

KAREN GLOY

THE BASIC STRUCTURE OF THE MODERN CONCEPTION OF SELFCONSCIOUSNESS

I. *Introduction*

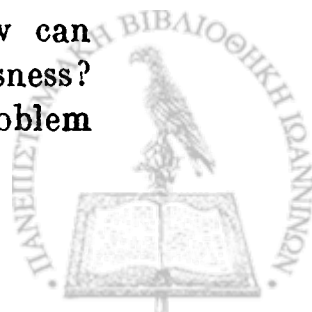
In this paper I will discuss one of the most interesting subjects in modern time, the theory of consciousness and selfconsciousness.

The theory is divided into different parts. One of them is the mind-brain-identity-problem. On the one hand there is the brain, a material substance which is the object for physiologists, physicians, physicists, on the other hand there is thinking, will, emotion, in short conscious acts or states, objects to be analysed by philosophers, scientists and every conscious man. How can these two different levels belong together, how can they be two aspects of one substrate, how can they be identified?

As econd part is the artificial intelligence. Since we have computers, robots, intellectual machines, that can speak, read, play chess, can decide and correct wrong decisions, we have to ask how it is possible that a material thing such as a computer can fulfil such intellectual tasks.

Once I visited the computer museum in Boston and had a small talk with a computer. The computer asked me: 'What's your name?' I said: 'Karen'. The computer spelled: 'Karin'. Then the computer asked me: 'Is it right?' I said: 'No'. The computer said: 'I know. The *i* is not correct, it must be corrected into *e*.' This little speech which can be more complicated and sophisticated today is an example for intelligent computers that can discuss and correct things and behave themselves as intelligent beings.

A third problem—very abstract—is the attempt to interpret the possible structure of consciousness and selfconsciousness. How can we imagine, how can we understand the working of consciousness? What concept of consciousness can we make? This is the problem



Kant and his followers like Fichte, Hegel, Husserl, Sartre, Bergson, Merleau-Ponty discussed, of course in different ways. Modern philosophy can be characterised as "philosophy of consciousness" or of *I* or the *self*, whereas postmodernism has given up this subject and substituted it by non-subjective models like society, general language, different plays of language.

With this paper I will discuss Kant's theory of selfconsciousness including its difficulties, which was one of the most influential theories.

II. *The Significance of the Self in Modern Philosophy*

Selfconsciousness is the subject of modern philosophy. Hegel in his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* declares that modern philosophy begins with Descartes, because this philosopher has established *selfconsciousness* as the fundamental principle of philosophy. This concept contrasts with ancient Greek Philosophy, which was based on *being*.

In the mentioned lectures Hegel writes:

"It is not until Descartes is arrived that we really enter upon a philosophy which is, properly speaking, independent, which knows that it comes forth from reason as independent, and that self-consciousness is an essential moment in the truth. Here, we may say, we are at home, and like the mariner after a long voyage in a tempestuous sea, we may now hail the sight of land."

("Mit ihm [Descartes] treten wir eigentlich in eine selbständige Philosophie ein, welche weiß daß sie selbständig aus der Vernunft kommt und daß das Selbstbewußtsein wesentliches Moment des Wahren ist. Hier, können wir sagen, sind wir zu Hause, und können, wie der Schiffer nach langer Ueberfahrt auf der ungestümen See 'Land' rufen."¹)

In another passage he says:

"René Descartes is indeed the true initiator of modern philosophy in the sense that he is the first to see thought as a philosophical principle. In respect to philosophical theology this is a new foundation."

("René Descartes ist in der Tat der wahrhafte Anfänger der modernen Philosophie, insofern sie das Denken zum Prinzip macht. Das Denken für sich ist hier von der philosophierenden Theologie verschieden [...], es ist ein neuer Boden."²)

1. G.W.F. Hegel: *Sämtliche Werke*, in 20 Bden., hrsg. v. H. Glockner, Bd. XIX, Stuttgart 1928, S. 328.

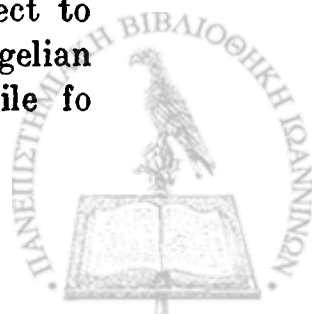
2. Ibid. Bd. XIX, Stuttgart 1928, S. 331.



