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How to Think Actuality? Schelling, Aristotle and the Problem of the Pure *Daß*

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In this paper, I address a problem of Schelling's late philosophy: the relation between negative and positive philosophy, and the role of the "pure *Daß*" in the transition from one to the other. While the so-called transition is a well-known and much discussed issue, recent Schelling scholarship has underlined the difficulties involved in the mere notion of pure *Daß*. I propose that we can avoid some of these difficulties by taking into account Schelling's particular and original interpretation of Aristotle's notion of actuality (*energeia*) and the way he applies this notion in his late negative philosophy.

I would like to begin by stating the philosophical problem of which the late Schelling becomes aware and which will provide the context for his reading of Aristotle. The late Schelling considers most of modern philosophy (including his own earlier work) to be a merely logical philosophy that ignores existence. In order to express this deficiency, he takes up Leibniz's question: "Why is there something? Why not nothing?" (SW XIII: 7).¹

It seems that there is no *necessity* of *thought* that can give an answer to this question. We cannot explain the *fact* that something exists at all. Actuality [*Wirklichkeit*], the actual existence of the world, cannot be explained by thought. Besides, whenever we try to think of what is actual, we cannot avoid turning it into a *content* of thought, that is, into a mere possible. Pure thought cannot grasp *actuality* as such. But what is it that we lack, then? If the actuality of the actual does not consist in an intelligible content (it's not a

¹ F.W.J. Schelling, *The Grounding of Positive Philosophy: The Berlin Lectures*, trans. Bruce Matthews (Albany: SUNY Press, 2007), 94. Translation is slightly modified by the author.

“real predicate” in Kant’s words), how can we even express actuality through concepts? *Can we think actuality at all?*

Introduction

Schelling’s interpretation of Aristotle takes place in the context of his late philosophy which is characterized by its division into a “negative” and a “positive” philosophy. While negative philosophy is the “purely rational,” *a priori* development of the *necessary* contents of reason, positive philosophy realizes that this *logical* necessity only refers to the connections *between* the contents and not to their existence, which remains *contingent*. Positive philosophy is the *a posteriori* understanding that seeks to make sense of historical, contingent existence and can deal with freedom and personality. The main motivation that leads Schelling to work on a negative philosophy in his very last years is precisely the attempt to show *from within* negative or purely rational philosophy itself that the mere contents or determinations are insufficient because they can only exist if there is something *actual* that brings them into existence (SW XI: 588).²

In this paper, I will address a problem of Schelling’s late philosophy that he aims to solve with the use of the Aristotelian “pure actuality”: the relation between negative and positive philosophy and the role of the “pure *Daß*” in the transition from one to the other. While the so-called transition is a well-known and much discussed issue (even among Schelling’s contemporaries), recent Schelling scholarship (Beach, Kosch) has underlined the difficulties involved in the mere notion of pure *Daß*. Briefly, the problem of the pure *Daß* has three different aspects:

1) How should one understand the relation between negative and positive philosophy (avoiding both a leap and a mere continuation)? This is a problem that Schelling himself aims to solve in his very last years. We could call it the Jacobi problem. Jacobi criticized modern philosophy for being an abstract philosophy with no room for immediacy, existence, personality, but he thought that faith was the only alternative (a *salto mortale*). Schelling agrees with Jacobi’s criticism of modern philosophy but he thinks the solution lies in a different way of doing *philosophy* (of exercising reason), which can adequately deal with aspects such as existence and personality.

2 “If one could still be surprised by something in this day and age, it would be to hear Plato and even Aristotle named on the side of those who place thought above being Aristotle, whom the world owes the insight [*die Einsicht*] that only the individual exists, that the universal ... is only attribute (*katêgorêma monon*), not something that is for itself Aristotle, whose sole expression: *hou hê ousia energeia* should vanquish all doubts, since *ousia* here takes the place which Aristotle normally gives to the *ti estin*, the essence, the what, and the sense is that in God there is no preceding what, no essence, that *actus* takes the place of essence, that actuality [*Wirklichkeit*] precedes the concept, precedes thought.” SW XI: 588. Translations are my own unless otherwise specified.

