

DANIEL BREAZEALE



Thinking Through the
Wissenschaftslehre

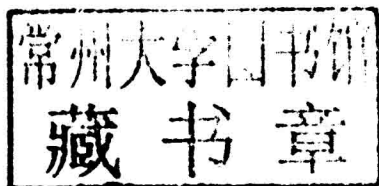
THEMES FROM FICHTE'S EARLY PHILOSOPHY

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Thinking Through the *Wissenschaftslehre*

Themes from Fichte's Early Philosophy

Daniel Breazeale



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Preface

This is a book intended to assist serious students and readers of the *Wissenschaftslehre* in their efforts to penetrate and to understand Fichte's early writings. Though I hope that my fellow specialists in post-Kantian German Idealism will find something of value here, even as they are sure to find some of my conclusions controversial, it is also my hope that this volume can serve others as an advanced introduction to the study of Fichte. In composing this volume I have tried to consider the needs of readers who may have been less than successful in their initial efforts to make sense of the first, best-known, and by far the most influential version of Fichte's system, the version he presented and elaborated in his lectures and writings during his career at Jena (1794–99), as well as in the short periods immediately preceding and following his tenure there. In other words, it has been my goal to provide students of Fichte with something of a “guide for the perplexed”—a goal for which I consider myself unusually well-qualified, inasmuch as all of my own research in this area has been inspired and driven by my own genuine perplexities concerning the aims, methods, and teachings of the early *Wissenschaftslehre*.

Fichte enjoys a well-deserved reputation as a “difficult” thinker, and many of his Jena writings are among the most abstract and enigmatic in the entire history of modern philosophy. My own work on Fichte always begins with a specific *problem*, with a particular issue raised by my frustrated efforts to make sense of Fichte's writings. Usually this involves a failure on my part to grasp the precise meaning and function within his philosophy of terms such as *Anstoß* (“check” or “impulse”), “intellectual intuition,” “Principle of Determinability,” and “pragmatic history,” or my puzzlement concerning, for example, the relation of Fichte's famous dictum that “the kind of philosophy one chooses depends upon the kind of person one is” to his efforts to demonstrate the truth of transcendental idealism and the falsity of dogmatic realism, or the precise sense in which the *Wissenschaftslehre* does (and does not) reflect its author's allegiance to the principle of “the primacy of practical reason.” I then proceed to read as widely as I can in the relevant primary and secondary literature, hoping that this will eventually produce some clarity. Sometimes this succeeds, but often it does not, and then I find myself re-reading and re-thinking the same material for a long time, sometimes for years, until I eventually arrive at what I consider to be an adequate understanding of the issue that first perplexed me and am finally in a position to propose a solution to my own problem. Each of the chapters in this volume began in just this way: as an attempt to “think through” a particular issue or problem associated with the early *Wissenschaftslehre* and do so by analyzing it as much as possible only within the context of Fichte's own lectures and published and unpublished writings and that

of the authors who influenced him or to whose works he was responding, thus thinking it “through” the *Wissenschaftslehre*. Hence the dual meaning of my title: “Thinking Through the *Wissenschaftslehre*.”

For four decades I have devoted myself to studying and interpreting Fichte’s early system and to sharing my (imperfect) understanding of the same with others. In the course of these efforts I have translated into English many of Fichte’s early writings, presented dozens of conference papers and invited lectures on his philosophy, and published scores of papers and essays on the *Wissenschaftslehre* in scholarly journals and books. With the kind encouragement of many of my professional colleagues, I finally decided to select some of my previously published papers, a few of which originally appeared in rather obscure publications or in languages other than English, for publication in a single volume. My original plan was simply to republish these studies in their original form. However, it quickly became evident that I would have to make some changes as well, such as translating into English the many cited passages from the writings of Fichte and others, most of which originally appeared in German or in some other non-English language. In addition, some of these papers were first published more than two decades ago, and thus it also became obvious that I would need to augment and update some of the references to both the primary and secondary literature. Moreover, since their original publication, several of these papers have been subjected to commentary and criticism by others, and thus it seemed advisable to take this opportunity to respond to my critics.

