

ON THE PRIMARY-SYNTHETIC UNITY OF APPERCEPTION IN THE *CRITIQUE OF PURE REASON*

IONUȚ ȘTEFAN*

Abstract: This research focuses on the primary-synthetic unity of apperception, as it appears in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, in a larger framework called transcendental idealism. Descartes' philosophy may be considered the first step towards transcendental idealism: the first occurrence of the idea of an epistemic subject. The essence of the epistemic subject through the method of systematic doubt is that of being a thinking *corpus*: I exist because I think. In the *System of Transcendental Idealism*, Schelling starts with a classical question of Western metaphysics: knowledge means an accord between something that is objective and something that is subjective. From here, the following question arises: what is the conjunction between the objective *datum* and the subjective one, or how can both of them be put together, so that no contradiction should arise? When the subjective takes priority, we are talking about transcendental philosophy, a philosophy which holds as central to itself the epistemic subject; and starting from it, we can accomplish the accord between subject and object, within knowledge. For all this mechanism described above to work, we need an *organon*, which is above the mediated knowledge, meaning it is direct. According to Schelling, this instrument is the intellectual insight. Returning to Kant, the transcendental subject depends on perceptiveness; therefore the transcendental subject cannot have intellectual insights. The primary-synthetic unity of apperception belongs to the intellect and includes perceptiveness and the categories. This unity creates an accord between "I think" and "my representations". "I think" is the essence of the epistemic subject. Representations must be associated with the exterior objects. The

* Ionuț Ștefan (✉)

Faculty of Communication and International Relations, "Danubius" University, 3, Galați Bd., 800654 Galați, Romania
e-mail: ionutstefan1977@yahoo.com; ionut.stefan@univ-danubius.ro

subject-object accord, created by Schelling by the means of intellectual insight, is achieved, in Kant's view, through the unity of apperception.

Keywords: epistemic subject, transcendental idealism, intellectual insight, subject-object accord, primary-synthetic unity of apperception.

INTRODUCTION

Kant addresses the issue of the primary-synthetic unity of apperception in the *Critique of Pure Reason* in a general context called transcendental idealism, which is also the type of philosophizing practiced by Kant and which may well be articulated with the philosophies of Fichte, F.W.J. Schelling, and Descartes.

We shall begin with Descartes, as his philosophy has meant an important gain for the transcendental idealism: placing the knowing subject at the heart of the philosophical undertaking. Descartes' work, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, is the proof of the previous statement. The central issue of Descartes' work is finding a rational path, through which we should obtain reliable knowledge, knowledge that should not be affected by the slightest doubt. Thus, the Cartesian method of systematic doubt emerged. What is this? Descartes subjects to a rigorous critical examination the knowledge he has acquired (the first meditation is actually titled: *On what may be called into doubt*).

THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF TRANSCENDENTAL IDEALISM

Descartes' doubt develops over four successive waves, each of which is apparently aimed at demolishing the apparently safe section left standing by the previous wave.

1. First of all, we are reminded that, not infrequently, our senses deceive us (the sound judgments based on senses, such as, for instance, this tower is round, may, at a closer look, prove to be unsound), and that it is prudent never to completely confide in those who have deceived us even once already.
2. The first argument left intact a large number of sound judgments based on senses, apparently unproblematic, such as I hold my hand outstretched before me. It seems I would be crazy if I doubted them. But here comes the second wave of doubt; it may be that claiming to hold my hand outstretched is false,

for I may be dreaming at this instant – and not hold my hand in sight, but be asleep, in bed, my eyes closed.

3. The possibility that I may be dreaming leaves untouched my belief in at least the existence of the general types of things such as heads, hands, faces (for, though a particular reasoning about this hand may be false in case I am dreaming, dreams are, most likely, made of ingredients taken from real life). Yet, here comes the third wave of doubt: a dream may be compared with a painting by imagination – although some paintings are formed by arranging the ingredients extracted from real objects, it seems possible that a painting describe something so new that nothing that would resemble it to the vaguest of extents has ever been seen before, something that therefore is so completely fictitious and unreal. Might it be, then, that my dreams have no counterpart in reality? (Later on, this doubt will be strengthened by the scenario of the malicious demon that made the air, sky, earth, colors, shapes, sounds, and all external things be nothing more than mere illusions of a dream that it had conceived to lure my reasoning).

