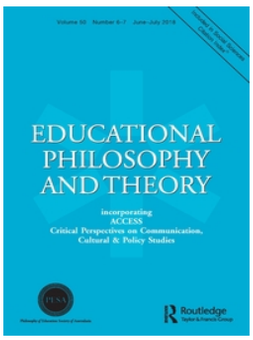

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Educational Philosophy and Theory
Incorporating ACCESS

ISSN: 0013-1857 (Print) 1469-5812 (Online) Journal homepage: http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rept20

Philosophy of education in early Fichte

Tamás Hankovszky

To cite this article: Tamás Hankovszky (2018) Philosophy of education in early Fichte, Educational Philosophy and Theory, 50:6-7, 631-639, DOI: 10.1080/00131857.2017.1373345

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2017.1373345

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY AND THEORY, 2018
VOL. 50, NOS. 6–7, 631–639
https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2017.1373345

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Philosophy of education in early Fichte

Tamás Hankovszky

Department of Philosophy, Pázmány Péter Catholic University, Budapest, Hungary

ABSTRACT

According to Fichte's early science of knowledge, man is a free and independent being who becomes somebody not through the power of nature, by developing his innate skills and abilities, or through external influence, but by his own power. Since the essence of human beings is I-hood, the individual, having defeated the not-I or nature living in him, has to strive towards the absolute I, which is nothing else but the being created by himself. This process is *Bildung*, the details of which are elaborated in Fichte's philosophy of education, whereby he opposes his point of view to Rousseau. Although Fichte emphasizes the activity of the student, he sees the assistance of an educator as indispensable. The role of the educator can be apprehended from the foundations of the science of knowledge. Thus, in order to be able to posit ourselves as free beings we require another being who summons us. 'The summons to engage in free self-activity is what we call upbringing.'

KEYWORDS

Self-activity; anthropology; freedom; summons; Rousseau

Although the science of knowledge should essentially consist of human knowledge as such, particularly all the disciplines of philosophy, Fichte never wrote systematically about the philosophy of education in detail (Schurr, 1981, p. 511). His early main work *Foundations of the Entire Science of Knowledge* (1794/1795) comprises only the basis of the science of knowledge. The disciplines which should be built upon these foundations were to be discussed in separate works. Nevertheless, after having published the *Foundations of Natural Rights* in 1796 and *The System of Ethics* in 1798, Fichte decided that 'I will for the present proceed no further with the systematic elaboration of this system; instead I will first elaborate more fully what has already been discovered and make it completely clear and obvious to every impartial person.' (Fichte, 1988a, p. 100) This work turned out to be a life-long project, therefore, the planned elaboration of disciplines as monumental as that of natural rights and ethics failed to be accomplished. However, Friedrich Schlegel is not completely right when he remarks in one of his fragments that the 'science of knowledge is too restricted: Fichte discusses only the principles […]. Society, education, wit, and art would deserve to be elaborated.' (Behler, 1963, p. 32) Not only do these above-mentioned areas have their place within the science of knowledge, but Fichte had also dealt with them from the very beginning; moreover, he reflected continuously on education, the social status of an educator, and the sharing of knowledge from the period of his career as a private tutor through his work as an university professor up until his rectorship at Berlin. Suffice it to mention his lectures (1794, 1805, and 1811) on the scholar's vocation and those writings discussing the problem of university education, as well as his most famous work concerning education (*Addresses to the German Nation*, 1807/1808),[1] which makes a proposal in particular regarding the nation's education.

CONTACT Tamás Hankovszky hankovszky@btk.ppke.hu

I am going to concentrate on the first years of Jena, since it is the best way to demonstrate that the topic of education is not a casual theme for writing for Fichte, but springs from the roots of his philosophy (Kivelä, 2012, p. 59). Furthermore, these Fichtian considerations are still noteworthy today.