As I continued to work on this project, I found myself less and less inclined simply to reissue my older work, even with the changes and additions just mentioned. Instead, I began to supplement my earlier studies with additional material that had been eliminated (always for reasons of space) from the originally published versions and thus added entirely new sections to some of the essays. I also added many additional references to and citations from Fichte’s published and unpublished writings, including references to some texts that had not even been published in the new critical edition of Fichte’s works when some of these studies were originally composed. In keeping with my intention to produce a volume that could help to orient students and readers not merely in Fichte’s Jena system, but also in the scholarly criticism of the same, I also added new references to and discussions of the secondary literature on Fichte, past and present: hence the unusually elaborate scholarly apparatus that accompanies each chapter.

In doing all of this, I was sometimes forced to reconsider some of my earlier conclusions and to revise my earlier work in the light of my present understanding of the early *Wissenschaftslehre*. As a consequence, though each of the fourteen chapters in this volume is based upon one (or in some cases two or more) previously published essays, none of them exactly corresponds to the older version(s); indeed, most of the chapters differ substantially from the papers on which they were based. All of them have been expanded, some of them quite extensively. A few are only lightly revised;

the rest have been thoroughly rewritten and reorganized, with the inclusion of new sections; and a few of them amount to new studies, even though they all began as revisions of older essays and discuss the same topics.

One consequence of working in this manner is that some passages and themes occur and are discussed in more than one chapter. Rather than being simple repetitions, these recurrences allow the same theme or passage to be illuminated in various contexts and from more than one angle, which contributes to my goal of making as much sense as possible of Fichte's early thought. Even though this remains a collection of independent studies of problems implicit in the early *Wissenschaftslehre* and not a monograph on Fichte's philosophy, it is nevertheless my hope that this volume possesses enough internal coherence to make it worth reading and studying as a whole, from start to finish, and I have added frequent internal cross-references to assist the reader in doing this.

The specific topics and problems discussed in this volume include: the epistemic status of the postulates of practical reason; the theoretical and practical tasks of philosophy; the proper aim and starting-point of transcendental idealism; the relationship of the *Wissenschaftslehre* to philosophical skepticism; the various distinct meanings of the controversial term "intellectual intuition;" the finitude of the I; the doctrine of the *Anstoß* and its essential role in Fichte's account of the self-constitution of the I; the "standpoint of philosophy" and its relationship to that of ordinary life; the complex and fraught dispute between "the idealist" and "the dogmatist," the theoretical and practical tasks of transcendental philosophy; and the relationship of theoretical to practical reason.

Here is a chapter-by-chapter summary of the contents of this volume:

Chapter 1: Wishful Thinking and the Postulates of Practical Reason. In his *Attempt at a Critique of All Revelation*, Fichte affirms a broadly Kantian account of the postulates of practical reason and defends a notion of divine revelation as an inexplicable sensible occurrence that assists one in recognizing the pure moral law. The *content* of all revelations is nothing but the moral law. The need for such revelation is based upon a certain characteristic weakness of human beings. Revelation has a strictly *practical* function and reveals no theoretical truths; it possesses *subjective* validity for certain individuals and is not universally necessary. Though philosophy can demonstrate the possibility of revelation, the actual occurrence of the same always remains *problematic*. Fichte's efforts to distinguish the certainty and necessity ("objective validity") of belief in the postulates from the wish-based and purely hypothetical character ("subjective validity") of belief in revelation are plagued with difficulties and ultimately unsustainable, since it is based upon certain *empirical* claims and not, as he maintains, upon the *a priori* concept of sensible-rational being.

Chapter 2: The Aenesidemus Review and the Transformation of German Idealism. In replying to G. E. Schulze's criticisms of Kant's Critical philosophy and K. L. Reinhold's Elementary Philosophy, Fichte concedes many of Schulze's explicit

criticisms, concerning, for example, the inadmissibility of the thing in itself and the illicit association of “form” with thinking and “content” with sensibility, and the inadequacy of Reinhold’s “principle of consciousness” as the starting-point of a complete system of philosophy. He nevertheless seeks to defend the overall project of transcendental philosophy and to sketch out a strategy for a new presentation of the same, beginning not with any “fact” of consciousness but with the “fact/act” or *Tathandlung* of the pure I, i.e., with an “intellectual intuition.” He also emphasizes that no philosophy can escape that “circle” within which all consciousness is confined, according to which all being is being for consciousness. The root of skepticism lies in the skeptic’s failure to grasp this point and in his demand for an impossible knowledge of things as they are apart from consciousness.

