

Owen Ware  
University of Toronto

"From Kant's Critique of Rational Psychology to Fichte's Infinite I."

It is well known that Kant seeks to discredit rational psychology on the grounds that we cannot access the nature of the soul by reflecting upon the 'I think' of self-consciousness. What is far less understood, however, is why Kant still believes the theorems of rational psychology are analytically true insofar as they represent the 'I' through the categories of substance, reality, unity, and existence. Early post-Kantian thinkers like Fichte would abandon this restriction and approach the concept of the 'I' instead through the category of community or reciprocal interaction. The result was nothing less than a radical shift in thinking about persons after Kant, yet in a way that would bear a striking affinity to the substance monism of Spinoza. The aim of this chapter is to trace the origin of this shift and its aftermath in Fichte's effort to defend a new conception of the 'I'.