In Fichte's early philosophy of education, three central topics have great importance concerning the science of knowledge: the subject taken as activity, nature conceived as Not-I, and the summons[2] of another subject as the condition of possibility of subjectivity. The first of these appears in the earliest of his works. It is known that the *Science of Knowledge* was born in autumn of 1793, when Fichte discovered the I as the self-positing principle (on the relation of reflectivity of self-activity and education cf. Traub, 2010, pp. 37–39). Positing itself means that the I is the product of its own activity: The I 'exists *because* it has posited itself' (Fichte, 1982, p. 98) and the I 'is that *which* it posits itself to be; and it posits itself as *that* which it is.' (Fichte, 1982, p. 99) It depends completely on itself, nothing falls into it from outside, so it is pure activity without receptivity. More than a year later, in a letter, Fichte sums up the considerable importance of his starting point:

> My System is the first system of freedom. Just as France has freed man from external shackles, so my system frees him from the fetters of things in themselves, which is to say, from those external influences with which all previous systems—including the Kantian—have more or less fettered man. Indeed, the first principle of my system presents man as independent being. (Fichte, 1988b, p. 385)

Fichte's idea on education in his schooldays

Even if not in such a radical way, Fichte grasped man as an independent creature much earlier, namely concerning the very concept of education, *Bildung*. In 1780, the 18-year-old Fichte, on leaving boarding school, made a distinction between the two forms of obtaining knowledge in his valedictory speech, written in Latin. The one is characterized by the passive receptivity of information, the other by the self-activity of the student, by which he himself conceptualizes what he learns:

> In my opinion, what we have not known yet, what we conceive with the help of our mind, we can learn on two ways. On the one hand, knowledge is transferred into our soul so to speak from outside, so we receive the whole as such from somebody else; on the other hand, […] it seems to us that we ourselves have grasped and comprehended that knowledge by our own mind, while the teacher only leads us onto the way we can reach it. (Fichte, 1962, pp. 19, 20)

Between the two ways of studying Fichte does not see a philosophically important difference, but as yet only a difference in efficacy. When the student is only a passive recipient of truth, such firm conviction cannot arise, as when knowledge is the product of his own activity; moreover, when one obtains knowledge in the latter way is much more self-contained and subject to one's own choice than when one has to bow to the superior force of truth, when demonstration fetters him.

It is already obvious from this quotation that, although Fichte emphasizes the activity of the student, he does not imagine learning without the direction of a teacher. He characterizes the teacher's role when speaking about how the student can be led to conceive God's existence, saying:

> With the help of examples which appear in front of his [i.e. learner's] eyes in the moment of speaking I am going to direct his mind without his suspecting what aim my speech serves, so that he may conceive there is somebody who created all this, and that he on his own, in his own intention, may wish to know whether that somebody is God. (Fichte, 1962, p. 20)

This manner of directing the student's attention while the teacher's aim remains unnoticed is very similar to that of Rousseau's, according to whom the teacher has to direct the improvement of the student. Many examples could be given, such as when teaching the estimation of distance Rousseau uses the help of foot-races. Since he presents courses with different length, Emil is forced to estimate which course is the shortest. While he is spellbound by the vying for cakes, he does not even presume that he improves his ability to make a visual estimate owing to a conscious plan of education (Rousseau, 1979, pp. 142, 143 On the ambiguous role of the teacher, cf. Bardina, 2017, pp. 4, 5).

It is controversial whether Fichte really had Rousseau's indirect education (Cf. Lindsay, 2016, pp. 487–491) in mind in his early philosophy of education or whether he was only influenced by the Enlightenment's anti-authoritative stance. (Cf. Lohmann, 2004, pp. 17, 18) It is a fact, however, that he

regarded Rousseau as one of his most favorite authors in his youth (Fichte, 1968, p. 134). In his mature works, Rousseau's impact is unquestionable. In his school-leaving speech, Fichte accepted ideas close to those of Rousseau, even concerning the anthropological conditions of *Bildung* in the student. At this time, he expresses his conviction that 'The seeds of science and wisdom are planted in and congenital with man's mind, they only need to be awakened.' (Fichte, 1962, p. 20) This idea can simply be regarded as a typical Enlightenment conception according to which education encourages only organic dénouement and growth. Nonetheless, we are going to see that Fichte credits Rousseau with a similar conception later, so that it is probable that he borrowed it directly from him. The originality of the mature Fichte, however, which distinguishes his philosophy of education from that of Rousseau lies in the fact that he denied the conception of natural growth as educational model with which he by then openly credited Rousseau. He differs therein so considerably from Rousseau that we can see his view of education as a distinct substantive type among modern educational theories (Langewand, 2003, pp. 274, 275).