4. Despite the radical effects of the implications of the doubts expressed so far, Descartes noted that they do by no means change the perception he has of what he calls the simple universals, such as area, size, quantity, and number. These general categories are not affected by the possibility of a complete delusion concerning the outside world and seem to provide the basis for reliable mathematical considerations, which can be made independent of what exists around me. For whether awake or asleep, two and three make five, and a square has no more than four sides; and it seems impossible that such transparent truths attract the suspicion that they would be false. But here comes the last wave – the most devastating one – of doubt. If, as I was taught, there is an almighty God, [then] it is quite possible, as far as I understand, that He misguide me whenever I add two to three or count the sides of a square; but if – on the other hand – my existence is not due to God, but to an accidental chain of less significant causes, [then] it seems even more likely for me to be so fallible that I go astray even when inferring the simplest and apparently the most transparent of truths [...].

The exposition of doubt is exhausted at the beginning of the second Meditation. If doubt is pushed to its limits and I picture in my mind an illusionist of supreme skill and power deceiving me constantly and deliberately, in this case, there is no doubt that I too exist, since he is deluding me: And let him [then] deceive by all his means, he will not, however, ever accomplish that I be nothing as long as I deem I am something. I must therefore conclude that the sentence I am, I exist, whenever uttered or imagined by me, is necessarily true [...].

Expressed elsewhere as the famous dictum *Cogito ergo sum* (“I think, therefore I am”) [the famous Latin phrase does not appear in the Meditations,

but in the Principles (I, 7), and in its French form (“je pense, donc je suis”) in the fourth part of the discourse [...], the consideration is Descartes’ Archimedean point of view – the secure and stable foundation on which he intends to build.¹

This is the guiding thread of the Cartesian method.² What is gained by such a method? A quite important finding, namely: the certainty of the existence of the knowing subject as a thinking corpus. “I reason, therefore I am”, this is what it means. Strictly speaking, I may not exist as stretched-out corpus (*res extensa*), meaning I can doubt the existence of my own body, but I can no longer doubt my existence as thinking corpus (*res cogitans*).

The essence of the knowing subject, through the method of systematic doubt, proves to be that of thinking corpus (I exist because I think). This is the most important truth of the Cartesian philosophy: the explicit revelation of the essence of the knowing subject as being thought. This truth will be fully exploited by the representatives of the German transcendental idealism: Schelling, Fichte, and Kant.

We must first mention the difference between a transcendental philosophy and the rest of philosophies. “In the simplest of terms, a transcendental philosophy seeks to determine the conditions of knowing what comes before and outside any experience. The transcendental (in Latin, *scholastica transcendentalis* from *transcendens*, meaning that which goes beyond) is distinguished from the transcendent, a term that, for Kant, means what goes beyond the limits of experience.”³

In the *System of Transcendental Idealism*, Schelling starts from an issue of traditional metaphysics: knowledge means an accord between

¹ J. Cottingham (1988). *The Rationalists: Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Romanian translation (1998): *Raționaliștii: Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz*, Bucharest: Humanitas Publishing House, p. 63.

² I considered that the exposition made by J. Cottingham clearly and distinctively portrays the “evolution” of the Cartesian method; so, I decided to reproduce it in whole.

³ T. Rockmore (1992). *Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel*. Paris: Criterion. Romanian translation (1998): *Înainte și după Hegel*. Bucharest: Scientific Publishing House, p. 26.

a given subjective and a given objective.⁴ This raises the question: what is the relationship between the objective and subjective givens? Or how can the subjective and objective be combined without contradictions appearing? There are two possible instances: either the objective prevails, and then the question raises, how can something subjective join and remain in line with it, or the subjective takes precedence, and then the question raises, how can something objective join. If we assume that at the beginning of the philosophical undertaking, the subjective and objective exclude one another, remaining separate, then, in the first instance, we get to place intelligence in nature, intelligence being intimately tied to knowledge. Placing intelligence in nature will ultimately lead us to man again, meaning to the subjective, because only man is endowed with self-reflexive intelligence. “The term intelligence bears here the general significance of thought, not intellect (*Verstand*)”.⁵

When the objective takes precedence, we are dealing, in Schelling’s view, with natural science, while in the second instance we are dealing with transcendental philosophy, a philosophy that is centered on the knowing subject, and starting from this knowing subject the accord between subject and object in the context of knowledge may be achieved. In such a context, “the subjective alone presents a primary reality for the transcendental philosopher, he will directly turn into an object at least what lies subjective in knowledge, for him, the objective will turn into object only indirectly”.⁶

This point of view is also supported by Kant, who believed that “the reason, when dealing with external objects, it will still be guided by how it is made”⁷ (reason belongs to the subjective, as stated). Thus, the German transcendental idealism is also characterized by the fact

⁴ F.W.J. Schelling (1979). *System des transzendentalen Idealismus*. Leipzig: Verlag Philipp Reclam. Romanian translation (1995): *Sistemul idealismului transcendental*. Bucharest: Humanitas Publishing House, p. 11.

