

# “A GREAT NOBLE MAN YET A DENIER OF GOD ACCORDING TO STRICT CONCEPTS”: SPINOZA ENTANGLED BETWEEN FICHTE AND HÖLDERLIN

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*Abstract: The reception of Spinoza in German Idealism is anything but unequivocal. The great noble man of the last century, in Hölderlin's words, despite being cursed for a long time in the German 18th century, began to attract the interest as his philosophy was compared with that of Leibniz, an association that placed him alongside an important figure for the Aufklärung. The 1780s would place Spinoza definitively in the German philosophical debate, starting with the quarrel over pantheism (Pantheismusstreit) initiated by Jacobi. Despite the latter's intention to accuse the former of atheism, Spinoza fell in into Goethe's grace as well as, in Tübingen, into the young friends still in their philosophical beginnings: Hölderlin, Hegel and Schelling. When Fichte made his debut in Jena, Spinozism had already established itself as the inevitable and irrefutable rational system. The aim of this essay is to show how intricately Spinoza and Spinozism appear in a debate that has long remained secondary in the research of German idealism, namely in Hölderlin's Fichte-Kritik in Jena (1794-1795), and in the suspicion that Fichte's system was at the watershed between being considered dogmatic or not. To approach this debate, it will be necessary to consider some Fichtean formulations of his Wissenschaftslehre of 1794, as well as some aspects of Hölderlin's philosophical conception at the time. As result, we can see that Hölderlin incorporate Spinoza in way not foreseeable in Jacobi's and in Fichte's Spinoza-polemic. Although there is no concrete textual mobilization of Spinoza by Fichte or Hölderlin, I assume that Spinozism is as present in its spirit (Geist) as Kantianism is by the time, even if the letter (Buchstabe) of the former is not present.*

Keywords: *Fichte, Hölderlin, Spinozism, Pantheism, Fichte-Kritik.*

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Resumen: *La recepción de Spinoza en el Idealismo alemán es todo menos inequívoca. El gran noble del siglo pasado, en palabras de Hölderlin, a pesar de haber sido maldecido durante mucho tiempo en el siglo XVIII alemán, comenzó a suscitar el interés al ser comparada su filosofía con la de Leibniz, asociación que lo situó junto a una figura importante para la Aufklärung. La década de 1780 situaría definitivamente a Spinoza en el debate filosófico alemán, a partir de la disputa sobre el panteísmo (Pantheismusstreit) iniciada por Jacobi. A pesar de la intención de este último de acusar al primero de ateísmo, Spinoza cayó en gracia de Goethe, así como, en Tubinga, de los jóvenes amigos aún en sus comienzos filosóficos: Hölderlin, Hegel y Schelling. Cuando Fichte debutó en Jena, el espinosismo ya se había establecido como el sistema racional inevitable e irrefutable. El objetivo de este ensayo es mostrar cuán intrincadamente aparecen Spinoza y el espinosismo en un debate que durante mucho tiempo ha permanecido secundario en la investigación del idealismo alemán, a saber, en la Fichte-Kritik de Hölderlin en Jena (1794-1795), y en la sospecha de que el sistema de Fichte se encontraba en la línea divisoria entre ser considerado dogmático o no. Para abordar este debate, será necesario considerar algunas formulaciones fichteanas de la Wissenschaftslehre de 1794, así como algunos aspectos de la concepción filosófica de Hölderlin en aquel momento. Como resultado, podemos ver que Hölderlin incorpora a Spinoza de un modo no previsible en la Spinoza-polémica de Jacobi y de Fichte. Aunque no hay una movilización textual concreta de Spinoza por parte de Fichte o Hölderlin, parto de la base de que el espinosismo está tan presente en su espíritu (Geist) como el kantismo en la época, aunque la letra (Buchstabe) del primero no esté presente.*

Palabras clave: *Fichte, Hölderlin, Espinosismo, Panteísmo, Fichte-Kritik.*

## 1. Introduction

While at the *Tübinger Stift*, Hölderlin writes to his mother in February 1791, and tells her of his thoughts on God, immortality and Christian faith. Aiming to not alarm her piety with his philosophical way through the study of “reason’s proofs of God’s existence and of immortality”, he declares still relying on the faith (*Glaube*) of his heart, for which there would be irrefutably given the longing for God: “But do not we doubt precisely on that which we most long for? Who brings us out of this labyrinth? – Christus.” (MA II: 469)<sup>2</sup> We may stick on the otherwise rhetorical question to Mrs. Johanna Christiana Gok. Along his philosophical path, the son declares to have fallen in his hands “writings on and of Spinoza, a great noble man from former century, yet a denier of God according to strict concepts.” (MA II: 468) As opposed to his “pious heart”, there remains the conviction, perhaps a little milder for the sake of the addressee, that “if one precisely inspects with the from heart abandoned cold reason, one must come to his [Spinoza’s] ideas if it is the case to explain everything”. (MA II: 468)

This insight is anything but new, since Friedrich Jacobi had already ascribed to Lessing the following statement: “There is no philosophy other than of Spinoza” (JSW 1,1: 18)<sup>3</sup> – to which Jacobi adds: “I love Spinoza because he, more than any other philosopher, brought me to the complete conviction that certain things cannot be developed, to which one must therefore not close one’s eyes, but accept them as one finds them” (JWB 1,1: 28). But then if Jacobi does accept things as he finds them based on a faithful *salto mortale* (JWB 1,1: 20), this might not help authors like Fichte and Hölderlin, born out of the spirit of Kantian criticism.

We know that what fell in Hölderlin’s hands *on* Spinoza was precisely the quoted Jacobi’s *Über die Lehres des Spinoza in Briefen an Herrn Moses Mendelssohn* (1785), and we know it namely from Hölderlin’s notes on this book, probably written down in the summer of 1790 (MA II: 39-43; MA III: 379). What we do not know is *of* which Spinoza’s writings Hölderlin might have read, though. Lack of strict reference to primary text sources should not surprise at the time, for it is characteristic of an entire generation, including Kant and Fichte, that any landmarking on philosophical authority, may it out of its textuality, would not be a must for justifying their own theses (Ivaldo, 1992, p. 59). Not only Hölderlin’s, also Fichte’s reference to Spinoza does not go back to the latter’s texts, being rather generic. One exception we find in Ernst Platner’s *Philosophische Aphorismen* (1776/1782), which considers Spinoza’s texts concretely, and on which Fichte lectures in the winter semester 1794 (GA II/4: 242-249). Platner had also stated that Spinoza’s system is difficult to refute and difficult to avoid, although not in the same sense Jacobi found it (GA II/4 S: 200). Apart from our epistemic justified standards hang on textuality, this earlier phenomenon does not disturb the fruitful reception of Spinoza in German Idealism, as I hope to show in what follows,

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2 Quoted from Hölderlin (1992) with the abbreviation *MA*, followed by volume and page. Unless if quoted from editions in English, all translations from German are mine.

3 Quoted from Jacobi (1998), *JWB*, volume, page.

based on Hölderlin's critique of Fichte's philosophy. Despite the lack of textuality on the case Spinoza, if we may recur not only to Fichte's differentiation of *Spirit* (*Geist*) from *Letter* (*Buchstabe*), but to Dieter Henrich notion of constellation (Henrich, 1991), we might be in better condition to grasp the spirit of Spinozism flowing under the surface of a deep river beneath one decade of post-Kantianism, before achieving the estuary of Hegel's system. That is what teleological discursive schemes on the issue tell us usually, though certainly not immune to criticism.

