kabiri

The Official Journal of the North American Schelling Society

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Editor's Note

The North American Schelling Society (NASS) was founded in 2011 with the intention of raising F.W.J. Schelling's profile in the English-speaking academy by facilitating the collaborative research of those philosophers who work on him. The ultimate goal in founding the society was to restore Schelling to his place of prestige, alongside, Kant, Fichte, and Hegel, in the history of modern philosophy, and so to correct a certain truncated version of German Idealism common in the North American departments of philosophy. Beyond this historical aim, NASS was also intended to stimulate the deployment of Schellingian concepts in contemporary philosophy and theory. Through a steady stream of articles, books, conference presentations and graduate seminars, a generation of new scholars has established a secure space for Schelling research in the 21st century. We would like to think that NASS, which has since its founding, held meetings in Seattle (2012), London, Ontario (2013), New York City (2014), St. John's, Newfoundland (2015), and Mexico City (2017), has significantly contributed to this resurgence of Schelling scholarship. Suffice it to say, the time is ripe to launch an official journal in English dedicated to the philosopher whom Heidegger regarded as the greatest of the classical German thinkers. It is with great pleasure that we announce the publication of this first issue of *Kabiri*, which has been in the works for several years, and with it create a venue for new work on Schelling and Schelling related scholarship in English. Special thanks to our editorial board, and the editorial staff, especially Kyla Bruff and Alisan Genç.

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"Prophetic, Dreaming on the Mounds of Heaven": Schelling and Hölderlin and the Madness of Prophetic Time

Elizabeth B. Sikes and Jason M. Wirth

> What lives [*das Lebendige*] within poetry is right now what most occupies my thoughts and feelings. I feel so profoundly how far I still have to go in order to grasp it, and nevertheless my entire soul struggles toward it and it seizes me so often that I have to cry like a child, when I keep feeling around, like my poetic representations lack something here and there, and I really can't pull myself out from wandering in this poetic errancy (*poëtische Irren*). Ach! Beginning in my youth, the world has always carried my soul back into itself and I still always suffer from this. There is of course a hospital to which all unfortunate poets of my kind can flee with honor—philosophy.[1]

Eight years later in 1806, Hölderlin's suffering would land him in the hospital in the Autenrieth Clinic in Tübingen. In an historical irony, it wasn't until much later that it would become something like the 'hospital' for poets he was envisioning in this letter: the building, the so-called *Bürse*, would come to house the philosophy faculty and standing library for the University. Hölderlin, it must be said, was always ahead of his time! His was an experience of Heracleitean time, as the later hymns would conceive it, one in which the liveliness within poetry is transfigured into the ever-living fire of *prophetic* time and *logos*. What does it mean to speak of the prophetic? What does this strange word, wrenched

1 Friedrich Hölderlin, *Sämtliche Werke und Briefe*, ed. Michael Knaupp (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1992), II, 710-711.

from the comforts of institutional religion as usual—Nietzsche's "monotono-theism"—give us to hear? In a time of diminishing returns for the traditional regimes of religion, how does the promise of the prophetic still speak to us?

Although discussions of the 'prophetic' tend to be in passing in the texts of both Hölderlin and his former roommate and friend, Friedrich Schelling (there is no single work by either exclusively dedicated to this theme), we would like to suggest that they are nonetheless critical. What is at stake in our insistence that Hölderlin, the great poet of remembrance, and Schelling, who once exclaimed, "O the Past, you abyss of thoughts! [*Oh, Vergangenheit, du Abgrund der Gedanken!*],"[2] are deeply prophetic thinkers, indeed, that there is something prophetic at the heart of both the poetic word and philosophy? This question directs our shared thoughts in this essay. Our central texts will be Hölderlin's *Mnemosyne* as well as the early (1811-1815) drafts of Schelling's *Die Weltalter* (*The Ages of the World*) and it is our contention that with respect to the issue of prophecy these texts are mutually illuminating.

For Hölderlin (as well as Schelling in his own way), the prophetic cannot be altogether extricated from a time of madness—of the poet's lived experience of his own loss of self and consequent non-being, as paradoxical as the formulation of having no self and having no being may seem. This, in turn, reveals something about the madness of time—experienced by the figures of poetic and prophetic madness in Hölderlin's song. As *poetic experience,* Lacoue-Labarthe describes it as "a visit in memory of that experience, which is also in the non-form of a pure non-event."[3] Thus Hölderlin had to carefully calibrate between, on the one hand, the nothingness of being and the suspension of the 'being-present' of the present and, on the other hand, his potential existence within the nothing as a *Zeichen* or sign—as the potential site of the event of poetic language, perhaps even of language as such. When this careful calibration, this delicate suspension, tips "suddenly into strangeness,"[4] this suspended present gives way to what we want to call the madness of prophetic time.

Mnemosyne, the hymn to the mother of all muses, Memory, was written in 1803, during the same time that *Patmos* and his Sophocles translations were finished. It was a time of great psychic unrest for Hölderlin. He had returned from the manic ambulations of his 1802 Bordeaux sojourn, having been somewhere along the way "struck by Apollo," and looking, as his friend Matthison remarked, "pale as a corpse, emaciated, with wild and hollow eyes, long hair and beard, and dressed like a beggar." Schelling would later recall to Gustav Schwab that after Hölderlin had come "unaccompanied, on foot, crossing through fields as though led by instinct" to see him, "it was a sad reunion,

2 See Manfred Schröter's introduction to *Die Weltalter in den Urfassungen von 1811 und 1813* (*Nachlaßband*), ed. Manfred Schröter (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1946), xviii.

3 Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, *Poetry as Experience*, trans. Andrea Tarnowski (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 18.

4 Lacoue-Labarthe, *Poetry*, 19.

because I was immediately convinced that this delicately strung instrument was forever destroyed."[5] Nonetheless, 1803 was somehow a productive year. His vocabulary of poetic images became more condensed, abstract, and, as Lacoue-Labarthe calls it, "idiomatic." An idiom is a translation whose explanation is contained within the context in which it appears, and thus has the authority of the autochthonous.[6] These new idioms feel mysterious, dangerous, and yet remote, especially as seen from the outside, from the position of the foreigner who first comes to the song. Hölderlin was responding to the need for new, modern-Hesperian-idioms grown of the age, and which markedly contrast with the speech of the ancients.

Whereas the Greek-tragic word, he says, is *tödtlich faktisch*, mortally factical, corresponding to the more immediate and athletic relationship with the divine, the Hesperian word is *tödtend faktisch,* mortifyingly factical, producing an attenuated death in life, corresponding to the Junonian sobriety of our more distanced, mediated relationship with the gods who have vanished. It is the time of the *karge*, meager and barren *Angst*, in which the Germans that Hyperion comes upon in 1797 must "literally and hypocritically only be what they are called."[7] For both Schelling and Hölderlin, it is the time of the rise of mortifying positivism as well as the time that Schelling lamented in his break with Fichte as the rise of the auto-isolated and thereby alienated subject and its *Bauernstolz*, literally the self-congratulatory pride of a peasant who profits from nature without really grasping it. This lopsided and self-serving cultivation is at the heart of a contemporary nature annihilating *Schwärmerei*:

> If an inflexible effort to force his subjectivity through his subjectivity as something universally valid and to exterminate all nature wherever possible and against it to make non-nature [*Unnatur*] a principle and to make all of the severity of a lopsided education in its dazzling isolation count as scientific truths can be called *Schwärmen*, then who in this whole era swarms in the authentic sense more terribly and loudly than Herr Fichte? (SW I/7, 47)

It is his lament in *The Ages of the World* of the stupidity of the *Verstandesmensch* and the insipid positivism and its consequently lethal *Naturvernichtung*, which, as in the Freedom Essay, is the fatal flaw that constitutes modernity, namely that "nature is not present to it" because it "lacks a living ground [*die Natur für sich nicht vorhanden ist, und daß es ihr am lebendigen Grunde fehlt*]" (SW I/7, 361).

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5 Friedrich Hölderlin, *Sämtliche Werke: Kritische Textausgabe*, volume 9 (Darmstadt: Luchterhand, 1984), 107.

6 Lacoue-Labarthe: "The idiomatic poem contains its own translation, which is a justification of the idiomatic." Lacoue-Labarthe, *Poetry*, 18.

7 Friedrich Hölderlin, *Hyperion* (1797, part two, 1799), in *Kritische Textausgabe* 11, 206.

In response to this general character of modernity, Hölderlin admits in a letter to Susette Gontard from the end of June 1799 that:

> Daily I must summon back the vanished god. When I think about great men in great times, how they renew everything in their surroundings, a holy fire, and all that is dead, wooden, the straw of the world, is transfigured into flames, which fly with them to the heavens, and then I think of me, how often I go around, a smoldering little lamp begging for a drop of oil so I can shine just a little while longer through the night—look! A strange shudder runs through all my limbs and quietly I say to myself that terrifying phrase: the living dead![8]

Mnemosyne and *Patmos* both contain striking idiomatic images of the prophet, prophesy, and prophetic time, all of which are marked by the nearness of death. The first stanzas of each resonate strangely with one another in a general temporal atmosphere that can best be designated as *suspension.* For both, though we will chiefly concentrate on *Mnemosyne,* the opening stanzas themselves seem suspended in a temporal and ontological space separate from the rest of the poem. A world is announced that has the uncanny familiarity of a dream remembered darkly, the fascination of a feeling that is old, ancient, near in its infinitesimal distance, perhaps like trying to recall what it had felt like to be mad. There is the nearness of death in the conflagration that surrounds, ripens, cooks, and tests. These are Hölderlin's opening words in *Mnemosyne*:

> Ripe are, dipped in fire, cooked
> The fruits and tried on the earth, and it is law,
> Prophetic, that all must enter in
> Like serpents, dreaming on
> The mounds of heaven.[9]

This is not a world behind the world, or some kind of 'other world' or any sort of afterlife to which we are being called. It is rather the suspension between the far-reaching, distantly-divining longing for the unbound, like "serpents,"—the mantic symbol, par excellence—and the weight of the earth, that must be born, contained as "a load of cut wood."

> And always
> There is a longing that seeks the unbound. But much
> Must be retained. And loyalty is needed.

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8 Hölderlin, *Sämtliche Werke und Briefe* II, 779.

9 Friedrich Hölderlin, *Poems and Fragments*, 3rd ed., trans. Michael Hamburger (Oxford: Anvil Press, 1994), 519.

Back and forth, back and forth, the thought moves between these two extremes, the extremes of a weightless future and the dense gravity of the past, such that in this suspension itself, the two coalesce. Rather than being the lure of another world, it is the waiting of the world that has been cut: a suspension of the being of the world, of the present of the present, in which, as we see at the end of the first stanza, all three temporal dimensions are gathered together, dangling in a non-space on the brink of world and language.

> Forward, however, and back we will
> Not look. Be lulled and rocked as
> On a swaying skiff of the sea.[10]

Suddenly here the lines tip into strangeness, stillness and silence. As Blanchot writes: "His solitude is the understanding into which he enters with the future; it is the prophetic isolation which announces time."[11] It slips into a reverie not unlike that of Rousseau in his famous Fifth Walk where he remembers the time spent on his beloved island of St. Pierre in the middle of Lake Bienne in Switzerland, afternoons spent rowing out into the lake, allowing himself to drift back and forth, sometimes for hours. It was then, on his tiny boat suspended upon the waves of the water, that Rousseau felt most keenly the pure *sentiment de l'existence.* Compare Hölderlin's last lines in stanza one with the following passage in Rousseau's *Reveries of a Solitary Walker*:

> But if there is a state in which the soul finds a solid enough base to rest itself on entirely and to gather its whole being into, without needing to recall the past or encroach upon the future; in which time is nothing for it; in which the present lasts forever without, however, making its duration noticed and without any trace of time's passage; without any other sentiment of deprivation or of enjoyment, pleasure or pain, desire or fear, except that alone of our existence, and having this sentiment alone fill it completely; as long as this state lasts, he who finds himself in it can call himself happy ... which leaves in the soul no emptiness it might feel a need to fill.[12]

A present that bursts out of its moment and seems to last forever without any trace of time's duration: here the feeling of the plenitude of existence is all there is, a fullness all the more striking because of its lack of being—of no-thingness.

Hölderlin was very much influenced by the work of Rousseau, and

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10 Hölderlin, *Poems and Fragments*, 519.

11 Maurice Blanchot, "Madness *Par Excellence*," *The Blanchot Reader*, ed. Michael Holland (Oxford and Cambridge MA: Wiley, 1995), 124.

12 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Reveries of a Solitary Walker*, trans. and ed. Charles E. Butterworth (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1992), 68-69.

some have even proposed that Rousseau may be one of the "half-gods" to which his later hymns often refer.[13] He even wrote an entire poem about Rousseau, who was prophetically "gratified by a distant sun and the rays of a more beautiful time," something that the "heralds [*Boten*]" can still find in his heart.[14] Yet we are struck by the thought that Hölderlin must have felt an affinity with Rousseau not simply because he admired his radical, Republican spirit. Rousseau died while writing the Tenth Walk of his *Reveries.* He walked because at the end of his life he found himself an exile among his people, his work having been vilified and misunderstood, having seen his *Emile* banned and publicly burned and his house in Môtiers attacked by an angry rock throwing mob; a wanderer across borders in Switzerland, France, even to England (an ill-fated stay with David Hume), and at the end, a wanderer in the fields which today belong to the streets of Paris. He walked because he was trying to heal himself spiritually and emotionally from the damage that others had wrought, and because by walking his aging and fading imagination (according to him) was warmed again, and he could write.

Hölderlin also pursued a serious intentional practice of walking, having walked in the middle of the summer heat from Germany to Bordeaux and back that following winter. At the end of his life, Wilhelm Waiblinger reports that Hölderlin took a daily constitutional for four or five hours; it was also one of the things that enabled him to manage the great energy and fits of rage to which he sometimes fell prey.[15] The figure of the wanderer in Hölderlin's poetry emerges often, and *Mnemosyne* and *Patmos* are no exception. The wanderer is an exile, and a figure of the poet; sometimes the wanderer is a tragic hero like Empedocles, Antigone or Oedipus; sometimes it is a forlorn, destitute, mournful wanderer like Hyperion who rambles from the Greek world and eventually comes upon the Germans; but always, he is a figure of the prophetic. The prophetic affect, idiomatic in Hölderlin's work, is in part marked by *Zorn,* anger or wrath. Everything about this prophetic perambulation is elevated to excess: the heights he walks, the distances he divines, the intensity of his affect, and the strangeness of his companion's discourse on the dead who are remembered there by a wayside cross. These are the last lines in the second

13 Jürgen Link, *Hölderlin-Rousseau: Inventive Rückkehr* (Opladen and Wiesbaden: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1999).

14 Hölderlin, *Sämtliche Werke und Briefe* I, 268.

15 Wilhelm Waiblinger (born 1803) published a biography of Hölderlin's life and madness posthumously, which was based on his journal entries detailing his first-hand experiences with him from 30 May 1822-31 December 31 1824. Pierre Bertaux's book has published many of the journal entries in an effort to get more clarity on the case of Hölderlin's madness and challenge the prevailing belief that he was ill with schizophrenia for the whole of the second half of his life. According to Waiblinger, "His day is simple in the extreme. Mornings, especially in summer, when he is much more agitated and tortured, he hauls himself out of bed before or with the sun, and leaves the house immediately, in order to take a walk in the yard. This walk lasts here and there four or five hours, so that he becomes tired." Pierre Bertaux, *Hölderlin: Eine Biographie* (Frankfurt a. Main: Insel Verlag, 2000), 181 and cf. 268-287.

stanza of *Mnemosyne*:

> Discoursing of the cross which once was placed
> There on the wayside for the dead,
> High up, in anger [*zorning*], distantly divining [*fern ahnend*]
> A traveler walks
> With the other, but what is this?[16]

What is this? What is this strangeness that we have stumbled upon? What is this—the question that cuts open the image as it reaches the most extreme point of excess. This same question is used as a caesura in *Patmos* as well. In this stanza, Hölderlin sings of the aftermath of Christ's death and the consequent estrangement of his disciples.

> The half-god's honor and that of his friends
> Is blown away by the wind, and the Highest
> Himself averts his face
> Because nowhere now
> An immortal is to be seen in the skies or
> On our green earth, what is this?[17]

This speaks of an excess of overweening anger about the loss of what was, an insane nostalgia that traps the mind in the past, attempting to break through its boundary, death, in order to join it. Although Hölderlin is a thinker of remembrance, he is not nostalgic, as if the best way to respond to the burden of the present with all of its stupidities, ideology, positivism, and alienation, was the reactionary wish that a terrible today be replaced with a better yesterday. This results in the loss not only of the present, but also in the obfuscation of the past with projection and neediness; it is also therefore forecloses outright any real future, including a prophetic one. The wrathful prophet does not want the present moment prima facie, but rather wants to become free for the event of the present moment, to find the capacity for the free use of what we find to be our own.

At the end of *Mnemosyne*, the mother of the muses, Memory, dies. "Here mourning is at fault"—it is her tragic error, her ἁμαρτία (*hamartia*). Having transgressed the measure, exploding form, she is sacrificed, perhaps to save the arts, above all, the poetic word. Mournful attachment to the past *fehlt*—it *fails* and it *lacks* what the present moment demands. It is the lopsidedly catastrophic course of Ajax (suicide) and Achilles (death in battle), who are named in that last stanza of *Mnemosyne*. As *Patmos* closes, the vision of John's end time, the Revelations attributed to him on the isle of Patmos, never comes. Instead, the

16 Hölderlin, *Poems and Fragments*, 521.
17 Hölderlin, *Poems and Fragments,* 491.

hymn finishes with mourning, the burden of an appeal to the cultivation of Apollonian sobriety in the form of "the solid letter [*der feste Buchstab*]," and that "the existing/be well interpreted."[18] And now hear the beginning lines of *Mnemosyne*, from the earlier draft:

> A sign we are, meaningless
> Painless we are and have nearly
> Lost our language in foreign lands.[19]

We are a sign (*Zeichen*) that does not point to anything (*deutungslos*), and this being so, we have *almost* lost language. But not quite! These powerful words are speaking even as they speak of this near loss of speaking. Yet this is language on the edge of not being able to speak at all. As the event of language unfolds, the ambiguity of its potential being is felt in the poet as a wrestling with god. Comparing *Patmos* with *Mnemosyne*, we see two ways of understanding the outcome, flip sides of the same coin: a solid letter that requires great care (*daß gepflegt werde*), and the risk of language that has lost itself in the foreign, exiled from any horizon of meaning, gone the way of Ajax and Achilles, scattered in the ashes of Apollo's blow, perhaps. As many commentators have noted, those lines from *Mnemosyne* resonate with these from his 1802 letter to Böhlendorff, written in the wake of his return from Bordeaux and after having received the terrible news that Susette Gontard, his Diotima, had died:

> The tremendous element, the fire of the sky and silence of the people, their life within nature, and their limitedness and satisfaction has continually affected me, and as it is said of the heroes, so I may say that Apollo has struck me.[20]

How does one speak after the fire of the heavens has struck the Junonian sobriety of modernity? What is language that has been struck by Apollo? Above all in both hymns, Hölderlin calls upon *die Treue*, fidelity, not to any particular letter or words, not to any particular sign, but fidelity to the event itself, even if, as his confrontation with Sophocles' tragedies showed him, fidelity would mean for the hero and the poet, the necessity of a *divine betrayal* (*göttliche Untreue*), a sublime forgetting, which, nevertheless, works best for keeping the memory of the divine ones eternally aflame. Even Mnemosyne is fated for the oblivion that

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18 This is also most likely a reference to the controversy that was in full force at the time around evidence disputing the Apostle John as the inspired scribe of the Revelations on Patmos.

19 Hölderlin, *Sämtliche Werke und Briefe* I, 436. There were several earlier drafts of *Mnemosyne*. The first draft had the title "The Snake" crossed out and replaced with "The Sign." Cf. Jochen Schmidt, *Friedrich Hölderlin: Sämtliche Werke und Briefe* in 3 Bände, ed. Jochen Schmidt (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1994).

20 Friedrich Hölderlin, *Essays and Letters on Theory*, trans. and ed. Thomas Pfau (Albany: SUNY Press, 1988), 152.

is the abyss of the past.

As Schelling reported to Hegel in July of 1803, Hölderlin's own hold on the present moment had indeed shattered.

> The saddest thing to see during my stay at home was Hölderlin.... Ever since this fatal journey [home from France], his mind has been completely shattered, and though capable of working up to a point on a few projects, like the Greek translations, otherwise he is absolutely mentally absent. He was a harrowing sight to see: his appearance was disgustingly neglected, and where his speech was less that of a lunatic, he had adopted the external mannerisms of someone in that state.[21]

Despite this, during his 36 hour stay, Schelling remembered that Hölderlin never did anything counter to his "old, noble, and upright being."[22] Six years after this heart-breaking reunion with Hölderlin, Schelling endured his own bout with the violence of Apollo felt as the blow of Caroline's death. In the 1811 draft of *The Ages of the World*, Schelling confessed that he was closer than "most people could probably conceive to this growing-silent of knowledge [*Verstummen der Wissenschaft*] which we must necessarily encounter when we know how infinitely far everything that is personal reaches such that it is impossible actually to know anything at all" (SW I/8: 200). Yet Schelling worked on the *Weltalter* for years, producing countless pages and drafts. Hölderlin, despite overwhelming psychic handicaps, and we would argue, perhaps *because of them,* never abandoned the desire to write.

In *Bread and Wine* Hölderlin linked the "poets in a destitute age [*Dichter in dürftiger Zeit*]," torn between the stupidity of modernity and the eruptive forces of madness, to the "holy priests of the wine god," "which roamed from land to land in holy night [*welche von Lande zu Land zogen in heiliger Nacht*]" (strophe 7). Although we have almost lost language in the dark night or in the incinerating force of the divine, we struggle to abide in our "holy drunkenness" while remaining "wakeful at night [*wachend ... bei Nacht*]" with our "holy memory [*heilig Gedächtniß*]" (strophe 2). The Dionysian disposition—drunk yet sober, mad yet reasonable, nothing yet everything, is also precisely how Schelling understood the problem of all philosophical thinking: everything comes down to the "holy drunkenness" that remains "wakeful at night."

Years later, as excited audiences in Berlin, a decade after Hegel's death, awaited yet another new philosophy, Schelling made a bewildering turn to the gods whose coming we drunkenly but vigilantly remember. Philosophy does not begin in the light of day of rationality, but in the dark night of madness. "*Where there is no madness that is governed and brought under rule, there is also no powerful understanding* [*Wo kein Wahnsinn ist, der geregelt und beherrscht wird,*

21 Hölderlin, *Kritische Textausgabe* 9, 106.
22 Hölderlin, *Kritische Textausgabe* 9, 107.

da ist auch kein mächtiger Verstand]."[23] Stupidity or *Blödsinn*, however, does not 'consist' in a lack of intelligence—the intelligent are even more dramatically inclined to stupidity than are the dim-witted—but rather in the "absence of this originary matter [*Abwesenheit dieses ursprünglichen Stoffes*]," the lack of "*the madness*, the *potentia* that lies concealed in the depths of the human *Wesen* [der Wahninn, *der potentia in der Tiefe des menschlichen Wesens verborgen liegt*]."[24] In the *Urfassung* of the *Philosophy of Revelation* (*Philosophie der Offenbarung*),[25] Schelling had already linked this to both art and philosophy in a manner that strikingly anticipated the early Nietzsche: "The mystery of true art is to be *simultaneously* mad and level-headed [*wahnsinnig und besonnen*], not in distinctive moments, but rather *uno eodemque actu* [altogether in a single act]. This is what distinguishes the Apollonian inspiration from the Dionysian."[26] This was, however, a distinction that Schelling had first announced in *The Ages of the World*:

> But where there is no madness, there is also certainly no proper, active, living intellect (and consequently there is just the dead intellect, dead intellectuals). For in what does the intellect prove itself than in the coping with and governance and regulation of madness? Hence the utter lack of madness leads to another extreme, to imbecility (idiocy), which is an absolute lack of all madness. But there are two other kinds of persons in which there really is madness. There is one kind of person that governs madness and precisely in this overwhelming shows the highest force of the intellect. The other kind of person is governed by madness and is someone who really is mad (SW I/8, 338-339).

As both Hölderlin and Schelling saw, we have lost the fire of the heavens. This is indeed a relationship to the past, but in remembering the past, one is also remembering that which, in displacing the stupidity of our relationship to the present, drives Mnemosyne to ruins. "Panthers or tigers do not pull the carriage of Dionysus in vain. For this wild frenzy of inspiration in which nature found itself when it was in view of the *Wesen* was celebrated in the nature worship of prescient ancient peoples by the drunken festivals of Bacchic orgies" (SW

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23 Schelling, *Philosophie der Offenbarung* 1841/42: *Paulus Nachschrift*, 2nd ed., ed. Manfred Frank (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1993), 97.

24 Schelling, *Philosophie der Offenbarung*, 186.

25 Schelling, *Urfassung Philosophie der Offenbarung*, two volumes, ed. Walter E. Ehrhardt (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1992), 708.

26 Schelling, *Urfassung*, 422. Karl Löwith was among the first to insist upon this kinship. "The utter lack of madness leads not to reason but to imbecility. The fundamental stuff of all of life and existence is, according to Schelling as well as Nietzsche, the awful [*das Schreckliche*]: a blind power and force, a barbaric principle, that can be overcome but never eliminated and which is 'the foundation of all greatness and beauty.'" *Nietzsches Philosophie der ewigen Wiederkehr des Gleichen* (1935), fourth proofed edition based on the corrected third edition, (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1986), 154.

I/8: 337). Yet thinking is not called simply to ruin itself. Schelling returned to writing, and Hölderlin wrote some of his most staggering lines after 1802, even as his capacity to write was increasingly hindered. In the Freedom Essay, Schelling warned against the inability to find the "reconciling and mediating basis" that results in the "gloomy and wild enthusiasm that breaks out in self-mutilation or, as with the priests of the Phrygian goddess, auto castration, which is achieved in philosophy as the renunciation of reason and science" (SW I/7: 357).

Philosophy is born of the caesura from which it endeavors to speak. In his remarks on his translation of *Oedipus Tyrannos*, another work from the extreme tensions that characterized Hölderlin's mind in 1803, we find the moment of caesura in which the tragic mating and sundering of god and mortal is suspended, in an atmosphere "where, among pestilence and confusion and universally inflamed prophesy, in idle time"[27] and "at the extreme limits of suffering," nothing more exists but the "conditions of time or space."[28]Hölderlin explains what he means:

> In this, the human being forgets himself, because he is completely in the moment, and the god because he is nothing more than time; and both are unfaithful, time, because in such moments it categorically reverses itself ... and the human being because in the moment of categorical reversal he is forced to follow, and in what comes afterwards he can no longer resemble the beginning.[29]

Hölderlin's madness and his poetry were a fight with two gods, Apollo and Dionysus. His genius, in Blanchot's view, arose from this. "Hölderlin was able to raise to the supreme meaning—which is that of poetry—the experience of illness, to link them completely to the whole of his spiritual existence and to master them for and through poetic truth."[30] Let us imagine the relationship between Hölderlin's madness and his poetic vision asymptotically, where madness is the curve to which the line of his poetic vision remains asymptotic, that is, etymologically, 'not falling together.' Such linking together of madness and poetry, as Blanchot saw, would have to observe the divine infidelity of proximity in distance. *Near, yet difficult to grasp, is God.* The relationship between the violent swings of madness and the steady approach of the poetic, constitute the two lines of his destiny with which he wrestled. Hölderlin's fate as a poet was relentlessly and faithfully pursued (or perhaps we should say, *it* relentlessly pursued *him*) along the same track, a "movement that raises him to an always clearer consciousness."[31]

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27 Hölderlin, *Sämtliche Werke und Briefe* II, 315.
28 Hölderlin, *Sämtliche Werke und Briefe* II, 316.
29 Hölderlin, *Sämtliche Werke und Briefe* II, 316.
30 Blanchot, "Madness *Par Excellence*," 116.
31 Blanchot, "Madness *Par Excellence*," 119.

Even during the "forty years his death lasted,"[32] lived out in the carpenter Zimmer's tower in Tübingen, when chaos had deranged his λόγος (*logos*), nevertheless, in song he remained luminous. Blanchot reports that Schwab, who visited Hölderlin when he was seventy years old, wrote, "'the magical power which poetic form exerted on Hölderlin was prodigious. I never saw a line by him that was bereft of meaning: obscurities, weak points, yes, but the meaning was always alive, and he still wrote such lines when, during the day, no one could extract anything reasonable from him at all.'"[33] The curve that describes his *mania*—the madness that, too, had its own course and pursued him relentlessly throughout life—fully permeates the subjective sense of his existence, from his sensitivity to the violent alteration in moods, often back and forth between the ecstatic joy of the moment and the abyss of despair lurking within it. After Zimmer died, Hölderlin began writing short seasonal odes in rhyme for visitors who wanted a little souvenir to take with them from the mad poet in the tower. He signed them as "Scardanelli": a frigid mask to keep the excesses of life at bay.[34]

Finally, in what way can one say that writing from the caesura is prophetic? How does the prophetic rage against the stupidity of modernity signal not the fantasy of a reactionary nostalgia (a fantastical past) or a cowardly flight to the highly capitalized otherworldly neuroses of institutional religion (a fantastical future), but rather a sense of the past that splits open the present into the fullness of time?

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32 Blanchot, "Madness *Par Excellence*," 114.

33 Blanchot, "Madness *Par Excellence*," 114.

34 In a letter, Hölderlin writes: "Just like we used to think, I still believe, but in this way! Everything infinite oneness, but in this All an exquisite One and becoming-One, which, in itself, is not an I, and this would be God among us! ... Here in the innocence of life, here in the silver Alps, things will finally go easier for me in my heart. I am exquisitely occupied with religion." Quoted in Bertaux, *Hölderlin*, 82. A commentator on this letter writes that when this particular style of Hölderlin's appears, ecstatic and mysterious, it announces his existence in the mental border space between joy and horror, "as the highest exaltation in transition to enrapture, wherein, in the early words of the poet, 'the eternal celebration of his thought plummets to the ground.'" Bertaux, *Hölderlin*, 82. Ludwig Binswanger noted this especially in the phenomenology of the manic mode of existence. He identifies the essence of the manic mode in the excesses of celebratory joy, a celebration "even to the climax of vertigo." Bertaux, *Hölderlin*, 136. This is the demonic streak in many festivals, of the Greek Saturnalia, of Carnival, or the Day of the Dead. The higher one flies, the closer one comes to death. Thus, he says, "What we describe as manic-depressive disorder is merely a pathological formation and intensification of this universal principle of life and death, the entanglement of death in life and of life in death found everywhere." Bertaux, *Hölderlin*, 136. The manic-depressive is the "antinomic man par excellence." Bertaux, *Hölderlin*, 138. In him you find the soaring heights of Phaethon and the crashing lows that his ill-fated flight with the sun pronounced. The phenomenon of *deciduous* life is present: "the withering, decaying, moribund, deformed or disorganized, the grey, gloomy hateful, dirty, stinking, the worm crawling in the ground, the death's head, the skeleton, the frigid mask or deformed visage, the discarded shards or scraps of paper lying around, etc." Bertaux, *Hölderlin*, 138. The excesses that he had to defend himself from by turning to ice, or to stone: the living dead! "In my head it's become winter sooner than outside. The day is very short. Even longer the cold nights. Hölderlin, *Sämtliche Werke und Briefe* II, 511. This is the 20 October 1793 letter to Neuffer.

The madness that explodes the stupidity of the present is the very madness whose negotiation with reason opens up the prophetic realm—the abyss of the past intimated as the future. Dionysus did not and could not manifest in the terms of public disclosure, manifesting only as an endless carnival of masks. The spell of presence, that is, the stupidity of the *Verstandesmench* who cannot think the mask as a mask, is broken by a more radical ἀνάμνησις (*anamnēsis*)[35] of the potencies of being itself. Moreover, although Jesus gave rise to the many public forms of Christianity, the Messianic remains no less obscure and calls for an equally radical *Andenken* (remembering) and ἀνάμνησις (*anamnēsis*). There is no thing to remember—the search confronts the infinity of what it seeks, but this shattering is also the possibility of not only breakdown, but breakthrough and liberation. The present is the repetition of a past always still to come.

When Schelling in all of the prefaces to the various attempts of *The Ages of the World* claims that *das Zukünftige wird geahndet,* the future is intimated, and *das Geahndete wird geweissagt*, the intimated is prophesied, or when Hölderlin speaks of the wandering and wrathful prophet as *fern ahnend*, distantly divining, divining what is always at a distance, they do not mean that one could say in advance of the future what the future will have been. The verb *weissagen*, common in Luther's translation of the Bible, translates a verb that is now more commonly translated as *prophezeien*, to prophesy, from the Greek (προφήτης [*prophētēs*]), *to speak for the gods*. Such speaking issues from divine darkness, speaking in and to the present from a past that is always already eternally past and of a future that reveals the futurity of the future, not future events.

In the first draft (1811) of *The Ages of the World*, Schelling succinctly defines the prophet as the one who can discern the manner in which the past, present, and future hold together as a dynamic whole, the one who "sees through the hanging together of the times [*der den Zusammenhang der Zeiten durchschaut*]" (SW I/8: 151). He also asks: "what holds back that intimated [*geahndete*] golden age in which truth again becomes fable and fable again becomes truth [*was hält sie zurück die geahndete goldne Zeit, wo die Wahrheit wieder zur Fabel und die Fabel zur Wahrheit wird*]?" (SW I/8: 200). A relationship to the bottomless depth of the past is not only a relationship to the past, but also a relationship to the future, an anticipatory relationship to the future in which truth presents itself as fable and the golden age is intimated as a lost (buried in the past) but future paradise on earth. The way to the golden age that is "intimated [*geahndet*]" and "prophesied [*geweissagt*]" first necessitates that one go directly into the center of the past, much like Dante who journeyed toward *paradisio* by going directly into the deepest center of the *inferno*. The way to the infinite productivity of the future is through the infinite depth of

35 From *The Ages of the World*: "What we call knowledge is only the striving towards ἀνάμνησις [*Wiederbewußtwerden*] and hence more of a striving toward knowledge than knowledge itself. For this reason, the name Philosophy had been bestowed upon it incontrovertibly by that great man of antiquity" (SW I/8, 201).

the past and as such one becomes free for the present moment, which comes, as Schelling and Hölderlin painfully experienced in suspension and waiting, on its own time.

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The Ungrounded Nature of Being: Grounding a Dynamic Ontology from Nature-Philosophy to Positive Philosophy

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The fact that in around 1844, and at the height of his positive philosophy period, Schelling dedicates himself to drafting a work entirely dedicated to issues in the nature-philosophy, such as the *Presentation of the Process of Nature* (*Darstellung des Naturprozesses*), in the explicit attempt to give continuity to the speculative physics theories set out in the 1799 *First Outline of a System of the Philosophy of Nature* (*Erster Entwurf eines Systems der Naturphilosophie*) and in the 1801 *General Deduction of Dynamical Process* (*Allgemeine Deduktion des dynamischen Processes*) in particular, raises a number of questions of both a historiographic nature and, above all, of a more strictly theoretical nature, which merit an in-depth analysis.[1] The *Presentation of the Process of Nature*, together with the other works from Schelling's later *Naturphilosophie*, brings into question all of the interpretations that split Schelling's philosophy into different phases,[2] as well as highlights how his interest in the nature-philosophy did not die out between the late 1790s and 1806. In addition, and far more significantly, the presence of a work such as the *Presentation of the Process of Nature* in that theoretical context, in which Schelling was working in particular on the grounding of positive philosophy and on its relationship with negative philosophy and on the passage from the latter to the former, leads us to reflect

1 See *Darstellung des Naturprozesses*, SW X: 301-390.

2 The first to introduce this distinction within Schelling's philosophy was probably Eduard von Hartmann. For a literature survey on Schelling's reception and the readings which describe his philosophy as a sum of different phases see Iain Hamilton Grant, *Philosophies of Nature After Schelling* (London & New York: Bloomsbury, 2006), 3 and note 3.

on the radical role and relevance of the nature-philosophy for Schelling's entire philosophical development, as well as on the particular relationship that his positive philosophy has with *Naturphilosophie*.

But whatkind of relationship existsbetween Schelling's *Naturphilosophie* and his positive philosophy? At first, it could be tempting to say that there are no crossover points between these two 'phases' of Schelling's philosophy,[3] yet, upon further consideration, one realizes that such a claim basically rests on the definitions (hasty in some cases and which at the very least should be rethought[4]) that we give to these phases, as well as, to some extent, on the same interpretation that splits his philosophy into distinct and successive phases, all of which should be set aside in favour of a concept that sees the internal unity[5] and continuity of Schelling's project. Following from these preliminary considerations, the argument that I hereafter intend to maintain and verify is that the *Presentation of the Process of Nature* shows once more that it is precisely the *Naturphilosophie* that constitutes the backbone of Schelling's entire philosophical agenda,[6] not in the sense that the entire Schelling's philosophy has to be seen as a nature-philosophy, but rather in the sense that his nature-philosophy has to be read as the "grounding of the entire system of philosophy," as Schelling himself states in his *Introduction to Philosophy*.

What I claim in this essay is not that positive philosophy can be reduced to nature-philosophy, but rather that the former is grounded on the theoretical results of the latter, in such a way that the issue of a free act of creation at the beginning of being arises as a (necessary) consequence of the natural process elaborated in the *Naturphilosophie*. Recently Sean McGrath has argued against the idea that positive philosophy is to be intended as a nature-philosophy, since "revelation is not a natural occurrence but an act of freedom," namely an act that is unprethinkable, while the being analyzed by nature-philosophy "is not unprethinkable being," but eminently "prethinkable being."[7] I agree with the claim that positive philosophy is not a nature-philosophy, but I argue in this essay that the late nature-philosophy aims exactly to analyze the free act of creation as a consequence of a specific antecedent, that is the ungroundedness of the dynamical process that it investigates. Moreover, I will show how

3 In recent literature on Schelling, the affinity between his nature-philosophy and his positive philosophy has been shown and sometimes developed. See Marcela Garcia, "Schelling's Late Negative Philosophy, Crisis and Critique of Pure Reason," *Comparative and Continental Philosophy* 3 (2), (2011): 141-164, and Iain Hamilton Grant, "The Remains of the World: Grounds and Powers in Schelling's Later Naturphilosophie," *Schelling-Studien* 1, (2013): 3-24.

4 For example, in the way suggested by Sean J. McGrath in the introduction to his *The Dark Ground of Spirit: Schelling and the Unconscious* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 3-6.

5 Cf. W.E. Erhardt, "Nur ein Schelling," *Studi Urbinati* 55 (1977): 111-122, in which the author claims that the concept of freedom constitutes the core of Schelling's philosophy.

6 The reconstructive work by Iain Hamilton Grant moves in this direction, in his *Philosophies of Nature After Schelling*.

7 S.J. McGrath, "Is the Late Schelling Still Doing Naturephilosophy?" *Angelaki*, 21:4 (2016): 121-141.

the construction of matter in the *Presentation of the Process of Nature* is in continuity with the grounding of the idea of the necessary being and with the role assigned to the unprethinkable Being (*unvordenkliches Seyn*), and how both the ideal and natural moments of the grounding of "what exists" (*das Existierende*) basically aim to trace a form of ungrounded dynamic ontology, which characterises Schelling's entire philosophical project.

Nature-Philosophy as a Positive Philosophy

The basic idea that we have begun to highlight, and from which we now intend to move forward, is that the nature-philosophy is really the theoretical core of the subsequent developments in Schelling's philosophy, and that even positive philosophy is indebted to some extent to the premises—as well as theoretical acquisitions—of the *Naturphilosophie*.

To understand this particular relationship that exists between Schelling's nature-philosophy and his positive philosophy, we must first unravel the proper meaning to be given to these 'phases' of the philosopher's thought. Schelling is quite explicit in his definition of *Naturphilosophie*, despite several misunderstandings that in some ways still negatively influence its proper understanding, and there are many passages in which the philosopher, claiming the originality of his project, warns the reader and the scholar of reducing his nature-philosophy to a theory of nature, which would aim to apply a particular philosophical theory to the latest and most significant results of the science of the time, or rather a study simply aimed at inserting the results of science into a system of knowledge.[8] The *Naturphilosophie* is not, therefore, a form of secondary philosophy which aims at 'systematically' studying a specific field of being, such as 'nature,' reading it as a part of or a 'phase' in a given 'system of being,' but as Schelling writes in his essay "On the Relationship between Philosophy of Nature and Philosophy in General" (Über *das Verhältnis der Naturphilosophie zur Philosophie* überhaupt), published in 1802 in the *Critical Journal of Philosophy* (*Kritisches Journal der Philosophie*), which he edited together with Hegel, "the nature-philosophy is, as such, the entire and undivided philosophy" (SW V: 107). Or rather, insomuch as it is an *a priori* study of the idea of nature, it does not have a particular and determined field of being as theme, but focuses directly on the 'becoming' of being itself, and precisely and only in this sense it is the only authentic philosophy.

Although Schelling repeatedly returned to this definition during the course of his philosophy, limiting the nature-philosophy to just one part of

8 See in particular the "Introduction to the Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature" (1797); SW II-1-73, "The Introduction to the First Outline of a System of the Philosophy of Nature" (1799); SW III: 269-326, and the essay "On the Relationship between Philosophy of Nature and Philosophy in General" (1802); SW V: 106-124.

his whole philosophy,[9] this does not change the fundamental assumption. As he writes in the 1830 *Introduction to Philosophy* (*Einleitung in die Philosophie*), the nature-philosophy is the only and true philosophy because of the fact that it is only from this, due to its being "the grounding of the entire system," that an adequate consideration of being itself can begin as such.[10] Given this interpretation, and to continue with our claim to continuity, if the nature-philosophy is the only philosophy in that it pre-eminently investigates the object par excellence, namely being itself insofar as it is unconditional (unthinged) and indeterminate, all that remains is to attempt a possible definition of positive philosophy.

The task immediately appears considerably more complex. At first it is tempting to resort to the *ex negativo* definition provided by Schelling himself in opposition to negative philosophy based on the known distinction between the different subjects under investigation: if negative philosophy is the philosophy which focuses on the *Was* of being, i.e. the essence (what it is), then positive philosophy has the *Daß* of being as its subject, i.e., the very fact of its existence (that it is). This distinction does not really tell us much about the philosophical project underlying positive philosophy, since it seems to be a simple introduction necessary to the historical narratives of Schelling's Philosophy of Mythology and Philosophy of Revelation. In other words, given the indubitable (and ungrounded) existence of being, nothing would be left for philosophy but the historical narrative of its phases. Now, positive philosophy is certainly an historical philosophy in the sense that it is the recognition of what just exists and the resulting 'description' of its 'history.' It is worth observing, however, that for Schelling the 'historical' characteristic of this philosophy does not at all lie in the historical narrative in itself, but in the source of its own object, clearly emerging in a completely 'ungrounded' way: positive philosophy is historic precisely because "it is (un-)grounded" on the absolute freedom that governs its object, while negative philosophy is non-historical since it seeks to understand the essence of its object and is grounded on the need for logical-rational connections. However this does not mean that historic philosophy can do without rational philosophy, which is, in fact, "necessary for the foundation of each system."[11] The real theoretical core of positive philosophy, as can be effectively deduced at the beginning of the various accounts offered by Schelling, is precisely the necessity of its 'grounding,' which is however only ever intended as a grounding of 'speculative' order.

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9 In the preface to the first volume of his *Philosophische Schriften*, Schelling explicitly describes the writings collected there as belonging to the "ideal side" of his philosophy, thus separating them from those belonging to the "natural side" (SW VII: 331-335). Although the Würzburger System of 1804, in continuity with the 1801 *Darstellung*, aims at combining the two 'wings' of his philosophy in the system, there are many explicit references by the author to the distinction of fields. See, for example, F.W.J. Schelling, *Einleitung in die Philosophie* (1830), ed. by Walter E. Ehrhardt (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann Holzboog, 1989), 55; SW XI: 372; SW XII: 71.

10 Schelling, *Einleitung in die Philosophie*, 55.

11 Schelling, *Einleitung in die Philosophie*, 10.

The beginning of positive philosophy, as Schelling himself observes during his years in Berlin, is a beginning that "is not capable of any grounding (*Begründung*)."[12] What at first looks like a limit of positive philosophy compared with negative philosophy, which considers being as starting from a ground, is instead a true gain in Schelling's position compared with a form of philosophy that intends to reduce the real to the rational. In my view, this original position of positive philosophy derives from his first deliberations in the *Naturphilosophie* and the theoretical problems that the latter aimed at resolving. Just as the nature-philosophy moves from the unconditional of being itself, since it describes not the being but rather the becoming-being (*das Werden zum Sein*), namely an ongoing process, so positive philosophy must start from the absolutely positive, from the absolute *prius*, that is from that which can never be known *a priori* at all (and so it is unprethinkable, i.e., *unvordenklich*); this allows therefore, indeed presupposes, "something positive, such as will, freedom, action, and not something simply negative, penetrable through the sole need of thought."[13] In the approach that we propose, the fact that Schelling here evokes "will" or "freedom" as that "something positive" from which historical philosophy comes, is not a problem at all. We know that from the *Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom* onwards, will and liberty must be understood as rooted in nature, in fact as manifestations of nature itself, that is as (anthropomorphic) expressions describing an area that the intellect would not otherwise describe.[14] What should be taken into account with these considerations is that the *prius* from which positive philosophy begins, insofar as it is by definition the *antecedens* par excellence, can only coincide with the free beginning, or rather with the becoming-being (*das Werden zum Sein*), which was already the subject of Schelling's considerations regarding the well-known *Philebus* (26d8) passage in the comment to *Timaeus* in 1794.[15] In other words, if the nature-philosophy deals with the passage from the unconditioned to the dynamic process and describes the latter in its development, then positive philosophy is required to take a step forwards (or rather backwards, to the origin of being) to free that process from a mechanical (rational) deduction (characteristic of a negative nature-philosophy), thus introducing a free grounding, as an original act of creation, at the basis of the process itself, and

12 Schelling, *Einleitung in die Philosophie*, 13.

13 Schelling, *Einleitung in die Philosophie*, 13.

14 As a parenthesis, note how Schelling, in an attempt to research the natural roots of human freedom, matches will (*Wollen*) with original being (*Urseyn*), and thus with the dynamism that goes with this match, and later how positive philosophy brings the same will alongside the tensions that rule the dynamics of the concepts of speculation: "The highest speculative concepts are always simultaneously the most profound ethical concepts" (SW XIII: 67); English: F.W.J. Schelling, *The Grounding of the Positive Philosophy: The Berlin Lectures*, trans. Bruce Matthews (Albany: SUNY Press, 2007), 135. Positive philosophy starts *ipso facto* only with a wanting. SW XIII: 93.

15 F.W.J. Schelling, *Timaeus* (1794), ed. Hartut Buchner (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann Holzboog, 1994), 63.

setting the becoming of being, accordingly with its essence, absolutely free.

In the 1830 *Introduction to Philosophy*, Schelling affirms that the nature-philosophy is not yet positive philosophy but is certainly its natural boundary (*natürliche Grenze*), not only for the fact that it eliminates the concept of being as an originary substratum and assumes nature as unconditioned—in a proposition of the *First Outline* that to some extent can be certainly understood as the manifesto of a 'positive' nature-philosophy (SW III: 77)—but above all for the fact that the nature-philosophy is the science that got closer than any others to the absolute fact (*Tatsache*), namely that there is a world and and there is a free cause of it, as creator of cosmos. Nature-philosophy has surely the merit of having described the construction of matter and the dynamic process, but if the nature-philosophy succeeded in defining a process, which is a great achievement, then (positive) philosophy has to move forwards, to go beyond the process, and in order to do this it is necessary to return to the very fact of free creation: "Philosophy has not gone beyond the concept of process," and "neither the nature-philosophy has broken the circle of necessity,"[16] even if the *Freiheitsschrift*, which to some extent has to be read as a work of nature-philosophy, exactly went in that direction: "All nature tells us that it is in no wise by virtue of mere geometrical necessity that it exists; there is not simply pure reason in it, but personality and spirit.... Creation is nothing given but an act" (SW VII: 395-96).[17]

In an attempt to reconstruct Schelling's philosophy as a unitary and organic development, and therefore trying to follow on from his thesis that it is the concept of freedom that constitutes the unitary axis of his entire philosophy, Walter E. Erhardt suggested (in an early 1980s essay[18]) seeing the relationship between the nature-philosophy, correctly understood, and positive philosophy as one would the relationship between a body and its organs. In this organic unity that has freedom at its core, there would be no room for a materialistic reading of Schelling's philosophy, since the nature-philosophy is not based on a banal ontological priority given to nature as opposed to the spirit (the mind). While it is true that, as much in the first theses of the nature-philosophy as in the fundamental positions of positive philosophy (and in contrast to the formulation of Kant's table of categories), Schelling gives modal-ontological priority to actuality (*Wirklichkeit*) rather than possibility (*Möglichkeit*)—a reversal that is due partly to the influence exerted by Hölderlin[19] and partly to

16 Schelling, *Einleitung in die Philosophie*, 60, 71.

17 F.W.J. Schelling, *Philosophical Inquiries into the Essence of Human Freedom*, trans. Jeff Love and Johannes Schmidt (Albany: SUNY Press, 2006), 69-60.

18 Walter E. Erhardt, "Die Naturphilosohie und die Philosophie der Offenbarung. Zur Kritik materialistischer Schelling-Forschung," in *Natur und geschichtlicher Prozess. Schelling zur Naturphilosophie F.W.J. Schellings*, ed. Hans Jörg Sandkühler (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1984), 337-359.

19 Cf. Friedrich Hölderlin, *Frühe Aufsätze und Übersetzungen*, ed. by Michael Franz, Hans Gerhard Steiner and D.E. Sattler (Frankfurt am Main: Stroemfeld/Roter Stern: 1991); Cf. also Manfred Frank, *Natura e Spirito. Lezioni sulla filosofia di Schelling*, ed. by Emilio C. Corriero

Kant's own pre-critical views that described being as absolute *Setzung* (absolute position)[20]—such a priority given to Wirklichkeit does not portray a materialist concept, but rather always refers to an actual-dynamic ambit that from the beginning precedes and accompanies the construction of matter and later the definition of being itself.

As stated at the start of the *General Deduction of Dynamical Process*, "the science of nature has a unique task: to construct the matter" (SW IV: 1). Now, such a task, which according to Schelling can be fulfilled using the speculative method, refers to the description of a "dynamic process" that underlies the grounding of being and therefore also the constitution of matter as the *primum existens*, and it repeats continuously and at different levels and potencies of being itself, thus accompanying being in its continuous constitution/creation of itself.

If Schelling intends, as clearly he does, to follow and probe the various phases and potencies of this process with his nature-philosophy, then it goes without saying that what constitutes the very essence of his *Naturphilosophie* has to be the investigation of the original grounding of being: an investigation that, given the non-objectifiability of the object under discussion, is necessarily doomed to failure and merely hypothetically (or rather speculatively) depicts the unconditional that precedes being and its forms as 'absolute activity.'

While it is true that from the thesis expressed in the 1801 *Presentation of My System of Philosophy* (*Darstellung meines Systems der Philosophie*) onwards, matter is certainly depicted as the *primum existens*, where the principles of the real and ideal are united, nevertheless this still presupposes an absolute and even unconditional identity, whose essence is nothing but force: "The essence of the absolute identity, in that it is the immediate cause of reality [*Realität*], is force. It comes from the concept of force. Since each immanent grounding of reality is called force" (SW IV: 145). Schelling's assertion should be read under the premise that absolute identity is to be understood as the absolute actuality (*Wirklichkeit*, whose etymology refers to effectiveness [from the meaning of the German word *wirken*]) of being, which is not to be read as the absolute *Setzung* (absolute position) of Kant's pre-critical work, *The One Possible Basis for a Demonstration of the Existence of God*, but rather as the absolute *Thätigkeit* (absolute activity) of the *First Outline* (*Erster Entwurf*): that is, as the unconditional being that determines the subsequent (ontological, not chronological) and constant distinction in the various realities (*Realitäten*), forms, of being in its own (always becoming) dynamic.

In the later development of Schelling's thought, this actuality would be described as the absolute freedom of the infinite subject, as the infinite potency of being, that is, as the eternal freedom of the *urständliche Subjektivität*

(Torino: Rosenberg & Sellier, 2010), 97f.

20 Cf. Manfred Frank, "Existenz, identität und Urteil. Schellings späte Rückkehr zu Kant," in Manfred Frank, *Auswege aus dem deutschen Idealismus* (Franfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2007), 312-374.

(original and never objective subjectivity, from which comes every possible form of Being), as had already been described in the 1821 Erlangen Lectures.[21] But the infinite potency of being is nothing more than the substance of reason in so far as it is the "infinite potency of knowing" (SW XIII: 75); what positive philosophy is seeking instead is the being itself:

> The potency (the immediate content of reason) is indeterminateness per se (το αόριστον [*to aóriston*]), insofar as it can be potency, subject, matter (since these are synonymous expressions), or even being (*das Seyende*). Consequently, one does not have being itself as long as one has not excluded from it what is material or simply potential (that which can be) (SW XIII: 75).[22]

According to Schelling, what makes the potency of being possible is what there is even before the content of reason: the being that Schelling describes as unprethinkable (*das Unverdenkliche*). By virtue of the modal-ontological priority given to actuality (*Wirklichkeit*) in contrast to possibility (*Möglichkeit*), the unprethinkable being literally comes before reason (in that it is infinite potency of knowing), which thinks and precedes it ontologically, ensures the infinite potency of being, and can at most be depicted as *potentia potentiae*, which corresponds to *Wirklichkeit*. The actuality is *potentia potentiae*: that potency (inappropriately named), which has the (same) potency within its power, while being the first to ontologically ground the plan, the potency, of this *dynamis*.[23] The "blind Being" shows what can be only *post actum*; even "the being of God himself comes before his thought."[24]

The pure *potentia*, the beginning of negative philosophy, was even incapable of being potency and it could not be regarded as such. Only the pure being is the potency of the potency, and since it cannot be potency of the *actus*, it is materially already *potentia potentiae*. What always has its being first is actually something which can will or begin; precisely due to the fact that it

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21 "Freedom is the essence of the subject, that is, it is itself nothing other than eternal freedom .... The absolute subject is the eternal, pure power (*Können*), not power for something (and thus already limited), but power for power, power without intention and without object; this is the highest possible state, and wherever we see it we seem to see a ray of that original liberty ... that it is will: not the will of a being that is distinct from it, but nothing but will, the will itself ... in a state of perfect indifference (an indifference which in turn includes itself and the non-indifference); and at least historically it is perhaps well known that precisely this indifference (*Gleichgültigkeit*, *Indifferenz*) was used as a form of what is more properly known as the Absolute." F.W.J. Schelling, *Initia Philosophiae Universae*. Erlangen Vorlseungen WS 1820/1821, ed. Horst Fuhrmans (Bonn: Bouvier, 1969), 22.

22 Schelling, *Grounding of the Positive Philosophy*, 143.

23 F.W.J. Schelling, *Philosophie der Offenbarung 1841/42*, ed. Manfred Frank (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1993), 162-164.

24 Schelling, *Philosophie der Offenbarung*, 163.

has its being as independent from itself, it has its being first and is sure of it.[25]

Although Iain Hamilton Grant maintains that nature-philosophy is already a sort of positive philosophy, since its sources cannot be thought in advance (according to the principle articulated in the positive philosophy, "it is not because there is thinking that there is being, but rather because there is being that there is thinking" (SW XIII: 162),[26] in an essay published in the first volume of *Schelling-Studien*, he shows how the late nature-philosophy is in greater continuity with the late negative philosophy than it is with the positive, since the object of nature-philosophy is first of all the "potency of being."[27] In partial amendment of Grant's claim that the absolute activity of the unconditional described in the *First Outline* emerges again (in another form) in the infinite potency of being of the later Schelling, I propose instead that the absolute activity of being is rather manifested in the actuality (*Wirklichkeit*) of the unprethinkable being (*unvordenkliches Seyn*), since this latter has to be read in continuity with the absolute subjectivity (*Urständlichkeit*) of nature. As additional proof of this, as we shall see, in the *Presentation of the Process of Nature* the passage from the idea of being as existent to its effective (material) realisation happens thanks to a *universio* that inverts the order of subject (-A) and object(+A) in which reason thinks of being as potency of being from the start, and therefore as subject (-A).