Chapter 3: “Real Synthetic Thinking” and the Principle of Determinability. According to Salomon Maimon, just as formal or analytic thinking is governed by the Principle of Identity, so is synthetic or “real thinking” governed by the Law or Principle of Determinability, according to which the subject of a judgment can be thought “on its own” (as something capable of further determination) whereas the predicate can be thought only with reference to the subject, which thereby “determines” it. The latter principle is thus a transcendental principle for the *a priori* determination of the objects of “real thinking.” For Maimon, however, no finite intellect can actually employ this principle to determine the sensible manifold. Fichte rejected Maimon’s skepticism, along with his faculty dualism, and employed his own modified version of his principle of real (i.e., synthetic *a priori*) thinking, which he called the “Principle of Interdetermination” or “Law of Reflective Opposition.”

Chapter 4: “A Pragmatic History of the Human Mind.” In describing the *Wissenschaftslehre* as a “pragmatic history of the human mind,” Fichte was directly influenced by the work of Kant and Platner, as well as by discussions concerning the possibility of a “pragmatic history of philosophy” by Reinhold, Maimon, and Tennemann. Fichte’s new conception of a pragmatic history is that of a “genetic” or “synthetic” account of a process of development, in which each step is implicit in and made necessary by the previous ones. A pragmatic history of the mind has for its object those self-constitutive acts of the I that are freely postulated and performed by the transcendental philosopher, who also observes or “intuits” them and then describes them in their relationship to one another. Such a history is both *a priori* and atemporal, and its objects can be described as necessary philosophical “fictions.”

Chapter 5: The Spirit of the Early Wissenschaftslehre. The system of the early or “Jena” *Wissenschaftslehre* includes: (1) a foundational portion or “first philosophy”; (2) “theoretical philosophy” or philosophy of nature; (3) “practical philosophy” or ethics; and (4) “philosophy of the postulates,” which includes both the doctrine of natural right or social/political philosophy and philosophy of religion. Fichte also published several popular or “critical” introductions to his new system, though he introduced his own students to philosophy by exposing them to skeptical objections of other systems and

by emphasizing the practical benefits of the *Wissenschaftslehre*. Central teachings of the Jena *Wissenschaftslehre* include: a commitment to a strongly foundationalist model of philosophy, beginning with the free self-positing of the I; an insistence upon the necessary finitude of the I; a recognition of the necessary embodiment of consciousness; an emphasis upon the division between the pure and finite I and the endless striving that this produces; and an insistence that we can never escape “the circle of consciousness” nor abstract from the I.

Chapter 6: The Divided Self and the Tasks of Philosophy. The purely practical or “existential” tasks of the *Wissenschaftslehre* include the following: it should satisfy our innate drive for knowledge; it should provide us with otherwise unavailable knowledge of the human condition and of the ultimate goals of human action and thus foster human progress; and it should address the fundamental problem of man’s “divided self” and assist in reconciling one’s awareness of one’s own freedom with one’s experience of an objective and determinate world, thereby mitigating the conflict between the dictates of one’s “heart” and one’s “head.” The purely theoretical or “scientific” tasks of the *Wissenschaftslehre* include both systematic and transcendental tasks. Among the former are: providing a systematic account of all knowledge; establishing the systematic form of science as such, along with the specific domain of each of the special sciences; establishing a universally valid and self-evident first principle for the system; and demonstrating its own completeness and possibility. Among the latter are: displaying the “foundations of experience;” providing a transcendental derivation of the ordinary standpoint of consciousness; and providing a complete inventory of the necessary acts of the mind and a complete analysis of its own first principle. The greatest practical contribution of philosophy lies in its demonstration of the necessity of a certain conflict within the I, without which there could be no consciousness, self-consciousness, cognition, nor free action.