## 2. Spinoza reloaded

Beyond Kant as surely the primer interlocutor by the time, it is worth remembering that one of the reasons why we see Spinoza in Fichte's ranking of philosophical partners traces back a broader process of his reception throughout the 18th century. Due to excommunication from Judeo-Christian milieu of previous century, Spinoza bore the image of a "cursed" philosopher, widespread in Germany as that of an atheist whose doctrine represented a moral, theological and political danger (Solé, 2011, pp. 56-65). But a rehabilitation gradually began to take place during the German *Aufklärung* in the 1750s, with Lessing and Mendelssohn holding different points of view on the compatibility of Spinoza's thought with that of Leibniz – which meant a comparison with the leading philosophical figure for the German *intelligentsia* by that time (Solé, 2017a, pp. 213-219). In the mid-1770s, Goethe and Jacobi also took part in Spinoza's new reception, and this happened in the broader context of their reacting to what they grasped as a mechanical and disenchanting view of the world underway, resulting from *Aufklärung*'s project. Goethe's approach was motivated rather by sentiment, while Jacobi's by the defense of the immediate knowledge of faith. They both shared an admiration for Spinoza, although Goethe had in mind the pantheistic aspect of unity with totality, and Jacobi targeted precisely the atheism and fatalism of the author of the *Ethics*. Decisive here was the meeting Jacobi and Lessing may have had in the summer of 1780, when the latter might have confessed his own Spinozism, of which the former bears witness in his *Über die Lehren des Spinoza*, published four years after Lessing's death. The book triggered the famous quarrel over pantheism (*Pantheismusstreit*) and provoked a series of reactions that ended up incorporating Spinoza into German debate definitively. After stated that Spinoza's thought, though atheistic and fatalistic, should be held as the only irrefutable rationalist philosophy, the polemic ended up arousing even the interest of Kant, who criticized the view of Spinoza's fatalism linked to the "idealism of final causes" (*KU*, AA 05: 392-393), and thereafter set the rationalist line of the debate Fichte would also endorse.

## 3. Tricky theoretical liaisons: Fichte's Spinoza

To say the least then, Spinoza was already reloaded after the moralist-conservative campaign had discharged him, and ready for new rounds when Fichte wrote his first *Wissenschaftslehre*. At the very end of the first principle of the *Foundation of the Entire Doctrine of Scientific*

*Knowledge* (1794-95), Fichte sets out the historical-philosophical references for his “doctrine of scientific knowledge”. Its absolute foundation was already to be found in Kant, precisely in the deduction of the categories, although not exposed. This principle was also to be found previously in Descartes, whose *cogito, ergo sum* Fichte converts into *sum, ergo cogito* within his critical-systematic conception (GA II/3: 13, 91).<sup>4</sup> Karl L. Reinhold, former professor of Fichte’s chair at Jena, would have gone one step further than Descartes with the “*repraesento, ergo sum*” or “*repraesentans sum, ergo sum*”, but he made little progress in the direction of the “doctrine of scientific knowledge” (thereafter *Wissenschaftslehre*), since representing would be in it only a “particular determination of being” (GA I/2: 262)<sup>5</sup> that needs to be deduced, and therefore is not fundamental.

Amidst philosophers, Fichte considers that Spinoza has gone far *beyond* the proposition of *Foundation*: “he does not deny the unity of empirical consciousness, but he completely denies pure consciousness” (GA I/2: 263), i.e. he separates pure consciousness, exclusively in God, from empirical consciousness, in human mind. If we try to interpret this Reinholdian-Fichtean terminology within the frame of Spinoza’s philosophy, empirical consciousness along with its representations would be no more than a particular representation within the series of *immanent* representations in God<sup>6</sup>, which is the conception of reality and the Spinozian *substance*. Understood from Spinoza’s perspective, the Fichtean explanation of reality in consciousness would appear to be a vain endeavor, since substance is *causa sui* and encompasses the reality of everything (*omnitudo realitatis*), including empirical determinations of the self as its modifications (*modi*). With the absolute I, Fichte’s introduction of a pure principle into consciousness from within consciousness itself would create a rift in Spinoza’s substance, so that Fichte’s reading should be taken for correct when saying that Spinoza would deny the pure consciousness of the *Wissenschaftslehre*. Thus, from Spinoza’s perspective, the Fichtean “I” could not be an I for its own sake, but because of something that contains it in principle and that, paradoxically, would be outside of it. In other words, the Fichtean empirical I, fiduciary of an absolute I, would be an I because of the substance. Spinoza’s substance could not accept a foundation in the self as an individual; it would be an I outside the self to which the individual refers, reducing effective subjectivity and its conscious life to internal and *immanent* modifications of substance. Given that Spinoza’s conception, according to Fichte, denies the dual structure of the pure I (both absolute and empirical concrete) by locating in substance what belongs to the I, the allegedly immanence of this substance is revealed rather as an annihilating transcendence of the I. Tricky enough.

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4 Quoted from Fichte (1962-2012), *GA*, volume, page.

5 Fichte’s *Grundlage der gesamten Wissenschaftslehre* (1794-95) will be quoted from Daniel Breazeale’s translation, Fichte (2021). The pagination of *GA* is indicated on the margins of Breazeale’s edited text.

6 Quotes from Spinoza (2007), *E*, followed by book, proposition and other demonstrative specifications. See here E II: Prop. 11 u. corollarium): “Hinc sequitur mentem humanam partem esse infiniti intellectus Dei”.

In Fichte's systematic construction, the pure consciousness of *Wissenschaftslehre* equals God of Spinoza's *Ethics*. God is never conscious of himself, "for pure consciousness never attains to consciousness", which is why it must be denied in the Spinoza system; empirical consciousness is in the "particular modifications of the Deity" (GA I/2: 263). For Fichte, as for Jacobi, this system is consequential, but without foundation: "for what justifies his proceeding beyond that pure consciousness that is given in empirical consciousness?" (GA I/2: 263).<sup>7</sup> Now, this Fichtean presupposition of a pure consciousness *given* in the empirical is problematic from the point of view of the principle of the *Wissenschaftslehre* in its own, and it affects what scholarship calls the "internal consistency of the self" (Klotz, 2006, p. 73). This is part of the transcendental construction of the pure I to explain the empirical, but the possible character of the *givenness* (*Gegebenheit*) is one of the *Foundation's* surplus claims that leaves room for suspicion. After all, what justifies Fichte affirmation of the existence of a pure consciousness (*Tathandlung*) as given in the empirical (*Tatsache*) if not a desire to theoretically jump over the empirical, at risk of falling into the old well-known dogmatism? Furthermore, by refusing consciousness to pure consciousness (*God*), the internal contradiction of the argument is obvious: if, by definition, pure consciousness does not reach consciousness, what is the case in which pure consciousness is given in empirical consciousness? By criticizing Spinoza, Fichte may not have realized that the argumentative arsenal could be turned against himself, wherein the program of the *Wissenschaftslehre* may result, perhaps deliberately, as inverted Spinozism (Solé, 2017, pp. 115-128).