In this sense, insomuch as it addresses the impossible grounding of being—speculatively describing it as a dynamic ambit, that is, as that which cannot be 'thought' by reason simply as what can be, but exclusively as that which has always been (and thus before it could be merely the substance of reason), like original *dynamis*, like *potentia potentiae*—the nature-philosophy must be understood, from its beginning and more so in its later expressions, as a positive philosophy. On the other hand, one can definitely say that Schelling's *Naturphilosophie* starts with his commentary on Plato's *Timaeus* (and *Philebus*), a dialogue that in his Berlin Lectures Schelling himself does not hesitate to define as a philosophical work in which "a transition to the positive" is carried out (SW XIII: 100).[28]

25 Schelling *Philosophie der Offenbarung*, 165.

26 Schelling, *Grounding of the Positive Philosophy,* 202.

27 Iain Hamilton Grant, "The Remains of the World: Grounds and Powers in Schelling's Later *Naturphilosophie*," *Schelling-Studien* 1 (2013): 3-24; Cf. Grant, *Philosophies of Nature after Schelling*; Grant, "Everything is Primal Germ or Nothing Is. The Deep Field Logic of Nature," *Symposium: Canadian Journal of Continental Philosophy* 19, 1 (2015): 106-124.

28 Schelling, *Grounding of the Positive Philosophy*, 159.

Thinking What Exists

Considering the first proposition in the 1799 *First Outline*,[29] which echoes the opening of *Ichschrift* (*Of the I as Principle of Philosophy*) (SW I: 163ff.), the character of *antecedens*, there clearly described as the unconditional, cannot in any instance relate to one thing in particular or a state of things. In fact, it is always and only due to becoming, or rather to power, in other words to what has effectiveness-actuality (in the sense of *Wirklichkeit*) in its consequences, compared to which, in fact, it is mere power-potency. And if, as Schelling observes, "nature is what behaves in accordance with a law of antecedence" (Schelling XI: 375), its beginning evaded any onto-theological 'foundation' (*Begründung*), just as the beginning of positive philosophy can never be described in onto-theological terms.[30]

The beginning of positive philosophy therefore finds realization in the consequences that determine it as *antecedens* (will, freedom), and therefore in the history of being;[31] but just as the *Naturphilosophie* is not a mere theory of nature, and indeed, insomuch as it is above all speculative physics, is about the very idea of nature and specifically the origin of the dynamic process,[32] so positive philosophy is not reducible to the narration of Mythology and Revelation, but is above all speculative science because it deals with the impossible ground from which this narration must/can start. It is in fact, as we shall see shortly, also the 'speculative' method that guides the unification of *Naturphilosophie* and positive philosophy, which is a method that, unlike Hegel, Schelling does not use in a way which allow negative philosophy to overstep its limits (SW XIII: 80), but rather to 'describe,' through hypothesis, the 'positive' (dynamic) grounding of being insofar as it exists.

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29 "The unconditioned cannot be sought in any individual 'thing' nor in anything of which one can say that it 'is.' For what 'is' only partakes of being, and is only an individual form or kind of being. Conversely, one can never say of the unconditioned that it 'is.' For it is BEING ITSELF, and as such, it does not exhibit itself entirely in any finite product, and every individual is, as it were, a particular expression of it" (SW III: 77). English: F.W.J. Schelling, *First Outline of a System of the Philosophy of Nature*, trans. by Keith R. Peterson (Albany: SUNY Press, 2004), 13.

30 Paraphrasing Aristotle in the 1854 *Presentation of the Purely Rational Philosophy* (*Darstellung der reinrationalen Philosophie*), Schelling points out that the 'law of antecedence,' which is found in the powers and in particular when dealing with the beginning, had been widely disseminated and used by nature-philosophy and that it is precisely via the latter that it must be demonstrated (SW XI: 376); cf. Grant, "The Remains of the World."

31 On the freedom of grounding in the late philosophy, see Claudio Ciancio, "Essere e libertà nell'ultimo Schelling," *Giornale di metafisica* XXVI, 69-90 (2004): 84ff.

32 "For, inasmuch as the first problem of this science, that of inquiring into the absolute cause of motion (without which Nature is not in itself a finished whole), is absolutely incapable of a mechanical solution. Because mechanically motion results only from motion to infinity, there remains for the real construction of speculative physics only one way open, the dynamic, with the presupposition that motion arises not only from motion, but even from rest" Speculative physics "occupies itself solely and entirely with the original causes of motion in Nature, that is, solely with the dynamical phenomena" (SW III: 274). Schelling, *First Outline*, 195-196.

But for now let us limit ourselves to the noted affinities and move on from these to consider the progress of *Presentation of the Process of Nature* more closely. The work effectively and specifically offers itself as an exposition, or exhibition, of that dynamic process that in the early years of the Nineteenth Century Schelling had attempted to 'deduce' (in *General Deduction of Dynamical Process*). Such an exposition actually ends in the development of that connection that Schelling establishes here between *Naturphilosophie* as speculative physics and the speculation about the deduction of the positive philosophy principles; that is, in transitioning from the 'ideal foundation' of the beginning of positive philosophy to the 'real foundation' of being as a 'construction' of matter.

As often happens with Schelling's works, the deliberations in the opening lines of the *Presentation of the Process of Nature* are of fundamental importance for the subsequent theoretical development of the text. In just a few effective strokes, Schelling introduces us to the context of positive philosophy while still pinning down the starting point of his first nature-philosophy: he immediately declares that the subject of philosophical investigation in general, and of the nature-philosophy in particular, is "the existent in general, independently of all particular and contingent determinations" (SW X: 303). Now, the existent in general, precisely in that it is independent of any particular determination, cannot be conditioned by anything, nor can it be described as the totality of beings (as Kant would have it), because that would mean having to still deal with a concept that was dependent on particular determinations. It is therefore to be read as being in clear and direct affinity with the unconditional being itself (*Seyn Selbst*), which was already the subject of the first of Schelling's works and which is described, for example, in the first principle of the *First Outline*.

If the definition of the subject of philosophical investigation in the 1844 *Darstellung* takes us back, so to speak, to a research field that is already well-known, in order to further clarify the context within which he intends to move, and in full awareness of the 'positive' character of his philosophy, Schelling immediately poses some questions that define the path that the investigation must follow: "What is the existent? What belongs to the existent?" But above all: "What am I thinking when I think what exists?" (SW X: 303). Asking this question—*Was denke ich, wenn ich das Existirende denke*?--together with the first question "What is the existent?" means immediately re-creating that divergence between negative and positive philosophy necessary to the exposition of the natural process that Schelling aims to produce. In fact, answering the question "what is the existent?" seems to imply precisely a solution of 'negative' philosophy, which aims at the *Was* of being. Yet already in this first question, the subject of the investigation resists any negative definition since—Schelling specifies in the opening—the existent in general must be understood "independently of all particular and contingent determinations," namely unconditionally. The existent in general can therefore be the subject only of a 'positive' philosophy, which focuses on being insofar as it itself constructs

the *a priori* both of being and of thinking. To further clarify Schelling, in fact, poses the question: "What am I thinking when I think what exists?" This question clearly introduces the relationship between being and thinking in the context of positive philosophy, i.e., it is made clear that "it is not because there is thinking that there is being, but rather because there is being that there is thinking" (SW XIII: 162).[33] This precedence attributed to being is hardly a novelty within Schelling's philosophy, one to be found only in his books and essays from his positive philosophy years, since this ontological priority already underlies Schelling's first philosophical formulations.

Thinking of the existent means to somehow create a concept of it, but the concept of the existent certainly cannot have an ontological priority over being itself. Forty-five years earlier in his *First Outline*, Schelling had made clear the need for nature-philosophy to eliminate the 'concept' of being as an 'original concept': "The concept of being as an originary substratum should be absolutely eliminated from the nature-philosophy, just as it has been from transcendental philosophy. The above proposition says this and nothing else: 'Nature should be viewed as unconditioned'" (SW III: 78).[34] With this brief step, which rightly could be considered, as it were, the precursor of the 'positive' nature-philosophy, Schelling intended to clarify that since the privileged subject of the nature-philosophy is being itself, insofar as it is unconditional (unthinged), it cannot in any way be defined/understood using a concept, since the latter in qualifying the subject to be conceptualized already assumes some form of conditioning.

The question "what am I thinking when I think what exists?" therefore aims to highlight, in the possible answers that it evokes, how a general 'thinking of the existent' cannot happen except speculatively: it is impossible, in fact, to think of the existent in general as coming from a ground, and thus 'negatively.' Thinking the existent in general implies free thinking, or rather speculative thinking, that is, it goes "looking for opportunities that allow achievement of a particular purpose in science" (SW XIV: 345). Thinking the existent in general means, therefore, to think of its becoming (the becoming-being), that is, its 'ground-ing.' When and if I think what in general exists, I cannot, in fact, think of it once and for all. The German expression *wenn*, which ties the first part of the question (what am I thinking/*was denke ich*) with the second (I think of the existent/*ich das Existierende denke*), can be translated either with the temporal adverb 'when,' or with the hypothetical conjunction 'if.' The latter option introduces a sceptical connotation that should probably not be undervalued: is it really possible, in fact, to think of the existent in general? Thinking the existent in general would mean thinking about the concept that describes it, about the act and about the process of conceptualization all at the same time, but the existent in general must be understood "independently of all particular

33 Schelling, *Grounding of the Positive Philosophy*, 202.
34 Schelling, *First Outline*, 14.

determinations," and its concept is certainly a particular determination of it. Thinking the existent in general in onto-theological terms is therefore effectively impossible. Thinking the existent in general cannot therefore mean anything more than thinking about its becoming, its foundation (ground-ing), which ends precisely 'when' I think it, or rather, when I am constructing it. Besides, in the same determination of the being itself within the Berlin lectures, Schelling clarifies how in the end his concept is not something that is immediate, but should instead be produced (SW XIII: 77).

Thinking of the existent in general means 'to think' of its dynamics, i.e., 'to create it,' just as philosophising about nature means to create nature itself (SW III: 67). In fact, the speculative hypotheses that form the basis of Schelling's positive philosophy project re-employ the speculative physics method that underlies his *Naturphilosophie*. According to the definition given by Kant in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, speculative knowledge is opposed to the knowledge of nature and "concerns an object, or those concepts of an object which cannot be reached in any experience."[35] In the ideal foundation of Schelling's positive philosophy, speculative knowledge and knowledge of nature remain opposed and distinct until history enters the fray and knits them back together. In the case of the nature-philosophy, however, the distance between speculative knowledge and knowledge of nature (or experience) is abolished through the construction of the matter, i.e. in the transition to the 'real ground,' which can be rightfully understood as the last element of Schelling's metaphysical empiricism. The originality of Schelling's speculation compared to that of Hegel,[36] most likely resides in the natural-philosophical application represented by speculative physics.

To speculate about the existent in general is not the result of a "mechanical" (SW IV: 345) and necessary thought but of a free one, however, this does not mean that it loses its scientific nature, since historical verification (*a posteriori*) must confirm the correctness of the assumptions made, as happens with speculative physics hypotheses which Schelling believes need to obtain empirical confirmation.

In the introduction to the *First Outline*, Schelling explains what he meant by speculative physics by showing how it is not an *a priori* knowledge of nature, but simply the only expository method suited to discussing nature (that is, to think of nature) as it is itself inescapably *a priori*, i.e. the antecedens par excellence: "It is not, therefore, that We KNoW Nature as *a priori*, but Nature IS *a priori*; that is, everything individual in it is predetermined by the whole or by the idea of a Nature generally. But if Nature is *a priori*, then it must

35 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), B 662/527.

36 Cf. Klaus Düsing, "Spekulation und Reflektion. Zur Zusammenarbeit Schellings und Hegels in Jena," *Hegel-Studien* 5, (1969): 95-128; R.W. Meyer, "Zum Begriff der spekulativen Physik bei Schelling," in Natur und Subjektivität, ed. by Reinhard Heckmann, Hermann Krings und Rudolf W. Meyer, (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann Holzboog, 1985), 129-155.

be possible to recognize it as something that is *a priori*, and this is really the meaning of our affirmation" (SW III: 279).[37] Now, the speculative hypotheses of positive philosophy are first and foremost about the 'grounding' of being itself, or rather the inference of the principles of existence. This is particularly evident in the first lectures of *The Philosophy of Revelation* (*The Grounding of Positive Philosophy*) or even more in *Another Deduction of the Principles of Positive Philosophy* (*Andere Deduktion der Principien der positiven Philosophie*).

Universio and Unprethinkable Being

In continuity with the 1801 General Deduction thesis, which states that the only real task for the nature-philosophy is to construct the matter (SW IV: 144), the speculative hypotheses in the *Presentation of the Process of Nature* focus directly on the constitution of matter, or more precisely and to use the Kantian terminology to which Schelling directly refers, expressly on its construction. Compared to the progression of *Another Deduction of the Principles of Positive Philosophy* for example, which, starting from what comes before any thought, aimed at finding "in the unconditional being or the existent ... the real monad, that is what is permanent, the principle that stands above everything" (SW XIV: 337), the *Presentation of the Process of Nature* goes beyond the 'ideal foundation' and requires the actual construction of matter through that *universio* which makes the transition from idea to reality actual and real.[38] It can be said, in fact, that the *Presentation of the Process of Nature* completes the positive journey Schelling embarked upon with his first nature-philosophy, presenting with his first stroke the ideal inference of the existent, which is characteristic of positive philosophy, and, therefore, in keeping with his natural-philosophical aim of exposing, or "exhibiting," the dynamic process, namely its transition to the reality of the matter as a possible (free) real ground of being.

Through the construction, the Kantian separation between speculation and experience is eliminated,[39] and yet that transition from pure speculation, which gives back (so to speak) the 'ideal foundation' of the beginning of positive philosophy, to the construction of matter, which in Schelling's eyes constitutes the passage (Übergang) to the 'real ground' of being (i.e., the beginning of the movement and thus of the dynamic process), is also an *a priori* foundation. The construction of matter, the true task of the nature-philosophy, is, in fact, always and in any case *a priori*, since nature itself is *a priori*. It is about an *a*

37 Schelling, *First Outline*, 198-99.

38 The *Universio* had been already described by Schelling in the *Einleitung in die Philosophie*, cf. Schelling, *Einleitung in die Philosophie*, 115ff. Moreover, Schelling uses the same expression in the context of his *Philosophy of Mythology* describing with it the passage from unity to the first plurality, cf. for example SW XII: 90-93; SW XIII: 304.

39 Michael Rudolphi, *Produktion und Konstruktion. Zur Genese der Naturphilosophie in Schellings Frühwerk*, (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann Holzboog, 2001), 131ff.

priori thought that is not focused on being intended as 'what can be' as happens in negative philosophy, but rather on 'being in action,' which is an effect of the dynamic *a priori* (or becoming *a priori*), which nature is and has always been.

In fact, in response to the question, "What am I thinking when I think what exists?," Schelling immediately presents an ideal inference of what in general exists, which essentially recalls the steps of *The Grounding of Positive Philosophy*, and obviously begins with the subject –A, insofar as it has an intransitive capacity to be, which can be contrasted with the pure object +A. But "what the existent properly is only exists where the subject and object is one and the same" (SW X: 304), i.e., in the third ± A. However, as Schelling clearly shows in the development of his exposition, the existent in general does not come in a single shape, but inasmuch as it is perfect, it has in itself "the beginning (–A), middle (+A) and end (±A) closed on itself" (SW X: 306). Now, the existent thus obtained is only the idea of reason, and the problem that arises in the exposition of the natural process is how this idea can now shift to reality: this is exactly what constitutes the natural-philosophical problem, that goes together with the ideal grounding itself of positive philosophy which *Presentation of the Process of Nature* aims to resolve.

Even if that which just is (*das bloß Seyende*) is a pure idea, though "not in the sense of the word as understood in negative philosophy," because it is an idea in which every potency is excluded—and we can call it the inverted idea (*umgekehrte Idee*) "in which reason is set outside itself" (SW XIII: 162/203)—we are still always concerned with an idea, which requires a transition to the pure reality of matter. Once the immediate capacity-to-be has transitioned to existence, it will cease to be the essentially being-becoming matter, the *primum existens* (A^2): "the first of being to proceed from the Idea," as a result of a becoming; but:

> The last aspect of becoming that we present is that what exists as having become, which was the original subject, becomes again –A, the true subject, or as B it is the false subject that cannot be subject; to be returned again to the true subject it must first become object, acknowledge itself as not-subject, and as object it is precisely *potentia veri subjecti*, not mere matter, but an existent and thus as such *actus* and potency. For this contradiction lies in the essence of what we call matter (SW X: 310).

To explain the transition that he introduces here, Schelling takes advantage of the *universio* concept that describes the inversion of the one, namely the subversion of the principles that had constituted the idea of reason of what exists in general. As the transition to actual reality is possible, it is in fact necessary that what was the subject (–A) of the 'preactual' existent becomes the object, while the object (+A) becomes the subject. That matter in the form

of B becomes the subject is not, however, something that can be affirmed with necessity: even though the subjectification of B is indispensable to creation, B has the freedom to define itself ("we cannot unconditionally posit the subordination of B under +A" [SW X: 311]). In the speculative context within which Schelling works, this means that not only the transition from idea to reality remains a speculative hypothesis, but also that the matter as *primum existens*, that is as a real ground (*Realgrund*) for the existence of subjects that arise from it, retains its freedom. And this freedom, that later manifests itself as space, coincides with the matter's freedom to offer itself as a potency.[40] "The metaphysical concept of matter is perhaps the most difficult because matter must be something actual, thus *actus*, and of course in turn acts as potency for what it is to become" (SW X: 310).

In order to understand the ambiguity of the metaphysical concept of matter in the context of positive philosophy and the *universio*, as introduced by Schelling, I believe one must go back to the concept of unprethinkable being. In the description of being itself given at the start of *Presentation of the Process of Nature*, one effectively retraces the steps of the *Grounding*, starting from the infinite potency of being as the substance of reason: "what I must think." Pure object necessarily contrasts with such a subject, and helps to establish the subject-object of being itself. Now, in order to arrive at the idea of the existent, it is certainly more intuitive to start with the subject as potency of being (–A) rather than with the pure act of the unprethinkable being, as happens in the *Another Deduction of the Principles of Positive Philosophy*. However, when understanding the transition of the idea of the existent to the effective-actual matter becomes central, starting with the *unvordenkliches Seyn* as blind actuality, the *Wirklichkeit* from which what can be (*das Seynkönnende*) derives allows one to understand the dual nature of the matter, insomuch as it is both act and potency, more easily without introducing the *universio* that is needed in the earliest exposition of the idea of the existent.

As *potentia potentiae*, the unprethinkable being, which never offers itself as the substance of reason but if anything as a premise of being and reason itself, is the absolute *Wirklichkeit* which ensures the *Seynkönnende* itself, what can be other, that opposes it and helps to establish the idea of the necessary existent. If indeed it can be said that on the ideal level we find in unprethinkable being that same dynamic that actually repeats itself, on the real-effective level of nature, in the construction and becoming of matter, it does not open the way to a form of speculative materialism,[41] since Schelling never describes

40 "With the setting free of until now merely possible subjects the subject itself, in which they were mere possibilities, must also at the same time become free from the narrows in which it until now found itself, and attain broad, open freedom; this breadth and freedom is space in which (it is essentially to think it this way) the self-extaining subject was already visible from the first as information [*Auskunft*] about itself, simultaneously as the form in which each subject—unrestricted by others—achieves actuals existence for itself" (SW X: 313-314).

41 If still in the *Darstellung des philosophischen Empirismus*, Schelling seems to maintain a form

unprethinkable being (*unvordenkliches Seyn*) as necessary being, but on the contrary and using the Aristotelian definition, he describes it as the "purely contingent," thus reaffirming the ungroundness on which it rests and ensuring it a free internal dynamic.[42] "What simply can be as such (*das Seynkönnende*) would have no right to exist alone; however, once the sheer *actu*, i.e., once the merely contingent necessity is, the merely possible (*das bloss Mögliche*) may assert its demands just as unprethinkable being first makes it possible for potency to appear" (SW XIV: 338). What can be (*das Seynkönnende*), which appears 'after' the unprethinkable being (*unvordenkliches Seyn*) as such, is not something different from it, but solely and only the same as the merely existent. Between the two there must be a unity that Schelling defines as necessary nature, which is "the necessarily existent in its nature and in its essence" (SW XIV: 339).

Aristotle claims that "the matter, therefore, which is capable of being otherwise than as it usually is, must be the cause of the contingent,"[43] but we must remember that Schelling describes unprethinkable being (*unvordenkliches Seyn*) not simply as contingent, but as purely contingent, thus emphasising the impossibility of tracing its foundation to some cause. In Schelling's original dynamic, in which the opposition of what can be (*das Seynkönnende*)

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of speculative materialism, the introduction of the pure contingency of unprethinkable beling (*unvordenkliches Seyn*) aims at denying this hypothesis. At the end of that work, Schelling deals with the question of the *creatio ex nihilo* and he introduces alongside the distinction between the μη όν [*mē on*] and the ούκ όν [*oúk ón*], a third defined as the "non-existent" (*materia informis*): das *Unseyende* (what is not). If the μη όν [*mē on*] is that which is, in the sense that only the effective, real (*wirkliches*) being is excluded from it, while in it persists the possibility of being, the ούκ όν [*oúk ón*] is, instead, that from which not only the reality of being is excluded, but also being in general, and therefore also the possibility of being. Since the definition of ούκ όν [*oúk ón*] does not allow any passage to being and that of μη όν [*mē on*] shows that being is already contained in it, although in the form of potency, Schelling introduces, as said above, the *materia informis* as a non-existent: "as a sheer presupposition, as ύποκείμενον [*hypokeimenon*] of effective creation, this blind being is absolutely not anything, it is not a specific and delimited thing, it is not a real being, but simply that which ... in order to be needs a power opposed to it" (SW X: 285). This passage precedes and implies the successive introduction by Schelling of the pure contingency of *unvordenkliches Seyn* (in the *Darstellung* still described as *materia informis*), in order to highlight once again how his philosophical position cannot be easily described as a mere speculative materialism.

42 "The unprethinkable being precedes everything else insofar as it is purely contingent, but it cannot be configured as the beginning of everything, since it, insofar as it exists simply *actu*, does not preserve a dynamic capacity to act as the principle, but only as the 'essential presupposition,' which further more appears only in this manner *a posteriori* in the process already underway. In fact, if the unprethinkable being is to be defined as purely contingent it must be possible to oppose it to something that can be altered, or something "with regard to which ... it can behave as something contingent" (according to the Aristotelian definition)." Emilio C. Corriero, "The Necessity of Contingency in the Late Philosophies of Schelling and Heidegger," *Nature and Realism in Schelling's Philosophy*, ed. by Emilio C. Corriero and Andrea Dezi, (Torino: Accademia University Press, 2013), 65.

43 Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, trans. William D. Ross, in *The Basic Works of Aristotle* (New York, NY: Random House, 1941), 1027a/781.

to *unvordenkliches Seyn* sets off the whole ontological process, we find an intimate essence of this substantial (and always dynamic) identity, namely a 'force'[44] that allows the original tension and the process that follows; it cannot therefore be excluded that this force could be that pure material (the spiritual matter), that 'absolute cause' (to which it is subject in eternity and therefore exceeds the confines of the principle of sufficient reason) that brings about the pure contingency of *unvordenkliches Seyn*. We are clearly at the level of pure speculation,[45] and only in this sense are we authorised to formulate this sort of hypothesis. Nonetheless, Schelling's introduction of (pure) contingency in the field of positive philosophy, which does not present a formal dialectic but rather the current dialectic in the field of freedom, deals directly with the material power of being, since only this original contingency 'grounds' the possibility of being in general. "With this contingency is posed the possibility of a power that removes [*aufhebende*] that unprethinkable being ... The blind being is, due to its contingency, precisely the (material) power of that power opposed to it."[46]

The free principle that stands above all else, and is the object of Schelling's *Another Deduction*, is therefore that necessary nature which is made up of a 'becoming' that is organised in three fundamental moments, which describe the unique inner dynamic of the unprethinkable being: 1) unprethinkable being, inasmuch as it is purely contingent, 2) the potency to be other as a necessary opposition to unprethinkable being, and 3) the free fluctuation, inasmuch as it is pure spirit, between the latter and the former. On the basis of this 'ungrounded' dynamic organisation, Schelling therefore tries to construct a post-metaphysical principle: a free foundation (grounding) of being that preserves in its permanent dynamic the being in its ungrounded becoming. Thus understood, unprethinkable being, as the *actus purus* that makes what-can-be possible, constitutes the ideal model for the natural dynamic that leads to the construction of matter, which, as we have said, "must be something actual, thus *actus*, and of course in turn acts as potency for what it is to become" (SW X: 310). Having to also present itself as potency, matter, as the free real ground of being, constitutes the basis for a conception of being that Schelling matures and develops over the years and which can be defined as a dynamic ontology[47]: an expression that clearly intends to refer to the well-known Sophist passage according to which being is essentially nothing other than *dynamis*[48];

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44 As it was described by Schelling in the *Presentation of My System of Philosophy* (SW IV: 145).

45 "To speculate means going in search of possibility that allows a given purpose, in science, to be reached. They are certainly only possibilities, which must be demonstrated, later, as reality; just as, in a deduction, what is in the first proposition is a hypothesis, in the conclusion is a demonstrated truth" (SW XIV: 344f.).

46 Schelling, *Philosophie der Offenbarung*, 169.

47 Cf. Emilio C. Corriero, *Libertà e conflitto. Da Heidegger a Schelling, per un'ontologia dinamica* (Torino: Rosenberg & Sellier, 2012).

48 "I suggest that anything has real bring that is so constituted as to possess any sort of power either to affect anything else or to be affected, in however small a degree, by the most insignificant agent, though it be only once. I am proposing as a mark to distinguish real things that they are

both active power of being and passive potency of being. This expression can in fact describe and summarize, in my view, Schelling's ontological conception throughout his whole philosophical journey. The freedom of the matter actually lies in its becoming and behaving as "potency," a freedom that is not lost in the transition to reality, but which instead, and precisely because of the essential character of its ungrounded foundation, transmits and communicates itself in every form and potency that the existent takes on.

In concluding the *Grounding of the Positive Philosophy* with the description of the transition from the idea of reason to the reality of matter, Schelling does not abandon the speculative field. He thus reaffirms the absolute ungroundness that 'grounds' and sustains being, its potencies and its manifestations from the free act of creation to the ongoing process of nature.

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nothing but power." Plato, *Sophist*, trans. Francis M. Cornford, in *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), 247e/992.

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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 prioristic* 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 (*katégoréma monon*), not something that is for itself .... Aristotle, whose sole expression: *hou hé 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 understanding[7]. 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 '*selbstseyend*,' 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 hé ousia energeia*). Schelling refers to the Aristotelian God with the term "absolute individual" (*absolutes 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 *einzeln* 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*, Ἕν τι [*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 [*chóriston*]" 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 factical existence in the world and that 'action is inevitable.' She decides to abandon the negative method and search for a factical 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 ἀλλά τι κρεῖττον] [*logou d'archê 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.

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23 "Womit die positive Philosophie selbst beginnt, ist das von seiner Voraussetzung abgelöste, zum prius erklärte A^{0}; als das ganz Idee-Freie ist es reines Daß (Ἕν 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 factical principle that can act in the world. What the rational philosophy strives for through "pure actuality" (the standpoint of existence: grasping onself 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.

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The Asystasy of the Life Sciences: Schelling, Hunter and British Idealism

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In 1799 the British Crown purchased 13,000 fossils and specimens from the estate of John Hunter (1728-93). This "vast Golgotha"[2] then became the object of attempts to classify and institutionalize the work of one of the most singular and polymathic figures in the British life sciences whose work encompassed medicine and surgery, physiology, comparative anatomy and geology. The result was the Hunterian Museum at the Royal College of Surgeons, separate Lecture Series on comparative anatomy and surgery from 1810, and "Orations" on Hunter's birthday from 1814. Almost symbolically, these efforts were disrupted by the burning of twenty folio volumes of Hunter's notes on the specimens in 1823 by his brother-in-law and executor Sir Everard Home. Home may have wanted to emerge from Hunter's shadow or disguise his borrowings but saw nothing wrong in his actions and divulged them to Hunter's amanuensis William Clift (by then Chief Conservator of the Museum). Having based over ninety articles on Hunter's work, Home claimed he had published and acknowledged everything of value, and that Hunter wanted him to burn the papers, though interestingly he waited thirty years to do so. He also claimed he had wanted to present Hunter's work in more complete form, and spare him from charges of irreligion. And indeed it had been recently that the debate between John Abernethy and William Lawrence had broken out, over whether Hunter and science should be aligned with religion or materialism: a debate

1 The author acknowledges the support of the Canada Research Chairs Program in the preparation of this article.

2 Samuel Gross, *John Hunter and his Pupils* (Philadelphia: Presley Blakiston, 1881), 52.

that caused Coleridge to invoke Schelling to support a nervous idealization of Hunter in his *Theory of Life*. Ignoring Home's activities, the Royal College, it seems, may also have wanted Hunter's work to be "completed." But if so what was troubling about the British scientist's first outlines and his reluctance to arrive at the "*system itself*" (SW III: 4)?[3] And given that Schelling would prove a dangerous supplement, how does Hunter's speculative empiricism converge with the equally explosive transcendental empiricism of Schelling's *First Outline of a System of the Philosophy of Nature* (1799), the most fertile and chaotic of his writings in *Naturphilosophie*?

According to Schelling, "contemplating human knowledge within a system" presupposes "that originally and of itself it does not exist in a system" but is "an *asystaton* ... something that is in inner conflict" (SW IX: 209).[4] In what follows I suggest that Hunter functions as a British surrogate for this asystasy that also lies at the heart of the philosophy of nature as a problem posed to post-Kantian Idealism's self-grounding of spirit in nature. Hunter was an avid collector of (in)organic materials, and as Walter Benjamin says in another context, it is because "he was a pioneer" that he became "a collector," a materialist (in the non-philosophical sense of that term) whose monads of knowledge could "blast the epoch out of its reified ... continuity."[5] The containment of Hunter that was necessary when his collection—and thus the life sciences themselves—became a public trust took two forms: utilitarian and philosophical. Several commentators (especially the "Orators") absorbed his work into the professionalization of medicine and pragmatized him by focusing on medical institutions rather than ideas. At the other end were the Coleridgeans: metaphysicians or transcendental biologists,[6] who included Coleridge himself, his friend and executor Joseph Henry Green, and Green's protégé Richard Owen, later the foremost biologist and paleontologist of the period before Darwin. These thinkers used a simplified Schelling (as well as Oken and Carus) to give the life sciences philosophical weight. They thus read *Naturphilosophie* in highly transcendental ways, so as to innoculate themselves against precisely the questions opened up by the feedback loop between science and philosophy of which Schelling's own work is exemplary.

While focusing on Hunter and the philosophical and methodological filtering of his work by British idealism, this paper therefore follows a double path. On the one hand, framing Hunter's work through Schelling's *Naturphilosophie* allows us to see how much of a fifth column it was within

3 F.W.J. Schelling, *First Outline of a System of the Philosophy of Nature*, trans. Keith R. Peterson (Albany: SUNY Press, 2004), 3.

4 Schelling, "On the Nature of Philosophy as Science," trans. Markus Weigelt, in *German Idealist Philosophy*, ed. Rüdiger Bubner (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1997), 210.

5 Walter Benjamin, "Eduard Fuchs, Collector and Historian," *Selected Writings*, Vol. 3, ed. Howard Eiland and Michael Jennings (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 261-2.

6 On "transcendental" biology and anatomy in Europe see Philip Rehbock, *The Philosophical Naturalists: Themes in Early Nineteenth Century British Biology* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983), 15-30; for its uptake in Britain see 56-114.

British science. Its many disturbing ramifications are one instance of why, on the edge of the Victorian period, British science in its public form felt compelled to unify nature under a natural theology consolidated across the disciplines by the Bridgewater Treatises.[7] In the space of an article we can only put the two thinkers in constellation suggestively, but Schelling gives us the theoretical tools to release Hunter's work from the immunitary enclosure in which it was increasingly confined. On the other hand, while German Idealism is more philosophically rigorous about the metaphorical short-circuits that produce natural theology,[8] the Coleridgeans sought sanctuary in Schelling precisely because his *System of Transcendental Idealism* (1800) promised to synchronize the volatile forces of nature with the goals of spirit. Crucial here is the *Stufenfolge* or graduated stages of nature by which nature develops from the polypi to man as one organism "inhibited at various stages." This logical rather than literal evolution which Schelling hypothesizes in the *First Outline* projects a purposiveness that allows mere natural history ("*Naturgeschichte*" or *natura naturata*) to be reconceived as "a history of nature [*eine Geschichte der Natur selbst*]" (SW III: 53, 63, 68).[9] Juxtaposing German with British Idealism reminds us of the former's transcendental aspirations, which we may want to forget in an attempt to make Schelling (if not Hegel) more contemporary. At the same time reading Schelling in apposition to Hunter (rather than the far more limited John Brown)[10] helps us to understand the explosive philosophical importance of empiricism for transcendental philosophy. For as Schelling writes, "philosophy of nature" is "empiricism extended to include unconditionedness" (SW III: 24),[11] and it is this unconditional empiricism that we find in Hunter.

But turning to Hunter, after Home burned the notes, Richard Owen (later Clift's son-in-law), was appointed to catalogue the collection of a "life" whose diversity, Schelling writes, "comes into existence in opposition to nature" (SW III: 89n).[12] Much of Hunter's work *did* survive, through James Palmer's edition of his *Surgical Works* (1835), and then Owen's two-volume edition,

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7 These were a series of eight treatises commissioned by the Earl of Bridgewater and published from 1833-6, with the intention of reconciling science and theology.

8 Thus Kant writes: "If one brings the concept of God into natural science ... to make purposiveness in nature explicable, and subsequently uses this purposiveness ... to prove that there is a God, then there is nothing of substance in either of the sciences, and a deceptive fallacy casts each into uncertainty by letting them cross each other's borders." *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, ed. Paul Guyer, trans. Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 253.

9 Schelling, *First Outline*, 43, 43n, 49, 53.

10 The interest of Schelling, Hegel and Novalis in Brown is well known. However, Brown's single work, *The Elements of Medicine* (1780 in Latin), a form of early psychiatry, hardly has the encyclopedic breadth of Hunter's many texts, despite Schelling's attempt in the *First Outline* to think it in a wider interdisciplinary context.

11 Schelling, *First Outline*, 22.

12 Schelling, *First* Outline, 68n. Schelling has in mind here a normative notion of "Nature as subject," which is deeply hostile to "individual natures" that impede its productivity and "universal activity" (SW III: 17-18, 69-70). Schelling, *First Outline*, 17, 54-5.

Essays and Observations on Natural History, etc. (1861), based on transcripts Clift made of half the notes before Home appropriated them. It is clear from the range of these volumes, particularly the Palmer edition which contains several long works, that Home's "completion" of Hunter missed both the interplay of system and singularity in Hunter's work and the interdisciplinary core of his thought. Home's articles repeat Hunter's detailed investigation of an array of anatomical and medical topics, but share none of his speculative interests in the vital principle at the boundary between chemistry and physiology, nor his sense of how empiricism troubles generalization. Home fragments Hunter's work into "an unintegrated collection of case studies,"[13] and in the absence of the architectonic that Kant sees as necessary to a "science," his cannibalization of Hunter's work atomizes it into a "mere aggregate."[14] Though it lies beyond the scope of this paper, in the second half of the century Owen's arrangement (rather than fragmentation) of these notes in classificatory series also de-fuses that "most intense moment of natural activity" that Hunter had wanted to get at by focusing on "the most acute moment of individualization in each organism" (SW III: 49).[15]

By contrast Hunter's corpus is encyclopedically ambitious and speculatively untotalized. As such, it traverses, even if it does not organize, all knowledge in the life sciences, rivalling the later and more theoretical projects of Schelling's *Naturphilosophie* and the second volume of Hegel's *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences.* The parts of Hunter's work in physiology, surgery, natural history, geology etc. may not all have been original in a broader European context which Hunter knew and in which his work was known, including by Schelling.[16] But Hunter thinks these fields in a kind of dis-integration, whose very empiricism is its own form of theory. As an encyclopedia of the life sciences in parts, his work can thus be approached through the paradigms provided by Novalis' *Romantic Encyclopedia* (1798) rather than by Kant's notion of architectonic. For Novalis the position of the parts in the whole is not determined *a priori,* as Kant suggests. Rather the whole is contingent on the parts, since through "the genuine raising to a higher power" or *Potenzirung*,

13 Nicolaas Rupke, *Richard Owen: Biology Without Darwin*, 2nd revised ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 99.

14 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Paul Guyer and Allen Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 691.

15 Schelling, *First Outline*, 39.

16 Hunter's work was translated into Dutch, Latin and German. His famous *Treatise on the Blood, Inflammation and Gunshot Wounds* (1794), as well as his *Treatise on the Venereal Disease* (1786) and *Observations on Certain Parts of the Animal Oeconomy* (1786/17) were all translated into German almost immediately. *Encyclopedia of Library and Information Science*, ed. Miriam Drake, Vol. 3 (London: Taylor and Francis, 2003), 1846. The first two texts are by no means narrowly limited to the subjects named in their titles. Schelling refers to Hunter thrice, in *On the World-Soul* and the *First Outline* (SW II: 570; III: 133, 171). He also refers to *The Contributions to Elementary Physiology* of Franz von Baader, who had read Hunter (SW II: 546). The Baader-Hunter connection is annotated by Iain Hamilton Grant, in his forthcoming translation of *On the World-Soul*, of which he has kindly given me a copy.

"every science" or even "molecule" of knowledge can "pass over into a higher philosophical science,"[17] blasting knowledge out of its continuity. It is in this sense that Hunter's radical empiricism, far from being unphilosophical in the mode of the British natural philosophy that Hegel criticizes in the Introduction to his *Encyclopedia Outline* (1817),[18] is the condition of possibility for theoretical questions that can be raised when Hunter's work and *Naturphilosophie* are thought through each other.

Among the problems Hunter shares with his more philosophical successors, particularly Schelling, is the question of the self-organization of life as it develops from matter. Hunter argues that "animal and vegetable matter" have "arisen out of the matter of the globe," but also writes that "animal and vegetable substances *differ* from common matter in having a power superadded, totally different from any other known property of matter, out of which arise various new properties" (italics mine).[19] This *vis vitae,* however, is not ascribed to a higher power; it is immanent but not easily traceable, since we know it more in terms of effects than causes. Hence we cannot be sure that it exists. Schelling similarly dissociates himself from the "fiction" of vitalism, even though he also seems to endorse an "*immaterial* principle, which is rightly called *vital force*" or *Lebenskraft* (SW III: 80, 80n, 84).[20] And indeed Schelling takes positions both for and against vitalism on the same page, as if posing an antinomy whose resolution is not, however, necessary in an experimental text where the facts "are not yet in" (SW III: 4).[21]

On this same issue of life and its forms, Hunter also claims, unsurprisingly, that animals are distinguished by having "motion within [themselves]." But then, unlike others, most famously Bichat—whom Hegel cites[22]—who categorically divides animals and vegetables, Hunter ascribes a "power of action" to both animals and vegetables, thus complicating the gradations on which any *Stufenfolge* must be based.[23] While the sheer materiality of Hunter's work resists the idealization that transcendental biology imposed on it, his understanding of life is not materialist and is certainly not mechanist, nor is it quite hylozoist or even conventionally vitalist. Thus Hunter writes that the "universe has been divided into 'matter' and 'spirit,'" as a "species of

17 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 691; Novalis, *Notes for a Romantic Encyclopedia*, trans. and ed. David Wood (Albany: SUNY Press, 2007), #487, #489 and see also #155, #176, #233, #460.

18 G.W.F. Hegel, *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Outline*, trans. Stephen Taubeneck, in *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Outline and Critical Writings*, ed. Ernst Behler (New York: Continuum, 1990), 49-50, 50n.

19 John Hunter, *The Surgical Works of John Hunter, F.R.S.*, ed. James Palmer, 4 vols. (London: Longman, Rees and Orme, 1835), I, 214.

20 Schelling, *First Outline*, 61, 61n, 64.

21 Schelling, *First Outline*, 3.

22 G.W.F. Hegel, *Philosophy of Nature*, trans. A.V. Miller (Oxford: Clarendon, 1970), 373-6, 393. Bichat was of course writing after Hunter, although Lawrence and Coleridge frame Hunter in relation to Bichat.

23 Hunter, *Surgical Works*, I, 214-15, 222.

intelligent quality that presides over and directs the actions of matter"—not language that we normally find in British science. But he adds, with almost Kantian reserve, that we cannot "have an idea" of spirit, "as it goes beyond matter," where we cannot go "even in idea." Denying that "spirit" is "a something superadded to ... matter," even though he elsewhere credits organic matter with a "power superadded" which is different from any other property of matter, Hunter nevertheless does hold on to the word "spirit," but only in order to yet suggest that it may be a property of matter.[24]

In short, if nature is possessed of a vital force that is not transcendentally grounded nor directed by a principle of sufficient reason, but contingent and elusively (im)material in its workings, there is no clear way of characterizing the force of production in nature. Related to this is Hunter's sense that normal and pathological life processes may be entwined, evidence for which lies in his many surgical case studies. Though Owen conspicuously excluded these from *Essays and Observations*, some of them are threaded through Hunter's extensive lectures on surgery and wounds in the Palmer edition, bringing life and mortification perilously close. Indeed, Hunter writes that "diseased actions" may be "established on nearly the same principles that the actions of health are."[25] In the Appendix on medicine in Schelling's *First Outline* and in the last section of Hegel's *Philosophy of Nature*, we find a similar proximity between disease and life that imperils the movement from nature to spirit. Indeed, Schelling too writes that disease "has the same factors as life," (SW III: 222) [26]a notion that he and Novalis derive from John Brown but develop from an accidental idea in Brown into a substantive idea. And finally, given the resulting difficulty in understanding "life"—life, as Schelling says, is "unnatural" (SW III: 222n)[27]—Hunter shares with the Germans a sense that in the absence of certain knowledge sciences fold into each other and supplement each other. "Life" may appear one way when focalized through comparative anatomy, and differently when seen through the lenses of medicine.

In its radical but not atomistic empiricism, Hunter's system in pieces thus lies somewhere between Kant's binary of system and aggregate. For Kant science is dependent on system as "the unity of manifold cognitions under one idea," and a system in turn requires an architectonic, where the parts inhere in a whole and there can be no "contingent additions"; otherwise it is "heaped together" as a "mere aggregate."[28] To establish the internal architectonic of a science and its external boundaries in the larger architectonic of knowledge, Kant proposed two forms of introduction: propaedeutic and encyclopedic.

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24 John Hunter, *Essays and Observations on Natural History, Anatomy, Physiology, Psychology, and Geology*, ed. Richard Owen, 2 vols. (London: John Van Voorst, 1861), I. 6; Hunter, *Surgical Works*, I, 214.

25 Hunter, *Surgical Works*, I, 300.

26 Schelling, *First Outline*, 160.

27 Schelling, *First Outline*, 160n.

28 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 691.

Though Hunter preferred essays to books, he did provide what Kant calls "propaedeutic" introductions—or at least tables of contents—for his longer works, which frame and divide "the proposed doctrine" and its parts, albeit somewhat *a posteriori*. What he did not provide was an "encyclopedic" introduction that assigned a particular field such as dentistry or geology a fixed place in a larger "system"; nor did he observe Kantian "boundaries between sciences" that cleanly separate "the principles proper to the new doctrine (*domestica*) from those that belong to another one (*peregrinis*)."[29] In this respect Hunter's writings, like the way he kept adding to his collection of specimens in an attempt to complete the catalogue of life, mirror Schelling's comment that in order to recognize the "asystasy" at the root of knowledge, the mind "must have searched in every possible direction." Schelling explores this asystasy in his Erlangen lecture, "On the Nature of Philosophy as Science" (1821), where he struggles with the way the desire for a unified system is unravelled by the multiplicity of philosophical systems, some "higher" than others but none ever gaining the upper hand. He thus points to the presence of multiple systems in the body—nervous, digestive, and so on—recognizing that their coexistence may result in one part departing from the whole conceived architectonically (SW IX: 209-11). The analogy silently refers back, not only to Kant's use of the animal body as a figure for architectonic containment, but also to Schelling's own Freedom Essay (1809), where he had written that the "individual body part, like the eye, is only possible in the whole of the organism" but has "its own life for itself, indeed, its own kind of freedom," which it "proves through the disease of which it is capable" (SW VII: 346).[30] "Healthy individuals do not feel ... these systems," and in the Erlangen lecture Schelling still projects the goal of being "free of" or "*above* all systems." (SW IX: 212).[31] But the very metaphor of the body, which refracts cognitive through physiological systems, testifies to the pressure that the life sciences were bringing to bear on philosophy.

For unlike Kant's mathematization of knowledge into a "stereometrically regular crystal," as Schelling sees it, philosophy "hosts germs of every possible illness" (SW IX: 212).[32] What Schelling says of multiple philosophical systems can also be said of the multiple systems generated by different natural sciences in his *First Outline* and their consequences for seeing nature as a unified entity or force. And just as Schelling uses the body's systems to rethink philosophical systems in the Erlangen lecture, so too Hunter's work on the body's multiple systems can be used to think about systems of knowledge. For instance, Hunter describes the phenomenon of anastomosis, in which one blood vessel opens into another, and where it is unclear whether these lateral ramifications of the veins

29 Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 41-2.

30 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 691; Schelling, *Philosophical Investigations Into the Essence of Human Freedom,* trans. Jeff Love and Johannes Schmidt (Albany: SUNY Press, 2006), 18.

31 Schelling, "On the Nature of Philosophy," 213.

32 Schelling, "On the Nature of Philosophy," 212.

help or retard the circulation of the blood.[33] Folding his account of physiological systems back onto the problem of epistemic systems provides a new way of thinking about the role of interruptions, anastomoses and relays within and between fields of knowledge.

Schelling provides a way to do this, for as he works between fields of knowledge such molecules of science are raised to "a higher power" and release philosophic potentials.[34] In terms of an emerging Romantic science of "systematics" that is critical rather than dogmatic, Schelling's response to the multiplicity of physiological or epistemic systems is not to unify them from a higher perspective, but to argue that it is "*one* subject that proceeds through everything," just as it is one subject "that lives in the different elements of an organism." If we did not conceive of such an "absolute subject," absolved from "everything finite" and from being "restricted to one form" or organ (of knowledge), "life and evolution would be inhibited" (SW IX: 215-17).[35] In his earlier lectures on academic study, Schelling had momentarily opened up the Kantian means-end architectonic of absolute knowledge, when he argued that "a scientist is faithful to the spirit of the whole only to the extent that he considers his field as an end in itself, an absolute" (SW V: 232).[36] We see this same willingness to host germs of every possible illness in the pursuit of "infinite" knowledge (SW IX: 222) in Hunter's decision to inject himself with gonorrhea to write his treatise on venereal disease. Less literally, we see it in the tangled paths taken by his work. Although he saw himself as a theorist of surgery (declining a professorship in comparative anatomy), in order to study surgery Hunter had to master physiology and comparative anatomy. But contrary to idealist biology's desire to make comparative anatomy a science that reveals "the unity and inner affinity of all organisms" as they originate in "one archetype," (SW V: 143)[37] comparative anatomy, to cite Schelling on both sides of this issue, opens up a series of "graduated divergences" (SW III: 64).[38] Furthermore, to understand the vital principle, Hunter had to study both inert and living matter and the transition between them in fossils, which arguably encrypted an eternal past in which nature is *prius*. In his traversal of these emergent but entangled disciplines, Hunter thus opened up the vast field of

33 Hunter, *Surgical Works*, III, 207-10.

34 For an elaboration of this (de)constructive interdisciplinarity as Schelling's method, see my articles "First Outline of a System of Theory: Schelling and the Margins of Philosophy, 1799-1815," *Studies in Romanticism*, 46 (2007): 311-35; "Evolution and its Resistances: Transferences Between Disciplines in Hegel's and Schelling's Systems," *Symposium: Canadian Journal of Continental Philosophy*, 19.1 (2015): 153-75.

35 Schelling, "On the Nature of Philosophy," 215-17.

36 Schelling, *On University Studies*, trans. E.S. Morgan, ed. Norbert Guterman (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1966), 25. The English title is, of course, a mistranslation, since Schelling, distinguishing himself from Kant's *Conflict of the Faculties*, for the most part refers to academies and not universities

37 Schelling, *On University Studies*, 142.

38 Schelling, *First Outline*, 50.

life in ways whose many interstices were disturbing for the British agenda of containing the life sciences within natural theology.

Hunter's polymathic embrace of so many fields concedes what he says he wants to transcend, namely that sciences are "blended with one another," or are used, in a form of transference, to explain other sciences. But it is not just that these mixtures and supplements occur for "want of a sufficient knowledge";[39] rather they point to the inadequacy of any positivist science. In other words, we are not dealing here with an amorphous pre-disciplinarity that precedes the disaggregation of disciplines often associated with the later nineteenth century. Indeed in the period under consideration disciplines *were* being founded, especially in Europe, and Kant repeatedly returns to the importance of separating the principles internal to a discipline (*domestica*) from foreign principles (*peregrina*) that are borrowed as analogical aids and must gradually be sifted out.[40] Hunter's comment on disciplinary crossings as due to a science being at its inception may hold out this Kantian hope of the streamlining and thus modernization of sciences. But we must remember that Owen's editing of his work extracts this comment from the asystasy of a notebook and gives it a systematic status by constructing an introduction that Hunter never wrote as such.[41]

Thus in practice we are speaking here of a quite different archeology of knowledge that is well described by Joseph Henry Green's phrase, "distinction without separation." This archeology distinguishes fields but resists dividing them from each other, and in the case of Hunter is also sensitive to the inexplicability of life and its resistance to clean scientific organization.[42] It is the same in Schelling's *First Outline*, which operates in terms of a vertical axis that tries to organize nature into a "history" by way of the *Stufenfolge* or graduated stages of nature, but also in terms of a horizontal axis that diversifies the natural sciences into a number of fields that displace and re- or co-determine each other. We can find in the text the pathways cut by any number of fields: dynamic (rather than Newtonian) physics, chemistry, biology, physiology, geology, pedology (the study of soils), and cosmology. These fields are not always named and cannot be synchronized. Moreover, they transect the text and make incursions into it, rather than being put into a succession or

39 Hunter, *Essays and Observations,* 1.4.

40 Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 252.

41 Hunter wrote his thoughts down on scraps of paper and then had his assistants copy them into notebooks. The relevant notebook at the Royal College of Surgeons is the copy Clift made of one of these notebooks, from which Owen, in turn, edited *Essays and Observations* over fifty years later. Owen's editing, to say the least, has its own agenda.

42 J.H. Green, *Distinction Without Separation* (London: Hurst, Chance and Co., 1831), 11, 43. Green's "holism" is, of course, more institutional and far less experimental than Hunter's or Schelling's. But confronted with an increasing specialization of the professions, specifically between surgeons and physicians, he argues that while there might have to be a "practical distinction" between the two, their "scientific unity" must be preserved, alongside an encyclopedic educational curriculum.

Stufenfolge of sciences, as in Hegel's *Philosophy of Nature*. Hegel's arrangement is a simulacrum or feint whereby the succession of disciplines seems to demonstrate Reason in Nature while in fact making this rationality contingent on an Idea which, at every stage of its development, releases complicating potentials.[43] But Schelling's spatial rather than temporal arrangement in the *First Outline* is more radically averse to hypostatizing any of its constructions, recognizing how, as different fields try to enclose nature within their sphere, or perhaps even as we try to enclose a field as a science or sphere of knowledge, "other spheres are again formed" within each sphere "and in these spheres others" (SW III: 55).[44]

In what remains I take up the Coleridgeans' encounter with Schelling at the site of the problems posed by Hunter to a theory of life, as a case study of how British Idealism itself reined in the speculative potentials of its German counterpart: potentials that were particularly intense in the philosophy of nature. Coleridge and Green (as well as Owen[45]) were familiar with Schelling and *Naturphilosophie*, even though Schelling was not translated till the later nineteenth century, and then too not in Britain.[46] Green, who worked closely with Coleridge, whom he met in 1817, twice studied in Germany, and was familiar with German science, including Goethe, Carus, Meckel and Wolff. An avid collector of books in German, he was also well-versed in the work of Kant and Schelling, and went to Berlin in 1817 to immerse himself in German philosophy with Karl Solger, who had just been involved in appointing Hegel. I venture here that Green, apart from reading the *Science of Logic,* had at least second-hand knowledge of Hegel's *Encyclopedia*, the first *Outline* of which appeared in 1817.[47] All this being said, British and German Idealism are very different, and

43 I suggest, in other words, that while a thinker such as Jean-Baptiste Robinet in *De la Nature* simply (and more naively) describes nature's ascent up the chain of being, Hegel's construction of his *Philosophy of Nature* in terms of a disciplinary series raises the question of mediation (which is throughout his struggle to impose/find the Idea in nature). Schelling differs in recognizing the relationship of the I to the Not-I as a construction which, as an "experiment" or "question" put to nature is open to its deconstruction (SW III: 276). Schelling, *First Outline*, 44.

44 Schelling, *First Outline*, 44.

45 Richard Owen, *On the Archetype and Homologies of the Vertebrate Skeleton* (London: John Van Voorst, 1848), 168-9. I do not take up Owen here, as his work is more scientific than philosophical. Owen's knowledge of Schelling was also somewhat second-hand, by way of Green and German transcendental anatomy.

46 Selections from Schelling's work were translated in the American journals, *The Dial* and more extensively, *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy*. These included the Introduction to the *Outline*, all of *On University Studies* in parts, and part of "On the Principle of the I." There was a translation of Schelling's essay on the plastic arts and nature in 1845 by J. Chapman. But in contrast to the reception of Hegel, there was no book-length English translation of a work by Schelling until James Gutmann's *Of Human Freedom* (1936). The neglect of Schelling is extraordinary, considering that Bichat, Blumenbach, Carus, Cuvier, Oersted, Oken, Werner and others were all translated during the nineteenth century. While translations of science (including *Naturphilosophie*) were more frequent than translations from philosophy, given Schelling's place in *Naturphilosophie* the omission is still striking.

47 According to the sale catalogue of Green's library, a copy of which is held at Victoria

Coleridge grew nervous when it became clear that his Fichteanized Schelling and borrowings from the *System of Transcendental Idealism* in *Biographia Literaria* were not representative of the more dangerous *Naturphilosophie*.[48] The Coleridgeans, caught in the issue of science vs. religion, all sought to foreclose the difficulties that nature caused for spirit: difficulties they also tried to skirt in Hunter. Hence British Idealism in its first phase, inspired by Kant and Schelling, tried to immunize the Germans' opening up of an autotelic, even autogenetic nature, by retaining a designing power for God. In its second phase, inspired by one side of Hegel only, it repressed *Naturphilosophie* into an organic conception of the state, entirely avoiding a nature whose "ever-increasing wealth of detail" Hegel himself saw as "refractory towards the unity of the Notion."[49]

Typical here is Green, and here his possible knowledge of a Hegel stripped of the *Philosophy of Nature* is significant. In fact, Green's two Hunterian orations, *Vital Dynamics* (1840) and *Mental Dynamics* (1847), enact a progress from matter to spirit that resembles Hegel more than Schelling. For while this progress is the spinal cord of the *System*'s absorption of the *Stufenfolge* into an evolution from nature to freedom (SW III: 491, 495, 588),[50] in the *First Outline* itself the purposiveness of nature never becomes teleology, nor is the word "spirit" attached to nature's "epigenesis" or "*dynamical* evolution" (SW III: 61).[51] Taking Schelling's speculative physics in a more dogmatic direction, Green, in his Hunterian Oration of 1840, but also much earlier in his Hunterian lectures on comparative anatomy in 1827 and 1828, introduces the new inter-discipline of "physiogony" to cement the sequencing of nature and spirit. Physiography is natural history: the description of *natura naturata*. Physiology studies *natura naturans*: the powers behind nature conceived vitally rather than mechanistically. Finally physiogony aims to "exhibit every order of living beings, from the *polypi* to the *mammalia*, as so many embryonic states of an organism, to which Nature from the beginning had tended, but which Nature alone could not realize." Physiogony or "the history of nature" thus becomes a "preface and portion of the history of man," as nature "labour[s] in birth with

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University College, Toronto, there were three lots of books, totalling 21 volumes, which could have contained texts by or on Hegel. But all we can say is that Green owned a copy of the Greater *Logic* (1812), and A. Ott's (*Hegel et la Philosophie Allemande* [Paris: 1844]), which has a substantial section on the *Philosophy of Nature*; this may indicate a general interest in Hegel, even though the book was published after *Vital Dynamics*. Green also owned work by Karl Rosenkranz on Hegel, and various histories of German philosophy, including by K.L. Michelet and Kuno Fischer (*Catalogue of the Library of the Late Joseph Henry Green Esq., F.R.S., D.C.L.*, &c [London: Sotheby, Wilkinson and Hodge, 1880]).