2) Why does Schelling go back to developing a negative or purely rational philosophy in his last years? Michelle Kosch has called attention to the problem of the exact relation between positive and negative philosophy.³ While negative philosophy is supposed to deal with necessary contents of thought, positive philosophy is to deal with actuality. The following dilemma emerges: either the contents of negative philosophy are what positive philosophy will regard as existent (but then negative philosophy would indeed grasp existence, albeit partially, and positive philosophy would only confirm necessities of thought) or necessities of thought play no role in actuality (but then Schelling would destroy the notion of necessity itself). This is the problem of a coexistence of negative and positive philosophy, if you will, stressed by the fact that Schelling does not abandon negative philosophy, but indeed dedicates his very last years to its revision.

3) Is the notion of pure *Daß* contradictory? Edward Beach has shown that the asymmetry between *Was* and *Daß* is problematic. How can the *Daß* (*quod*) be independent from the *Was* (*quid*)?⁴ If a pure *Daß* is a contradiction in terms, how could positive philosophy start out from this? Beach writes: “The real difficulty lies in the undertaking to *conceive* (in some manner) of a reality which supposedly would *transcend conceptualization* altogether.”⁵

I suggest that we can avoid some of these difficulties when we pay closer attention to the way Schelling interprets Aristotle’s *energeia* and applies it in his last work.

Schelling’s Interpretation of Aristotelian *Energeia*

There is in particular one issue that is still very much discussed and which is relevant to Schelling’s interpretation of Aristotle. The term ἐνέργεια (*energeia*) itself is problematic. It can be understood in a general sense as the opposite of potentiality (*dynamis*) in which case it would be translated as “actuality” or “actualization.” In this general sense, *energeia* can be used interchangeably with ἐντελέχεια (*entelecheia*). However, there are other Aristotelian passages where *energeia* in a stricter sense is contrasted with movement or change (*kinêsis*), in which case it would be best translated as “activity.”⁶ This is not simply a

3 See Michelle Kosch, *Freedom and Reason in Kant, Schelling, and Kierkegaard* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), esp. 107-112. Cf. also Michelle Kosch, “Actuality in Schelling and Kierkegaard,” in *Kierkegaard und Schelling*, ed. Jochen Hennigfeld and John Stewart (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2003), 235-251.

4 See Edward Beach, *The Potencies of God(s). Schelling’s Philosophy of Mythology* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1994).

5 Beach, *The Potencies of God*, 176.

6 “Although Aristotle uses *entelecheia* interchangeably with *energeia* in this context, there is no independent reason to think that *entelecheia* can mean ‘activity,’” Andreas Anagnostopoulos, “Change in Aristotle’s Physics 3,” *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 39 (2010): 34-79; 36.

difficulty of translation, but one of understanding⁷. Indeed, the philosophical question would be precisely how these different aspects (being-in-actuality as opposed to potentiality, on the one hand, and an activity that does not involve movement or change, on the other) can come together under one term, that is, how they are related to each other.⁸

Schelling sees in Aristotle's *Metaphysics* a progression from actuality as "actualization-of" something potential towards an actuality that is not the actualization of anything. How can we think of such an actuality? Only if we see it as activity in a strict sense, that is, as an *energeia* that is not movement, and does not imply any process. For this reason, Schelling distinguishes sharply between *entelecheia* (as actualization-of) and *energeia* (as activity). Schelling also underlines that, for Aristotle, actuality does not merely refer to the *instantiation* of certain intelligible contents, but to an *individual* and active principle that brings such potential contents into existence. Contents of thought are universal (not individual) and in themselves merely possible (not actual). For this reason, Schelling understands the search for an individual actuality in Aristotelian metaphysics as a search that points *beyond* intelligible contents.

Individual actuality appears in Aristotelian metaphysics in stages, according to Schelling. In each of these stages, the principle that brings potential, universal contents into existence is individual and actual. However, Schelling is using "individual" in a particular sense: not as instance of a general term or as something particular that happens to fall under a concept (this sense of "individual" would consider something only from the point of view of the contents it instantiates, from *what* it is). Rather, Schelling understands "individuality" here as "self-being" (*selbstseyn*). Schelling applies this term to different stages of Aristotelian actuality:

(a) Substance: οὐσία (*ousia*), what, in virtue of itself, is 'selbstseynd,' in contrast to mere attributes. "But for him [Aristotle] *Eidos* is act, that is, not a mere *quid* [*Was*], but rather the *quod* [*Daß*] of the *quid* [*Was*] posited in the being, the same as the *ousia*, insofar as this is *cause* of being for the corresponding being, in our expression: that which *is* the being" (SW XI: 406).⁹

(b) Essence—τί ἦν εἶναι (*ti ên einai*): Schelling writes that this is what constitutes something's "self"; for animate beings it is their soul, since it is

7 See Jonathan Beere, *Doing and Being: An Interpretation of Aristotle's Metaphysics Theta* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 155ff.