These thoughts expressed in these two passages have remained true until now, being reiterated by Hegelian as well as non-Hegelian philosophers. It is simply not possible to imagine a modern theory of self-understanding without a theory of selfconsciousness, as this idea is one of the fundamentals of all modern theoretical constructs.

At the same time the domain of selfconsciousness has been expanded constantly since Descartes. While selfconsciousness was first functioning as a *truth-theoretical principle*, promoted by virtue of its certainty and undoubtfullness, that means only as a *principle of evidence*, serving as the measure of all other forms of evidence of knowledge, it later assumed the role of an *ontological and epistemological principle* increasingly applied in the explication of the world. For Descartes self and world —*res cogitans* and *res extensa*— were two separate and independent categories—the former in a dominant position, the latter in a subordinate one—, so that the external world could only be understood out of the self by means of a third power, namely God, who guaranteed the correctness of the relation between the self and the external world. The further development arrived not only at a *dependence* of the world from the selfconsciousness, but rather at a *derivation* of the world from the selfconsciousness. Whereas Kant favoured only a *formal deduction* from the self and therefore a *formal idealism*, maintaining that all objects in the external world as well as all laws of nature could only be formally deduced from the self, while matter has to be given from the outside, the proper idealists Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel assumed that a total —formal and material— deduction of the world from the self is possible. According to these philosophers the external world in its formal and material determination is a product of the subject which exists nowhere else than in consciousness.

In spite of constant expansion of the self from a simple *principle of evidence* to an all embracing *principle of absolute deduction* via a *principle of formal deduction*, it is surprising that the discussion of the self was always directed at its function of establishing a system, especially in Kant's philosophy, and not to its nature and structure. Selfconsciousness was used by Kant by virtue of its significant status, but was not actually analysed by him. Fichte following Kant as his interpreter was the first and possibly the only philosopher who studied selfconsciousness in its internal conditions and in respect to its influence in establishing a philosophical system. Post-Hegelian philosophers abandoned selfconsciousness as well as a principle fo



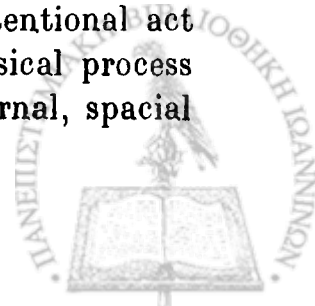
evidence as a principle of deduction, replacing it with more concrete principles such as life in the philosophy of life, for example with Dilthey, existence or Dasein in the existential-philosophy of Heidegger, Sartre, and Jaspers. Although the element of knowledge was abandoned, the fundamental structures have been retained, only in another package. Heidegger makes appear his analysis of Dasein in *Being and Time* (*Sein und Zeit*) as a *temporal* interpretation of the *reflection*-structure of selfconsciousness; for Heidegger, Dasein is a preliminary project reaching into the future and returning from there to an historically determined present.

Looking forward and back at the history of the theory of self-consciousness, it is evidently correct to say that Fichte not Kant was the first philosopher to approach selfconsciousness for its own sake and to recognise the full dimension of its problems. By virtue of the insight gained in the study of the difficulties inherent in the preeminent conception of selfconsciousness of his time, Fichte was able to develop a new theory that must be considered as a revision or even as an opposing counter-project to Kant. Nevertheless, it must be said that his theory did not succeed in avoiding all complications nor did it satisfy expectations.

What was the traditional interpretation of selfconsciousness available to Fichte? We find it in Kant's theory, which was a *reflection-model* of the *egological* type. As Fichte's own concept can only be understood as a critical response to the Kantian model, this lecture will first dwell upon it.