48 For a more detailed account of the two phases of British Idealism and also of Coleridge in particular, see my article, "Immunitary Foreclosures: Schelling and British Idealism," in *Schelling's Afterlives,* ed. Daniel Whistler and Johannes Zachuber, special issue of *International Journal of Philosophy and Theology*, (forthcoming 2018).

49 Hegel, *Philosophy of Nature*, 444.

50 Schelling, *System of Transcendental Idealism*, trans. Peter Heath (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1981), 122, 125, 199.

51 Schelling, *First Outline*, 48, 48n.

man" to complete "the evolution of the organic realm."[52]

As previously noted, this "gradative evolution," in Green's Schellingian term, is an idea which can be found in many sources outside German Idealism that undertake a temporalization of the Chain of Being. Through this temporalization, as Arthur Lovejoy suggests, the "*plenum formarum*" is reconceived "not as the inventory but as the program of nature, which is being carried out gradually."[53] But Green very much follows in the footsteps of a certain German Idealism in binding this program of nature to spirit, a word which for him avoids a more dangerous Schellingian "freedom." Beyond his lectures in the 1820s, which were broadly in the vein of natural theology but technical rather than philosophical,[54] we can see Green's increasingly Victorian development of natural into political theology in his deployment of the word "constitution," initially used in a medical context by Hunter's follower, the surgeon John Abernethy. Although Green links physical to political constitution only once and as a metaphor, this connection is why, unlike Abernethy, he does not focus on potentially troublesome constitutional diseases but on what he repeatedly calls "constitution to one," through "spirit," which he defines as "one power, manifesting itself in a diversity of forms."[55]

In this use of the word "constitution" Green may also have in mind Schelling's allusions to a "universal constitution" (SW III: 587).[56] Indeed, Philip Sloan argues that under the more acceptably British alias of "Hunter" Green's lectures secretly introduced his audience to Schelling and a Kant read back through Schelling.[57] But this is the Schelling of the *System* and not the *First Outline*. And if Green rarely mentions Schelling, it is also because he knew, in the wake of his bi-weekly tutorials with Coleridge, that Schelling was as much of an alibi for natural theology as Hunter, in ways that might similarly unground the intellectual work Green wanted Hunter to do. Green did nevertheless develop the term "physiogony," which is merely tossed off by

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52 Green, in *Vital Dynamics* (London: William Pickering, 1840), 101-3. *Vital Dynamics* includes Green's 1840 Hunterian Oration which gives the collection its title, the "Recapitulatory Lecture" for his Hunterian lectures of 1828 (from which the above passages are taken), and a number of other essays which are more philosophical than his Hunterian lecture courses of 1824-8, at least in terms of trying to read Hunter's work in the life sciences and medicine within natural theology.

53 Green, *Vital Dynamics*, 39; Arthur Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being: The Study of the History of an Idea* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1942), 242-4.

54 These lectures have not been published, and survive only *via* the notes taken on them by Clift and Owen, manuscripts of which are at the Royal College of Surgeons.

55 John Abernethy, *Surgical Observations on the Constitutional Origin and Treatment of Local Diseases* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown, 1817); Green, *Vital Dynamics*, xxii-iii, 41, 81-4. The link between physical and political constitution is explicit in Coleridge's earlier short essay, "On Life," *Shorter Works*, 2, 1027-8.

56 Schelling, *System*, 199.

57 Philip Sloan, "Kant and British Bioscience," in *Understanding Purpose: Kant and the Philosophy of Biology*, ed. Philippe Huneman (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2007), 155-6. Sloan does not get into the complexity of either Schelling or Hunter.

Kant,[58] in specific response to Schelling, whose *First Outline* he was re-reading with Coleridge in 1827. His justification of this new inter-discipline—albeit only as an "idea"—on the grounds that natural history is "an erratum in the nomenclature of science"[59] builds on Schelling's stated desire to replace natural history as *Naturbeschreibung* with a *Geschichte der Natur selbst* that would give the term a "much higher meaning," subsuming nature into history (SW III: 116).[60] Green then uses his hypostasis of Schelling's speculation to narrativize Hunter, whose work is more like the networks of fields in the *Outline* itself.

Green's claim that a "history of Nature" aims, like "all other history, to discover in the past the solution of the present, and in both the anticipation of the future,"[61] evokes something very much like the Hegelian *Aufhebung*. His later focus on disciplines as they contribute to *Bildung* is also loosely Hegelian. In line with this broader organization of knowledge, Green's second Hunterian oration, *Mental Dynamics* (1847), only touches on the life sciences, which it absorbs, not so much into a philosophy of spirit, as into an arts and science curriculum of knowledge for the education of a medical clerisy, to borrow Coleridge's pseudo-religious term. By 1847 we are well into the Victorian period, and rather than research into life or even psychology, *Mental Dynamics* provides a pragmatic, philosophically de-fanged version of the *Bildung* projected by Hegel's *Encyclopedia*.

To be sure, Green saw his work as entering a "region of thought, little, alas, frequented by the English reader," and as bringing the "dynamic" philosophy of the Germans to the reading of Hunter, who had not been understood because his contemporaries missed his "philosophical principles." Thus he wants to recognize Hunter as a "philosophical physiologist" so as to elevate the life sciences into philosophical sciences with higher aims than either the pragmatic or technically scientific ones emphasized by other commentators on Hunter. Still Hunter's radical empiricism and complete disinterestedness raise questions that Green's anxiety to "reconcile the study of Nature with the requirements of our moral being" avoids; moral being was hardly the concern of someone who experimentally injected himself with venereal disease. It is thus telling that Green, in outlining a "history of nature," elides the complexity of this idea in the *First Outline* by glossing it through Schelling's more transcendentally idealist comments, from the lectures on academic study, on comparative anatomy as a field that discloses the unity and affinity of all organisms.[62] It is also worth noting that though Green's expertise was in surgery, he chose to give his Hunterian lectures on comparative anatomy,

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58 Kant, "On the Use of Teleological Principles in Philosophy," trans. Günter Zöller, in *Anthropology, History, and Education*, ed. Günter Zöller and Robert Louden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 198n.

59 Green, *Vital Dynamics*, 107.

60 Schelling, *First Outline*, 63.

61 Green, *Vital, Dynamics*, 102.

62 Green, *Vital Dynamics*, v-ix, xv, xix-xxi, 81.

and that the guiding spirit in these lectures is Cuvier more than Schelling: classification rather than speculation on a field that Schelling sometimes saw as proving the unity and inner affinity of all organisms, but also saw as disclosing "increasingly graduated divergences" between organisms (SW III: 64).[63]

Coleridge is more tangled, because his more complex understanding of the threat posed by natural to transcendental philosophy made him both anxious about, and fascinated by, the complexities of *Naturphilosophie,* and so at times hysterically resistant to Schelling. As is well known, Coleridge "plagiarized" extensively from the *System* in his *Biographia Literaria* (1817). The general view of these borrowings is that what led him to credit Schelling with a "revolution" in philosophy beyond the "crude Egoismus" of Fichte, was Schelling's "inclusion of nature in the system of absolute mind": his "dynamic philosophy," which repudiated "realism" by making nature "unawakened mind" and mind "nature that has achieved" self-consciousness.[64] Indeed this understanding of Schelling would for a long time dominate Anglo-American readings of Schelling, even though Coleridge himself thought better of it.[65] In the immediate period of his enthusiasm from 1816-17 (though he had been interested in Schelling since 1812), Coleridge tried to buy everything that he could from across the channel. He had read at least seventeen texts by Schelling and owned twelve (including the five in the *Philosophische Schriften*), spanning transcendental idealism, *Naturphilosophie* and religion.[66] But as he delved further into Schelling's work, he concluded that "as soon as [Schelling] commenced the Objective or Natur-wissenschaft, he gave the Slip" to the *I Am* and in "his Jarbücher der Medicin fairly involved it" in the *It Is*, leaving "both in the Lurch." As Coleridge wrote somewhat ingenuously to Green in late 1818, if he had not been misled by having read only the *System* when writing *Biographia*, Schelling himself would have put him "on guard."[67]

The common wisdom accepts Coleridge's story, and dates his turn against Schelling to late 1818, when he started working through the latter's corpus more carefully with Green, whom he had met the previous year through Ludwig Tieck. But in fact when Coleridge wrote the *Biographia*, he had read a fair

63 Schelling, *First Outline*, 50.

64 S.T. Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria, or Biographical Sketches of my Literary Life and Opinions*, ed. James Engell and Walter Jackson Bate (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 158-9, 163; G.N.G. Orsini, *Coleridge and German Idealism* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1969), 198-200.

65 See Raimonda Modiano, *Coleridge and the Concept of Nature* (London: Macmillan, 1985), 160. The assumption here is that Coleridge rejected Schelling because the latter's concepts of freedom and the self-organization of life failed to achieve the identity of God, mind and nature which both thinkers wanted, and not that Schelling might have been doing something radically different.

66 Coleridge could also draw on Henry Crabb Robinson and Green for German books. The Sale Catalogue for Green's library indicates that Green owned five volumes by Schelling, but beyond *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature* and something given the title of "*Naturgeschichte*, 2 vols. in 1," it does not indicate what they were.

67 Coleridge, *Collected Letters*, ed. E.L. Griggs, 6 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), IV, 874.

amount of Schelling's work, including the Freedom Essay in the *Philosophische Schriften.* Indeed in 1812 he had told Crabb Robinson that "Schelling appears greatest in his last work on *Freiheit*." Coleridge may indeed have read Schelling more critically after 1818, as his annotations of the Freedom Essay include ill-tempered comments about the passage on the eye's capacity for sickness being an example of freedom, on Schelling as doing no more than rehash Boehme, and on how "Freedom" devolves into a mere synonym for "Life."[68] But he must have had earlier knowledge of what would later disturb him, and long after his turn against Schelling, he also continued to use and to wrestle—privately, in his notebooks—with the language of polarity, indifference, powers, ground, and copula: in other words, with the ungrounding role played by nature in relation to transcendental philosophy in Schelling's work. Coleridge was particularly concerned that Schelling introduced polarity into "the unity of a perfect will" or "Godhead,"[69] and could close down this spectre only through a convoluted Trinitarianism that performed an *Aufhebung* of this polarity,[70] and that he tried to fix in mathematical schemas to prevent the possibility of philosophy hosting germs of illness, or indeed infecting theology with the illness it had contracted from the life sciences.

It is through the *Theory of Life* that Coleridge enters the story of the double projection by which Schelling is used to contain what he simultaneously opens up, and what Hunter and *Naturphilosophie* potentially catalyze in each other. The *Theory* was probably written late in 1816, in the wake of the Abernethy-Lawrence debate (1814-16) over whether Hunter was a vitalist whose thought was philosophically compatible with religion or a materialist closer to Bichat, with all that a French connection going back through the Revolution to the *philosophes* might imply for the relation of spirit to matter. The text opens ceremoniously in front of Hunter's bust and the "august temple" of his Museum, in which Coleridge seeks an adequate embodiment of "the true idea of Life."[71] Its aim is to fit the troublesome science of life into a larger system that perceives in nature the "workings of a spiritual activity that is essentially identical with the activity of a self-conscious being," to quote one characteristically simplified account of Schelling.[72] The text was not published in Coleridge's lifetime because, according to its editor Heather Jackson, it was an occasional piece written to give "the support of a philosophic system" to

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68 Raimonda Modiano's headnote to Coleridge's annotations of *Philosophische Schriften* in Coleridge, *Marginalia*, ed. H.J. Jackson and George Whalley, 6 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), IV, 402. See IV, 344 for Coleridge's reading of Schelling by this time. For the above, more critical comments on the *Freedom Essay* see *Marginalia*, IV, 422, 425, 434, 445.

69 Coleridge, *Letters*, IV, 873-4.

70 See Modiano, *Coleridge and the Concept of Nature*, 189.

71 Coleridge, *Theory of Life*, *Shorter Works and Fragments*, ed. H.J. Jackson, 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 485-6. The *Theory* had first been published posthumously in 1848 by Seth Watson, who found it among the papers of James Gillman, the doctor in whose house Coleridge lived from 1816 onwards.

72 Modiano, *Coleridge and the Concept of Nature,* 160.

Abernethy's argument, and was rendered superfluous by the appearance of Abernethy's own two-volume *Physiological Lectures* in 1817. Jackson also suggests Coleridge's turn against Schelling as another reason for withholding the text, since after 1817 it is "unlikely that he would have wished to publish" the theories of "German philosophers ... in the comparatively uncritical form in which we find them here."[73]

I suggest, by contrast, that the *Theory* is part of an ongoing interest in the life sciences and medicine on Coleridge's part that transected and survived the Abernethy-Lawrence debate, and that his turn against Schelling was by no means definitive.[74] In other words, Coleridge's reasons for keeping the *Theory* to himself run deeper than simply the appearance of Abernethy's lectures. He kept working on the topic of "life," and could bring it to closure only in moments when he limited it to a schema,[75] but as the *Theory* showed, any longer articulation of the project complicated and unravelled it. The opening of the Hunterian Museum and the ensuing Abernethy-Lawrence debate provoked Coleridge to think about issues of matter vs. spirit raised by (in)organic life. But the fact that, unlike Green, he was not a central figure in the Royal College allowed him to write from the margins and to return to this private writing—in marginalia, notebooks and essay fragments—when the issuehadbeen "resolved." Curiously Schelling and his follower Henrik Steffens are nowhere mentioned in the *Theory*, even though their ideas are throughout the text, and particularly as a complication of the *Stufenfolge* which provides the main axis of Coleridge's argument. We will return to this evasion that is the condition of possibility for Coleridge to be speculative rather than dogmatic. But as important for our purposes is the fact that the *Theory* was roughly contemporaneous with the *Biographia*, and its densely textured engagement with the philosophy of nature puts the lie to Coleridge's nervous claims to be firmly on the side of the *I Am* rather than the *It Is*.

Indeed the relationship of the *Theory* to the philosophical sections of the *Biographia* uncannily mirrors that of Schelling's *Naturphilosophie* to his *System*, as if recognizing the very problem opened by Schelling but confining it to the privacy of an unpublished text. Coleridge's endeavours are also secretly disturbed by the link between pathology and life that traverses the work of both Hunter and Schelling, via Hunter's focus on medicine and Schelling's

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73 Heather Jackson's headnote to the *Theory* in *Shorter Works*, I, 481-3.

74 On this topic see my article, "The Unavowable Community of Idealism: Coleridge and the Life Sciences," *European Romantic Review* 14:4 (2003), 395-416.

75 I refer here to the account of a lecture given in 1822 which was posthumously published in *Fraser's Magazine* in 1835, and which is included in *Shorter Works* under the title "On Life" (II, 1027-32). Trevor Levere takes this brief sketch as indicating that Coleridge was "looking forward" to publishing the *Theory* in 1823. Trevor Levere, *Poetry Realized in Nature: Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Early Nineteenth-century Science* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981, 45. This seems unlikely, but based on many notebook entries in the 1820s it is clear that the topic of "life" continued to worry Coleridge, as the particulars overwhelmed the universals, which therefore remained hypothetical.

Appendix on disease in the *First Outline*. For the *Theory* is thought to have been composed as a "foundation" and "sequel" for an *Essay on Scrofula*, which Coleridge also did not finish or publish.[76] This essay too is connected with Hunter and with Abernethy's recuperation of the dark matter of pathology in Hunter through the notion of "constitution" as the curative return of diseased parts into a whole. Evoking this context, Coleridge ends the essay by saying that if scrofula is a "constitutional disease," we need a conception of "the living principle" to understand the "derangement of some one or all of the primary powers, in the harmony or balance of which the health of the human being consists."[77] He thus constructs a bridge from disease back to vitality, so as to exit the disturbance of spirit by matter that makes pathology a dangerous supplement in the philosophical life sciences. Yet as we see both in the last section of Hegel's *Philosophy of Nature* and in Schelling's Appendix on disease, using life to understand disease as "derangement" can equally well derange life by disclosing that it has the "same factors" as disease. Moreover, what Schelling calls the perspective of the "individual" cannot be without consequences for the "*whole of organic nature*" (SW III: 220-2).[78] And although in the *First Outline* Schelling reserves this problem for future consideration by putting it in an Appendix, in the Freedom Essay he constructs a feedback loop between the real and ideal portions of philosophy that results in his exploring the transcendental consequences of illness for spirit.

Coleridge, for his part, does not take on disease in the *Theory*, reserving it for other private writing and reading. But he does focus on how nature "brings forth the whole multiplicity of its products through continuous *deviations* from a common ideal": a formulation that Schelling uses both in the *First Outline* and the *System* (SW III: 68, 588; italics mine).[79] The Hunterian Museum would have confronted Coleridge with an array of different, often mutant specimens which Home, and later Owen, arranged into "diverse series," according to the physiological function of each organ. These series, as described by Home, who was the first to organize the Museum, begin with the "most simple state in which each organ is met with in nature," and follow it "through all the variations in which it appears in more complex animals," so as to trace "one regular series of gradations," through "all the complications which lead by almost imperceptible steps to man."[80] Home's relatively simple synopsis hypostatizes an arrangement that was probably heuristic into something approaching a history of nature.

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76 Levere, *Poetry Realized in Nature*, 43. Coleridge wrote the essay in 1816 for Gillman, who wanted to compete for a prize offered at the Royal College for a contribution on scrofula or syphilis. Coleridge wrote the philosophical part of the essay, but Gillman never wrote the medical part and withdrew from the competition.

77 Coleridge, *An Essay on Scrofula*, *Shorter Works*, I.478.

78 Schelling, *First Outline*, 159-160.

79 The wording is virtually the same except that *gemeinschaftlichen Ideal* in the *First Outline* (p. 53) is changed to *ursprünglichen Original* in the *System* (p. 199).

80 Everard Home, *Lectures on Comparative Anatomy; in which are explained the preparations in the Hunterian Collection*, 2 vols. (London: G. And W. Nichol, 1814), I, 7.

But it would later be deemed inadequate once Home's management of the Hunter materials was called in question. The ongoing organization of the Museum described by Hunter's biographer Drewry Ottley in the 1830s, and the ensuing discrimination of five kinds of comparative anatomy by Richard Owen,[81] who became the Museum's most important intellectual presence, lend themselves less easily to a temporalization of the Chain of Being. In short, it is incorrect to say that Hunter's view of life, while obscure in his writings, was clearly embodied in "the selection and arrangement of specimens for his museum ... hence Coleridge's success in attributing to Hunter ideas clearly beyond his utterance."[82]

Nor is Coleridge quite able to attribute what Green would later call physiogony to Hunter. Complaining of the "obscurities" and contradictions" in Hunter's writings that result in a "temporary occultation" of his idea, Coleridge projects this "idea" onto the Museum, whose objects he describes as "a more perfect language than that of words—the language of God himself, as uttered by nature." Yet he also complains about the clutter created by Hunter's "incessant occupation" and "stupendous industry." Thus when he says that Hunter constructed the "idea" for "scientific apprehension out of the alphabet of nature," this unscientific retreat into hyperbole betrays Coleridge's nervousness about whether the collection really shows "the wisdom and uniform working of the Creator." As Hunter proves an inadequate prosthesis for the "idea," Coleridge concludes that we must "climb up on his shoulders"[83] and turns for philosophical supplementation to Steffens' *Beyträge zur innern Naturgeschichte der Erde* (1801) and Schelling's *First Outline*. By combining Schelling's graduated stages of nature with Steffens' more detailed extension of it to geognosy or the inner history of the earth, Coleridge sketches out life's self-organization from minerals and crystals, through vegetables and plants, to man.[84] In the process he imagines an organized ascent up the "ladder" of being that is not just a "series" but a dynamic logic of nature, as implied by the very term *Stufenfolge*.

Yet this logic, as derived from *Naturphilosophie*, is precisely what makes the ladder impossible; thus Coleridge writes that even as nature ascends "the steps in a ladder," it "expands" in "concentric circles." More specifically, he sees the power of production in nature as involving a tension between a

81 Drewry Ottley, *Life of John Hunter*, in Hunter, *Surgical Works*, I, 145.88; Richard Owen, "Observations on Palaeontology," in Hunter, *Essays and Observations*, I, 281-4.

82 Levere, *Poetry Realized in Nature*, 210. Levere seems unaware of the controversy surrounding Home.

83 Coleridge, *Theory of Life*, 486; *The Friend*, ed. Barbara Rooke, 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), I, 474.

84 The borrowings or, as some have claimed, plagiarisms from Steffens are well known (see Heather Jackson's notes to the *Theory).* On Coleridge and Steffens, see Levere, *Poetry Realized in Nature*, 161-9. In discussions of Coleridge and Schelling's *Naturphilosophie*, the *First Outline* is strangely neglected, but its separately published *Introduction,* which is often cited, was bound together with it in the copy belonging to Henry Crabb Robinson that Coleridge read.

"positive" force of "attachment or reduction" into the universal life and a force of "detachment": a "negative" and "limitative power, constantly acting to individualize" and "*figure* the former."[85] Whether they are drawn directly from the *First Outline* or indirectly from Schelling via Steffens, the notions of "figure" and of an inhibiting or retarding power are very much in the vein of Schelling's *First Outline*. We can contrast Coleridge's distinction with that of Green, for whom "individuation and integration to a whole" are also "the great polar forces of organic nature." But for Green integration is nature's tendency "to integrate all into one comprehensive whole, and consequently retaining each part," while individuation is "integration in the parts," so that the two poles are really the same, and cooperate in an "advancing Integration."[86] Just as Coleridge makes individuation a force of detachment from nature's productivity, echoing Schelling's conflicted focus on "individual natures which have torn themselves away from universal Nature" (SW III: 69),[87] so too he sees this individuation as happening not just through but in the individual organism. Thus in 1822 Coleridge writes of the relations of "the different parts of the Body" to the "nervous system" and "the nerves themselves to the Brain," and says that "the polypus nature of every nerve" means that each part not only has "relations to its centre" but is "a center in itself." In a similar vein, Schelling writes of "individual systems of *specialized excitability*" that make physiology a "*whole* of systems" that cannot be reduced to the "*absolute identity*" of one force (SW III: 174-5). This "dynamical infinity" of "*absolute involution*" makes any "*absolute evolution*" impossible (SW III: 261-2).[88]

In conceding that there are multiple systems of specialized excitability Schelling is discussing the "gradation of forces in the organism," namely reproduction, irritability and sensibility: a triad whose hierarchy remains uncertain and which has many permutations in the physiological theory of the day (SW III: 206).[89] If we are to see "one cause acting uninterruptedly" throughout nature, the "graduated series of functions" in the individual must be aligned, in a form of recapitulation, with "the graduated series of organic forces" in nature (SW III: 206, 220)[90] as expressed in the scale of organisms. It is this which Coleridge, drawing on Steffens, attempts to do, in aligning individual species (such as fish and insects) with individual powers. A synchronizing of the graduated functions in the organism with the graduated forces in nature

85 Coleridge, *Theory of Life*, 507, 515, 557.

86 Green, *Vital Dynamics*, 38-9, 105.

87 Schelling, *First Outline*, 53.

88 Coleridge, *The Notebooks of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Kathleen Coburn and Anthony John Harding, 5 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957-2002), IV.4865; Schelling, *First Outline*, 126-7, 187.

89 Schelling, *First Outline*, 149. The progression is sometimes irritability>sensibility>reproduction (as here and for Hegel), or the reverse (as for Coleridge and sometimes Schelling). There are sometimes more than three forces (five for Kielmeyer), or fewer (for Brown, just excitability, which combines sensibility and irritability).

90 Schelling, *First Outline*, 149, 159.

as expressed in the graduated series of organisms would indeed yield a uniform productivity throughout nature. Then "nature as subject" or *natura naturans* and "nature as object" or *natura naturata,* or "nature" and "life," would not be at odds (SW III: 284, 222n). They would cooperate in the creation of "*one* product" (SW III: 206).[91] This in turn would mean that a physiology of nature—in Green's sense—could be raised to the higher potency of a physiogony in which purposiveness becomes teleology.

However, if the forces (of irritability, sensibility etc.) are both identified with particular species and are found in different proportions in all species, the scale becomes confused. Indeed the scale is rendered entirely problematic by the Appendix on disease, which concedes the relativity of the proportions of powers in individual organisms. Moreover, though Schelling may look to comparative physiology to provide a "continuity of organic functions" that will be "far simpler" than that of comparative anatomy, and will allow him to project a history of nature (SW III: 65, 69),[92] this promise is (de)constructed by the empirical specificities of nature, as Coleridge would also have seen them in Hunter's collection. For even if the galleries of life were to be arranged in an ascending series, there was still the problem of whether to organize them by organ or organism. While we can imagine organisms in a scale that culminates with man, in an organization by organs the hierarchy of organisms could change, depending on the organ under consideration. In other words the guiding thread for an ordering of things seems to vary. For his part Schelling uses the notion of gradation with respect to several terms—powers, functions, organs, organisms—and this proliferation confuses synchronization; hence Schelling cannot and does not really construct a scale of anything.

In Coleridge's shorter and potentially more streamlined text, which is more committed to a linear narrative, premonitions and residues of such problems nevertheless surface. Coleridge wants to combine the graduated series of forces with the scale of organisms, by recognizing the coexistence of the "powers" (of reproduction, irritability etc.) in different species, but aligning powers and species in an ascending scale, based on the "*proportion*" of the "predominance" of one of the powers in "the Species of animals subsumed," which allows him to move from fish to insects to birds. On this basis he wants to see life as "the copula, or unity of thesis and antithesis."[93] But are birds, for instance, really the "synthesis of fish and insects?" Also troublesome are entities that cross organizing categories, such as corals, which confuse vegetation and animalization, as well as being linked to minerals.[94] Aware of these aporias, Coleridge laments that he is not permitted to "deduce the philosophy of Life synthetically," and concedes therefore that the "evidence" cannot be "carried

91 Schelling, "Introduction to the Outline," 202; *First Outline*, 160n, 149.

92 Schelling, *First Outline*, 50, 53.

93 Coleridge, *Notebooks*, IV, 4719; *Theory*, 518-9 and see also 495, 510 and 512 for other instances of the copula.

94 Coleridge, *Theory*, 539-41.

over from section to section," allowing for a "*quod erat demonstrandum*" at the "conclusion" of one chapter to be "the principle of the succeeding." Since he must instead construct nature *a posteriori*, "positions arranged" in his "own mind, as intermediate and organic links of administration" remain "mere hypothesis."[95] Thus Coleridge repeatedly describes Hunter's understanding of life as an "idea." And the word "idea" is one to which Coleridge gave some attention, characterizing it as "equidistant from an *ens logicum* (= an abstraction), an *ens repraesentativum* (= a generalization), and an *ens phantasticum* (= an imaginary *thing* or phaenomenon)."[96]

We lack space for a thorough traversal of the ways in which nature's "ever-increasing wealth of detail" resists "the unity of the Notion"[97] that Coleridge wants German Idealism to confer on Hunter. Suffice it to say that Schelling, through the density of natural detail in the *First Outline*, opens up the very problems that Coleridge wants him to close off, namely an overrunning of the unity of production by a bio-diversity that generates proliferating speculative differences. Hence the "august temple" into which Coleridge wants to form Hunter's corpus in two media—writings and specimens—resembles nothing more than the "Gothic cathedral" that Coleridge uses to figure his own half-unwritten theory of imagination in the *Biographia*, supported by ten unacknowledged "theses" often loosely credited to Schelling.[98] While the *Theory* was simply not published, in *the Biographia* Coleridge actually published a letter from a "friend" (assumed to be himself), which advised him not to publish his theory.[99] This curious subterfuge draws attention to the deferral of publication as a way of writing under erasure. Schelling enters both these texts as a zone of disavowal, openings and untraversed difficulties in the relation of natural to transcendental philosophy, and hence can only be there incognito. Repressing the asymmetry of the empirical and the transcendental, plagiarism holds together in a bipolar short-circuit a simultaneous enthusiasm for and doubt about their unity. In short, the infamous borrowings in the *Biographia* are a way for Coleridge not to put in his own words, not to take responsibility for, a unifying idealism that cannot be grounded in Schelling either, even though in some ways it is not wrong to attribute it to Schelling, who also entertained it as an idea. For as we have said, the relationship between the *Theory* and the philosophical sections of the *Biographia* recapitulates that between the *First Outline* and the *System,* natural and transcendental philosophy, which Schelling

95 Coleridge, *Theory*, 551. In what seems like a Freudian slip, Coleridge actually refers to "medical" chapters.

96 Coleridge, *The Friend*, ed. Barbara Rooke, 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), I, 494n. See also Levere, *Poetry Realized in Nature*, 91-3.

97 Hegel, *Philosophy of Nature*, 444.

98 Coleridge, *Biographia*, 254-84. As the notes by Engell and Bate indicate, these theses are loosely compounded from Schelling's "On the I" and the *System.* The long tradition of dismissing them as plagiarisms is a way of dismissing both German Idealism and Coleridge's serious engagement with it.

99 Coleridge, *Biographia,* 300-4.

too wanted to think as exemplars of "one science, differentiated only in the opposite orientation of their tasks" (SW III: 272).[100] The difference is that although Schelling wants to identify the two, he is open to the possibility that they might unfold differently. But Coleridge could entertain that asystasy only in private.

100 Schelling, *Introduction to the Outline*, 194.

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Freedom as Ariadne's Thread through the Interpretation of Life: Schelling and Jonas on Philosophy of Nature as the Art of Interpretation

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According to Schelling's 1806 *Aphorisms as an Introduction to Naturphilosophie*, the aim of philosophy should be nothing less than a sort of excitation of further developments of an eternal poem (*Gedicht*) (SW VII: 145f).[1] This type of poem should not just be understood as fictional in the modern sense, i.e., as an opposition to what is actual (*wirklich*). First and foremost, we should interpret the verbs *contrive* or *dichten* (poeticize) in the sense of creation. We should even read the Schellingian term "construction" in the German verb *dichten*. Thereby, the developments of such an eternal poem as the goal of philosophy point towards the act of forming a system. The result of this effort is a collection of internally connected concepts in a condensation (*Verdichtung*). According to this view of development, a true school does not merely repeat the master's philosophy. What takes place in the hands of the student is rather an addition that on the one hand condenses the old, thereby bringing it clearer forth. On the other hand, this condensing shows itself to be something new. Thus, philosophy is thought to be radical, i.e., rooted (*radix*) in and growing out of the old. This, I will show, follows from Schelling's conception of philosophy, as it can be seen in *System of Transcendental Idealism*.[2] Exemplary, here we find

1 F.W.J. Schelling, "Aphorisms as an Introduction to *Naturphilosophie*," *Idealistic Studies* 14 (1984): 244-58, here 248.

2 F.W.J. Schelling, *System of Transcendental Idealism*, trans. Peter Heath (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1978).

Schelling's development of his predecessor's thoughts in the abovementioned sense. In this system, the rootedness in the old amounts to a grounding and systematization of the preceding systems (Kant's and Fichte's).

More precisely, I will here argue that Schelling's concepts of construction and mythology in his system of knowledge (*System des Wissens*) implicate such a philosophical development. Furthermore, I will point to a structural connection between Schelling and Hans Jonas. Hereby, I aim to contribute to the understanding of the heritage of Schelling in the 20th century philosophy. First, I will outline my understanding of the construction of the system of knowledge in *System of Transcendental Idealism*. Second, I will relate this concept of construction to a concept of interpretation that I mainly read from Benjamin Carl Henrik Höijer (1767-1812). Hereafter, I seek to make probable a relation between the concept of construction and Schelling's concept of a new mythology. Finally, I will forge some connections with Jonas's work. In a manner similar to Schelling, Jonas sought to establish a philosophy of nature, which also necessitated a rational myth, which Jonas briefly sketched. Thus, the somewhat limited treatments of the new mythology by Schelling can find concretion in the thought of Jonas.

The System of Knowledge

In this first section, I will very briefly outline my conception of Schelling's philosophy and field of problems around 1800. I am well aware of the pitfalls and superficiality of such a short outline. My goal is to point to a highly *problematic* aspect of the whole enterprise of Schelling in this period. Doing this, I do not wish to propose to simply discard Schelling's thoughts. Rather, I want to show how these problematic aspects can be read in a fruitful way.

To demonstrate this, I propose to determine the relationship between Schelling's philosophy of nature and his transcendental philosophy as *problematic*: The necessity of a philosophy of nature, at least before the completion of the system of knowledge, cannot be decided.[3] Through the system of knowledge, the philosophy of nature turns from being a, for many readers, dogmatic science, into a possible hypothesis or postulated presupposition. In the course of Schelling's transcendental philosophy, the philosophy of nature gradually gains the status of a necessary science culminating in the end of *System of Transcendental Idealism*, where the philosophy of nature becomes necessary. This seems to be the case in the philosophy of nature in the form given in the *Introduction to the Outline of a System of Natural Philosophy*.[4]

3 Cf. Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (Riga: Johann Friedrich Hartknoch, 1787), B99f. Later the adjective "problematic" is used in reference to the "I think" as a means to investigate what lies therein. Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft,* B405.

4 F.W.J. Schelling, "Introduction to the Outline of a System of Natural Philosophy," in First Outline of a System of the Philosophy of Nature, trans. by Keith R. Peterson (Albany: SUNY

Here, the philosophy of nature is to gain necessity or, in Schelling's terms, to achieve the status of the *a priori*.[5] Schelling determines the status of a sentence specifically on the grounds of how it is known. To have an insight into the necessity of a sentence is to know it *a priori* (SW III: 277ff.).[6] Here, the understanding and construction of systems is suggested to be a more open and experimentally oriented process in persistent confrontation with experience. This process can nevertheless still end up being *a priori*. To construct an object is namely to gain an insight into its necessity. An *a posteriori* knowledge can thus via a construction be transformed into an a priori knowledge, i.e., into a necessary knowledge. I will here argue that this conception of construction is to be understood as an exposition (*Darstellung*) of a postulate, which then can turn out to be necessary.[7] As a starting point I therefore turn to *System of Transcendental Idealism*, which on my interpretation retains a much more conspicuous role in and for the philosophy of nature than often thought.

In *System of Transcendental Idealism*, Schelling considers transcendental philosophy as the one scientific, and hence irreducible, part of a twofold system of knowledge, with the other part being the philosophy of nature. In the *Introduction* as well as in the opening of *System of Transcendental Idealism* Schelling determines the two sciences as one. However, according to their task (*Aufgabe*), they are opposite in direction. Hence, they have different principles, but each respective science tends towards the principle of the other (the object and the subject respectively). Thus, it is often claimed, the sciences are parallel movements of the one science, the system of knowledge (SW III: 342).[8] This is known as the *parallel hypothesis*. Thus, Schelling proclaims two philosophies: one of which *explains* (the philosophy of nature) the other by its reduction to its principle (object); the other (transcendental philosophy) which *subsumes* the first under its principle (subject). In the opening of *Introduction*, transcendental philosophy is said to subsume (*unterordnen*) the real under the ideal. The philosophy of nature, on the other hand, explains (*erklären*) the ideal in juxtaposition from the real. This Schelling understands as an answer to the question of how the ideal arises (*entspringen*) from the real (SW III: 272).[9] Later in the *Introduction*, Schelling clarifies that to explain physically

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Press, 2004) Hereafter referred to in text as *Introduction* and in notes as "Introduction to the Outline."

5 See Schelling, "Introduction to the Outline" §IV.

6 Schelling, "Introduction to the Outline," 193-232, here 197ff. The exact German quote is as follows: "*bloß in Absicht auf unser Wissen* und die *Art* unseres Wissens von diesen Sätzen" (SW III: 278).

7 This is contrary to the geometrical conception of construction from the works of the identity philosophy. See *Further Presentations from the System of Philosophy* (1802) and *Philosophy of Art* (respectively SW IV: 334; SW V: 353).

8 Schelling, *System*, 7.

9 Schelling, "Introduction to the Outline," 193f. Schelling sticks to this model of explaining in the philosophy of nature in §63 of the *General Deduction of the Dynamic Process* (SW IV: 75ff). Hereafter *General Deduction*.

is to lead the *explanandum* back (*zurückführen*) to *explanans*, i.e., to perform a reduction to the origin (SW III: 287ff).[10] This, I claim, must take the form of a construction of the *explanandum*. The task of construction is thus to show how the particular came to be a limited product from the original productivity. In *System of Transcendental Idealism*, however, both sciences equally set out to answer a question of a supervening (*Hinzukommen*) and a coinciding (*Übereinstimmung*).

In the same year as the publication of *System of Transcendental Idealism* (1800), Schelling seemingly amends the parallel hypothesis at the very end of the *General Deduction of the Dynamic Process* by making the philosophy of nature the logical first science.

> After we have arrived at this point from wholly opposite directions, moving from nature to us, from us to nature, we could thus [hold] that the *true direction* for those, for whom *knowledge* is the highest, is that direction, which nature itself has taken (SW IV: 78).[11]

On my reading, this insight of a logical priority and hence a logically prior principle, however, will first become clear with the *completion* of the system of knowledge. Schelling states this in the passage following the quotation from *General Deduction* above (SW IV: 78). This appears to run contrary to his claim of the two equal, necessary sciences in philosophy, i.e., to the *parallel hypothesis*. However, Schelling seems to anticipate this conclusion in *System of Transcendental Idealism*, when he explicitly states the following in a footnote: "Only upon completion of the system of transcendental philosophy will one come to recognize the necessity of a nature-philosophy, as a complementary science [*ergänzender Wissenschaft*], which only a nature-philosophy can satisfy" (SW III: 343n1).[12] The logical priority or necessity of the philosophy of nature cannot even be stated at the beginning of the system—we are not at any kind of end for the time being. On the contrary, we are at the beginning.

Regarding the parallel hypothesis, Schelling does not seem to have a strict geometrical parallel between two vectors with the same direction in mind. The content of the philosophy of nature shows itself to a large extent in the third main chapter of *System of Transcendental Idealism*. However, it does not here have a principle of its own. Now, the question regarding this seemingly missing content in the philosophy of nature in *System of Transcendental Idealism* becomes pressing. Further, the content from the fourth and sixth chapters of

10 Schelling, "Introduction to the Outline," 204ff.

11 My translation. In German the quote is as follows: "So können wir, nachdem wir einmal auf diesem Punkt angekommen sind, nach ganz entgegengesetzten Richtungen - von der Natur zu uns, von uns zu der Natur gehen, aber die *wahre* Richtung für den, dem *Wissen* über alles gilt, ist die, welche die *Natur selbst* genommen hat." SW IV: 78.

12 Schelling, *System of Transcendental Idealism*, 7n1.

System of Transcendental Idealism is in no way fully visible in the philosophy of nature, e.g., Schelling did not include the human in the philosophy of nature. He does not even explicitly account for the human as an organic being. It is at best hinted at, if even that. Furthermore, the status of the I seems to change as the transcendental philosophy develops.[13] In this process, the I increasingly comes to experience itself as depending on something other than itself, i.e., nature. Thus, the I seems to acquire a sort of impotence.

Hence, the parallel hypothesis should rather be understood as a preliminary determination of the development of the system of knowledge. This opens up the possibility of the logical priority of the philosophy of nature, which, however, needs transcendental philosophy to gain necessity in the system of knowledge.[14] This priority, I suggest, is of a circular or organic kind, which, at least according to Schelling himself, is the general characteristic of any true system of philosophy. In the language of *System of Transcendental Idealism*, the philosophy of nature lets the subject rise from the object; the transcendental philosophy should then subsume the object under the subject. In giving the philosophy of nature its necessity, the completion of transcendental philosophy should return the system (of knowledge) to its beginning and thus fulfill it. Both philosophies, thus, tend towards the same, i.e., the system of knowledge. However, this subsumption of the object under the subject seems to be exactly what transcendental philosophy cannot achieve completely in *System of Transcendental Idealism*, as it has to rely on the genius for this completion.[15] Consequently, transcendental philosophy itself cannot bring forth the principle

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13 One of the problems here seems to be the overarching system of knowledge. Whether the knowledge (*Wissen*) referred to in the science of knowledge from the *Introduction* is meant or not in the same sense as one of Schelling's many uses of knowledge at the beginning of *System of Transcendental Idealism* is not always clear. Indeed, Schelling determines the task of transcendental philosophy as the explanation of the possibility of knowledge in §3 of *System of Transcendental Idealism*. SW III: 346; Schelling, *System*, 10. Here he also treats the system of knowledge (*System des Wissens*) in relation to the completion of the system with its return to its principle. SW III: 349; Schelling, *System*, 12. For an example, see the preliminary determination of knowledge in §1 of *System of Transcendental Idealism* as the supervening of the subjective and objective, which Schelling determines as the I (subject of knowledge) and nature (object of knowledge), respectively. SW III: 339; Schelling, *System*, 5. Schelling hints at placing the task of an explanation of knowledge as a higher task than the one of transcendental philosophy alone, which only should explain the possibility of knowledge. SW III: 342; Schelling, *System*, 6f.. That we are led to the same result, independent of which principle we choose (SW III: 342; Schelling, *System*, 7), seems to me to confuse the matter, at least for my interpretation.

14 What is even more striking, is the fact that Schelling himself first introduces actual directions in the deduction of the dimensions in the third chapter of *System of Transcendental Idealism* in the deduction of matter. (SW III: 445f.; Schelling, *System*, 86ff.). To be fair, this could also be a symptom of confusion or a lack of clarity on the part of Schelling, but I here want to risk an interpretation and take Schelling on his word by interpreting his notions in the best possible way considering them as consistent and intelligible.

15 The unconscious always withdraws in the construction of a product. According to Schelling, only the genius is capable of producing a product consciously, which symbolically represents the unity of the conscious and unconscious.

of the philosophy of nature on its own. Transcendental philosophy must instead let it supervene. This I wish to illustrate with the following thoughts.

Seen from the viewpoint of the philosophy of nature, nature has the power to produce what we know as subjectivity. *System of Transcendental Idealism* can be considered the place where the spirit comes to recognize nature as its own ground. To know ourselves is to know of nature. Now, Kant left the principle and guarantee of knowledge, i.e., transcendental apperception, undetermined as a pure formal concept. In *System of Transcendental Idealism*, Schelling's task is to present exactly this principle, albeit with massive consequences for the conception of the status of the I. The hidden ground of consciousness that would relate man to nature and nature to man is not known, which immediately begs the question: What characteristics should we seek? We are tasked with analyzing an object that is neither given nor known, i.e., an alien object for us. As in the works of Plato, this problem is also ever present for Schelling.[16] The fact that Plato did not give a direct answer to the question of how to know the object in rational terms speaks to his greatness. He gave it in the form of the myth. In this, Schelling followed Plato. For Schelling, we always begin from within, i.e., from consciousness, which exactly is our epistemological—and as a consequence of this, ontological—problem. As Schelling, in *On the True Concept of Philosophy of Nature and the Correct Way of Solving its Problems* (1801), turns to his philosophy of identity, he states that the possibility of the system of nature depends on the ability of a de-potentiating (*Depotenzierung*). This amounts to positing ourselves as the first potency, and from there on constructing the system (SW IV: 85).[17] Although this is interpreted by many as a break with the philosophy of 1800, the idea of a problematization of the status of subjectivity is interesting in this context. The construction of the system rests on the ability to put oneself in another place (*Versetzenkönnen*), i.e., the ability to downgrade our viewpoint to a lower level of producing nature.

This problem was already prominent in *System of Transcendental Idealism*, where this ability to set oneself in another place, i.e., in the other science (the philosophy of nature), is the problem. Here, Schelling relies on transcendental philosophy itself, i.e., on its direction, to allude to another science, which runs in an opposite direction. Transcendental philosophy needs something outside of itself to let the object supervene. Later in *System of Transcendental Idealism*, Schelling suggests that this kind of understanding can take place in the form of the myth. Although this is with respect to the loss of the golden age before the fall of man (and history), Schelling is nevertheless here suggesting another kind of understanding of our origin in the form of the myth. He can then add that history ends for the philosophers with the end

16 E.g., in Plato's *Timaeus*.

17 F.W.J. Schelling, "On the True Concept of Philosophy of Nature and the Correct Way of Solving its Problems," trans. Judith Kahl and Daniel Whistler in *Pli* 26 (2014), 24–45, 27f.

of freedom, thereby returning the philosopher back to the place within which nature had originally placed him (SW III: 589).[18]

Now, my point is that this is one of the things shown in *System of Transcendental Idealism* in relation to the philosophy of nature. If *System of Transcendental Idealism*, as mentioned, is the point at which nature as subject recognizes itself as itself in the human being, then the whole of the unconscious past of consciousness is exactly to be a revealing of something already known. At least, this seems to be the case in chapter 3 of System of Transcendental Idealism, which contains content from the philosophy of nature. When one reads *System of Transcendental Idealism* after having read the development of Schelling's philosophy of nature from 1797-99, one sees that what consciousness learns from—or maybe even sees in—its own unconscious transcendental past is the system of nature. Consciousness sees itself structured *as* nature in its unconscious part. Without the philosophy of nature, consciousness would not even recognize anything in its past *as* its own unconscious past. It would be absolutely separated and alienated from its origin or past.[19]

Again, we see that the relationship between *System of Transcendental Idealism* and the philosophy of nature is a very problematic one. The philosophy of nature is in some sense nonsense, i.e., irrational, before *System of Transcendental Idealism*. Likewise, System of Transcendental Idealism is nonsense before the philosophy of nature. This opposition makes the system of knowledge into a system with interacting and irreducible parts. In short: Schelling needed to write what he could not have written, i.e., the philosophy of nature, before he could write *System of Transcendental Idealism*. On the other hand, a philosophy of nature is needed as an opposite to transcendental philosophy in order for there to be a knowledge to be established at all.

Thus, *System of Transcendental Idealism* and the philosophy of nature seem to fit together, but in a very problematic way: transcendental philosophy depends on a science, which can not be given necessarily, i.e., shown and established with necessity before the completion of transcendental philosophy. My thesis in the following is that the role of mythology could possibly, if not clarify, then at least show us something about the *way* to establish this relationship. According to Schelling and his contemporaries, the myth has not lost its relevance for contemporary times with the birth of reason. On the contrary, the enlightened world needs a new, rational myth. I maintain that Schelling needed to take the detour through myth. As I hope to make clear in the section, the myth is a logical next move from the impotence of the I and construction. Even if it may be an exaggeration on Schelling's behalf, he can therefore write that he has already finished "a treatise *on Mythology*" (SW III:

18 Schelling, *System of Transcendental Idealism*, 200.

19 According to Jonas, we find this expression in the gnostic elements of and hostility towards nature in dualism and existentialist philosophy. See Hans Jonas, *The Phenomenon of Life* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1966), 211ff.

629n1).[20]

Construction, Interpretation, and Myth

In *General Deduction*, Schelling explicitly states that the task of the natural sciences is to construct matter (SW IV: 3). This is also clear in his review of Höijer's *On Construction in Philosophy* from 1802. From this point on the concept of construction increasingly receives more attention methodically. In this article, I will set the upper limit of my scope to the year 1801 and rather point backwards in time to the importance of construction in Schelling's early philosophy in general, as sketched above. However, I will consider this theme in the light of Höijer's work and Schelling's review of it to highlight the character of construction as an interpretive process.[21] This trait is most clearly seen in Höijer's (and Schelling's) self-proclaimed relationship to Kant. Höijer described this kind of relationship in his book *Treatise on Philosophical Construction as an Introduction to Lectures in Philosophy*.[22] Schelling approvingly reviewed the German translation from 1801. After a couple of remarks on the concept of construction in Schelling's earlier works, I will return to Höijer's *Treatise* and Schelling's review of it.

The status of construction and its limitation to mathematics given in Kant's Doctrine of Method in the First Critique contributed to the prominent place of the concept of construction in the minds of Kant's followers. The fact that Kant in his *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science* (1786) seemed to allow for a construction of matter further excited the new generation. Along the lines of Schelling, Höijer notes that because Kant is not constructing in pure time and space, as would be the case in a mathematical construction, he

20 Schelling, *System of Transcendental Idealism*, 232n1.

21 While the creative understanding of construction is rather common, the research on the concept often looks to the years 1801 and onwards for a concept of construction. See for an example H. Ende, *Der Konstruktionsbegriff im Umkreis des deutschen Idealismus* [*The Concept of Construction in Context of German Idealism*] (Meisenheim am Glan: Anton Hain, 1973); Bernhard Taureck, *Das Schicksal der philosophischen Konstruktion* [*The Fate of the Philosophical Construction*] (Vienna and Munich: Oldenbourg, 1975); Daniel Breazeale, "'Exhibiting the Particular in the Universal': Philosophical Construction and Intuition in Schelling's Philosophy of Identity (1801–1804)," in *Interpreting Schelling,* ed. Lara Ostaric (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 91-119; Gian Franco Frigo, "Konstruktion und Anschauung: Der Status des Absoluten in Schellings Identitätsphilosophie" [Construction and Intuition: The Status of the Absolute in Schelling's Philosophy of Identity] *Schelling-Studien* 3 (2015): 89-114. To my knowledge, the interpretation of the concept of construction in the earlier period has not been thoroughly expounded. Cf. Valerio Verra, "La «construction» dans la philosophie de Schelling" [The 'Construction' in the Philosophy of Schelling], in *Actualité de Schelling*, ed. Guy Planty-Bonjour (Paris: Vrin, 1979), 27-47; Jürgen Weber, *Begriff und Konstruktion. Rezeptionsanalytische Untersuchungen zu Kant und Schelling* [*Concept and Construction. Enquiries of Reception from Kant to Schelling*] (Göttingen, 1998).

22 Hereafter, *Treatise*.

already and against his own sayings constructs philosophically.[23] Accordingly, Höijer takes Kant on his word and reads Kant's criticism as a propaedeutic to philosophy. However, as Schelling's critique in his *Introduction* from 1799 states, Kant begins logically too late with an *analysis* of a matter which, from the beginning, is already constructed. According to Schelling and Höijer, Kant presupposes a concept of matter, which he can then seamlessly go on to analyze. Rather than a construction, Kant ends up with a merely static analysis of matter.[24] In short, he neither went back far enough logically nor did he proceed completely dynamically. Thus, Schelling can write that Kant *begins* with the opposition in the product, which he, on the contrary, constructs in the philosophy of nature. In short: Kant begins, where Schelling ends (SW III: 326).[25]

For Schelling, the concept of construction goes back to his contribution to his *General Outline of the Newest Literature*[26] in 1797-98. Amongst other topics, Schelling wrote on self-construction and self-production in relation to the concept of a principle, postulate, and the indeterminacies in Kant's philosophy (SW I: 403ff.). As far as I am aware, this is also the first time Schelling in a published work mentions the concept of "construction." This early work on postulates, which naturally includes the construction, deals primarily with the concept of postulates, denying the limitation of the practical postulates of Kant. However, Schelling includes a discussion of the free act of a self-construction of the I (SW I: 448f.). As in the review, the creative aspect and the division between an original and repeated construction can be found, as well as the comparison with mathematics. Schelling essentially uses this comparison to show that philosophical construction belongs to an even higher realm than mathematics, i.e., to the realm of freedom (SW I: 416ff.). Here Schelling treats the principle of philosophy as a postulate, which needs to be constructed. This postulate is the unity of a theoretical side (original construction) and a practical demand (*Forderung*) (SW I: 446-448.). Seen in relation to *System of Transcendental Idealism*, Schelling does not construct at all in the practical part, but nevertheless maintains the practical side of the postulate, which he

23 Benjamin Carl Henrik Hoyer, *Abhandlung* über *die philosophische Construction, als Einleitung zu Vorlesungen in der Philosophie* [*Treatise on Philosophical Construction as an Introduction to Lectures in Philosophy*], trans. G. A. Silverstolpe (Hamburg: Fr. Perthes, 1801), 6. I read the Swedish version cross checking with the German translation. When I cite Höijer, I do so in my own translation of the Swedish text, but I will refer to the Swedish as well as the German edition of the text in the footnotes. For the Swedish version see B.C.H. Höijer, *Afhandling om den philosophiska construktionen,* ämnad *til indledning til föreläsningar i philosophien* [*Treatise on Philosophical Construction as an Introduction to Lectures in Philosophy*] (Stockholm: Carl Deleen och J.G. Forsgren, 1799), http://litteraturbanken.se/#!/forfattare/HoijerB/titlar/DenPhilosophiskaConstruktionen/info last accessed 24/12/2017, 9. The page numbers are missing in the original edition, which is why I refer to the page number provided on the right-hand side of the webpage cited above.

24 Cf. SW II: 231; Schelling, *Ideas*, 184f.

25 Schelling, "Introduction to the Outline," 232.

26 Hereafter, *Outline*.

associates with the will and necessity. One could thus say that the postulate in theoretical philosophy is answered through a construction; the postulate of practical philosophy with rules (*Gebote*) and task (*Aufgabe*). Nonetheless, they are thought to be dependent on one other.[27] In the *Outline*, we interestingly also get a very brief hint of a similarity between the hidden truth of the mystics (*Mysterien*) and the principles of philosophy as realized in the course of history, culture, and education (SW I: 418). To be sure, further research is needed to establish a well-grounded account of the similarities and differences between the treatments of the concept of construction in *System of Transcendental Idealism* and the *Outline*.[28] However, this comparison opens the possibility for an alternative understanding of philosophical construction, as something that establishes the necessity of the postulate, rather than something that proceeds geometrically with necessity.

To further clarify the concept and function of the construction in the constellation sketched above, I will now cast a glimpse on Höijer's *Treatise* from 1799. Although Schelling's lack of a distancing himself from Höijer in the review does not equal an approval, I will, with some justifications, use parts of Höijer's conception as a key to understanding Schelling's concept.

I begin by focusing on a peculiar part, where Höijer seeks to determine a special kind of relationship between his own philosophy and Kant's. On the one hand Höijer draws on Kant's philosophy, e.g., his concept of construction. On the other, he uses this concept to show the limits of the philosophy of Kant.[29] According to Höijer, the relationship between his and Kant's philosophies is itself established with the concept of construction. Similar to Schelling, Höijer wants to construct the matter, which Kant analyzes. Adding to this, Höijer's understanding of the relationship to Kant's philosophy is as follows: "So far, we are in complete agreement with Kant. All we have done with his theorems consists in that we might have determined them *nearer* and, thus, we have only *interpreted* him."[30] An interpretation of Kant's philosophy consequently

27 Ibid. Schelling keeps this concept of the principle in *System of Transcendental Idealism* (SW III: 376).

28 One difference is the seemingly limitation of the construction to the I in the *Uebersicht* from 1797/98. SW I: 448. Thereby, this work seems limited to the earlier idealistic period before the identity philosophy. Cf. Ende, *Der Konstruktionsbegriff*, 2f.

29 This is also seen in the review, when Schelling accepts Kant's two notions of construction, one as an exhibition of the general in the particular ("*Darstellung des Allgemeinen im Besonderen*") and the other as an exhibition of the particular in the general ("*Darstellung des Besonderen im Allgemeinen*"). To my knowledge, Schelling first uses this description explicitly in the Philosophy of Identity.

30 Hoyer, *Abhandlung*, 55 (my translation of the Swedish version and my emphasis). In the German translation the quote is as follows: "Bisher sind wir mit KANT in vollkommener Übereinstimmung. Was wir mit seinen Lehrsätzen vorgenommen, besteht darin, dass wir sie vielleicht genauer *bestimmt*, und ihn also nur *interpretirt* haben." In the Swedish version from 1799 the quotation, we find the exact same verb (*interpreterat*): "Hittils äro vi i fullkomlig öfverensstämmelse med KANT. Allt hvad vi gjort vid hans lärosattser består deri, at vi til äfventyrs *närmare bestämt* dem, och således blott *interpreterat* honom." Höijer, *Afhandling*, 66

amounts to a limitation of his theorems. Thus, Höijer sees his philosophical contribution as an interpretation of Kantian critical philosophy, whereby Kant's position is made clearer.