Systematically, however, Spinoza's position is crucial in the *Foundation*, as it would represent the dogmatic realism the *Wissenschaftslehre* deconstructs from end to end. According to Fichte, what motivates the Spinoza system is a *practical effort* to produce the unity of human knowledge. From the perspective of the *Wissenschaftslehre*, Spinoza's error would lie in wanting to proceed by theoretical reasoning where it is driven by practical necessity, believing that an ideal can never be achieved as something given, i.e. as a *thing in itself* (*Ding an sich*), in a metaphysical sense. The desired unity cannot be a thing, for the object of the will is never put into a physical faculty with a view to effects in nature. Instead, it is the object of a rational endeavor. Spinoza would have understood his practical effort theoretically. As Fichte starts from the I, the unity conceivable in it is that of the practical ideal: "In the *Wissenschaftslehre* we will rediscover Spinoza's highest unity, not as something that *exists*, but rather as something that *ought* to be but *cannot* be produced by us" (GA I/2: 264). The unity is not the same as the absolute I of the *Foundation's* first principle, because it

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<sup>7</sup> See Schäfer (2006, p. 51). Schäfer interprets the objection as a "purely rhetorical" question, as if Fichte were questioning in Spinoza only the dogmatic transcendence of empirical consciousness. At the same time, Schäfer recognizes that "this quotation makes it clear that Fichte refers pure consciousness to empirical consciousness: the determinations of pure consciousness must also be measured by the facts of empirical consciousness and must be given and compatible with empirical consciousness". Now, if this is the case, Fichte's question cannot be merely rhetorical, but it mobilizes an essential aspect of his thought.

is the pure form of the position not yet filled out and specified by the different actions of the I derived and explained in the *Wissenschaftslehre*. The system must be realized.

Fichte states that any philosophy overstepping the “*I am*” necessarily leads to Spinozism (GA I/2: 264). On this basis, there are two opposed systems: *Criticism* or *idealism* within the limits of the *I*, and *Spinozism* or *dogmatism* beyond these limits. Dogmatism leads to a realism of a *thing (ens) in itself*, which fatalistically founds and determines the I: The I would then be entirely determined by a transcendent thing that suppresses the freedom of the finite I. In the critical system, the thing is posited within the I, so that as a result “criticism is *immanent* whereas dogmatism is *transcendent*, because it proceeds beyond the I” (GA I/2: 279-278). Fichte attacks dogmatism with a skeptical argument. When asking the dogmatist why the absolute must be one *thing* outside the self, and not the self, he cannot answer without admitting a foundation for the foundation of the thing in something else, etc. Dogmatism, in its consequences, must deny the possibility of knowledge when conceiving a foundation by infinite regression or by some unjustified presupposition like a dogma: “a thoroughgoing dogmatism is a skepticism that despairs over the fact that it doubts” (GA I/2: 280). Skepticism cannot be a system because it denies the possibility of a system in general, which also contains a contradiction because denial of a system can only be done systematically. From this radical skepticism, which he calls dogmatic<sup>8</sup>, Fichte defends a *critical skepticism*, which both points to the need for more consistent foundations in the face of the insufficiency of existing systems and carries out the propaedeutic task of deconstructing dogmatism to prepare the ground for idealism (GA I/2: 280; Breazeale, 1991, pp. 427-453).

The deconstruction of dogmatism is also task of interpretation, and Fichte tries to do it by reading Spinoza in terms of the principles presented in the *Wissenschaftslehre*. At the end of the exposition of the third principle, Fichte returns to Spinoza to ask him the same skeptical question that is asked of dogmatists in general: What is the foundation of substance? Fichte himself answers that there can be no foundation, its necessity *is* because it *is*, and Spinoza was moved rather by the practical necessity (i.e. freedom) to accept a supreme absolute unity. Spinoza is entirely rational and its refutation in favor of idealism is as misplaced as the refutation of the theses and antitheses in the Kantian antinomies. It is precisely for this reason that Fichte will constantly differentiate the positions of idealism and dogmatism throughout the *Foundation* (Schäfer, 2006, pp. 96-97). In the case of Spinoza, presented at the end of the section on the principles of *Wissenschaftslehre*, it is a key point to assess the position of his dogmatism (in Fichte’s eyes) within the system of the spirit: If Spinoza had understood the nature of the explanation’s demand of empirical consciousness,

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8 The name is also given by Reinhold, for whom dogmatic skepticism, as opposed to critical skepticism, takes this name “because it tries to show that one must always doubt objective truth, that is, the real agreement of our representations with their objects” (Reinhold, 1795, pp. 130-131). On this, see Breazeale (1998, pp. 130-132).

Fichte concludes, “he should have stuck with that unity given to him in consciousness” (GA I/2: 281).

Therefore, Fichtean interpretation of Spinoza is strategic. By identifying the practical datum underlying dogmatism, Fichte manages to expose the structure of the theoretical *Wissenschaftslehre* in view of its practical principle. He goes into a little more detail about the nature of this datum: “What drove the dogmatist beyond the I was not, as some seem to believe, a theoretical datum; it was a practical one: namely, the feeling (*Gefühl*) that our I, to the extent that it is practical, is dependent upon a Not-I” (GA I/2: 281). The dependence of the empirical I, which would point to something outside it, should be understood as a practical feeling of dependence on something that is not under the legislation of the self: the Not-I.<sup>9</sup> The instability generated by this feeling provokes the search for equilibrium through the “feeling that it is necessary to subordinate and unify under the practical law of the I everything that is Not-I”, which is properly the object of an idea, i.e., it is “something that *ought* to be present and ought to be brought about by us” (GA I/2: 281). In other words, the dogmatic view of the world must be replaced by a critical one, and Spinoza’s realism, critically reinterpreted through the subordination of theoretical reason to practical reason, reveals the *transcendental* (not transcendent) meaning of each of its theses: Supreme unity is, in fact, the unity of consciousness; its thing-in-itself is the “substratum” of the general partibility of the third principle; Spinoza’s intellect and extension are the Fichtean I and Not-I. (GA I/2: 281-282)

From this point of view, Spinoza’s dogmatism would not go as far as the first principle of the *Wissenschaftslehre*, reaching at most the Not-I and partibility; it would be up to critical philosophy precisely to take the last step, i.e., to overcome (Spinoza’s) dogmatism. Fichte places the theoretical part of *Wissenschaftslehre* within the framework of this historical-critical reading of dogmatism and, in this sense, calls its theoretical part *systematic Spinozism*, with the difference that, for this Spinozism, the I (reality in general) stands for substance (*omnitudo realitatis*). The *Wissenschaftslehre* reveals *in totum*, on the other hand, the critical sense of that first practical demand driving dogmatism:

To this theoretical part, however, our system adds a practical part, which grounds and determines the theoretical part. The entire science is thereby brought to completion, and the contents of the human mind are completely exhausted. In this way

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<sup>9</sup> In a note to the preface of the first edition of *Concerning the Concept of the Wissenschaftslehre or of So-Called “Philosophy”* (1794), Fichte presented this same fundamental notion as being the very object of dispute between dogmatists and critics: “Some future *Wissenschaftslehre* might be able to settle this controversy by showing the following: that our cognition is by no means connected with the thing in itself directly, by means of a representation, but is instead connected with it mediately or indirectly, by means of *feeling*; that, in any case, things are *represented only as appearances*, though they are *felt as things in themselves*; that no representation at all would be possible without feeling, but that things in themselves are cognized only *subjectively* – that is, only insofar as they have an effect upon our feeling” (GA I/2: 109).

ordinary human understanding (*gemeiner Menschenverstand*), which was insulted by all pre-Kantian philosophy and which, to judge simply from our own theoretical philosophy, still remains separated from philosophy with no hope of reconciliation, is completely reconciled with philosophy. (GA I/2: 282)

#### 4. Hölderlin on Fichte: *Wissenschaftslehre* under suspicious

Hölderlin finished his studies at the *Tübinger Stift* in December 1793 and moved to Waltershausen at the end of the month to work as a tutor to Charlotte von Kalb's son.<sup>10</sup> For one year, this would be his main occupation whilst working on manuscripts of *Hyperion*. In November 1794, he went to Jena and probably arrived in time to attend Fichte's first lecture of the winter semester, when he also began to listen to him every day at the university.<sup>11</sup> The same month, Schiller published the volume of the *Neue Thalia* with the *Hyperion Fragment*. At the end of December, Hölderlin traveled with von Kalb and her son to Weimar; at the beginning of January 1795, he left his overwhelming post as preceptor, settling in Jena until the beginning of June.