Chapter 7: Anstoß, Abstract Realism, and the Finitude of the I. Often translated either as “check” or “impulse,” the term *Anstoß* indicates both a limitation upon the original activity of the I and an occasion for further acts of reflection on its part, through which originally given “sensible feelings” are transformed into representations of external objects in space and time. In the doctrine of natural right the original limit of the I appears as a “summons” from another individual, calling upon one to limit one’s freedom in recognition of that of the other. In the domain of ethics, the original limitation of the I appears as a pre-deliberative determination of the pure will to will as its final end nothing but the independence and self-activity of the finite I, a determination of which one becomes immediately conscious through the feeling of duty. These limits, which cannot be explained or grounded in anything higher, indicate the limits of philosophy as well, which is strictly confined to a transcendental derivation of the necessary conditions of I-hood. Because it recognizes the necessity of such limitations as conditions for the possibility of the freedom of the I, the *Wissenschaftslehre* may be described as a system of “abstract realism.”

Chapter 8: Intellectual Intuition. One can distinguish four distinct senses of “intellectual” (or “inner”) intuition in Fichte’s Jena writings: (1) the “actual intellectual intuition” of moral obligation and of one’s free power to determine oneself in accord with duty; (2) “intellectual intuition” as designating the pure and underlying structure of self-consciousness or “I-hood,” in which the subject and object are in immediate unity with one another as a fact/act of *Tathandlung*; (3) “intellectual intuition” as a freely produced fact of (philosophical) consciousness; and (4) “intellectual intuition” as a central component of the transcendental philosopher’s “observational” or “descriptive” method of genetic construction. Only the first occurs as such within ordinary consciousness, while the other three pertain exclusively to the “standpoint of philosophy.”

Chapter 9: Skepticism and Wissenschaftslehre. For Fichte, “critical skepticism” represents a crucial step beyond the ordinary standpoint and towards an adequate philosophical standpoint, at the same time that it fails to be an adequate standpoint in its own right. His response to skepticism takes two forms: on the one hand, he provides a purely speculative or theoretical account of knowledge and experience, which makes no reference whatsoever to “things in themselves”; on the other, he endorses a “practical” response to the challenge of skepticism, and, more specifically, to skeptical doubt concerning the reality of one’s everyday *belief* in moral obligation and human freedom. Without an extra-philosophical practico-moral resolve not to question such beliefs, the systematic starting-point of the *Wissenschaftslehre* is always open to theoretically grounded skeptical challenge.

Chapter 10: Circles and Grounds. Fichte’s Jena writings include a remarkable number of comments on avoidable and unavoidable kinds of circular reasoning, many of which appear to apply directly to his own philosophizing. This has led some interpreters to challenge the common view of Fichte as an arch-foundationalist and to interpret the Jena *Wissenschaftslehre* as committed to a “circular” model of epistemology and system, according to which there are no immediately certain philosophical propositions and all truth is mediated by the inter determination of all the propositions that make up the system, as in Hegel’s mature system. Though there is some evidence for this view, there is an overwhelming amount of evidence against it. Despite his acknowledgment of various types of unavoidable extra-systematic and intra-systematic “circularity,” including the circular or mutually inter determining relationship to one another of the various powers and actions of the finite I and the inescapable “circle of consciousness” within which all finite intellects are confined, Fichte remained a systematic foundationalist.

Chapter 11: Idealism vs. Dogmatism. The task of philosophy is to explain the presence to consciousness of “representations accompanied by a feeling of necessity.” It can attempt to do this either by grounding experience upon a thing in itself as the cause of the determinations of the I, or by explaining experience as a product of the self-constitutive activity of the finite I. These are, respectively, the strategies of “dogmatism” and “idealism,” which are, for Fichte, the only two possible systems of

philosophy. Though Fichte appears to argue that neither idealism nor dogmatism can directly refute the other and thus that the “choice” between them is either radically free or else determined by one’s practical interests and self-conception, he nevertheless offers a number of arguments designed to “refute” dogmatism by demonstrating that it can never successfully “explain” ordinary experience. At the same time, he also tries to explain why the dogmatist remains incapable of recognizing the force of such arguments and what this implies concerning the idealist’s obligation to educate and to cultivate others.