In this sense, to interpret is to determine and to delimit a subject matter. In accordance with this, Höijer generally defines construction as an act (*Handlung*) that freely brings about an object, which was not there before the act. Thus, construction is to construct a universal in the particular or vice versa.[31] The activity of construction involves a very important aspect for post-Kantian philosophy: unification. Construction unifies the particular with the universal structure. Further, this act is either a limitation or a composition, of which the former is logically prior to the latter.[32] To construct is in this sense to interpret, i.e., to limit in the sense of determining a subject matter. Construction is showing the way a particular was created or composed (*zusammensetzen*) from the origin. In this sense, construction is the exposition of the genesis of the particular. Hereby, the construction results in an understanding of the place of the constructed particular. Hence, the construction is an explanation in the above-mentioned sense of a reduction. The particular is placed and thus understood logically by virtue of its universal constituents. From Höijer, we thus learn that to construct is to interpret. In this sense, the construction of Kant's starting point is a determination and limitation of Kant's philosophy. This, then, forms Höijer's relationship to Kant: a better understanding of Kant's philosophy through a limitation of Kant's thoughts.

Thus, Höijer relates interpretation and construction. Later, Höijer goes on to define the construction of concepts in a Kantian manner as freely giving an object, i.e., as an intuition a priori to a concept. In the case of constructing a philosophical position (e.g. Kant's), it drastically forms and alters the interpreted position. When the interpretation delimits, i.e., shows the limits of the original position (e.g. Kant's), it thereby shows the need for further interpretation, i.e., construction. It shows the need for a grounding of the constructed position. Höijer seeks to legitimize construction in philosophy as well as the intellectual intuition through a (very Schellingian) critique of the Kantian limitation of construction to mathematics in philosophy. Höijer thereafter goes on to determine philosophy as the freest activity of all the sciences. In fact, philosophy must be considered just as much an art (*konst*) as a science.[33] First, this leads Höijer in the direction of Fichte. However, Höijer quickly goes on to interpret Fichte along the lines of the former's own previous interpretation of Kant, when he shows the limits of Fichte's system and the conception of the Absolute as an I.[34] According to Höijer, Fichte confused

(my emphasis).

31 Höijer, *Afhandling*, 61; Hoyer, *Abhandlung*, 51.

32 Höijer, *Afhandling*, 66ff.; Hoyer, *Abhandlung*, 51ff.

33 Höijer, *Afhandling*, 94; Hoyer, *Abhandlung*, 79.

34 Höijer, *Afhandling*, 178f.; Hoyer, *Abhandlung*, 154f.

the pure I with the original act.[35] This act Höijer implicitly identifies with an original construction, which, as a postulate, philosophy has to construct.[36] In fact, Höijer in some places goes in a Schellingian direction in the search for the original and pure act (*Urhandlung*) and an original construction (*ursprünglichen Construction*). This Höijer understands as the ground or subject of matter. This is the case when Höijer necessitates nature for an understanding of freedom.[37] Furthermore, this search should take the form of a construction towards the pure subject. This original act is not determined as a Fichtean I but, according to Höijer, shows the need for a philosophy of nature. A line of thought Schelling approvingly accentuates in his review (SW V: 140ff).[38]

Schelling however goes on to criticize Höijer. According to Schelling, Höijer is too old fashioned when he turns towards Leibniz and an old conception of the difference between reality (*Realität*) and actuality (*Wirklichkeit*). Herein Schelling sees a Fichtean structure, when Höijer, according to Schelling, necessitates a realm transcendent to the original act (SW V: 143).[39] On Schelling's reading of Höijer, the original act still bears the structure of the absolute I with regards to its form (SW V: 141ff.).[40] However, Höijer, it seems to me, is very clear in his move in the direction of Schelling as he overcomes Fichte.[41] In doing this, Höijer gave the philosophy of nature way more room than it received in Fichte's system. The other way around, Höijer only briefly mentions Schelling and, in concluding his *Treatise*, leaves it for other *connoisseurs* to judge Schelling's philosophy. The historical question of whether Höijer was inspired by Schelling shall not concern us further here.

It is, I claim, the above-mentioned interpretive process Schelling had in mind in his aphorism, when he spoke of the development of his philosophy; that is, his students should construct his system further. This is what he means by "poeticizing": A further grounding of his system. In this sense, Schelling could be said to have interpreted Kant and Fichte by limiting their position on construction in the direction towards pure subjectivity, i.e., nature as subject. That Schelling actually saw his philosophical constructions in the early philosophy of nature, at least to some degree, as an interpretive activity, shall be established by the following quotation. It stems from the preface to the first

35 Höijer, *Afhandling*, 186; Hoyer, *Abhandlung*, 161.

36 Höijer, *Afhandling*, 156f.; Hoyer, *Abhandlung*, 136f. Cf. Höijer, *Afhandling*, 164; Hoyer, *Abhandlung*, 142f.

37 Höijer, *Afhandling*, 137np; Hoyer, *Abhandlung*, 118n*.

38 F. W. J. Schelling, *On Construction in Philosophy*, trans. A. A. Davis and A. I. Kukuljevic, *Epoché* 12, 2 (Spring 2008): 269-288, 181. Cf. SW V: 150f; Schelling, *Construction*, 187.

39 Schelling, *Construction*, 282f.

40 Schelling, *Construction*, 281f.

41 Höijer, *Afhandling*, 105f.; Hoyer, *Abhandlung*, 90. Cf. Höijer, *Afhandling*, 171f.; Hoyer, *Abhandlung*, 148f., Höijer, *Afhandling*, 189ff.; Hoyer, *Abhandlung*, 164ff. That Höijer wants to exclude everything alien (främmanda), seems to be in favor of Schelling's reading of him, although Höijer in the same sentence admits of the possibility of an externality to his system. Höijer, *Afhandling*, 99f.; Hoyer, *Abhandlung*, 84f.

edition of *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature*:

> My object, rather, is first to allow the natural science itself to *arise* philosophically, and my philosophy is itself nothing else than natural science. It is true that chemistry teaches us to *read* the *letters*, physics the *syllables*, mathematics *Nature*; but it ought not be forgotten that it remains for philosophy to interpret what is read (SW II: 6).[42]

Construction shows how the natural sciences (and philosophy) emerge out of self-limitations of the original activity. Schelling lets this constructive process be mutually informed by the empirical findings and theories of the different natural sciences.[43] In the philosophy of nature, the natural sciences deliver the particulars to be constructed. Further, a true construction will show itself as a tendency which is not fully articulated in the empirical sciences.[44] Now, to emerge (*entstehen zu lassen*) is to show something before the eyes of the constructor[45]—and by *eye* Schelling means an intellectual as well as empirical eye. Thus, philosophy of nature interprets the natural sciences.

Höijer expresses thoughts of the very same kind in his *Treatise*. Here, he vehemently rejects all philosophical attempts of mimicking the natural sciences or mathematics. People who attempt to do this "presume their terminology, like when one accepts a character or title when one is not in possession of the merit, which these merits should entail."[46] They all need philosophy to construct their ground.[47] Thus, between philosophy and the sciences there is a constructive relationship, i.e., the two interact (*wechselwirken*), although philosophy is prior to the sciences logically. In this sense, there is a most fruitful marriage between philosophy, intuition, and the sciences.

Having established the connection between construction and interpretation, I will now briefly outline a structural relationship between construction and Schelling's concept of a new mythology. In a common view

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42 F.W.J. Schelling, *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature*, trans. Errol E. Harris and Peter Heath (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 5. Henceforth *Ideas*.

43 Cf. SW III: 277ff.; Schelling, "Introduction to the Outline," 197ff. See further the *Ersten Entwurf eines Systems der Naturphilosophie* for an actual use of this method, SW III: 195ff.; F. W. J. Schelling, *First Outline of a System of Philosophy of* Nature, trans. Keith R. Peterson (Albany: SUNY Press), 141. This even seems to continue in the Identity Philosophy with the demand for construction and a complementing demonstration. Paul Ziche, *Mathematische und naturwissenschaftliche Modelle in der Philosophie Schellings und Hegels* (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1996), 188ff.

44 Schelling shows this line of thought in *On the World Soul* (*Von der Weltseele*) with the concept of a complete induction. SW II: 464.

45 See for an example SW II: 214; Schelling, *Ideas*, 172.

46 Höijer, *Afhandling*, 16 (my translation of the Swedish). The German translation is as follows: "sie nahmen bloss die Terminologie derselben an, so wie man Würden und Titel annimmt, ohne darum das Verdienst zu besitzen, das sie begleiten sollte." Hoyer, *Abhandlung*, 10f.

47 Höijer, *Afhandling*, 197f.; Hoyer, *Abhandlung*, 172. Here specifically the natural scientists.

of myths, their purpose has often been to explain the genesis of something in a symbolic or allegorical, i.e., a metaphorical and living language. As previously mentioned, we find the need for a new mythology in the closing passage of *System of Transcendental Idealism*. Schelling locates the actual finalization of this new mythology in a prospective point in history (SW III: 629).[48] Here, mythology is the medium (*das Mittelglied*) for the return of science to poetry. If the artwork expresses the highest point and grounding of the system of knowledge, mythology leads the way to this completion of the system. Schelling does not give a more precise description of this mythology. Here I suggest that we can draw on the early studies of myths by Schelling to see if they fit into this picture.

To this end, I wish briefly to point to the following understanding of myth from Schelling's essay *On Myths, Historical Legends and Philosophizing in the Oldest World* (1793).[49] My strategy could seem odd, as his treatment of myth in the Philosophy of Identity is much clearer. My reasons for looking backwards is in short the following: First, the Philosophy of Identity, including its construction of the myth, is written after *System of Transcendental Idealism*; second, because it has a place in the identity system, myth should have another function, since the philosophy of which it is part is of another and more far-reaching kind; third, the myth is exactly constructed in the philosophy of identity.[50] Hence, it does not spring from a limitation of philosophy, as is the case within the system of knowledge. Here Schelling does not construct myth. With this in mind, I will outline the concept of myth, i.e., mythology in Schelling's early philosophy.

First, there is a division of the concept of myth into historical and philosophical myths. Schelling differentiates between them based on their purpose: the purpose of the historical myth is history (*Geschichte*); the purpose of philosophical myth is an exposition of *the Truth* (*Darstellung der Wahrheit,* SW I: 57f.). Thus, the latter ought to convince someone of the truth, i.e., to bring someone to an understanding of something through the medium of a myth. The former seeks to be a mere description of an actual event. Further, the myth lacks precision but is livelier, more concrete and convincing (SW I: 64). The myth is not allegorical, because it does not refer to something through something else, i.e., no comparison takes place. The philosophical myth is complete in itself (SW I: 64f.). The language of the myths is hence symbolical, although not accidental. Its language is that of its time, i.e., in the best possible language available at the time. Following a long tradition, e.g., Lessing in his interpretation of Christianity, Schelling understands the concepts of the oldest world as sensuous; this is why the oldest myths have a sensuous expression

48 Schelling, *System of Transcendental Idealism*, 232f.

49 Hereafter *On Myths*.

50 For an example see §39 of *Philosophie der Kunst*. SW V: 406ff.; F. W. J. Schelling, *Philosophy of Art*, trans. Douglas W. Stott (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 45ff.

(SW I: 64f.).[51] They are expressions of a need to communicate the truth about a phenomenon. In this way, they bring the listeners to an understanding by showing before their eyes how a phenomenon achieved its place in cosmos (SW I: 70). Importantly, this include the place of man himself.

To expand on these rather superficial remarks: the myth is to be understood as a response to some alien phenomenon by giving this phenomenon a place in the common cosmos. From this ensues a world picture, in the best possible language of an age. In the language of *System of Transcendental Idealism*, a myth should not rise from the individual, but of itself. Hence, the myth comes "not of some individual author, but of a new race, personifying, as it were, one single poet" (SW III: 629).[52] Its origin is the unconscious. Here, I have left out many important distinctions of the concept of the myth from *On Myths*. Further, I have omitted some of the characteristics which Schelling shares with the enlightenment, e.g., that the languages of the oldest world are preforms of rational language. This could indeed render Schelling's mythology superfluous for his own times, if his time had a fully enlightened concept of reason. With the limitation of philosophy however, Schelling seems to deny in such a concept in *System of Transcendental Idealism*.[53] It seems to me that much of the content from *On Myths* does not exclude the need of a new rational mythology, although Schelling's explicit interest here is to understand the oldest myths in the context of contemporary theology. In *System of Transcendental Idealism* his interest is not in the the ancient times, but in the history of consciousness. In general, however, the myth integrates an alien phenomenon into a contemporary and common world picture. Thus, the early studies could lend some determinations to the mythology which Schelling suggests in *System of Transcendental Idealism*.

The content of such a myth is not accidental, butaccidental but needs to be established on the basis of the earlier stages, i.e., on the philosophy of nature. As Walther Ehrhardt has remarked, this new mythology could very well be a scientific mythology.[54] In this sense, the myth does not have to stand in opposition to reason and hence be irrational. Thus, Schelling's philosophy of nature should provide the mythical grounding of his system. Further, the language of myth would have to be the highest of the times. This would, I here

51 Cf. SW I: 68ff.

52 Schelling, *System of Transcendental Idealism*, 232. In German, the full quote is as follows: "Wie aber eine neue Mythologie, welche nicht Erfindung des einzelnen Dichters, sondern eines neuen, nur Einen Dichter gleichsam vorstellenden Geschlechts seyn kann, *selbst* entstehen könne, dieß ist ein Problem, dessen Auslösung allein von den künftigen Schicksalen der Welt und dem weiteren Verlauf der Geschichte zu erwarten ist." SW III: 629.

53 Cf. Adolf Allwohn, "Der Mythos bei Schelling," *Kant-Studien* 61, Ergänzungshefte (1927), 18.

54 Walter E. Ehrhardt, "Ergänzende Bemerkungen," in *System des transzendentalen Idealismus*, ed. Horst D. Brandt and Peter Müller (Hamburg: Meiner, 2000), XLV-L, XLIXf. Cf. Lore Hühn, "Die Idee der Neuen Mythologie. Schellings Weg einer naturphilosophischen Fundierung," in *Evolution des Geistes: Jena um 1800*, ed. Friedrich Strack (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1994), 393-411.

suggest, be that of reason (*Vernunft*). It would have to be mythology of reason (*Mythologie der Vernunft*). As a mythology of reason (*Mythologie der Vernunft*), it is the genesis of reason (*genitivus obiectivus*), before reason, and written in the language of reason itself (*genitivus subiectivus*).

If the situation is as described above and calls for such a concept of construction, mythology would be the answer to Schelling's systematic intentions. The new myth would take the form of an elevation of the philosophy of nature to a more complete form, which would include the human being. Further, it brings the philosophy of nature into transcendental philosophy, which lets the former supervene (*hinzukommen*), thereby completing the system of knowledge. In other terms, the new myth continues the genetic function of the construction. It would present and reintegrate the philosophy of nature—and not just its content—in the domain of transcendental philosophy, by showing the place of spirit in the world picture. Such a myth, a rational myth, would be the lively story of the construction of nature and spirit. Thereby, it adds objectivity or reality to the system from 1800.[55] Thus, the myth is what the system needs for its completion in the artwork (SW II: 218n1).[56] Schelling occupied himself continuously with this kind of mythology.[57] A mythology not absolutely opposed to *logos*, not a fictitious bedtime story, but a myth capable of leading to the truth. Thus, the Schellingian problem is a problem of beginnings, to which the myth is the temporary answer. As a rational-mythological background, this new myth can supplement the universals of the philosophy of nature, leading towards an understanding of ourselves as part of nature. Whereas philosophical construction interprets the sciences and nature in opposition to the human being, according to my thesis, the new myth is an interpretation of nature as such, including the human being.

To sum up, construction is a free activity. This freedom is transferred to nature's constructs. In the products, although not free themselves, we recognize resemblances to human freedom. Likewise, the new myth is the genesis of reason and freedom. In this way, freedom could be said to be the guide of Schelling's philosophy of nature and transcendental philosophy. Accordingly, Schelling can write in the *First Outline of a System of Philosophy of Nature* that to see nature as unconditioned would be impossible, "if the concealed trace of freedom could not be discovered in the concept of being itself" (SW III: 13).[58]

A new myth should, it seems, take over where philosophy is no longer able to construct. Schelling does not construct after the third chapter of *System of Transcendental Idealism* although he uses postulates up to the very end

55 Cf. Paul Ziche, "Wirklichkeit als 'Duft' und 'Anklang'. Romantik, Realismus und Idealismus um 1800," in *Europäische Romantik* (Berlin & Boston: De Gruyter, 2015), 125-142.

56 Schelling, *Ideas*, 175n4. Cf. SW I: 216.

57 Steffen Dietzsch, "Zum Mythos-Problem beim frühen Schelling," *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift. Gesellschafts- und Sprachwissenschaftliche Reihe* 1 (1976): 99-111.

58 F. W. J. Schelling, *First Outline of a System of the Philosophy of Nature*, trans. Keith R. Peterson (Albany: SUNY Press, 2004), 14.

of *System of Transcendental Idealism*. So the postulates are ever present, but Schelling limits construction to the theoretical part. As we have seen in the *Outline,* Schelling actually states this difference, saying that postulates are not directly kept in the practical philosophy, but are tasks (*Aufgabe*; SW I: 416f.). Although this is Schelling's characteristic of the break with theoretical philosophy in 1798, the limits of this magical circle (*magischen Kreis*; SW I: 395) should be breached by these kind of tasks, i.e., by practical philosophy. In *System of Transcendental Idealism*, this move seems to come after the practical philosophy and to prepare the completion of the system with a new myth. That a myth is the answer to this impotence is thus in no way arbitrary.

As an example of how this is done from a similar position, I will point towards Jonas. Although Jonas did not explicitly use the concept of construction, he conceptually understood the relationship between philosophy, the sciences, and the history of philosophy in a similar way to Schelling. He states his thoughts on the place of myth in philosophy in *The Phenomenon of Life* from 1966.[59] By pointing towards Jonas, I hereby not only wish to show an important development of a philosophy rooted in Schelling, but also to bring an aspect of Schelling's thoughts clearer to the foreground than Schelling himself did. At that time, a new myth seamed obvious. This obviousness lacks in twentieth century philosophy, why Jonas had to legitimate the need for myth for philosophy.[60]

A Schellingian Heritage: Hans Jonas' Philosophical Biology

While any talk of Jonas as a sort of pupil of Schelling would seem out of the question, he must have known some of Schelling's work. He partook in at least one of Heidegger's seminars on Schelling from 1927/28, where Jonas presented a version of his forthcoming book on the problem of freedom in Augustine.[61] In the following, I will begin by considering some reservations in comparing Schelling's philosophy with Jonas' philosophy when it comes to the concept of system and construction in their respective works. This nevertheless leads to a common understanding for the need of myths. Finally, I will follow up with an

59 I use and refer to the German edition (Hans Jonas, *Organismus und Freiheit. Ansätze zu einer philosophischen Biologie* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1973). Unless otherwise stated, I follow the style of *Kabiri* by quoting Jonas from the English original (Jonas, *The Phenomenon of Life*) with reference to the German and Jonas' improved edition in brackets in text, providing the corresponding reference from the English original in a footnote.

60 See also Jesper L. Rasmussen, "Hans Jonas' philosophische Biologie und Friedrich W. J. Schellings Naturphilosophie: Einleitende Bemerkungen zu einer Affinität," *Res Cogitans* 11, 1 (2016): 63-93.

61 *Heideggers Schelling-Seminar (1927/28). Die Protokolle von Martin Heideggers Seminar zu Schellings 'Freiheitsschrift' (1927/28) und die Akten des Internationalen Schelling-Tags 2006,* ed. Lore Hühn, Jörg Jantzen, Philipp Schwab and Sebastian Schwenzfeuer (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 2010).

example of how Jonas interprets the cybernetic explanation of metabolism. On this background, the scope and role of Jonas' myth become clear.

Jonas considered his philosophy as an attempt of hermeneutical-interpretation, with the explicit goal to transform phenomenology and biology into a philosophical biology through interpretative thinking. Here, we find a concept of philosophy, where freedom should be the Ariadne thread which guides us in the interpretation of life.[62] In Jonas' works, we thus find a similar situation regarding mind and nature as we do in the works of Schelling. Jonas' critique of phenomenology entails an attempt to appropriate nature and the natural sciences into philosophy and phenomenology. This can be seen in his appropriation of insights from Darwinism combined with phenomenology, resulting in an understanding of nature and the human being.[63] By determining a degree or reminiscence of freedom in living nature and simultaneously balancing anthropocentrism, biocentrism, panvitalism, and panmechanicism, Jonas interprets the results from the sciences (broadly speaking) into a kind of hierarchy of the living nature. Although Jonas' presentation hardly comes close to the completeness and systematism of Schelling's, their intentions seem to agree. In contrast to Schelling however, Jonas limits his philosophy to life, i.e., to organic nature. This seems to put into question the use of construction in Jonas' philosophy.

Jonas was not a straightforward constructor of systems like Schelling. When Jonas mentions "construction," he often does so critically in reference to a godly constructer, which entails fatalism. It seems that Jonas had a mathematical God in mind when considering the concepts of construction and system.[64] There are, though, other pertinent aspects of Jonas' philosophy which I will briefly emphasize here. One of the constructors that inspired Jonas was Spinoza. He wrote on Spinoza on several occasions and praised him for establishing the first organic concept of individuality—referring to the anti-atomistic inner world of Spinoza's substance.[65] Moreover, in his letters (*Lehrbriefe*) to his wife Lore Jonas, he praised Spinoza's third form of knowledge (*amor dei intellectualis*).[66] This is not to mention the theological writings of Jonas, e.g., *Matter, Spirit, and Creation* (*Materie, Geist und Schöpfung*). Thus, Jonas is not completely distancing himself from a project like Schelling's, although he

62 Jonas, *Organismus und Freiheit*, 14; Jonas, *The Phenomenon of Life*, 3.

63 See for an example the third chapter ("Philosophische Aspekte des Darwinismus") in Jonas, *Organismus und Freiheit*, 60ff.; Jonas, *The Phenomenon of Life*, 38ff.

64 See for an example: Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, "Cum Deus calculat et cogitationem exercet, fit mundus," "Dialogus," in *Die philosophischen Schriften von Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz. Zweite Abtheilung*, ed. Carl I. Gerhardt (Berlin: Georg Olms Verlag, 1961), 190-193.

65 Hans Jonas, "Spinoza and the Theory of Organism," in *Philosophische Hauptwerke 1. Organismus und Freiheit. Philosophie des Lebens und Ethik der Lebenswissenschaften* (*Kritische Gesamtausgabe der Werke von Hans Jonas*, I/1), ed. Dietrich Böhler, Michael Bongardt et al. (Freiburg im Breisgau: Rombach Verlag KG, 2010), 571-592.

66 Hans Jonas, "Lehrbriefe an Lore Jonas 1944/45," in *Erinnerungen*, ed. Rachel Salamander and Christian Wiese (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2005), 348-383, here 370.

clearly sees the limitation of philosophy in these matters. In fact, this is why in *The Phenomenon of Life*, Jonas dedicates the twelfth and last chapter to an exhibition of the creation of the world. This takes the form of a myth, which is necessary in order to understand his earlier investigations on organisms.

Jonas describes the origin of these finite life forms as the risky venture of being (*Wagnis des Seins*), the adventure in mortality (*Abendteuer in Sterblichkeit*).[67] In Jonas' words, we are *tempted* to use the freedom of not knowing (*Freiheit des Nichtwissens*) to establish a complete metaphysics capable of explaining being on the basis of freedom. The medium for this should be the myth.[68] This is legitimized by Jonas with a reference to the Platonic use of myths. We are, however, necessitated to trust this medium: "In the great pause of metaphysics in which we are, and before it has found its own speech again, we must entrust ourselves to this, admittedly treacherous, medium at our risk."[69] As we are not able to do metaphysics before its ground is made clear to us again, the myth, is the only way to explicate the ground according to Jonas. The ensuing myth of God is briefly put as follows: the finite world follows from God's free decision. This decision is God's determination to renounce his being and deity to become the world once and for all. In considering the following longer quotation from Jonas' thoughts of an alternative to a pure identification of God and World (pantheism), we are immediately reminded of Schelling's Odyssey of the spirit from *System of Transcendental Idealism*:

> In order that the world might be, and be for itself, God renounced his own being, divesting himself of his deity—to receive it back from the Odyssey of time weighted with the chance harvest of unforeseeable temporal experience: transfigured or possibly even disfigured by it. In such self-forfeiture of divine integrity for the sake of unprejudiced becoming, no other foreknowledge can be admitted than that of *possibilities* which cosmic being offers in its own terms: to these, God committed his cause in effacing himself for the world.[70]

This is a response to the experience of not knowing, which, however, is an experiencing of something. This experience is namely the experience of the loss of transcendence, security and the experience of finitude and mortality.[71] The

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67 Jonas, *Organismus und Freiheit*„ 162; Jonas, *The Phenomenon of Life*, 106.

68 Jonas, *Organismus und Freiheit*, 331. Here, I cite the German version, which in full is as follows: "Wenn ich, wie man manchmal zu tun nicht widerstehen kann, von der Freiheit des Nichtwissens Gebrauch mache, die in diesen Dingen unser Los ist, und vom Mittel des Mythus oder der glaublichen Erfindung, das Plato dafür erlaubte, so fühle ich mich zu Gedanken wie den folgenden versucht." Jonas, *Organismus und Freiheit*, 331. The English version has quite a different choice of words. See Jonas, *The Phenomenon of Life*, 275.

69 Jonas, *Organismus und Freiheit*, 335; Jonas, *The Phenomenon of Life*, 278.

70 Jonas, *Organismus und Freiheit*, 332; Jonas, *The Phenomenon of Life*, 275.

71 Jonas, *Organismus und Freiheit*, 323ff.; Jonas, *The Phenomenon of Life*, 268ff.

gut reaction to such a response would be to deny it any philosophical legitimacy.[72] Against this, Jonas as well as Schelling could respond with a grounding of the myth in reason and in the sciences. The uncertainty following the basic structure of being is a mythical response to the experience gained through Darwinism, natural selection, and phenomenology. This experience and science, then, is understood through the myth. These, at the same time, necessitate the form and content of the myth. As a new mythology, a mythology is required which builds on our experiences of the world gained from the sciences and from ourselves. Essential for this is our experience of freedom, which consequently necessitates that the myth must have freedom at its core. Jonas explicitly states this. The world is not necessary, only possible. The reason for the existence (*Dasein*) of this world, the mystery of mysteries, is God's self-denial of his inviolateness.[73] This, Jonas adds, should be reflected symbolically in the myth. Now, man stands alone.

> The image of God, haltingly begun by the universe, for so long worked upon—and left undecided—in the wide and the narrowing spirals of pre-human life, passes with this last twist, and with a dramatic quickening of the movement, into man's precarious trust, to be completed, saved, or spoiled by what he will do to himself and the world.[74]

The only transcendence is the lasting footprints of the finite beings on this Earth.[75] Thus, an ethics of responsibility should be made possible through this myth.[76]

According to Jonas, the myth can only be hypothetical, temporary or experimental in character.[77] We can find this kind of temporariness of the myth in Jonas as well as Schelling. Thus, we must not mistake these myths for scientific theories of everything or finalized metaphysical systems. The myth given must be thought of as constantly revisable on the grounds of new experiences. However, this character of the myth does not make it changeable at one's discretion, but it is rather bound with common experience. Thus, the sciences, our experience of ourselves in their context, and the myth, i.e., world pictures, must stand in a mutual relationship. Thereby, the myth loses its arbitrariness.

To give an example of this, I will conclude with Jonas's interpretation of cybernetics to draw attention to the relationship between the sciences,

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72 Cf. György Lukács, *Die Zerstörung der Vernunft* (Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 1955).
73 Jonas, *Organismus und Freiheit*, 336; Jonas, *The Phenomenon of Life*, 279.
74 Jonas, *Organismus und Freiheit*, 334; Jonas, *The Phenomenon of Life*, 277.
75 Jonas, *Organismus und Freiheit*, 334; Jonas, *The Phenomenon of Life*, 277.
76 Jonas, *Organismus und Freiheit*, 335; Jonas, *The Phenomenon of Life*, 278. Cf. Jonas, *Organismus und Freiheit*, 331; Jonas, *The Phenomenon of Life*, 274.
77 Jonas, *Organismus und Freiheit*, 335; Jonas, *The Phenomenon of Life*, 278.

philosophy, and myth in Jonas.[78] Here, Jonas targets Norbert Wiener's cybernetic explanation of organic metabolism as an input-output machine, describable only in purely mathematical terms. Here, Jonas explicitly maintains that his purpose is the meaning (*Sinn*) of metabolism. The explanations of Wiener are right on some level, i.e., the objective level visible for the empirical eye. Nonetheless, the ground of the input and output is the subjectivity of the organism. This subjectivity is a higher form of activity, making the autopoetic relation of input and output possible. Furthermore, to know how this activity is possible, the organism first needs to be 'constructed.' For this activity to function, a certain emancipation or negative freedom of the organism is necessary. The organism as subject is dependent, but not completely determined by the organism as object, i.e., the actual input and output. We are attentive of this kind of freedom, Jonas claims, because we know it from our own freedom.[79] This is the reason why we experience a structural similarity between our own experiences and those of other organisms.

While the cybernetic input-output analysis explains the purpose of an organism as its endpoint, it fails to do justice to the *autopoesis* of the organism, i.e., in Kantian terminology, the inner purposefulness. Cybernetics, according to Jonas, mistakes "to have a purpose," i.e., an inner purpose, with the "execution of a purpose," i.e., an outer purpose. When cybernetics extrapolates from its actual objective description on the phenomenon level, it actually posits a steersman outside the organisms to explain that activity, i.e., an outer purpose. According to Jonas, the organism possesses a kind of freedom, i.e., autonomy—a phenomenon only recognized on the basis of the principle of freedom as the guide in the interpretation of life.[80] Thus, Jonas limits cybernetics to the objective level as an approximate description of behavior, thereby showing the need for further interpretations. Such 'constructions' would ultimately result in the understanding of the subjectivity of the organism.[81]

Admittedly, there appears to be no clear end to the possibility of construction in this sense in Jonas' philosophy, but Jonas admits that there is some kind of boundary beyond which we are necessitated to the symbolic language of myth. As the background from which the myth is told, one candidate for this limit seems to be the practical realm of human life including immortality and ethics. If there is something to this, it is the need for an interpretation of the genesis of human life itself, i.e., free human life in a

78 See also Rasmussen, "Hans Jonas' philosophische Biologie und Friedrich W. J. Schellings Naturphilosophie," 70ff.

79 For Jonas, this freedom mainly expresses itself as an intentional directedness in organic life.

80 See Jonas, *Organismus und Freiheit*, 164ff.; Jonas, *The Phenomenon of Life*, 108ff.

81 For a similar point relating to the *General System Theory* of Bertalanffy, see H. Jonas, "General System Theory: A New Approach to Unity of Science—A comment on General System Theory," in Hans Jonas, *Herausforderungen und Profile* (*Kritische Gesamtausgabe der Werke von Hans Jonas* III/2), ed. Sebastian Lalla, Florian Preußger, and Dietrich Böhler (Freiburg im Breisgau, Berlin, Wien: Rombach Verlag, 2013), 333-340, here 340.

natural world, that necessitates the myth.[82] As a necessity springing from our position in nature, we are forced to construct as far as we can. At some point a rational myth is the only means from which grounds we can establish an adequate understanding of life. The results of science are confronted with our freedom, which necessitates a new interpretation of the understandings given to philosophy from the sciences. After having come to a new understanding of nature by interpreting these results, we are in the end forced to myth, if we want to understand ourselves as a part of nature. Neither the sciences nor philosophy is able to complete such a worldview itself.

Conclusion

After all then, there is some recognition of the necessity of construction in the limiting and uniting sense in Jonas' philosophical biology. This leads to the need for a new myth. That Jonas writes an actual myth could be said to be in disagreement with the intentions of Schelling, whose mythology demanded the myth to arise unconsciously. However, the myth springs from an irresistible need, which in Jonas' description, forces itself upon him. As I hope to have sketched, Jonas' myth should correspond with philosophical biology. Just as with Schelling, arbitrary and ideological myths must be discarded as irrational.

This brief examination of Jonas' philosophical biology should, at least, render probable a likeness between some parts of his project with Schelling's. Perhaps his philosophical biology could even be said to be in need of a more developed ground, the like of which could be perhaps be found Schelling's philosophy. On the other hand, Jonas' later engagement in ethics on the grounds of his metaphysics seems to give us a possible ethical answer to a Schellingian question, regarding the relationship between man and nature. In Schelling, ethical implications concerning a responsibility of man towards nature remain at best partly unanswered.[83]

First of all, they both show the need for construction in the understanding of facts. Second, and just as important, we are shown the limits of this constructive process, which instead of resignation ends in the need for a new, rational myth. What I have found in hints in Schelling and an interpretation of his work is brought forth clearer by a closer look at Jonas' philosophical biology. That the principle for both endeavors is freedom, which we learn from an experience of ourselves as free, turns out to cast a new light on the concept of construction and the ensuing myth. In Jonas as well as Schelling, we find both concepts in sharp opposition to a standard conception of construction, as exhibiting mechanism, relativism (constructivism), or fatalism. By drawing on Höijer's work on construction and Schelling's reception of it, this is made

82 See Jonas, *Organismus und Freiheit*, 317; Jonas, *The Phenomenon of Life*, 262.
83 E.g. Jonas' *Das Prinzip Verantwortung* (1979).

especially clear.

On the grounds of my interpretation of Schelling, I thereby also hope to have made a possible heritage of Schelling's philosophy of nature visible: A heralding of another kind of myth, i.e., a scientific and rational myth, where freedom is the central vehicle. Although Jonas himself in 1992 expressed an unconcerned attitude towards the contemporary public opinion, I find Jonas' sense for the times and milieu he lived in quite extraordinary.[84] By pointing from Schelling towards Jonas, I thus hope to have exemplified an actuality of Schelling. Hence, I see Jonas as a co-poet (*Mitdichter*) of Schelling, although Jonas, to my knowledge, never mentioned Schelling in his works. Thereby Jonas must be considered an *autonomous co-poet* (*Mitdichter*)—albeit *incognito*—of Schelling.[85]

To read the philosophy of nature, be it Schelling's or Jonas', through a mythological lens could seem a terrible devaluation of Russellian proportions, the like of which we so often have witnessed in the 20th century's reception of any philosophy of nature.[86] On the contrary, I have suggested quite the opposite by pointing to the system of knowledge and the philosophical biology.[87] Only by accepting certain forms of myths as rational means to an understanding of man and nature are we able to discard the myriad of irrational myths, which make claim to our modern worldview.

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84 Jonas proclaimed that "der Zeitgeist ... meinen Buckel herunterrutschen [kann]." Hans Jonas, *Hans Jonas zu Ehren. Reden aus Anlass seiner Ehrenpromotion durch die Philosophische Fakultät der Universität Konstanz am 2. Juli 1991* (Konstanz: Universitätsverlag Konstanz, 1992), 42.

85 Cf. O. Marquard, "Schelling–Zeitgenosse incognito," in *Schelling. Einführung in seine Philosophie*, ed. Harald Holz and Hans M. Baumgartner (Freiburg im Breisgau; München: Verlag Karl Alber, 1975), 9-26; Michael Hackl, "Ein Appell an die Freiheit. Existenz, Mythos und Freiheit bei H. Jonas und F.W.J. Schelling," in *Die Klassische Deutsche Philosophie und ihre Folgen*, ed. Michael Hackl and Christian Danz (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2017), 131-154.

86 E.g. Bertrand Russell, *History of Western Philosophy* (London: George Allen and Unwin LTD, 1948), 745.

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On Matter: Schelling's Anti-Platonic Reading of the *Timaeus*

Tyler Tritten

This essay[1] contrasts the so-called emanationism of Neoplatonism, particularly Proclus's, with the naturephilosophy[2] of F.W.J. Schelling. The contention is that Schelling's thought is Neo-Platonist because thoroughly Platonist (albeit not at all Platonic, that is, dualistic), except that his project stands Neoplatonism on its head by inverting the order of procession. Schelling agrees with Neoplatonism that matter is the lowest and most inferior of the hypostases—not even constituting a proper hypostasis itself, because incapable of self-reversion—but he differs in viewing matter as cosmologically prior to intellect, soul, the demiurge and so forth. The question concerns not the hierarchical but the ontological ordering of matter. For Schelling, procession is not a descent into being (and eventually non-being) from a one beyond being, but an elevation (*Steigerung*) and intensification of being, which precludes the need for return (ἐπιστροφή [*epistrophē*]). This is the trademark of Schelling's late distinction between positive and negative philosophy. Positive philosophy is progressive, beginning with the inferior as the most original in order to ascend

1 This article is a slightly revised and shortened version of chapter three of my *The Contingency of Necessity: Reason and God as Matters of Fact* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017).

2 In *Philosophies of Nature After Schelling* (London: Continuum, 2008) Ian Hamilton Grant speaks of Schelling not as a practitioner of the philosophy of nature, but as a naturephilosopher. *Naturphilosophie* does not merely take nature as its object of study as if it were to be ordered amongst the philosophy of the political, the philosophy of gender, the philosophy of religion and so forth, but naturephilosophy, for Schelling, indicates the nature of philosophy as such, that is, philosophy in its universality before it has been delimited to a specific domain of objects. Naturephilosophy does not signify one sub-branch of philosophy amongst others, but the implication is that only naturephilosophy can be true philosophy.

to the superior through a consequent intensification of being, while negative philosophy is regressive, beginning with the inferior only as something already derived in order regressively to retrace its descent back up to the superior one. Being, for Schelling, is not constituted as an eternal circle but the irretrievable temporality of the line, because *no* level of reality reverts upon itself without remainder. In order to elucidate how Schelling's inversion of Neoplatonism forged his later distinction between positive and negative philosophy this essay begins with his reading of the role of "matter"[3] in Plato's *Timaeus* and then offers an experimental reading of Proclus's *Elements of Theology*.

Schelling's Early Reading of the *Timaeus*

Schelling's early essay on the *Timaeus* was published in 1795 at the age of nineteen, but this does not mean that it was uninfluential for his mature thought. This precocious teenager here translates the language of the intelligible/determinate and the sensible/indeterminate in the *Timaeus* into the Kantian language of the form of the understanding and the matter of sensibility only to read the *Timaeus* against transcendental philosophy in a way prescient of his later thought.[4] A few authors have already shown how Schelling's early reading of the *Timaeus* is indispensable for the relation between ground (*Grund*) and existence (*Existenz*), unprethinkable matter and intelligible form, in the 1809 *Freiheitsschrift* and beyond.[5] Werner Beierwaltes, for example, has argued that

3 The philosophical sense of ὕλη [*hylē*] (matter) is not actually discussed in the *Timaeus*. Rather one finds a discussion of ὑποδοχή [*hypodochē*] (receptacle), χώρα [*chōra*] (Space) and ἄπειρον [*ápeiron*] (the indefinite). Schelling, following the precedent of a number of Neo-Platonists in reading Plato and Aristotle as complementary rather than as antithetical, simply speaks of all these under the common heading of "matter." See also John Sallis, "Secluded Nature: The Point of Schelling's Reinscription of the *Timaeus*," *Pli: The Warwick Journal of Philosophy*, 8 (1999): 71-85, who states, "Schelling is referring to what Plato—or rather, Timaeus—calls, among its many names, ὑποδοχή [*hypodochē*] (receptacle) and χώρα [*chōra*] ... the nurse (τιθήνη) [*tithḗnē*] of generation" Sallis, "Secluded," 75. Schelling also speaks of this as μήτηρ [*mḗtēr*] (mother), which Schelling relates to the Latin *mater* and *materia*. "*Mater* and *materia* are in principle the same word [*Mater und materia sind im Grunde nur ein Wort*]." SW I/2: 193. All translations of this work are my own.

4 Sallis notes the novelty of this translation of the *Timaeus* into Kantian terminology, commenting that "Schelling's re-nscription of the *Timaeus* in the text of modern philosophy, his re-inscription of the dialogue into a text that while belonging to modern philosophy also renders it radically questionable, perhaps for the first time" Sallis, "Secluded," 71. "For what Schelling rewrites within the text of modern philosophy is a discourse on nature, on nature in its capacity to withdraw, on secluded nature" Sallis, "Secluded," 73 This withdrawn or secluded nature, that is, that nature which does not present itself empirically because it is the presupposition of all presentation, is, of course, the receptacle, which Schelling customarily refers to simply as "matter."

5 In addition to Beierwaltes (quoted in the text), concerning the influence of Schelling's early reading of the *Timaeus* on his later philosophical development, one should again note Sallis: "Schelling inserts [in the *Freiheitsschrift*] a decisive *indication referring this entire development* back

in the *Timaeus Essay* Schelling wanted to show that physics, that is, matter, generates the ideal, that is, the transcendental, writing that (especially in Schelling's later thought) "transcendental philosophy and naturephilosophy [*Naturphilosophie*] basically represent *one* science."[6] Schelling reads Plato as a physicist or naturephilosopher who places matter, that is, the unruly receptacle or the χώρα [*chōra*], as prior to order and form, namely, prior to the intelligible and transcendental.

> Schelling notes, in accord with the *Timaeus* itself, that ...
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> ... the elements, insofar as they are *visible*, are to be wholly differentiated from the matter in which they are grounded and which as such never becomes visible, and that they are not properly *matter* itself, but rather *forms, determinations* of matter, which matter obtains externally.[7]

This begs the question concerning what the elements were prior to becoming visible by means of "forms" or "determinations" externally imprinted on matter. What stands outside of question for Schelling, at any rate, is that "matter," so-called, is something for itself, that is, apart from its relation to that which "externally" imprints form and determination upon it; matter is not reducible to its empirical products. Schelling names this being-in-itself of matter "ἀόριστον τί [*aóriston tí*],"[8] which he later terms, in a more Pythagorean fashion, simply "*Dyas*" and "the ambivalent Nature (*natura anceps*)" (SW II/2: 142).[9] Matter may be considered in two distinct ways, as an empirical substrate/ὑποκείμενον [*hypokeímenon*] or as potency/δύναμις [*dynamis*].[10] As Plato himself writes in the *Sophist*, "I hold that the definition of being is simply power [δύναμις/

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to the *Timaeus* and broaching in effect a re-inscription. The originary longing, says Schelling, is to be represented as a moving "like an undulating, surging sea, similar to Plato's matter" ... the darkness from which understanding is born, that is, the secluded ground, that is, *die anfängliche Natur*, is similar to Plato's matter.... Schelling's discourse on the unruly ground, on secluded nature, may thus be taken—at least in certain decisive moments—as re-inscribing the Timaean discourse on the receptacle." Sallis, "Secluded," 74-5.

6 Werner Beierwaltes, "The Legacy of Neoplatonism in F.W.J. Schelling's Thought," *International Journal of Philosophical Studies*, 10(4) (2002): 393-428, here 400. The translation was slightly revised, altering "the philosophy of nature" into "naturephilosophy."

7 F.W.J. Schelling, "Timaeus," *Epoché: A Journal for the History of Philosophy*, 12(2) (2008): 205-248, here 229.

8 Schelling, "Timaeus," 229. It will be seen that this cannot be equated with Aristotle's χωριστόν [*chōriston*] insofar as Aristotle denies that matter has being-in-itself. He only regards matter as that of which predication can occur.

9 "*Die zweideutige Natur* (*natura anceps*)." Schelling, SW II/2: 142.

10 Again, as much as this reading is already influenced by Aristotle insofar as the word "matter" is used at all and that in relation to substrate and potency, it will be seen that Aristotle likely only recognizes matter in the sense of a *logical* substrate, that is, the mere potency to receive predication. Matter loses, in this way, its ontological or substantial character in Aristotle. It is de-substantialized, whereas it retains its substantiality in Plato.

dynamis]."[11] Dynamically considered, that is, in terms of power/potency, matter only has being as ἄπειρον [*ápeiron*]. Schelling proclaims, in opposition to canonical readings of Neoplatonism, that for Plato matter, thought as ἄπειρον [*ápeiron*], that is, as δύναμις [*dynamis*], is not the last emanation from the one, but it is, despite its lack of self-sufficiency or inability to revert upon itself, the *first* procession from the one (albeit still the lowest in rank) insofar as it is to become the substance of the cosmos. Said differently, insofar as everything can be predicated only of substance, as Aristotle suggests, so the substance of the world is nothing but ἄπειρον [*ápeiron*]; all that exists is ἄπειρον [*ápeiron*] or, rather, quantitative determinations of ἄπειρον [*ápeiron*]. Schelling remarks that "all reality is ἄπειρον τι [*ápeiron ti*]." Everything emerges "from out of the ἄπειρον [*ápeiron*] and, according to its form, from out of the πέρας [*péras*]."[12] Both of these, in turn, the unlimited and the limited or the indeterminate and the determinate, are bound together by the activity of the demiurge.[13]

Schelling does not read Plato according to the canon that suggests that because intelligible form, that is, the definite and ruly, is superior to matter it is also ontologically prior to matter, that is, the indefinite and unruly. This would be as if an attribute could bring about its own substance, that of which it is predicated. Schelling rather states that the demiurge "saw these [form (πέρας) [*péras*] and matter (ἄπειρον) [*ápeiron*]] (regularity and unruliness) as two things constantly striving against one another" and thus concludes that "at this point the pre-existing original matter of the world is presupposed."[14] Thought in terms of Neoplatonist procession, matter, as the indefinite and unruly, does not stand at the end as the final emanation. Matter is only last in terms of superiority, but it is ontologically originary, just as or more originary than rule, order and form.

Beierwaltes explicates that, in his translation of Plato into Kantian

11 Plato, *Sophist*, 247e4.

12 Schelling, "Timaeus," 232.

13 Schelling thus identifies the ἄπειρον [*ápeiron*] with quality and the πέρας [*péras*] with quantity. He writes, with reference to the *Philebus*, that "Plato maintains namely that the world arose through the combining of the elements, insofar as these are ἄπειρα [ápeira] ... they only stand under the category of quality" Schelling, "Timaeus," 223, and "God (the world architect) presented *everything* in the world as *quality* (reality) determined through quantity" Schelling, "Timaeus," 232. Quality or the ἄπειρον [*ápeiron*] is thus only "presented," says Schelling, and not cosmically created. Quality is not created but it is presupposed insofar as everything already "stands under the category of quality." Similarly, in the *Freiheitsschrift* of 1809, Schelling writes "nowhere does it appear as if order and form would be original, but as if something primordially unruly would have been brought to order [*nirgends scheint es, als wären Ordnung und Form das Ursprüngliche, sondern als wäre ein anfängliche Regelloses zur Ordnung gebracht worden*]." SW I/7: 359. Translations of this work are my own.

14 Schelling, "Timaeus," 209. Note also: "Plato assumed, after all, a pre-existing matter, but one that had absolutely no determinate empirical form." Schelling, "Timaeus," 213. Note 51b-52a of the *Timaeus* itself for Plato's word here on these two kinds. Only the elements—earth, air, water, fire—have a determinate form. If these, as something in some sense created, are to be called matter, then that pre-existent matter is, as it were, the matter of matter, that is, the substantiality of the elements.

terms, "Schelling translates πέρας-ἄπειρον [*péras-ápeiron*] with '*Grenze und Uneingeschränktes*' (limit and unrestricted) and with '*Regelhaftigkeit und Regellosigkeit*' (regularity and irregularity)"[15] or, better, as the ruly/intelligible and the unruly/unintelligible. Their relation is such that the ἄπειρον [*ápeiron*]/indefinite/unruly/irregular is the *substantiality* of πέρας [*péras*]/limit/ruliness/regularity, a pre-existence of which the latter is merely attributed or predicated. The former is the presupposed, ungenerated *subjectum*. Schelling here anticipates a possible criticism of his reading of Plato's *Timaeus*. What if, as a good Neoplatonist would always be quick to point out, ἄπειρον [*ápeiron*] and πέρας [*péras*] are co-originary and mutually determinative; for, in Neoplatonist thought procession from the one, at least unto the point of the sensible reality of the cosmos and the concomitant emergence of time/becoming, is not to be thought as a temporal succession, but as eternal procession. Matter, for example, would not be there *before* intellect, but they are both eternal processions from the one. To this, Schelling offers the following rebuke:

> ... that the ἄπειρον [*ápeiron*] first emerges through the communication of the πέρας [*péras*]. Fine! If what is at issue here is *empirical* existence, then in that case both are only present in their being bound together. However, Plato speaks of ἄπειρον [*ápeiron*] to the extent that it is *separated from* πέρας [*péras*] [emphasis added] and says ... that the imitations of that which is most beautiful and most glorious, that is, *the ideas, must also be found in the* ἄπειρον [*ápeiron*] *as such* [emphasis added].[16]

Plato, Schelling decries, speaks of ἄπειρον [*ápeiron*], that is, matter, in a way that Aristotle could never permit, namely, as separate from form and determination, that is, as χωριστόν [*chōriston*]. Likely, most Neoplatonists, as most scholars readily admit, are not actually thoroughbred Platonists, but heavily influenced by Aristotle's reading of Plato. At any rate, says Schelling, the ἄπειρον [*ápeiron*], the matter of matter, cannot be consequent, not even eternally consequent, from the Ideas, that is, the realm of pure intellect, because indefinite matter subsists even there. This too is something most Neoplatonists would readily admit, though perhaps not in these terms.[17] More scandalous, however, is that Schelling regards the matter of matter, that is, what is also called χώρα [*chōra*], as an idea itself. Or, to repeat, "The ideas must also be found in the ἄπειρον [*ápeiron*] as such."

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15 Werner Beierwaltes, "Plato's *Timaeus* in German Idealism," in Gretchen J. Reydams-Schils, ed., *Plato's* Timaeus *as Cultural Icon*, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003), 267-289, here 272.

16 Schelling, "Timaeus," 236.

17 See sections four and five of Plotinus's Second Ennead as a prime example of a discussion of intelligible matter.

Aside from Kant, the other largest influence on Schelling's early reading of the *Timaeus* is his reading of the *Philebus,* in which one finds a discussion of all four kinds (γένη [*genē*]). Of this connection Iain Hamilton Grant writes,

> The Platonic gene: it is a phase space of the Idea in unlimited not-being, that is, the always-becoming, in which the Idea acts as the limit-attractor towards which becoming never ceases to become, the *auto* or absolute approximated but never realized in the generated particular.[18]

The ἄπειρον [*ápeiron*], as one of Plato's kinds, contains the idea; the idea exists within this kind as the attracted limit for the "always-becoming." The ἄπειρον [*ápeiron*], in turn, is the attractor of limit, of πέρας [*péras*]. As one of the causes of becoming, but yet not something that has itself become, the ἄπειρον [*ápeiron*] itself can be called an Idea or, better, a generator/attractor of the Idea, the determinate.[19] Schelling writes of these kinds, and particularly of that dark Idea or that dark kind, ἄπειρον [*ápeiron*], generically called matter because it acts as the substrate/substance of things,

> One thus sees clearly the extent to which Plato is speaking of intelligible archetypes of every individual object, namely, not insofar as he believed that every individual object has its particular *individual* archetype, but rather insofar as each individual object stands under the universal form of all existence.[20]

In this fascinating passage, Schelling explicitly associates the indefinite kind, dark and unruly matter, despite its indefiniteness or "materiality," as an "intelligible archetype," normally termed idea. In what sense, then, the unruly and indeterminate is intelligible is clear. It is intelligible because it is a limit-attractor; it attracts definiteness and intelligibility to itself. It is to be called an archetype because it is a "universal form of all existence." Nothing exists that is not ἄπειρον [*ápeiron*]; the indefinite itself constitutes the substantiality of all that is. In this context Sallis writes, "Schelling insistently reinscribes its [the receptacle's] name as *substance, substratum,* and especially *matter*."[21] If something like this can be called an idea even though it can never serve as an

18 Grant, *Philosophies*, 45.

19 Schelling explicitly refers to ἄπειρον [*ápeiron*] and πέρας [*péras*] as kinds, remarking that the one kind is operative "by means of the activity of the understanding" and "the other which without understanding and orderliness acts according to chance (ὅσαι μονωθεῖσαι φρονήσεως τὸ τυχὸν ἄτακτον ἑκάστοτε ἐξεργάζονται [*hòsai monōtheîsai phroneseōs tò tychòn átakton hekástote exergázontai*] [on the other side those which, bereft of prudence, produce on each occasion a disordered chance effect] (46e5))." Schelling, "Timaeus," 224.

20 Schelling, "Timaeus," 238.

21 Sallis, "Secluded," 84.

archetype for any *particular* individual whatsoever, then what does this mean for the so-called theory of participation and the corresponding doctrine of the ideas? Schelling takes Plato to mean that there are, in fact, only four ideas, that is, the four kinds—γένη [*genē*]—which alone are universal forms operative in all existence and which are, accordingly, not models for participatory copies but genes, that is, generators, of all reality, including intelligible reality.[22] Matter or ἄπειρον [*ápeiron*], as the first of the kinds, that peculiar kind which must always be presupposed as that which attracts limit, order and intelligibility to itself, proceeds from no prior hypostasis. It is assumed as one of the four generators for *all* levels of reality. Grant is therefore able to state, "Whatever therefore *appears* or *bodies forth* in nature is necessarily not an image of its original."[23] Neither Plato nor Schelling divorces model and copies, form and matter. The two-world theory is wrong because matter is not antithetical to the intelligible; it is an attractor of intelligible form. Proclus too agrees that matter is not antithetical to the higher intelligible levels of reality and even the one itself, sarcastically asking, "The unlimitedness and measurelessness of matter must consist of the need for measure and limit. But how could the need for limit and measure be the contrary of limit and measure?"[24]

The indefinite or unlimited, as one of the four kinds, is an archetype and it is intelligible, that is, it contains the idea within itself—recall that "the ideas must also be found in the ἄπειρον [*ápeiron*] as such"[25]—insofar as ἄπειρον [*ápeiron*] attracts πέρας [*péras*] to itself. It is the presupposition of limit and not vice versa just as matter is the presupposition of intelligibility. Limit, however, does not act upon the unlimited as something inert (unlike the matter of the

22 Schelling writes that "matter was *thus* first determined that the elements became visible and, to the extent that the elements emerged through the intelligible forms or, expressed otherwise, to the extent that they are imitations, copies of the intelligible form, they *present* [emphasis added] the intelligible form" Schelling, "Timaeus," 237. What can "present" mean if not a manifesting or making real for the first time? This is a very strange sort of "imitation" and "copying" at play here, an imitation that is but the manifestation of the original, of the thing itself, in its emergence and first determination.

23 Grant, *Philosophies*, 55. Grant is, therefore, also able to write that "Natural history does not have objects as its field of study, but rather kinds, *gene*"—what will eventually become Schelling's potencies—"and their becomings, their *genneta* or *gignomena*" Grant, *Philosophies*, 53. Also, "History, according to Platonism, is necessarily *natural* insofar as nature is not *what* is, but is the 'always becoming' (*Tim.* 27e-28a)" Grant, *Philosophies*, 54. The idea that reality is fundamentally historical rather than merely logical or eternally intelligible will become a theme later, as this constitutes the division between positive and negative philosophy in Schelling's later thought. Positive philosophy is historical while negative philosophy is merely logical and eternal, denying any becoming to the order of intelligibility.

24 Proclus, *On the Existence of Evil*, trans. Jan Opsomer & Carlos Steel, (New York: Cornell University Press, 2003), 32, 16-18. Proclus continues by questioning, "How can that which is in need of the good still be evil?" Proculus, "Evil," 32, 18-19 For Proclus, this is a question concerning the compatibility of matter and the one or matter and evil. As will be seen below, Proclus's position on this issue and the question concerning the ontological status of matter in general is closer to Schelling than is Plotinus's.