From initial praise of Fichte's lessons and of his performance as an orator and a thinker capable of "investigating and determining the principles of the most remote domains of human knowledge" (MA II: 553) and till the end of January 1795, Hölderlin does not make any more detailed comment on Fichtean philosophy, although he claims to study it intensely.<sup>12</sup> By the end of January also comes the mention of Hölderlin's enthusiasm for Fichte, in a letter Hegel wrote to Schelling: "Hölderlin sometimes writes to me from Jena; he speaks of Fichte as a titan who fights for humanity and whose influence will certainly not be limited to the walls of the auditorium" (Hegel, 1952, p. 18). But the enthusiasm is soon dampened when Hölderlin sets out his more detailed reading of the Fichtean program, as we can see in the letter sent to Hegel by the end of the month:

Fichte's speculative pages – Foundation of Entire Doctrine of Scientific Knowledge – and also his printed Lectures on the Destination of the Scholar will interest you greatly. At first, I held him in high suspicion of dogmatism; if I may conjecture, he really seems to have been, or still is, at the watershed – he wanted to go beyond the fact (*Factum*) of consciousness in *theory*, that is what many of his statements show, and this is just as evident, and even more strikingly transcendent, as when previous metaphysicians wanted to go beyond the existence of the world – his absolute I (= Spinoza's substance) contains all reality; it is everything and outside of it there is nothing; there is no object

10 See *Letter from Hölderlin to Stäudlin and Neuffer*, December 30, 1793 (MA II: 513-515).

11 See *Letter to Neuffer*, Nov. 1794, (MA II: 553).

12 See *Letter to his mother* of November 17th, 1794: "Fichte's new philosophy occupies me entirely. I listen only to him [i.e. to his lessons] and to no one else" (MA II: 555).

for this absolute I, because then all reality would not be in it; but consciousness without an object is not thinkable, and if I myself am this object, then as such I am necessarily limited, even if only in time, therefore I am not absolute; in the absolute I there is then no thinkable consciousness, as the absolute I has no consciousness, and if I have no consciousness I am nothing (for me), the absolute I is nothing (for me).

This is how I wrote down my thoughts while still in Waltershausen, when I read his first pages immediately after reading Spinoza; Fichte confirmed it to me

[manuscript interrupted in this part]

(*Letter from Hölderlin to Hegel*, January 26<sup>th</sup>, 1795, MA II: 568-569)

Here things change clearly. The first and notable topic of the letter is the dogmatism suspicion of Fichte's philosophy. Regarding this, it should be considered in two moments: Firstly, Hölderlin refers to the time of Waltershausen, when he first read a considerable part of the *Foundation*<sup>13</sup>, surely its first three paragraphs, precisely at the end of which Fichte contrasts critical philosophy (in the form of the *Wissenschaftslehre*) with dogmatic philosophy (GA I/2: 279); then secondly, now in Jena, it "still" seems to be at stake to decide whether Fichte is a dogmatist or not, a doubt that is in conflict with the decreasing suspicion, although not with the fact that it "still" makes sense to suspect. Given that Fichte expressed clearly his views on skepticism as well as on criticism and dogmatism, and he did it in fact also publicly in his 1792 *Aenesidemus*' Review, Hölderlin must not have been completely satisfied with Fichte's exposition in Jena, after few months and several lectures.<sup>14</sup>

Up until Hölderlin's contact with Fichte's discussion of the concept, the current meaning of dogmatism he then might have known of in Tübingen belonged to Kantian vocabulary. Also Jacobi's philosophical *début* in the 1780s helped to fix the frame through which dogmatism, skepticism and criticism would be discussed ever since.<sup>15</sup> Before him, Kant was trying to establish the critical terms of his transcendental idealism, and defined dogmatism as the procedure of pure reason "*without the prior criticism of its own faculty*" (KrV: B xxxv) – being dogmatism of previous metaphysics precisely the intention to advance in that procedure without a critique of reason. Therefore, as program, *criticism* is opposed to *dogmatism* in its presumption of proceeding by *pre-critical* reason only with pure knowledge by concepts, i.e.,

13 For detailed dates and text sources available to Hölderlin in Waltershausen, see Quevedo (2023, pp. 111-117).

14 In another constellation, and without any precise knowledge of the *Wissenschaftslehre* by the time, Hegel expressed a similar suspicion in the mentioned letter to Schelling, also from January 1795: "It is indisputable that Fichte has favored the nonsense, about which you write and whose reasoning I can well imagine, with his 'Critique of all Revelation' [1792]. He himself made moderate use of it; but if his principles are accepted, then it is not possible brake theological logic. He reasoned about how God should act based on his holiness, based on his purely moral nature, etc., and thereby reintroduced the old dogmatic way of demonstrating" (Hegel, 1952, p. 17).

15 On this, see Beckenkamp (2006, pp. 9-27); see also Beckenkamp (2004, pp. 41-66).

the presumption of having objective knowledge by means of a general logic that allows only the laws of thought to be dealt with without the conditions of their application. The dogmatist thinks uncritically and fails to determine “the limits of his possible knowledge according to principles” (KrV: B796). In contrast, the entire program of the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781/1787) carries out its scrutiny in a “true court” for all controversies, in the extension of the “rights of reason in general according to the principles of its first institution” (KrV: B779).

In this context, *dogmatism* should also be seen in opposition to criticism and idealism, because it is precisely with critical philosophy that the history of metaphysics is called into question through a clear delimitation of the concepts and principles of theoretical knowledge. This way of understanding criticism was taken forward by Fichte, who shifted the emphasis to a systematic program of transcendental idealism. If, for Kant, establishing the limits of thought is the only way to proceed critically, for Fichte these limits are given precisely in the principle of the absolute I of *Wissenschaftslehre*. After Jacobi’s criticism of Kant’s transcendental idealism based on the paradoxical finding that its system had to start from the affection of external objects as cause of representations, but inversely founded a conceptual doctrine that reduces the given to phenomena (JWB 2,1: 103-112), it was established in the debate that dogmatists stands for the knowledge of a *thing in itself* on the basis of conscious representations, and that the skeptics deny it. With his review of G. E. Schulze’s *Aenesidemus*, Fichte goes on stage and proposes to abandon entirely the concept of the thing in itself as the “principle of the dogmatic”, a principle which has “no reality beyond that which must be obtained from it for the explanation of experience” and which, therefore, for the idealist, reveals itself as “a total chimera” (GA I/4: 192-193).