The most important concern of the pedagogy of the young Fichte turned out to be the idea that the student is not just a recipient during learning, but also has an active role. Fichte was faithful to this idea during his career as a tutor (1785–1792) and later on as well (for example, by rejecting the learning of texts by heart (Lohmann, 2004, pp. 35–37), when he elaborated his philosophy of education as based on the doctrine of science and the subject's quintessential activity, and consistently applied it in revising some of his earlier conceptions. Among these we can find the early anthropological conception congenial to Rousseau, as well as the fact that Fichte regarded activity not only as a subservient means, but also as an end in itself, as the actualization of freedom. A philosophy which posits the freedom and independence of human beings, which wishes to liberate human beings from the fetters of external influence and present the subject as product of its own activity, must not make do with a conception according to which the student gains knowledge through mere germination of congenital seeds under an unnoticed, but significant influence of the educator.

Although one of the mature Fichte's central beliefs was already hidden in the school leaver Fichte's conception, his farewell speech was not framed by a thinker who had already been freed from the 'fetters of external influence.' A teacher seems to be standing beside him leading his mind so invisibly that he can present something as his own either taken from the Enlightenment or—as seems to me plausible—directly borrowed from Rousseau. In the following section, I am going to consider two of the above-mentioned principles of Fichte's early philosophy of education as based upon the doctrine of science, namely the subject's activity and nature conceived as Not-I, taking as point of departure a work in which Fichte argues with Rousseau. On the one hand, I am going to show the anthropological conception which can be extracted from Fichte's early science of knowledge; on the other hand, I will discuss the difference between Fichte's standpoint and that of Rousseau. Finally, I deal with questions concerning education, although owing to problems of space, I discuss only schematically the third principle of his philosophy of education, namely the 'summons' (*Aufforderung*) already prolifically reviewed by critics.

Anthropological foundations of the Fichtian philosophy of education

A year after his first politico-philosophical works had been published (in which, besides other considerations, he had defended and elaborated Rousseau's ideas), in the first semester of being a professor, Fichte gave open lectures about the significance of university education. Of these, he published five under the title *Some Lectures concerning the Scholar's Vocation*. These lectures can be read as disputes with Rousseau. The last, for example, deals specifically with Rousseau's so-called 'paradox' (Fichte, 1988d, pp. 182, 184). Fichte, however, does not aspire to analyze Rousseau objectively, but, as he himself admits (Fichte, 1988d, p. 177), contrasts Rousseau's philosophy with his own in order to introduce his standpoint more clearly, and render a brief synopsis of the topic, which he does in the first four lectures. This can best be described as anthropology, or development of a picture of human beings, whereby Fichte applies what he says in his private lectures on the *Foundations of the Entire Science of*

Knowledge, which he held parallel to his public lectures, about the I, and in particular about the absolute I to subject individual and social subjects. The outcome of these lectures is none other than his main work published under the same title.

According to Fichte, not only is Rousseau's picture of man contrary to the science of knowledge, but also his personal attitude as read through his works. Thus, it is clear why he finished his considerations about Rousseau like this: 'I wished to show you, through the example of one of our century's greatest men, how you should not be.' (Fichte, 1988d, p. 184) How should we be, then? Briefly, we should be such persons as strive to approach the proposed ideal, namely the absolute I of science. We do not need extraordinary means for that, since, whatever we do, we approach it merely by acting, as the absolute I is nothing else but pure activity. It is not something which is and otherwise acts as well, not some '*res agitans,*' but 'Act' (*Tathandlung*) in which 'product and activity and agency are […] one and the same' (Fichte, 1982, p. 226).

Although according to Fichte we have to grasp the individual from such an I, we have to know that the absolute I is not identical to us, since we are finite, individual beings, who are limited by an 'independent Not-I […], that is, *nature*' (Fichte, 1988d, p. 162). This not-I acts on us in very different manners, thereby developing the skills and instincts of individual people in different ways. 'What we call 'individuals,' as well as their particular empirical individual nature, is determined by the different ways in which nature acts upon them.' (Fichte, 1988d, p. 162)

Since as the Not-I, it opposes the divine in me and renders me finite (Fichte, 1988d, p. 180)—for it is the negation of the I, or what I should be—nature is something alien, a negative and bad power. If I could cut myself off from it, remove myself from its influence, then to the extent I were able to do it, I would be able to approach the absolute I, which does not suffer any external influence, but it is pure activity. I would not only be able to approach the absolute I in this way—since 'If all men could be perfect, if they could all achieve their highest and final goal, then they would be totally equal to each other. *They would constitute but one single subject.*' (Fichte, 1988d, p. 159, my italics).