⁵ Al. Surdu (2002). *Filosofia modernă/Modern Philosophy*. Bucharest: Paideia Publishing House, p. 154.

⁶ F.W.J. Schelling, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

⁷ Immanuel Kant (1930). *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, Leipzig: Meiner. Romanian translation (1998): *Critica rațiunii pure*. Bucharest: IRI Publishing House, p. 32.

that “in the case of this philosophy, the knowing subject is never passive but always active in relation to what the object of experience is. If the subject is active with respect to the object of their experience, then we never perceive what is as it is, independent of us, because what we perceive depends on the subject, on us, on who we are, as subject of experience, we shape the content of our experience. For what we perceive depends on how our responsive apparatus is made up and influences the data of our experience. Kant, for example, argues on technical grounds that any knowledge is possible if and only if, we can modestly say that we produce or create the object of knowledge.”⁸

For all this mechanism described above to work, an instrument is required, that should lie outside the mediated knowledge, meaning be a type of unmediated, direct, non discursive knowledge. Precisely this lying outside the mediated knowledge makes it possible as a first point of departure. This instrument, in Schelling’s view, is an intellectual insight. As he defines it in *System of Transcendental Idealism*, intellectual insight is a certain, unique, and necessary instrument for the possibility of founding the transcendental undertaking. In an intellectual insight, the inferring subject is placed in identity to the inferred object, thus causing the subject-object identity in the context of knowledge. Intellectual insight differs from sensitive insight, because the sensitive one does not cause the occurrence of the identity between the inferring subject and the inferred object, but instead, they remain separate.

[...] there must be a kind of knowledge the object of which is not independent of it, therefore a kind of knowledge that is also a production of its object – an intuition which generally occurs freely and in which the one producing and what is produced are one and the same.

Such an intuition is called intellectual insight, as opposed to sensitive insight, which is not the production of its object and in which, consequently, the inference itself is very different from what it is inferred.

Such an intuition is the I, for only by self-knowledge of the I, the I itself arises (the object). For, whereas the I (as object) is nothing more than self-knowledge, the I arises only in that it knows itself, therefore, the I itself is a

⁸ Tom Rockmore, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

knowledge which also produces itself (as object). The intellectual insight is the core of the whole transcendental thinking, for the transcendental thinking aims to turn into its object, thanks to freedom, that which, otherwise, is not object; it implies a capacity to produce and also infer certain actions of the spirit, so that the production of the object and the inferring itself be absolutely one; but it is precisely this capacity which belongs to the intellectual insight.⁹

This identity that Schelling speaks of is the one “Fichte proclaimed by the formula $me = I$, where I is both the subject and the predicate”¹⁰. Before Schelling, Fichte has instituted the absolute I by intellectual insight, meaning by a direct form of knowledge. “I call intellectual insight that self-insight which we claim of the philosopher on the performance of the act by which “I” arises for him or her. It is the immediate awareness that I act and the awareness of the way I act is the one by which I know something because I am doing or making it. That there is such a faculty of intellectual insight cannot be proven conceptually nor can it be developed through concepts. What this faculty is, one must find it in him or her at first hand or they will never know it. The claim to prove by reasoning is much more surprising than the claim that a blind by birth would have to be given an explanation of what colors are without him or her having to see them.”¹¹ It is noted that the use of intellectual insight becomes essential for the transcendental manner of philosophizing, because, as Schelling used to consider, practically, what is objectified in such an approach are still some subjective contents.

Returning to our topic, we must follow the Kantian guiding thread, that is, the difference between: perceptiveness, intellect, reason, and how this mechanism works in the process of knowledge. “The ability (receptivity) to receive representations by the way we are affected by objects is called perceptiveness.”¹² This first “faculty” thus applies to

⁹ F.W.J. Schelling, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

¹⁰ Al. Surdu, *op. cit.*, p. 154.

¹¹ J.G. Fichte (1908). *Darstellung der Wissenschaftslehre*. Leipzig: Fritz Echartd Verlag, Romanian translation (1998): *Doctrina științei*. Bucharest: Humanitas Publishing House, p. 55.