III. *The Traditional Kantian Model of Selfconsciousness: The Reflection Model and its Difficulties*

The most frequent, and therefore probably the most ancient interpretation of selfconsciousness is the *reflection-model* as explained by Kant in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (*Kritik der reinen Vernunft*.) Selfconsciousness results apparently when we turn away from the external world with which we are confronted daily, and revert inwards to our inner self as implied by the popular Japanese saying: "see nothing, hear nothing, say nothing". The subject has recourse only to itself. External objects do not longer interest the subject as it becomes its own object. The reversion or reflection of an intentional act of consciousness is often described analogous to the physical process of light reflection. In the same way in which in the external, spacial



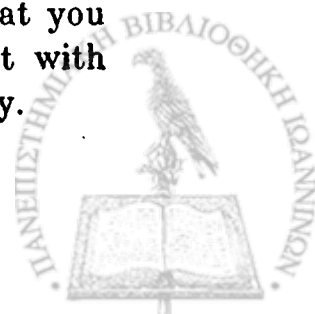
dimension a-light ray produced from a source rebounds after colliding with a solid surface, such as a wall, in the internal, mental dimension a ray of consciousness produced by the self as subject rebounds to the self as object. Here in the theory of Kant we have an interpretation of self-referring knowledge derived from a model of the outer world.

No matter how plausible this interpretation may appear at first, a deeper examination shows its deficiencies. The thesis that the self occurs in the double function of subject and object and, in spite of this duality and opposition, forms a unified, identical self is a mere assertion and arbitrary assumption that still has to be proofed. Proof, however, is hindered by unassailable difficulties. They approach a dilemma. That means, we will be confronted with a hopeless situation, no matter which solution we grasp. The only two possibilities of solution are the alternatives: *knowledge of the self of itself* and *non-knowledge of the self of itself*.

1) If we were to assume that the self does not possess *knowledge of its own subject-object-unity*, whereby such unity is obtained by reflection of the subject to itself as object, an identification is not possible. On the one hand, the subject is not aware of what it should be searching for, and on the other hand, under the assumption that it should face the object with which it coincides, it would not identify it with itself because of the lack of knowledge of the object as corresponding to it.

Similar situations come to mind from psychology, especially pathology, and from poetry. There are cases of organisms existing and acting within their own field of view without knowing that they are doing so. For example, a dog, upon seeing its image in a mirror, will bark, as it does not recognise its own form. In a similar fashion, a baby will not recognise itself in a mirror, thinking instead that it sees another. It is also known that up to a certain age, children address themselves with their given name, as if the person they address were someone else, and not themselves.

The structure of this argumentation is very old and dates back to the sophism Plato mentioned in his dialogue *Menon*, namely that it is impossible to learn: If you *know*, it is not necessary to learn and to look for something, because you know; if you *do not know*, it is impossible to learn and to look for, because you do not know what you have to learn and to look for, and in case you will find what you are looking for by coincidence, it is impossible to identify it with that you are looking for, because you do not know the identity.



2) If we were to assume the opposite, namely that the subject already possesses *knowledge of its subject-object-unity*, it becomes apparent that upon the coincidence of subject and object, identification will not cause any kind of difficulty. However, the theory then will become redundant or circular, because what should follow upon the application of the reflection-model, the process of identification, is completed beforehand. This alternative therefore commits a *petitio principii*, whereby that, which should be explained, becomes a part of the explanation: In this case, it is the *coincidence or identity of subject and object* which is to be explained. This was supposed to occur *by means of reflection* (as defined earlier), that is *by reversion*. But *reflection* occurs only when the subject is already aware of *its relationship to the object*.

In his *Theory of Science (Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo)* of 1798 Fichte describes this difficulty of the Kantian theory as follows:

"So far one has reasoned: We cannot be aware of things opposite to us or of external objects without being aware of ourselves—that is without being ourselves object—and by this means to attain consciousness, i.e. by means of the act of consciousness which reflects itself and gets a consciousness of consciousness. However, we become aware of this consciousness of our consciousness only when we make it object, thereby attaining consciousness of consciousness of our consciousness ad infinitum. This sophism is the basis of all systems, including the Kantian."

("Man hat bisher so gefolgert: Entgegengesetzter Dinge oder äußerer Objekte können wir uns nicht bewußt sein, ohne uns selbst bewußt zu sein, d.h. uns selbst Objekt zu sein [...] und dadurch Bewußtsein von unserm Bewußtsein erlangen. Dieses Bewusstseins von unserm Bewußtsein werden wir aber wieder nur dadurch bewußt, daß wir dasselbe abermals zum Objekte machen, und dadurch Bewußtsein von dem Bewußtsein unseres Bewußtseins erhalten und so ins Unendliche fort [...] Diese Sophisterei lag bisher allen Systemen—selbst dem Kantischen—zum Grunde."³)

Fichte's idea is, that an endless regressus will result when we attempt to search for the self by virtue of consciousness. Being itself an object of consciousness, the consciousness is conscious by a consciousness of a higher level and so in infinitum. Each consciousness presupposes another at a higher level—that is a consciousness of a consciousness of a consciousness etc.