8 The relation between *energeia* as activity and *energeia* as actuality and the question which of these notions is a special case of the other, has been recently discussed in detail, cf. Anagnostopoulos, "Change"; Beere, *Doing and Being*; Aryeh Kosman, *The Activity of Being. An Essay on Aristotle's Ontology* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2013); Stephen Menn, "The Origins of Aristotle's Concept of *Energeia*: *Energeia* and *Dynamis*," *Ancient Philosophy* 14, (1994): 73-113.

9 "Aber diesem [Aristotle] ist das *Eidos Actus*, also kein bloßes *Was*, vielmehr das *Daß* des in dem Seyenden gesetzten *Was*, dasselbe mit der *Ousia*, inwiefern diese dem jedesmal Seyenden *Ursache* des Seyns—in unserm Ausdruck: das es *seyende* ist" SW XI: 406f. Cf. also SW XI: 313; 333.

what actually *is* each of them.¹⁰ In other words, the soul constitutes the *living being's* self, but this means that the soul is not its *own* self.¹¹ The soul both actualizes a body that has life potentially and instantiates a general concept: it is the *Daß* of the *Was*, but not its own *Daß*. “As *energeia* the soul is the *quod* [*Daß*] of this determined body, but not a *quod* [*Daß*] which is separable from it. In this respect the *quid* [*Was*] is contained and *conceived* in the *quod* [*das Was in dem Daß*]. Only in *this* sense is the concept also in *eidos*” (SW XI: 407f.).¹²

(c) Intellect: νοῦς (*nous*). Schelling follows Aristotle in the characterization of *nous* as having the nature of pure actuality. The *nous* is neither derived from other parts of the soul nor does it require a material substrate. In this sense, *nous* is independent and *separable* from matter and from movement. It is not bound to any preconditions and can be understood as radically new. “Something new because it has nothing of which it would follow necessarily, so if it is, it is purely *out of itself*, and therefore also only itself, that is, it contains nothing universal, but rather where it is, it is only *for itself* and *individual*, as God is individual” (SW XI: 459).¹³

(d) God as that whose substance is *Energeia*: οὗ ἡ οὐσία ἐνέργεια (*hou hē ousia energeia*). Schelling refers to the Aristotelian God with the term “absolute individual” (*absolute Einzelwesen*). While the soul is not its self (it actualizes and instantiates material contents), the pure actuality is God considered “in his pure self [*seinem reinen Selbst nach*]” (SW XI: 418).¹⁴ In other words, instead of being the *Daß* of a *Was* (*quod* of a *quid*) it is *pure Daß*: “an absolutely individual being which as such is pure actuality without mixture, that excludes all potentiality, not *entelecheia* but *Energeia*” (SW XI: 412).¹⁵

What can he mean with the expression “pure *Daß*”? Since Schelling repeats elsewhere that nothing could exist without being *something* (SW XI:

10 Cf. SW XI: 408.

11 Cf. SW XI: 402.

12 “Als Energie nun ist die Seele das Daß eben dieses bestimmten Körpers, aber nicht das von ihm trennbare Daß. Insofern ist das Was in dem Daß enthalten und *begriffen*. Nur in *diesem* Sinn ist im Eidos auch der Begriff” SW XI: 407f. Cf. also SW XI: 402.

13 “Ein Neues, weil er ebenso wenig etwas hat, aus dem er mit Nothwendigkeit folgte, also, wenn er ist, rein *aus sich selbst* ist, und darum auch nur sich, d.h. nichts Allgemeines in sich hat, sondern *wo* er ist, *nur für sich* und *einzel*n ist, wie Gott einzeln ist” SW XI: 459.

14 “Because God is Being, but against this still has a being of His own, a being that He has even without Being.... Nevertheless, that He is independent of being *according to his pure self*, this we know, and this whole science is based on the assumption that being is separable from him.” Cf. SW XI: 373.