¹² Immanuel Kant, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

the information that we receive from outside through the senses. For this first mechanism to work, Kant considered that there are two possibility conditions to receive representations within us, namely pure intuitions of time and space. As they are a priori, they come before any possible experience and, precisely because they are a priori, they make possible the ability to receive representations within us.

THE PRIMARY-SYNTHETIC UNITY OF APPERCEPTION

Following this first level, the intellect, with its categories or pure concepts, is placed in service. Through the intellect, the contents of sensitive insights are thought or arranged as concepts. Kant used to consider that the knowledge faculties of the transcendental subject act spontaneously (perceptiveness is, by excellence, intuitive, while intellect is discursive). It is very important to note that, with Kant, the intellect gathers, as concepts, abiding by the logical principle of non-contradiction, the intuitive-sensorial material of perceptiveness.

[...] regardless of perceptiveness, we cannot participate in any intuition. Therefore, the intellect is not a faculty of intuition. But, apart from intuition, there is no other way of knowing, only through concepts. Therefore, the knowledge of any intellect, of the human one at least, is a knowledge through concepts, not intuitive but discursive.

[...] the intellect in general may be represented as a faculty of reasoning. For it is, as stated above, a faculty of thinking, thinking is knowledge through concepts. But concepts relate, as predicates of possible sound judgments, to a certain representation of a yet undetermined object. Thus, the concept of body means something, such as metal, which can be known by that concept. It is therefore concept only by that that it contains other representations which it can use to relate to objects. It is thus the predicate of a possible reasoning: for example, any metal is a body.¹³

The last level in the Kantian undertaking is the level of reason. In Kant's view, it should however be noted that the "intellect is the only one which can spring pure and transcendental concepts, that reason itself does not actually produce any concept, but, at the most, that it frees the concept of intellect from the inevitable limitations of a

¹³ *Ibidem*, pp. 105-106.

possible experience and therefore seeks to extend it beyond the limits of the empirical, but still in touch with it.”¹⁴

It is noted that, with Kant, the sequence of the faculties of knowledge in the process of knowledge is: perceptiveness, intellect, reason. The reason, according to the German philosopher, must take into account that which perceptiveness provides, meaning the sensorial empirical material. Kant considered as eristic that use of reason that does not take perceptiveness into account and operates with those premises arising from it (it referring to reason). Such a fallacious use of reason was represented, in Kant’s view, by the speculative dialectics.

So there are sound judgments which do not contain empirical premises and with the aid of which we conclude from something that we know to something else of which we have no concept and to which we yet attribute, through a seemingly inevitable, the objective reality. Such judgments should be called, in regard to their results, rather sophisms than sound judgments, although in terms of their origin they can take the name of the latter, as they are not forged or born by chance, but they are arising from the nature of reason.¹⁵

What is the Kantian view concerning the intellectual insight? Considering what has been said so far, it seems it is logical that the intellectual insight be regarded with skepticism by Kant.

Self-consciousness (apperception) is the simple representation of the I, and if all the diverse in the subject were given spontaneous only through it, then the internal insight would be intellectual. In humans, this awareness requires an internal perception of the diverse which is given in the subject beforehand, and the manner it is given in sentience without spontaneity should be called, by virtue of this disparity, perceptiveness. If the faculty of being self-conscious is going to perceive (to understand) what is found in sentience, it must be affected, and only in this manner it can produce a self-insight; but this form, being preliminarily found in sentience, determines in the representation of time, the manner the diverse is reunited in sentience, for sentience infers itself not as it would directly represent itself as spontaneous,

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 351.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 298.

but by how it is affected from the inside, hence, as it appears before itself, not as it is.¹⁶

Thus, in Kant's view, the apperception or the simple self-representation is not an intellectual insight as it is with Fichte or Schelling. Concerning the primary or intellectual insight, Kant says:

There is no need to restrict the manner of intuition in time and space to human perceptiveness; it may be that any finite and thinking being necessarily be consistent in it with man (although we cannot state this firmly); yet, despite this universality, it never ceases to be perceptiveness simply because it is derived from something (*intuitus derivatus*) and not primary (*intuitus originarius*), therefore, it is not an intellectual insight similar to the one which, because of the abovementioned reasons, seems to belong to the primary being alone, but never to a dependent being with respect both to its existence and to its intuition (which determines its existence in relation to some given objects). However, this last remark must be regarded in our aesthetic theory only as an exemplification and not as an argument.¹⁷

According to Kant, it follows that the transcendental subject, which is always dependent on perceptiveness in the process of knowledge, cannot have intellectual insights. Who is, then, the primary being that Kant speaks of? Perhaps God, for He does not depend on perceptiveness in the knowledge process. Due to its character of direct knowledge, the intellectual insight of which Kant was skeptical requires a different theoretical approach and another faculty of knowledge. For an expert in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Section 16 of the book raises serious question marks. If thinking means thinking through the concepts of the intellect and not by intuition, then what is the purpose of the primary-synthetic unity of apperception?