Chapter 12: The Interests of Reason. Kant distinguishes the interest of theoretical reason from that of practical reason and connects both to the interest of reason as such, which he conceives of as ultimately “practical.” Fichte links the interests of practical and of theoretical reason more closely to one another than does Kant and connects his account of the fundamental interest of reason to his general theory of the finite I as a perpetually “divided self,” always striving and struggling to obtain an unobtainable unity. For Fichte, there can be no real conflict between the interests of theoretical and of practical reason, nor can there be any genuine conflict between reason and interest. On the contrary, reason is always “interested,” and the “life of reason” is one of active, practical engagement with the world in a process of endless striving.

Chapter 13: The Standpoint of Life and the Standpoint of Philosophy. A sharp distinction between the “standpoints” or “points of view” of, on the one hand, ordinary human life and, on the other, transcendental or speculative philosophy is a characteristic feature of all of Fichte’s “critical” or introductory writings from the Jena period. Between 1794 and 1801 his views concerning the utility of philosophy for life underwent important changes, but he remained insistent that only from the standpoint of philosophy could one overcome certain tensions—notably that between freedom and necessity—that are irresolvable from the standpoint of life itself. Philosophy accomplishes this by deriving the standpoint of life from the free self-positing of the I; but in order to do this it has to abstract completely from and thereby transcend the ordinary standpoint of life. There are a number of problems associated with the *transition* from each of these standpoints to the other, which Fichte tries to address by considering the intellectual and the practical prerequisites for engaging in philosophy, as well as the role of “aesthetic education” in preparing one for the transition from the standpoint of life to that of philosophy.

Chapter 14: The Problematic Primacy of the Practical. Though Fichte is often described as an “ethical idealist” who carried the Kantian principle of “the primacy of the practical” to a new extreme, this characterization overlooks the extent to which the *Wissenschaftslehre* actually demonstrates the fundamental “equiprimordiality” of the theoretical and practical powers and activities of the I. Knowing and willing are equally involved in the constitution of finite selfhood and are both implicit in every moment of actual consciousness. There are, however, several other senses in which Fichte does recognize the primacy of the practical: with respect, for example, to the role of moral

self-awareness in making the transition from the ordinary to the philosophical standpoint and in resolutely rejecting skeptical doubts concerning human freedom. Though Fichte identified “practical philosophy” with ethical theory, he also suggested that the *Wissenschaftslehre* as a whole could have practical benefits both for the individual philosopher and for the progress of humanity as a whole, even though philosophy as such is and must remain a purely theoretical enterprise.

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Chapter 1. Wishful Thinking and the Postulates of Practical Reason: based upon “Wishful Thinking: Concerning Fichte’s Interpretation of the Postulates of Reason in his *Versuch einer Kritik aller Offenbarung* (1792).” In *Philosophy and Religion in German Idealism* (“Studies in German Idealism,” vol. 2), ed. William Desmond, Ernst-Otto Onnash, and Paul Cruysberghs, pp. 35–69. Dordrecht and Boston: Kluwer, 2004, used with kind permission from Springer Science+Business Media B.V.

Chapter 2. The *Aenesidemus* Review and the Transformation of German Idealism: based upon “Fichte’s *Aenesidemus* Review and the Transformation of German Idealism.” *Review of Metaphysics* 34 (1981): 545–68.

Chapter 3. “Real Synthetic Thinking” and the Principle of Determinability: based upon “‘Der Satz der Bestimmbarkeit: Fichte’s Appropriation and Transformation of Maimon’s Principle of Synthetic Thinking.’” *Internationales Jahrbuch des Deutschen Idealismus/International Yearbook of German Idealism (Konzepte der Rationalität/Concepts of Rationality)*, ed. Karl Ameriks and Jürgen Stolzenberg. [Berlin: de Gruyter] 1 (2003): 115–40.

Chapter 4. “A Pragmatic History of the Human Mind”: based upon “Fichte’s Conception of Philosophy as a ‘Pragmatic History of the Human Mind’ and the Contributions of Kant, Platner, and Maimon.” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 62 (2002): 685–703, used with kind permission from the University of Pennsylvania Press; and “What is a ‘Pragmatic History of the Human Mind’? Some Methodological Remarks on Fichte’s Jena Project.” In *Fichte: Crença, imaginação e temporalidade*, ed. Fernando Gil, Viginia López Dominguez, and Luisa Couto Soares, pp. 89–108. Porto [Portugal]: Campos das Letras, 2002.

