

# **“THE BEING OUTSIDE OF BEING, WITHIN BEING”. THE QUESTION OF HUMAN CONSCIOUSNESS IN NOVALIS’ “FICHTE-STUDIEN”\***

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**ABSTRACT** *The question of human consciousness is a crucial part of Novalis’ aim of construing a self-critique of the I, or critique of human identity, as it is proposed in his “Fichte-Studien” (1795-1796). Namely, this question is an intermediary stage in said critique, serving as proof for Novalis’ theory of the opposites, the fundamental stage, and his position on philosophizing, the final stage of this endeavor, which will be at the basis of his whole philosophical system; and as such, it is a topic of great importance, as it is not only a link in a chain of thought which aims at proving the organicity or living heterogeneity – and not Fichte’s machine-like homogeneity – of the human but is also a key topic towards the resolution of Novalis’ problem of philosophy as an existential problem. Given this, the present article intends to situate the question of human consciousness in the framework of Novalis’ greater scope of a critique of the I; and from then, to comment on Novalis’ own position on the problem of human consciousness, as it is stated in the formula “Consciousness is the Being outside of Being, within Being”; a position which further separates the young poet*

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*from Fichte, as it renders him closer and closer to other young idealists, such as Hölderlin or Schelling.*

**Keywords** *Novalis, Fichte, consciousness, Being, philosophy.*

**RESUMO** *A questão da consciência humana é uma parte crucial no intento novaliano de construir uma autocrítica do Eu, ou crítica da identidade humana, como ela é proposta nos seus “Fichte-Studien” (1795-1796). Designadamente, esta questão constitui um estado intermédio em tal crítica, servindo como prova da teoria dos contrários de Novalis, o estágio fundamental desta, e a posição de Novalis sobre o filosofar, o estágio final da sua empresa, a qual está na base de todo o seu sistema filosófico; e, como tal, é um tópico de grande importância, visto ser não só um elo em uma linha de pensamento que visa provar a organicidade ou heterogeneidade viva – e não a maquinal homogeneidade de Fichte – do humano, mas também um tópico-chave tendo em vista a resolução da questão novaliana da filosofia enquanto problema existencial. Assim sendo, o presente artigo propõe-se situar a questão da consciência humana no contexto maior da crítica da identidade de Novalis; e, a partir daí, comentar a posição de Novalis sobre o problema da consciência humana, como ele surge exposto na fórmula “A consciência é o Ser fora do Ser, no Ser”; uma posição que decisivamente separa o jovem poeta de Fichte, enquanto o aproxima de outros jovens idealistas, tais como Hölderlin ou Schelling.*

**Palavras-chave** *Novalis, Fichte, consciência, Ser, filosofia.*

## **I. The problem of the self-critique of the I and the question of human consciousness as its constituent**

Read up close, the hundreds of fragments which compose Novalis’ “Fichte-Studien” (1795-96),<sup>1</sup> seem only to prove what is indicated in its title: that such a work consists of a vast group of fragmentary or thematic studies on Fichte’s philosophy, and that Novalis will have composed the latter almost randomly, following his own reading of Fichte.<sup>2</sup> According to this vision, the “Fichte-

1 All citations will be presented in a traditional manner (Abbreviation of work, Volume of work, number of page(s)). The abbreviation of each work cited finds correspondence in the final bibliographical section, namely, at the end of the respective title. All citations have been translated from their original German language into English. The citations are of my own translation.

2 Though they do not represent Novalis’ first contact with philosophy (Novalis had been K. L. Reinhold’s, Schiller’s or C. C. E. Schmid’s student in Jena, during his philosophical-theological study there), not even Novalis’ first

Studien" are no more than annotations on Fichte's philosophy, not to mention *dispersed, casual* annotations – something which only seems to be confirmed by the fact that Novalis never really did entitle, or even publish his reflections.<sup>3</sup>

However, if one adopts a different standpoint regarding the text – that is, if one reads the fragments from due distance, as a whole – *something else is to be discerned*. There is indeed apparent disorder among Novalis' annotations. But, secluded amid the latter, there is also a fundamental stem, a *fundamental thought* which presides over the others, the analysis of which folds upon itself, thus creating various layers of application and confirmation of an internal line of thought, ultimately drawing coherence from confusion; not by chance, a theoretical configuration very similar to the construction method of Fichte's own theoretical edifice; a proof not only of Fichte's profound influence over Novalis, but also of a necessary internal order which, by affinity, the latter's thought did indeed possess.

There is, then – we affirm – a thought which is sovereign over all of Novalis' philosophical concerns in the "Fichte-Studien" and sows order among the poet's reflection on Fichte. The fundamental thought is that of the formative process of the I in general: *the self-formation, self-comprehension and self-consummation of the I – or, in other words, a self-critique of the I*. The self-critique of the I presupposes approaching the I in its original reflection, establishing boundaries between the I and itself and the I and the world, and at last discerning the final destination of the I as a thinking and sentient; a manner of thinking which be it in the "Vorarbeiten" (1798), or the "Logologische Fragmente" (1798), or the *Allgemeines Brouillon* (1798-99) or even "Christenheit oder Europa" (1799), will always be at the core of the I's philosophical, aesthetic, or anthropological application in the world. This key thought, which brings order to all of Novalis' lines of reflection, unfolds in various sub-planes of analysis. Here we emphasize three: 1) A first plane, the most elementary but also the most seminal, for prior to the empirical I, deals with *the fundamental opposites which constitute the human being*: their relations, their possible union or disunion and the influence the latter might have upon the I either as a being one with itself, or as a divided being, progressing through opposites (a study which one may recognize as a

philosophical writing as such (see "Von der Begeisterung", or "Apologie der Schwärmerey" (NS I: 99-102)), the "Fichte-Studien" should be seen as the first, yet fragmentary expression of what was to unfold as a solid philosophical system; and hence, one may say that this long group of fragments contains *in nuce*, if not the origin at least the first form of Novalis' philosophical thought.