As seen at the end of the first part of the *Foundation* (which Hölderlin read in Waltershausen), Fichte is very clear about these issues. Formulating the question in terms of his own program, he states that the essence of *Critical* philosophy constitutes in the fact “that an absolute I is put forward (*aufgestellt*) as purely and simply unconditioned and determinable by nothing higher” (GA I/2: 279). On the contrary, philosophy is *dogmatic* when it “views the I as something equal to and posited in opposition to something else” (GA I/2: 279), i.e. the concept of a thing (*ens*) placed in a totally arbitrary way as something supreme. Given that in the critical system the “thing” is placed within the I and in the dogmatic system it places the I, Fichte defines criticism as an *immanent* system that “posits everything in the I”, and dogmatism as a *transcendent* system that “proceeds beyond the I” (GA I/2: 279). Fichte argues that the dogmatist’s way of proceeding is easily dismantled. If he questions the foundation in the I and asks for its higher foundation, then he must accept that the critic also asks for a higher foundation for his concept of the thing in itself, to which the dogmatic cannot respond without looking for another higher foundation for the higher one *ad infinitum*: “Hence, if it is not to contradict itself, any thoroughgoing dogmatism must deny that our knowledge possesses any ground whatsoever and therefore must deny that there is any system whatsoever in the human mind” (GA I/2: 280). The consequent

dogmatism, the product of which Fichte identifies in Spinoza's system, reveals itself in the end as a radical skepticism "that despairs over the fact that it doubts" (GA I/2: 280) – and it is therefore close to what Reinhold defined as dogmatic skepticism.<sup>16</sup> For Fichte, and this is illustrative of his *Wissenschaftslehre* of 1794, dogmatism in its strong variant must suppress the unity of consciousness and, with it, the whole of logic by denying the position (*Setzen*) of the foundation in the I (as consciousness and as activity). Taking up Reinhold's definition, Fichte distinguishes critical skepticism from consequential skepticism, going so far as to say that "no one has yet been such a skeptic in earnest" (GA I/2: 280, note).

In view of these categorical statements, it is not possible to imagine that Hölderlin suspected a veiled dogmatism in Fichte from the outset out of ignorance. On the contrary: as Hölderlin reports having read Fichte's first "speculative pages" "while still in Waltershausen, immediately after reading Spinoza" (MA II: 569), it is safe to assume that he read what Fichte wrote in the above-mentioned passages of the *Foundation* quite carefully. In addition, for reasons given above, the accusation of dogmatism is the harshest that could be leveled at a system that understands itself to be radically critical, which leads us to see more closely Hölderlin's continued suspicion of Fichte. Unfortunately, we do not know what Fichte may have confirmed to Hölderlin, since the manuscript was torn up after "Fichte confirmed me" with the following part being lost, and no additional information about this gap can be found in the correspondence.<sup>17</sup> Regardless of this, it is necessary to determine what is dogmatic about Fichte in Hölderlin's eyes. As the suspicion relates to the claim that the absolute "I" corresponds to Spinoza's substance, this topic should be taken up while commenting on the corresponding passage.

## 5. Fichte beyond consciousness

Alongside the suspicion of dogmatism, Hölderlin's criticism also directs at Fichtean radicalization of Kantian idealism: "Fichte ... wanted to go beyond the fact of consciousness in theory", which Hölderlin concludes from "many of his statements" (MA II: 568). Fichte's going beyond would formally amount to the infringement of the skeptical warning that one cannot go beyond the limits of experience with pure concepts of reason. But as far as the content of the statement is concerned, Fichte would also extrapolate a basic point of transcendental idealism, which establishes consciousness as formal condition for the synthesis of representations that refer to objects<sup>18</sup>, in whose unity we may have knowledge of things critically, i.e., within its bounds to possible experience.

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16 Dogmatic skepticism, as opposed to critical skepticism, takes this name "because it tries to show that one must always doubt objective truth, that is, the real agreement of our representations with their objects" (Reinhold, 1795, pp. 130-131). On this, see also Breazeale (1998, pp. 130-132).

17 On this, see Quevedo (2023, p. 123, note 34).

18 Kant states: "an object is that in the concept of which the different things of a given intuition are *brought together*. But every gathering of representations requires the unity of consciousness in its synthesis. Therefore, the unity of conscious-

Hölderlin speaks of *fact* (*Factum*) of consciousness, preferring the Latin variant of the term. He uses fact of consciousness in the Reinholdian theoretical sense (Henrich, 2004, p. 797), but he does not understand it, like Fichte critically ascribes it to Reinhold, as a principle of philosophy. In general terms, it can only be said that it is a fact that consciousness proceeds through the separation of subject and object (the elements of Reinhold's proposition), and in the Kantian conception there is no need for a unifying principle of the facts of consciousness. It is striking in this context Hölderlin's use of *factum* as a possible allusion to the awareness of the moral law as the "*Faktum* of reason", which is literally in Kant (KpV: A55-56, Henrich, 2004, p. 797, note 153). But, once again, the philological and semantic connection would appear here as an indication that it is an established fact, as certain as the *Faktum* of reason, that conscience has its theoretical limits. The young Hölderlin in Jena always seemed to consider these limits set by Kant, from whom he learned to "examine something before accepting it" (MA II: 579). He reinforced the conviction in contact with the early re-kantianization of post-Kantian philosophy, initiated by Friedrich Niethammer.<sup>19</sup> This Kantian affiliation may explain the choice of the term to define the overstepping of the limits of consciousness in theory. When he clearly states that there are limits for consciousness beyond which theory cannot go, Hölderlin also understands that trying to do so theoretically would be suspect for those who operate within these frameworks.

In view of this, it is understandable that Hölderlin speaks of consciousness in the strong sense of *empirical consciousness*<sup>20</sup> by emphasizing its factual character, i.e. as consciousness that can be reflexively described according to object relation. But there is an argumentative strategy to be highlighted, and here I believe lies the decisive crux of the matter. On the principles of the *Foundation*, Fichte works with two senses of consciousness that clash when he calls consciousness both empirical consciousness and *Tathandlung*, e.g. when he comments that Spinoza "does not deny the unity of empirical consciousness, but he completely denies pure consciousness", while at the same time, following the comment, he states that "pure consciousness never attains to consciousness" (GA I/2: 263). Hölderlin's remark on consciousness as object related strikes a chord with Fichte's ambiguity and emphasizes a conceptual maneuver underlying the attribution of a certain kind of consciousness to the absolute I, according to which Fichte would like to show that, unlike Spinoza's substance's immanency, *his* way of arguing would be immanent, moving within consciousness boundaries. In this way, we can read that Hölderlin's reference to a *fact* (*Factum*) of consciousness eliminates the ambiguity that would remain if his notes on Fichte in Waltershausen referred to an unqualified concept of consciousness. Whether intentional or not, Hölderlin's conceptual accurate suspicion rein-

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ness is what alone constitutes the relation of representations to an object, to their objective validity, and to what converts them into knowledge, and consequently the very possibility of understanding rests on it" (KrV: B137).

<sup>19</sup> On this, see Quevedo (2023, pp. 128-138).

<sup>20</sup> Wirth (1997, p. 195) emphatically defends this thesis.

forces at this point that everything depends on deciding whether Fichte oversteps the limits of empirical consciousness with his insistent grounding in pure consciousness.