Nature and body with its inclinations are, namely, also bad because they separate and differentiate people, and create inequality. When Fichte asks Rousseau's question 'what is the origin of inequality among men?' (Fichte, 1988d, p. 161), he finds this answer: 'Nature's mistakes.' (Fichte, 1988d, p. 164). Inequality appertains to the human natural condition. As 'pure I is always one and the same and is never anything different' (Fichte, 1988d, p. 149), not only individual human beings must not have any controversies and variety, but also people, who ought to turn into being the same I. 'The ultimate characteristic feature of all rational beings is … absolute unity, constant self-identity, complete agreement with oneself' (Fichte, 1988d, p. 149), in the same way 'the complete unity of all individuals' (Fichte, 1988d, p. 160) belongs to the purpose of man, as well as 'the complete equality of all of its members' (Fichte, 1988d, p. 163). Man both as individual and as a member of society equally can approach his final goal provided that he frees himself from the influence of the Not-I turning against nature, and gets further and further from some natural condition by freedom and culture.

Although these early lectures do not elaborate concerning the conceptions of 'summons' and 'recognition,' Fichte comes to the idea that 'the social drive is one of man's fundamental drives. It is man's destiny to live in society; he ought to live in society. One who lives in isolation is not a complete human being. He contradicts his own self.' (Fichte, 1988d, p. 156) This vocation, however, does not belong to human nature in the sense that nature as not-I had implanted it in us.

Man is sociable only as I, as an intellectual being. While Rousseau speaks about accidents 'which may have perfected the human understanding while debasing the species, and made man wicked by making him sociable' (Rousseau, 2002, p. 113), for Fichte man is principally and essentially sociable. While Rousseau states that 'we shall easily conceive how much the difference between man and man in the state of nature must be less than in the state of society' (Rousseau, 2002, p. 111), according to Fichte, it is no other than society where natural differences could be reconciled (Fichte, 1988d, pp. 163, 164, 168). Whereas Rousseau discovers the development of the mind behind every negative process (Rousseau, 2002, pp. 93, 111), Fichte thinks 'Reason will see to it that every individual obtains *indirectly*

from the hands of society that complete education which he could not obtain *directly* from nature.' (Fichte, 1988d, p. 164)

Reason (which is only another name for I for Fichte (Fichte, 1967, p. 287; Fichte, 2000, p. 3; Fichte, 2005, p. 7) conducts a tremendous struggle with nature (Fichte, 1988d, p. 164), in which mind cannot achieve any splendid victory over nature, but it can approach its aim by infinite stages and degrees. If it entirely reached its aim and completely freed itself from nature's influence by defeating it, then it would become absolute I. This, however, is not possible, 'so long, that is, as man is to remain man and is not supposed to become God.' (Fichte, 1988d, p. 152, cf. p. 164). Whereas the third principle of *Foundations of the Entire Science of Knowledge* describes this struggle as limitation of the Not-I, or as transferral of the reality of the Not-I to the I, the aforementioned lectures (Fichte, 1988d, p. 152) consider rather how the man strives 'to subordinate to himself all that is irrational, to master it freely and according to his own laws.' (Fichte, 1988d, p. 152) The Not-I should not merely be destroyed, but rather so transformed that the effects which it inevitably has upon us may help us to attain our destiny (On the positive Role of the Not-I in the construction of the self-consciousness and the I, Cf. Schneider (2012), pp. 308, 309). The more we force our own laws on nature and the more we can have influence on the effects proceeding from nature upon us, the more influence we are going to have upon ourselves through the Not-I (Fichte, 1988d, pp. 149, 150, 164).