This: I think must be able to accompany all my representations, for otherwise something which could not be thought at all would be represented within me, which is tantamount to saying that representation would be either impossible or nothing, at least for me. The representation, which can be given before any

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 92.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 94.

thought is called intuition. Therefore the entire diverse of intuition has a necessary relationship with: I think, within the same subject where this diverse is encountered. But this representation is an act of spontaneity, meaning it cannot be regarded as belonging to perceptiveness. I call it pure apperception, to distinguish it from the empirical apperception, or primary apperception as well, because it is that self-consciousness which, producing the representation, I think, must be able to accompany all others and which, being one and the same in any conscience, can no longer be accompanied by any of them. I call the unity of this representation, transcendental unity of self-consciousness, to describe the possibility of the a priori knowledge that stems from it.¹⁸

We emphasize the Kantian formulations: “I think”; “must”; “all my representations”. If we consider the gain of the Cartesian philosophy, subsequently exploited by the transcendental idealism, and if the essence of the knowing subject, transcendental in this case, is thinking, then what are representations applied to, in Kant’s view? I mentioned the definition of perceptiveness (the ability to receive new representations), wherewith Kant operates, and I explained what perceptiveness does. What is related to my representations, in this case, are the objects that are out of my own person. My representations apply as a first grid in the functioning of the intellect, when we perceive something. Although representations are innate, they are upgraded, meaning passed from the potency of the intellect into its act of thinking, under the influence of those objects external to me, as a knowing subject.

It appears that this primary-synthetic unit of apperception fulfils the function the intellectual insight held in Schelling’s *System of Transcendental Idealism*, namely the achievement of the accord between subject and object in the context of knowledge. It is a necessary accord and even Kant admits it. Only that this accord is no longer achieved through an act of direct knowledge, but by a seemingly bizarre operation subordinated to intellect. Although it is an act of spontaneity, the primary-synthetic unity of apperception must be realized by the transcendental subject in the process of knowledge. Or,

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 129.

awareness involves reflection and it is not known how this reflection is reconciled with the spontaneity of this act. Kant does not provide arguments or logical deductions in favor of this primary-synthetic unit of apperception. We are only told that this act “must” necessarily happen. Thus, we find, even this way, a first manifestation of the categorical imperative in a purely theoretical undertaking. We emphasize once again what we have presented so far. In a purely theoretical approach, in which Kant operates only with a form of knowledge mediated by the concepts of the sovereign intellect, there is a problem that his contemporaries (Fichte, Schelling) have solved by an act of direct knowledge. As the problem remains and cannot be avoided, Kant solves it somewhat artificially, meaning by forcing argumentation. However, the difficulty of Kant’s approach here will be noticed by Hegel and successfully removed. Hegel will be the one to show that it is necessary that any act of direct knowledge be reflected through concept.

The last quote shows a clear distinction between the empirical and pure apperceptions, distinction which reminds of the one operated by Schelling between the intellectual and perceptive insights. Bringing together the various representations, such that all of them should be mine, through the primary-synthetic unity of apperception, can only mean the achievement of the accord between subject and object in knowledge.

There are some interesting comments made by Fichte on intellectual insight. Intellectual insight “may exist only in relation to a sensitive one, an observation which is important and which the scientific doctrine does not refute. If, however, based on this relation, it deems itself entitled to deny the intellectual insight, we could deny with the same justification the sensitive insight as well, for it is only possible in connection with the intellectual one, as everything that my representation has to become, must relate to me, but the I-conscience comes exclusively from intellectual insight”.¹⁹ It is an opposite view of Kant’s. Could it be more justified than this one? An act of direct