25 Schelling, "Timaeus," 236.

modern period, which is utterly inert because completely de-potentiated as nothing more than the merely geometric matrix of extension). As Schelling comments:

> Now, insofar as the *form* that god imparted to the world refers only to the form of the movement of the world, the world must also have had its own *original* principle of motion, independently of god, which, as a principle that inheres in matter, contradicts all regularity and lawfulness, and is first brought within the bounds of lawfulness through the form (πέρας [*péras*]) that the divine understanding gave to it.[26]

The indefinite, in Schelling, is to be equated with the unruly, and so it is neither an inert substrate nor even a pre-partitioned grid. It is irregular motion, but motion all the same. Form, that is, the definite and intelligible, is static, but matter is δύναμις [*dynamis*], a dynamism. "The understanding (namely, the form of understanding) came to *dominate* over *blind* necessity"—the not yet intelligible motion of the apeiratic—"precisely because the pure form of the understanding is unchangeable and cannot take its direction from matter, but rather, on the contrary, matter makes itself subservient."[27] Putting aside the Kantian rhetoric—which is quite obstructive in this passage—one can see that matter, which has a principle of motion within itself, only makes itself subservient to form by coming to a standstill for thought. This is how it attracts limit to itself; this is how it becomes intelligible. The domain of becoming comes to be by arresting rather than by initiating movement. The motion of becoming/time is, as it were, already provided through the substantiality or matter of that which becomes. It was rather stability that had to be added in order for becoming/time to come to be. The originary motion, that which is always presupposed, is the unceasing motion of matter itself as the substrate and attractor of the formal and intelligible. Schelling does, however, at least reaffirm the Neoplatonist stance that intelligibility is *superior* to materiality, even if he rejects that intelligibility is the more original. In so doing he also shatters any notion of matter as the Aristotelian idea of a merely *logical* substrate, which bears no powers, no δύναμις [*dynamis*], except the passive potency of receptivity to predication.

A Break with Neoplatonism?

Under Schelling's (Kantian) interpretation, Plato provides a physics of the transcendental; he provides the transcendental with its substance. There

26 Schelling, "Timaeus," 210.
27 Schelling, "Timaeus," 225.

is a materiality even of the formal. Even the Neoplatonists speak of an intelligible matter, but I would like to raise the possibility that when Plotinus, for example, thinks of matter as mere non-being and hence mere privation, that his Platonist side has become dominated by Aristotle. In this vein, Grant has convincingly argued that Aristotle's philosophy brought about for later Antiquity a "desubstantialization of *ousia*."[28] He argues that in Aristotle "matter loses all substantial existence" by means of "its reduction to logic, to a purely extensional *logos* .... Aristotelian metaphysics is that science concerned with substance not insofar as this is particular, sensible or material, but insofar as it is a *predicable essence*, that is, only insofar as it is the subject or *hypokeimenon* supporting a *logos*."[29] For this reason Aristotelian matter, which thought in itself is unlimited, cannot exist apart from a limiting form. Matter, in Aristotle, does not signify any sort of ontological or cosmological reality, that is, a substantial reality, but only an indeterminate X as the logical subject of predication. Consequently, one finds Aristotle recoiling at the idea of attributing any sort of substantiality, that is, ability to exist apart as χωριστόν [*chōriston*], to matter in the *Metaphysics*. Immediately after seemingly according matter some substantiality, he recants: "But this is impossible; for it is accepted that separability and individuality belong especially to substance. Hence it would seem that the form and the combination of form and matter are more truly substance than matter is."[30] Ironically, it may be that Plato's insistence, at least upon the readings of Schelling and Grant, that matter can, in fact, exist apart is the very thing that saves Plato from a two-world dualism because, by this means, Plato is able to retain an ontological rather than merely logical status of matter. This matter is neither a logical nor inert substrate, but it bears a principle of (chaotic) motion within itself, which means that it is a *principle*. As Grant remarks: "Platonic physics concerns the emergence of order from disorderly and unceasing motion, which creates a post-Aristotelian conception of Platonism: no longer a formal or moralizing two-worlds metaphysics, but a one-world physics."[31] Should one find this narrative plausible, then one cannot exclude that Neoplatonism, arguably as influenced by Aristotle as Plato, has in part developed under Aristotle's misrepresentation of the role of matter, so-called, in Plato. In this vein one finds Schelling lamenting that Plotinus, though a "profound spirit, had already given up the Platonic pre-existence of a lawless entity striving against order, and adopted a certain viewpoint according to which it is assumed that all has begun from the most pure and perfect."[32] One wonders whether Neoplatonism, in relegating matter to the most inferior, has also removed its ontological status as something pre-existent and thereby fashioned it as the most derivative, as last in the procession from the one

28 Grant, *Philosophies*, 35.
29 Grant, *Philosophies*, 34.
30 Aristotle, *Metaphysics,* 1029a27-30.
31 Grant, *Philosophies*, 41.
32 Beierwaltes, "Legacy," 414.

rather than first. To approach this question one must turn to Proclus and not Plotinus; for, Proclus levels a criticism against Plotinus's account of matter and thereby attempts to restore, at least somewhat, the dignity of matter. Matter, for Proclus, is not evil and so, perhaps, it is also not degraded to nothing more than the last station on the descent from the one.

There are many reasons to suggest that Proclus recognized, the one aside, that matter is pre-existent to every hypostasis. He details in his own commentary on Plato's *Timaeus* and in obvious opposition to the more Aristotelian Porphyry and strikingly even Iamblichus, with whom he shares more affinities, that "those around [those who side with] Porphyry and Iamblichus castigate this position on the grounds that it puts the disordered before the ordered, the incomplete before the complete and the unintelligent before the intelligent in the universe."[33] That one does not find the term "matter" in this passage has to do with the fact that Proclus is much more careful than Schelling to hold matter as such, that is, as something elemental, as a stuff and substrate, apart from the "matter of matter," that is, the substantiality of the substrate as the indefinite or unlimited, the ἄπειρον [*ápeiron*].[34] This legitimate refusal to equate the two can be seen in the following lengthy passage of Proclus:

> [Plato] placed first unlimitedness, the [unlimitedness] which is prior to the mixed, at the summit of the intelligibles and extends its irradiation from that point (*ekeithen*) all the way to the lowest [reaches of being]. And so, according to [Plato], matter proceeds both from the one and from the unlimitedness which is prior to one being, and, if you wish, inasmuch as it is potential being, from one being too.... And [it is] devoid of form, on which account [it is] these prior to the forms and their manifestation.... For just as Plato derived (*paragein*) two causes, limit and unlimitedness, from the one, so also did the theologian bring aether and chaos into existence from time, aether as the cause of limit wherever it is found, and chaos [as the cause] of unlimitedness. And from these two principles he generates both the divine and the visible orders.[35]

First, Proclus situates the unlimited at the "summit" of the intelligibles and traces its influence from there down to the lower, more derivative levels of reality.

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33 Proclus, *Commentary on Plato's Timaeus, Volume II*, trans. David Runia & Michael Share, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 382, 14-17.

34 Schelling writes, "the *matter of the world* ... is this constituted out of the elements...? That which is continually appearing in various forms but which appears usually as fire is not *fire* but rather always only something *fire-like*, nor is it water, but always only something *water-like*. Thus, neither can we give a *determinate* name.... The elements *flee from* every determinate designation" Schelling, "Timaeus," 226.

35 Proclus, *Commentary*, 385.10-14, 385:16-22.

Accordingly, the unlimited cannot itself be the lowest procession, because its effect takes hold already at the level of intelligible reality and extends its influence from there down. Second, matter, here called by name explicitly and not just in terms of the unlimited, "proceeds from the one;" matter is not the last in the procession from the one, but it is an immediate procession from the one that does not first pass through the intelligible, soul and so forth. Third, matter proceeds "from the unlimitedness which is prior to one Being ... and from one Being too." Here one sees how Proclus is careful to distinguish matter proper from its own substantiality, that is, that from which it has proceeded, namely, unlimitedness, the ἄπειρον [*ápeiron*]. Moreover, he even tantalizingly suggests that this matter of matter, unlimitedness, is even prior to one Being, though he is careful to add that it proceeds from one Being too. What is not up for debate is that unlimitedness (and limit) is an immediate procession from the one and not a later, mediated procession. It could not be otherwise for it to retain its status as an originary kind. For, these kinds are generators of intelligible forms and here Proclus too asserts that the unlimited is both "prior to the forms and their manifestation." It is thus not just a condition of the appearance or manifestation of forms in the sensible cosmos, but it is prior to forms as such. Cosmologically considered, limit and unlimitedness are to be equated with "aether and chaos" or, as this essay might suggest, the elemental substrate and its apeiratic substantiality. As a final word, Proclus notes that from these two kinds "both the divine and the visible orders" are generated.

In addition to the lengthy passage just cited one also finds Proclus asserting that the Demiurge only "took over" matter,[36] minimally ascribing to matter a pre-existence with regards to the sensible cosmos as such, and that "the paradigm *takes over* matter from the good and informs it—for the forms *qua* forms are offspring of the paradigm—and the demiurgic [cause], receiving the forms from the paradigm, regulates (*diakosmein*) them by means of numbers and imposes order upon them by means of proportions (*logoi*)."[37] Matter is thus explicitly stated to be pre-existent to the forms and affirmed to be a procession ensuing immediately from the good, itself the presupposition of all lower levels of reality, where lower is here understood not in terms of inferiority but in terms of ontological ordering.

Despite the evidence garnered in these passages, one likely still feels compelled to follow the more canonical reading of Proclus which allows him to fit more neatly into the Neoplatonic corpus as a whole. Neoplatonist and Procline scholar Radek Chlup offers a decisive word here, informing his readers that "most ancient Platonists were convinced that the image [of a primordial disorder] is not to be taken literally."[38] According to the canon—and it is not the task here to rewrite the canon, but merely to make plausible an alternative

36 Proclus, *Commentary*, 388.1-2.
37 Proclus, *Commentary*, 388.5-9.
38 Radek Chlup, *Proclus: An Introduction*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 202, note 5.

reading—Proclus, though he has a more positive account of matter than Plotinus, only regards matter as a passive rather than active potency, an end and not a beginning—which is to say that matter is not a principle that has its own motion, however chaotic it may be, within itself. Matter may not be mere privation, as it was for Plotinus (and eventually also for St. Augustine) but, unlike in Schelling, it cannot positively begin anything. Perhaps Chlup is correct and one is to take very little in the Neoplatonists, who were so found of allegorical interpretations, literally.[39] Proclus himself will often speak of these issues in almost mythical fashion or as if on a par with mere myth and allegory. He writes:

> In giving existence to the discordant and unordered ahead of the production of the cosmos [Plato] is copying the theologians. For just as they introduce wars and uprisings of the Titans against the Olympians, so too does Plato assume two starting-points, namely the unorganized (*akosmos*) and that which produces organization (*kosmopoios*).[40]

Whether his words are to be taken literally or figuratively, it should not be surprising that Proclus, arguably the most Platonist and least Aristotelian of the Neoplatonists, was the one to criticize the deflationary account of matter provided by Plotinus, at least not if one finds any merit to the thesis that the true follower of Plato will accord to matter a genuine ontological status instead of relegating it to the shadows of non-being as Aristotle's merely logical presupposition. Whether Proclus truly adopted matter or the unlimited as an unruly and, hence, ever-moving and actively dynamic (δύναμις [*dynamis*]) principle at the origin of things or whether he relegated it to a mere passive

39 As an example of Neoplatonism's penchant for analogy and allegory Chlup writes: "Eastern Neoplatonists take a different course. In their metaphysical accounts they are able to speak of the one quite clearly and precisely, but at the same time they constantly stress that none of their statements actually capture the true one as such." Chlup, *Proclus*, 55. This is to be read against the many analogies of the one offered by Plotinus, who apparently believes himself actually to be hitting at the reality of the one as such by these means. Yet, Chlup also asserts: "Proclus postulates the 'henads' or 'gods' as the basic 'subunits' existing within the one." "The incomprehensible one turns out to be really just a tiny point on the top of the pyramid of all things in which everything else is subject to apprehension. Although the henads are unknowable themselves, we can know them safely through their effects." Chlup, *Proclus*, 61. If the henads can be known through their effects, then one is committed to a notion of univocal causing, which should not be surprising as this is a staple of participation—which affirms that there cannot be more being in the participated than in that in which it participates, hence that the participated cannot assert anything other than what it has found in that in which it participates. Yet, if causing is univocal and if the participated cannot express something otherwise than that in which it participates, then the participated *does* reveal something about the unparticipated or that in which the participated participates. Accordingly, it seems that some statements, even if they must be analogical rather than literal statements, should actually be able to divulge something about the unparticipated itself.

40 Proclus, *Commentary*, 390, 28-32.

potency as the final procession emptied of all being cannot here be decided. The attempt here is simply to offer an experimental reading of Proclus's *Elements of Theology*, altering one of his presuppositions in accordance with Schelling's reading of the *Timaeus* in order to see what might follow as a consequence for the rest of the propositions of the *Elements of Theology*. Finally, it must be asked if this bastard reading corresponds to what we find in the later Schelling. Did Schelling, in fact, develop his later thought as an outgrowth of reading Plato's *Timaeus* in the nineteenth year of his life?

An Experimental Reading of Proclus' *Elements of Theology*

If matter is the most incomplete, imperfect, discordant and inferior—concerning which Schelling and the Neoplatonists alike are in perfect agreement—then should one assert that matter lies at the ultimate basis of things, so the complete, perfect, ordered and superior could only be consequent and not original. If one begins with matter as the only cosmological pre-existent and progresses toward the more perfect and ordered, then one is denying the Medieval doctrine that the effect cannot contain more being than the cause (and perhaps even the Ancient doctrine that like causes like insofar as order would be consequent upon a disorder which it is in no way like). This is precisely the proposition (#7) to be axiomatically denied in Proclus's *Elements of Theology*, which states, "*Every productive cause is superior to that which it produces.*"[41] Any further alterations of propositions in this experimental reading will ensue as a result of this first amendment. It is to be seen, however, that a rejection of this proposition already entails a break with any metaphysics of participation considered as a doctrine that the participated cannot contain more being than and be superior to that in which it participates. In other words, by substituting Proclus's premise with a more Schellingian one, one will be led to regard the procession of being as a gradation (*Steigerung*) of higher and higher levels of superiority and not as a descent according to which being is gradually lost until one hits rock bottom in the non-being of utterly inferior and derivative matter.

Now, proposition 8 reads as a direct consequence of proposition 7. "*All that in any way participates the good is subordinate to the primal good which is nothing else but good.*"[42] Proclus offers as an implication that "all appetite implies a lack of, and a severance from, the object craved."[43] How is this not the exact implication that causes Plotinus to regard evil as a mere privation, arguably the presupposition at the heart of the vast majority of Western metaphysics? Desire/appetite is, in this way, thought completely in terms of lack, that is, apophatically rather than cataphatically. Desire or appetite has no being of

41 Proclus, *The Elements of Theology*, trans. E.R. Dodds (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963), Prop. 7.

42 Proclus, *Elements*, Prop. 8.

43 Proclus, *Elements*, 11.

its own, but is only culled by the absent object, "the object craved." Desire is a consequence of having departed from the good which can satisfy it, which begs Nietzsche's (amongst others') question: Why did the good ever leave itself? In response, this essay proposes that one reserve the term 'good' only for the one in its return or ἐπιστροφή [*epistrophē*]; for, only in return is the one desired as the *missing* object of desire. Procession, however, according to Neoplatonist thought, does not occur because of a missing or absent good, but instead on account of the effusiveness of the one (even if this effusiveness is still conceived in terms of apophatic theology as a negation of all inferior forms of being). Furthermore, if one reserves the term "good" for the one only as the object reverted to in ἐπιστροφή [*epistrophē*], then proposition 13 follows all the more tightly.

Proposition 13 reads: "*Every good tends to unify what participates it; and all unification is a good; and the good is identical with the one.*"[44] Procession is a departure from the one or, as it were, diffusion, whereas the unity of all things is only constituted through their reversion to the one. The one only exerts a unifying operation and is thus only the good proper in return or reversion, because "all unification is a good" and because "the good is identical with the one" insofar as it is unity-bestowing. Proclus comments:

> For if it belongs to the good to conserve all that exists (and it is for no other reason that all things desire it); and if likewise that which conserves and holds together the being of each several thing is unity (since by unity each is maintained in being, but by dispersion displaced from existence): then the good, wherever it is present, makes the participant one, and holds its being together in virtue of this unification.[45]

The good is only good insofar as it is one-making, that is, *limit-giving*. This means that the one is only to be called good in return, not as the first but as the *last*. For this reason, in fact, Aristotle's god, which Proclus criticizes for its impotency to act as principle and begin any process, but only acting as *end* of movement, is to be called good, that is, precisely only insofar as it is an end and not an origin, a culmination and achievement of unity and not a generator of difference. Like Aristotle's god, which is a perfectly self-enclosed circle that ensures that the object of desire is never absent, self-desiring desire, goodness is only intrinsic to that which can revert upon itself, that is, goodness is only in that which is self-sufficient. This, then, is why matter, for Plotinus, is at the end of the day still likely thought as a deficiency of goodness, a mere privation of the good, that last procession in which all goodness has finally been dissipated, which is to be seen in the fact that it is *essentially* discordant and

44 Proclus, *Elements*, Prop. 13.
45 Proclus, *Elements*, 15.

unable ever again to become one with itself (It is, of course, always capable of *receiving* oneness or determination insofar as it is a one-attractor). Proclus, for all his criticisms of Plotinus, thus far falls in line with Plotinus, viewing the good as one-bestowing and desire as motivated by a *lack* of goodness, that is, a deficiency or privation of oneness, insofar as Proclus too denies that matter can self-revert, thereby acquiring self-sufficiency.

Chlup notes in this context: "The emanation can only stop at a level that is no longer capable of self-reversion."[46] This level is, of course, the material world, because soul, for example, is still perfect, that is, sufficient, because capable of self-reversion. Only in matter has the one proved itself as *effusive* and perfect, albeit still *not* self-sufficient. The one, as effusive, is not self-sufficient because it is self-overflowing; it cannot suffice with itself. It ends not in sufficiency, but in excess. Prior to matter—the excess of the one—has the one actually proved itself to be effusive? In other words, is the one effusive prior to the procession of matter? If not, then matter would not just be permitted, but it would be required for the one to be identified *as* the effusive good to which things ought to return and hence matter, as Proclus wishes to affirm, could not be evil as such or even the source of evil. Matter is rather the posterior condition of the good as the posterior proof of the one's effusiveness, its inability perfectly to revert upon itself. Matter itself would then not so much participate in the good—which it clearly does not do insofar as, as the receptacle of limit, it lacks oneness and identity in itself—but it would establish the one's effusiveness and thereby generate the need to return in order that things may become one and hence good. It would be the condition of the one *as* the good, as the absent object that bestows unity on that which has been disseminated. Only that capable of reversion is capable of oneness.

Now, in proposition 24, Proclus brings the discussion to its decisive juncture. He writes, "*All that participates is inferior to the participated, and this latter to the unparticipated.*"[47] Given this study's methodological rejection of proposition 7 and the insight that the consequent overflow of the one, matter, operates as that artifice by which the one proves itself to be more than one, that is, more than itself or effusive, namely, an effusive *good*, so too must this proposition be denied. According to the experimental or even bastard reading offered here, this proposition must be rejected because the one too has acquired something more, something extra, namely, its goodness, through its consequent: matter. The good is only good because it is extra-one, that is, more than one. The good is good because it bestows oneness on the participating and reverting even though it itself, in the production of matter, surpasses oneness; it produces an extra, a supplement to the one. The good, consequently constituted through matter, which thus proves the one's effusiveness and generates the need for reversion, is accordingly superior to the one prior to the emanation of matter,

46 Chlup, *Proclus*, 75.
47 Proclus, *Elements*, Prop. 24.

superior to the one in its pre-processual or pre-lapsarian state. There is something more in the one as consequent, that is, as good, as object of desire, than it had as pre-processual antecedent. What is to be affirmed in its entirety, at any rate, at least in a sense, is proposition 26, which states, "*Every productive cause produces the next and all subsequent principles while itself remaining steadfast.*"[48] The suggestion of this experimental reading is to read μονή [*monē*] along the lines of Schelling's idea of "the never presencing remainder."[49] This too affirms that the cause or, stated in a more deflationary manner, the antecedent is never dissipated in its consequent, but rather heightened and greatened! The antecedent, the one, is now not just the one that begins a motion (procession)—a first cause simply—but also an end, that is, also an object of desire, also the good.

Proclus states in proposition 32, "*All reversion is accomplished through a likeness of the reverting terms to the goal of reversion.*"[50] Sense can no longer be made of this proposition, as the consequences of this bastard reading of the *Elements of Theology* has made the one to differ from itself in its pre-processual state as it is only good in a post-lapsarian sense as the object of return. In other words, it is now unlike itself as it was prior to the act of procession (however much such a pre-processual state is simply a moment for thought and nothing actual). There is thus a denial that like causes like precisely because there is also a denial that there cannot be more in the consequent than in the antecedent. The one as consequent has become unlike itself as antecedent by becoming superior to itself as antecedent, by becoming the good, a bestower rather than diffuser of unity. This marks the break with the traditional understanding of the theory of participation. The one as antecedent, although it indivisibly remains (μονή [*monē*]), although it is not assumed and encapsulated by its consequent, is nevertheless altered by a change that occurs 'outside' it, the ex-cretion of matter. It is not a change *in* the one itself that alters it, but it is a change that occurs *outside* the one that alters it. This is the consequence of thinking the good and desire for the good in positive terms rather than as negativity, that is, as mere privation; the one now works to heighten and elevate itself to more superior domains, the domain of the good. Neoplatonism operates from the top down while Schelling works from the bottom up. The former approach affirms that causes are superior to their effects—which always leaves one wondering why it would leave itself (the notion of the effusiveness of the one aside[51])—

48 Proclus, *Elements*, Prop. 26.

49 "*Ein nie aufgehender Rest*," Schelling "Philosophische," 360. This phrase, following Slavoj Žižek, is normally translated as "indivisible remainder." Never presencing remainder, however, though clumsier, intimates that it is the source or substratum of all presentation without itself ever occurring within what is presented.

50 Proclus, *Elements*, Prop. 32.

51 Chlup correctly remarks that for Neoplatonists "the one is often compared to the sun, whose rays do not illuminate our world intentionally, being a natural result of the sun's hotness" Chlup, *Proclus*, 63. Procession from the one occurs according to Neoplatonism because the one is effusive, which means that there is no intention or volition involved. The one could not have failed to

while the latter posits that causes are inferior to their effects. According to the latter option every creation is a heightening and intensification of being and not a diffusion and descent unto the inert non-being that is matter. On the former account, considered from the perspective of the one itself, there would be no need for reversion; reversion would leave the one as is. Reversion would be, so to speak, no good for the one on the traditional Neoplatonic reading. The latter Schellingian reading, however, recognizes this and therefore drops the cyclical character of reversion altogether in order to think through the implications of linearity, that is, historicity. This Schellingian reading suggests that a cause is only a cause if it brings about a consequent that is *independent*, that is, no longer participatory, precisely insofar as the effect inversely posits the cause *as* antecedent. As Proclus himself elsewhere states, "God brings all unlimitedness into existence, he also brings matter, which is ultimate unlimitedness, into existence. And this is the very first and ineffable cause of matter."[52] Could this not be read as saying that god brings the unlimited into existence *as* matter, that is, *as* substrate or *as* antecedent, and it brings limit into existence *as* consequent? In this respect, one can affirm both the historical nature of creation, that is, the division of times into before and after, antecedent and consequent, while still affirming the eternal nature of procession. Things proceed from the one always with an as-character. Matter or the unlimited proceeds always *as* antecedent, precondition, past and *subjectum* and limit always *as* consequent, that is, as *future* consequent; for, a consequent is always the consequent *of* a 'prior' antecedent. This historical process would not occur 'in' time because the positing of the unlimited *as* antecedent/past and limit *as* consequent/future is, in fact, the very positing of time itself. Time itself cannot be posited 'in' time just as Becoming cannot itself become, but time is timelessly or eternally posited. There is nevertheless a veritable prior and posterior and not the Neoplatonic circle of simultaneity/eternity in which everything happens in one stroke. This reading, in concurrence with Proclus and Neoplatonism in general, preserves the ineffability of the one, because the effect, as no longer resembling or being *like* the cause, discloses nothing about the cause (This is where St. Thomas departs from Neoplatonism and the doctrine of participation in requiring that god's causing be thought non-univocally.) The effect is now no longer a mere predicate or attribute of the cause as fully participatory in it, but the effect is only an effect at all *because* of its independence, that is, lack of participation, in the antecedent cause. This is precisely how it inversely posits the antecedent

process/create; it is not free not to do so. The one *is* free, that is, self-determined, but it does not *act* freely, but rather out of its overflowing perfection. It is, so to speak, constrained to overflow itself. Schelling, in beginning with the inferior rather than the effusiveness of the perfect, rather speaks of the origin as a "decision," a free decision, and not an overflowing by nature. Chlup provides the Neoplatonic response here: "A perfect being needs no decisions whatsoever, being always capable of acting in the best way possible" Chlup, *Proclus*, 69. Progression or amelioration is impossible if one begins with the perfect.

52 Proclus, *Commentary*, 385, 1-4.

as antecedent rather than as simultaneous with itself as an eternal source of presence and participation. Non-univocal or heterogeneous causing, in denying that like causes like, rejects that the effect remains in, that is, participates in, the cause, but it accepts that the cause remains in itself, never subsumed into the effect, that is, its consequent become independent. Causality is thus not participation and unification, but independence and differentiation! Contra Neoplatonism, this author asserts that to be an effect is to be independent from the cause and to be a cause, as Proclus would want of the one, is thus to be unparticipated, an indivisible remainder. There is, in short, a transitive breach between cause and effect, antecedent and consequent, past and future, which spells the end of participation and reversion.

This bastard reading, then, also denies proposition 35: "*Every effect remains in its cause, proceeds from it, and reverts upon it.*"[53] It does, however, wholeheartedly agree with proposition 75: "*Every cause properly so called transcends its resultant.*"[54] Effects cannot encapsulate or exhaust their cause, but not because they are always less than their cause, but because they are *more* than and independent of their cause, which is inversely altered by this change in the effect that is now *outside* it, that is, no longer participatory in it. To dispute what Proclus says in proposition 69, the effect is *not* a part participatory in the whole-before-the-parts and this constitutes a decisive break with participation as the doctrine that the participated retains only passive potency and so can have no inverse effect on the being of the cause. The one, for example, can indeed be altered into the good by means of the independence of its effect/consequent, primarily matter, which is but the proof of the one's unparticipatedness, proof that the one can produce something extra in the sense of non-participatory, something incapable of reversion and return to the one itself.

Standing Neoplatonism on its Head

This author does not purport to pronounce judgment concerning the correct interpretation of the role of matter in Proclus, but it does show that Schelling's reading sets the *canonical* reading of Neoplatonism (and Platonism at large)—which is likely more Plotinian and Aristotelian than Procline—on its head by rejecting the idea that reality descends from superior originals to inferior copies. This essay has attempted to explicate what would ensue if proposition 7 of Proclus's *Elements of Theology* concerning the inferiority of the effect with regard to its cause were methodologically denied in accordance with Schelling's reading of Plato. The contention is that Schelling's later thought continues to build upon his early reading of Plato's *Timaeus*, but in such way that it inverts the *direction* of so-called emanationism in Neoplatonism. Emanation (or if one

53 Proclus, *Elements*, Prop. 35.
54 Proclus, *Elements*, Prop. 75.

prefers, procession) descends from the superior to the inferior, but Schelling hopes to ascend, that is, repeat at a higher intensity, from the inferior to the superior.

Schelling stated (more than once) in the 1840s:

> The entire collection of his remaining works is thoroughly dialectical, but at the summit and point of transfiguration ... in the *Timaeus* Plato becomes historical and breaks through, albeit only violently, into the positive, namely, in such a way that the trace of scientific transition is scarcely to be detected or only with great difficulty. It is more of a breach from the foregoing (namely, the dialectical) than a transition to the positive (SW XIII: 100).[55]

In Schelling's own estimation, then, the turn in Plato's later thought from a dialectical (and, given his re-inscription of this into Kantian terms, transcendental) project to a historical and narrative method becomes the impetus for Schelling's own division between negative and positive, that is, historical, philosophy, hence his philosophy of mythology and revelation. The precedent had already been set by the historical turn in Plato's cosmology or naturephilosophy. Peculiar to the emphasis on history is that movement is linear and one-directional and not cyclical, as it must be if one adheres to a doctrine of ἐπιστροφή [*epistrophē*]. Schelling's positive philosophy is a priori only in the sense that it proceeds from the *prius* forth,[56] while negative philosophy seeks to regress back to a first cause, first ground or first being; positive philosophy is progressive and negative philosophy is regressive. It is the directionality of the method that marks the difference between negative and positive philosophy, that is, regressive and merely logical philosophy on the one hand and progressive and historical philosophy on the other hand. Now, the need for reversion in Neoplatonism was to bestow oneness and goodness on that which had proceeded from the one and was thus deficient in oneness, longing for the one as the absent but desired object. Reversion is needed because procession was a movement from the superior to the inferior. Beierwaltes acutely judges, however, that for Schelling, already in the middle period of his thought marked by his drafts of *The Ages of the World* (*Die Weltalter*) (1811-1815), "The end of this processive self-revelation of god is—in opposition to the Neoplatonic procession of the one/good—the '*highest.*'"[57] Schelling's is not a system of emanation hinged

55 "Die ganze Reihe seiner übrigen Werke hindurch dialektische ist, aber im Gipfel und Verklärungspunkt ... im Timäos wird Platon geschichtlich, und bricht, freilich nur gewaltsam, ins Positive durch, nämlich so, daß die Spur des wissenschaftlichen Übergangs kaum oder schwer zu entdecken ist—es ist mehr ein Abbrechen vom Vorhergegangenen (nämlich dem Dialektischen) als ein Übergehen zum Positiven." Translations of this work are my own.

56 "*Vom Prius herleitend*" (SW XIII: 177-530, here 249).

57 Beierwaltes, "Legacy," 406.

upon notions of imitation and participation, but a metaphysics of novel production and elevation. Schelling denies that reality has descended from superior originals to inferior copies and rather argues that reality moves from inferior matter, which is yet a principle with its own discordant motion(s), to higher and more superior levels of order and organization. Beierwaltes's gloss is then perfectly accurate:

> Schelling understands matter in his speculative physics as a process productive in itself, and in the *Weltalter* as the precondition of the dynamic process of an historical unfolding of the Absolute....Thus, in his ennobling of matter....Schelling departs decisively from Plotinus. This difference has less to do with the concept of matter as an element and basis of nature than it has to do with the *progressive weakening* or destruction (*Zer-nichtung*) of reality.[58]

Beierwaltes is correct to indicate that the issue does not concern matter as such as the basis of reality, as both Plotinus and Proclus themselves affirm an intelligible matter, but the *Zer-nichtung*, the bringing to nought or bringing to non-being of reality. Matter is considered as mere non-being, as reality emptied of being and δύναμις [*dynamis*]; this is the end of procession for the Neoplatonist, hence the need for reversion. By conceiving of procession as progression, that is, a heightening, potentiation or intensification of reality rather than as a descent or emanation, Schelling is able to avoid the need for reversion, which returns to things their lost unity and goodness. By conceiving of procession as an escalation, Schelling also posits the whole process as an open-ended, one-directional line without any need to return or close itself back up into a circle. This, for Schelling, is positive, historical philosophy. Not even god, for Schelling, much like the one of the Neoplatonists, is self-sufficient, except that Schelling is able to view god/the one as effusive from the outset. Matter is not the *last* emanation that proves the effusiveness and impossibility of self-reversion for the one, but it is *first* and it is a *principle*, a productive principle.

One may plausibly argue that for Proclus, contra Plotinus, matter is not the last but rather the first emanation, but it nevertheless does not seem to be a productive principle. First, regarding the possibility that Proclus views matter as the first emanation from the one, Chlup can state that for Proclus, "matter is paradoxically very close to the one, being produced by it *only* [emphasis added] and bearing *no traces* [emphasis added] of the lower levels ([*Elements of Theology*] 72)."[59] Similarities between the one and matter abound, for example,

58 Beierwaltes, "Legacy," 415.

59 Chlup, *Proclus*, 88. It is also highly recommended that one view Chlup's chart depicting the stages of emanation on page 98 of this same text, which clearly shows that matter is a *direct* procession from the one and not, as it were, the last on the ladder of descent, first having to pass

both are simple, properly invisible, non-intelligible (though the one is higher than the intelligible as inscrutable and ineffable and matter is rather less than intelligible) and so forth. Moreover, both are otherwise than being: "the one is non-being in the sense of what is 'superior to being,' while matter in the sense of what is weaker than being"[60] and regarding their shared non-intelligibility, Chlup adds, "The lowest inanimate objects are thus particularly suited for manifesting the divine, for by being deprived of all traces of intelligence they symmetrically mirror that which transcends intellect."[61]

Given Chlup's foregoing consideration and his clear depiction of matter as a direct and immediate procession from the one, it then seems baffling to read a passage like the following from him, a passage which must be rejected by this work's attempt to stand Neoplatonism on its head. "[Plotinus] seems to grant (in common with Proclus) that in the end matter is the final link in a long causal chain whose beginning lies in the good." "It was the lowest offshoot of soul (i.e. Nature) which produced matter (*Enn.* V 2, 1, 21)."[62] However true this judgment may be of Plotinus, it is surely dubious in Proclus, for whom Chlup elsewhere clearly suggests that matter is *not* "the lowest offshoot" and *not* "the final link in a long causal chain" but rather pre-existent for *all* other levels on the chain of being as the first, albeit most inferior, and direct emanation from the one. If Chlup is correct in aligning Proclus with Plotinus in this respect, then Schelling's reading of the *Timaeus* would stand in direct contrast with Proclus's, standing Proclus on his head. If, however, Proclus does admit that matter is preexistent for all other levels of reality, then the main difference between the two is simply that Proclus does not admit that matter acts as a principle of motion and so fails to admit that reality could ascend and potentiate itself. At the end of the day, matter is still an emptying out of dignity and rank,[63] which functions as proof of the impossibility of self-reversion for the one, rather than being the presupposed substrate that allows for potentiation, intensification and elevation.

Concerning Schelling's relation to Plato and Neoplatonism, Grant has argued that Schelling avoids two-world Platonizing precisely by holding

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through soul, sensible reality and the like. Matter, if one believes (at least this particular chart of) Chlup, is last in rank for Proclus, but first in the order of procession.

60 Note also Chlup, *Proclus*, 223, where he says that Proclus "admits that matter is a kind of non-being, but … non-being for him is connected with potentiality … it is the necessary 'vacuum' element in each level of reality.… It follows that non-being is to be found on all planes of reality, matter being but its lowest and most passive expression."

61 Chlup, *Proclus*, 90.

62 Chlup, *Proclus*, 206.

63 Chlup comments similarly of Plotinus, "Matter is seen by Plotinus as total privation, deforming forms and preventing their full realization" Chlup, *Proclus*, 77. The Schellingian position, however, views matter as that *pre*condition *without which* the good could not come to be rather than viewing it as an impediment to the good. Note in this context Plato's distinction at the end of the *Phaedo* between merely material preconditions without which something could not be what it is and the actual reason *by which* a thing is the thing that it is.

to the idea of preexistent and unruly matter, which Plotinus (and, perhaps, also Proclus) rejected. More recently Daniel Whistler has reiterated this same point, writing, "The model of emanation is grounded in the very 'two-world' metaphysics Schelling rejects. The distinction between copy and archetype is brought about by the process of emanation. Pre-existing archetypes produce inferior copies of themselves."[64] Accordingly, Schelling has no need for reversion; one-directional linearity reigns. This is precisely the point of Schelling's late positive, that is, historical, philosophy, which *progresses* from the origin without the accompanying need for reversion because reality always potentiates itself rather than emptying itself into degraded and imperfect copies. For Schelling, things must not revert to the one to acquire their oneness, but the one acquires its unity all the more intensely the more things progress toward greater degrees of unity yet unknown. The one is produced or constructed, not disseminated. For the canonical reading of Neoplatonism emanation always produces only failing and inadequate forms of the one itself, hence their need to revert back upon their source, while for Schelling all forms of unity are not derivate copies but excessive intensifications of oneness. The produced is always more than the source of production; consequents always exceed the anterior in rank and dignity. The world did not begin with the perfect, but the hope is that it might end with it. It is precisely this aspect of Schelling, which lead to the speculative rejection of proposition 7 in the experimental reading of Proclus's *Elements of Theology*, that sets Neoplatonism on its head or, just perhaps, on its feet, firmly implanted in a material base.

64 Daniel Whistler, *Schelling's Theory of Symbolic Language: Forming the System of Identity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 87.

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The Eclectic System in Cousin and Schelling

Daniel Whistler

Eclecticism is therefore the contrary of dialectic
—Macherey[1]

Schelling among the Eclectics

On 29 June 1832, Victor Cousin announced to F.W.J. Schelling, "In a few days, I will send you a new edition of my *Fragments* with an introduction that speaks much of you. It is one of the most important things I have written and I recommend it to your attention."[2] Cousin's reference is to the new Preface written for the second edition of his *Fragments philosophiques*, which Schelling did indeed receive a year later. On 23 August 1833, Schelling responds:

> I received with great pleasure and read with great interest the second edition of your *Fragments philosophiques*, evident proof of the fact that your political career has not taken you from science. Your friendship for me cannot be doubted from the Preface; I am thinking of giving an extract of it and a critique of the scientific part in a literary journal published here.[3]

1 Pierre Macherey, "Les débuts philosophiques de Victor Cousin," *Corpus* 18/19 (1991), 42. Unless otherwise noted, all translations from French and German are my own.
2 Victor Cousin, "Letter to Schelling, 29 June 1832," in Cousin and Schelling, *Correspondance, 1818-1845*, ed. Christiane Mauve and Patrice Vermeren, *Corpus* 18/19 (1991), 218.
3 F.W.J. Schelling, "Letter to Cousin, 23 August 1833," in *Correspondance*, 222.

This promise of "a critique" was fulfilled in a notice Schelling published initially in the *Bayer'schen Annalen* in 1833 and subsequently, in revised form, as the Preface to the 1834 German translation of Cousin's second-edition Preface—"your preface to my preface," as Cousin dubbed it.[4] In 1835, it was translated into French, twice: initially by Félix Ravaisson[5] and then by Joseph Willm.[6] It was to become Schelling's most significant publication during the final four decades of his life and, indeed, Schelling himself writes to Cousin of his apprehension and "repugnance at having to explain myself on so many very significant philosophical issues after having kept silent so long."[7]

Schelling's "amical but serious critique"[8] is wide-ranging, and itself makes explicit only a few of the issues that were at stake over the course of his twenty-five year friendship with Cousin; for this reason, it is certainly not my purpose here to provide a comprehensive summary. Instead, I focus on the similarities that hold between Cousin's and Schelling's conceptions of systematicity, and in particular an 'eclectic' tendency present in both Cousin's and, I will argue, Schelling's systems.[9] My jumping-off point is a comment of Schelling's on Cousin's eclectics in the 1834 Preface:

> We do not deny that psychology can be a useful preparation for philosophy in general (though it can never serve as its ground). But it cannot serve as preparation for a determinate philosophy, especially not for [the philosophy] here in question, to which it has no relation. As for the preparation that was subjectively necessary for this [determinate philosophy], the philosophical spirit has taken care of that in a much better way by means of the diverse systems in which it has successively served its apprenticeship.... This might, at the present moment, be no better understood than by something similar to the eclecticism which Cousin has set out with such truth and vividness (even if this is perhaps not the appropriate term) (SW X: 215).

4 Victor Cousin, "Letter to Schelling, 28 September 1834," in *Correspondance*, 229.

5 This marked the beginning of Ravaisson's long, if ambivalent reception of Schelling's philosophy. See Dominique Janicaud, "Victor Cousin et Ravaisson, lecteurs de Hegel et Schelling," *Les Etudes Philosophiqes* 4 (1984), 451-66; Christiane Mauve, "Ravaisson, lecteur et interprète de Schelling," *Romantisme* 88 (1995), 65-74.

6 On Willm's role in the controversy, see Paul Rowe, *A Mirror on the Rhine? The Nouvelle Revue germanique* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2000), 236-41.

7 F.W.J. Schelling, "Letter to Cousin, 27 August 1834," in *Correspondance*, 228.

8 Victor Cousin, "Letter to Schelling, 28 September 1834," in *Correspondance*, 229.

9 So, for example, there is more going on in Schelling's rejection of psychologism in the passage below—let alone in the Preface as a whole—than could easily be discussed in the one essay, and I do not even attempt such a task. As this implies, I neglect many of the very significant differences between Cousin and Schelling, as well as providing only a partial reading of their systematic practices as a whole, isolating artificially, as it were, one significant strand of their thinking in order to bring out what strikes me as an important yet underexplored form of post-Kantian systematizing—the eclectic system.

Legible here, I am going to contend, is an ambivalent, yet unmistakable affirmation of something like Cousinian eclecticism. Similar marks of approval are discernible later in the Preface when Schelling remarks, "All that Cousin has written in general—both here and elsewhere—on the history of philosophy and on the manner of treating it is excellent in every respect" (SW X: 222), as well as in their correspondence, when—upon reading the Preface to the first edition of *Fragments philosophiques* in 1826—Schelling exclaims, "Keep going! You have followed entirely the idea of the true system."[10] In this essay, I make the following experiment: to take Schelling's more-than-half-hearted approval for the practice of eclectics seriously, to see what happens when Schelling's philosophy is read as part of the eclectic tradition—that is, I present a case for reading Schelling's system as an eclectic one, "even if this is perhaps not the appropriate term."[11] In the first few sections, I consider some initial reasons from the history of ideas why this is a plausible case, before proceeding in the final section to the conceptual meat of the argument, where I argue at length for the disjunction of the dialectic and the eclectic.

The Search for a European System

To his translation of the *Jugement de M. Schelling sur la philosophie de M. Cousin*, Willm appended his own Preface (the Preface to the French translation of Schelling's Preface to the German translation of Cousin's Preface), entitled, "Essai sur la nationalité des philosophies." The title articulates what Willm took to be the central stakes not only of the content of the Cousin-Schelling controversy, but also of the very fact that these two celebrated philosophers from very different intellectual traditions were engaging with each other's works.

Indeed, in all three prefaces, there is a pressing sense of something that has been lost in recent philosophical endeavors, a loss of common purpose and meaning—a loss of the European ideal. That is, instead of producing philosophies that try to speak to all European peoples and thus become "universally' intelligible,"[12] philosophers are now, it is claimed, concerned with

10 F.W.J. Schelling, "Letter to Cousin, 16 April 1826," in *Correspondance*, 204. On the other hand and unsurprisingly, Schelling does react aversely to Cousin's insistence on eclectically mixing his philosophy with that of Hegel ("Letter to Cousin, 27 November 1828," in *Correspondance*, 210).

11 While this is to emphasize the stakes of this reading in relation to Schelling, the stakes for interpretations of Cousin are also high. Cousin's relation to German Idealism has been, as we shall see, a perennial sore-spot in his reception from the late 1820s onwards. Contemporary readings that draw his work into the ambit of German Idealism (Janicaud, Macherey, Rey, Vermeren) tend to insist on its Hegelian origins and invoke Schelling mainly to highlight their differences. I will argue that, when it comes to the idea of the eclectic system, Schelling is also an inspiration, notwithstanding disagreements and misunderstandings.

12 The Eurocentrism of such universality is self-evident and remains unaddressed in all three prefaces.

national interests alone. At issue, then, is the task of reconstructing a form of European thinking that overcomes national, linguistic and cultural boundaries in the name of a geographic universality. There is of course much to say about the socio-historical context to this felt need for a philosophy that could unite Europe, and particularly France and Germany, in the early 1830s: at a time, that is, when Europe was coming to terms with the legacy of Napoleon and the Restoration, prior to the rise of the Second Empire and Franco-Prussian hostilities in the mid-century.[13]

As Willm argues, in previous epochs the use of a universal language (first Latin, then French) ensured that some pan-European understanding was presupposed, even if not always attained: "There was neither a French or German or British philosophy, but rather a European philosophy. All philosophies were linked and understood each other reciprocally."[14] During the late Seventeenth Century, for instance, "thanks to the universality of the French language which forced ideas to be expressed with universal clarity, European philosophy could stride in-step towards its destined future." However, according to Willm, "towards the middle of the Eighteenth Century, there was a great shift: from this time the different national schools began to separate more and more." Now, each national school "walked alone," alienated from the European alliance—and this is seen as a loss, for "the more national a philosophy, the narrower, more incomplete and thus further from the truth it is." Hence, Willm complains, "At no other epoch has European thought presented a greater diversity than in our day; the more it has become nationalized, the more it has ceased to be intelligible to all cultivated spirits.... Never has it all been spread so thin, never has there been less of a European philosophy."[15]

It is in the context of this somewhat fanciful genealogy that Willm reads Cousin's and Schelling's prefaces as particularly significant; indeed, he calls them "the most interesting fact of the recent history of philosophy." They will, he insists, "contribute to bring together German and French philosophy and so prepare a universal philosophy," and thus, through Schelling's and Cousin's endeavors, "soon philosophy, without ceasing to be English, French or German, will also become European, much closer to the truth, more understood everywhere and thus universally intelligible."[16] The ideal of European philosophy will have been resurrected, overcoming barriers of linguistic and cultural diversity.

This ideal of a pan-European philosophy is present in Schelling's Preface

13 Another celebrated example of such intellectual pan-Europeanism from the period is Louis Blanc, "D'un projet d'alliance intellectuelle entre l'Allemagne et la France," *La revue indépendante* 11 (1845). See further Christiane Mauve and Patrice Vermeren, "Le passage de la ligne: politiques de la nationalité philosophique sur les deux rives du Rhin," *Le Cahier du Collège International de Philosophie* 6 (1988), 53-65.

14 Joseph Willm, "Essai sur la nationalité des philosophies," in F.W.J. Schelling, *Jugement de M. Schelling sur la philosophie de M. Cousin*, trans. J. Willm (Paris: Levrault, 1835), xii.

15 Willm, "Essai," xvi-xxii.

16 Willm, "Essai," v, xliii.

too. In this essay, one finds Schelling, who is for some the very embodiment of metaphysical obscurantism, bemoaning the state of German philosophy thus:

> Germans have for so long philosophized among themselves alone that their speculations and their language has become further and further removed from what is universally intelligible.... Just as some families separate from the rest of society and living among themselves end up—among other repulsive peculiarities—affecting idiosyncratic expressions only intelligible to themselves, so too with Germans in philosophy. After a few vain attempts to spread Kant's ideas beyond their borders, they renounced the task of making themselves comprehensible to other peoples and instead now regard themselves as the philosophical elect, forgetting that the original goal of all philosophy—a goal often forgotten but still necessary—is to make oneself universally intelligible.... A philosophy which cannot make itself comprehensible to every civilized nation and be expressed suitably in all languages, for this reason alone cannot be the universal and true philosophy (SW X: 204).

Such criticisms of terminological mystification and jargon had been a staple of Schelling's thinking since he first read the *Phänomenologie des Geistes* and form a central pillar of his Hegel-critique. Nevertheless, this time Schelling's call for an ordinary language philosophy is occasioned very specifically by Cousin's Preface to the *Fragments philosophiques*. It is in response to Cousin's text that Schelling goes on to see part of the remedy for German philosophy's penchant for jargon in a kind of Francofication: German philosophers must learn good style from the French. He writes, "It is generally agreed that when it comes to the clear, simple and precise presentation of scientific matters there is something to be learned from our cousins in the west" (SW X: 204). Through the absorption of French philosophical style into German systematizing, Schelling claims, genuinely universal philosophy can be attained.

Schelling intends the above as a contribution to Cousin's defense against his detractors. For, as Cousin points out in his own 1833 Preface, it had become commonplace to accuse him of betraying the French philosophical spirit by importing German concepts and concerns—in Cousin's words, this is "the objection of Germanism repeated so often" in France.[17] That is, Cousin's detractors saw in his work of the late 1820s and early 1830s intellectual treason, a renunciation of the virtues of the French intellectual tradition in the name of a Germanic return to scholastic metaphysics and jargon: "Here is the most devastating objection [to my work]: all of it is only an importation of German

17 Victor Cousin, "Letter to Schelling, 13 October 1833," in *Correspondance*, 225.

philosophy, and it is this accusation that stirs up patriotism as if I had introduced a foreigner into the heart of my country."[18] Cousin had made no secret of his admiration for and borrowings from Schelling and Hegel: they are his "two great masters,"[19] and Cousin explicitly writes of Schellingian philosophy as follows: "The first years of the nineteenth century have seen appear the great system. Europe owes it to Germany, and Germany to Schelling. This system is the true one, for it is the most complete expression of the whole of reality."[20]

Hence, Cousin does not deny having imported German philosophy; instead, his strategy (in 1833, at least[21]) is to affirm both the international and the national character of his philosophy simultaneously. Hence, while Willm enthusiastically embraces the ideal of a European philosophy and Schelling insists on it as an escape from the false turns of Hegelianism, Cousin feels it necessary to be far more circumspect about this ideal in his Preface.[22] He acknowledges his redeployment of German Idealist concepts and arguments at the same time as affirming the integral 'Frenchness' of his philosophy. So, having, as above, set out at length his debt to Schelling, Cousin goes on to provide a number of responses to the accusations that his fondness for "the new German school" has led him to blindly betray French traditions.

First—and most substantively—Cousin differentiates himself from German Idealism in respect to his psychological 'method': "My two illustrious friends [Hegel and Schelling] place themselves from the beginning in speculation; I begin from experience ... I start from psychology."[23] Hence, he concludes there is a "general difference that separates me from the new German school, namely, that of the psychological character heavily imprinted on all my views."[24] While this difference is fundamental to any summary of the Cousin-Schelling controversy, it lies outside the focus of the present essay.

Secondly, it is by means of a grounded and sober style that Cousin believes he remains faithful to France, despite it all. His style is French because it is precise, clear and free of jargon. This is evidently why Schelling comes to Cousin's defense precisely on the question of style, and indeed Schelling states explicitly, "Cousin's love for German philosophy has been criticized as an anti-

18 Victor Cousin, *Fragments philosophiques*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Ladrange, 1833), xxx.

19 Cousin, *Fragments*, xliii. He continues elsewhere, "Hegel has borrowed much from Schelling; I— being less able than either of them—have borrowed from both of them." *Fragments*, xli.

20 Cousin, *Fragments*, xl-xli.

21 In the 1840s and beyond, Cousin will increasingly deny altogether any German influence on the development of his thought and, instead, trace its origins to a French spiritualist tradition beginning with Descartes. For example, in later editions of *Fragments philosophiques*, the claim that Schelling's "system is the true one" is quietly omitted. On this point, see Lucie Rey, *Les enjeux de l'histoire de la philosophie en France au XIXe siècle: Pierre Leroux contre Victor Cousin* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2013), 144-5; more generally, on the conflict between 'internationalist' and 'nationalist' strands in Cousin's thinking, see Macherey, "Les débuts."

22 In correspondence with Schelling, Cousin speaks more freely of such a European ideal; see *Correspondance*, 206, 225.

23 Cousin, *Fragments*, xlii.

24 Cousin, *Fragments*, xliii.

French tendency; however, on the contrary, he has faithfully conserved [the French] national character for which, as he says himself, precision and clarity are essential" (SW X: 224). And behind such French stylistic virtues lies the idea of analysis. That is, Cousin believes that what unites the French philosophical tradition is analytic method: he identifies it in Cartesianism, Condillacian empiricism and the later sensualists, as well as in his own speculative psychology. Moreover, he specifies with respect to the French philosophical tradition as a whole:

> For me, the secret of the shared nationality of [French] philosophies lies entirely in the common spirit which presides over them, and which dominates their differences: this spirit of method and analysis, this need for clarity and precision is the French spirit *par excellence*. Here is our true nationality in philosophy; here is what we must take up and not abandon at any price.[25]

Such a defense poses an obvious limit to the ideal of European philosophy embraced by Willm: style, particularly the use of analysis, is to remain French. Hence, Cousin's tendency to analyze precisely means, in his view, that—despite all of his borrowings from German Idealism—his thought remains faithful to national tradition.

Thirdly—and this will be crucial for what follows—Cousin believes that he wards off accusations of Germanism by means of his overarching systematic practice of eclecticism. And it is with the invocation of eclecticism, in particular, that Cousin believes he can both defend himself against the treason charge, while still remaining partially committed to the ideal of a pan-European philosophy.[26] For Cousin, the very *modus operandi* of his philosophical enterprise is the constant appropriation of concepts and arguments from all other philosophical systems, whether historic or contemporary. Cousinian eclecticism is thus a form of "tolerance" which reconciles "inevitable diversity" in past philosophical systems by "taking advantage of the truths [each system] contains so as to draw out a general doctrine which will purify and enrich itself

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25 Cousin, *Fragments,* xxxi-xxxii. Cousin writes earlier in the Preface, "I prefer analysis to synthesis, because it reproduces the order of inversion which is true, while synthesis, in claiming to reproduce the necessary order of things, runs the risk of engendering only hypothetical abstractions." *Fragments*, xi-xii.

26 Again, this is a claim from which Cousin will later distance himself. From the 1840s onwards, he will argue that eclecticism is a distinctively French form of philosophy: "Eclecticism is a French doctrine and peculiar to us." Victor Cousin, *Premiers essais de philosophie* (Paris: Librarie nouvelle, 1862), 280. See further Donald R. Kelley, *The Descent of Ideas: The History of Intellectual History* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1988), 11-12; Michael Albrecht, *Eklektik: eine Begriffsgeschichte mit Hinweisen auf die Philosophie- und Wissenschaftsgeschichte* (Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog, 1994), 611.

over time without end."[27] Or, as Cousin puts it elsewhere, eclecticism "looks out and discerns the truths of different systems ... to justify them and give them a legitimate place in the great city of philosophy."[28] Systematic material is drawn from everywhere and is truly international in character. There will therefore be much material taken from "the new German school," for philosophy's task is to borrow, even from German sources. Consequently, Cousin writes in 1833 in response to his critics:

> There is nothing to fear from contact with philosophical schools that flourish in other parts of this great European family, and we would do well to discern there, with wisdom and firmness, the good and the bad, to send what is vapor and chimera to the wind and profit from what is solid and true ... I dare to believe that [my achievement in doing this] is a genuine service that I have made to my country and it will sooner or later be recognized.[29]

Eclectic appropriation, Cousin claims, is not itself German, even if it employs material from the German tradition extensively; instead, it contributes to the resurrection of a European philosophizing, for it plunders philosophical material from all nations indiscriminately.

A Potted History of Eclecticism from Vossius to Cousin—via Schelling

Eclecticism is international not only in the material it plunders, but also in its genealogy, which is characterized by cross-border negotiations: the very idea of eclecticism is born from Franco-German clashes and conciliations. The philosophical origins of eclectic philosophy[30] are to be found in Gerhard Vossius' 1657 *De philosophorum sectis liber*, which exploited a passing reference of Diogenes Laertius to the otherwise-unknown Potamon of Alexandria to imaginatively construct a late Antique philosophical school (*secta*) that freely selected what was best from all other sects—a *secta non secta*. Vossius' Potamon was therefore, following Laertius, an *eklektikos* [selector], and serves as a model for a late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century philosophical ideal that became extremely influential in the German academy prior to the hegemony of

27 Victor Cousin, *Cours de l'histoire de la philosophie moderne*, vol. I/2 (Paris: Fournier, 1846), 12.
28 Victor Cousin, *Histoire générale de la philosophie* (Paris: Librarie académique, 1864), 34-5.
29 Cousin, *Fragments*, xxxii.
30 The following brief conceptual history draws on Albrecht, *Eklektik*; Kelley, *The Descent of Ideas*; and three essays by Ulrich Johannes Schneider: "L'éclectisme avant Cousin. La tradition allemande," *Corpus* 18/19 (1991), 15-28, "Eclecticism Rediscovered: A Review Essay," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 59.1 (1998), 173-82, "The Problem of Eclecticism in the History of Philosophy," *Intellectual History Review* 26.1 (2016), 117-29.

Wolffianism. As U.J. Schneider describes it, "eclecticism served as the ideal of intellectual freedom for those who had to make up their minds before starting a career within the philosophical or theological faculties."[31] It was not so much a doctrine as a call to autonomy and, consequently, a thorough-going rejection of sectarianism. Brucker's monumental history of philosophy, completed in the mid-1740s, defines eclectic philosophy as follows: "For me only those are true eclectics who shed all prejudice of authority, admiration, old age, sect or other, in order to follow solely the reason one was born with, and to observe things and their essential properties."[32] Or as Christian Thomasius, the most influential German eclectic, put it, it is "to see with one's own eyes instead of others."[33] In general, seventeenth- and eighteenth-century eclectics defined themselves against three prevailing trends: first, dogmatism, or systematic philosophy—the eclectic ideal was a critical one, rejecting the false in all systems so as to avoid the sectarian transmission of partial and exclusive doctrines; secondly, a-historicism—the eclectic ideal involved a hermeneutics in which all traditions in the history of philosophy were to be read, interpreted and then selected from; thirdly, syncretism—the eclectic ideal required a reasonable and consistent selection of past philosophical materials, instead of syncretic, unthinking appropriation.