Skill and proficiency in the fight for control over the influence of nature upon us is nothing else but *culture*. Therefore, 'Culture is the ultimate and highest means to his final goal: complete harmony with himself.' (Fichte, 1988d, p. 150) We have to emerge from the natural state of being, since, however, owing to our sensual-individual nature we are indissolubly attached to nature, our destiny lays a charge on us to strive towards infinitude by cultivation of our natural condition: 'Sensibility ought to be cultivated: that is the highest and ultimate thing which one can propose to do with it.' (Fichte, 1988d, p. 150)

The polemics between Fichte and Rousseau

So far, I have discussed the most important topics of the first four lectures, and although Fichte does not mention Rousseau in these, we have found views which conflict with Rousseau's. The critical stance of Fichte regarding Rousseau becomes openly conspicuous in the fifth lecture. The idea of human *nature* and its *vocation* forms the background of his confrontation with Rousseau. The two agree only that human beings as they really are in their present state, are self-contradictory beings and that it is our duty to overcome this state. Man, on the one hand, is completely delivered up to sensuality; on the other hand, according to the idea attributed to Rousseau, man has a 'divine spark' (Fichte, 1988d, p. 179), 'feels the divine within himself' (Fichte, 1988d, p. 180), or as Fichte would rather say, man feels in himself the instinct of self-activity, since he feels in himself the absolute spontaneity of the I positing itself.

While the two philosophers do not entirely agree with regard to the nature of human beings' self-dividedness, their opposition is even greater in their opinion about the origin of this division and how to overcome it. In Rousseau's view—at least, as Fichte interprets it—'Sensuousness reigned; that was the source of the evil.' (Fichte, 1988d, p. 181) People live in a way that 'their joys and their sorrows, as well as their entire destiny depended upon the gratification of their base sensuousness, whose needs nevertheless increased painfully with every gratification.' (Fichte, 1988d, p. 179), but it is not nature that is responsible for that, but they themselves. Since

> talent, art, and knowledge united for the miserable purpose of extorting a still more refined pleasure from nerves jaded with every pleasure or for the detestable purpose of excusing and justifying human depravity, of exalting corruption into a virtue and completely demolishing anything still standing in its way. (Fichte, 1988d, p. 180)

According to this line of reasoning, culture is responsible for evil, since it is nothing else but the means by which man can make himself more and more sensual, while he more and more cunningly denies it to be bad. Therefore, the only right way to achieve the vocation of man is to abolish culture.

Culture, then, according to Fichte, helps us to approach gradually an ideal condition, while according to Rousseau, it actually removes us from the ideal. In other words, Fichte and Rousseau hold opposing

views about what the ideal condition of human beings consists in, as well as how their present status has emerged. According to the etiological explanation of Rousseau, human beings emerged from their original and natural state emerged by attempting to improve their nature through reason and reflection. The maladjustment which resulted therefrom is grievous not only because we nourish desires so unnatural that nature cannot satisfy them, but also because they themselves are the source of evil, as our inflated desires prompt us to immoral deeds (Fichte, 1988d, p. 181). Fichte conceives the essence of human nature in a radically different way. Reason and reflection belong to me so much that 'before I came to self-consciousness … *I* did not exist at all; for I was not a self.' (Fichte, 1982, p. 98) If we wished to grasp etiologically the connection between the I and Not-I for the sake of a parallel, the original act leading to the actual human situation would be like that of the originally pure I: pure reason, pure reflection was made relative to nature when positing a Not-I opposed to itself—according to the second principle of the science of knowledge. Man, then, came into being with the moral duty to overcome the contradictory unity of I and Not-I, for according to the ideal of the first principle of the science of knowledge ('I = I'), the I is originally unity and identity.

Fichte and Rousseau do not agree with each other on the question whether reason and reflection belong to human nature or not. If not, we can fulfill our vocation by discarding reason. In Fichte's view, Rousseau considers such a practically animal being to be our aim. When sensuality reigns over us through the power of the reason, we have to reconcile our humiliating state and preclude further moral evil by discarding reason. Nevertheless, in this reinstated natural condition, 'Man would become an irrational beast. There would be a new animal species, but there would no longer be any men.' (Fichte, 1988d, p. 181) Consequently, virtue also becomes impossible, and for Fichte this is the sign of the fact that Rousseau was mistaken. Freedom and morality belong to human nature and so reason, in particular practical reason, has to belong to it as well.