3. J.G. Fichte: *Gesamtausgabe* der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, hrsg. v. R. Lauth, H. Jacob u. H. Gliwitzky, Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt 1962 ff, Bd. IV, 2, S. 30.



A deeper understanding of the seemingly naive reflection-theory shows that this theory only leads to impenetrable difficulties. This is not to say that reflection has no sense or is not one of the most significant achievements of conscious beings. Its importance is justified if considered as a *process of becoming conscious*, that means a *process of explanation of something already existent*. In respect to selfconsciousness it is the *explanation* of the *phenomenon* of selfconsciousness. The theory, however, fails as soon as it is used as an *explanation* for the *genesis* of the phenomenon itself.

Fichte discovered a second fundamental difficulty of the traditional Kantian theory of selfconsciousness. The term "selfconsciousness" is ambiguous, referring on the one hand to the *consciousness of consciousness* and on the other hand to the *consciousness of the self*, which leaves open the exact composition of the self. Is it composed of the total physical-psychical-spiritual self with all its social associations in respect to its environment, social esteem or disdain, its role in the family, state, profession etc., or is it only composed of the physical-psychical self or, even more limited, only of the psychical self with its diverse mental and emotional conditions? Or is it just the spiritual self comprising intellectual acts only? The extension and boundaries of various philosophies may vary, but common to all is the belief in an *egological* basic structure, according to which the relation between self and consciousness is defined as the relation between a possessor of properties and possessed properties.

This aspect can be clearly demonstrated with the Cartesian interpretation of the cogito. When Descartes defined the cogito as *res cogitans* analogous to *res extensa*—the extended thing—, he was indeed trying to show that in thinking we are concerned with a *thing* or at least something *analogue to a thing*, such as *substance*, even if it is of the same kind as an extended substance. However Kant, in his chapter on paralogism in his *Critique of Pure Reason* (*Kritik der reinen Vernunft*) rejected the thing-substance notion due to the lack of empirical provability. The only part of the idea of a concrete substance he accepted was the *logical subject* which is the base of all judgements of the form "I think", "I will", "I recognize" and always remains true to itself. Neo-Kantianism went a step further; for instance, Natorp regarded the Ego simply as a *referent* or a *pole of reference* of acts of consciousness. Nevertheless, all these theories remain closely bound to the egological structure.

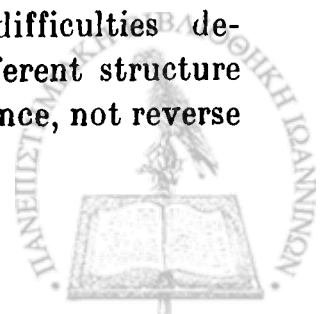


The reason why this interpretation looks familiar to us is due to the Indogermanic structure of the language and its elementary subject-predicate structure as well as the reflection "I think" or "I am conscious of myself". As language is primarily oriented to the external world, that is to *things* that show properties, and is then transported to the inner world of our mind, it is understandable that the structure of the external world can also be found in the description of the inner world. For Fichte this egological notion of selfconsciousness from Descartes to Kant and moreover to Natorp which is oriented on language is to be questioned fundamentally. He completes *the reduction of the self as substance* via the *self as subject* via the *self as pole* to a *self-less, anonymous act of consciousness*. Fichte regards the "self" merely as an expression for a pure subject-less act. This step is justified by the fact that in the act of selfconsciousness adequate evidence belongs to the act of consciousness only, and not to an additional something having consciousness, the self. It seems to be much more the case that the self is a theoretical addendum, to which pure experience does not necessarily lead. Although Fichte keeps the notion of a "self", he has surpassed it theoretically.