This eclectic movement received its definitive statement in Diderot's 1751 entry in the *Encyclopédie*, "Eclectisme." Diderot follows Brucker closely in his definition of the eclectic:

> The eclectic is a philosopher who stamps out pieties, prejudices, tradition, ancientness, universal consent, authority—in a word, everything which subjects the crowd; he dares to think for himself—even ascend to the clearest, general principles, examine them, discuss them, admit nothing except on the testimony of his own experience and reason.[34]

Diderot continues in a way that further emphasizes his familiarity with the German tradition: "The sectarian is a man who has embraced the doctrine of one philosopher; the eclectic, on the contrary, is a man who recognizes no master."[35] Nevertheless, what is absolutely central to present purposes is Diderot's invocation of a form of eclectic practice that breaks with the tradition—what he calls, systematic eclecticism. While for Thomasius, Brucker and others, eclecticism is essentially a protest against sectarian systems, "used

31 Schneider, "Eclecticism Rediscovered," 177.

32 Quoted in Schneider, "The Problem of Eclecticism," 121.

33 Quoted in Schneider, "The Problem of Eclecticism," 122.

34 Denis Diderot, "Eclectisme," in *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, etc.*, ed. Diderot and D'Alembert, vol. 5, http://encyclopedie.uchicago.edu/, last accessed 19/12/2016, 270.

35 Diderot, "Eclectisme," 270.

by those who did not want to be regarded as dogmatic, sectarian or systematic thinkers,"[36] Diderot propounds the paradoxical reconciliation of the eclectic and the systematizer. He writes:

> There are, as we see it, two sorts of *eclecticism*: one *experimental*, which consists in reassembling known truths and given facts and augmenting their number through the study of nature; the other *systematic*, which is concerned with comparing known truths and combining given facts, so as to draw from them either an explanation of a phenomenon or the idea of an experience.

He continues, "Those who carry on combining—they can be called *systematic* eclectics."[37] Elsewhere he writes, "This is the eclectic method ... to form a solid whole, which is genuinely one's own work, out of a great number of collected parts that belong to others,"[38] thereby "constructing out of the ruins [of earlier science] ... a durable, eternal city capable of resisting the attacks which had destroyed all others."[39] In other words, the eclectic *system* is one that absorbs into itself any scientific discourse that is seen to be useful or productive: one picks and chooses materials no matter where they come from, mixing together the ruins of old systems for the sake of a new coherent whole.

Cousin revives the eclectic tradition with a difference. Gone is the Enlightenment emphasis on autonomy of thought, non-dogmatism and freedom from prejudice; instead, Cousin accentuates the idea of eclecticism as a plundering of materials from the history of philosophy. This is done not so much to liberate the thinker as, rather, to effectuate an intellectual peace, with the philosopher conceived as peace-broker exemplifying absolute tolerance towards all systems from all traditions.[40] In Cousin's own words, the objective of eclecticism is "to make these diverse systems successively more and more perfect, without managing to destroy any of them, by means of searching out and abstracting the portion of truth that each of them encloses and by which each of them is brother to all and the legitimate offspring of the human spirit."[41]

Crucially, Cousin regards what result from eclectic practice *as a system*, and so is to be understood as a direct heir to Diderot's invocation of systematic eclectics. While Cousin's use of the notion may seem unremarkable from the perspective of the history of philosophy as a whole, in post-*idéalogues* France systematization had not been a live option. Cousin, instead, very consciously

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36 Schneider, "Eclecticism Rediscovered," 174.
37 Diderot, "Eclectisme," 283-4.
38 Diderot, "Eclectisme," 271.
39 Diderot, "Eclectisme," 283.
40 On the political undertones of this project, see Patrice Vermeren, *Victor Cousin: Le jeu de la philosophie et de l'Etat* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1995).
41 Quoted in Patrice Vermeren, "Victor Cousin, l'état et la revolution," *Corpus* 18/19 (1991), 5.

adopts this concept from his German contemporaries; Macherey claims, in fact, that "the general idea of a philosophical system" was "the one essential element" in Cousin's appropriation of German Idealism.[42] Out of the eclectic absorption of foreign materials a system is generated, "a vast and complete truth which encompasses and puts in harmony all the others,"[43] "an immense, harmonious whole."[44] Cousin articulates the systematic nature of his philosophy as follows, "There is nothing more to do today but to separate what is true in each system, so as to compose a system superior to all [previous] systems."[45] In so doing, he makes clear that, for him, there is nothing more to contemporary philosophizing than the eclectic constitution of the system: *all* that the system consists in is the selection of what is best from every possible past and present philosophical configuration.

At times, "even if this is perhaps not the appropriate term," Schelling's conception of the system also exemplifies this post-Diderotian tradition of eclecticism. I have set out elsewhere the philosophical reasons that necessitated Schelling's commitment to an eclectic system;[46] for present purposes, a series of illustrations are sufficient to recommend such a claim. Circumstantial evidence is provided, for example, by Devin Zane Shaw's characterization of Schellingianism in the opening words of *Freedom and Nature in Schelling's Philosophy of Art*: "The philosophy of Friedrich Schelling has a remarkable depth and breadth. It can move, often rapidly, from Plato to Spinoza, from physics to mythology, from art to astronomy, from medicine to theology."[47] Or equally, it is evidenced by Hegel's criticism that Schelling "has ever pressed on to seek a new form, and thus he has tried various forms and terminologies in succession without ever setting forth one complete and consistent whole."[48] Hegel goes on to diagnose Schelling as a philosopher who illegitimately revels in the improper confusion of discourses, and, indeed, it does not seem far from the truth to suggest that at the heart of the Schellingian system stands the imperative *to mix*: Schelling mixes dialogues with the *mos geometricus*; Spinozist vocabulary with Platonic vocabulary with theological vocabulary, and throws

42 Macherey, "Les débuts," 38.

43 Victor Cousin, *Cours de philosophie 1818* (Paris: Hachette, 1836), 13.

44 Cousin, *De la philosophie moderne*, 12.

45 Victor Cousin, "Préface," to W.G. Tennemann, *Manuel de l'histoire de la philosophie*, trans. Victor Cousin (Paris: Pichon-Didier, 1829), v.

46 Daniel Whistler, *Schelling's Theory of Symbolic Language: Forming the System of Identity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). The earlier tradition of eclecticism may have died after Wolff, but was still familiar to German philosophers at the turn of the nineteenth century. For instance, in his lectures on logic as well as on metaphysics, Kant defines eclectics as "autonomous thinkers [*Selbstdenker*] who belong to no school but look for and take up the truth wherever they find it," quoted in Albrecht, *Eklektik*, 598-9. As we shall see, Fichte, Reinhold and Krug also speak of eclecticism.

47 Devin Zane Shaw, *Freedom and Nature in Schelling's Philosophy of Art* (London: Continuum, 2010), 1.

48 G.W.F. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, vol. 3, trans. E.S. Haldane and Frances H. Simson (London: Routledge, 1896), 515.

in depictions of magnetic lines and mathematical formulae as well. It is in this way that Schelling envisages systematicity as generated, in part, from the appropriation of foreign discourses. Schelling practices an eclectics without boundaries of any kind, certainly not national ones.

Three concrete examples help develop this claim. First, Schelling's ambivalent approval of Cousinian eclecticism rehearsed at the beginning of this essay occurs in the midst of an evaluation of the relative merits of rationalism and empiricism. Schelling points out that the two traditions have been traditionally understood as utterly distinct and at variance: "In empiricism and rationalism [the philosophical spirit] has produced its highest opposition" (SW X: 215). In the language of the eclectic tradition, empiricism and rationalism have been identified as opposed sects, each with exclusive claim to the truth. In a move familiar to readers of his late work, Schelling goes on to argue that, considered exclusively, empiricism and rationalism are equally inadequate. He writes:

> It is easy to see that one cannot attain the positive [principle], which encompasses the negative within it, either by way of empiricism alone, which cannot raise itself to the concept of universal being, a concept which is by its nature *a priori* ... nor by way of rationalism, which cannot escape mere intellectual necessity (SW X: 214).

Hence, Schelling concludes the two must be absorbed, as complementary rather than mutually exclusive, into a higher, overarching system:

> Philosophy is soon to undergo a great reform which, in its essentials, will be its last and which will give a positive explanation of reality.... The opposition of rationalism and empiricism will at this time be discussed in a much more elevated manner than it has up until now .... And so there will occur the union of the two [empiricism and rationalism], in a quite different way than has been possible until now, in one and the same concept (SW X: 216).

The resulting system will have eclectically appropriated materials from both sects.

Secondly, at the end of the 1804 *Propädeutik*, Schelling makes similar claims. After running through "the *Stufenfolge* of philosophical viewpoints" (SW VI: 92), he insists that his own "final" system will be a "synthesis of the preceding systems" (SW VI: 130)—that is, he will reconcile together into one system the finite idealism of Leibniz and the dualist idealism of Kant and Fichte, which are themselves potentiated repetitions of naïve materialism and Cartesianism, respectively. The Schellingian system is thus positioned as "the

highest point of indifference" between these traditions from the history of philosophy (SW VI: 130).[49]

Finally, the most evidently eclectic moment in Schelling's oeuvre is to be found among the final pages of *Bruno*. It is here proposed that each of the participants examine one set of concepts from the history of philosophy to test out their truth. Alexander thus begins by experimenting with a materialist vocabulary, then Anselm does the same with a kind of Platonized Leibnizianism, followed by Lucian on idealism and Bruno on realism.[50] All four of them are concerned with locating and selecting those aspects of materialism, intellectualism, realism or idealism which are most conducive to the one absolute system. Schelling here acts out a process of systematic eclectics: in Diderot's terms, the philosopher sifts through the ruins of past systems for the sake of constructing a final, universal one. Indeed, Anselm is adamant that such eclectic plundering of past philosophies is constitutive of the system as such. He claims, "reason expresses itself in a variety of shapes as it appears in philosophy," and so the philosopher must make use of all these shapes to reconstitute absolute reason in systematic form: "The task which calls for our greatest effort is that of recognizing the one metal of philosophy, self-identical in all these forms, in the purity of its native state" (SW IV: 309-10).[51] It is such a conception of the task of philosophy that makes Schelling a systematic eclectic.

Moreover, a key tenet of Schellingian eclecticism is here spelt out: every philosophical system, past and present, has been saying, in essence, exactly the same thing, notwithstanding the manifold ways in which this one truth has been said. So, each of the four systems plundered by the characters in the dialogue "turns out to be a version of identity-philosophy."[52] As Anselm puts it of Leibnizian intellectualism, "This form of philosophy too leads back to the one absolute" (SW IV: 321).[53] Eclecticism is therefore feasible because of the essential sameness of all philosophical utterances—why not appropriate material from other systems if they are all saying the same thing anyway?[54]

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49 A qualification is necessary, though: the conclusion to the *Propädeutik* rehearsed above makes a far stronger claim than that presented at the opening of the work, where Schelling repeatedly denies that these earlier systems provide any "positive" material for his own final system (SW VI: 73-4).

50 Cousin also conceives the history of philosophy in terms of four basic systems; see Rey, *Leroux contre Cousin*, 117-23.

51 Schelling, *Bruno*, trans. and ed. Michael Vater (Albany: SUNY Press, 1984), 205.

52 Michael Vater, "Translator's Introduction," to Schelling, *Bruno*, 63.

53 Schelling, *Bruno*, 214.

54 In *Schelling's Theory of Symbolic Language* (Chapters 10-11), I have made the further argument that: to say this one truth in as many ways as possible is, in fact, a significant metaphilosophical virtue for Schelling.

Systematic Eclectics

The above argument is evidently insufficient: any philosopher who made use of past philosophies to construct a system would count on the above as, to some extent, eclectic. So, my claim that Cousin and Schelling are two significant proponents of eclectic systematizing still needs to be fully justified, and in what follows I provide such additional justification by considering why calling a system "eclectic" matters, by, that is, delineating the conceptual features of a systematic eclectics.[55]

The earlier discussion of the quest for a genuinely European philosophy made clear the geographical universality to which the eclectic system aspires. The eclectic absorbs materials from all traditions without limits. It is this internationalism that provides Cousin with what he considers his strongest defense against the charges of anti-French Germanism. He writes:

> I will respond sharply that in philosophy there is no other country than truth, and that it does not matter whether the philosophy I teach is German, English or French; it matters whether it is true. Has anyone ever spoken of a French geometry or a French physics? And by the very nature of its objects, does not philosophy possess, or at least seek, this character of universality in which all distinctions of nationality evaporate?[56]

The eclectic method is indifferent to borders, whether national or otherwise. As previous sections of this essay have outlined, the eclectic prides herself on generating the only truly *universal* system, one that encompasses everything; it therefore absorbs all national intellectual traditions, all regional styles and forms within itself. Cousin continues:

> The name of eclecticism, which for a long time fell into oblivion and was scarcely pronounced in a whisper, now rings out from one end of Europe to the other, and the spirit of the nineteenth century has come to recognize itself in eclecticism.[57]

The eclectic system searches out what is best "from one end of Europe to the other." Moreover, such universality is not merely geographic, for the eclectic must plunder the *history* of philosophy too. Materials are appropriated from every philosophical tradition, no matter how historically remote or geographically close. There is nothing that escapes the eclectic gaze;[58] there

55 As will become clear in the Conclusion, what follows is very much a description, rather than a defense.

56 Cousin, *Fragments*, xxx-xxxi.

57 Cousin, *Fragments*, lvii.

58 Eclectic practice, then, involves an operation by which diverse, even heterogeneous forms are

is nothing that may not potentially be appropriated into the system. This is universality without limit.

As evident in the account of *Bruno* above, such universality is often conceived as identity: the essential identity of all philosophical claims, no matter what their time or place. Elsewhere, Schelling is even more explicit on this point: "What do I boast of ?—[Of having] proclaimed ... the potential sameness of all knowledge no matter of what topic" (SW VII: 143-4).[59] That is, all philosophical forms have ultimately put forward the same systematic position, the very position of the eclectic system. Eclecticism reworks the idea of a *philosophia perennis* for the early nineteenth century. Willm is the most enthusiastic on this point:

> In a certain sense, there is only one philosophy. According to its goal and final stage of its development, philosophy is one. But no one has attached his name to this one, absolutely true philosophy, not in Greece, Rome, France, Germany or England. It exists nowhere, but thinkers of all times and countries aspire to it, work towards it and contribute to it.[60]

It is with these claims to the absolute universality and identity of the eclectic system that its *distinctive character* comes into view. An eclectic system which fulfils the promise of being genuinely universal must appropriate and absorb materials from all traditions, must perform, that is, the philosophical recuperation of what is other into the system. And of course Hegelian

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absorbed into the system. However, in order for such absorption to be possible, a prior operation is required (a condition of the possibility of eclectic appropriation): the freezing of past forms. That is, in order for the eclectic to pick and choose from the discursive units of foreign philosophies, these units must first be conceived as distinct and abstracted past forms, separable from all other forms. They must first become discrete and rigid artefacts. Compare this to types of *dialectical* appropriation, for which the past must be put in process, made to move and repeat its implicit contradictions before our eyes. Dialectics revives past content; eclecticism turns past forms into still-lives, *pensées-mortes*. In so doing, the past is flattened out onto one plane, on which all such forms are arranged for the eclectic gaze to survey and choose from. In consequence, the history of philosophy is dehistoricized and the eclectic takes up a position of "historico-philosophical independence." Schneider, "Eclectisme avant Cousin," 18. Schneider makes this logic of the eclectic gaze particularly clear: the eclectic "escapes historical finitude" by taking up "a position from which it would be possible to judge all other [philosophies]," a position by which the history of philosophy is held "at a distance"—a distance, moreover, that denies it historicity. Ibid., 17-8. Rey is extremely critical of this attitude in Cousin's philosophy: "the ground of eclecticism," she writes, is "the non-historicity of history of philosophy": "Eclecticism grounds its superiority on the temporal position that it takes up as the philosophy of the present time, which places it in a position of authority and permits it to synthesize and overcome the doctrines of the past." Rey, *Leroux contre Cousin*, 36. There is, for Rey, an ultimate "sterility" to this enterprise Ibid., 38.

59 F.W.J. Schelling, "Schelling's Aphorisms of 1805," trans. Fritz Marti, *Idealistic studies* 14 (1984): 237-258, at 246.

60 Willm, "Essai," xxx-xxxi. Cf. Schelling's avowal of the *philosophia perennis* in his *Fernere Darstellungen* (SW IV: 400-1).

subsumption is the most obvious example of this kind of operation. On the face of it, the eclectic absorption of foreign material seems indistinguishable from such a dialectical operation; however, I want to set out what is specifically eclectic in Cousin's and Schelling's systems to show that there is more than one way to reabsorb foreign materials, that it is possible to *universalize without subsumption*. And there are initially two marks that distinguish eclectic and dialectic forms of appropriation.

First, contrary to the Hegelian translation of all foreign materials into a single master language, the eclectic system retains formal diversity at its very heart. This is why Willm sees it as an eminently suitable method for achieving universality in an age of linguistic and cultural (i.e. formal) diversity: to repeat his concluding claim, the eclectic system aspires to a "philosophy [which], *without ceasing* to be English, French or German, will also become European." This is not to argue that there is no diversity in dialectical systems in general or Hegel's in particular, but merely that eclecticism retains a formal diversity that Hegel rejects. Hegel's later critique of Schelling—an element of which I already rehearsed above—is premised on this very point: Schelling's system uses a bewildering array of different forms from a variety of disciplines that are not unitarily or properly speculative, according to Hegel. Schelling retains formal diversity, and this suggests that there is something non-Hegelian and non-dialectical, even *sui generis*, about the eclectic manner of traversing borders and generating a universal system.

Secondly, a genuinely eclectic system lays claims to completeness by virtue of its speculative extensity. As Cousin puts it:

> Each [historical] system is not false but incomplete; hence, it follows that in reuniting all the incomplete systems one would have a complete philosophy, adequate to the totality of consciousness. This would be a genuine historical system that is both universal and precise.... It would encompass everything and reach infinity.[61]

"Reaching infinity" thereby becomes one of the cardinal criteria for evaluating the success of an eclectic system. This is a particularly important metaphilosophical virtue for those like Schelling who find categories like representation, adequacy and correspondence problematic: for Schelling, representation or reflection is an inferior mode of cognition because it presupposes a pre-existing dualism between mind and world.[62] The genuine system, therefore, does not describe, explain or justify all that exists; it is not a reflection of it; and if this is the case, one cannot judge the success of a system

61 Cousin, *Fragments*, 48.

62 As Schelling puts it in the 1804 *System*: "We now abandon forever that sphere of reflection that discriminates between the subject and the object" (SW VI: 140), trans. and ed. Thomas Pfau, *Idealism and the Endgame of Theory: Three Esssays* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1994), 143.

by the adequacy, truth or even coherence with which it represents reality. Instead, as Grant argues, the success of a Schellingian system is a matter of extensity. "Every philosophical construction," Grant states, "undergoes the test of the *extensity* of its concepts."[63] And he elaborates as follows,

> [Philosophy] is 'the infinite science,' and cannot therefore be 'conditioned' by eliminating anything *a priori* from its remit.... The infinite science must test itself against the All.... It is the extensity therefore, the range and capacity of philosophical systems that is being tested.[64]

So, the absolute system talks about everything; it is maximally extensive. In a similar vein to Renaissance ideals of the *omniformis* or microcosm, absoluteness is to be conceived as a consequence of infinite range and capacity in the system's appropriation of foreign philosophical forms—an infinite mixing. Absolute extensity provides a viable metaphilosophical criterion for eclectic success after the ruination of representation, for the eclectic system operates by means of *addition*, by means of the infinite accumulation of foreign materials.

The consequences of this are far-reaching indeed; foremost is the elimination of negativity from this conception of the system. It is here that the difference between the dialectic and the eclectic is most stark: in Macherey's words, "there is no room for any kind of dialectic" in eclecticism.[65] He writes more fully of Cousin's system:

> One can see immediately how this conception, despite its formal resemblance to Hegel's, differs from it essentially.... It is enough to ... retain only those [truths] which are compatible and to reconstitute out of them a complete system of the true—one, then, that results from *the addition* of all these partial truths. In this exposition, there is no place for negativity—that is, knowledge appears under the form of an assemblage and not as a process.[66]

Thus, Macherey concludes, "Eclecticism is therefore the contrary of dialectic."[67]

The eclectic system is additive: it perpetually accumulates foreign forms as a means of attaining maximal extensity. There is no negation, criticism or

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63 Iain Hamilton Grant, *Philosophies of Nature after Schelling* (London: Continuum, 2006), 194.

64 Grant, *Philosophies of Nature*, 19-21.

65 Macherey, "Les débuts," 44.

66 Macherey, "Les débuts," 42; my italics. Cf. Uslar's characterization of Schelling's system: "The inner movement of Schellingian absolute identity is fundamentally different from Hegel's dialectical movement.... And the fundamental difference is that Schelling conceives the inner movement of the absolute *without negation*." Detlev von Uslar, "Die innere Bewegung der absoluten Identität bei Schelling," *Studium Generale* 21 (1968): 503.

67 Macherey, "Les débuts," 42.

skeptical *reductio ad absurdum*; it is a system without critique.[68] It operates paratactically, generating an ever-increasing assemblage of discourses, or, in Schneider's words, "replacing the exclusive 'either ... or ... ' with the synthesis of an 'and ... and ....'"[69] This is the metaphysics of an absolute book: a system whose completion would coincide with the incorporation of everything true ever thought.[70] Instead of critique, then, the most typical operation of the eclectic towards a pre-existing system is to absolutize it: to take what is exclusive and limited in a body of thought and stretch it to infinity until it is no longer partial (and thereby false) but inclusive (and thereby true).[71] To repeat a key claim from the closing pages of Schelling's *Bruno*, "This form of philosophy too leads back to the one absolute" (SW IV: 321).[72] Cousin's treatment of eighteenth-century French sensualism in *Fragments philosophiques* provides the clearest example of this non-critical operation on foreign material.

Cousin begins by whole-heartedly affirming sensualist methodology—an unadulterated empiricism oriented towards the observation of psychological data. Where sensualism fails, according to Cousin, is merely in the arbitrary restrictions it places on such empiricism, namely, in its limitation of psychological observation to sensation alone. Cousin's argument proceeds as follows:

> [Sensualist] philosophy observes, it is true, but it observes only the facts that agree with it, and it thus corrupts the experimental method with systematic views.... It is certain that on first

68 It is here one discerns major differences between Cousin's and Schelling's systematic eclectics and that of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century tradition of eclecticism. The earlier proponents emphasize the critical nature of philosophy, whereas Schelling and Cousin return to a form of dogmatism. On Schelling's relation to dogmatism, the key text is Tyler Tritten, "Against Kant: Toward an Inverted Transcendentalism or a Philosophy of the Doctrinal," *Angelaki* 21.4 (2016): 143-55. Similarly, there is for the latter a total absence of emphasis on autonomy of thought. Cousin, for instance, seems to envisage eclecticism, in Rey's words, as "the result of a spirit who dreams of producing a philosophical system, but who, incapable of doing it himself, asks history to produce it for him." Rey, *Leroux contre Cousin*, 114. She writes elsewhere: "Cousin, as an individual, is nothing more than an accidental cause of the appearance of eclecticism: the necessary cause of its appearance is found in ... the labor of the history of philosophy." Rey, *Leroux contre Cousin*, 31. Schelling likewise insists that "the fundamental error in all knowledge is ever since Descartes the '*I* think, *I* am.' Thinking is not my thinking, and being not my being, for everything is only God's or the All's" (SW VII: 148; *Aphorisms*, 250) Rather than eclectics resulting from the choices of a 'colonial' sovereign subject, it is the absolute that works eclectically

69 Schneider, "Eclectisme avant Cousin," 23. On parataxis in Schelling's system, see Daniel Whistler, "Improper Names for God: Religious Language and the 'Spinoza Effect,'" *Speculations* 3(2012):99-134.

70 Systematic eclectics thus presupposes a univocity of discursive domains where all can be plundered equally, contrary to the Hegelian reconstitution of a hierarchy between what is properly speculative and improper *Vorstellungen*.

71 As I make clear in the Conclusion, Cousin and Schelling are never at any point 'purely' systematic eclectics; there are obvious examples of critical and skeptical argument in their writings.

72 Schelling, *Bruno*, 214.

> blush one perceives in consciousness a set of phenomena which, decomposed into their elements, are reducible to sensation. These phenomena are incontestable and numerous.... There is a strong natural illusion to believe that this order of phenomena encompasses all those of which we can have consciousness.... But even if sensibility is the root of all our intellectual faculties, it still cannot be the root of our moral faculties.... Impartial observation destroys both the principle and the entire system in making visible that there are phenomena in consciousness which cannot be reduced to sensation—very real, numerous ideas which play a huge role in life and language and which sensation does not explain.[73]

According to Cousin, sensualism attains truth through the absolutization of its empiricist starting-point. Its commitment to observation is taken beyond all limits, such that the philosopher no longer observes sensations alone, but all psychological phenomena, including moral values. Sensualism, as previously conceived, has been merely a partial sect, practising a limited, exclusive form of empiricism; to maximize this method is to bring sensualism into the one true system as something absolute. Cousin here performs an eclectic operation: sects are not to be excluded, negated or criticized, but absorbed into the system absolutely—i.e., all foreign philosophical systems are to be maximized without limit, such that the system exhibits maximal extensity. This is a system *without critique*.

The additive character of the eclectic system raises a number of questions, foremost among them whether it can legitimately be called a system at all. As already rehearsed, eclecticism was traditionally an anti-systematic enterprise, a protest against the reduction of truth to one finite set of doctrines. On the other side, proponents of the system have repeatedly criticized the agglomerative nature of eclectic truth. Three examples within the German Idealist tradition evidence this claim.[74] Fichte, for one, berates the pick-and-mix attitude of the eclectic: "Nothing has seemed more hateful and despicable to me than that wretched treatment of science in which one cobbles together all kinds of facts and opinions, without any connection or purpose.... Such half-knowing and incompetence [is] called eclecticism." Reinhold raises similar concerns: eclecticism has "no system ... no foundational principles.... Under the name of *eclecticism*, a false, syncretic and cobbled-together aggregate of indeterminate, ambiguous propositions boasts of profundity." Krug launches the most scathing critique, labelling eclecticism "anarchism" and lamenting "the philosophical inconsistency with which propositions from completely different systems are mixed together by the eclectic." He concludes, "Eclecticism is therefore nothing

73 Cousin, *Fragments*, xiii-xiv.

74 Quotations in this paragraph are taken from Albrecht, *Eklektik*, 599-601.

but a *shallow syncretism*." These criticisms oppose systematicity to eclecticism, such that no form of the latter could ever hope to meet the criteria for a genuine post-Kantian system. If this were indeed the case, then the "eclectic system" would be an incoherent concept.

Post-Kantian systems have, broadly speaking, two basic characteristics: totality and unity. Paul Franks articulates them in terms of a 'monistic demand' in German Idealism: "This is the demand that every genuine grounding participate in a single systematic unity of grounds."[75] Franks goes on to show that this demand is conceived in most mature German Idealist systems as a "holistic monism," a term he defines as follows:

> Holistic Monism may be divided into two requirements, The Holistic requirement is that, in an adequate philosophical system, empirical items must be such that all their properties are determinable only within the context of a totality composed of other items and their properties. The Monistic requirement is that, in an adequate philosophical system, the absolute first principle must be immanent within the aforementioned totality, as its principle of unity.[76]

As Franks points out, the demand for "holistic monism" emerged out of the foundationalism-crisis in mid-1790s Jena: in its wake, it no longer appeared theoretically justifiable to conceive of a system possessing one external foundation or ground from which all else derived. In Franks' terms, a crude version of "derivation monism" ("the view that, in an adequate philosophical system, the *a priori* conditions of experience must somehow be derived from a single, absolute first principle"[77]) was no longer plausible. Unity of derivation or grounding, at least as traditionally understood, was off the table.

The eclectic system is evidently not troubled by the totality requirement; indeed, the eclectic lays claim to maximal systematic extensity. It is with the monistic demand that it seems on shakier ground: when Kant criticizes, for example, "the mere confluence of assembled concepts" in a non-systematic aggregate,[78] the eclectic systematizer seems to have no redress. The problem is compounded in light of the prevailing orthodoxy in contemporary German Idealist scholarship[79] that the Hegelian incorporation of negativity and skepticism into the system proved the most successful response to the foundationalism-crisis. That is, its paradigmatic solution is to be found in

75 Paul Franks, *All or Nothing: Systematicity, Transcendental Arguments and Skepticism in German Idealism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 20.

76 Franks, *All or Nothing*, 85-6.

77 Franks, *All or Nothing*, 17.

78 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (Basingstoke: Palgrave-Macmillan, 1929), A835/B863.

79 See, for one example, Franks, *All or Nothing*, Chapter 6.

Hegel's insistence on bringing "thoroughgoing skepticism" into the system, thereby recasting the philosophical enterprise as a "pathway of doubt."[80] Negativity becomes the non-foundational first principle, and each part of the system is brought into holistic interconnection by appeal to the category of determinate negation. Such a solution is evidently not available to the eclectic who has banished the specter of negation from her system.

Nevertheless, the eclectic system does maintain some unity among its perpetually-accumulated discursive forms. This unity consists in their essential sameness: everything appropriated into the eclectic system is saying the same thing. To put it another way, it seems odd to question the idea that Schelling, for one, whose systems are often explicitly styled as monist, would fall foul of the "monistic demand." To repeat the key Schelling quotation, "What do I boast of?—[Of having] proclaimed ... the potential sameness of all knowledge no matter of what topic."[81] There is a minimal form of monistic unity here to which an eclectic *system* does lay claim. On this reading, it exhibits both totality and a holistic interconnection of parts made possible by an essential identity of content, and, as such, it is at the very least a coherent aspiration.

The Impossibility of Eclecticism

The previous section described an unadulterated systematic eclectics that no thinker—certainly neither Cousin nor Schelling—ever practiced in its purity. There are, I have demonstrated, numerous moments of systematic eclecticism in their writings and, "even if it is perhaps not the appropriate term," it certainly describes, I want to insist, one tendency in their thinking. There are, however, endless counter-examples to such eclectic practice: one need not look far to unearth both Cousin and Schelling engaging in critique, arguing skeptically or even excluding vast swathes of the history of philosophy from their system. There is no 'pure' eclecticism to be found here.

Moreover, there are good philosophical reasons for this: pure eclecticism is impossible, "a philosophical idea that never really worked."[82] The problem is as follows: to select what is best and so to become *eklektikos*, one requires a criterion for selection; however, such a criterion can only be justified by a truth established prior to eclectic practice. Rey writes:

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80 G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A.V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), §§78-9.

81 One way to understand such unity is as the reversal of the Hegelian account of the form/content relation. For Hegel, forms are to be translated into a master-language to bring out the genuine speculative content they disguise; for the eclectic, however, such unity of content is not esoterically hidden, but exoterically obvious, and so the diversity of discursive forms is no barrier to unity. In the eclectic system, therefore, forms retain such diversity free from translation and reinterpretation. See Daniel Whistler, "The New Literalism: Reading after Grant's Schelling," *Symposium* 19.1 (2015): 125-39.

82 Schneider, "Eclecticism Rediscovered," 175.

> Eclecticism is not the totality of past philosophies placed end to end; it is rather a conciliation of contrary principles founded on a selection.... [It] is achieved by means of a certain number of *philosophical choices*.... Yet, to choose, one needs a criterion. And such a criterion can only be found in a doctrine prior to eclecticism that makes it possible.[83]

Hence, "the pure eclectic position is untenable since it supplies no criteria to distinguish between the true and the false in past philosophies."[84] In other words, there are only two options for the would-be eclectic: either to begin with a pre-established criterion generated through non-eclectic reasoning or to give up on the possibility of selection altogether and so appropriate all forms indiscriminately.

Schelling tends for the most part towards the first option: he is more than just an eclectic on most occasions, and, even when he does practice eclectics most discernibly, he does so at the margins of his writings, in propaedeutics or epilogues. Cousin officially insists on the first option as well: he is adamant that truth drawn from psychological insight provides the ground from which eclectics proceeds. He insists, "One must already know the truth in order to recognize it."[85] Eclecticism is thus derivative, employing the history of philosophy to confirm truths already verified by other means. Cousin writes in *Fragments philosophiques* itself, "Eclecticism ... is the application of a system: it presupposes a system and begins from a system."[86] It occurs after the fact, subject to a prior orientation.

The second option is to take eclecticism beyond its etymological origins by erasing the categories of selection and choice. Historically, this option has been labelled "syncretism": while the eclectic claims that "to search for truth everywhere is correct, but to find truth everywhere is impossible" for one must "everywhere select the best,"[87] the syncretic does indeed discover truth *everywhere* indiscriminately. She is indifferent to the merits of what she appropriates. What has hopefully become clear over the course of this essay is that far from being the phantom other of 'proper' eclectic practice, such syncretic indifference is an ineluctable moment of all eclectics, especially Cousin's and Schelling's;[88] indeed, if the eclectic system is to be accorded more than a mere post-factum role, such an eclecticism-beyond-eclecticism, an absolute syncretism, needs to be taken seriously.

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83 Rey, *Leroux contre Cousin*, 140-1.

84 Vermeren, *Victor Cousin*, 25.

85 Victor Cousin, *Du vrai, du beau et du bien* (Paris: Didier, 1867), 14.

86 Cousin, *Fragments*, lvi.

87 Albrecht, *Eklektik*, 18.

88 Schneider ("Eclecticism Rediscovered," 176) points to the fact that historically the eclectic/syncretic distinction has repeatedly broken down. Similarly, Rey discerns in Cousin's early writings a promise of indiscriminate eclecticism. Rey, *Leroux contre Cousin*, 140.

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The Implications of Schelling's Metaphysics of Contingency for Phenomenology[1]

Kyla Bruff

In *Ecstasy of Reason*, Jean-François Courtine states that F.W.J. Schelling's late, "positive philosophy" is "not a sublime ground of being as a whole, but the contrary itself of a ground, the attempt of a phenomenology of ... the divine!"[2] Schelling's paradoxical idea of the non-ground which grounds everything that is, a decisive feature of his philosophy from 1809 to 1854, will guide this essay through an account of the link between Schelling and phenomenology. As a main representative of contemporary phenomenology, I take the work of Hungarian philosopher László Tengelyi, particularly as presented in his magnum opus *World and Infinity: On the Problem of Phenomenological Metaphysics,* published in 2014—the year of his death.[3] This decision is not based on Tengelyi's worldwide notoriety as a phenomenologist (his work has been overlooked by much of the English literature on phenomenology). It is rather anchored in the importance of Tengelyi's clear, original exposition of a "phenomenological metaphysics," which links Husserl's late phenomenology to contemporary phenomenology in France (specifically to Jean-Luc Marion, Jean-François Courtine and Marc Richir), while also demonstrating that

1 This piece is written in memory of László Tengelyi, my educator and mentor at the University of Wuppertal from 2013-2014.

2 Jean-François Courtine, *Extase de la Raison: Essais sur Schelling* (Paris: Galilée, 1990), 166: "La philosophie positive n'est pas une fondation sublime de l'étant dans son ensemble, mais le contraire même d'une fondation, l'essai d'une pensée phénoménologique à propos du ... divin!" The meaning of the term "positive philosophy" will be dealt with in detail below.

3 László Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlichkeit: Zum Problem phänomenologischer Metaphysik* (Freiburg & Munich: Verlag Karl Alber, 2015).

phenomenology can offer a metaphysical alternative to Martin Heidegger's constitution of metaphysics as "ontotheology."

I will begin with a defence for the return to metaphysics after phenomenology, as motivated by a critique of the reduction of the history of metaphysics to ontotheology. Parallels between Tengelyi's and Schelling's respective criticisms of and alternatives to ontotheology will be demonstrated. Subsequently, I will show the double-sided relationship that Schelling and Tengelyi bear to Kant's philosophy. On the one hand, they appreciate Kant's endorsement of the distinction between essence and existence and his positing of the abyss (*Abgrund*)—the groundless ground—of reason. On the other hand, both thinkers are critical of Kant's treatment of experience and how it largely reduces experience to that which is conceived as the *possibility* of experience. From this point, Schelling's construction of the groundless ground[4] as the "unprethinkable being" (*unvordenkliches Sein*)—the locus of pure act—and its direct significance for Tengelyi's metaphysics of contingent facticity will be discussed. I will then conclude by defending the relevance of this metaphysics of contingency, and as initiated by Schelling and developed in a phenomenological context by Tengelyi, for the revival of metaphysics today.

Metaphysics Before and After Heidegger's Critique of Ontotheology

There exists a widespread anti-phenomenological, anti-metaphysical current in contemporary philosophy. This trend, particularly within "speculative realism," is first marked by the opposition of *ontology*—specifically realist ontology—to phenomenology. We are told that "Speculative realism signals the end of phenomenology" and it is therefore "ultimately necessary to close the door on phenomenology as an approach to realism."[5] Along with this approach comes the imperative to target and dismiss those "who believe that phenomenology can disclose something about the divine, God, or radical alterity."[6]

Furthermore, *ontology* is defended as a modern, superior endeavor to its outdated counterpart, metaphysics. In the wake of Heidegger's critique of ontotheology,[7] which will occupy us in detail below, metaphysics continues to

4 Schelling's groundless ground (also referred to as the non-Ground [*Ungrund*] or abyss) "becomes" the ground of God; it marks the beginning of the process by which God grounds himself and comes to know himself through creation. See Milos Vetö, *De Kant à Schelling: les deux voies de l'idéalisme allemande*, vol. 2 (Grenoble: Éditions Jérôme Millon, 2000), 266.

5 Tom Sparrow, *The End of Phenomenology: Metaphysics and the New Realism* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), xi.

6 Sparrow, *The End of Phenomenology*, xiii. Sparrow further argues that "phenomenology holds metaphysical commitments despite itself and that phenomenology can only underwrite a rhetoric of realism, not metaphysical realism" (xiv). Furthermore, phenomenology is ultimately judged by Sparrow to be "in principle strong correlationism, and, as such, prohibited from making realist metaphysical commitments" (xiii).

7 Ontotheology, in the broad sense invoked by Heidegger, refers to the attempt to theorize all of

be widely viewed as a categorical, logical pursuit which begins with God or an equivalent principle as the first cause of the whole of substance, nature or being (which is in turn taken to be intelligible). Even Markus Gabriel, who astutely acknowledges the current misguided "prohibition of metaphysics and free thought" as "nothing other than a manifestation of the aggressive suspicion that free thought cannot be refuted by weak spirits, but only suppressed by committees, philosophical societies, and journal editors,"[8] in the end opts for ontology over metaphysics.[9]

Consequently, there appears to be a relationship between, on the one hand, the failure of the metaphysical attempts to develop a totalizing theory of everything, and the perceived poverty of phenomenology in its alleged inability to speak directly about God or ontological themes on the other. For example, Tyler Tritten criticizes "contemporary thinking about God, at least from the so-called continental perspective," as having "abandoned any possibility of elaborating an ontology of God, relegating itself instead to phenomenological or hermeneutical descriptions and analysis of religious experience."[10] Phenomenology is taken in such contexts to be a restrictive method of doing philosophy, which can say nothing of God or foundations, because it is constrained to the domain of experience. I argue, however, that the analysis of experience and metaphysical claims are far from mutually exclusive. I propose that the downgrading of the possible role of experience in metaphysics is largely due to a reductive, relative view of experience in epistemology. As will be shown, the question of the manner by which experience could serve as a source of knowledge is far from simple.

But before arriving at an analysis of experience, our first task at

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being and its possibilities by positing a first principle or cause (such as God), from which and of which we can achieve certain knowledge through concepts or universals.

8 Markus Gabriel, *Transcendental Ontology: Essays in German Idealism* (London & New York: Continuum, 2011), 34. Gabriel here establishes a positive link between metaphysics and human freedom. Moreover, he warns against the naïve attitude of "contemporary naturalists" and "analytic metaphysicians" towards metaphysics. Far from futile, Gabriel describes metaphysics as in fact "system-theoretically motivated metatheory, a practice of higher-order thought, and not some wild speculation about the supernatural." Gabriel, *Transcendental Ontology,* 36.

9 Gabriel's positions towards both metaphysics and phenomenology are highly subtle, and equally appreciative as critical. I will return to them below. It is worth nothing that although Gabriel describes his project in *Fields of Sense: A New Realist Ontology* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015) as the construction of a "realist ontology," he is nevertheless critical of "contemporary ontology," accusing it of having "returned to mostly materialist variations of Presocratic metaphysics with a hint of Plato and Aristotle." Moreover, Gabriel describes the assumptions grounding contemporary approaches to ontology as "fundamentally flawed beyond repair." Gabriel, *Fields of Sense,* 2, 5.

10 Tyler Tritten, *The Contingency of Necessity: Reason and God as Matters of Fact* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017), 5. Tritten evaluates the contemporary perspective of the philosophy of religion as largely a "phenomenological hermeneutics of religious life." His goal in *The Contingency of Necessity* is thus to reinvigorate the philosophy of religion in a "post-metaphysical" manner—particularly through Schelling's late work—and thereby to produce an ontology of God. Tritten, *The Contingency of Necessity,* 6.

hand is to clarify why Schelling and Tengelyi's return to metaphysics is not a return to ontotheology. Both figures similarly invoke Aristotle and analyses of medieval philosophy to demonstrate a counter-ontotheological-tendency in the history of metaphysics. I will now show in parallel, beginning with Tengelyi and proceeding to Schelling, the complex position in which they both situate Aristotle in the history of metaphysics, and then defend that Duns Scotus, rather than Thomas Aquinas, is the true thinker of ontotheology. Precisely why Schelling and Tengelyi's return to metaphysics is also not merely a return to ontology will be clarified in the last section of this essay.

According to Tengelyi, at best, the ontotheological constitution of metaphysics occurs "only during a certain epoch of European thought," beginning with Duns Scotus and Henry of Ghent, extending through the late scholastics (particularly Francisco Suárez) and ending in Baumgarten, Wolff, and the pre-critical Kant.[11] The movement of German Idealism, particularly through the work of Hegel and Schelling, thus marks a break from closed, naïve, "old," arguably ontotheological, metaphysical thinking. As Gabriel states, both Hegel and Schelling "spell out a metaphysical truth of skepticism."[12] This post-Kantian skepticism is discussed in reference to experience as a source of both knowledge and "nonknowledge" below.

As is well known, the term "ontotheology" was used by Kant before Heidegger. Kant's employment of the term refers to the theological pursuit of the knowledge of God (understood as the most real, original being) through reason, rather than, for example, revelation.[13] In his opposition to ontotheology, Kant differentiates the *concept* of something (and thereby the corresponding, logical analyses which pertain to it) from its existence.[14] Reason, for Kant, "can only ever attain to the concept of reality, whether it be of the world, the soul or

11 Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlichkeit*, 99: "Diese [ontotheologische] Verfassung ist der Metaphysik vielmehr nur während einer bestimmten Epoche des europäischen Denkens eigentümlich."

12 Gabriel, *Transcendental Ontology*, 1. Gabriel here, rather polemically, states that this "metaphysical truth of skepticism consists both in a realization of our finitude and in the adjacent insight into the nonexistence of the world." Gabriel, *Transcendental Ontology,* 1-2. The meaning of the "nonexistence of the world" is debatable and ambiguous, and is discussed by Gabriel in detail in *Fields of Sense*.

13 Schelling accepts Kant's critique of ontotheology, particularly Kant's critique of the "ontological argument, wherein the attempt is made to derive the actual being of an *ens originarium* from the necessary idea of reason." Bruce Matthews, "Translator's Introduction," in F.W.J. Schelling, *The Grounding of Positive Philosophy: The Berlin Lectures,* trans. Bruce Matthews (Albany: SUNY Press, 2008), 61.

14 See Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. and ed. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), A567/B595: "No objects at all can be represented through pure concepts of the understanding without any conditions of sensibility, because the conditions for the objective reality of these concepts are lacking, and nothing is encountered in them except the pure form of thinking." More specifically, Kant states, "The aim of reason with its ideal is, on the contrary, a thoroughgoing determination in accordance with *a priori* rules; hence it thinks for itself an object that is to be thoroughly determinable in accordance with principles, even though the sufficient conditions for this are absent from experience, and thus the concept itself is transcendent." Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason,* A571/B599.

God."[15]

In medieval philosophy, according to Tengelyi, a general scepticism towards Aristotelian metaphysics (or Aristotelian "physicotheology") begins. This movement is initiated by Duns Scotus and Henry of Ghent. Henry of Ghent objects to Aristotle that an appeal to the experience of movement "is evidently inadequate to prove that the First Mover is truly God."[16] The resulting insight is for that any *a posteriori proof* of God to prove anything or to have a metaphysical relevance for Scotus and Ghent, it must definitively refer back to the investigation of God's essence *a priori*.[17] This signifies the demoting of experiential content and the primacy of the *a priori* within ontotheological metaphysics. In this medieval-ontotheological metaphysics, God, as the "first being," is "included in the universal concept of being and made the object of a special science within the universal science of being as such."[18] The pursuit of God's existence is thereby confined to the science of universals.

Before moving on to the contemporary French critique of the medieval distortion of Aristotle, let it be noted that already in medieval philosophy, there are approaches to metaphysics which are not "ontotheological." For example, in twenty-first century literature, phenomenologist Jean-Luc Marion and Sean J. McGrath have argued that Thomas Aquinas is far from being an ontotheologian.[19] Tengelyi notes the particularity of the structure of Aquinas' metaphysics, which "remains open to a revelational theology that differs from it." In order for the world to receive revelation, the "circle of reasons" cannot be closed.[20] On this point, Aquinas is markedly different from Scotus, whose univocal concept of being, notes Tengelyi, is a *thing* without actual existence that manifests itself through abstract, "transgeneric" concepts.[21] Aquinas,

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15 Matthews, "Translator's Introduction," 29.

16 Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlichkeit,* 98: "Der Hinweis auf die Erfahrung der Bewegung ist offenbar unzulänglich, um zu beweisen, dass der Erste Beweger wahrhaft Gott ist."

17 Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlichkeit,* 98: "Daraus geht deutlich hervor, dass ein Gottesbeweis, der *a posteriori* angelegt ist, also im Ausgang von der erfahrenen Welt zu Gott gelangt, solange nichts beweist, als er sich nicht mit einem ganz anders angelegten Gedankengang verbindet—nämlich mit einem Gedankengang, der sich zur Aufgabe macht, das Wesen Gottes im Ausgang von den disjunktiven Transzendentalien a priori zu konstruieren."

18 Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlichkeit,* 98: "Gott [wird] als erstes Seiendes in den allgemeinen Begriff des Seienden eingeschlossen und zum Gegenstand einer besonderen Wissenschaft innerhalb der allgemeinen Wissenschaft vom Seienden als solchem gemacht ... Das ist der entscheidende Schritt zur Ontotheologie im Sinne von Heidegger."

19 See Jean-Luc Marion, "Thomas Aquinas and Onto-Theology," in *Mystics: Presence and Aporia,* ed. Michael Kessler and Christian Sheppard (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 38-74, and Sean J. McGrath, *The Early Heidegger and Medieval Philosophy: Phenomenology for the Godforsaken* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2006), 216-242.

20 Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlichkeit*, 99: "Bei einer Struktur der Metaphysik, die offen für eine sich von ihr unterscheidende Offenbarungstheologie bleibt, wie dies bei Thomas von Aquin der Fall ist, kann nämlich der Kreis von Gründen und Begründen nicht geschlossen werden. Aus diesen Überlegungen ergibt sich die Schlussfolgerung, dass keineswegs jede Metaphysik durch eine ontotheologische Verfassung charakterisiert ist."

21 Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlichkeit*, 97: "Für diese Selbstständigkeit der Metaphysik *als scientia*

like Schelling after him, leaves an openness beyond rational theology for the revealed God that acts. Therefore, Tengelyi praises Aquinas' accentuation of "the Being-act [*Seinsakt*] (*actus essendi*) of beings," which "would deprive the general science of beings as such of its unlimited universality."[22] Schelling similarly posits a fundamental act before reason at the very beginning of the "positive" philosophy, which he calls "*actu* acting being" (*actu Actus Seyende*) (SW XI: 563). The free acting God outside of the web of universal concepts is the God who *can* reveal himself to creation. Tengelyi notes the ambiguity in characterizing a notion of being *without* this fundamental characteristic, for such a lifeless conception of being has an obscure relation to the question of its own actuality.[23]

In the 1990's, a trend began in France to revisit the history of ancient and medieval philosophy to find new tendencies that counteract traditional, particularly ontotheological, readings. One such thinker, on which Tengelyi heavily relies, is Olivier Boulnois. Although Boulnois, a specialist of Scotus, may be little known to the English-speaking audience, Tengelyi highlights his influence on the methodological shift in the practice of researching the history of philosophy in France. Boulnois, along with Jean-François Courtine (who is undoubtedly more known to the larger Schelling audience, for his two Schelling books remain crucial to the international reception of the late Schelling[24]), searches for alternative principles, categories or tendencies guiding and shaping the "metaphysical typology" in which a given thinker develops her or his work, rather than focusing on juxtaposing the essential positions themselves.[25] Boulnois, in *Being and Representation*, specifically uncovers Scotus' key move of *subordinating* and *assigning* the first being to the general in his philosophy, instead of merely *explaining* the relation between these two terms. Furthermore, Boulnois not only underscores the issue of (in)commensurability of an impotent, univocal being with the universal as discussed above, but also highlights the problem of whether such a being can *exist* at all. Thus, at the end

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transcendens muss allerdings ein gewisser Preis gezahl werden: Der abstrakte Charakter des transgenerischen, aber dennoch univoken Begriffs des Seienden ist dafür in Kauf zu nehmen."

22 Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlichkeit*, 97: "Nichts könnte von diesem Ansatz weiter entfernt sein als die Idee, den Akzent mit Thomas von Aquin auf den Seinsakt (*actus essendi*) des Seienden zu setzen. Diese Akzentsetzung würde ja die allgemeine Wissenschaft vom Seienden als solchem ihrer uneingeschränkten Allgemeinheit berauben."

23 Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlichkeit,* 87: "Was ist aber ein Seiendes, das ebenso sehr bloß möglich—und das heißt: unwirklich—wie wirklich sein kann? Es ist offenbar nichts mehr als ein Etwas überhaupt, ein aliquid, eben gerade nicht nichts, non nihil (aber beinahe nichts), ein Ding (*res*) von einem bestimmten Sachgehalt (*realitas*), aber gegebenenfalls reine Potentialität ohne aktuelle Existenz." Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlichkeit,* 97.

24 See Jean-François Courtine, *Extase de la raison. Essais sur Schelling* (Paris : Galilée, 1990) and Schelling, *Entre temps et* éternité—*Histoire et préhistoire de la conscience* (Paris: Vrin, 2012).

25 Tengelyi also claims that Courtine's and Boulnois's method continues the legacy of structuralism, and that in their interpretations of Heidegger, they allow the "heuristic potential" of the latter's understanding of metaphysics as ontotheology to be explored in new ways (which are not exclusively negative). See Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlichkeit,* 99-111.

of Scotus' universal science, Scotus claims knowledge of the first being should be achieved, but the problem is that this inquiry begins with the general.[26]

Courtine and Boulnois, along with Marion and Rémi Brague, investigate core issues in Heidegger's understanding of medieval metaphysics and neglect of Neoplatonism in support of the argument that the history of metaphysics cannot be reduced to ontotheology. First of all, Heidegger's oversights in Neoplatonism, according to Boulnois and here cited by Tengelyi, conditioned his insufficient treatment of the relationship between Aquinas and Scotus.[27] Secondly, Courtine's work on Francisco Suárez[28] exposes the mediating role of the latter on the twentieth century reception of Scotus. While Heidegger acknowledges this essential role of Suárez, at the same time, "he does not notice that Thomas Aquinas is separated by a gap from Duns Scotus and the already-turned-to-Scotus Suárez."[29] This leads to a substantial historical blind spot in Heidegger's construction of the history of metaphysics as ontotheology, for reasons cited in reference to Aquinas above.

Tengelyi declares that as Courtine publishes his Suárez book, it is "no coincidence" that his 1990 collection of essays on the late Schelling simultaneously appears. More specifically, Tengelyi maintains that the subject of Courtine's "metaphysical-typological investigations" is the same subject of the late Schelling's philosophy, namely "the outline of a historical philosophy," and the opposition of purely *a priori* philosophies of history.[30] Schelling thus occupies an under-evaluated place and influence on this particular

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26 See Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlichkeit,* 98.

27 Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlichkeit,* 104. Tengelyi cites Boulnois' claim that Heidegger reads Aquinas as a Christian Aristotelian, and does so without taking into account the "Neoplatonic dimension" of Aquinas' thinking. Boulnois further exposes the problems caused by Heidegger's insufficient knowledge of the influence of Arabic philosophy on medieval philosophy (especially the meaning of Avicenna for Aquinas). Thus, Heidegger "ist blind für den Einfluss des Neuplatonismus auf die Aristoteles-Rezeption der Hochscholastik, wie er blind für den Einfluss der arabischen Philosophie auf die peripatetische Metaphysik des Mittelalters ist. Nur deshalb kann er der Metaphysik im Ganzen eine allumfassende Wesenseinheit zuschreiben, ohne dessen inne zu werden, dass er sich mit seiner Idee einer ontotheologischen Verfassung der Metaphysik von vornherein nur im Rahmen einer bestimmten Avicennainterpretation bewegt." Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlichkeit,* 103-104.

28 Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlichkeit,* 105. According to Courtine, Suárez straddles between a Thomist position and Scotist premises and arguments: "Suárez 'einen Standpunkt einnimmt, der ihn offensichtlich auf die Seite der Thomisten stellt, sich aber dabei auf Argumente stützt, die der scotistischen These bereits das Wesentliche zugestanden haben.'"

29 Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlichkeit,* 103: "[Heidgger] bemerkt nicht, dass Thomas von Aquin durch eine Kluft von Duns Scotus und dem bereits an der scotistischen Wende orientierten Suárez getrennt ist."

30 László Tengelyi, *Welt Und Unendlichkeit,* 107. "Es ist kein Zufall, dass [Courtine] gleichzeitig mit seinem Suárez-Buch eine Aufsatzsammlung über den späten Schelling veröffentlicht, die uns übrigens noch im Einzelnen beschäftigen wird. Worauf es ihm in seinen metaphysiktypologischen Untersuchungen eigentlich ankommt, ist der Entwurf einer geschichtlichen Philosophie, so wie sie bereits von Schelling, dem Verfasser der 'Weltalter'-Fragmente und der Vorlesungen über Mythologie und Offenbarung, jeder apriorisch konzipierten Geschichtsphilosophie, sei es Fichte' schen oder auch Hegel' schen Typs, aufs Schroffste gegenübergestellt wurde."

methodology of doing historical, metaphysical research and its relation to French phenomenology. Notably, both Schelling and the French historical, phenomenological thinkers of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries defend the position that the meaning of events—including events in the history of philosophy—cannot be conceptualized in a purely *a priori* fashion. [31]

Courtine, Marion and Brague, along with Marc Richir—who translated Schelling's Freedom Essay into French and published four essays on post-1809 Schelling—are all thinkers who transition from historical, metaphysical research to phenomenology. Integral to this transition is the aforementioned "groundless ground" of metaphysics, which features first in Schelling and reappears subsequently in Heidegger.[32]

For example, Courtine's critique of the reading of representationalism into Aristotle by Duns Scotus and his followers leads him directly to phenomenology. Tengelyi explains that:

> The transformation of the Aristotelian *phantasia*/imagination (φαντασία) into a *repraesentatio* negates [*abhebt*] the direct contact with the appearance of the apparent, and even has a 'complete withdrawal of presence as appearance' (*retrait complet de la présence comme manifestation*) as its consequence. [33]

Tengelyiclearlydefends this critique as the precise "phenomenological inspiration of Courtine's metaphysics-typological research."[34] In short, Courtine, Marion and Brague were all influenced by their metaphysical responses to Heidegger's construal of the history of metaphysics as ontotheology in their future research directions.[35] According to Tengelyi, these thinkers specifically demonstrate that

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31 By trying to describe a "historical change of worlds" in the history of metaphysics, it could be argued that Courtine's historical methodology itself is a challenge to ontotheology and a-historical transcendental metaphysics. Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlichkeit,* 107: "Anders als Honnefelder geht es Courtine keineswegs um eine fortschreitende Verwissenschaftlichung der Metaphysik als Transzendentalphilosophie, sondern um einen geschichtlichen Wandel von Welten."