15 “Dieses durch sich selbst Ewige ist jedoch nicht die Seele; denn diese obgleich immaterieller Natur behält ihr Verhältniß zum Materiellen, und ist nur in Bezug zu diesem, dem nicht für sich seyenden, sie ist nur als Entelechie desselben etwas, daher auch ihr nicht bestimmt ist für sich zu seyn. Alles werdende verlangt vielmehr nach dem, was weder als Möglichkeit noch wie die Seele als Wirklichkeit von etwas andren und schon darum schlechthin für sich und von allem andren abgesondert ist, das darum auch nicht mehr Princip in dem Sinn, wie die bisher sogenannten, d.h. Allgemeines, sondern absolutes Einzelwesen ist, und als solches reine, ungemischte, alles Potentielle ausschließende Wirklichkeit, *nicht Entelechie, sondern reine Energie*” SW XI: 412. My emphasis.

587),¹⁶ it would seem that he is speaking here of a way of *considering* existents (SW XI: 314),¹⁷ that is, to consider something not from the perspective of the contents it happens to instantiate (of *what* it is) but simply from the point of view *that* it exists. This perspective would take the individual being into account as if it were independent of (*separable*, prior to) those contents: “Of him as he is in himself (in his *pure self*) one cannot say *what* he is but *only* that *he Is* [*nur, daß er Ist*] (this is that being which is independent and separable from all *What* towards which science strives)” (SW XI: 402).¹⁸

I suggest that the “pure actuality” (*reine Wirklichkeit*) is the anticipation of a way of considering existents, a way of pointing at something that cannot be reached through purely rational means: the perspective on an individual considered from the point of view *that* it exists [*Daß*], beyond the contents [*Was*] it might instantiate.

Pure Actuality: A Negative Concept

The pure actuality is, as Schelling says, a *negative* concept.¹⁹ Indeed, in the case of pure actuality, there is nothing to determine, it is rather a pure positing of existence without a concept that accounts for it.²⁰

And while, as Kant says, all existential judgment is synthetic, that is, a judgment in which I go *beyond* the *concept*, so does this find no application to the pure *quod* [*Daß*] (liberated from anything universal) as it remains standing at the end of rational science, because the pure abstract *quod* [*Daß*] is not a synthetic judgment (SW XI: 563).²¹

16 “Anything that *is* must also have a relation to the *concept*. What is *nothing*, that is, what has no relation to thought, *is not truly*” SW XI: 587. Cf. footnote 10.

17 “That which is being, as that which is absolutely free of essence, or free of idea (namely for itself and *considered* [my emphasis] apart from being), cannot even be *the One*, but just *one*, “*Ev ti* [*Hen ti*], which for Aristotle means the same as that which is a *this* (τόδε τι ὄν) [*tode ti on*] and that which is able to be-for-itself, the *χωριστόν* [*chōriston*]” SW XI: 314. Cf. footnote 11.

18 “Von ihm, wie er in Sich (*in seinem reinen Selbst*) ist, [ist] nicht mehr zu sagen, *was* er ist, sondern *nur, daß er Ist* (es ist eben dieses von allem *Was* unabhängige und trennbare Seyn, wohin die Wissenschaft will)” SW XI: 402. Cf. footnote 16.

19 “One could find it incomprehensible how the negativity of this determination has gone unnoticed in Aristotle as well as in modern philosophy” SW XI: 559.

20 Indeed, Schelling refers several times to Fichte’s *Thathandlung* as a way of understanding what Aristotelian *energeia* means. “If this is merely about showing what *Actus* is at all, then Fichte was not that wrong to point to that which is nearer to *us*, the continued deed or, as he thought to express himself more strongly, the *Thathandlung* of our self-consciousness” SW XI: 315.

21 “Und wenn auch, wie Kant sagt, jeder Existentialsatz ein synthetischer ist, d. h. ein solcher, durch welchen ich über den Begriff hinausgehe, so findet dieß doch auf das reine (von allem Allgemeinen befreite) *Daß*, wie es am Ende der Vernunftwissenschaft als Letztes stehen bleibt, keine Anwendung, denn das reine, abstracte *Daß* ist kein synthetischer Satz.” SW XI: 563

At each step of *The Purely Rational Philosophy* (*Die reinrationalen Philosophie*), actuality turns out to be beyond the contents that have been grasped. It points towards something that it cannot reach with this purely rational approach. Thus, through this notion, reason touches the limitations of purely rational philosophy and its paradoxical nature: it tries to think an actuality that it can never know. Only after this realization of its limits can we speak of the purely rational philosophy as a *negative* philosophy.