That said, the surpassing is to be found in the absolute I. If Fichte's "many statements" go "beyond the fact of consciousness in theory", on the other hand we know that not all of them proceed in this, but some in the opposite way. Precisely in the passage in which Fichte's rhetorical question about what would justify Spinoza "going beyond pure consciousness given in empirical consciousness" (GA I/2: 263), it is supposed that pure consciousness, while not attaining to consciousness, can be derived immanently only from within empirical consciousness. This would be a paradoxically closed reasoning, certainly an artificial construction from the point of view of the philosopher (*Wissenschafts-Lehrer*). Despite of that, one solely of Fichte's inconsistent "many statements" would be enough to question the system. Hölderlin sticks to those opposed of immanence and endorses an interpretation fully compatible with the Fichtean program: the *immediacy* of the absolute "I" is problematic because it cannot be presented in the reflection of empirical consciousness, due to the latter's distinctive *mediated* moments. Being this is not soluble, its form of exposition appears as an extrapolation of empirical consciousness, i.e., for Hölderlin, as dogmatism.

## 6. *Pros and cons around Hyperion*

After having abruptly left Jena and settled in his family home in Nürtingen, Hölderlin prepares the manuscript of the penultimate version of his *Hyperion or the Hermit in Greece* (1797/1799). By December 1795 at the latest, he had sent a print copy to the publisher J. F. Cotta (Schmidt, 1994, p. 1085). At this point, it was no longer a question of purely formal innovation, but of significant changes in the basic conception of the novel.

If in Hölderlin's first months in Frankfurt 1796 "the reverberations of Jena still sound powerful" (*to Niethammer*, MA II, 614), a short time before, in Nürtingen, "his speculative *pros and cons*" seemed to be coming to an end (*to Neuffer*, MA II: 596). The first philosophical manifestation was addressed to Schiller in September 1795, when Hölderlin had probably already written the preface to *Hyperion's* penultimate version. Lamenting the personal disgust that moved him towards "abstraction", he presents the perspective of that moment:

I try to develop for myself the idea of an infinite progress of philosophy, I try to show that the inescapable demand that must be made to every system, the unification of subject and object in an absolute – I or however one names it – is in fact possible aesthetically in intellectual intuition (*intellektuale[n] Anschauung*), but theoretically only by means of an infinite approximation (*unendliche Annäherung*) like the approximation of the square to the circle; and that, in order to realize a system of thought, an immortality is just as necessary as for a system of acting (MA II: 595-596).

Although reserved regarding Fichte's pretensions, Hölderlin understands quite well the demands for a systematic philosophy from Reinhold to Fichte and interprets it here accurately as the unification of subject and object. In Fichte's *Foundation*, this demand is made by the absolute I, which thereby imposes the agreement of the object with the I (GA I/2: 396). In his letter to Hegel, Hölderlin associated the Fichtean I with the problem of consciousness faced in the *Foundation*, but he does not endorse the Fichtean solution to systematic unity because he sees it as a philosophy of identity and self-consciousness incapable of effective unity. For this reason, in *Urtheil und Seyn* (1795), Hölderlin would split what is on the side of consciousness as judgment (*Urtheil*), subject, object, self-consciousness and identity, and what is posited in the perspective of unity in *being* (*Seyn*), "as in *intellectual intuition*" (MA II: 49). The letter to Schiller is the first document retaking up the concept of intellectual intuition and it updates the context of the Jena's problematic. In his speculative *pro*, Hölderlin once again states that the systematic unity of philosophy is only possible through infinite approximation, as Fichte also understands it in the *Foundation* (GA I/2: 276). Therefore, they both think it is an impossible theoretical task. Aware of the problem, Hölderlin illustratively adds the metaphor of squaring the circle and, in parallel, the practical postulate of immortality.

However, Hölderlin extends this difficulty to the Fichtean fiduciary practical domain. If the doctrine of scientific knowledge justifies the act of the I that engenders the system and its realization as fundamental, it is understandable why Hölderlin alludes to immortality to show that his understanding of the practical also interdicts the speculative bias of *Wissenschaftslehre*.<sup>21</sup> His speculative *pro* is of a different nature; he gradually prepares himself to think through the problem of difference within which unity can be valid for a finite consciousness, and not an abstract unity obtained by the practical-progressive demand of a pure consciousness. Thus, the completion of the system would not be possible but *aesthetically*. The recourse to intellectual intuition as an abstract concept launched in *Urtheil und Seyn* for the purposes of definition ("judgement is the original separation of subject and object intimately united in intellectual intuition", MA II: 50) and parameter ("where there is no partition, one can speak of a *pure and simple being*, as in the case of intellectual intuition", MA II: 49), serves rather to emphasize the aesthetic moment of the union of the sensible with the rational-conceptual. The metaphorical allusion to the squaring of the circle makes it clear that Hölderlin certainly understood the postulated moment of Fichtean intellectual intuition, but he instead could not follow the practical yet constructive-projective program of the *Wissenschaftslehre*.

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21 Regarding the practical, Hölderlin says the following, still in Jena, in a letter to his brother of April 1795: "the idea of duty, i.e. the principle: human being must always act in such a way that the disposition from which he acts can be valid as a law for everybody (...). You have the rights to everything that is necessary as means to that supreme end, everything that is indispensable to you for the never-ending perfection of your ethicality (*Sittlichkeit*) (...). Naturally, every human being has the same right in this sense; no one, whoever he may be, can be challenged in the use of his forces or his products in such a way as to impede, less or more, the approximation of his goal, the greatest possible ethicality" (MA II: 576-577).

For if it was clear to him that intellectual intuition and consciousness are respectively situated in the spheres of union and schism, for Fichte, although he identifies the same separation between intuition and consciousness and self-consciousness (GA I/4: 214), intellectual intuition is the very “act performed by the philosopher” which corresponds to the “immediate awareness that I act (...); it [intellectual intuition] is that by which I know something, because I do it” (GA I/4: 216-217). Strictly speaking, therefore, Fichtean intellectual intuition appears as a foreign body artificially introduced by the philosopher into human experience.

The obvious centrality of the aesthetic moment is in line with what had been outlined in the metrical version of *Hyperion*, as well as reverberating in the fragment *Das älteste Systemprogramm des deutschen Idealismus* (1795-1796), which are not at stake here for scope reasons.<sup>22</sup> As for the connection with the speculative *pro* which Hölderlin hesitates so much about, i.e., the unity of subject and object, the preface to the penultimate version of *Hyperion* will relate Beauty to the concrete union of *being* “in the only sense of the word” (MA I: 558).

## 6. Preface to penultimate version of *Hyperion*: Embodied Spinozism?

*Hyperion*'s letters were supposed to communicate the hero's love for Greece. Unlike what might be expected from the narrative of the life of an ancient Greek, the author warns that the character Hyperion, a modern Greek, may seem to the reader somewhat irritating in his contradictions and confusions, “in his strength as in his weakness, in his fury as in his love” (MA I: 558). But “there must be irritation” (MA I: 558). In fact, *Hyperion*'s contemporaries should be able to share the universe of experience narrated in his letters, which is the modern fateful split in the cultural unity such as thought of once may existed between the ancient Greeks as a now poeticized “beautiful community” (*schöne Gemeinde*) (II: 16)<sup>23</sup>.

Certain of the communicability of the character's ambivalence, Hölderlin later addresses the hero's letters to a contemporary German friend, Bellarmin, but still in the preface of penultimate version he tries to explain it in philosophical terms as a fundamental split and a constitutive union. The passage is long, but it is worth reproducing in full:

We all go through an eccentric path (*exzentrische Bahn*), and there is no other way from childhood to perfection.

The blissful unity (*seelige Einigkeit*), the Being (*das Seyn*), in the only sense of the word, is lost to us and we had to lose it if we were to strive for it, to achieve it. We tear ourselves away from the peaceful *Ἐν καὶ Πᾶν* of the world in order to reproduce<sup>24</sup>

<sup>22</sup> On this, see Quevedo (2023, pp. 245-270).