32 Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlichkeit,* 111. Courtine "geht … von der Heidegger'schen 'Grundfrage der Metaphysik' aus" und findet "dass die ontologisch angelegte Metaphysik viel weniger mit dieser Grundfrage zurechtkommt als die ihr gegenüberstehende Metaphysikformation. Dieses Urteil begründet seine Rede vom ''nihilistischen' Hintergrund' des gesamten Forschungsvorhabens der Ontologie." Tengelyi thus claims ontology has a "nihilistic background," for a thesis about being is simultaneously a thesis about nothingness. Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlichkeit,* 111.

33 Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlichkeit,* 112: "Er zeigt, dass die Umwandlung der aristotelischen φαντασία in eine *repraesentatio* die unmittelbare Fühlung mit dem Erscheinen des Erscheinenden aufhebt und sogar einen 'vollständigen Entzug der Gegenwärtigkeit als Erscheinens (retrait complet de la présence comme manifestation)' zur Folge hat."

34 Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlichkeit,* 112: "Hier wird die phänomenologische Inspiration von Courtines metaphysiktypologischen Forschungen offensichtlich."

35 The influence of Heidegger on Courtine is self-evident. See his book *Heidegger et la Phénomeologie*, and his multiple published articles on Heidegger. Alexander Schell explains Marc Richir's relationship to Heidegger in detail in Alexander Schnell, "Au-delà de Husserl, Heidegger

traditional metaphysics cannot be limited to ontotheology, and furthermore, that the "ontotheological constitution" of metaphysics is consequently not a suitable "guide to research on individual authors and schools."[36] Furthermore, they open the path for a "systematic renaissance of metaphysics" within the phenomenological tradition. Inga Römer accordingly explains that Courtine discusses the "end of the 'end of metaphysics'" as a metaphysical position.[37]

Finally, and most importantly for our purposes, Tengelyi asserts that the interest in Schelling in France grows "from the conviction that in Schelling's late philosophy, the beginnings of a 'first decisive overcoming of ontotheologically composed metaphysics' is visible."[38] He specifies that this has been the central motivation behind Courtine's Schelling investigations since the 1970's.[39]

Schelling's Critique of Ontotheology

Tengelyi, referring to Courtine, proclaims that Schelling specifically "works on a critique of ontotheology."[40] Schelling's late challenge to "ontotheological" thinking bears similarities to the critique of the ontotheological constitution of metaphysics levelled by Tengelyi and the French phenomenologists. Although I will deal primarily with Schelling's critique of ontotheological metaphysics in the 1841/42 *Berlin Lectures,* it is noteworthy that András Schuller has demonstrated that Schelling begins this enterprise already in the Freedom

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et Merleau Ponty: la phénomenologie de Marc Richir," *Revue Germanique Internationale* 13 (2011): 95-108, https://journals.openedition.org/rgi/1124: "By radicalizing in a 'transcendental experience' in a certain way, Heidegger opened a path to a phenomenological *ontology.*" Schnell explains that Richir chose a third position "beyond" the dualism of the transcendental and the appearance, the constituting subject and object, and that he was profoundly influenced by Heidegger. See Schnell, *La phénomenologie de Marc Richir,* paragraphs 15-20. Brague shares affinities with Courtine on his Heidegger interpretation. See Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlichkeit,* 52. For the methodological influence of Heidegger on Brague, see Rémi Brague, *Aristote et la question du monde: Essai sur le context cosmologique et anthropolgique de l'ontologie.* (Paris: PUF, 1988). Here, Brague analyzes Aristotle through Heidegger's concepts in *Being and Time*. Finally, Marion found Heidegger's method hermeneutically useful for understanding other thinkers. See Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlichkeit,* 25.

36 Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlichkeit,* 26: Es "machte deutlich, dass die ontotheologische Verfassung zwar nicht als erschöpfende Wesensbestimmung der traditionellen Metaphysik gelten kann, sich aber auch nicht allein dazu eignet, als Leitfaden zu Untersuchungen über einzelne Autoren und Schulen verwendet zu warden."

37 Inga Römer, "From Kant to the Problem of Phenomenological Metaphysics: In Memory of László Tengelyi," *Horizon* 5, no. 1 (2016): 115-132, here 121.

38 Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlichkeit,* 144.

39 Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlichkeit*, 143-144: "In Frankreich erwächst ... dieses Interesse ... aus der Überzeugung, dass in Schellings Spätphilosophie die Anfänge einer 'ersten entscheidenden Überwindung der ontotheologisch verfassten Metaphysik' sichtbar würden."

40 Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlichkeit,* 143: "Man kann ... behaupten, dass er—wie Courtine sagt—an einer Kritik der Ontotheologie arbeitet."

Essay.[41]

Firstly, in the *Berlin Lectures,* Schelling presents a dual evaluation of Aristotle and then turns to the issues of the modification and replacement of Aristotelian philosophy in the medieval tradition. Schelling seems to agree with Henry of Ghent's problem concerning the identification of Aristotle's First Mover with God.[42] Despite finding a new appreciation for Aristotle on the one hand,[43] the late Schelling nevertheless suggests that defending Aristotle's God means accepting "renunciation," for this God is *"terminus*," and thus would not correspond to the demand of our consciousness" (SW XIII: 107).[44] This "demand of our consciousness," for Schelling, is the *willing* of a free God of revelation: the God who progressively reveals himself through mythological and political history.[45] Aristotle's God, says Schelling, is just a "principle from which to explain the world ... the ideal creator *to* which—but not *through* which—everything has come to be" (SW XIII: 108).[46] Schelling's God, on the other hand, is *longed for* by the individual, and is thus more than God as a concept or principle.

From this point, Schelling criticizes the "rational dogmatism or positive rationalism" of medieval philosophy, which he deems to be even more problematic than Aristotle's metaphysics. Schelling claims that such forms of rational philosophy came to take the place of "the pure Aristotelian philosophy" in the "Christian schools" (SW XIII: 108).[47] Even though he was a mere principle, Aristotle's God was at least posited as the foundation of

41 See András Sculler, "Der Satz vom Ungrund: Der schellingsche Überwindungsversuch der Ontotheologie als Vorläufer der phänomenologischen Metaphysik bei László Tengelyi," in *Welt und Unendlichkeit: Ein deutsch-ungarisscher Dialog in memoriam László Tengelyi,* ed. Markus Gabriel, Csaba Olay, and Sebastian Ostritsch (Freiburg & Munich: Verlag Karl Alber, 2017): 79-96, at 87-94.

42 Joris Geldhof makes the interesting observation that instead of substance, "relation" is the "most important [Aristotelian] category" for Henry of Ghent, Franz von Baader and Schelling. However, he notes that "It is improbable that Baader and Schelling knew the work of Henry of Ghent." Joris Geldhof, *Revelation, Reason and Reality: Theological Encounters with Jaspers, Schelling and Baader* (Leuven, Paris, & Dudley, MA: Peeters, 2007), 84.

43 Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlichkeit,* 157. "Er findet zwar gerade in seiner Spätphilosophie einen neuen Zugang zu Aristoteles, so dass er ihm zu dieser Zeit sogar mehr abgewinnen kann als dem bis dahin immer bevorzugten Platon." Tengelyi also notes Schelling's appreciation for Aristotle as a thinker who begins from the presupposition of that which exists and from experience (157), but also repeats Schelling's critique of Aristotle as a thinker of negative philosophy. Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlichkeit*, 157.

44 F.W.J. Schelling, *The Grounding of Positive Philosophy: The Berlin Lectures,* trans. Bruce Matthews (Albany: SUNY Press, 2008), 164.

45 As we *experience* the world as finite, limited, historical beings, we creatively apply and re-apply concepts to this very experience in order to make claims about its meaning. As McGrath notes, the recognition of the limits of thought allows us to be "possible receivers of revelation, that is, recipients of an act of knowledge originating outside of reason and nature." Sean J. McGrath, "Is the Late Schelling Still Doing Nature-Philosophy?" *Angelaki* 20, no. 4 (2016): 121-144, here 122.

46 Schelling, *The Grounding*, 164.

47 Schelling, *The Grounding,* 165.

the world. Much of medieval rationalism, on the other hand—as exposed in reference to Scotus above—aims to arrive at an "existing God" by beginning in universal reason. Its method for coming to God's existence proceeded through concepts alone (SW XIII: 108).[48] It thus concerned only the concept-God whose predicates are deduced, and not the acting God who is willed for or even posited.

This approach, in the form of the "syllogism" or "inference," or reason understood as the "capacity to deduce" (SW XIII: 37),[49] "*began* in a rational way to arrive at a positive result" (SW XIII: 108).[50] This "syllogistic knowing," according to Schelling, attains the proposition but not the root of the content itself (SW XIII: 41) Schelling thus problematizes the approaches to attaining knowledge of "supernatural and supersensible" objects, such as the "nature of God and his relationship to the world," through general principles and laws, particularly when God is claimed to be the *result* of this process (SW XIII: 34-36).[51] Scotus is the most emblematic representative of this mode of argumentation. His metaphysics was doomed to fail because "the coherency it achieved was merely a coherency in our thoughts, but not in the matter itself" (SW XIII: 41).[52] In brief, proving that God exists, according to Schelling "cannot be an issue for reason" (SW XIII: 58).[53]

As stated above, Aquinas is the exception, for he does not equate existence with essence. Rather, all essences require an additional *act* of existence in order to be. As Gilson writes, "the act which makes substance exist can and even must be added to the act of form which causes substance ... all form is act, but all act is not form."[54] In the vocabulary of contingency, and foreshadowing the metaphysics of Schelling and Tengelyi, one could thus say that, in Aquinas, the act of form—the act which instantiates beings—is dependent upon a more primordial act of existence. This is a second order of deep contingency. Schelling explicitly recognizes Aquinas as a source of this insight. Aquinas separates, he notes, "what allows itself to be known from the mere nature of things and what does not ... everything that refers to existence is more than what can be realized from the mere nature of things and, thus, also with pure reason" (SW XIII: 172).[55] In short, both Aquinas and Schelling thus defend an acting God who exceeds that which reason can supply to humankind (SW XIII:

48 Schelling, *The Grounding,* 165.
49 Schelling, *The Grounding,* 115.
50 Schelling, *The Grounding,* 165.
51 Schelling, *The Grounding,* 113.
52 Schelling, *The Grounding,* 118.
53 Schelling, *The Grounding,* 129.
54 Etienne Gilson, *L'être et l'essence,* 3rd ed. (Paris: Vrin, 2000), 104.
55 Schelling, *The Grounding,* 210. Alluding to a judgment of his own previous philosophy of nature as a purely rational, not "positive," philosophy, Schelling here adds: "With pure reason I cannot, as was said, even realize the existence of some plant that if it is an actual plant, exists necessarily in a definite location in space and at a definite point in time. Under given conditions, reason, o*f itself,* can know quite well the *nature* of this plant, but never its actual, present existence." SW XIII: 172, Schelling, *The Grounding,* 210.

142-143)[56]: this is the God of revelation, and not the abstract, concept-God of Scotist metaphysics who can be known at the end of a logical inquiry on the level of transcendental being. Schelling's God is therefore "outside the Absolute Idea, in which he was as lost" (SW XI: 562). McGrath accordingly asserts that Schelling and Aquinas similarly argue "for the closest possible interpenetration of philosophy and theology while preserving both the autonomy of philosophy and the sovereignty of revelation."[57]

The difference between essences (which can be ascertained through reason) and existence is therefore the beginning of the historical alternative to 'ontotheological' metaphysics. The essence/existence distinction is not only shared by Aquinas and Schelling, but is also maintained by Kant. Schelling and Tengelyi accordingly praise the relation of Kant's differentiation between essence and existence to his establishment of the limits of reason.[58] These

56 Schelling, *The Grounding,* 189.

57 Whether Schelling breaks with the Scotist tradition of *univocatio entis*—the root of ontotheology—is debatable. While Tengelyi and Saitya Brata Das argue that the late Schelling successfully defects from this tradition, McGrath argues otherwise. Although he draws the above cited between the acting God of Aquinas and Schelling, McGrath also argues that Schelling is *not* a thinker of analogy in the Thomist sense. This is because, explains McGrath, the principles of reason (the "potencies") are also the "names" of God. In other words, Schelling applies the principles of reason *directly* to the explication of the revealed God, despite asserting the contingency of God's existence. On the existence of God as a "contingent necessity," see Tritten, *The Contingency of Necessity* (Tritten, 2018: 160). Therefore, according to McGrath, Schelling does *not* follow Aquinas's thesis of *analogia entis,* i.e., that the principles of reason apply to God only analogously, even though he maintains that the question of whether God truly *exists* is not a question which can be answered absolutely through the principles of reason. McGrath thus qualifies his comparison between Aquinas and Schelling in the following way: "Schelling holds that reason indeed possesses an adequate idea of God, which Aquinas denies, and second, and even more disturbing for Thomism, Schelling maintains that the *distinctio realis* between essence and existence also applies to God. This means that (1) for Schelling, God exists contingently even if he exists as necessary being ... and (2) Scotus was right about the *univocatio entis*: the concept of being which we deploy in understanding finite being is the same concept which we legitimately deploy in understanding the nature of God." McGrath, "Still Doing Nature-Philosophy?" 138. As stated, Das, on the other hand, argues that Schelling is *not* a thinker of *univocatio entis*. He explains that Schelling's eschatology "introduces a rupture ... into the univocity of being," and that the actuality of being in Schelling's positive philosophy is "that which can no longer be grasped, categorically, on the metaphysical basis of being as potentiality." Saitya Brata Das, *The Political Theology of Schelling* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016: 8, 26). Finally, in order to claim that Schelling's metaphysics of contingency is a distinctive break from the ontotheological tradition, Tengelyi seems to broadly interpret Schelling as a thinker of analogy positioned in opposition to Scotus' univocity. Tengelyi describes the idea of directly grasping the world as a whole through the properties of God as a "transcendental illusion"—a position with which phenomenology breaks. However, in taking this position to the extreme, Tengelyi is also critical of the Thomist claim that God sees all in one at the same time. See Aquinas, *Summa Theologica,* 1, q. 14. We can thus question, from this point of view, the extent to which the post-Husserlian, phenomenological project would be able to truly coexist with the late Schelling's *theology.* See Tengelyi, "Experience and Infinity in Kant and Husserl," *Tijdschrift voor Filosofie, 67st Jaarg.* 3 (2005): 479-500, here 497.

58 McGrath additionally draws a comparison between Schelling and Aquinas on the claim that the "possibility of evil is necessary to the existence of love. God has allowed evil to actualize

epistemological boundaries determine the system of reason specifically as a philosophy of essence (*quidditas*), and not of existence (*quoddita*s). This implies that a deductive, *a priori* philosophy of essence is incommensurable (but not incompatible!) with a philosophy of existence.

Furthermore, Kant crucially emphasizes the problem of *experience* for epistemology and metaphysics, which adds a new dimension to Schelling's challenge to the ontotheological application of general concepts and principles to being. The ontotheological medieval metaphysics of which Schelling is critical thus commits a logical fallacy on a meta-level: it applies rational, "general principles" to material from experience, and from this point, makes inferences about that which is *beyond* both being and experience (SW XIII: 38, 108).[59] The demoting of experience in the old metaphysics to merely that which can only reveal the "particular, contingent, and transitory" consequently seems to ignore the fact that it is on the basis of the "particular and contingent" that the "*production* of knowledge and science" occurs (SW XIII 37).[60] As we will see in the next section, *experience* is the important middle term between *a priori* reason and *a posteriori facts of existence* (the latter which compose the metaphysics of contingency). Recognition of the necessity to further examine the role of experience in the history and future of metaphysics also opens new paths for the critique of ontotheology in phenomenology, as will be clarified in what follows.

Schelling, Kant and the Abyss of Reason

Kant's emphasis on experience and his analysis of the limits of reason ended the so-called "ontotheological" era. As Schelling states, "After Kant, the Germans

itself (the fall) for the sake of creation/revelation." On this point, McGrath points to Aquinas' *Summa Theologica,* 1a, q. 2, a. 3, ad. 1. Sean J. McGrath, *The Dark Ground of Spirit: Schelling and the Unconscious* (London: Routledge, 2012), 169. It would be an interesting project for future research to investigate the existent to which Schelling and Aquinas together could be linked to Kant on this topic (notably the latter's position on the facticity of evil in *Religion Within the Boundaries of Pure Reason*), and furthermore, whether this facticity of evil could be a basic metaphysical fact in the framework developed by Tengelyi and explained below.

59 Schelling, *The Grounding,* 116, 165. Schelling writes further, "When I incorporate the phenomena given in experience into the world of concepts and determine these phenomena as *contingent* (which could also not be), yet existing, and when I then apply the general laws of the understanding to what exists contingently—namely, everything that comports itself as just an effect, that is, as something that could also not be (for this is the proper concept of an effect), that cannot be determined to exist without a *cause,* but only through a determinate cause—I elevate myself, on the one hand, to the *concept* of an absolute cause through which the world, that is, the complex of all special and merely relative causes and effects, is determined to be, and on the other hand, to the insight into the existence of this absolute cause, which to know was considered to be the ultimate and highest goal of all metaphysics." SW XIII: 38, Schelling, *The Grounding,* 115-116.

60 Schelling, *The Grounding*, 115.

held onto metaphysics, but interwoven with experience."[61] Schelling frequently notes Kant's importance for his thinking, and sees own his late metaphysical project as consistent with Kant's epistemology. One could even say that Schelling "considered his own life's work as an attempt to more fully develop the central insights of Kant's critical program."[62] As a post-Kantian thinker, Schelling remains sceptical of any rational theory which purports to have access to the whole or totality, and is thereby critical of many forms of religious philosophy (SW XIII: 32).[63] Indeed, Schelling had one single recommended course reading for the audience of his *Berlin Lectures*—Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* (SW XIII: 33).[64]

As noted above, Kant articulates the limits of reason and identifies reason's object, not as existence or even as *experience,* but rather as reason itself (or *a priori* essences).[65] Yet experience is evidently the minimum condition for the general laws and concepts of reason to have any relevance or application at all. But how exactly, then, does reason relate to experience? The main challenge in answering this question lies in the complexity of ascertaining whether and how experience can be a source of knowledge—a task which brings us to an examination of Schelling's conception of the groundless ground, inherited from Kant.

After Kant, reason is no longer assumed to have the power to deduce the fact of existence or the *existence* of God. In relation to Schelling, the result of this conclusion is that God cannot be reduced to the *concept* of God. Schelling clearly relates this to Kant's use of the essence/existence distinction and reason's limits:

> Kant leaves to reason only the concept of God, and because he rejects the so-called ontological argument, which wanted to infer God's existence from his concept, he makes for the concept of God no exception to the rule that the concept of a thing contains only the pure whatness [*Was*] of the concept, but nothing of its thatness [*Daß*], of its existence. Kant shows in general how futile it is for reason to attempt through inferences

61 F.W.J. Schelling, *Philosophie der Offenbarung 1841/42: Paulus Nachschrift*, ed. Manfred Frank (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1977), 128.

62 Matthews, "Translator's Introduction," 32. For both Schelling and Kant, reason cannot attain existence through its own methods—it thus restricts itself, inhibiting "the *cogito's* seemingly instinctual drive 'to progress' into the positive world of experience." Matthews, "Translator's Introduction," 29.

63 Schelling, *The Grounding,* 110. Schelling suggests that a proper philosophical examination must be embarked upon before declaring whether any philosophy is "religious" or "irreligious." It is interesting that although Schelling has already exposed himself as an ostensibly Christian thinker by this point (1841), he never ceased to be critical of the relation of religion, especially rational religion, to philosophy.

64 Schelling, *The Grounding,* 111.

65 See Matthews, "Translator's Introduction," 28.

> to reach beyond itself to existence (in this effort, however, reason is not dogmatic, since it does not reach its goal, but, rather, is simply dogmatizing) (SW XIII: 83).[66]

Furthermore, Kant's infamous things in themselves are a reminder of reason's blind spots and its areas of "nonknowledge" (to use Gabriel's term). I will explain the complex role of Kant's things in themselves for Schelling's positive philosophy later in this section. For now, let us note that "Schelling," writes Gabriel, "reconstructs the path of metaphysical knowledge as the discovery of nonknowledge by and through the breakdown of all dogmatic determinations of the whole."[67]

At issue here is not what we know *a priori*, but the identification of that to which no *a priori* access is possible, and which therefore requires a different method of knowing. On this point, experience has a humbling role to play, for in experience we come to be aware of that which we do not or cannot absolutely know. Thus, although Schelling calls experience "the only other source of knowledge of equal birth with reason" (SW XIII: 57),[68] it is also paradoxically *not* a source of knowledge on its own *per se*. More accurately, it is a source of the *awareness* of "nonknowledge." Schelling therefore calls experience the "escort" of reason (SW XIII: 61)[69]; in accompanying reason, it thereby also exceeds reason.

As a source of both knowledge and the awareness of "nonknowledge," the question of experience in Schelling is inherently paradoxical. Experience is both that to which reason applies, and that which exceeds reason. Reason constantly aims to be completely adequate to experience, to "describe its entire sphere"—but falls short. Schelling correspondingly explains that reason eventually arrives at "an ultimate [*ein Letztes*] beyond which it can no longer continue and because of which it cannot also refer to experience in the same way as with everything which has preceded it" (SW XIII: 148).[70] Experience can therefore also provide a sense for that which the concept fails to grasp. In experience, reason is provoked to admit that it "cannot demonstrate its final idea in experience, [and] must now turn to the being [*Seyn*] that is itself outside and above experience, to the being that relates to reason as the pure faculty of knowing" (SW XIII: 171).[71]

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66 Schelling, *The Grounding*, 147.

67 Gabriel, *Transcendental Ontology*, 7.

68 Schelling, *The Grounding*, 128.

69 Schelling, *The Grounding*, 131.

70 Schelling, *The Grounding*, 194. Schelling calls this ultimate [*Letztes*] "being itself [*das Seyende selbst*]": that "which is most worthy of knowing" as the "entirely *actus*, pure actuality." Schelling, *The Grounding*, 194, SW XIII: 149.

71 Schelling, *The Grounding*, 210. Schelling's description of the relationship between reason and experience is challenging due to the possible *a priori* and *a posteriori* methods of *applying* and *using* reason. Schelling suggests that reason can encompass everything except that which *simply is*, including the *feeling* for that which *simply is*, neither of which can be deduced *a priori*.

Although this being is outside of all thought and conceptualized experience,[72] experience is also the only possible domain in which the senses can be stimulated and thus in which a thinker can be instigated to posit such a being. Schelling accordingly describes that we come to know *existence* of things outside of us exclusively through the senses (SW XIII: 172).[73] More precisely, he maintains that reason in itself "cannot realize or prove any actual real being even in the sensible world," and that the desire for real being entails a submission to "the authority of the senses" (SW XIII: 170).[74] Through the senses, "we know the present existence, the plant that exists here, which cannot be realized from the mere nature of things, and thus from reason" (SW 171).[75]

From such a realization or provocation, Schelling is prompted to posit the idea of a groundless ground, which was denoted the non-ground (*Ungrund*) in the Freedom Essay (SW VII: 406),[76] and which transforms into the "unprethinkable being" (*unvordenkliches Sein*) in his later work.[77] This is the principle upon which the philosophy of reason (the philosophy of essences) is dependent—for both its own existence and the existence of that which fulfils its concepts. This is because reason cannot ground itself, or in other words, possibility cannot ground actuality. Again, true to its Thomist heritage, this principle of groundless ground is pure *act.*

Kant's abyss (*Abgrund*) of reason, explicitly discussed by Schelling, is an "unconditional necessity" and the "*supporter of all things*" (SW XIII: 163),[78] which is "not comprehensible *a priori*" (SW XIII: 165).[79] Although this abyss (*Abgrund*) shares characteristics with the non-ground (*Ungrund*)[80] and

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72 Schelling thus states, "Of this being the Hegelian philosophy knows nothing—it has no place for this concept" (SW XIII: 164), Schelling, *The Grounding,* 204.

73 Schelling, *The Grounding,* 210. Interestingly, on the nature of this point, Schelling draws a comparison with Aquinas' distinction between "what allows itself to be known from the mere *nature* of things and what does not. To the latter, of course, he ascribes only *ea quae divina autoritate traduntur* [the things bequeathed by divine authority]" (SW XIII: 172) Schelling, *The Grounding*, 210. In short, existence always indicates more than what reason can provide.

74 Schelling, *The Grounding,* 210.

75 Schelling, *The Grounding*, 210.

76 F.W.J. Schelling, *Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom,* trans. Jeff Love and Johannes Schmidt (Albany: SUNY Press, 2006), 68-69. Henceforth referred to as *Freedom Essay.*

77 Philipp Schwab has demonstrated the affinity between Schelling's non-ground and unprethinkable being: "The central concept of Schelling's late philosophy ... is ... unprethinkable Being [*unvordenkliches Sein*]. And there is no doubt as well, that this very concept is a term that follows up on the nonground of the Freedom Essay." Philipp Schwab, "Nonground and the Metaphysics of Evil: From Heidegger's First Schelling Seminar to Derrida's Last Reading of Schelling (1927-2002)," *Analecta Hermeneutica* 5 (2013), 25.

78 Schelling, *The Grounding,* 204.

79 Schelling, *The Grounding,* 205.

80 In the Freedom Essay, Schelling distinguishes between a 'dark' ground and existing being. This is further dependent on another type of ground—a non-ground or an *Ungrund*—which is other to them. The fact and drama of existing at all is dependent or contingent upon this originary ground, according to Schelling, whose only predicates are primordial will and drive

the "*unprethinkable* being" (the absolute *prius* which undergirds the philosophy of reason)—its *function* differs. All three concepts, however, show that reason is contingent, i.e., dependent on an outside other than itself. Nevertheless, as Wolfram Hogrebe demonstrates, Kant's abyss (*Abgrund*) is still only a "regulative principle from a distance." Hogrebe suggests that this abyss (*Abgrund*) is unattainable and inscrutable, and thus that Kant avoids any "speculative interpretation of such abysses," thereby adopting a principle of "speculative abstinence."[81] In brief, while Kant expresses the incomprehensibility of the abyss [*Abgrund*], insofar as it is "not comprehensible *a priori*" (SW XIII: 164-165),[82] he does not move to an a posteriori investigation about what the groundless ground or abyss (*Abgrund*) could be.

Schelling, on the other hand, will not remain abstinent when it comes to speculating about the groundless ground. Instead, he explains that reason can effectuate a dispossession of itself as its object, the most necessary being, and then come to make assertions (*Behauptungen*)[83] about what this groundless ground could be. In the domain of operating concepts, a coherent demand can be made for "that which is beyond being," which signifies the performative *completion* of reason, the point after which reason can go no further. Schelling thus exclaims: "I want that which is above being!" (SW XI: 564). This longing is for the transcendent "Lord of Being" (SW XI: 564): the God of revelation. As we will see, this God is desired by a will which cannot be reduced to its concept. From this point, the positive philosophy begins, and reason can factically explain what the groundless ground could be.

Schelling's describes the process of identifying the groundless ground with God as a reversal of the traditional, "immanent," approach to the knowledge of God that ends in the transcendent. Schelling accordingly claims that the "great misunderstanding of our time" is the misconception that God is "the transcendent." Rather, Schelling writes, "he is the immanent (that is, what is to become the content of reason) made transcendent" (SW XIII: 170).[84] By this, Schelling means that after reason (through an immanent mode of proceeding) has reached its limits, we can set out from a posited, incomprehensible being

(*Trieb*). Creation and existence are contingent on this primordial *Ungrund*, and therefore existence *need not have been*, or *could have been otherwise.*

81 Wolfram Hogrebe, "Wie kommt das Böse in die Welt?," in *Die Ausnahme denken: Festschrift zum 60. Geburtstag von Klaus-Michael Kodalle in zwei Bänden*, vol. 2, ed. Claus Dierksmeier (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2003), 311.

82 Schelling, *The Grounding,* 205.

83 McGrath explains that the transition from the philosophy of reason to the philosophy of revelation (the philosophy which can speculate on whether the groundless ground is God) "happens by means of assertions (*Behauptungen*), which are not as such deductions or concepts but acts of the will positing concepts as true. Thus, the one who asserts something is already outside the purely conceptual and so does not need to pass from concept or essence to actuality and existence. The thinker is already in the real." McGrath, "Still Doing Nature-Philosophy?" 125.

84 Schelling, *The Grounding*, 209.

and re-appropriate it through reason (immanently). Schelling explains, "What is *a priori* incomprehensible, because it is conveyed through no anterior concept, will become a comprehensible being in God, or it arrives at its concept in God. That which infinitely exists, that which reason cannot hide within itself becomes immanent for reason in God" (SW XIII: 170).[85]

The groundless ground—which Schelling also calls the absolute *prius* of that which infinitely exists—is therefore not an opaque substratum precluding all speculation. It is rather an "unmediated concept of reason," which reason attains by means other than the syllogism and logical inferences (SW XIII: 165).[86] As noted above, the groundless ground is associated with an absolutely free act[87] and is "that being in which no thought can discover a ground or beginning" (SW XIII: 166)[88]—hence it is "unprethinkable," or "that before which nothing can be thought." Indeed, the only positive predicates we can associate with it are in the register of willing, acting and drive.

To be clear, Schelling begins with a groundless ground—a posited principle of pure actuality outside of reason—which is not itself *directly* experienced and which can be, as that which necessarily exists, subsequently re-appropriated as reason's content. This principle, from which all reason and potency are excluded, thereby *becomes* "the first proper *object* of thought" before which "reason bows down" (SW XIII: 162).[89] In short, Schelling maintains that after reason posits this concept of being "absolutely *outside itself*," it acquires it once again later, *a posteriori,* as its own content (SW XIII: 163).[90] This is the moment in which reason is "set outside itself, absolutely ecstatic" (SW XIII: 163).[91]

Despite the "inscrutability" of Kant's abyss (*Abgrund*) as identified by Hogrebe, Schelling concurs with Kant regarding the claim that "that which necessarily exists is precisely that which … exists *of itself* … without antecedent ground" (SW XIII: 168).[92] According to Schelling, Kant both indicates "the impossibility of denyingthat which necessarily exists as an immediate concept of reason" (Kant's abyss or *Abgrund*), and also acknowledges "the concept of the most supreme being [*Wesens*] as the final, lasting content of reason" (SW

85 Schelling, *The Grounding,* 209.
86 Schelling, *The Grounding*, 206.
87 Schelling also calls the groundless ground the absolute *prius*, and describes it as having "no necessity to move itself into being. If it passes over into being, then this can only be the consequence of a free act, of an act that can only be something purely empirical, that can be fully apprehended only *a posteriori,* just as every act is incapable of being comprehended *a priori* and is only capable of being known *a posteriori."* SW XIII: 127, Schelling, *The Grounding*, 179. Schelling frequently describes this act as the act before all possibility and prior to the principles of reason (potencies). See SW XIII, 160.
88 Schelling, *The Grounding,* 205.
89 Schelling, *The Grounding*, 203.
90 Schelling, *The Grounding*, 203.
91 Schelling, *The Grounding,* 203.
92 Schelling, *The Grounding,* 207.

XIII: 168).[93] However, the problem for Schelling is that Kant does not connect these two concepts. Schelling—almost paradoxically, and in a method which appears to be backwards—claims that the *first* concept, that which necessarily exists before all other concepts, must be first posited as *transcendent*, so it can then be possessed once again immanently. This marks the transition between negative and positive philosophy. While Kant acknowledges the requirement to posit an unconditional necessity outside reason as the "*supporter of all things*" (SW XIII: 163),[94] and himself even has a "sublime feeling" for this being, he fails to make this being itself transcendent in such a way that it would later become a possible object for reason.

For Schelling, the concept of the supreme being, immanent to reason marks the end of the philosophy of reason (the negative philosophy). On the other hand, that which necessarily exists *qua* transcendent principle signifies the beginning of the philosophy of revelation and history (the positive philosophy). The philosophy of reason can indeed reach that which necessarily exists, but only as a principle of reason, not in *its existence* (SW XIII: 168).[95] This is the point beyond which Kant advances no further. According to Schelling, however, that which necessarily exists, understood *as the transcendent* principle, can subsequently be conceptualized *factually* and proven *a posteriori* in experience, and is therefore not deduced necessarily (SW XIII: 169).[96]

As explained above, Schelling is critical of the presupposition of the ontological argument that the true existence of God could be inferred in and through the *concept* of God. But if one begins with that which exists as completely *anterior* to all concepts, then the fallacy of the ontological argument, i.e., the move from the immanent (concepts deduced through reason) to the transcendent, is avoided. Schelling can therefore posit a transcendent principle with no presuppositions or concepts, and then re-appropriate it through the "immanent" philosophy of reason, without thereby violating the limits of reason established by Kant.[97] "The transcendence of the positive philosophy is an absolute transcendence, and for precisely this reason *not* transcendent in the sense in which Kant had forbidden it" (SW XIII: 169).[98]

Both Kant and Schelling refuse to conclude on the basis of a proof of the concept of God as the necessary being that God *exists*. Schelling accordingly lauds Kant for forbidding the move which *dogmatized* reason—i.e., his objection to the role of reason in traditional metaphysics to seek "by means of inferences, to reach existence." Furthermore, Kant *did not,* writes Schelling, "forbid reason to proceed conversely from that which simply and

93 Schelling, *The Grounding,* 207.
94 Schelling, *The Grounding,* 204.
95 Schelling, *The Grounding*, 208.
96 Schelling, *The Grounding*, 208.
97 In this immanent sphere of pure thought, Schelling states, "transcendence is hardly possible." SW XIII: 169. Schelling, *The Grounding*, 209.
98 Schelling, *The Grounding,* 209.

thus, infinitely *exists* to the concept of the most supreme *being as posterius* (he had not thought of it, for this possibility had not even presented itself to him)" (SW XIII: 170).[99] In this sense, although Schelling sees Kant as neglecting to work with the transcendent principle of that which necessarily exists, he also claims Kant's critical philosophy does not preclude the possibility of doing so. Schelling simply claims that reason's re-possession of that which necessarily exists (as pre-conceptual, transcendent being) *per posterius* as God is allegedly something which simply did not occur to Kant.

Kant's insights on the dependence of our experience on that which is external to reason is nevertheless appreciated by Schelling. Firstly, Schelling appreciates Kant's argument that reason requires an outside (in Kant– eternity) for finite experience in time to be possible. Schelling thus explains that Kant differentiates the necessity *within God* from "absolute eternity, eternity insofar as it is not yet *opposed* to time, but is rather before and above all time" (SW XIII: 164).[100] In this sense, Schelling suggests that this absolute eternity, which is the "existence, of which we know no *prius* and no beginning" (SW XIII: 164),[101] is the outside of reason necessary in order for a finite experience of time and freedom to be possible.

Secondly, Kant's thing in itself suggests a rejection of subjective idealism and appears to indicate the postulating of a real being (which is also, for Schelling, a transcendent being) persisting independently to all rational concepts of things or objects.[102] Schelling thereby states that "the things that occur in real experience" include two elements: their general determinations object and "something real (this it must be even independent of the categories) ... that which remains in the object *independent of the faculty of knowledge*" (SW XIII: 48-49).[103] In short, when all external properties and determinations are stripped from an object, this unknown, thing in itself still remains. (SW XIII: 49).[104] A structural comparison can therefore be drawn between Kant's positing of the thing in itself and Schelling's postulation of that which necessarily exists as the antecedent ground to all concepts. But Schelling nevertheless criticizes Kant's "thing in itself " as the "point of departure beyond which Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* could never move, and because of which it had to fail as an independent science" (SW XIII: 50).[105] He also accuses Kant of completely extracting from (*a priori*) knowledge "that which is precisely the most important thing, namely, that which exists [*Existirende*], the 'in itself' [*An sich*], the being [*Wesen*] of the the thing, that which *really is* in it" (SW

99 Schelling, *The Grounding*, 208-209.
100 Schelling, *The Grounding,* 205.
101 Schelling, *The Grounding,* 205.
102 Schelling uses the language of the in and of itself, "as one used to express it, *a se*, that is, *sponte ultra*, and which exists without an antecedent ground." SW XIII: 168, Schelling, *The Grounding*, 207.
103 Schelling, *The Grounding,* 122-123.
104 Schelling, *The Grounding,* 123.
105 Schelling, *The Grounding,* 123.

XIII: 50).[106] In short, although Schelling sees Kant as successfully arriving at the end of rational philosophy, and even positing an independent, necessary being, devoid of all concepts, as the condition of the existence of reason and that which fills its concepts, Kant does not take the final step to make the "transcendent principle" immanent, or in other words, to interpret the meaning of the abyss (*Abgrund*) through reason *a posteriori* as a new science.

The Ecstasy of Reason and Experience

Schelling states it would be an "embarrassing situation" to have to explain "that which infinitely exists" (the groundless ground as absolute beginning) as if it were an idea or concept (SW XIII: 162). Alternatively, Schelling describes a process of reason's self-emptying or *kenosis* which begins reason's subsequent free relation to the groundless ground. In this process, reason dispossesses itself of its object, and thus frees itself for a new philosophical beginning, as described above. Schelling names this process the "ecstasy of reason."

In the ecstasy of reason, reason becomes "paralyzed by that being which overpowers everything," and thus enters into a relationship of subordination to all of being. From this humbled moment, reason can "reach its true and eternal content," i.e., existence, which it could not recover through the *a priori* deductive work of concepts (SW XIII: 166).[107] It rather "allocates everything to a foreign knowledge, namely, that of experience, until it arrives at that which no longer has the capacity to be external to thought, to that which remains abiding within thought." Note that Schelling here gestures to experience as a *different source of knowledge,* through which reason can escape its own "necessary movement" (SW XIII: 102)[108] and arrive at something "absolutely *outside* itself" (SW XIII: 170).[109] Schelling therefore states that in this process, reason is "set outside of itself, absolutely ecstatic" (SW XIII: 162-163).[110] It then becomes apparent that "the fact *that*" reason's own content exists is "something purely contingent" (SW 60, p. 130).[111] That is, to know "things" is not qualitatively the same as to know that they exist: "that they exist I do not know in this way [through reason] and must convince myself of this from somewhere else, namely from experience" (SW XIII: 61).[112] Experience thus

106 Schelling, *The Grounding*, 124.
107 Schelling, *The Grounding,* 206.
108 Schelling, *The Grounding,* 160-161.
109 Schelling, *The Grounding,* 209.
110 Schelling, *The Grounding,* 203.
111 To say God is contingent is not to say that his manner of existence is contingent or that he exists "*per transitum a potential ad actum* [in transition from potency to *actus*]." This is because, Schelling states, God must himself be "the *existing* potency, the upright capacity to be." This is the God who "precedes his concept, and, thus, all concepts." SW XIII: 158, Schelling, *The Grounding*, 200.
112 Schelling, *The Grounding,* 131.

serves as the source of facts, which cannot all be verified by *a priori* methods, and it is *into* this domain of experience itself that reason releases the content of its grip, and in so doing, acknowledges something other than itself. This is the inauguration of a new method of knowing.[113]

Once it has reached its limits, reason stops seeking "its object within itself" and instead posits an "infinite being" outside of itself. In this moment, reason is rendered "motionless, paralyzed, *quasi attonita*" (SW XIII: 165).[114] But how does this movement of the self-dispossession of reason happen?

The answer to this question, on my reading, lies in human experience. *A priori* reason, which is indifferent to its own content, is confronted by a pushback from within human experience, in which a human being, who is free to will and to hope, accuses it of inadequacy. Simply stated, the human being who cries out for that which is beyond being is the human being who does not find the resources within the syllogism to sufficiently grasp her experience in the world in which she lives—an experience of freedom, love, suffering, hope and history.

Nevertheless, we must equally heed Schelling's words that the positive philosophy (the philosophy dealing with revelation, history, existence and the event, in juxtaposition to the philosophy of reason) "does not start out from experience." This is because it neither "presumes to possess its object in an immediate experience (as in mysticism), nor ... attempts to attain to its object through inferences drawn from something given in experience." Instead, Schelling states, the positive philosophy goes "toward experience, and thereby proving *a posteriori* what it has to prove, that its *prius* is God, that is, that which is above being" (SW XIII: 127).[115] Schelling is here explaining that experience cannot be the unmediated *object* of the concepts of positive philosophy. But he is not precluding that particular instances in experience could *incite* a demand—an outcry, even—for that which is beyond conceptualized being. Experience is rather impotent as a *source of direct, absolute knowledge*. In other words, the application of reason to experience *a posteriori* in Schelling is neither an immediate, mystical union with God, nor is it an external, syllogistic, logical pursuit of God from conceptualized experience. However, this does not rule out allotting a role to experience in *stimulating* a transition between the methods of knowledge (i.e., between a "negative" or *a priori* rational method and a "positive" or abductive method).

Once desired, the positive philosophy then sets out, *a posteriori,* to prove God "factually" as a "*res facti*." or matter of fact" (SW XIII: 128).[116]

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113 The new method of knowing is *per posterius* and abductive, and it does not violate the methods of purely rational philosophy, but rather co-exists with it. The point here is not that experience is the *other* of the concept. It certainly is not. Rather, experience exceeds the concept that always tries to grasp it. It is both a source of the new and a locus of purge.

114 Schelling, *The Grounding,* 205-206.

115 Schelling, *The Grounding,* 179.

116 Schelling, *The Grounding,* 179.

Thus, although on the one hand, the interpretation of history is an ongoing *a posteriori* proof that the groundless ground is God, this process is also always-present (and thus "*per posterius*"[117]), for we are constantly directly engaged in this proof *through* experience. This places experience in the middle ground between the philosophy of reason and the positive philosophy.

When harkening back to Kant as the source of the "abyss" [*Abgrund*] of reason, Schelling includes a lengthy passage from the *Critique of Pure Reason* (A613/B641), in which Kant expresses his "profound feeling for the sublime nature of the being that precedes all thought" (SW XIII: 163).[118] In other words, to be motivated to posit the groundless ground of reason, Kant required a stimulus from lived experience in the world. This is the sublime experience and realization that a system of reason which proceeds via concepts is not adequate to all that exists. Therefore, without experience, there can be no "encounter with the sublime as an overpowering shock [*Erschütterung*]" in the Kantian sense, and equally no "ecstatic moment of reason becoming free of itself" in the Schellingian sense.[119]

Experience, as the above-mentioned source of nonknowledge, is the only possible location of an encounter with the sublime, the realm of longing for that which is beyond being. It is the domain of Plato's awe—that of phenomenologist Eugen Fink's astonishment (*Erstaunen*) in the face of the world—the locus of the beginning of philosophy for so many thinkers. Schelling's ecstasy of reason and the drive to inaugurate a new beginning for positive philosophy—i.e., to posit the beginning of pure actuality—thus occurs in experience.[120] Matthews therefore explains that Schelling "grounds positive philosophy in an experience that is not mediated by thought."[121] The thinker recognizes that which she cannot achieve by means of "logical knowledge" and *wills* more, i.e., "that which is above being!"

It is in experience that the human being also confesses an "ignorance caused by the exuberant nature [*Ueberschwenglichkeit*] of what is to be known" (SW XIII: 99).[122] Thus, the sublime feeling described above comes with a

117 McGrath, "Still Doing Nature-Philosophy?" 122.

118 Schelling, *The Grounding,* 204.

119 Matthews, "Translator's Introduction," 51.

120 Here, the *impetus* to posit the absolutely free beginning of being, and the very being of this *prius* itself must be qualitatively differentiated. Schelling thus cautions us *not* to say that the positive philosophy *begins* from "some being that is present in *experience*," and instead claims it begins from "that which is before and external to all thought, consequently from being." SW 126-127, *Grounding* 178-179. It should be noted that while the *ecstasy* and *impetus* are experienced, the pure that itself is not.

121 Matthews, "Translator's Introduction," 51: "Thought and existence can only be accounted for if we begin before reflexivity divides and conquers our awareness of this unity of experience." If we try to proceed in the opposite direction and extract the foundational principle from unified experience, the result will be "the impossible task of demonstrating their correspondence." The postulation of the grounding principle of experience is therefore itself an event in experience in retrospect.

122 Schelling, *The Grounding,* 158

humbling recognition of that very "exuberance" which concepts constantly fail to fully grasp.[123]

Therefore, according to Courtine, the ecstasy of reason itself is also an experience—he calls it the "inaugural experience of the positive philosophy."[124] Gabriel similarly describes the ecstasy of reason as a "stimulus" (*Anlaß*) for "initiating a new movement, that presents Being [*Sein*] itself in the process of its coming-to-selfhood [*Verselbstung*]."[125] Hence, the ecstasy of reason, as a recognition of reason's "estrangement and motionlessness,"[126] is not a logical transition between the negative and positive philosophy. It is rather a particular *experience* that induces the positing of a qualitatively different principle of beginning, which can only occur if reason sets itself outside of itself.[127]

Furthermore, the will introduces an additional element into Schelling's portrayal of experience that is not reducible to rational philosophy. In Schelling's words: "The will is in fact not only *a potentia passiva*, but is also that which introduces into the realm of experience the most decisive *potentia activa* that is intimately related to the pure capacity to be" (SW XIII: 67).[128] When the will is in the state of a *potentia passiva*, Schelling notes, it may require "stimulation to become active" (SW XIII: 69)[129] (which, of course, would also occur in experience, not merely in thought). However, Schelling states that the will is "*potentia activa*" in those "who are capable of freely deciding and are able to start something on their own accord, to become the originator of a course of action" (SW XIII: 68).[130] The will accordingly introduces the possibility to act and decide in a way that is not merely calculative. Moreover, this primordial position of the will is not only to be found at the depths of individuality. For Schelling, it also marks the ultimate primordial act (the "actu acting being" (XI, 562)) of everything that is. As we will see, this ultimate act can be compared to Tengelyi's positing of the foundational metaphysical fact

123 Matthews claims that the "exuberant nature" of the object of knowledge is a "force which serves as the attractive power that draws thought 'outside itself,' thereby liberating thought 'from its necessary movement' in the *a priori* sciences ... only this philosophy of 'free thinking' ... is creative and powerful enough to meet the challenge of actually making meaning within our individual lives." Matthews, 'Translator's Introduction," 28.

124 Courtine, *Extase de la Raison,* 308.

125 Markus Gabriel, *Der Mensch im Mythos: Untersuchungen über Ontotheologie, Anthropologie und Selbstbewusstseinsgeschichte in Schellings Philosophie der Mythologie* (Berlin & New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2006), 14.

126 Gabriel, *Der Mensch im Mythos*, 14.

127 The challenge at the jointure of the ecstasy of reason is to describe the relationship between the *individual* who exists and experiences the world and his or her *use* of reason. The ecstasy of reason is often described as a largely impersonal, almost mechanized process, but at its base there must be an individual who experiences and, within that experience, *wills* something more or other to that which *is* in *thought*. However, although this experience must be of an individual, the *articulation* of the moment of longing—this desiring—indeed, this *willing,* still requires systematic language, or the external concepts of reason.

128 Schelling, *The Grounding,* 135.

129 Schelling, *The Grounding,* 135.

130 Schelling, *The Grounding,* 135.

of the act of appearing in experience.

The common challenge to Kant which bridges Schelling and phenomenology concerns the problems with the former's exposition of possible experience.[131] As we have seen, the object of the philosophy of reason is reason itself, or the *essences* (not the existence) of things. The "environment" of these essences is Kant's "virtual world of possible experience."[132] Matthews clearly articulates that:

> Possible experience, however, is not real experience, and while reason proves quite successful in differentiating itself within its own sphere of thinking, it is incapable of grounding that sphere, and worse, it is rendered catatonic when faced with articulating the dynamic facticity of real existence.[133]

Neither Schelling nor Tengelyi are satisfied with Kant's attempt to equate possible experience with real experience. Although Kant posits an abyss (*Abgrund*) of reason, Schelling implicitly criticizes that he does not articulate how this groundless ground could be the subject of a different type of knowledge. By reducing experience to the possibility of experience, Kant does not have a method (besides regulative ideals) to philosophically speculate on that which evades mere possibility. As shown above, he halts before the incomprehensibility of the abyss (*Abgrund*). Schelling's positive philosophy, on the other hand, has the resources to deal "with what is not capable of being comprehended *a priori*," for it turns the incomprehensible into the "comprehensible in God" (SW XIII: 165).

Tengelyi's use of Richir to Critique Kant

Tengelyi, like Schelling, praises Kant's critique of the "old" metaphysics,[134] but takes issue with his notion of possible experience. For the latter task, Tengelyi

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131 Despite Schelling's appreciation of and reliance on Kant, there are numerous points of discordance between the two philosophers, the full exposition of which is beyond the scope of this essay. Firstly, as we have seen, in addition to the aforementioned critique of Kant's thing in itself, Schelling criticizes Kant's failure to pursue any sort of philosophy of the abyss (*Abgrund*) (or of that which necessarily exists as transcendent being), which would be other to his philosophy of reason. Secondly, Schelling's understanding of experience as the domain of the historical, *a posteriori* proof that the groundless ground could be God, is a position foreign to Kant. Furthermore, we should remember here that the identification between the "unprethinkable being" and God in Schelling is something that is "never conclusive but must remain open to falsification until the end of history." McGrath, "Still Doing Nature-Philosophy?" 124.

132 Matthews, "Translator's Introduction," 28.

133 Matthews, "Translator's Introduction," 28.

134 Tengelyi states that with Kant, metaphysics first truly becomes an "ongoing, unsettling *Problem*"("ein anhaltend beunruhigendes *Problem*"). Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlcihkeit,* 13.

heavily relies on Marc Richir's critique of the "possibility of the possibilities" of experience in Kant.

Generally stated, Schelling prompts Richir to introduce something unsurmountable and irreconcilable into his genetic account of the structure of the phenomenological field.[135] He also inspires Richir's related claim that *experience* exceeds the restrictions of the ego and of conscious thought. This leads Richir to reconceptualize the phenomenon, and ultimately, to develop a genesis of the "structures" and "laws" of the domain of the unconditional and the unthinkable.[136] Florian Forestier explains that "Richir qualifies the 'original non-adherence' of existence to itself as the 'metaphysical fact' par excellence, which is also the condition of the possibility for any phenomenological undertaking."[137] Despite his analyses of structures, Richir refuses "any *a priori* stability of the phenomenological field," and thus is critical of Kant's conceptualization of the possibility of possibilities.[138]

The crux of Richir's Kant critique is that any context for the possibilities of experience "would always already be a holistic version of what Richir calls a 'symbolic institution.'"[139] Tengelyi appropriates this critique from Richir, for he is interested in "precisely that what *disturbs* such an institutionalized context, that what appears with a surplus of spontaneous sense, transcending the already inquired symbolic institutions."[140] Tengelyi's metaphysics, like Schelling's, provides room for the event, spontaneity, interruption and the unexpected in experience. He thus finds Kant's *a priori* conditions of the possibility of experience too restricted, and is critical of Kant's reduction of experience to the subjective conditions of knowledge.[141] The critique of the "possibility of the

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135 See Marc Richir, "Inconscient, nature et mythologie chez Schelling," in *Schelling et l'élan du Système de l'idéalisme transcendantal*, ed. Alexandra Roux and Miklos Vetö (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2001), 187.

136 Florian Forestier, "The phenomenon and the transcendental: Jean-Luc Marion, Marc Richir, and the issue of phenomenalization," *Continental Philosophy Review* 45 (2012): 381-402, here 381-383.

137 Forestier, "The phenomenon and the transcendental," 394. The so-called "ground" of non-coherence of the world's phenomenologization is, like the "unprethinkable being," posited *a posteriori*. Forestier articulates that "Richir seeks to take nothing as originally given," and that his phenomenology is genetic "in the sense that it begins from the transcendental fiction of a field where almost nothing has been formed." Forestier, "The phenomenon and the transcendental," 396.

138 Furthermore, Richir's portrayal of phenomenological experience as an "experience of freedom" that entices us to go beyond the constraints of the concept in the "metaphysics of presence" links him to Schelling. See Marc Richir, *Phénomenologie et institution symbolique* (Grenoble: Éditions Jérôme Million, 1988). Forestier initiates an analysis of the comparison of Richir and Schelling on this point in his *La phénoménologie génétique de Marc Richir* (Heidelberg, Berlin and New York: Springer, 2004), 197.

139 Römer, "From Kant," 130.

140 Römer, "From Kant," 130.

141 Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlichkeit,* 142: "Vom Gesichtspunkt der Phänomenologie aus bleibt bei Kant vor allem der Begriff einer 'Möglichkeit der Erfahrung' oder einer 'möglichen Erfahrung' zweideutig .... Sowohl Richir als auch Marion .... bestehen darauf, dass jeder Wandel in der

possibilities" of experience relies on a radicalization of the hitherto discussed distinction between existing reality and reason in the context of *experience*.

In the pre-critical period, Kant "tries to show that a necessary being must exist in order for there to be anything to think about."[142] But, Tengelyi claims, the turn which occurs in the critical period is not because Kant wanted to show that *knowledge* depends on being. His goal was rather to show that the existence of a necessary being and the existence of God can only be equated with one another if being is unified in one idea, which Kant calls the idea of "the most real being."[143] However, In *The Experience of Thought,* Richir shows that there is an error in transforming the distributive unity of the experience of reality into the unity of this "most real being."[144] Following Richir, Tengelyi demonstrates that on the one side, Kant is critical of the metaphysical desire to make absolute claims about experience in a way that is helpful, but on the other side, he reduces experience to its cognitive *a priori* conditions.[145] Richir argues that for the "realization" of the total possibility of the possibilities of experience in Kant to actually occur, the whole of this possibility (as an *a priori* foundation) would have to first of all be objectified, and second of all be equated with reality.[146] But it is not a given that the totality of possibilities and reality are the same thing (hence the need for positive philosophy—a split between *a priori* possibility and the positing of the principle of acting being). Tengelyi reiterates the problematic sleight of hand behind this "realization" in the *Critique of Pure Reason* as the "transformation of the possibilities of all things into the real conditions of their universal [*durchgängig*] determination"[147]

As should now be clear, Schelling, Richir and Tengelyi all refuse to reduce real being to *a priori* conditions, or to the total possibility of the

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Wirklichkeit neue Möglichkeiten erschließen kann, die über die Grenzen des Vorweggenommenen und überhaupt Vorhersehbaren hinausgehen. Auf den ersten Blick scheint Kants Vorstellung von der möglichen Erfahrung als einem 'Vorrat des Stoffes,' aus dem alle sachhaltigen Prädikate genommen werden, gerade diese Einsicht zu untermauern. Aber diese Vorstellung erweist sich am Ende doch als zweideutig, weil die Grenzen möglicher Erfahrung bei Kant durch subjektive Bedingungen der Erkenntnis bestimmt werden."

142 Tengeyli, *Welt und Unendlichkeit,* 160: "[Kant] versucht zu zeigen, dass ein notwendiges Wesen existieren muss, damit es überhaupt etwas zu denken gibt."

143 Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlichkeit,* 160. "[Kant kommt] zur weiteren Einsicht .... dass die Existenz eines notwendigen Seienden nur dann mit der Existenz Gottes gleichgesetzt werden kann, wenn dieses Seiende nicht—distributiv—in der Erfahrung gesucht, sondern—kollektiv—in der Idee eines 'allerrealsten Wesens' zusammengefasst wird."

144 Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlichkeit,* 137.

145 Römer, "From Kant," 122.

146 Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlichkeit,* 136. "Richir [hebt] hervor, dass mit der Gesamtheit aller Möglichkeiten nichts mehr als eine bloße 'Möglichkeit der Möglichkeiten' gemeint sein kann. Die Realisierung der gesamten Möglichkeit erfolgt dann, wenn diese Möglichkeit der Möglichkeiten —sozusagen eine Möglichkeit zweiter Ordnung—ihrerseits 'zum Objekt gemacht' und als eine eigenständige Wirklichkeit gesetzt wird."