Is having a negative concept tantamount to having nothing at all? Has Schelling simply negated all thinkable contents and that's the end of the story? We should rather think of a negative concept as a *silhouette* that has been carved out by eliminating all that is not actual and individual in the sense sought after. This negative concept or 'inverted idea' ultimately leads to a crisis where rational procedure experiences its own limitation, and the need for a new method becomes clear. The individual who has been enclosed in purely rational philosophy up to this point realizes that she has a factual existence in the world and that 'action is inevitable.' She decides to abandon the negative method and search for a factual principle capable of action in the world. This decision precipitates the crisis of rational philosophy and leads to its abandonment.

The great, last and true crisis consists only in God, the last one found, being expelled from the idea, and the rational science itself being therewith abandoned (rejected). Negative Philosophy ends thus with the destruction of the idea (as Kant's *Critique* ends ultimately with the humiliation of reason) or with the result that what is truly being [*das wahrhaft Seyende*] is only that which is outside the idea, what is not the idea but is more than the idea, κρείττον τοῦ λόγου [*kreitton tou logou*] (SW XI: 566).²²

The Pure *Daß* as the Beginning of Positive Philosophy

However, Schelling seems to use the term "pure *Daß*" for two moments in the transition from negative to positive philosophy: both for the notion at the end of purely rational philosophy (a negative concept, a pointing-at-something-

²² "Die große, letzte und eigentliche Krisis besteht nun darin, daß Gott, das zuletzt Gefundene, aus der Idee ausgestoßen, die Vernunftwissenschaft selbst damit verlassen (verworfen) wird. Die negative Philosophie geht somit auf die Zerstörung der Idee (wie Kants Kritik eigentlich auf Demüthigung der Vernunft) oder auf das Resultat, daß das wahrhaft Seyende erst das ist, was außer der Idee, nicht die Idee ist, sondern mehr ist als die Idee, κρείττον τοῦ λόγου." Cf. Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics* VIII 14, 1248a27-28 "The principle of reason is not reason but something superior to reason [λόγου δ' ἀρχὴ οὐ λόγος ἀλλὰ τι κρείττον] [*logou d'archē ou logos alla ti kreitton*]." SW XI: 566.

beyond-contents), and for the starting point of positive philosophy, the standpoint of existence *from which* positive thought can begin, once the pure actuality has been “expelled from the idea” and rational philosophy itself has been abandoned.

That through which positive philosophy itself begins is A^o liberated from all presupposition, and declared as *prius*; as that which is completely free-of-idea it is the pure *quod* [*Daß*] (*Hen ti*), as it was left behind in the previous science, only now it is made into the beginning (SW XI: 570).²³

This second pure *Daß* seems to refer to the ecstatic state of a reason that is now turned inside out.

That which just is (*das bloß Seyende*) is being (*das Seyn*) from which, properly speaking, every idea, that is, every potency, is excluded. We will, thus, only be able to call it the inverted idea (*die umgekehrte Idee*), the idea in which reason is *posited* outside itself [*außer sich gesetzt*]. Reason can posit being in which there is still nothing of a concept, of a whatness, only as something that is absolutely *outside* itself [*als ein absolutes Außer-sich setzen*] (of course only in order to acquire it thereafter, *a posteriori*, as its content, and in this way to return to itself at the same time). In this positing [*Setzen*], reason is therefore posited [*gesetzt*] outside itself, absolutely ecstatic (SW XIII: 162f.).²⁴

Once reason has become inverted, it can only posit the existent devoid of contents as an absolute “outside of reason,” where the term “outside” is capitalized but not the term “absolute” (*als ein absolutes Außer-sich setzen*). In so doing, reason is beside itself, or outside itself (*außer sich*) and *itself* posited (*außer sich gesetzt*).

After the crisis we have, then, a pure *Daß* in a different sense: Not as a negative notion beyond reach, but as a *realization* of our *own facticity*, as assuming our own *contingency*, our existence, in a *practical* sense prior to any conceptualization.

23 “Womit die positive Philosophie selbst beginnt, ist das von seiner Voraussetzung abgelöste, zum prius erklärte A^o; als das ganz Idee-Freie ist es reines Daß (Ἐν τι) [Hen ti], wie es in der vorigen Wissenschaft zurückblieb, nur ist es jetzt zum Anfang gemacht.” SW XI: 570.