Chapter 5. The Spirit of the Early *Wissenschaftslehre*: based upon “The Spirit of the *Wissenschaftslehre*.” In *The Reception of Kant’s Critical Philosophy: Fichte, Schelling and Hegel*, ed. Sally Sedgwick, pp. 171–98. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Chapter 6. The Divided Self and the Tasks of Philosophy: based upon “Philosophy and the Divided Self: On the Existential and Scientific Tasks of the Jena *Wissenschaftslehre*,” *Fichte-Studien* 6 (1994): 117–47, used with kind permission of Rodopi.

Chapter 7. *Anstoß*, Abstract Realism, and the Finitude of the I: based upon “Check or Checkmate? On the Finitude of the Fichtean Self.” In *The Modern Subject: Conceptions of the Self in Classical German Philosophy*, ed. Karl Ameriks and Dieter Sturma, pp. 87–114. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995; and “De la *Tathandlung* à l’*Anstoß*—et retour: Liberté et facticité dans les *Principes de la Doctrine de la Science*.” *Les cahiers de philosophie*, “Le bicentenaire de la *Doctrine de la Science* de Fichte (1794–1994),” Numéro hors série, Printemps 1995 (Lille, France): 69–87; and “Fichte’s Abstract Realism.” In *From Transcendental Philosophy to Metaphysics: The Emergence of German Idealism*, ed. Michael Baur and Daniel O. Dahlstrom, pp. 99–115. Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1999.

Chapter 8. Intellectual Intuition: based upon “Fichte’s *nova methodo phenomenologica*: On the Methodological Role of ‘Intellectual Intuition’ in the Later Jena *Wissenschaftslehre*.” *Revue Internationale de Philosophie* [Brussels] 206 (1998): 587–616.

Chapter 9. Skepticism and *Wissenschaftslehre*: based upon “Fichte on Skepticism.” *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 29 (1991): 427–53.

Chapter 10. Circles and Grounds: based upon “Circles and Grounds in the Jena *Wissenschaftslehre*.” In *Fichte: Historical Contexts/Contemporary Controversies*, ed. Daniel Breazeale and Tom Rockmore, pp. 43–70. Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1994.

Chapter 11. Idealism vs. Dogmatism: based upon “How to Make an Idealist: Fichte’s ‘Refutation of Dogmatism’ and the Starting Point of the *Wissenschaftslehre*.” *Philosophical Forum* 19 (1987/88): 97–123, used with kind permission from Blackwell’s.

Chapter 12. The Interests of Reason: based upon “Kant, Fichte, and the ‘Interests of Reason.’” *Διαίωση*, *Revista de Filosofia* (Murcia [Portugal]) Número 9 (1994): 81–98.

Chapter 13. The Standpoint of Life and the Standpoint of Philosophy: based upon “The ‘Standpoint of Life’ and the ‘Standpoint of Philosophy’ in the Jena *Wissenschaftslehre*.” In *Transzendentalphilosophie als System: Die Auseinandersetzung zwischen 1794 und 1806*, ed. Albert Mues, pp. 81–104. Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1989.

Chapter 14. The Problematic Primacy of the Practical: based upon “The Theory of Practice and the Practice of Theory: Fichte and the ‘Primacy of Practical Reason.’” *International Philosophical Quarterly* 36 (1996): 47–64, used with kind permission from the Philosophy Documentation Center; and “Die systematischen Funktionen des Praktischen bei Fichte und dessen systematische Vieldeutigkeit.” In *Fichtes praktische Philosophie. Eine systematische Einführung*, ed. Hans Georg von Manz and Günter Zöller, pp. 39–72. Hildesheim: Olms Verlag, 2006.