Fichte, however, does not stop here. He points out that the use of reason and the virtuous life realized by the reason are a mode of *act*. Rousseau, in rejecting reason, wishes to discard action. Instead of actively confronting evil by every means available to human intelligence, he wishes to withdraw into a mode of life, where there is neither struggle nor victory. Instead of trying to intensify human morality or teach human beings to reign over their desires and satisfy them in keeping with their human dignity, Rousseau chooses what seems to be the easier path, which is for us to have no conscious desires at all, no needs which would impel us to act according to reason. Fichte, on the other hand, believes that 'Need is not the mother of vice; need is the impetus towards activity and virtue. The source of vice is laziness.' (Fichte, 1988d, p. 183) We must never overcome our maladjustment by choosing indolence, even if it is possible for us. How could we, then, be identical with ourselves if we reject self-conscious activity? We must reflect on our self-contradictory condition from the point of view of our I, and on our I from the point of the absolute I.[3] The absolute I is *pure activity*, and 'There is no salvation for man until he successfully conquers his natural indolence and finds all of his joy and his pleasure in activity alone.' (Fichte, 1988d, p. 183)

Nature, by opposing our self-conscious I, offers us occasion and incentives for continuous activity. The augmentation of needs causes us greater and greater suffering, but in this way the objective is attained of prompting us to act (Fichte, 1988d, p. 183). We do not have to minimize sensual needs as Rousseau thought; rather, we have to improve them (Fichte, 1988d, p. 177) in order that desire may prompt us to act in order to fulfill ever new tasks. 'Act! Act! That is what we are here for.' (Fichte, 1988d, p. 184) According to Fichte, all of Rousseau's mistakes originate in having not noticed this. (Fichte, 1988d, p. 183) 'His entire system of ideas is governed by this deficient striving for spontaneity. He was a man of passive sensibility, without also being a man capable on his own of actively resisting its influence.' (Fichte, 1988d, pp. 183, 184) That is the reason that Fichte's audience must not be like Rousseau.

Self-activity and education

The lack of self-activity in Rousseau is, of course, relative. Not only do Fichte's early learning-teaching ideal and his mature philosophy of education rely on the learner's self-activity, but the text of *Emile* also

builds upon the student's activity, even though this activity is stimulated by the educator. Rousseau would also reject indolence in the sense of laziness or slothfulness. In fact, Fichte's objection is that activity does not really start from the learner's volitional act; it is not something by which the learner would posit himself with a sort of moral act. The problem is that Rousseau 'conceals from our view the most interesting and instructive thing of all: the struggle between reason and passion and the gradual, slow victory which the former achieves by means of exertion, effort, and labor' (Fichte, 1988d, p. 184). His learners eventually become what they should be, even moral men 'but they merely *become* so, and we are unable to see *how* this happens.'(Fichte, 1988d, p. 184) In respect of morality their activity is not their own activity, but it only *happens* to them, and so it is not self-activity in the strict sense of the word. Fichte notes, referring to *Emile*, that 'The pupil Rousseau depicts develops all by himself' (Fichte, 1988d, p. 184) On the one hand, this means that the teacher has no other duty than to eliminate obstacles which obstruct improvement and to provide opportunities for the learner to deploy his inherent potential. On the other hand, 'benevolent nature' (Fichte, 1988d, p. 184) itself deploys the learner's abilities, or rather nature itself evolves in the learner. Contrary to this point of view, according to Fichte, *Bildung* is nothing but the everlasting struggle against nature which we apprehend through the conception of the Not-I.

Whether it is inside or outside us, nature, according to Fichte, is not the good by which we also become good, since when nature affects us, we are by definition passive. Nevertheless, the morally good is self-activity because we are in unity with ourselves only in this way, i.e. in opposition to nature. Through self-activity not something alien gets into me, but rather something of which primarily I am the principle. The science of knowledge—in Fichte's view, the first philosophical 'system of freedom'—represents man as an independent being, who becomes something not through the power of nature, but through his own power. This is *Bildung* in the true sense. Self-activity, according to this point of view, has not attained its position with regard other educational forms owing to its practical efficacy, but because it is the only form which man is worthy of.