24 “Das bloß Seyende ist das Seyn, in dem vielmehr alle Idee, d.h. alle Potenz, ausgeschlossen ist. Wir werden es also nur die umgekehrte Idee nennen können, die Idee, in welcher die Vernunft *außer sich* gesetzt ist. Die Vernunft kann das Seyende, in dem noch nichts von einem Begriff, von einem Was ist, nur als ein absolutes *Außer-sich* setzen (freilich nur, um es hintennach, *a posteriori*, wieder als ihren Inhalt zu gewinnen, und so zugleich selbst in sich zurückzukehren), die Vernunft ist daher in diesem Setzen *außer sich* gesetzt, absolut ekstatisch.” SW XIII: 162f. Schelling, *The Grounding of Positive Philosophy*, 203, translation is slightly modified by the author.

Standpoint of Existence and the Crisis

At the turning point, the crisis, reason has posited itself as existent. What does this mean?

Positive philosophy must begin from a different standpoint, the standpoint of existence that is beyond contents. This does not mean that I have to somehow step *outside* of reason or thought, but rather to *realize* that reason and thought are always already taking place within the larger framework of actual existence. Reason, thought, are themselves existent.

The rejection of negative philosophy takes place from a standpoint of existence. Rather than *going over* into existence, negative philosophy realizes that it is situated, posited, within a historical, practical framework (the standpoint of existence which was always already there). To give an account of this larger framework, purely rational thought is not enough and we must find a new way of interpreting reality.

In order to adopt the standpoint of existence, reason has to undergo a reversal, it has to turn inside out. This is only possible if there is an experience of the insufficiency of the contents of thought. The question for Schelling is how the negative philosophy itself can lead to the realization of the insufficiency of contents regarding the standpoint of existence. Once the insufficiency becomes clear, then it will be the decision of a will to demand a factual principle that can act in the world. What the rational philosophy strives for through “pure actuality” (the standpoint of existence: grasping oneself as a particular existent) can only ultimately be attained by the *willing* self or I.

Only once we have realized the insufficiency of contents as such, even from the perspective of negative philosophy, do we become able to envision a different relation between individual self-being and conceptual contents. But this is possible because by going through the *needle's eye* (through pure actuality as negative concept or inverted idea, through renunciation of the world in a practical sense) reason is now beside itself (*außer sich*), ecstatic, turned about. Only through a humiliation of reason, as Schelling says, quoting Kant, can a different approach to actual reality begin: one that starts out from actual existence and then attempts to make sense of it *a posteriori*. Whatever determinations or capacities are regained after starting out from the pure *Daß* as standpoint of particular existence, these contents gained *a posteriori* will have a different status than those of purely rational philosophy.

Aristotelian Actuality and the Problem of the Pure *Daß*

Taking into account the way Schelling interprets Aristotelian actuality allows us to avoid three aspects of the problem of the pure *Daß* and of the relation between negative and positive philosophy.

The Problem of an Irrational Leap (Jacobi): The search for actuality in Aristotle shows *step by step* the insufficiency of contents to adequately deal with the individual and active principle that puts them into existence. Aristotle is useful in order to articulate what is missing from a negative philosophy so that it can reach the critical point where its limitation becomes evident. By proposing a transition that is not irrational but is carried out by negative philosophy as it progressively realizes its *own* limitation, we can avoid the irrational *salto mortale*. This is precisely the function of this last negative philosophy.

The Problem of the Relation Between Contents and Actuality (Kosch): Negative and positive philosophy have different realms. Negative philosophy constructs a formal structure of possibility, but it cannot adopt an existential standpoint. The problem that advances the late negative philosophy is not whether things exist, but rather to understand what actuality *itself* is. Schelling concludes that the only way to think actuality is by grasping our *own* actuality: not a mere instantiation of contents but dealing with our own individual, contingent existence which inevitably compels us to act. Positive philosophy that starts out from this standpoint will develop concepts that are oriented towards interpreting a historical actuality in which we must act. In this sense, it does not destroy the contents reached by negative philosophy, but it does limit negative philosophy to its realm: purely rational philosophy is not considered absolute philosophy anymore.

The Problem of a Contradictory Pure Daß (Beach): Taking Aristotelian actuality into account explains why the pure *Daß* (pure individual actuality) functions in purely rational philosophy as a negative notion, that is, it points towards a way of considering individuality that the negative method cannot fully grasp. The negative pure *Daß* points to something that can only be grasped from a different standpoint: the perspective in which I grasp myself in an existential sense as ‘individual that cannot avoid action.’ This standpoint is pure *Daß* in a positive sense: as the horizon for a philosophy whose concepts will be formed *from* that starting point.