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List of Abbreviations

- AA *Immanuel Kants gesammelte Schriften* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1902ff.). Cited by volume and page number.
- ALZ *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung*.
- ApT Fichte, *Annalen des philosophischen Tons* ["Annals of Philosophical Tone"] (1797; partial English trans. in *EPW*).
- AssJ Fichte, "[Ankündigung:] Seit sechs Jahren]" ("Public Announcement of a New Presentation of the *Wissenschaftslehre*") (1800; English trans. in *IWL*).
- BEIWL Fichte, *Über Belebung und Erhöhung des reinen Interesse für Wahrheit* ["On Stimulating and Increasing the Pure Interest in Truth"] (1795; English trans. in *EPW*).
- BM Fichte, *Die Bestimmung des Menschen* [*The Vocation of Man*] (1800).
- BWL Fichte, *Über den Begriff der Wissenschaftslehre* [*Concerning the Concept of the Wissenschaftslehre*] (1794; English trans. in *EPW*).
- CC Fichte, "A Crystal Clear Report to the General Public Concerning the Actual Essence of the Newest Philosophy: An Attempt to Force the Reader to Understand," trans. John Botterman and William Rasch, in *Philosophy of German Idealism*, ed. Ernst Behler (New York: Continuum, 1987), pp. 39–115. Trans. of *SB*.
- CR Fichte, *Attempt at a Critique of All Revelation*, trans. Garrett Green, ed. Allen Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). Trans. of *VKO*.
- EEWL Fichte, *Erste Einleitung in der Wissenschaftslehre* ["First Introduction to the *Wissenschaftslehre*"] (1797; English trans. in *IWL*).
- EM/PP Fichte, *Eigene Meditationen über ElementarPhilosophie/Practische Philosophie* [*Personal Meditations on Elementary Philosophy/Practical Philosophy*] (unpublished manuscript, 1793/94).
- EPW Fichte: *Early Philosophical Writings*, ed. and trans. Daniel Breazeale (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988).
- EVBC Fichte, *Einige Vorlesungen über die Bestimmung des Gelehrten* [*Some Lectures on the Scholar's Vocation*] (1794; English trans. in *EPW*).
- FfG *Fichte im Gespräch: Berichte der Zeitgenossen*, ed. Erich Fuchs (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1978ff.).
- FNR Fichte, *Foundations of Natural Right*, ed. Frederick Neuhouser, trans. Michael Baur (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). Trans. of *GNR*.
- FTP Fichte: *Foundations of Transcendental Philosophy (Wissenschaftslehre) nova methodo*, ed. and trans. Daniel Breazeale (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992). Trans. of *WLM*.

- FzR* J. G. Fichte in *zeitgenössischen Rezensionen*, ed. Erich Fuchs, Wilhelm G. Jacobs, and Walter Schieche (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1995).
- GA* J. G. Fichte-Gesamtausgabe der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, ed. Erich Fuchs, Reinhard Lauth†, and Hans Gliwitzky† (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1964–2012.). This monumental critical edition is divided into 4 parts: Pt. I = Published writings; Pt. II = Unpublished writings; Pt. III = Correspondence; and Pt. IV = Student transcripts of Fichte's lectures. Fichte's correspondence, however, is identified simply by date and recipient.
- GEWL* Fichte, *Grundriss des Eigenthümlichen der Wissenschaftslehre in Rücksicht auf das theoretische Vermögen* [Outline of the Distinctive Character of the Wissenschaftslehre with Respect to the Theoretical Faculty] (1795; English trans. in *EPW*).
- GG* Fichte, *Über den Grund unseres Glaubens an eine göttliche Weltregierung* ["On the Basis of our Belief in Divine Governance of the World"] (1798; English trans. in *IWL*).
- GMS* Kant, *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten* [Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals] (1785).
- GNR* Fichte, *Grundlage des Naturrechts* [Foundations of Natural Right] (1796/97; English trans. = *FNR*).
- GWL* Fichte, *Grundlage der gesamten Wissenschaftslehre* [Foundations of the Entire Wissenschaftslehre] (1794/95; English trans. = *SK*).
- IWL* Fichte, *Introductions to the Wissenschaftslehre and Other Writings*, ed. and trans. Daniel Breazeale (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994).
- KpV* Kant, *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft* [Critique of Practical Reason] (1788).
- KrV* Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* [Critique of Pure Reason]. (As is customary, references to *KrV* are simply to the page numbers of the A [1781] and B [1787] edns.).
- KU* Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft* [Critique of the Power of Judgment] (1790).
- MM* Kant, *Die Metaphysik der Sitten* [Metaphysics of Morals] (1797).
- P* Kant, *Prolegomena zu einer jeden künftigen Metaphysik, die als Wissenschaft wird auftreten können* [Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics that will be able to Come Forward as a Science] (1781).
- PJ* *Philosophisches Journal einer Gesellschaft Teutscher Gelehrten* [Philosophical Journal of a Society of German Scholars, founded in 1794 by Fichte's Jena colleague, F. I. Niethammer. Fichte became co-editor of *PJ* in the summer of 1796.].
- RA* Fichte, "Recension des *Aenesidemus*" ["Review of *Aenesidemus*"] (1794; English trans. in *EPW*).
- SB* Fichte, *Sonnenklarer Bericht an das grössere Publikum über das eigentliche Wesen der neuesten Philosophie* [Sun-Clear Report to the General Public Concerning the Actual Essence of the Newest Philosophy] (1801; English trans. = *CC*).
- SE* Fichte, *System of Ethics*, ed. and trans. Daniel Breazeale and Günter Zöllner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). Trans. of *SS*.