<sup>23</sup> Final version of *Hyperion* will be quoted from MA, but with the pages of the first edition after de volume (I: first volume, II: second volume), which is common to all critical editions and available at the margins.

<sup>24</sup> As Wegenast (1990, p. 96) observes based on the *Grimms Wörterbuch*, the meaning of *herstellen* (nowadays ‘produce’) was the same of *wiederherstellen* (‘reproduce’). The difference would be established from the 19th century onwards.

it through ourselves. We are dissociated from nature, and what was once, as one can believe, One, is now at odds with each other, as if we were everything and the world nothing. Hyperion also divided himself between these two extremes.

To end that eternal conflict between ourselves and the world, to bring back the peace of all peace, which is higher than all reason, to unite us with nature into one infinite whole, that is the goal of all our endeavors, whether we understand each other or not. But neither our knowledge nor our action in any period of existence reaches that point where all conflict ceases, where all is one; the definite line unites with the indefinite only in infinite approximation (*unendliche[r] Annäherung*).

Nor would we have any inkling (*Ahndung*) of that infinite peace, of that Being, in the single sense of the word; we would not strive at all to unite nature with ourselves, we would not think and we would not act, it would be nothing at all, (for us) we ourselves would be nothing, (for us) if that infinite union, that Being, in the single sense of the word, were not nevertheless present. It is there - as beauty (*Schönheit*); a new realm awaits us, to speak with Hyperion, where beauty is queen. –

I believe that in the end we will all say: holy Plato, forgive! you have been grievously sinned against.

The editor.  
(MA I: 558-559).

The idea of a beautiful unity (*schöne Einigkeit*) of previous versions (MA I: 511, 523) is reinforced as a happy or blessed unity (*selige Einigkeit*), qualified as *Being in the only sense of the word*, more emphatically establishing the ontological bond of unity. But Hölderlin also enhances the split even further recognizing that unity is irremediably lost for us as subjects of consciousness, with the present yearning showing a necessary loss: “we had to lose it if we were to strive for it, to achieve it” (MA I: 558). But if unity was originally lost to consciousness from the point of view of *Urtheil und Seyn*, here in the penultimate version it is also placed at the endpoint as a kind of fabrication of ours, therefore initially as a *terminus a quo* and then *ad quem* of thought, so that we are always in a decentered (*exzentrisch*) intermediate position between the original split and the recovery (*Wiederholung*)<sup>25</sup> and reproduction (*Herstellung*)<sup>26</sup> of unity by ourselves. In other words, the condition for recovering unity is so formulated, that it must be effective for it to be

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25 See *Urtheil und Seyn* (MA II: 50): “When I think of an object as possible, I only recover (*wiederhole*) the preceding consciousness through which it is effective.”

26 See above (MA I: 558): “We tear ourselves away from the peaceful Ἐν καὶ Πᾶν of the world in order to reproduce (*herstellen*) it through ourselves.”

possible. The concept of beauty (*Schönheit*) fulfills this condition in previous versions, and in the penultimate version, it joins as present beauty the conditions to produce unity precisely in its felt loss, which bears witness of its presence *ex negativo*, in the effort towards unification and in the “inkling (*Ahndung*) of peace”. This is set by the limits on consciousness, without which, however, it would not be possible to think and act: Beauty is the “*Ev καὶ Πᾶν* (*One and All*), a whole which differs from unity in unity (*All and One*) and which, if on the one hand remains a shadow for consciousness, on the other, is the motor of its (subjective-objective) activity.”<sup>27</sup>

The unity of *Ev καὶ Πᾶν* thus takes up a Spinozist theme in a different key to the critical association Hölderlin set out between Fichte and Spinoza his letter to Hegel. By spreading Lessing’s supposedly use of the expression “*Ev καὶ Πᾶν* as a “summary of his theology and philosophy” (JWB 1,1: 43), Jacobi had given the occasion for thinking of Spinoza’s immanence as an alternative to any philosophy of principles, like the ones offered by Reinhold and Fichte. Now, in the preface to the penultimate version of *Hyperion*, Spinoza steps onto the stage in a more consequential way. The construction of *Urtheil und Seyn* was at the limit of an irreparable split in unity, which was strained by the need for effective unification in *Hyperion* (MA I: 518-519, Quevedo, 2023, p. 247-270). This could not be resolved simply by placing beauty at the center of the question. The Spinoza reconstructed by Jacobi appears in this scenario in an ambivalent way. On the one hand, he is the dogmatic metaphysician to be debunked with Kant and Jacobi, on the other, the thinker of immanence in the opposite direction to the transcendence that Kantian *transcendental* vocabulary also sought to banish (Henrich, 2004, p. 176). Even Jacobi, with his offensive against Spinoza, represented a double position for Hölderlin, for the Spinoza to be fought ends up appearing as the philosopher of demonstrated theory against the Jacobi of immediate knowledge. Despite all his intentions, Jacobi releases a properly positive Spinoza intention, which not only Hölderlin, but Schelling and Hegel, will make own use of (Henrich, 2004, p. 181).

In the preface, Hölderlin is concerned with one more aspect of his speculative *pro*. In the resumption of the Spinozist, the construct of unity that is *One* (*Ev*) and *All* (*Πᾶν*) carries within it the idea of a difference: unity is one *and* (*καὶ*) is all. The need for a differentiated understanding of unity for consciousness gradually begins to gain ground in an effective unity. But this does not mean that the idea of a unity encompassing the whole was not on the horizon of post-Kantian alternatives. Even Fichte gave the practical I an infinitude capable of maintaining itself as “One and All (*Eins und Alles*)” (GA I/2: 301), although this appeared to consciousness as a demand for agreement for the finite I and, so saw Hölderlin, as its suppression. With the recourse to “*Ev καὶ Πᾶν* in *Hyperion*, Hölderlin adds something new to the perspective glimpsed with the idea of Beauty, now including the thought of difference in unity, with the unfolding of this Jacobean-Spinozian construct in the idea of beauty as

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<sup>27</sup> On this general thesis, see Quevedo (2023, pp. 13-21, pp. 213-220).

“one and all” (I: 94) and then as the “in itself differentiated” as the “essence of beauty” (I: 145), both formulations from the first volume of *Hyperion*.<sup>28</sup>

In addition to the relation of unity and totality in the concept, there is a more properly existential and individual element in the relationship with the whole, the experience of which runs through the letters of *Hyperion* and is formulated in the notion of the eccentric path (*exzentrische Bahn*). In Hölderlin’s view, the integration of the autonomous individual into universal truth fails from the point of view of *Urtheil und Seyn*. Its model of schism continues to apply to the constitutive split between being and consciousness. But if there is anything left of this limit after overcoming it with beauty (*Schönheit*), it is overturned once and for all with the reintroduction of Spinoza in the preface. On the one hand, beauty poses the question of the effective presence of being without including the essential moment of difference in unity; on the other, by announcing the presence of beauty as *being*, Hölderlin identifies the thought of Ἐν καὶ Πᾶν both with “childhood”, that is, with the starting point of human formation, and with “perfection” or the endpoint, the lost unity to be *reproduced, recovered*. Therefore, in addition to the difference between the *one* and the *whole*, there is also a difference in the way this unity presents itself to finite consciousness. In Spinoza’s terms, individual and finite existence would be in unison with the pantheism of the Ἐν καὶ Πᾶν of the world, just as the immanence of the world would be the very immanence of the human being. And if we update the key in which Hölderlin receives Spinoza, he notes that Jacobi’s merit was precisely in unveiling the problem of existence (*Daseyn*) in its simple and immediate insolubility (MA II: 43), which recalls the problem of the relationship between the individual and the unity-totality.