3 Previously scattered throughout other editions of Novalis' works, and therein presented incompletely, the "Fichte-Studien" are first presented as a whole only in 1929, and only in 1960 are they published in their present order. The first complete edition appeared in Novalis, *Schriften* (1929): im Verein mit Richard Samuel, hrsg. von Paul Kluckhohn. Nach den Handschriften ergänzte und neugeordnete Ausgabe. 4 Bde. Leipzig.

replica of Fichte's approach to the same problem, in his "Eigne Meditationen". 2) A second plane deals with the application of the results from 1) to that which is the I's natural comprehension of itself in the world: namely, the question of *human consciousness* and its affirmation of a human identity (something which finds correspondent in Fichte's problem of a principle of identity). 3) A third plane deals with the final application of the results from 1) and 2) to the I's very own thought – identity or not – in the world. Namely, the question here is that of *human philosophizing*, its origin, procedure and end – in a word, its validity, as ascertained through its relation with the absolute (which is also perceptible in Fichte's approach to the task of philosophy as a Doctrine of Science).

Now, to translate the previous planes into more concrete terms, nearer to those which are indeed the terms of Novalis' problem, we would say that:

in *the first*, most basic degree of a self-critique of the I the task is to consider the circle of Being with regards to its most fundamental components – *feeling* and *reflection* – and strive towards their union. Namely, one is to consider the I, and hence consciousness, as a circle composed of two parts, feeling and reflection, but also as a circle where both parties act simultaneously – the problem being that feeling and reflection are opposites, and hence, despite their reciprocal desire for union, totally incompatible. From this thorny problem must arise that which, according to Novalis, is the archetype of human consciousness: "Consciousness is the Being [...]" (NS II: 10).

In the *second*, intermediate degree of a self-critique of the I, one is to consider human consciousness in its sensible relation with the original, or pure, and in its intellectual relation with the real, or empirical. In a word, the task here is to think human consciousness in its relation with itself; the problem being that, just as before, human consciousness must come to remark an apparent paradox in the nature of its procedure, namely, a very difficult, but necessary oscillation between real and ideal, empirical and pure. This, we shall see, shall be designated by Novalis as "Consciousness is the Being outside of Being [...]" (NS II: 10).

In the *third*, most complex degree of the self-critique of the I the objective is to deal with the I's reflection of itself. Namely, the question is how the I reflects on itself, and what is the destination of such a kind of reflection, as well as the I's image of itself. According to Novalis, the problem here lies on the apparent paradoxicality of the act of human philosophizing, which is due to the fact that the origin, procedure and end of philosophy are directly linked to the previous sub-planes of the self-critique of the I, and hence are no less subject to the apparent difficulty of the latter. From this difficulty, and its solution, we must draw two conclusions. First, the consummated image of

human consciousness and its ultimate design in the world: "Consciousness is the Being outside of Being, within Being" (NS II: 10). Second, the final proof that in the "Fichte-Studien" there presides an order, a rigorous, for tripartite effort of a *critique of identity*, of the study of the potentialities and incapacities of the self-intellection of the I; one whose validity therefore relies on the interconnection of its multiple planes and the final result of the line of thought conducted through them, which we must therefore try to follow.

Now, as is evident, it cannot be our pretension to do full justice to the secret order of Novalis' thought, nor to extensively deal with each of the three planes of the process of self-comprehension of the I, much less with the problems therein proposed. This would be the task for several articles. But, regardless of this, it may be possible to undertake such a task *in nuce*. That is, it may be possible to expound the reasons why Novalis' critique of identity bears an interconnection – even an interdependence – between its different planes, and their respective problems; which, of course, could and should be seen as a way to justify the course of such a self-critical procedure, as well as the process of its construction in view of Fichte's meta-critique. To do this, which we find indeed feasible, we choose as main vehicle of our investigation Novalis' concept of *human consciousness* and its singular formulation – "Consciousness is the Being outside of Being, within Being" (NS II: 10)<sup>4</sup> – which, if we are to claim coherence for the young poet's system of thought, must be able to divide itself by the aforementioned planes of the self-critique of the I, now finding sustenance in the previous, now itself preparing the subsequent one, and thus ultimately showing that Novalis' theory of consciousness not only starts much prior to its letter but goes much further than its spirit. If by this methodological option, and its expected results, we do indeed dispel the doubt which presided over this section and the whole article – the doubt whether Novalis' "Fichte-Studien" proceed only fragmentarily, and hence inconsequently –, then its purpose will have been fulfilled.

Let us then attempt to expound Novalis' problem of human consciousness and the self-critique of the I and see if it is possible to fulfil such a wishful objective.

4 The question of human consciousness in Novalis has not been sufficiently analyzed as one of the pivotal issues in his philosophical system; much less as a key problem in the early construction of the latter. Among the exceptions to such neglect are: Frank (2004), Gabel (2013), Haering (1954), Krüger (2008); Lewis (1962); Nassar (2006); Tokarzewska (2002); Vercellone (1993); Wallwitz (1997).

## II. Human consciousness, or “the Being outside of Being, within Being”

*II.1. “Consciousness is the Being”. The union in disunion of the opposites, or the organic heterogeneity of human consciousness*

Bearing in mind the partial citation which entitles this chapter and founds Novalis’ conception of the problem of human consciousness, let us then start with the antecedents of the question; that is, let us start by approaching Fichte and his own position on the same question.

Fichte’s opinion was that the circle of the critique of the I – the circle of human consciousness – is a circle composed of two essential parts: *feeling*, or the original self-activity of the I, wherein the I finds himself in himself (*Insichfindung* (FiW 1: 339)), and *reflection*, through which the I is born and exists. Fichte’s circle runs uninterruptedly and eternally; but uninterrupted and eternal is something which the comprehension of the I cannot be, rather the I must have a finite comprehension of himself. Namely, the impulse for the I, and hence feeling and reflection, must converge in a specific point – the original action of the I (*Urhandlung*) – thus laying the grounds for the self-comprehension of the I, as well as for the I’s procedure in life and his philosophy. To this problem, the reiterated effort to reenact such a consummatory union, proceeds Fichte in his “Eigne Meditationen” (1793),<sup>5</sup> where, after many a vain attempt, the philosopher concludes that the mutual reduction of the opposites (A and – A) – and their respective union – *is not an impossible, or infinite task*, as infinite is not the self-comprehension of the I or the course of philosophy (a conclusion also drawn in Fichte’s “Aenesidemus-Rezension” (1792)). Quite on the contrary, *this task must be attainable through the minimums of both opposites*; namely, through the belief that feeling, which must be thought alongside reflection, is the ideal from which the latter must come to be real (and that hence there is not, nor could there be equality between opposites, rather one opposite must unite with the other). In other words, Fichte solves the dilemma of the incompatibility of the opposites through the idealization of one pole in detriment of the (total) realization of the other, and from this arises the reflexive I; an I which, by being born from such an “inexplicable and incomprehensible interruption of the original activity of the I” (FiW 1: 331), therefore arises not to a world of opposites, but within a one-way circle (action-

<sup>5</sup> Much like the “Fichte-Studien”, the text “Eigne Meditationen” is a long and complex attempt of coming to terms with a philosophical problem; namely, the thought of an absolute principle of philosophy, as acquired through the possible (as it were, necessary) union of fundamental opposites. The text, also composed as a vast series of fragments, is to be found only in Fichte (1962-2012, Bd. II,3, pp. 3-180).

action), a world of the infinite – yet finitely comprehensible – subjectivity and/or reflexivity of the I: a world where the I arises prescient of the need for its own consummation, that is, in the ante-chamber of its own absoluteness; in a word, a world where the I is the whole circle of its comprehension, where the I holds itself as the infinite continuity of itself, and hence is also the absolute principle of itself ("A = A").