IV. *Fichte's Theory of Selfconsciousness: The Production Model and its Difficulties*

Deeper understanding of the problems described above has motivated Fichte to redesign his conception of selfconsciousness. Fichte expressively considered his new theory to represent an alternative to the reflection-model of Kant. Therefore it can only be developed in contrast to the last one. From this perspective we have to keep in mind three aspects:

1. Since the reflection-model of Kant requires an instance — the self — being available beforehand, so that the function of reflection has only to revert back to the same, and since from that fact a progress or regress ad infinitum evolves, it is evident that a *previous existence* of the self cannot be assumed; what can be assumed though is its *state of being produced*. The self's existence is not a *prerequisite*, but rather a *product*.
2. Since the reflection-model of Kant makes use of the structure of *reversion* and since this supposition leads to the difficulties described above, it is evident that an essentially different structure has to be chosen, namely that of one-sided dependence, not reverse



dependence. A *one-sided dependence* is the relation *between production and product*. The new theory is categorised as a relation between cause and effect or ground and result.

3. Since the egological reflection-model operates with the notion of a substrate which contrasts with conscious data without being itself the object of consciousness, it appears to be opportune, due to the difficulties encountered, to reject the *egological* model of Kant in favour of a *non-egological* one.

Fichte's new theory of selfconsciousness, as first exemplified in his major work of 1794, *Foundation of the Whole Theory of Science* (*Grundlage der gesamten Wissenschaftslehre*), could be summarised as follows: "The Ego produces itself" ("Das Ich setzt sich selbst⁴") or better: "The production produces itself."

The most interesting aspect of this formulation in comparison with Kant is the term "to produce" (*setzen*) and not "to reflect" or "to reverse". We no longer have the case of the self's relation to itself (*Sich-auf-sich-Beziehen*) nor "to be in relation" (*Bezogensein*); on the contrary, it is self-production (*Selbstsetzung*) which we are concerned with. This circumstance qualifies our present theory to be a *production-model*, in contrast to the previous *reflection-model* of Kant. In German the word "setzen" has two meanings: a practical and a theoretical one. On the one hand, the term means "to bring forth" (*hervorbringen, erzeugen*), "to create," "to generate," "to call into life or existence" (*ins Leben rufen*). On the other hand, it signifies "to assume," "to accept" (*annehmen*), "to maintain," "to assert" (*behaupten*), "to determine" (*bestimmen*). Whereas the first definition indicates the *general putting forth of an existence or coming into existence* (*Dasein*), the second refers to a *special qualification of the existence, a certain state of being* (*Sosein*). Both terms are interconnected in the sense that existence (*Dasein*) occurs only in a special quality or state of being (*Sosein*).

The act of production in the formulation. "The Ego produces itself" or "The production produces itself" fulfils two tasks: 1. it assures that the existence of the thinking occurs as such and 2. it establishes the existence of the thinking in a certain manner, namely in the manner of knowledge of itself.

4. Ibid. Bd. I, 2, S. 259.



Existence and knowledge of itself proceed hand-in-hand. The ego or the production produces what it is aware of, and it is aware of what it produces. At the end of the *Foundation of the Whole Theory of Science* (*Grundlage der gesamten Wissenschaftslehre*) as well as in later writings Fichte expresses the combination of pure generation and self-knowledge with the words "The Ego (or the production) produces itself as something that is producing itself" ("Das Ich setzt sich *als* sich setzend"⁵). The word "as" —one of the most important words in philosophy— is a particle with an explicatory function. It is the standard philosophical term referring to that which is not only given to sense, but understood by intellect by means of the cogito. Here it implies that the Ego or pure production does not simply bring itself forth, but also knows that it is bringing itself forth.

In summary, it can be said that Fichte's formula describes a relationship between *production and product*. In our previous vocabulary, we see that an "act of production" occurs. Its first result is to be produced, its second result is to be produced as a something knowing itself. Since this act has no condition, no motivation, no cause, it is absolute. That means it is the origin and consequence of itself like Spinoza's *causa sui*. We usually think of God or the Absolute in this way, as of something which has no cause other than itself and no result other than itself. Or to use other words, the Absolute is the cause of everything, including itself.

V. Difficulties of the Production Model

Although Fichte's production theory was introduced to avoid the antinomies inherent the reflection-theory of Kant, we now discover that it itself is not free of them. On the contrary, it appears more absurd and incomprehensible than the reflection-model of Kant. If the latter can at least be legitimated empirically, in the sense that reflection is one of the major acts of conscious beings, no empirical proof can be given for the former.

