'categorical imperative' which is involved, for him, as for Kant, in the very notion or idea or reality of the self.

One reason for this may be that, at the level of reflection, where alone philosophy exists, everything has to be seen as a not-self, as the so-called 'self' is only a formal logical, or rather 'transcendental', presupposition which also somehow seems to be 'existentially' real because of the sense of the 'I' which, though perpetually changing in its reference being an 'indexical' expression like 'this', projects an illusory sense of substantiality providing the 'self' with an ontological being distinct from the not-self.

But the idea of the not-self would have to be analyzed more carefully, if this way of seeing Fichte is accepted, as what we would actually have on our hands at the phenomenological-existential level is only the not-self masquerading as 'self'. This, however, Fichte could not do as, unlike Kant, he started not with the 'given' of sense-experience or even what both he and Kant call 'presentation', but rather with the self-as-positing-itself, the correlate of what Reason finds in itself at the foundational level, the law of identity in which it articulates itself as 'A=A'. This is what Kant had meant by 'transcendental

unity of apperception' and which (the self) Fichte sees as providing the unshakable fundamental unity that synthesizes *all* the oppositions and contradictions that his analysis discloses in the course of a work that should have been a landmark in the history of philosophy, but which somehow has been forgotten for reasons best known to those who have written on it.

Fichte tried to present the views propounded in his *Science of Knowledge* in a clearer and more intelligible manner in his subsequent writings, the two of which have recently been published under the title *Foundations of Transcendental Philosophy* edited and translated by Daniel Breazeale, published by Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London, 1998. He seems to suggest a slight shift in the emphasis as he now seems to accord primacy to practical reason over the theoretical; something that had begun to be evident at the end of the *Science of Knowledge* itself. The theoretical reason, according to Fichte, reveals itself in the activity of reflective 'reverting' of self-consciousness on itself as it tries to understand what exactly happens in the movement and structure of consciousness where alone philosophy arises and has its being. The practical reason on the other hand reflects on the primordial act by which the self posits or asserts itself and the dialectics thus engendered between itself and the not-self which indefinitely extends in the outward movement of consciousness, the successive stages of which he has tried to delineate to some extent in the latter part of the *Science of Knowledge* itself. Fichte's enterprise has to be carried further and as he perhaps suggests, both the 'outward' and the 'inward' movements are two sides of the same consciousness, one of which is called 'practical' and the other 'cognitive' or theoretical.

## A Resurrection of Mates' Problem\*

SIVAKUMAR ELAMBOORANAN

21, First Street, Thirumudi Nagar, Pondicherry 605 001

In the second section of *Synonymy and the Analysis of Belief Sentences*,<sup>1</sup> Hilary Putnam offers a solution to a problem that Benson Mates raises<sup>2</sup> for Rudolf Carnap's proposal<sup>3</sup> to use the notion of intensional isomorphism as an explicans for synonymy.<sup>4</sup> The general idea behind Carnap's suggestion is that two sentences are synonymous if they are *intensionally isomorphic* with each other. Carnap's effective definition of 'intensional isomorphism' may be stated as follows:

If S and S\* are sentences that are grammatically constructed in the same way from corresponding constituents having the same intension, then S and S\* are *intensionally isomorphic* with each other.

Let us say that two sentences that are constructed to the specifications of this definition are C-intensionally isomorphic. Further, let us agree that by 'Carnap's Proposal' we mean:

Two sentences are synonymous if they are C-intensionally isomorphic with each other.

Mates' problem shows that Carnap's Proposal may not be workable because contexts exist in which substitution of an expression occurring in a sentence by another expression that is C-intensionally isomorphic with the first expression does not result in a sentence that is synonymous with the first sentence, even though both sentences are C-intensionally isomorphic. Mates' example will clarify this. The sentences

(1) Whoever believes that D believes that D

and

(2) Whoever believes that D believes that D\*