Now, upon conceiving this very question – the relation between the opposites which constitute the I and their role in human consciousness – *Novalis considers the question somewhat differently*. For, no doubt, Novalis too conceives such a problem in its circular form; Novalis too acknowledges feeling and reflection to be the two halves of the circle of the I (see NS, II: 20) and the two halves of human consciousness. But, Novalis suggests, feeling and reflection are no mere opposites, nor can they be seen negatively, in their mere union *or* disunion. They are the most elementary units of the self-critique of the I, essential components of human consciousness. They are, hence, the opposites of opposites, the archetype of a progressive resistance which is the propeller spring of human action and thought, and hence they have to be endowed with unalienable dignity and relevance, to be proved only in their simultaneous affirmation and inter-dependence. And this, as such, must be inscribed in the essence of human consciousness, which Novalis states in the expression: "Consciousness is the Being [...]" (NS II: 10).

As such, then, the problem does indeed lie on the possible union, or the impossible union, of the opposites in an original point; for one and the other, each in its own way, dictate different procedures and different conceptions of human consciousness. But, according to Novalis, the solution for this problem is to be found not in the maximum reduction of the opposites, nor in the amalgamation – or mere union – of the weakest one; nor is it in the positing of an I whose reflexivity opens to a one-way circle, devoid of points of orientation; nor is it in the belief that the philosophy of the I runs a finite path towards its consummation. But neither is it in the inversion of all this. For this has nothing to do with the essence of human consciousness, which admits neither the total union nor the total disunion of the opposites, rather runs *a singular intermediary path*. Quite on the contrary, Novalis concludes in fragments 15 to 19 of the 1<sup>st</sup> group of Manuscripts of the "Fichte-Studien", the task is here to negate this and state the need to expose such assumptions as a natural *illusion of the human spirit*, of which Fichte's philosophy would be a perfect example. Namely, according to Novalis, the problem of the original action rather presupposes that feeling and reflection are inter-dependent entities and can neither be united nor disunited; something which Novalis presents as *a*

*new circularity of the self-comprehending I*, and defends through the following *via media of thought*:

1) Feeling does not progress from limited to unlimited, and reflection from unlimited to limited, rather feeling progresses from unlimited to limited and reflection from limited to unlimited (see NS; II: 19): *which means that the circle of the comprehension of the I has not one, but two simultaneously contrary and concomitant directions.*

2) This being a circle with two directions, and two opposed but also compatible directions, then the original action, the real contact point between feeling and reflection, will have to be thought in regard to a second point of orientation in the circle, namely, an *ideal consummation point* between the illimitations of feeling and reflection: *which means that the circle of the I has not one, but two orientation points.*

3) The real and ideal contact points being points of union, but also points of disunion of the opposite, then the contacts between feeling and reflection cannot occur, in the real point, between mere limitations (minimums), and in the ideal one, between mere illimitations (maximums); which would still suppress one of the opposites. Instead, the real I must arise from a double limitation – taken as an *intensification* – of the opposing natures of feeling and reflection, in such a way that both opposites are *at the same time validated but restricted* – in a word, *equal*; and the ideal I must arise from the exact contrary of this, both opposites thus being kept in existence during the course of the I. Were it not for this proposition of an *active-reactive circle*, and the opposites would not be mediately reciprocal and could not claim veritable parity.

4) Finally, given that feeling and reflection are here equally disunited and united in their course, and given that these two directions necessarily cross in the two previous real and ideal contact points of the circle of Being, then this means that the very first image of human consciousness is, just as that of the Being, not one of mere uninterruptedness; but neither is it one of mere opposition, just for the sake of contradicting Fichte. No. Quite on the contrary, Novalis' image of human consciousness is that of a circle led by two beacons – the original action and the consummatory action of the I – where, as such, two different entities run in opposite directions (minimum-maximum; maximum-minimum), yet convergently, in the previous points (maximum-maximum: original action; minimum-minimum: consummatory action of the I), within the same circle; where there is, therefore, union and disunion at once: the *via media* of the problem! And hence, that which is truly noteworthy in Novalis' opinion is that in human consciousness there are not only two diverging directions (*disunion*), but such directions are nonetheless also convergent (*union*), thus



conversely running through all the points that constitute the circle, but also meeting in the original and consummatory points of the I, thus creating union in disunion. Were it not for this proposition of *an active-reactive circle*, were it not for this progressive resistance, and the opposites would not be mediately reciprocal and could not claim veritable parity; and hence, consciousness would not be consciousness.<sup>6</sup>

In sum, then, one may conclude that Novalis and Fichte stand for different conceptions of the opposites and their relation. For, according to Novalis, the opposites always run antithetically, yet convergently, within the same circle, the points of contact between the opposites representing the origin and the consummation of that circle. Whereas, according to Fichte, two opposites run convergently, never antithetically, within the same circle: a circle devoid of scission points, entirely composed of contact points, and hence a circle with no origin or end. And precisely these different conceptions of the minimal units of a critique of the I shall dictate, in both authors, different conceptions of human consciousness, as well as different conceptions of human philosophizing.