This radical point of view regarding individual autonomy seems not to give much place to the influence of a teacher, especially such influence as is invisible to the learner, for example, insofar as the 'cunning of the teacher' guides the learner into the direction chosen by the educator, to the minimal influence assigned by Rousseau's indirect educational method, which the young Fichte considered to be a desirable means of education. In this context, it is important to note that Fichte doesn't write about children's education, but places the problem of *Bildung* on a social and political niveau. The addressee of education is a free man must be treated according to the conviction that:

> every individual in society ought to act on the basis of free choice and on the basis of a conviction which *he himself has judged adequate*. In each of his actions he ought to be able to think of himself as an end and ought to be treated as such every other member of society. A person who is deceived is being treated as a mere means to an end. (Fichte, 1988d, p. 175)

This means that education should use only moral means, a principle which demands far more from the educator than merely to reject the use of 'compulsory means or physical force' (Fichte, 1988d, p. 175). The aim of education is to live as 'a member of society,' since 'we desired a free fellow worker on our great project' (Fichte, 1988d, p. 167). Although we may wish to have influence on others, or more precisely on others insofar as they are Not-I, we must do it through the mediation of each one's own I, otherwise 'we have killed the man within the person we have treated in this manner' (Fichte, 1988d, p. 167).

Not only do practical rules arise for the educator from the fact of the other's freedom, but an important theoretical question arises as well, to which I can only refer to in conclusion. How can free men as free men be influenced? Even if we suppose that the I is able to determine the inherent Not-I (the physical, sensual aspect of man), it is still questionable how a teacher (that is to say an I who the I is *not*) can help or motivate the I to produce the desired determination in Not-I. Furthermore, even if such stimulation were produced, could we consider this activity to be the I's self-activity? Can the I determine itself to an activity and can it be prompted for that activity at the same time? At this point, the third main topic of the early science of knowledge is of great importance, the summons (Cf. Langewand, 2003, pp. 278–280). According to Fichte, my freedom and independence are not endangered if somebody summons me, but does not force me to do something. Although we gain the rule of activity from

outside, we remain free in its implementation or non-implementation. A summons does not diminish our freedom; when in 1796, Fichte elaborates on the theory of summons in *Natural Rights*, he sees it as one of the conditions of the possibility of subjectivity. In order that we will be able to posit ourselves, we have to attribute free activity to ourselves. Nevertheless, we need another being to do this who summons us. The teacher's role is just that; moreover, he has not got any other role. 'The summons to engage in free self-activity is what we call upbringing.' (Fichte, 2000, p. 38)

Notes

1. Temilo van Zantwijk does not discuss the Fichtian philosophy of education on the evidence of these works, but of others dealing with different topics (van Zantwijk, 2010).
2. 'Summons' is used here for the German word 'Aufforderung' (also 'demand,' 'challenge'). In the older English translation of Fichte's *Foundations of Natural Right* from 1889, the word 'requirement' is used. The more recent translation from 2000 uses 'summons'. Cf. Fichte (2000, M. Baur, Transl.).
3. Cf. 'My *absolute I* is obviously not the *individual*, though this is how offended courtiers and irate philosophers have interpreted me, in order that they may falsely attribute to me the disgraceful theory of practical egoism. Instead, *the individual must be deduced from the absolute I*.' (Fichte, 1988c, p. 411).

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Notes on contributor

Tamás Hankovszky, PhD studied philosophy, theology, literature and chemistry, and teaches philosophy at Pázmány Péter Catholic University, Hungary. His main interest is in German idealism (Kant and Fichte), philosophy of religion and logic.

ORCID

Tamás Hankovszky http://orcid.org/0000-0002-9429-4040

References

Bardina, S. (2017). Reconciliation of natural and social: Rethinking Rousseau's educational theory. *Educational Philosophy and Theory,* 1–11. doi:10.1080/00131857.2017.1296758

Behler, E. (Ed.). (1963). *Friedrich Schlegel: Kritische Ausgabe seiner Werke: XVIII.: Philosophische Lehrjahre (1796–1806) 1*. Paderborn: Schöningh.

Fichte, J. G. (1962). De recto praeceptorum poeseos et rhetorices usu. In R. Lauth & H. Jacob (Eds.), *Johann Gottlieb Fichte Gesamtausgabe der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, II/1* (pp. 5–29). Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog.