This criticism, however, can easily be refuted. With selfconsciousness we are concerned with a basic concept and for the interpretation of such a basic concept as for all basic notions of philosophy, we have to apply different criteria than those derived from these basic philosophical ideas. Referring to the *last conditions of existence*

5. Vgl. *ibid.* Bd. I, 2, S. 409, I, 4, S. 276.



(*Sein*) and consciousness (*Bewusstsein*) our natural forms of world interpretation fail because of the ontological and epistemological distinction between the level of last reasons and the level of what is derived from them. The last reasons would not be the last reasons if they could be justified adequately by the very matter of the reasons. Thus, the interpretation is necessarily paradox or circular.

Another attitude is necessary, however, towards the whole range of difficulties which make Fichte's construction suspicious indeed. Three of them I will mention: 1. We find *reflection-theoretical-aspects* in Fichte's production-theory too; 2. we find a *contradictory nature* of the theoretical structures in Fichte's production - model; 3. we finally meet the *inexplicability* of the *unity* of pure production and knowledge of this production. These points I will explain in short:

1. At various points of Fichte's production theory, reflection-theoretical features of Kant can be discerned, which, however, should have been surpassed. Fichte's theory simply replaces the reflecting intention of the reflection-model by a retrospective activity ("Handeln auf ein Handeln"), as described in *the Second Introduction to the Theory of Science (Zweite Einleitung in die Wissenschaftslehre)*⁶. The reflexive structure of the self returning to itself remains, apparently irrespective of whether we are concerned with theoretical intention or with practical acting.

2. A second fundamental difficulty results from the heterogeneous, contradictory demands of the production-theory by which it should utilise the thought of production or causality *and* the notion of *causa sui* with which cause and consequence co-occur. That means on the one hand the model uses a one-sided relationship of dependence between production and product and on the other a self-relation or self-production. These incompatible demands have obviously contradictory consequences. On the one hand, the production must *precede* the product and on the other, both of them must occur *simultaneously*. The unresolved question is: how can we build a system out of such divergent, contradictory demands? How can precedence and simultaneity be thought together?

3. Another problem consists in the legitimation of the hypothetical unity of self-production and the knowledge of self-production. The thesis that these two are inseparable remains a mere assertion

6. Ibid. Bd. I, 4, S. 213.



as long as it is not proved. It is not enough to merely refer to the significant status of selfconsciousness, in which unity is *factual*. We need a *theoretical explanation* of the factual unity. From the finite human standpoint of knowledge such an explanation is possible only by proving the *interdependence* of production and knowledge. This, however, is not to be done, as on the one hand there are many activities, even reflexive ones, that are and will remain unconscious, for example "I wash myself", "the stomach destroys itself with its own fluids", "the river bends its own way into a mountain" etc. On the other hand, knowledge of the self is not necessarily based on activity as in Kant's and Fichte's theories: it is also conceivable as being with oneself (Selbsthabe). Fichte never was able to deliver a proof of the inseparability of activity and knowledge of this activity. In his philosophy after 1800, he shifted the still postulated ground of the unity of selfconsciousness into a transcendental area, into the Absolute, the manifestation and appearance of which is selfconsciousness. With this, Fichte concedes that for us the ground of the unity is theoretically not available.

Thus, all attempts to explain the apparently intelligible phenomenon of selfconsciousness either with a model of reflection as Kant or with a model of production as Fichte are destined to failure.

If a matter cannot apparently be understood theoretically, does this render the matter itself questionable? Is only the *theory impossible* or is the *entity itself an illusion*?

The reason why in present philosophical thought there is a tendency to reject selfconsciousness as well as its substitutes such as life, existence, Dasein, may be found in this fundamental scepticism. Modern analytical philosophy treats the word "I" without its referential meaning in a real self-relation, as an indexical, word, whose employment depends on the learning of its use, the same as for every other word. Thus, the self has been deprived of its eminent position. We do not see a new principle providing the ground for a unified philosophical theory, and, at the same time, avoiding the inherent difficulties of a theory of selfconsciousness. This situation may be partially responsible for the present-day condition of philosophy's disunion and division into uncountable theories, schools and methodical principles. Our task, however, is to search for such a unifying principle.