But, in view of such different coordinates of its formation, how to consider both authors' initial conceptions of consciousness? The answer is simple and may be rendered explicit with the aid of a metaphor dear to both authors: *the metaphor of the first mirroring – or reflection, or speculation – of the conscious I*. For, according to Fichte's view, human consciousness is represented by a *union in union*; namely, consciousness is the image of a consummated rational speculation, in that, if seen as an I which sees itself in a mirror, consciousness is an I which sees only itself, nothing else. That is, Fichte's I, upon seeing its own reflection, assumes this is the mere reflection of itself. Fichte's I exists in reality as it does in its reflection (or reflex), so that both the original image and its reflection lose their valences, and this because the specularity of the image of the I is total, as it is, by extension, the consciousness of the I (which is why, according to Fichte, the opposites are combinable in reality). Hence, the result of the union of the opposites, and the fact that there are no opposed directions, and the fact that the circle is composed of one direction, is that, even though the

6 This very accusation regarding Fichte is also formulated by Hölderlin, in "Judgment and Being" (1795): "But how is self-consciousness possible? In that I oppose myself, I separate from myself, but despite this separation recognize myself as the same in the opposition. But to what extent the same? I can, I must ask this; for in another respect it is opposed to itself. Hence, identity is not a union of subject and object that would simply occur, hence identity is not = absolute Being" (StA, IV: 227). The same accusation is reiterated once again by Hölderlin, in a letter to Hegel dated 26<sup>th</sup> of January 1795: "[...] but a consciousness without object is not to be thought, and if I myself am this object, then I am as such necessarily restricted [...], hence not absolute; hence, in the absolute I there is no consciousness to be thought, as absolute I, I have no consciousness, and if I have no consciousness, then I am (for myself) nothing, hence the absolute I is (for itself) nothing" (StA, VI: 169).

course of the I – the circular movement of the circle – is uninterrupted, one’s consciousness of it is finite and is always present to oneself; it does not need to divide itself into opposites, or into this or that I, rather it is always present to itself as one I, it is one in itself and in all the circle, as it is the consciousness of the I which sees itself in the mirror. As a matter of fact, such consciousness is even accomplished, or consummated, even before it launches the search for itself, as if one could do without the very speculative act and simply knew itself as omnipresent. And so, according to Fichte, *consciousness is not at all a Being* – not, at least, a Being in Novalis’ sense of the word; this much is said by the silent mechanicity, the uniform infallibility of the principle of absolute identity<sup>7</sup>.

Novalis, however, saw this problem quite differently; and the proof of this is Novalis’ vision of the opposites as a *union in disunion*. For, even if seen as the first version of a resistant, non-linear vision of man and his manner of thinking the world, which shall have a more profound application in the conception of human consciousness (Section II.2) and philosophy (Section II.3), the preliminary idea of a union in disunion is already dissident regarding Fichte and does indeed break with the previous theory of human consciousness. Namely, what this idea means is not only that the opposites are at the origin of human consciousness, that they must remain as such if human consciousness is to exist as it is, or that the end of the opposites will bring about the end of consciousness; that is, it does not only mean that human consciousness is intimately dependent on this progressive resistance, as well as on this living heterogeneity, in order to subsist. Above all this means that *the very consciousness of the humanity of the I intimately presupposes the creation, and*

7 A few words, methodological in nature, must be said in order to explain the unfair, and yet necessary incompleteness of the previous presentation of Fichte’s articulation between feeling and reflection – especially, as far as its (lack of) connection with other Fichtean works is concerned. It is not unknown to us that our presentation leaves out Fichte’s more detailed treatment on this matter, namely, that found in the *Wissenschaftslehre Nova Methodo* (1796-99), where the problem of feeling–reflection is dealt with extensively and consciousness is deemed a “mirror with eyes” (GA IV/2: 49). Such an approach would indeed be worth discussing, inasmuch as it would show just how much Novalis’s mirrored view of consciousness as a “Being outside of Being within Being”, as well as its unitarian-heterogeneous nature, *prematurely* owe to Fichte. However, the assumption of this influence would entail a contradiction – namely, that Novalis, whose “Fichte-Studien” date from 1795-1796, would have been influenced, or could have known, Fichte’s *Wissenschaftslehre Nova Methodo* (1796-1799). Now, since this was not the case, then such omissions on our part are deliberate. Our option is therefore to restrict the scope of our analysis to the “Eigne Meditationen”, and especially, even if tacitly admitted, to the works “Über den Begriff der Wissenschaftslehre” (1794) and *Grundlage der gesamten Wissenschaftslehre* (1794), both of which do bring to light the problems of the mutual, mirrored relation, the attraction and yet repulsion, the concomitance and yet resistance of the two original opposites, but by then in a manner still very contrary to that which Novalis believed to be correct. As such, what is presented here is not Novalis’ reading of the “Eigne Meditationen” or the *Wissenschaftslehre Nova Methodo*, which could not have happened, not even our position on this matter, rather simply Novalis’ first collocation of the problem of the original opposites as read in the early Fichte – that is, Novalis’ own (necessarily antagonistic) view of this problem at a time when the latter, even in Fichte’s line of thought, was still far from receiving its final disposition.

subsequent vision, of another I, by the I<sup>8</sup> – and that, if not this form of internal alterity, then at least the vision in itself – the alternation, or the coming and going of the gaze between the I which sees and the I which is seen – grounds the very coming to, and being in consciousness of the I. Hence, if we resort to the metaphor of the mirror, but this time in Novalis' own view of it, one could say that if the I stands before a mirror, it surely sees itself; but because the opposites are, and are not, divergent, because something in them is antagonistic and yet concomitant, then, if standing before the mirror, the I, despite acknowledging itself, *also acknowledges another I*.<sup>9</sup> For, unlike Fichte, to whom there is but one direction of the I's vision, the I's gaze implies, according to Novalis, *not only to see but also to be seen*. That is: in the I which sees the I being seen there is *subjectivity*; and in the I which sees itself seeing there is *subjective activity* (union of the I's). But at the same time, just as in the question of the opposites, in the I which is seen, and which sees itself being seen, there is also a gaze: a gaze which is returned to its origin, which inspects the I, which surely brings together both I's, but which also forever marks their distance (disunion of the I's). In a word, one could then say, *the I which sees feels that there is Another in itself, in detriment of another I which is Self outside of itself*;<sup>10</sup> and in this coming and going, in this union in disunion, of the gazes, in this reciprocal and living beam which is the I's gaze upon itself, in this unique disposition of what is for Novalis an identity, does the young poet found his initial position on human consciousness: a human consciousness which strives towards unveiling the illusion of the human spirit, as caused by a "Scheinsatz",<sup>11</sup> A=A, a consciousness which dictates the impossibility – and the need for the impossibility – of a real union of the opposites, and which hence stands, even though only preliminarily, as a Being.