Back to (lack of) accurate textuality in the entire German Spinoza quarrel, it is worth remembering that Spinoza does not use the formula Ἐν καὶ Πᾶν. But we may try following Wegenast (1990) and dig up the spirit of German discussion (Henrich’s constellation) out of Spinoza’s text. In the context of his differentiation between *natura naturans*, which conceives of itself as substance (God), and *natura naturata*, which derives from the necessity of God as an attribute (E I: Prop 29 u. scholium), Spinoza does not propose a pantheistic dissolution of the unity of the divine substance in the plurality of existence, nor that of a suppression of the multiple in unity. On the contrary: he conceives unity and totality in a parallelism in which the essence of human being and all existing things appear as *modes of substance*, in a coexistence whose expression might be well translated with the motto Ἐν καὶ Πᾶν. Through this conception, individual existence is integrated into the metaphysical totality of being, just as body and mind constitute only distinct aspects of one and the same existing (E II: Prop 21 u. scholium), and what is conceived as body must derive from what the human mind perceives as such (E II: Prop. 12) – given that “the order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things” (E II: Prop. 7). The argument is as follows: since Spinoza does not conceive of two or more substances of the same nature or of

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28 On this, see Quevedo (2023, pp. 287-312).

the same attribute (E I: Prop. 5), and since “the essence of human does not involve necessary existence” (E II: Ax. 1) because it is not *causa sui* (E I: Def. 1), it follows the well-known thesis that the “essence of human”, like that of other beings, “is constituted by definite modifications of the attributes of God” (E II: Prop. 10 u. corollarium). In the ambivalence of the human being’s *in*-dividual relationship with substance, on the one hand, the link with divinity is placed in what is indivisible between the two<sup>29</sup>, on the other hand, the subjection of the individual to a cognitive inadequacy to what is external to him is exposed (E II: Prop. 31) and the part of the mind that is passive is explained (E III: Prop. 2).

Spinoza’s great theoretical problem, which is to overcome his initial rejection of finalism (E I: Appendix), lies in specifying how intelligence (i.e., human liberty) can overcome its inadequacies and its impotence in the face of affections, therefore achieving the “beatitude of the mind” (E V: Praefatio). This problem reflects the dual situation of the individual with ethical and anthropological consequences, placing him in tension with ignorance and with the affections that must be overcome in an effort (*conatus*) of the mind to persevere in its being (E III: Prop. 6 and 9) during “the whole trajectory of life” (*vitae spatium*) (E V: Prop. 39 u. scholium). This same tension is the cause of representations of evil, disputes and discrepancies with nature. The awareness that accompanies striving is precisely what distinguishes human as a being of will (E III: Prop. 9 u. scholium) who, unlike God (E I: Prop. 32 u. corollarium), is capable of freedom despite (or precisely because of) ignoring true knowledge of himself, i.e. *of his own being and substance*. Only in the intellectual love of the mind towards God<sup>30</sup> (*amor Dei intellectualis*) is a kind of superior intuitive knowledge (*scientia intuitiva*) possible, which “starts from the adequate idea of the essence of certain attributes of God to the adequate knowledge of the essence of things” (E II: Prop. 40 u. scholium 2).

This outlines the framework within which it is possible to think of a positive appropriation of the relationship between individual and totality through its mode of co-embodiment: the essential difference between human and God in the single substance defines the links of this relationship.<sup>31</sup> Translating Spinoza to the problems faced in the preface of the penultimate version of *Hyperion*, the ideal becomes as valid for the *substance* as the eccentric deviation is for the individual *way (modus)* of relating to it, i.e. in the form of unfinishedness marked respectively by modern cultural formation and human’s cognitive inadequacy. To this end, eccentric path is no longer the deviation from the model but the model itself and the ontological status of the individual (Wegenast, 1994, pp. 372-373).

29 See E I: Prop. 13: “Substantia absolute infinita est indivisibilis”.

30 Love has an essential cognitive function in Spinoza: “whoever understands himself and his affections clearly and distinctly loves God; and all the more so the more he understands himself and his affections” (E V: Prop. 15). On the intellectual love of God (*amor Dei intellectualis*), see E V: Prop. 36.

31 As Wegenast observes (1994, p. 377), this relationship may have come to Hölderlin through Lessing, in whose *Die Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts* (1780) we find the idea of legitimizing the individual as self-consciousness and the *medium* of the revelation of universal history, and this in the process of its knowledge.

## 7. By way of conclusion

From the construction of Spinoza we took up to read its entanglements with Fichte and Hölderlin, it is important to point out that the relationship between the individual and substance is of the same type as that between consciousness and the speculative unity of subject and object. If, on the one hand, the latter is glimpsed either as pure and simple being, beauty or substance, on the other, its intangibility ratifies the experience of an insurmountable opposition between self-consciousness and being, between oneself and the world in the extremes of “everything” (*Alles*) or “nothing” (*Nichts*) (MA I: 558). At the same time, as Spinoza sought to understand individual existence as a differentiated form in the modes of substance, his philosophy would promote an “ontological rehabilitation of the multiple” (Wegenast, 1994, p. 375), which is especially important for recovering the unity lost in the multifaceted experience of consciousness in *Hyperion*. What remains of that unity of the Jena philosophical concerns is precisely what is transposed into the truth of the “Ἐν καὶ Πᾶν of the preface, the restitution of which is an unavoidable task, “whether we understand each other about it or not” (MA I: 558). But even so, this immanent unity is guaranteed for the individual by the presence of being as beauty, in which it is fiduciary to the “inkling of being in the single sense of the word” (MA I: 558) that determines thoughts and actions, making it aesthetically accessible. The rehabilitation of the Platonic concept of beauty in the context of “Ἐν καὶ Πᾶν makes it plausible to think of a unity whose *mode* of validity for the individual is that of presence *as* beauty, in which individual and totality, “One *and* All”, are differentiated and united. Beauty is precisely the placing of being in perspective for the human, making it less opaque in aesthetic experience, beyond the theoretical-practical relationship in which “the definite line unites with the indefinite only in infinite approximation” (MA I: 558).

Therefore, the preface structurally reproduces the general lines of what Hölderlin expressed to Schiller in September: the systematic-speculative requirement is only possible aesthetically, because, in theory, one would have to think of “an infinite approximation like the approximation of the square to the circle”, in practice, “an immortality as necessary as for a system of action” (MA II: 595-596). Because of the individual’s relationship with totality in “Ἐν καὶ Πᾶν, which, for consciousness, manifests itself as loss and longing, aesthetics does not enter as an instance of synthesis between the theoretical and the practical, but as a form of individual experience of totality, marked precisely by constitutive opposition between fullness and lack, enthusiasm and sobriety.

Aesthetic experience is here thought of as an act of reproduction of “Ἐν καὶ Πᾶν by us, in which it is saved and explained as a finite consciousness of the founding truth of the unity and totality of being as its own individual unity and totality. The sensitive experience of beauty allows human being to realize that, just like this unifying idea, the conscious effort also realizes the truth of totality, even (and precisely) in his errancy. The gaze towards one’s own experience and perception (*αἴσθησις*) is also the same gaze that enables an earthly realm for beauty, although in *Hyperion* this is placed in the utopic perspective of waiting and hoping.

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