

Reinhold & Critics

PHIL 971 Kant Seminar

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1 Figures & Timeline

- Immanuel Kant (1724–1804)
- Karl Leonhard Reinhold (1757–1823)¹
- Gottlob Ernst Schulze (1761–1833)²
- Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762–1814)³

2 The Need For a Science of Representation

- Why do we need a foundation for the critical philosophy?
 - The Critical philosophy is a “science of the faculty of cognition” and depends on the notion of representation⁴

3 Reinhold's Representationalism

The Principle of Consciousness: in consciousness representation is distinguished through the subject from both object and subject and is referred to both

- The Principle of Consciousness is, by being the basis of the Critical philosophy, supposed to be the fundamental principle of philosophy and thus of science generally)
- Recognizes a fourfold distinction between representation⁵, object⁶, subject⁷, and the distinguishing of this ‘mere’ representation from subject and object

‘Mere’ Representation: that which *can* be related in consciousness to the object and subject and is distinguished from both (Reinhold, “New Exposition,” 1:172. Cited by Schulze, Aenesidemus, 79)

- Mere representation is cognitively and ontologically prior to the subject and object^{8,9}

Reinholdian Representationalism: (1) all our conscious states are representations; (2) all representations have a four-fold structure, consisting of a subject, an object, a distinguishing of the mere representation from the subject and object, and a relating of the mere representation to the subject and object.

¹ The Philosophy of the Elements:

- *Attempt a New Theory of the Human Power of Representation* (1789)
- *Contributions toward Correcting the Previous Misunderstandings of Philosophers*, Vol. I (1790)
- *On the Foundation of Philosophical Knowledge* (1791)

² *Aenesidemus Or Concerning the Foundations of The Philosophy of The Elements* (1792)

³ *Review of Aenesidemus* (1792)

⁴ If the science of the faculty of cognition is to remedy the confusion which has been the main pitfall of all previous philosophy . . . it must proceed from the concept of representation as such, and exhaustively identify its essential characteristics. (Reinhold, **Über das Fundament**, 74; BKH 69)

⁵ The representation is that which is distinguished in consciousness through the subject from the object and subject and related to both (Reinhold, “New Exposition,” 1:168. Cited by Schulze, Aenesidemus, 77)

⁶ that which is distinguished in consciousness through the subject from the subject and the representation, and which is related to the representation that is distinguished from the subject (Reinhold, “New Exposition,” 1:169. Cited by Schulze, Aenesidemus, 78)

⁷ that which is distinguished in consciousness through itself from the representation and the object, and which is related to the representation that is distinguished from the object (Reinhold, “New Exposition,” 1:171. Cited by Schulze, Aenesidemus, 79)

⁸ [Subject and object] occur in consciousness only through the representation, only through the fact that the representation is related to them; this, however, is only possible through the fact that the mere representation, that is, that which can be related to both of them, is present [*vorhanden*] (Reinhold, “New Exposition,” 1:173. Cited by Schulze, Aenesidemus, 80)

⁹ That which is related in consciousness to the object and subject must be present—indeed not according to time but according to nature—before the acts of being related [*Bezogenwerden*], insofar as nothing can be related, if nothing is present [*vorhanden*] that is able to be related. (Reinhold, “New Exposition,” 1:173. Cited by Schulze, Aenesidemus, 80)

- Self-consciousness is a special case of being conscious of the subject, and conforms to the Principle of Consciousness¹⁰

4 Schulze's Criticisms

- Against the existence of a faculty of representation
 1. There is no secure inference from how we have to think to how things in fact are
 2. Inference from the existence of a representation to the existence of a faculty of representation is inconsistent with the Critical philosophy
 3. There is no secure inference from properties of representation to the properties of any faculty
 4. The appeal to powers explains nothing
- Against the Principle of Consciousness
 1. The PC is not the highest principle since it is subject to the principle of contradiction
 2. Some conscious representations are representations fail to conform to the PC
 - deep reflection
 - primitive mental states (e.g. sensation in small children)
 - intuition¹¹
 3. Reinhold's own views require that mere representation is derivative rather than fundamental¹²
 4. Reinhold's conception of self-consciousness is problematic:
 - The subject seems to represent itself even when not conscious in a manner conforming to the Principle of Consciousness
 - Reinholdian self-representation is not obviously possible (i.e. how does the subject distinguish itself from itself?)
 - The status of first-person representation confronts a dilemma (see Messina 2011, 360)}
 - Self-consciousness is implausibly portrayed as always present¹³