We conclude, then, in response to our own question on why consciousness is a Being, according to Novalis: consciousness is a Being for it is never absolute and the identity it promotes is never unilateral. Quite on the contrary, in likeness of its minimal units of analysis, human consciousness is, in its unicity and division, in its simultaneous union and disunion, subjective-objective,

8 One and the same I, divided into two I's, namely, the pure and the empirical I's.

9 "In order to conceive itself, the I must represent, as it were, anatomize for itself another being equal to it. This other being equal to it is no other than the I itself" (NS, II: 11).

10 Novalis deems this an "action [of] alienation and respective production" (NS II: 11): "alienation" in the feeling of the Other in the Self, "production" in the feeling of the Self in the Other.

11 Reference to the very first words of Novalis' "Fichte-Studien", where Novalis attempts to promptly expose Fichte's absolute principle of all philosophy: "In the proposition a is a there is nothing but a positing, differentiating and linking. It is a philosophical parallelism. To render a more distinct, a is divided. *Is* is established as general content, a as determined form. The essence of identity can only be established in an *illusory proposition*" (NS II: 8).

and therefore completes a full circle; and the identity which lies upon this is therefore human, and not machine-like; it is a human, and not an inhuman consciousness, for it harbors heterogeneity within homogeneity and ascribes it open field to think the two opposites simultaneously, as a human being. Something, which, as we shall see, Novalis takes to a whole new dimension in the subsequent level of comprehension of the problem of human consciousness.

*II.2. “Consciousness is the Being outside of Being”. The real and ideal visions of the opposites, or the progressive resistance in human consciousness*

The second premise of Novalis’ definition of consciousness presupposes that we depart from the previous results of our investigation, regarding the term “Consciousness is the Being”, and that we ponder on the meaning of “the Being outside of Being”.

Proving this are fragments 19-21 of the “Fichte-Studien”, which depart from a point in thought where feeling and reflection, the opposites of human consciousness are *in reality* (dis-)united (Section II. 1), and where Novalis asks if there is any sphere of thought in which such a real union in disunion may give rise to a *simple union*, and as such to a new vision of human consciousness – or at least, one where consciousness should not be a mere sum of opposites, rather a “Being outside of Being, within Being” (NS II: 10). Now, at this point, Novalis reiterates that *opposites are indeed irreducible in their real dimension*, that there is between the two an evident inter-dependence, but there cannot be between them a finite mutual reduction which could merge both of them into one – just as there cannot be a total separation between the two of them. And hence, Novalis concludes that the opposites are, precisely in their real irreducibility, the components of a *consciousness which is a living consciousness, as it is a Being*; and to prove this once and for all, Novalis does not question the real prism of the question, but rather its *ideal prism* – thus attempting to see if this prism, together with the other one, would eventually allow for a real union of the opposites, or if it only further reinforces the previous conclusion of a disunion in union, of the living heterogeneity of human consciousness.

The question, of which we shall present here but a very brief summary, has to do then not with the real existence, but with the *ideal existence of the opposites*. Namely, the vision which opposites have of each other, but not their real vision, rather their *ideal vision*; the seeing and being seen of one another, thus resuming and delving deeper into the previous image of a mirroring between opposites.

Now, if one considers that the opposites are standing before a mirror, and that they see themselves only on a *real plane*, this operation will tell

us precisely the same as Novalis' description of Fichte's conception of the problem. Namely, that the opposites are either irreconcilable, or erroneously reconcilable. For, if seen as opposites, the opposites are irreconcilable because they are so and because, even while pressing for their reconciliation, they are in reality incompatible; and even if one sees them as non-opposites, or as ex-opposites in the meantime forcibly reduced to one – as does Fichte, according to Novalis – feeling and reflection, once they face each other as the counterpart's reflection, see *nothing but... themselves, and themselves only*. That is, upon exchanging gazes in the mirror of consciousness, the opposites see only their own reflection, which is returned to them, and to them only – and do not recognize their counterpart in the opposing extremity; because, one could say, their gaze never leaves their own sphere, which is therefore total, and the beam of their own vision never rests but upon themselves.

But – Novalis adds – if instead of considering that which the opposites see when they see, one considers *that which they see when they are (not) seen*; that is, if one deals with the question not just through its real prism, but also through its *ideal prism*, one not only avoids a series of objections, but one may indeed overcome the problem. The explanation for such an important step is, as a matter of fact, quite simple. It is Novalis' opinion that the opposites are irreducibly opposed, and that they cannot *in reality* mirror – unite with – one another, or at least they are not able to see each other as such. For, upon seeing, each opposite only really sees itself. But, conversely, it is possible to think that, upon seeing, *each of the opposites is also being seen*; that is, that in the reverse of seeing, which sees only what it sees, one is being seen and that this being-seen, or ideal vision, may see something other than that which is (not) seen by real vision. Now, if the existence of each opposite is its own vision, and if the problem lies in the fact that the vision of each opposite cannot abandon their own sphere of existence ("Consciousness is a Being" (NS II: 10)) because there is no Other, rather only a Self in the reflection, then one should think that instead, because between opposites there is no superiority or inferiority, only parity, and because both are seen while they see, then *the ideal vision, the being-seen of each of them* offers here a much-desired escape from the previous dilemma. And why is this? Because if *in reality* each of the opposites is in commerce only with itself and directs its gaze only upon itself, *ideally*, however, each opposite is doing the contrary: that is, it is pretending not to be seen by the other, but indeed seeing ideally and hence ultimately abandoning its own sphere and occupying the other one's sphere. It is, in a word, seeing itself in the mirror as an equal, but under the guise of an Other (that is, consciousness as "the Being outside of Being (id.)). Hence, this means that in the place left

vacant by the real gaze, the ideal gaze of the opposite – each one's being-seen – is at last free from its restrictive existence, it accommodates itself in the other, thus compensating for the other one's lack of existence. One could say: it exists in the other, *uniting with it* and promoting a living heterogeneity, or a possible union between opposites within their real disunion.<sup>12</sup>

As a current standpoint, we could say that to a real disunion of the opposites Novalis now juxtaposes *an ideal union of the opposites*; opposites which do indeed need each other, and must be united, but cannot be united under pain of losing their individuality: in a word, *union in disunion*. And, as such, from this second, superior form of union in disunion derives a first notion of what Novalis might mean when he states that “Consciousness is the Being outside of Being” (ibid.): namely, that to consciousness as a being, which is so because it accommodates the opposites in their union and in their disunion, one must juxtapose a superior form of comprehension of its nature, according to which consciousness preserves its heterogeneous unity – “the Being” – even when it abandons itself (“outside of Being”); and abandon itself it must, for that is determined by its minimal units of analysis, feeling and reflection, without whose exteriorization, and mutual existence in the Other, the opposites would not be (dis-)united, and consciousness would not be truly human in nature.