¹⁹ J.G. Fichte, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

knowledge ignores, in Kant's view, perceptiveness and intellect, as he conceives it. An intellectual insight, as an act of direct knowledge, pertains to speculative thinking, but it is precisely this type of thinking that Kant avoided. So it was only natural that the author of the *Critique of Pure Reason* be wary of the speculative instruments in knowledge. Where the argumentation is poor, the imperative must arise, announcing the need for such a step in the philosophical approach. If we accept a Hegelian type of solution to this problem, then the Kantian approach appears as a natural relation between such philosophical systems as: Schellingian or Fichtean and Hegelian. In another train of thoughts, our statement recalls the Hegelian belief in the necessary existence of a natural and logical relation among the various philosophies in the history of philosophy, as Hegel conceived it. Now, returning to the Kantian guiding thread, we find the following statements in the *Critique of Pure Reason*:

This principle of the necessary unity of apperception is, in fact, identical to itself, therefore an analytical reasoning, but it nevertheless manifests a synthesis of the diverse given in an intuition as being necessary, synthesis without which that absolute identity of self-consciousness cannot be conceived. For through the I as a mere representation, nothing diverse is given; only by intuition, which is intended by it, may the diverse be given and thought through the connection to a conscience. An intellect, within which the entire diverse would simultaneously be given by self-consciousness, would infer; ours can only think and must seek intuition in the senses. Hence, I am aware of the identical I referring to the diverse of representations given to me through an intuition, because I call all of them my representations, which make one. But this is tantamount to saying that I am aware of a necessary synthesis of these a priori representations, synthesis which is called the primary-synthetic unity of apperception, to which all the representations given to me are submitted, but also to which they must be brought by summarizing.²⁰

Kant's explicit statement about the intellect's impossibility of being intuitive reinforces what we have previously considered. An issue that is solved speculatively becomes a touch stone for a discursive intellect.

²⁰ Immanuel Kant, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

Beyond these aspects, but with regard to this issue, a similarity between the manner of Kant gathering under the strength of a single principle, the representations given by perceptiveness in order for them to be conceived, and the manner Schelling gathered under a single principle the whole system of transcendental idealism, is noticed.

The supreme principle of the possibility of any insight concerning perceptiveness was, as transcendental aesthetic showed, that the entire diverse of intuition be subjected to the formal conditions of space and time. The supreme principle of the same possibility concerning the intellect is that the entire diverse of intuition be subjected to the conditions of the primary-synthetic unit of apperception. The former principle reunites all the various representations of intuition since they are given to us; the latter, since they must be connected by a conscience; without it, nothing can be thought or known, because the given representations do not have the act of apperception – I THINK in common, and therefore they would not be perceived together in a self-consciousness.²¹

CONCLUSIONS

The fact that, with Kant, this unifying identity of the intellect must be realized, an attempt to overcome the stage of direct thinking, not reflected by the concept, as Hegel would put it, is made, but this attempt is not brought to an end. Hegel will systematically accomplish this requirement. We will return to Fichte's considerations on this issue. In the work mentioned, he considered that:

In the Kantian terminology any insight targets an existence (one being established, lasting); the intellectual insight would thus be the direct conscience of a non-sensitive existence, the direct conscience of the object itself, namely by simply thinking; thus, a creation of the object itself through the concept (similar to those who demonstrate God's existence through simple concepts and who must regard His existence as a mere consequence of their thinking.)²²

If Fichte was right, then it seems that the reasons because Kant refused to accept the possibility of the manifestation of an intellectual insight in the case of his transcendental subject without any argument

²¹ *Ibidem*, p. 132.

²² *Ibidem*, p. 147.

whatsoever begin to unravel. This is because an intellectual insight would have annihilated the scheme: perceptiveness which provides content by empirical material, then the intellect which formally orders this empirical material through concepts, and, finally, reason which operates on the concepts of the intellect. An intellectual insight, as an act of direct knowledge of a revealing character, no longer needs the mediation of the intellect by empirical perceptiveness. This would have meant, however, that the whole edifice of the *Critique of Pure Reason* would have again “succumbed” to speculative knowledge, which would have been ruinously in Kantian view.

Kant’s apparent honesty may, however, be noticed. An intellectual insight may be obtained on our own, by each of us, but not by sound judgments and deductions (as I have shown to be the case with Fichte). If Immanuel Kant never had an intellectual insight, then he is entitled to examine it skeptically. His theoretical approach is founded on that kind of bases which can be verified at an intelligible level, and the intellectual insights of his contemporaries, Fichte and Schelling, were useless to Kant, being totally outside his knowing, transcendental subject. Perhaps the evolution (becoming) of the absolute spirit needed a speculative thinker of Hegel’s class, for the approach of transcendental idealism to be crowned by absolute idealism.

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