KAREN GLOY

Η ΝΕΩΤΕΡΙΚΗ ΕΝΝΟΙΑ ΤΗΣ ΑΥΤΟΣΥΝΕΙΔΗΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ Η ΣΤΟΙΧΕΙΩΔΗΣ ΔΟΜΗ ΤΗΣ

Π Ε Ρ Ι Λ Η Ψ Η

Αποτελεί γεγονός το ότι ο χαρακτήρας της ευρωπαϊκής φιλοσοφίας από τον Descartes και ύστερα έχει καθοριστεί σε σημαντικό βαθμό από το ζήτημα του εαυτού και της συνείδησης.

Το ερμηνευτικό μοντέλο του αναστοχασμού, της στοχαστικής αντανάκλασης—το οποίο βρήκε κορυφαία διατύπωση με τον Descartes και τον Kant— περιγράφει μεν το γεγονός της ανθρώπινης αυτοσυνείδησης, δεν μπορεί ωστόσο να ερμηνεύσει τη γένεσή του. Όπως ετέθη χαρακτηριστικά από τον Fichte, αυτή η περιγραφική εξήγηση αποδεικνύεται επιπλέον και κυκλική: ο εαυτός καθίσταται και υποκείμενο και αντικείμενο ταυτόχρονα της αναστοχαστικής κίνησης. Επιπροσθέτως, η έννοια της αυτοσυνείδησης αποκτά μία αυστηρά «εγωλογική» δομή: ο εαυτός είναι ο πόλος σχηματισμού της συνείδησης ως πλέγματος των ιδιοτήτων του, και η συνείδηση είναι το πλέγμα των ιδιοτήτων του εαυτού.

Με βάση την κριτική αυτή, ο Fichte προχωρεί (*Grundlage der gesamten Wissenschaftslehre*, 1794) σε μία αποκλιμάκωση του διπόλου που αποτελείται από τον εαυτό και από τη συνείδηση του εαυτού: η συνειδησιακή πράξη είναι μάλλον για τον φιλόσοφο εκείνη η απρόσωπη, ανώνυμη κίνηση, η οποία συνίσταται ακριβώς στην παραγωγή του εαυτού. Το πρόβλημα της αυτοσυνείδησης έχει αναχθεί έτσι σε μία διαδικασία «εαυτοπαραγωγής» (*"Selbstsetzung"*). Κατά συνέπεια, η ύπαρξη του εαυτού επαρκεί για τη γνώση του εαυτού, αφού τελικά η μία είναι συνώνυμη της άλλης.

Ωστόσο ο Fichte στις αναλύσεις του δεν αποδεσμεύεται ριζικά από την καντιανή εγωλογική φρασεολογία, ούτε κατορθώνει να υποδείξει με ποιον τρόπο η συνειδησιακή πράξη παράγει τον εαυτό (επομένως προϋπάρχει του εαυτού), ενώ ταυτόχρονα τα δύο συνυπάρχουν αδιαχώριστα (ως η αιτία και το προϊόν της). Επιπλέον, δεν κατορθώνει να αποδείξει θεωρητικά την ως άνω ενότητα ύπαρξης και γνώσης, δηλαδή παραγωγής του εαυ-



τού και αυτογνωσίας: υπάρχουν, αντιθέτως, πολλές δραστηριότητες παραγωγικές του εαυτού τους, χωρίς αυτό να συνεπάγεται το ότι είναι και συνειδητές.

Εάν λοιπόν η αυτοσυνείδηση δεν είναι μετά βεβαιότητας ούτε αναστοχαστική ούτε αυτο-παραγόμενη δραστηριότητα, πώς θα την αποδώσουμε ερμηνευτικά; (Π.χ., γιατί να είναι δραστηριότητα και όχι απλώς κατάσταση;) Ο Fichte κατέφυγε στην υπερβατική περιοχή του Απολύτου, η σύγχρονη αναλυτική φιλοσοφία επανέθεσε το «εγώ» ως μία εκ των αντωνυμιών, χωρίς αναφορά σε κάποιον πραγματικό εαυτό. Είναι ανάγκη, εντούτοις, για μία ενοποιητική θεωρία της αυτοσυνείδησης— εάν τουλάχιστον δεν επιθυμούμε να την εντάξουμε ως φαινόμενο στη σφαίρα των ψυχολογικών ψευδαισθήσεων.

ΝΙΚΟΛΑΟΣ ΓΚΟΓΚΑΣ