Now, one must ask: if such essential parts of the coming to consciousness of the I, of a pre-self-critique of the I, are so disposed in simultaneous union and disunion, not only in their preparatory stage (in their mutual relation), but in their reciprocal operativity (in their vision); if feeling and reflection, the opposites which constitute human consciousness, exist in such a way that they seem to strive precisely through this progressive resistance; if, last but not least, in this singular relation of existence and vision, of necessity and impossibility of a union between opposites, there lies, as we have seen, the kern of what Novalis means by “the Being outside of Being, within Being” (NS II: 10), then we ask: what prevents us from deducing from this the most essential procedure of human consciousness itself, and from thereby deducing what Novalis understands by a Being which is outside of Being?

The answer, Novalis seems to say, is nothing. Nothing prevents us from undertaking this amplification of the scope of the problem and thinking consciousness not with regard to its parts, but with regard to its *whole*. And bearing this in mind, we would say this. The moment it is born, the moment it says “I” for the first time, the I comes to consciousness; and it comes to

<sup>12</sup> On this topic, see NS II: 47-48, more specifically fragments 63 and 64, on the spirit's natural exchange – and subsequent confusion – between “image” and “being”.

consciousness through that which is its original action, which is brought about by none other than by the previous living heterogeneity of the opposites. Now, precisely for this reason Novalis presents the opposites as the minimal unit of the problem of consciousness, for they are the primordial image of consciousness, they form human consciousness and cease to be only when the I ceases to call itself I. That is, through this small, yet gigantic step, the I gains consciousness of its relation with the world, a relation which is tacitly conveyed to it through a relation between opposites which never cease to be one in disunion: and hence, the I in its relation with the world is composed now by reflection, now by feeling: that is, now by its introspective, sensible half of a relation between the I and the I – the pure I – now by its speculative, reflexive half of a relation between the I and the world. And if this is so, then, just as before, the two halves of the circle of Being, or human consciousness, reciprocally mirror two I's, none confined to its reducibility, yet none capable of total autonomy, rather united in their disunion: one, the half of feeling, necessarily considered through the ideal vision of reflection, the other one, the half of reflection, necessarily considered through the ideal vision of feeling; and, nonetheless, both strictly divided by the real vision which each of them has of the other.

Now, what this means for consciousness is surely hybridity, even heterogeneity. But if through the previous conclusion we are led to think that this applies to feeling and reflection, and that their ideal gazes lodge in their antipode, thus resulting in union in disunion, however, here, in the superior application of this thought, where one deals with both halves of the circle of Being and the whole of consciousness, *something else takes place and the implications of this are more profound*. For the scope of the original action is valid, but restricted; that is, the original action lays down the laws for human thought and feeling, but it is no more than a moment in the I's life. But if instead of this we consider the whole of this life, as is here the case, one notices something different, namely, one understands that, given the independence, and yet inter-dependence, given the real and yet also ideal visions of each of the halves which trigger the procedure of consciousness, then what we previously designated as each one's "consideration" of the other is indeed not just this. Namely, this means that if in its real vision feeling holds reflection as something other, and reflection holds feeling as something other, and this must be so, then in their ideal visions, where consciousness acts as a whole, a twofold movement takes place. Namely, on the one hand, feeling forces reflection to know that, though it is relatively autonomous, though it trudges its own course, reflection is intimately and forever inoculated in the half of feeling. This means that, upon

being born, reflection must already feel a call forcing it to return to feeling, even though, in its essence, it disagrees or does not understand the purpose of this return.<sup>13</sup> Reflection, on the other hand, forces feeling to know that, in spite of its relative autonomy, and its own path, feeling too is at the origin of reflection and is an essential part of the latter. This means that, in its partial existence, feeling must always be in intimate connection with reflection<sup>14</sup>; even though, just as reflection, it too does not agree or understand the purpose of this mutual relation. And finally, consciousness, which is here as a “Being outside of Being”, is no more than the result of both contrary and united movements at once.

Hence, to sum up, and to lay the disposition of the opposites which Novalis perceives in the whole of consciousness, one would conclude as follows. *In the real visions of the opposites, in consciousness as a Being*, one has on the one hand feeling, which runs opposite to reflection and has nothing to do with reflection apart from their inter-dependent constitution of human consciousness: namely, *mere disunion*; and on the other hand one has reflection, which acts precisely in equal fashion, but in a manner directly contrary to that of feeling: *real disunion of the opposites*. But through *the ideal visions of the opposites, in consciousness as the Being outside of Being*, something different occurs. For here one has a *human reflection* which, by action of feeling, is destined to fulfil its half of the circle in such a way that it returns to feeling, thus exteriorizing itself – because the ideal antipode of the circle is that of the consummation of the I; but also a *human feeling*, which, by action of reflection, is destined to fulfil its half of the circle in such a way that, by its oppositional direction, it aids reflection to fulfil this very purpose – which, in a word, is the ideal union of the opposites. And hence, if this is so, then in the juxtaposition of both these perspectives – in the unavoidable union in disunion of the opposites of human consciousness, in the Being outside of Being – something like the crossing of the two latter shall take place. Namely, feeling and reflection, each in reality running in opposite directions, shall jointly strive, in ideality, for union, and this in such a way that reflection, though striving towards an ideal union with feeling, shall always have feeling’s real resistance against this, and feeling, though striving towards an ideal union with reflection, shall always have reflection’s real resistance against this<sup>15</sup> – both in such a way

13 “Reflection finds the need for a philosophy, or a thought, systematic coherence between thinking and feeling – for it in feeling” (NS II: 20).

14 “Feeling gives reflection, as its contingent, the matter of intellectual intuition” (NS II: 21).

15 “A feeling of reflection, a reflection of feeling” (NS II: 23).



that one cannot exist without the other, just as progress cannot exist without resistance, or the outside of Being without the Being. For here, one concludes, *Being* is consciousness in its impassive resistance; the *outside of the Being* is the active progression of the Being; but *the Being outside of Being*, which is here of the utmost importance for Novalis, is a progressive resistance in which consciousness not only resists, but lets itself go in the flow of what is to Novalis the destination of the I; a progressive resistance in which consciousness oscillates, as an infallible pendulum, in the self-critical assessment of the I and in the exo-critical relation of the I and the world.