- SK *Fichte: Science of Knowledge (Wissenschaftslehre), with First and Second Introductions*, ed. and trans. Peter Heath and John Lachs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982 [orig. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1970]). Trans. of *GWL*.
- SLP Fichte, "On the Spirit and Letter in Philosophy," trans. Elizabeth Rubenstein in *German Aesthetic and Literary Criticism*, ed. David Simpson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984). Trans. of *UGBB*.
- SS Fichte, *System der Sittenlehre [System of Ethics]* (1798; English trans. = *SE*).
- SW *Johann Gottlieb Fichtes sämtliche Werke*, ed. I. H. Fichte, 8 vols. (Berlin: Viet & Co., 1845–46); rpt., along with the three vols. of *Johann Gottlieb Fichtes nachgelassene Werke* (Bonn: Adolphus-Marcus, 1834–35), as *Fichtes Werke* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1971). Citations from this edition are in the following form: *SW*, X: 22 = Vol. X, p. 22.
- UGB Fichte, *Über den Unterschied des Geistes und des Buchstaben in der Philosophie* ["Concerning the Difference between the Spirit and the Letter within Philosophy"] (unpublished public lectures, 1795; English trans. in *EPW*).
- UGBP Fichte, *Über Geist und Buchstabe in der Philosophie. In einer Reihe von Briefen* ["Concerning Spirit and Letter in Philosophy, in a series of Letters"] (written 1794, published 1800); English trans. = "The Spirit and the Letter in Philosophy," trans. Elizabeth Rubenstein, in *German Aesthetic and Literary Criticism: Kant, Fichte, Schelling, Schopenhauer, Hegel*, ed. David Simpson [New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984], pp. 74–93).
- VKO Fichte, *Versuch einer Kritik aller Offenbarung [Attempt at a Critique of All Revelation]* (1st edn., 1792; 2nd edn., 1793; English trans. = *CR*).
- VLM Fichte, *Vorlesungen über Logik und Metaphysik* ["Lectures on Logic and Metaphysics"] (1794–98, 1804, and 1812); Fichte's lecture notes for his "introductory" class, based on Ernst Platner's *Philosophical Aphorisms*, vol. I).
- VM Fichte, *The Vocation of Man*, trans. Peter Preuss (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1987). Trans. of *BM*.
- VSS Fichte, "Vergleichung des vom Hrn. Schmid aufgestellten Systems mit der Wissenschaftslehre" ["A Comparison of Prof. Schmid's System and the *Wissenschaftslehre*"] (1796; partial English trans. in *EPW*).
- VWL Fichte, *Versuch einer neuen Darstellung der Wissenschaftslehre* ["Attempt at a New Presentation of the *Wissenschaftslehre*, Chapter One"] (1798; English trans. in *IWL*).
- WLmm Fichte, *Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo* (1796–99; student transcripts of revised versions of Fichte's private lectures on the foundational portion of his system; English translation = *FTP*).
- WLmm[H] Fichte, *Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo* ("Halle Nachschrift," 1796/97; English trans. = *FTP*).