5 Fichte's Review

- Against Schulze Fichte accepts Reinhold's Principle of Consciousness but with Schulze he denies that it can be the highest principle of philosophy¹⁴
- With Reinhold, Fichte claims that (1) "all that is discovered in the mind is a representing," and (2) representation "is undeniably an empirical determination of the mind." (BKH 140)
- Against Reinhold Fichte claims that there are pre-representational acts of the mind that make representation possible

¹⁰ even with that kind of consciousness that is called self-consciousness . . . the representing thing [das Vorstellende] as subject and as ² | ³ object, as the representing thing that thinks and as the representing thing that is thought, are distinguished. In the first respect, it behaves as the thing that distinguishes through the representation; in the second, as the thing distinguished through the representation—as representing and as represented. As the thing that distinguishes it cannot simultaneously be the thing that is distinguished (just as little as the eye can see itself) (Reinhold, "New Exposition," 1:197. Cited by Schulze, Aenesidemus, 312)

¹¹ I indeed notice [bemerke] my "I," which intuitively, and a representation, which constitutes the content of the intuition; however, in this intuition and during it, there is no perception [Gewahrnehmung] of an object that is distinct from my "I" and the representation that is present in it. (Schulze, Aenesidemus, 72)

¹² For if a representation is made up only of something that is distinguished by the subject from the object and subject, and is related to both; if it is certain, moreover, that only something that has been perceived [was wahrgenommen worden ist] can be distinguished from, and related to, something else by the mind (for the operation of distinguishing and relating can occur only if there is something there that can be related to, and distinguished from, something else; and where there is nothing present [vorhanden] that can be distinguished, "distinguishing" cannot be thought of at all), then it follows that "intuition" is not a species of the genus "representation" because the concept of the genus is not applicable to it at all. During the intuiting no distinction of an object from a representation occurs, because for as long as the intuition lasts, no object at all different from it is noted [bemerkt] (Schulze, Aenesidemus, 84–85)

¹³ Thus, self-consciousness is not only present in us when the representing "I" constitutes the object of a special representation, but rather also in general when the representing thing, as a representing thing, is distinguished from the representation and from the object, or when the representing "I" is perceived as existing; and one is conscious of oneself as soon as and insofar as one distinguishes the thinking "I" from some kind of a thought or from the object of the thought. (Schulze, Aenesidemus, 350)

¹⁴ all the objects of Aenesidemus are groundless in so far as they are to be taken as directed against the truth of the principle of consciousness as such, but that they are relevant to it as first principle of all philosophy and as a mere fact; thus the objections make a new justification necessary. (Fichte, BKH 142)

- The “positing” [*Setzung*] of self and object in intellectual intuition¹⁵
- * Is Fichte’s notion of positing related to Kant’s?¹⁶

References & Further Reading

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¹⁵ The absolute subject, the ego, is not given in an empirical intuition, but is posited through an intellectual one; and the absolute object, the non-ego, is what is posited in opposition to it. In empirical consciousness, both occur in no other way than by a representation being referred to them. They are in it only mediately, qua representing, and qua represented. But the absolute subject, that which represents but is not represented; and the absolute object . . . of these one will never become conscious as something empirically given. (Fichte, BKH 142)

¹⁶ The concept of positing [Position] or setting [*Setzung*] is perfectly simple: it is identical with the concept of being in general. Now something can be thought as posited merely relatively, or to express the matter better, it can be thought merely as the relation (*respectus logicus*) of something as a characteristic mark of a thing. In this case, being, that is to say, the positing of this relation, is nothing other than the copula in a judgment. If what is considered is not merely the relation but the thing posited in and for itself, then this being is the same as existence. (OPG, 2:73)