Lastly, and because this superior degree of comprehension of a union in disunion of consciousness is not yet its last, let us approach the question where it is most accentuated and where human consciousness is more actively in play: in the effective describing of the circle of Being by reflection and feeling, *in philosophizing*.

*II. 3. "Consciousness is the Being outside of Being, within Being". Human consciousness and philosophizing*

As is expected, Novalis believed that the previous degree of the critique of the I had to be applied to something concrete – in Novalis' own words, "to the half which is just reality" (NS II: 23).<sup>16</sup> For indeed the opposites, as minimal units of Being, and consciousness, as the operating ground of such constituents (both of which are here the inferior and intermediate degrees of the comprehension of a union in disunion, or a "Being outside of Being") are no mere theory, rather they must have their repercussion, and their definitive proof, in the highest possible degree of their application. This highest of degrees is human life itself as it unfolds in the circle of Being ("[...] within Being" (NS II: 10)): in this case, through reflection, or, in other worlds, through philosophy.

Now, in order to resume our expounding of this problem and come to this last stage of its reflective and/or philosophical application, let us depart one last time from the citation which presides over this article. The proposition "Consciousness is the Being outside of Being" means that consciousness is the whole of the circle of comprehension of the I. The Being is outside of Being in so far as the I, because it is composed of opposites, exteriorizes itself upon reflecting; for reflection is rather a re-flection, a speculation of the pure I upon the empirical I, or simply of the I upon the world. It comes as no surprise, then, that according to Novalis the first act of the I, and its dawning subjectivity, is

<sup>16</sup> "Both [feeling and reflection] can only take place in reflection, and hence necessarily in the Something – in the half which is just reality" (NS II: 23).

the first reflexive act, and hence *the first act of philosophy*. Along with the I, and its subjectivity, philosophy is born as this mirroring of the I upon the (Non-)I and its objectivity. And if this is so, then it must be concluded that reflection, having arisen from the previous half of the circle, is set to describe the half of the circle which is its own; not randomly, however, rather in such a manner that its procedure proves the manner of its origin – sure enough, in intimate relation with feeling, in the union in disunion which characterizes them.

However, it just so happens that despite its apparent naturalness, the previous fact, due to its likeness with others of a lesser degree, has repercussions of a *greater magnitude* – now on the level of a global comprehension of the problem of human consciousness. The reason for this is simple and has to do with the very phenomenon of the being-outside of consciousness. For, let it be noted, upon being born, the I sets forth the course which is that of its reflection, which leads him to describe the reflective half of the circle; and hence, it [reflection] tends to reactivate the other half of the circle and ultimately once again re-form itself. This much is dictated to him by the very nature of reflection, which *in reality exists in itself*, in the half of reflection, but also *ideally outside of itself*, in the half of feeling, and which is set to act in conformity, and yet in opposition toward feeling. This, we know full well, is *the first image of philosophizing: the ideal union and real disunion between feeling and reflection*. But if, upon being born, reflection arises as if naturally inoculated of all this essential information – which is conveyed and imposed by the very circle of Being – then another information, unsurprisingly contrary to this, and yet also concomitant with this, is also given to reflection by the half of feeling. Namely, an information which Novalis presents tripartitely: *firstly*, by stating that although the course of reflection must be constituted by new cognitions or thoughts, this course does not involve any strengthening of reflection; for, having been born from maximums, reflection now tends towards a minimum (by influence of the contrary force of feeling). *Secondly*, Novalis suggests that if reflection faces a resistance in its action – the resistance of the opposites which after all gave it its being – then this means that reflection will always strive to progress, but that progression, or knowledge, will always be contrary to its own perseverance – in a word, as if its progression were a regression. And *thirdly*, Novalis suggests that if reflection acts in this limbo, then this will change entirely its relation towards the objective – its consummation, or the absolute.

Let us then think each of these three steps – i.e. three problems – in more detail and see what kind of philosophizing emerges from them.

Now, the first piece of information reminds us that the circle of Being is composed of two contrary directions within the same circle. As such, then,

*reflection can never arise by itself, nor can it operate by itself.* But now, let it be noted, it is made evident that just as reflection cannot preserve itself, nor can it consummate itself on its own: for this reflection needs feeling, which in reality is always contrary to reflection, and gives reflection its origin and its end, but between this origin and end ideally ascribes reflection a certain path – an enfeebling, dying path – which is to be one with that of feeling (“the Being outside of Being”). Now, if one puts faith in this, then one could say that philosophizing, which is none other than reflection between its origin and end, gives just proof of Novalis’ theory of the opposites: philosophy is the play between two opposites in the circle of human comprehension: one running against the other (outside of Being), one running towards the other (the Being) and philosophizing itself is a singular product of that play. Something other than this – a more and more invigorating philosophizing – and reflection would be total, beginning and end of philosophy would be but one point and its course a mere moment in the history of the I’s absoluteness. That is, something other than this, and reflection would forever grow until its consummation, Man would be capable of total knowledge, he would be a God and philosophy the *organon* of his divinity.

The second piece of information, it is our belief, takes this opinion even further. For reflection, as well as feeling, are the union in disunion of the opposites of human consciousness, and this because they are two directions running contrarily, and yet concomitantly, in the real-ideal sphere of the I. Philosophizing, or reflection in this sense of a relation with the whole circle, cannot differ from this: it is one such union in disunion. But, let it be noted, if it is, then this means that in human philosophizing there is in general a possibility of progression, as imposed by the natural, real tendency of reflection, but also a necessary resistance – or regression – as imposed by the natural, ideal tendency of feeling: and both act simultaneously (contrarily, yet cooperatively) in the formation of human philosophizing.

Now, what to think of this?