Fichte, J. G. (1967). Entwürfe zur Recension des Aenesidemus. In R. Lauth & H. Jacob (Eds.), *Johann Gottlieb Fichte Gesamtausgabe der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, II/2* (pp. 287–314). Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog.

Fichte, J. G. (1968). Letter to Marie Christiane von Koppenfels, June 1790. In R. Lauth & H. Jacob (Eds.), *Johann Gottlieb Fichte Gesamtausgabe der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, III/1* (pp. 133–137). Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog.

Fichte, J. G. (1982). Foundations of the entire science of knowledge. In J. G. Fichte (Ed.), *Science of knowledge: With the first and second introductions*. (P. Heath & J. Lachs, Trans.). (pp. 87–286). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Fichte, J. G. (1988a). Concerning the concept of the Wissenschaftslehre or, of so-called "Philosophy". In D. Breazeale (Ed.), *J. G. Fichte: Early philosophical writings*. (D. Breazeale, Trans.). (pp. 94–135). Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Fichte, J. G. (1988b). Draft of a letter to Baggesen, April or May 1795. In D. Breazeale (Ed.), *J. G. Fichte: Early philosophical writings*. (D. Breazeale, Trans.). (pp. 385–387). Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Fichte, J. G. (1988c). Letter to Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi, August 30. 1795. In D. Breazeale (Ed.), *J. G. Fichte: Early philosophical writings*. (D. Breazeale, Trans.). (pp. 411–412). Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Fichte, J. G. (1988d). Some lectures concerning the scholar's vocation. In D. Breazeale (Ed.), *J. G. Fichte: Early philosophical writings*. (D. Breazeale, Trans.). (pp. 144–184). Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Fichte, J. G. (2000). *Foundations of natural right. According to the principles of the Wissenschaftslehre*. (M. Baur, Trans.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Fichte, J. G. (2005). *The system of ethics: According to the principles of the Wissenschaftslehre*. (D. Breazeale & G. Zöller, Trans.).Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Langewand, A. (2003). Über die Schwierigkeit, Erziehung als Aufforderung zur Selbsttätigkeit zu Begreifen. *Zeitschrift für Pädagogik, 49*, 274–289.
Lindsay, P. (2016). Thinking back (and Forward) to Rousseau's Emile. *Journal of Political Science Education, 12*, 487–497. doi:10.1080/15512169.2016.1146146
Lohmann, P. (2004). *Der Begriff des Gefühls in der Philosophie Johann Gottlieb Fichtes*. Amsterdam: Rodopi.
Rousseau, J. -J. (1979). *Emile or on education*. (A. Bloom, Trans.). New York, NY: Basic Books.
Rousseau, J. -J. (2002). *The social contract and the first and second discourses*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
Schneider, K. (2012). The subject-object transformations and 'Bildung'. *Educational Philosophy and Theory, 44*, 302–311. doi:10.1111/j.1469-5812.2010.00696.x
Schurr, J. (1981). Zur Konzeption einer transzendentalen Bildungstheorie nach Prinzipien der fichteschen Wissenschaftslehre. In K. Hammacher (Ed.), *Der Transzendentale Gedanke: Die Gegenwärtige Darstellung der Philosophie Fichtes* (pp. 508–520). Hamburg: Meiner.
Kivelä, A. (2012). From Immanuel Kant to Johann Gottlieb Fichte: Concept of education and German idealism. In P. Siljander, A. Kivelä, & A. Sutinen (Eds.), *Theories of Bildung and growth: Connections and controversies between continental educational thinking and American pragmatism* (pp. 59–86). Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.
Traub, H. (2010). Biographische Wurzeln und systematische Reflexionen: Grundlegung einer Philosophie ganzheitlicher Bildung und Erziehung in Fichtes Wanderjahren. In J. Stolzenberg & L. T. Ulrichs (Eds.), *Bildung als Kunst: Fichte, Schiller, Humboldt, Nietzsche* (pp. 29–58). Berlin: Gruyter.
van Zantwijk, T. (2010). Wege des Bildungsbegriffs von Fichte zu Hegel. In J. Stolzenberg & L. T. Ulrichs (Eds.), *Bildung als Kunst: Fichte, Schiller, Humboldt, Nietzsche* (pp. 69–86). Berlin: Gruyter.