On the one hand, that if reflection aspires to its consummation, and to a consummation through its fading progression; and if that fading, as the rhythm of its progression, is dictated by feeling, which is always opposed, but always promotes such a progression, then this means that *there is indeed resistance, as well as progression, in human philosophizing and knowledge.*

On the other hand, and more importantly, if we assume this, then as far as the whole of the image of reflection is concerned, this – this simultaneous resistance and progression – changes the very end, the very nature of its activity. Namely, reflection strives to progress towards consummation, but is *resisted*

by a form which impels it; and if this form impels reflection contrarily to its consummation, then *it makes reflection regress in the direction of its origin*. To put this in other words, human philosophizing is born endowed with the design to progress towards its consummation – and this through the suppression of that which gives rise to it, the opposites. For that is part of philosophy's destination: that, *outside of Being*, it strives to annul itself, that it may be brought to commit suicide, as if undoing what it is and reenacting the integral union of man's opposites to a point prior to itself, under the form of a perfect union. But against this stands feeling, which, so to say, acts here as the I's survival instinct (*within Being*) and always keeps reflection in activity – and does so, quite unsurprisingly, by preserving the opposites and ensuring that philosophy's progression is indeed a return to its origin – therefrom deriving the union in disunion of human philosophizing. Now, what does this mean? It means that *philosophizing is nothing else than a recurrent oscillation – an interruption, a suspension – of human knowledge between the progression towards its end and the return to its origin*;<sup>17</sup> and it means that this oscillation hovers between two extremes which, in truth, are but one, which steer a philosophy that wishes to supplant what gave rise to it, but self-preserved itself in that very desideratum. And that is not just a part, but the whole destination of philosophy. For, upon progressing, reflection is already regressing and returning to its origin; and upon returning to itself, it is already progressing: which is characteristic of a reflection which cannot have but must have opposites. And hence, philosophizing, just as its lesser components, demonstrates union in disunion; in reality it wants union, and in ideality disunion, but that which shapes philosophy is precisely the contrary, which is endowed by the half of feeling: *an ideal wish for union and a real disunion of the opposites*.

Lastly, the third piece of information concludes Novalis' thought on the role of philosophy in the formation of human consciousness; namely, in as much as if human reflection, and by consequence philosophizing, are indeed hybrid, then this sheds new light on the relation between philosophizing and its objective, and the relation of the consciousness of the I with this objective. For, with regard to the first, if philosophy envisages its own self-suppression and this self-suppression can only be attained with the death of philosophy;<sup>18</sup> but, at the same time, this self-suppression is countered by feeling, which strives to keep philosophy alive; if, in other words, the wish for the consummation of

17 "Philosophy, result of philosophizing, therefore arises through *interruption* of the impulse towards cognition of the ground – through suspension in the member where one is – Abstraction from the absolute ground [...]" (NS II: 181).

18 "To die is a genuinely philosophical act" (NS II: 217).

the I is opposed by its wish to live and yet these oppositions, and subsequent impossibility of the fulfilment of philosophy's design are always revitalized by the very wish for union that underlies them: then it is possible to think that it is characteristic of philosophy that it cannot attain its objective, and yet it must do so. In other words, it is possible to think that, given this perennial oscillation, or, in Novalis' words, this infinite approximation to the absolute,<sup>19</sup> philosophy is always unable to achieve the absolute, but, nonetheless, must always keep pressing towards it<sup>20</sup> – in a word, as if the experience of the absolute was not in the divine moment of its attainment, but in the striving – a striving towards the absolute which is a constant negation of the absolute, yet one doomed to fail, auspicious but always prescient of its own insufficiency – in a word, *human*. For this, this *humanity of philosophizing*, is after all that which was already present in Novalis's definition of consciousness, and which we now definitively bring to voice: namely, that human consciousness is not directed by the absolute, or by the infinite, rather moves in *an infinite approximation to its own perfection and the perfection of its self-knowledge* – and so acts the I in its self-critical formation. Hence, if consciousness is such a Being, and such a Being of opposites, then it must come as no surprise that it exteriorizes the Being, through reflection, and through philosophizing, only to thereby understand that, in an infinitely approximative movement, it must annul its

19 The image of an infinite approximation to the absolute is corroborated by several akin images. As an example, the one of the "quadrature of the circle" (see Annotation 15), and also that of an infinite "undoing of a clew", as presented, not coincidentally, by J. B. Erhard and F. K. Forberg, old colleagues of Novalis in Jena. For Erhard's reference, see his work *Über das Recht des Volks zu einer Revolution und andere Schriften*, hrsg. von Hellmut G. Haasis, München, Carl Hanser Verlag, 1970. (ÜRV: 10); for Forberg's reference, see his citation in Frank (1998) (UA: 452-453).

20 The topic of the impossibility of an absolute principle of philosophy, and subsequently of an infinite approximation to the absolute, is not one exclusive of Novalis. As the flag of all who did not defend the possibility of an absolute principle of all philosophy, this would be expressed in similar fashion, yet different words, by many other young idealist philosophers. As mere examples, Novalis says, in his "Fichte-Studien": «Hence, all search for One principle would be like the attempt to find the quadrature of the circle./ Perpetuum mobile. Philosopher's stone." (NS, II: 181); and also in fragment 314 of *Das Allgemeine Brouillon*: «Every science has its own God, which at the same time is its objective. Thus lives, in truth, mechanics with the perpetuo mobili [...]. Thus chemistry with the menstruo universali – and spiritual matter, or the philosopher's stone. Phil[osophy] seeks a first and unique principle. The math[ematician] the quadrature of the circle and a main equalization. Man – God» (id.: 530). Hölderlin too, who is very close to Novalis, defended "the idea of an infinite progress of philosophy", so as to "show that the irreducible demand that must be done to every system, the union of subject and object in an absolute – I, or however one wishes to deem it – is [...] only possible theoretically through an infinite approximation, as the approximation to the quadrature of the circle [...]" (Letter to Schiller, 4<sup>th</sup> of September 1795, StA, VI: 196-197). The young Schelling also spoke of philosophy as a "necessary evil" (AS I: 252), one which man must relentlessly and eternally seek to annul by once again suppressing the original chasm – the original separation – from which (philosophical) reflection arose (a conception very similar to Novalis' position on suicide as the genuine philosophical act (see NS II: 23)). And finally, see also the Danish poet J. I. Baggesen, who defended that "[...] a science, a doctrine of science, a system of complete philosophy which is solidly lain upon ulterior grounds is to be expected only at the end of all things – a bit like the quadrature of the circle, upon being corrected to the infinite, for practical use" (FiG, I: 214-215).

own movement, it must return to itself, to the Being. For, in truth, the outside of Being of consciousness is nothing but the awareness of the necessity and yet impossibility of suppressing the opposites and totally coming to know itself of consciousness; and hence, what consciousness does is be outside the Being, towards the absolute; a step which is but a return to itself, to the Being: an ideal step of the Being, outside the Being, and yet after all always in the Being: "Consciousness is the Being outside of Being, within Being" (NS II: 10).

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