147 Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlichkeit,* 136. "Die ‚Erdichtung' ergibt sich demnach aus der 'Verwandlung der Möglichkeiten aller Dinge in reelle Bedingungen [...] ihrer durchgängigen Bestimmung.' Das ist der genaue Sinn von 'Realisierung' in der Kritik der reinen Vernunft."

possibilities of experience. Richir critiques the status of the "one all-encompassing experience" (*einige allbefassende Erfahrung*) in Kant, which is also the "context of a possible experience," particularly in its position as the "epitome [*Inbegriff*] of all empirical reality."[148] This "one all-encompassing experience" reduces experience to the predicates of the restricted "collection of all possible predicates."[149] Tengelyi furthermore explains that by making the "pure I with its self-consciousness" into "most real being" ("*das allerrealste Wesen*"), Kant reduces real being to the conditions of thought of the finite human being. Tengelyi's conclusion therefrom is that Kant's own thought suffers from a certain "travestied" ontotheology.[150] In critical response to Kant, and under a significant influence of the works of Schelling, Heidegger and Husserl, Richir develops his unique approach to phenomenology in which he strives to give "phenomenological status to the 'beyond meaning within meaning'"[151] The spirit of such a project can be compared with Schelling's inauguration of an *a posteriori* method of philosophizing about the "indivisible remainder" or the groundless–(almost) predicateless–ground of being and existence.

Tengelyi on Schelling's Metaphysics of Contingency

Tengelyi dedicates an important subsection of *World and Infinity* specifically to Schelling, situating him as the crucial intermediary figure in the historical transition from the configuration of metaphysics as ontotheology and the beginning of phenomenological metaphysics (which has its origins in Husserl[152]). It should now be clear Schelling is a thinker of that which exceeds thought. Tengelyi thus praises Schelling's late metaphysics (particularly the positive philosophy) in its task to grasp "reality that surpasses all thinking."[153]

148 Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlichkeit,* 137. The key issue here is whether this "one all-eoncompassing reality" is ever really realized at all, or whether it remains on the level of possibility. Tengelyi further discusses that Kant wants a unity where there is only factual, scattered multiplicity. See Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlichkeit,* 138

149 Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlichkeit,* 138: "Die Erfahrung kann uns mit keinem Prädikat bekanntmachen, das nicht immer schon in dieser Sammlung aller möglichen Prädikate enthalten wäre."

150 Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlichkeit,* 142. "Aus diesen Überlegungen müssen wir folgern, dass in Kants transzendentalem Ansatz eine Spur travestierter Ontotheologie zurückbleibt."

151 Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlichkeit,* 138 and Forestier, "The phenomenon and the transcendental," 400. Tengelyi specifically highlights Richir's interpretation of Schelling in *L'expérience du penser* to underscore the sharpness of Schelling's critique of Kantian "transcendental ideals" and the problematic remnants of traditional ontotheology in post-Kantian thought in Germany. See Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlichkeit,* 142-143.

152 Rudolf Boehm has as argued that it is unlikely that Husserl read Schelling. See Rudolf Boehm, *Vom Gesichtspunkt der Phänomenologie: Husserl-Studien* (The Hague : Martinus Nijhoff, 1968), 50, note 1.

153 Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlichkeit,* 144: "Der positiven Philosophie wird Schelling demgegenüber gerade die Aufgabe stellen, die 'alles Denken übertreffende Wirklichkeit' zu erfassen."

As we have seen, Richir and Tengelyi seek to effectuate something quite similar, particularly in reference to experience, in their phenomenological approaches to metaphysics.

Tengelyi's subsection on Schelling in *World and Infinity* begins with a discussion of the shared notion of the abyss (*Abgrund*) as a necessary being Schelling and Kant,[154] and a discussion of Schelling's departure from Kant on the relation between reason and that which is beyond reason (which, as we have seen, in the end, results in the capability of reason to speculate about the groundless ground). Tengelyi also demonstrates how Schelling's late philosophy, unlike Hegel's, takes "into account the proper role of contingency as an essential element of what there is."[155] Schelling thus represents the gateway from the old, dogmatic metaphysical tradition towards a new critical "non-traditional metaphysics of contingent facticity," which Tengelyi develops.[156]

Tengelyi's interest in Schelling and Kant on the abyss (*Abgrund*) of reason is rooted in the thesis deep contingency implies. This abyss (*Abgrund*) presents the inescapable, "greatest trial [*Erprobung*] of reason—a true épreuve *de la contingence*"[157]; it presents the question of to what extent reason can or cannot ground itself. While Kant first posits the principle of the abyss (*Abgrund*), it is Schelling who highlights its relation to experience in a manner important for Tengelyi. As explained above, the groundless ground also presents a "fundamental—or rather abysmal—*experience* of contingency, an *experience* with the ultimate contingency of the world."[158] Such a dizzying, sublime experience in the face of reason's paralysis can prompt the will to will something external to reason itself.[159] This point in Schelling marks the beginning of a post-Kantian project, largely paralleled in Tengelyi's own work, which, on the

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154 Tengelyi's interest in the complex relationship between Schelling and Kant began very early in the former's philosophical career. Tengelyi began his "philosophical path" with two Hungarian books on Kant, and turned to Schelling when he did not find an adequate answer to the problem of evil in Kant. Römer suggests that the "insurmountable abyss between the finite and the infinite," which "also accounts for the historicity of thinking and a facticity that can never fully be mastered by thinking" is consistent thread throughout all of Tengelyi's philosophy, linking those early Kant-Schelling works to *World and Infinity*. Tengelyi thus wrote a book in Hungarian on Kant and Schelling called *Guilt as an Event of Destiny*. Römer, "From Kant," 120.

155 Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlichkeit,* 154.

156 Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlichkeit,* 154.

157 Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlichkeit,* 155: "In dieser Zusammengehörigkeit des notwendig Seienden—und das heißt zugleich: des grundlos Existierenden—mit der Zufälligkeit der Welt sieht [Schelling], genauso wie Kant, die größte Erprobung der Vernunft—eine wahre épreuve de la contingence."

158 Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlichkeit,* 155. "In der Besinnung auf das notwendige Wesen als den Träger aller Dinge drückt sich aber zugleich eine grundlegende—oder vielmehr abgründige—Kontingenzerfahrung, eine Erfahrung mit der letzthinnigen Zufälligkeit der Welt aus. Das ist der Grundzug der angeführten Zeilen, auf den Schelling in erster Linie achtet."

159 Tengelyi thus emphasizes Schelling's claim that that which merely exists "crushes everything that may derive from thought ... for thought is only concerned with possibility and potency" (SW XIII: 161), Schelling, *Grounding,* 202, Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlichkeit,* 156.

one hand, continues "the legacy of Kant's critique of reason,"[160] but on the other, entails a critical analysis of Kant's treatment of that which is outside of reason's possibilities. This prompts new, integrated analyses of experience, reality and existence, which reopens paths towards a non-ontotheological metaphysics.

Specifically, as an alternative to the prohibition on metaphysics, Tengelyi positively evaluates Schelling's "unprethinkable being" as a new beginning to thought which *cannot* be identified with God *a priori,* and which therefore represents an alternative to Hegel.[161] For Schelling, *if* God exists, he exists necessarily (God is essentially characterized by his necessity). However just because God is a necessary being does not mean that God actually necessarily exists. The proof of God's existence can rather only be gradually testified to by the human experience of history. Schelling's "unprethinkable being," as the late form of the groundless ground, is retrospectively posited as prior to logical being and existence, and thus itself maintains no relations of opposition or exclusion. While the "unprethinkable being" is necessary for the birth of all existing being, experience and thought, we can never achieve an adequate, non-falsifiable understanding of it, because thinking is always already founded within being.[162] The best we can say is that "unprethinkable being" is actuality or reality (*Wirklichkeit*) that precedes all possibility, and is thus necessary in order for there to be anything real at all. "What shall reach [actuality] [*Wirklichkeit*] must then also proceed directly from reality and, indeed, from *pure* actuality, thus, from the actuality that precedes all possibility" (SW XIII: 162).[163] All possibilities and their formal conditions thus depend contingently upon this "unprethinkable being."

The "unprethinkable being" is the core of Schelling's metaphysics of contingency, in which God is "free against being" (SW XI: 260).[164] The refusal to

160 Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlichkeit,* 156: Tengelyi here follows Axel Hutter's claim in *Geschichtliche Vernunft: Die Weiterführung der Kantischen Vernunftkritik in der Spätphilosophie Schellings* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1996), that "Selbst in seiner Spätphilosophie führt er vielmehr das Erbe von Kants Vernunftkritik weiter." Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlichkeit,* 156.

161 Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlichkeit,* 164.

162 See Gabriel, *Transcendental Ontology,* 89.

163 Schelling, *The Grounding,* 203.

164 Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlichkeit,* 166: "Denn es geht Schelling in seiner positiven Philosophie keineswegs darum, Gott als dem nothwendige Existierenden« doch eine notwendige Existenz im Sinne des ontologischen Gottesbeweises zukommen zu lassen, sondern vielmehr darum, ihn als den 'Herrn des Seyns' zu begreifen, der 'überseyend,' 'über jede Art des Seyns hinaus' und 'frei gegen das Seyn' ist." Although most of the Schelling referenced up to this point of the essay has been from Schelling's Berlin period, which began in 1841, the true roots of his metaphysics of contingency can be located in his 1809 Freedom Essay. Here, Schelling exposes two different types of contingency: contingency in the everyday sense of accidental contingency, and also the deep metaphysical contingency of the system of reason. In explaining accidental contingency on the level of being, Schelling writes, "Contingency is impossible; it contests reason as well as the necessary unity of the whole; and, if freedom is to be saved by nothing other than the complete contingency of actions, then it is not to be saved at all." Schelling, *Freedom Essay,* 48-49. Schelling thus refuses that human actions would be themselves totally accidental or contingent (*zufällig*),

identify God with his concept *a priori* supports a radical notion of freedom[165]—freedom of God as the creator to reveal himself to being, and freedom for the individual to choose to will God and to engage in the construction of his *a posteriori* proof. Furthermore, there is "no *a priori* guarantee" that even God's will will "reach its goal."[166] This question is an open matter for history, and its answer cannot be deduced. Thus, the free relationship of God to being, and the individual to God, provides the conditions for the individual to make a true decision about whether God is "living" or "dead."[167] Tengelyi explains that this introduces a dimension of facticity and of contingency in our consciousness of God and questions about him."[168]

In Schelling's metaphysics of contingency, Tengelyi therefore finds a support for his own refusal to reduce the concept of reality to the *a priori* possibility of the possibilities of experience. Schelling, according to Tengelyi, rightfully acknowledges that the concept of the *totality* of reality has only the "status of a possibility of possibilities." Thus, to view the possible as determining the actual is to concern oneself only with a *possible* being (*Seiendes*), which provides no "access to the real [*zum Wirklichen*]."[169] As we have seen, Richir develops this insight in a phenomenological key, focusing particularly on the problems of the restriction of experience to the possibility of possibilities in Kant.

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for the resulting conclusion would be that human beings are not responsible for themselves. The necessity of the decision and of action in the Freedom Essay represents a defence of moral responsibility in Schelling, which is consistent with the deep metaphysical contingency described in this essay.

165 Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlichkeit*, 167: "Die positive Philosophie ... ist von einem 'Willen' getragen. Aus einer anderen Stelle wird klar, worauf sich dieser Wille richtet: 'Freiheit ist unser Höchstes, unsere Gottheit, diese wollen wir als letzte Ursache aller Dinge.'"

166 Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlichkeit*, 167: "Es besteht keine apriorische Garantie dafür, dass dieser Wille seinen Zweck erreicht. Der Beweis, dass der Herr des Seins dem unvordenklich Existierenden den Charakter blinder Zufälligkeit nehmen kann, muss a posteriori erbracht werden."

167 Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlichkeit,* 168.

168 Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlichkeit,* 167-168: "Selbst wenn er da ist und selbst wenn sogar der aposteriorische Beweis, den die positive Philosophie zu erbringen hat, tatsächlich gelingt (was ja nach Schelling letztlich von der Geschichte selbst abhängt), bleibt unser Bewusstsein von Gott als dem Herrn des Seins an 'Faktizität' und 'Kontingenz' gebunden." Furthermore, when we discern and explain historical processes, we are describing the relationships of the consciousness's of peoples with God or the gods over time. Thus, Tengelyi claims that this historical project of the late Schelling is a "phenomenology of religious consciousness." Schelling, *Welt und Unendlichkeit,* 167: "Schreibt [Schelling] doch keine bloße Religionsgeschichte, so deshalb, weil er die Erörterung des Geschichtsprozesses auf eine Phänomenologie des religiösen Bewusstseins und des erscheinenden Gottes gründet."

169 Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlichkeit,* 159: "In seiner Spätphilosophie gelangt Schelling zur Einsicht, dass dem All der Realität notwendig nur der Status einer Möglichkeit der Möglichkeiten zukommt, und er zieht aus dieser Einsicht den Schluss, dass die *a priori* erfassten, im Gedanken vorweggenommenen, deshalb aber eben nur rein gedanklich umrissenen Möglichkeiten auch in ihrer Gesamtheit nur ein mögliches Seiendes bestimmen, ohne uns einen tatsächlichen Zugang zum Wirklichen zu verschaffen."

Tengelyi's Metaphyics of Contingent Originary Facts

Tengelyi's development of a phenomenological metaphysics of "originary contingent facts" (*zufällige Urtatsache*) in *World and Infinity* follows Schelling's method of ascertaining that which exists through *a posteriori* metaphysical claims that are open to revision. Furthermore, I have shown that Schelling's complex considerations of experience and its epistemological role on the positive philosophy serve as a forerunner to the critique of the limitations of Kant's treatment of experience by phenomenologists (notably Richir and Tengelyi) who aim to speculate about the nature and structures of the largely inaccessible, unconditioned condition of the phenomenological field. Such a project requires an understanding of experience as exceeding the limitations of thought or of the conscious experience of the I. Tengelyi's metaphysics thus takes the multifaceted "lifeworld experience," as the basis of phenomenology, to be a new guide and resource for metaphysics.[170]

It was explained above that for Schelling, *experience* is the source of the affirmation of "the fact *that*" reason's content exists (SW XIII: 61). Moreover, the goal set for the positive philosophy was to prove God as a "*res facti*." or matter of fact" (SW XIII: 128). Following Schelling, Tyler Tritten argues that the contingency of being "is a *factum brutum*, the fact that there is something rather than nothing."[171] In his 2017 *The Contingency of Necessity*, which is "Schellingian at heart," Tritten accordingly seeks to affirm God "as a matter of fact."[172] Schelling has thus instigated a methodology of the metaphysical fact in contemporary philosophy, which, along with Husserl's phenomenological metaphysics, plays in the background of Tengelyi's metaphysics, which proposes contingent facts that are at the basis of all experience. This project proceeds from Tengelyi's development of Husserl's insight[173] that a phenomenological metaphysics "does not search for the first causes and causes of beings as beings. Rather, it relies on certain basic facts from the outset."[174]

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170 Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlichkeit*, 14: "Ich wende mich dem Problem der Metaphysik mit der Frage zu, ob nicht etwa die phänomenologische Tradition mit ihrem Rückgang auf die lebensweltliche Erfahrung eher in der Lage sei, hier Richtung zu weisen, als die analytische Philosophie."

171 Tritten, *The Contingency of Necessity,* 2.

172 Tritten, *The Contingency of Necessity,* 5.

173 Husserl, Tengelyi clarifies, never really developed his idea of phenomenological metaphysics. Rather, he merely sketches it out in published works, and in the unpublished texts works with the idea in a fragmentary fashion. See Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlichkeit,* 15-16: "[Husserl] beschränkte sich darauf, sie in veröffentlichten Werken programmatisch zu entwerfen und in unveröffentlichten Forchungstexten fragmentarisch auszuarbeiten." It is noteworthy that Tengelyi here draws a parallel between Husserl's phenomenological metaphysics and Heidegger's proposition of a "metaontology" at the end of the 1920's, and its appropriation by Sartre in the 1940's.

174 Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlichkeit,* 14: "Zum nicht-traditionellen Charakter dieser Metaphysik gehört, dass sie nicht nach ersten Gründen und Ursachen des Seienden als Seienden forscht. Vielmehr stützt sie sich von vornherein auf gewisse *Urtatsachen.*"

Tengelyi explains that Husserl first derives the necessity of a fact from the Cartesian *cogito*,[175] but then moves away from Cartesian subjectivism towards metaphysics. He transfers the significance of the necessity of the fact of the *cogito* to other originary facts (*Urtatsachen*), and acknowledges that this necessity *does not* exclude the supernatural or God. These facts, which are slotted into a framework of a metaphysics of "accidental facticity," offer a primordial ground to eidetic consciousness. This point may be contentious to some phenomenologists, due to the aforementioned paradoxes in attempting to speculate on such a ground. However, the result of Husserl's insight is the ability speak from the standpoint of experience about that which precedes the very structures *through which* we experience the lifeworld. Like Schelling's "positive philosophy," Tengelyi's metaphysics is thus not an *a priori* science, but a science of the factual.[176] Instead of looking for the first causes of beings, it proposes *a posteriori* originary facts, which, like Schelling's God as a *res facti,* are at once necessary in essence, but, *qua* their status as facts proposed from the standpoint of experience, contingent.[177]

It is important to note that the object of Tengelyi's metaphysics is not being itself, but the *world.* The world has a uniqueness and antecedence (*Vorgängigkeit*), according to Tengelyi, and thus, that the I has a world becomes itself one of his four primordial, metaphysical "originary facts" (outlined below).[178] Even if it is contingent in its facticity, no experience or theory—including Gabriel's[179]—can take the world we experience away from us. Furthermore, at the core of Tengelyi's thesis of a phenomenological

175 Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlichkeit*, 15.

176 Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlichkeit*, 15: Phenomenological metaphysics can "keineswegs als eine apriorische Wissenschaft aufgefasst werden. Im Gegenteil, sie wird als eine Wissenschaft des Faktischen bestimmt." Tengelyi describes the *necessity* of the fact, in the sense that that Husserl describes the cogito as necessary, but he transfers it this insight to other originary facts. Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlichkeit*, 15.

177 Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlichkeit*, 15: "Allerdings schließt die 'Notwendigkeit eines Faktums' einen 'Kern des Urzufälligen' keineswegs aus. Aus der Analyse der Urtatsachen erwächst vielmehr eine Metaphysik 'zufälliger Faktizität.'"

178 Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlichkeit,* 16.

179 Although Gabriel famously argues that the world does not exist, his restriction of existence to the possible, or to "fields of sense," cannot extinguish our lived experience of and testament to the world. It has therefore been suggested that in spite of Gabriel's reverence for Schelling, in the end, Gabriel is more of an idealist than he would care to admit under his brand of realism. McGrath, who argues that Gabriel substitutes human thinking in the place of God, accordingly writes that "Gabriel will not permit any speculation on the possibility of a real other to reflection—call it God, the good infinite or the Good beyond being. And it is Gabriel, not Schelling, who forbids this restitution of transcendence." McGrath continues, "Gabriel never tells us by virtue of what privileged insight he is able to pronounce that there is no positively existing other to thought." Sean J. McGrath, "On the Difference Between Schelling and Hegel," in *Rethinking German Idealism,* ed. Sean J. McGrath and Joseph Carew (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 255. This leads McGrath to judge Gabriel as "another deflationary Hegelian, another advocate of a cynical foreclosure to the range of questioning, in short, a modern cynic." McGrath, "Schelling and Hegel," 256.

metaphysics is the idea that the "actuality [*Wirklichkeit*] of world is determined as a total expression of various unanimity tendencies."[180] For Tengelyi, unifying tendencies are at the basis of all the categories of experience.[181]

Tengelyi's originary facts are thus originary, necessary facts of our *experience* in a world. However, as stated, they must always remain open to the possibility of revision. Tengelyi claims that the most fundamental "contingent necessity" or originary fact on which all others depend is therefore experience itself, or more specifically, the event of the appearing in experience. The *event* of appearing in experience is a kind of groundless ground of all subsequent metaphysical facts, and can be compared with the originary pure act which proceeds all existing beings in Schelling. Experience (*Erfahrung*) for Tengelyi is therefore itself an unexpected event (*Widerfahrnis*)—"something in which we are engaged and that happens to us, often in surprising ways."[182]

On top of the very primordial, most fundamental fact of experience, Tengelyi subsequently identifies four other contingent facts *of* experience. These facts "replace the idea of first causes from traditional metaphysics," but cannot be deduced from any other origins or principles.[183] Tengelyi's four originary, contingent-but-necessary, metaphysical facts (which have been formulated in English by Thomas Nenon) and are: (1) the *I* or ego of mineness "as a point of intersection with the world, but not as a traditional subject"[184] (2) that the *I* has a world which is a "horizon of all horizons that contains entities that transcend consciousness but are nonetheless accessible to experience," (3) *intersubjectivity* (otherwise described as "intentional interweavement"[185]) and (4) *history.*

The ego considered in the first fact is not the Cartesian ego, or an I that is completely, consciously self-transparent to itself. Rather than placing the I in the controlling, driver's seat of its own destiny, Tengelyi's I, we are to remember, is the I of experience and action. He thus describes this I as having things that it *can* and things that it *does* (*Vermöglichkeiten*).[186] This I is a fact of experience, and it allows for the I to be responsible and embodied. It can therefore be linked to studies of Schelling as the first thinker of the unconscious I,[187] and Schelling's portrayal of the relation between the freedom of the I, its character and responsibility in the Freedom Essay.

The second fact, or the fact of "having a world" (*Welthabe*), emphasizes that the I experiences the world as having certain "transcendent elements" that can be accessed but not exhausted by experience. In explaining that our

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180 Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlichkeit*, 16: "Die Wirklichkeit der Welt bestimmt sich als ein Gesamtausdruck verschiedener Einstimmigkeitstendenzen."

181 Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlichkeit*, 16.

182 Thomas Nenon, "László Tengelyi, Welt und Unendlichkeit: Zum Problem phänomenologischer Metaphysik," *Husserl Studies* 31 (2014): 143-149, at 146.

183 Römer, "From Kant, " 123.

184 Nenon, "László Tengelyi," 145.

185 Römer, "From Kant, " 123.

186 Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlichkeit,* 184.

187 See McGrath, *The Dark Ground of Spirit.*

experiences of objects occurs within the "open horizon" of infinite experiences,[188] Tengelyi picks up metontological insights from Heidegger.[189] Through this thesis of the I having a world, Tengelyi seems to suggest that we do not operate in a self-enclosed, systematic whole of nature, but rather live in a world of infinite transcendent possibilities which we can never "realize" completely.

The third fact describes the fact that we live and experience the world with others. From Husserl, Tengelyi explains the facticity that every self 'intentionally' bears the other, and thus describes it as an "inwardness of being-for-each-other as an intentional being-in-each-other" (*Innerlichkeit des Füreinanderseins als eines intentionalen Ineinandersein*). This fact could have far-reaching ethical and political consequences, particularly in relation to Schelling.[190]

Tengelyi's fourth contingent fact of experience, namely history, might be the most important for further developing his metaphysical resonances with Schelling. Tengelyi's fact of history entails a "historical teleology" which tends towards unity (*Einstimmigkeit*).[191] For Tengelyi, unifying tendencies teleologically work within experience. The first "tendency towards unity" (*Einstimmigskeitstendenz*) of experience (*Erfarung*) is "the existence [*Wirklichkeit*] of the world as a global view of all the unifying tendencies, among which are space, time and causality."[192] This tendency towards unity is the element of the world which allows us to make sense of it over time.

The late Schelling offers an intricate understanding of mythology and history as the unfolding of a narrative with specific turning points of change. This historical narrative develops towards a final unity of all beings. Tengelyi describes this aspect of Schelling's project, as noted above, as the development of a "phenomenology of religious consciousness."[193] Specifically, the late Schelling describes the end of history as the unification of the inner and outer lives of all human beings on earth in a single community.

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188 Nenon, "László Tengelyi, "148.

189 This position is that metontological metaphysics is a metaphysics that "transcends beings in favor of the world." Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlichkeit,* 415.

190 Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlichkeit,* 185. It is worth noting here that the late Schelling emphasizes the distinction between the community and the state, the former of which describes beings who associate freely and righteously, whereas the latter ought to pass away. See SW XI: 516-572. A topic for further inquiry here is whether Tengelyi's emphasis on intersubjectivity could have political resonances in Schelling's preference for the community over the state.

191 Nenon, "László Tengelyi," 145.

192 Römer, "From Kant," 123.

193 Tengelyi, *Welt und Unendlichkeit,* 167.

Ontology or Metaphysics?

This essay began with the goal of critically responding to contemporary realism's claim that metaphysics is dead and phenomenology is naïve. Let us now revisit this challenge in view of Schelling and Tengelyi's approaches to metaphysics.

Gabriel defines ontology as "the systematic investigation into the meaning of 'existence,'"[194] and metaphysics as "a combination of (a) an account of reality versus appearance, and (b) a theory of totality ... [as] the investigation of the world as world."[195] According to these definitions, a metaphysical project could still theoretically include an ontology (as an account of the possible meanings of existence).[196] Metaphysics, according to Gabriel, originates "in the desire to uncover reality as it is in itself, where this means reality independently of what we add to it by thinking about it."[197] Metaphysics with ontology would thus be a description of the inaccessible foundations of reality beyond experience, but which would still provide an examination of the possible meaning of existence. This is exactly what Marc Richir sets out to do in reference to the phenomena, and Tengelyi in the development of a distinctly *phenomenological* metaphysics. If the premise of Schelling and Tengelyi's metaphysical enterprises is the conditional statement that reality *could* be more than its appearance, and if so, we can speculate on that which exceeds appearances, then perhaps both could be described as doing an ontologically-inspired sceptical metaphysics. Specifically, the move from a critical appraisal of Kant's analyses of experience and existence—which refuses to limit these to the structures and concepts through which it appears—to the *a posteriori* positing first principles, seems to be a shift from the critical examination of the meaning of existing (rational) being, i.e., ontology, to speculation concerning the reality beyond this being, i.e., metaphysics. The postulation of Schelling's "unprethinkable being" and Tengelyi's originary facts therefore represents a metaphysical, not an ontological, gesture.

Thus, insofar as both Schelling and Tengelyi's projects systematically consider the relation of experience to both the question of existence and

194 Gabriel, *Fields of Sense*, 5. It is noteworthy that in Gabriel's definition of ontology, he focuses on the *meaning* of existence, rather than existence itself. As should be now evident, Schelling is interested in existence itself, as the meaning of existence is constantly being re-evaluated and reinterpreted from the perspective of the futural, i.e. revelation. Its full meaning has not yet been disclosed.

195 Gabriel, *Fields of Sense,* 6.

196 The close relation between metaphysics and ontology is partially exemplified in Gabriel's own description of his ontological position as "*meta-metaphysical nihilism.*" This is perhaps best exemplified in his famous claim that the world does not exist. Based on this premise, he holds that "metaphysics" itself "literally talks about nothing, that there is no object or domain it refers to." Gabriel, *Fields of Sense,* 7. However, one could question whether this claim itself *about* metaphysics is metaphysical in virtue of what it denies (i.e., the existence of the world).

197 Gabriel, *Fields of Sense*, 6.

contingent but necessary first principles, their work can be considered *metaphysical*. By working through the history of philosophy to demonstrate that metaphysics cannot be reduced to ontotheology, they both methodologically separate the philosophy of reason from the philosophy of existence. This allows them to propose facts based on experience which remain open to revision based on *a posteriori* occurrences, events or discoveries.

Tengelyi, relying on Schelling, Husserl and Richir, has furthered the case for the contemporary relevance of phenomenology[198] by reconsidering how experience in the "lifeworld" can produce a new methodology of establishing the foundations of a metaphysical system. This presents a strong opposition to the mischaracterization of phenomenology as a highly relativist investigation of consciousness experience, as described at the outset of this piece.

In the end, questions of epistemology, or what we can know, draw the lines between ontology and metaphysics. The complicated relationship between epistemology and metaphysics, mediated by experience, is why Kant was such an important figure for the investigation of this essay. Schelling, as we have seen, distinguishes two types of knowledge attainable through contrasting methodologies: the knowledge of "negative" philosophy (the philosophy of reason), which logically deduces, and the knowledge of "positive" philosophy (the philosophy of revelation and history) which abductively explains. This distinction implies that no *a priori,* rational, philosophical system (including Schelling's own *Nature-Philosophy* and *System of Identity*) can encapsulate the whole of existence within its concepts. But it is the decision of the individual thinker—who lives, experiences and wills—whether they want to engage in the second type of knowing, which is not ontotheological or dogmatic, but rather free and abductive. While we cannot attain *certainty* of the claims we make about existence beyond the concept, we can nevertheless present proofs, hypothetical explanations, competing *rational* arguments and contingent facts, which compose the dynamic foundation of our experience of the world. These then provide a different type of knowledge than that which is deduced by rational philosophy—a knowledge which is metaphysical and historical, but not absolute. Thus, the paralysis and silence of reason when it reaches its limits in

198 Gabriel hints at an affinity between his own ontological project (constructing the fields of sense in which we have access to the world) and phenomenology. He writes, "Even if we are somehow struck by a deep illusion ... we are nevertheless confronted with a world to which we have immediate access." Gabriel, *Fields of Sense,* 16. Gabriel shares with phenomenology an acknowledgment of "epistemic intermediaries" between our perceptions and how things themselves are, and that these interfaces both truly exist and contribute to the meaning of the existence of that which they mediate. Thus, Gabriel maintains that our experience of the world in appearances is a real confrontation, but that world itself which is confronting us does not itself exist. Gabriel, *Fields of Sense,* 14. Gabriel's issue with approaches like Schelling's is, he maintains, that they are "more interested in believing that everything deep down completely differs from the way it appears to us (including ourselves)" than in "how things appear to us." Gabriel, *Fields of Sense,* 126. For Gabriel, the world is all there is, but at the same time, for him, this world *itself* is not real (even if the structures and fields in which we describe them are).

fact opens the possibility of making a free decision to speak about metaphysics once again in a new key.

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RETRIEVING THE SCHELLINGIAN TRADITION

Friedrich Christoph Oetinger's Speculative Pietism[1]

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The influence of Friedrich Christoph Oetinger (1702-82) on Schelling's work is even deeper than that exerted by Jakob Boehme, deeper, not because Schelling devoted more scholarly attention to Oetinger than he did to the study of Boehme (he did not), but because Schelling was very likely first introduced to Boehme, theosophy and Protestant mysticism by reading Oetinger.[2] Both Schelling's

1 A German version of this paper, translated by Uwe Voigt, appeared in the *Comenius Jahrbuch* under the title, "Eine Besinnung auf das Leben im 18. Jahrhundert: Friedrich Christoph Oetingers spekulativer Pietismus," *Comenius Jahrbuch* 25 (2017): 46-61.

2 We touch here on the question of the influence of Western Esotericism, Jewish and Christian Kabbalah, and theosophy on Schelling's development. I have argued that these currents played a major role in the shift in emphasis and the development of the new questions that distinguish the later from the early Schelling, especially the influence of Boehme, Swedenborg, and Baader. See S. J. McGrath, *The Dark Ground of Spirit* (London: Routledge, 2012), chapter two. In a marked difference from Hegel, the late Schelling speaks of theosophy as a source of knowledge that in principle can exceed philosophy, even if philosophy has every right to try to reconstruct theosophical knowledge on its own terms. See Schelling, SW VIII: 202-5. See also the introduction to Schelling's *Philosophie der Offenbarung* (Schelling, SW XIII: 121-4). On Schelling and speculative pietism see Bruce Matthews, *Schelling's Organic Form of Philosophy: Life as the Schema of Freedom* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2011), 39-68; and in the German literature, Ernst Benz, *Schellings Theologische Geistesahnen* (Wiesbaden: Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur, 1955), and Robert Schneider, *Schelling und Hegels Schwäbischen Geistesahnen* (Würzburg: K. Triltsch, 1938). On Schelling and Swedenborg, see Friedemann Horn, *Schelling and Swedenborg: Mysticism and German Idealism* (1954), trans. George F. Dole (West Chester, Pennsylvania: Swedenborg Foundation, 1997). On Schelling and Boehme see Robert Brown, *The Later Philosophy of Schelling: The Influence of Boehme on the*

father and grandfather were pastors in the Wurtembergian Pietist tradition.[3] Schelling most probably first read the works of Oetinger in his father's study as a precautious boy eager to make his way in knowledge both natural and divine. Oetinger's *Biblical Dictionary* (*Biblisches Wörterbuch*), a compendium of theosophy and Biblical theology, was written for lay people as a study guide to the reading of Scripture, but this does not fairly describe it. Concerned as he was with a non-mechanistic philosophy of nature that would be not only consonant with Biblical revelation but also to some degree confirmative of it, Oetinger jammed the encyclopedia with natural scientific and esoteric and occult material one would not expect to find in such a text. It was likely a staple of Schelling's catechetical education. At the age of ten, Schelling received an intense immersion in Oetinger's theosophical pietism, when he was sent to live in Nürtingen while he attended Latin school. He lived for a time in the house of his uncle, who was known as a "fiery disciple of Oetinger's."[4] Here he met Phillip Matheus Hahn, the most important follower of Oetinger's, who impressed Schelling so deeply that the boy was inspired to compose his first poem on the occasion of the great theologian's death.[5]

Since neither Oetinger nor speculative pietism are widely remembered (despite their massive influence on modern thought via Kant, Schelling, Hegel, and Hölderlin, among others[6]), I will take the opportunity of this first entry in *Kabiri's Retrieving the Schellingian Tradition* to offer an exposition of Oetinger's thought, focusing especially on those aspects of it which were determinative for Schelling's thinking, and traces of which can be found in other Continental philosophers.

Works of 1809-1815 (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 1972); and especially, Paola Mayer, *Jena Romanticism and Its Appropriation of Jakob Böhme* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999). On Schelling and Oetinger see Wilhelm August Schulze "Oetinger's Beitrag zur Schellingschen Freiheitslehre" *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 54 (1975): 213-225. On Schelling and Kabbalah, see Wilhelm August Schulze, "Schelling und die Kabbala," *Judaica. Beiträge zum Verständnis des Jüdischen Schicksals* 13 (1957): 65-98; 143-70; 210-232. On Schelling and Baader, see Marie-Elise Zovko, *Natur und Gott: Das wirkungsgeschichtliches Verhältnis Schellings und Baaders* (Würzburg: Konigshausen and Neumann, 1996).

3 Benz, *Schellings Theologische Geistesahnen*, 41.

4 Schneider, *Schwäbischen Geistesahnen*, 8.

5 Schneider, *Schelling*, 8-9. See Matthews, *Organic Form of Freedom*, 51-2. Schneider and Benz argue that the early Schelling's inspiration in problematizing Fichte's subjectivism with a re-vamped *Naturphilosophie* was Oetinger's *Lebenstheologie*.

6 Barry Stephenson has exposed the influence of speculative pietism on Herman Hesse in his *Veneration and Revolt: Herman Hesse and Swabian Pietism* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2009). It would be interesting to examine the influence of speculative pietism on Heidegger through his reception of Hölderlin. Among other things, this might shed some much needed light on the meaning of the "fourfold," which, whatever else it is, is a binary of two sets of opposites, a dark, contractive set (earth and mortals), and a light, expansive set (sky and immortals), which gives rise to everything that is. See Heidegger, "Building Dwelling Thinking" in Martin Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell (New York, NY: HarperColins, 1993), 43-364.

Life as Master Concept

Oetinger's speculative pietism is a peculiar blend of modern philosophy, Kabbalah, alchemy, and Christian theology. The eclectic blend of sources is held together by Oetinger's one great thought, the notion of *life*.[7] In Oetinger's view, life is the essence of the Biblical Revelation. The common enemy of theology and philosophy is mechanism, which elevates the lifeless causal interaction of discrete particles—ostensibly a useful if not necessary abstraction for modern physics—into a universal ontological paradigm. Modern natural scientific discoveries, Oetinger argues, need to be interpreted in a bio-theological context that understands the divine, not as a first cause or highest being, but as a self-developing life. The new, non-mechanistic sciences of electricity, magnetism, and chemistry, with their discoveries of how matter is capable of action from distance, exemplify for Oetinger a theological principle, largely forgotten in modernity, but central to Jewish theosophy, Jacob Boehme, and the Renaissance Jewish and Christian kabbalists: life is struggle, a dialectic of conflict and resolution, and only possible through the antagonism and resolution of polarities.

This concept of life grounds Oetinger's critique of representationalism, his theory of embodiment, and his notion of soul, which I will discuss in turn. In the conclusion I will argue that Oetinger's greatest contribution might in fact be to the psychology of the unconscious.

Oetinger describes life in various ways: as spontaneity; self-development; the progressive exteriorization of a hidden interior; and that which contains the ground of its temporal unfolding in itself. The fullness of the concept requires a fusion of both natural science and Biblical theology. In his magnum opus, the 1785 *Theologia ex idea vitae deducta*,[8] Oetinger argues that revelation and science must be allowed to cross-fertilize each other so that theology can be rethought on the basis of a broadened concept of life. Nature is neither a "clockwork," as the Deists believe, nor a "force," as the mechanists and vitalists would have it, but a self-developing will to revelation. The power of nature is *internal movement*, a manifestation of dynamic principles whose archetypes are found in the dynamic, processive, and ultimately unfathomable life of that which is most living, the revealed God of history. Oetinger rejects the Scholastic onto-theology for the same reason that he rejects modern mechanistic science: both absolutize extrinsic efficient causality, which leads invariably to the forgetting of the spontaneity characteristic of life. God is not properly described as being, or as a first cause, but as life, whose fundamental telos (like the telos of all living things) is *self-manifestation*. When a flower unfolds from a mature plant, which in turn has unfolded out of sprout and seed, we see in simply form the

7 Sigred Großmann, *Friedrich Christoph Oetingers Gottesvorstellung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979), 120.

8 Friedrich Christoph Oetinger, *Theologia ex idea vitae deducta*, ed. Konrad Ohly, in two parts, in *Texte zur Geschichte des Pietismus*, Abteil VII, Band 2 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1979).

will to manifestation, which is the essence of all life and the essence of God. If the flowering plant can be said to will something, it wills itself manifest, that is, it opens itself up to light, to others, and ultimately to itself. What is enfolded, hidden, and interior, is unfolded, manifest for all, and externalised. What else is growth? On a macro-cosmic level, this is what is happening in the created order itself. Being is becoming manifest, for its own sake, or without why (as Eckhart put it), unfolding from a hidden, and concentrated core of potencies into a flowering of openly manifest form, pattern and order. Creation is not merely the effect of God's agency; it is a revelation of the life of God, which is nothing other than the absolute archetype of being towards manifestation.[9] Aristotle, according to Oetinger, is not a reliable guide on these matters; theology like science needs to turn to other sources, ultimately to Biblical revelation of the dynamic and progressively unfolding life of the God in history.

One might think that Aristotle, the biologist, would be the guide in these matters. But for Oetinger, the Aristotelian principle of motion, so fundamental to the theology of the high middle ages—everything that is moved is moved by another—is inadequate to the conceptualization of life, whose law is self-movement. Life is not a causal movement from potency to act, but a dynamic energy that emerges out of a duality of forces, a resolution of struggle between "various forces that are bound together in opposition and conflict."[10] But Aristotle is not the only obstacle to thinking life in the modern age; Leibniz is singled out by Oetinger, especially the pernicious influence on theology and science of Leibnizian monadology. The monads, in Oetinger's view, are lifeless precisely because they are simple. Life is not complex, dyadic, and relational, not simple and atomistic. Monads express their essence in "windowless" isolation from one another; life, by contrast is a field of intermingling elements, whose relations to one another make possible exchange, movement and growth. The conflicting elements necessary to self-movement are reducible to two opposed principles, one passive and contractive, possessing the capacity to suffer (*Leidensamkeit*), the other active and expansive, possessing the capacity to enflame and affect. The two are drawn to each other even as they repel each other; their polar opposition binds them essentially to each other. Drawing on the theology of electricity of Prokop Divisch, Oetinger describes the polarities as two fires, one cold, the other hot. The first is a "hungry," centripetal, flammable, attracting force (*die anziehende Krafi*), the systole of life; the second is a centrifugal, enflaming, expansive force (*die wegtreibenden Krafi*), the diastole of life. Nothing is static here, however, and in the explosive transformation of their encounter, the passive and the active turn into each other, the passive assuming the active role, and the passive, the active role. Out of the "flash" (*Blitz*), "shock" (*Schlag*) and *angst* of their conflict, life is born.

9 Friedrich Christoph Oetinger, "Biblisches und Emblematisches Wörterbuch," ed. Gerhard Schäfer, in two parts, in *Texte zur Geschichte des Pietismus*, ed. Gerhard Schäfer, Abteil VII, Band 3 (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 1999), pt. 1: 296.

10 Großmann, *Oetingers Gottesvorstellung*, 124; Oetinger, *Wörterbuch*, pt. 1:217.

The "double fire" (*zweierlei Feuer*) of the conflicting forces reduplicates itself on a new level in the life form produced.[11] The two principles converge in the whole as the circumference and centre converge in the production of a circle.[12] The centre opposes the circumference: where the latter radiates outward and strives to expand, the former draws inwards and strives to contract. If the circumference had its way, the circle would become a line; if the centre had its way, the circle would likewise disappear into a point. It is precisely the tension between the two that constitutes the circle as a circle.[13]

Oetinger's source is clearly Boehme's notion of God as a living personality containing within himself two opposing forces, the dark and inwardizing drive of wrath, and the light, externalizing drive of mercy. In Boehme's *ungrund* an eternal will to reveal itself is eternally held in check by an opposing will toward self-concealment. Oetinger is more careful than Boehme to stress the distinction between God as he is in-himself, in whom there is no distinction, no active or passive forces, and the eternal sevenfold nature he generates within himself (the Sephiroth/seven spirits). There is no darkness in God, no potency, no grades or modes of being. God is pure light, without beginning or end. Only in his self-manifestation in the sevenfold nature, the seven spirits or archetypes of created nature (divided as per Boehme into two opposing sets of three, with the "flash" or "crack" [*Blitz*], mediating between

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11 Oetinger fuses Newton's centripedal/centrifugal binary with Boehme's seven qualities (noting that Newton likely derived his two forces from Boehme). He references William Law and the English Boehmian tradition, suggesting the possibility that Newton's laws of motion were inspired by theosophy. See Oetinger, *Wörterbuch*, pt. 1: 285. It is widely known that Newton maintained an active research program in alchemy. See Stanton J. Linden, *The Alchemy Reader: From Hermes Trismegistus to Isaac Newton* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

12 Oetinger, *Wörterbuch*, pt. 1: 218.

13 "Zum Leben gehören verschiedene, in einer gewissen Widrigkeit und Gegeneinander-Wirkung auf einen ordentlichen Zweck hin von Gott zusammenverbundene Kräften. Es befinden sich aber die ursprügliche Kräften in 2 Gattungen von Körpern. Einige haben die Leidsamkeit und den Hunger, das Feuer an sich zu ziehen; diese sind ohne anhaltendes Reiben wie todt, finster, hart, kalt; die andere haben die feurige webende Kraft der schnellen electrischen Ausdehnung; wenn nun existere durch Reiben erregt und mit der leztern vermengt wird, so wird die Flüchtigkeit gebunden, daß verborgentlich das Active und Passive Feuer in einem innern Streit einander die Wage halten. Daher ensteht bei leichten annähernden Körpern ein motus alternus oder Abwechslung der anziehenden und wegtreibenden Kraft, heißt Systole und Diastole, und ist der Anfang des Lebens, wobei zugleich auch etwas von dem volatile in eine gewisse Weite sich erhebt, doch so, daß sich auch näher gegen dem Centro oder Quelle des Lebens das Active durchs Passivum mit einer Entzündung durchschlägt, ja am nächsten mit mehrer Stärke zur Durchblizung sich vereinigt. Das Active und Passive Feuer treiben einander so schnell, daß im Subjecto selbst die active Elemente zu passive und diese zu active werden, biß bei eine Total-Replication durch Bliz und Schlag entsteht. Es heißt diese Enstehung des durch den Streit geloffenen Feuers und Lichts eine Geburt aus der Angst oder finstern Wolke Ezechielis, und vermittelst solchen Durchbruchs wird ein ausfliessend Saamen-Bild zu einem wachsenden Wesen erhoben, das im Centro seine Wurzel hat und in einer gewissen Peripherie sich ausbreitet. Hier kan man begriefen, daß aus Finsterniß Licht hervor kommt (2. Kor. 4: 6), ja daß die angehäufte gegenseitigen Kräften vermittelst der Elasticität sich plötzlick gegeneinander auflösen, aufheben und abgleichen" (Oetinger, *Wörterbuch*, pt. 1: 217).

them), does duality and the play or polarity occur. Of God in himself we can say nothing. All we can say is that the revealed God *lets* himself be moved, allows himself to become diversified, self-developing and moving.[14] For Oetinger, by distinction from Boehme, polarity is not grounded in the birth of God from himself but in the birth of the world from God. Thus does Oetinger avoid the historical immanentism, which Boehme, and the middle Schelling fell into, and which was best developed and defined by Hegel, the position that God depends upon the evolution of his creation into self-conscious life to become conscious of himself.[15] Historical immanentism becomes indistinguishable from pantheism in so far as it cannot absolve itself of the error imputed to the latter, the mistake of making the infinite dependent on the finite. Oetinger follows the Kabbalah in distinguishing God's infinity, which is unspeakably simple, the *ein sof* of Isaac of Luria, from God's self-developing life: the latter emerges from the former through an act of self-limitation or contraction (*zimzum*). The most perfect being is not the Scholastic *ens necessarium* that cannot be relate to others or vulnerable to love because it is infinite and free of potency; it is rather the infinite that is free to finitize itself for the sake of love.

God gives rise to plurality within himself, the sevenfold nature of the divine being, which are the archetypes for all movement, multiplicity, and possibility, and which are ordered according to the three persons of the divine Trinity (the Father containing the three dark principles, the Son, the three light principles, and the Spirit mediating the two with the seventh principle). In this tradition, which begins in Boehme and finds its highest point in Schelling's Freedom Essay, God is not so much 'a person' as personalizing. Self-pluralization and self-mediation are therefore conceived as the conditions of personality, beginning with God and repeated in every finite human person. God has posited his non-relational infinity as the past and given rise to relations, first within himself, and then, as a mirror of his internal community, without himself. He does it for the sake of love, which is not possible where relations do not exist.[16]

In creation the binary of dark and light, wrath and mercy, Father and Son, first manifest in the sevenfold nature of the unfolded divine, becomes materialized in the opposites of contraction and expansion, which are the basic principle of nature. These two further bifurcate into earth, air, fire and water, each of which incarnates the duality in a different way (earth and water on the

14 Oetinger, *Wörterbuch*, pt. 1: 287; Gorßmann, *Oetingers Gottesvorstellung*, 130-143.

15 On historical immanentism, see McGrath, *Dark Ground*, chapter one.

16 "But the non-ground divides itself into the two exactly equal beginnings, only so that the two, which could not exist simultaneously or be one in it as the non-ground, become one through love, that is, it divides itself only so that there may be life and love and personal existence. For love is neither in indifference nor where opposites are linked which require linkage for [their] Being, but rather (to repeat a phrase which has already been said) this is the secret of love, that it links such things of which each could exist for itself, yet does not and cannot exist without the other" (SW VII: 500). English: F.W.J. Schelling, *Philosophical Inquiries into the Essence of Human Freedom*, trans. Jeff Love and Johannes Schmidt (Albany: SUNY Press. 2006), 70.

dark, contractive side, air and water on the light expansive side).[17] Although the two principles, dark and light, wrath and mercy, contraction and expansion, are never found without each other, one is metaphysically prior to the other in the created order.[18] What is most original in nature is the passive or dark principle. In the depths of nature lies an unformed sea of potency, what the alchemists call *prima materia*. The darkness however is implicit light, potential structure and form. God draws the light *out of* the darkness.[19] At the origin of every creature, then, is formlessness or chaos: "Every creature is first made chaotically, then regulated and formed in light, finally in end and measure made into an embodied organic form."[20] The first manifestation of God in creation is not form but matter, not order but chaos; out of the chaos appears the primordial play of forms, the equilibrium of forces that gives rise to life.[21] The play of polarities makes creation into an inexhaustibly creative, self-generative order. The ever-revolving "wheel of birth" emerges from the tension between "the passive and the active principles."[22] Out of the strife of opposites in nature emerges life's basic drive (*der Umtrieb des Lebens*): toward the exteriorization of the interior or self-manifestation.[23]

Oetinger criticizes the Aristotelian/Leibnizian logical principles of identity and sufficient reason for engendering mechanistic and externalistic approaches to truth. The principle of identity, which assumes that being is self-identical, deals only with static and unchanging entities, not with self-developing, growing, and ever-changing life. As Hegel went on to argue, the living thing is never simply identical with itself: it is always othering itself, i.e., moving.[24] The principle of sufficient reason likewise substitutes a static entity for the living and self-developing being. The deduction of an efficient cause assumes that the thing lacks a ground of its activity within itself; the thing becomes on this view a mechanism which is always determined by something outside itself, i.e., without a life of its own. Both principles miss the self-activity

17 Oetinger, *Wörterbuch*, pt. 1: 287.

18 Schelling will make the dark principle prior to the light principle, not only in creation but also in God. The ground of God is the dark womb of potency in which God "comes to be." See Schelling, SW VII: 356-36. Oetinger does not make this heterodox move, but distinguishes the order of principles in nature from the structure of the divine. In his depths there is no nature in God, no polarity or play of action/reaction. God freely takes on a nature for the sake of his self-manifestation. See Oetinger, *Biblische und Emblematisches Wörterbuch*, pt. 1: 287.

19 Gen. 1: 2-3; Schneider, *Schelling*, 93.

20 Oetinger, *Wörterbuch*, pt. 1: 70. Cf. Schelling, SW VII: 345-347; *Freedom*, 42-43.

21 Schneider, *Schelling*, 97.

22 Schneider, *Schelling*, 102.

23 See Oetinger, *Wörterbuch*, pt. 1: 264: "Nun gehören zum Leben verschiedene in einer gewissen Contrarieté des Activi und Passivi, oder in einer gewissen Gegeneinander-Wirkung auf einen ordentlichen zweck zusammen verbundene Kräften. Der einzige gottselige Newton hat unter den Weltweisen eingesehen, daß zwei widerwärtige central-Kräften der Anfang des Rades der Geburt seien, woraus der Umlauf der Dinge entsteht."

24 G.W.F. Hegel, *Hegel's Science of Logic*, trans. A.V. Miller (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1969), 440.

so essential to understanding life. The focus for Oetinger is not the external cause conditioning the thing, but rather the essence of the thing, from out of which the thing becomes, like the sprout from the seed.[25] Life is change and movement not self-identity.[26]

A Non-Representational Theory of Knowledge

If on the metaphysical side Oetinger's nemesis is mechanistic reductionism, on the philosophical side, he struggles against its epistemological analogue: representationalism. Long before Hegel became famous for the claim, Oetinger argues that the truth is never one-sided or partial, and therefore, never reducible to a proposition; rather truth is the whole, which exceeds any propositional expression.[27] Oetinger's "sacred philosophy" (*sacra philosophia*) fuses the study of history with the study of nature, the study of theology with philosophy and science, in an inevitably imperfect effort to give as comprehensive an account of infinite reality (the self-manifestation of God) as is humanly possible. Just as according to the Kabbalah no passage of scripture can be understood apart from the whole vision revealed therein, so too God's actions in history cannot be properly understood apart from his revelation in the whole of nature. In an anticipation of Hegel's absolute idealism, Oetinger opposes the epistemological standpoint of modern philosophy–the Cartesian/Kantian stipulation that science and metaphysics must be preceded by a critique of the conditions of the possibility of knowledge–with the proto-Schelling/Hegelian assumption that one can begin anywhere.[28] Theories of mind that interpolate a representation between intellect and thing dichotomize truth and reality. The truth is not a representation or a correspondence between a representation and a thing; for Oetinger, as much as for Hegel, the truth is the real, and the real the truth. Oetinger focuses on the literal meaning of the Greek *Aletheia* to highlight the non-representational nature of truth. Truth does not consist primarily in image or concept but in a revelation of being.[29]

Representationalism assumes that human being is initially outside the truth, confined to a subjective world, from which he or she reaches out toward reality-in-itself. The model fails to recognize that the soul leans towards the real the way the plant leans towards the sun. Human being has a natural instinct for

25 Schneider, *Schelling*, 79.

26 In Oetinger's *Wörterbuch* "Seyn" is interpreted as a derivative term, whose first meaning is "life." Oetinger, *Wörterbuch*, pt. 1: 296. Cf. Schelling. SW VII: 349-51. "Will is primal Being to which alone all predicates of Being apply."

27 Schneider, *Schelling*, 51.

28 Schneider, *Schelling*, 53.

29 See Oetinger, *Wörterbuch*, pt. 1: 351: "Truth is in concept, when our concepts are the things themselves [*Sache selbst*].... Truth is something ontological [*wesentliches*], consisting not only in thought, image, and word, but in being [*wesen*]. When being subsists in the truth, the relationship of the part to the whole comes clearly to the fore."

the real, a feeling for the truth, which is the common possession of all people, a *sensus communis*, a non-deductive, non-demonstrable immediate knowledge which lies at the basis of human consciousness.[30] The *sensus communis* is a residue of our original unity with God, a natural revelation, for the most part lost but not wholly destroyed in the fall. Oetinger describes it as an "immediate interpenetration of the innermost being of spirit with the essence of all beings [*grund-Wesen aller Wesen*], the self-sufficient truth."[31] The *sensus communis* exceeds the powers of understanding and penetrates to the essence of life itself. It is not the innate ideas of modern philosophy, not a content, but a *feeling* for the whole, which must be supported, developed and elaborated through the discursive practices of science. Oetinger's view that our inborn feeling for the whole must be elaborated by discursive reasoning parallels the early Schelling's approach to intellectual intuition. The *sensus communis* is the primordial, pre-conceptual, non-discursive sense for the whole of reality, which sets the soul in motion. The whole is always vaguely known prior to the part; the path of knowledge passes from an inchoate intuitive fore-grasp of the whole, through a discursive understanding of the parts, only to reconstruct the whole from the parts—Gadamer's hermeneutical circle. This path is not the geometric method of modern metaphysics but a more organic movement, which Oetinger calls the *ordo generativus*, knowledge blossoming from within outward, like the plant from the seed.[32] It is a finalistic movement, akin to the freedom with which a person reveals his or herself in action, rather than a deduction, in accordance with Oetinger's basic presupposition: that life is the primary reference point for being and knowing. Knowledge, as the highest expression of life, could never be a passive representing; it is rather the coordination of drive (*Trieb*), desire (*Begierde*) and longing (*Lust*). Hence knowledge reaches its highest expression in love.[33]

On the Body and its Soul

Perhaps no theologian in the history of Christian theology has so emphatically resisted the spirit-matter dichotomy, which routinely haunts Western thought, as Oetinger. For Oetinger, any philosophy or theology that denigrates the body, or makes it a means to a spiritual end (as Augustine could be said to have done), is to be rejected. "Embodiment is the end of all God's work [*Leiblichkeit ist das*

30 Hans-Georg Gadamer draws on Oetinger in his development of common sense in philosophical hermeneutics. See Gadamer, *Truth and Method*

31 Friedrich Christoph Oetinger, *Sämtlichen Schriften*, ed. Karl Christian Eberhard Ehmann, Zweiter Abteilung, Theosophische Schriften, 3 vols. (Stuttgart: J.F. Steinkopf, Facsimile of the 1776 edition), vol. 5: 291.

32 Schneider, *Schelling*, 72.

33 Schneider, *Schelling*, 85.

Ende der Werke Gottes]."[34] Heaven and earth constitute the macrocosm, which reveals the glory of God. The organic whole of the macrocosm is repeated in "the little world," the pinnacle and centre of God's self-revelation, the human being. Drawing freely on Boehme and the Kabbalah, Oetinger re-thinks spirit not as the opposite of body but as its most perfect expression. "Spirit does not exist without body [*Der Geist besteht nicht ohne Leib*]."[35]"To be bodily [*leibhaft seyn*] is no imperfection, as commonly believed, but a perfection."[36] The "pleroma" in Oetinger's revision of Gnosticism is not the spirit- world over and against the material world but the multi-sided fullness of eternal nature, the whole of heaven and earth, with its multitude of bodies, sidereal and material, contained in the image of God. The fullness of being requires the dynamic exchange of opposites, the *enantiodromia* of the passive and the active, the contractive and expansive by which God lives and lets live. The incarnation of Christ is at the centre of this vision; it is not undertaken solely to save the fallen order: the manifestation of God to himself, which sets the absolute in motion, is only fully achieved when God stands forth in time and space, at a particular moment in history, bodily, in Christ. Only when God has thus become absolutely other to himself, finite, embodied, localized in space and time, only then is he fully revealed. Even the heavenly things, the angels and powers that circle the throne, are embodied. Oetinger finds the *Zohar* too other-worldly on this point. Boehme alone seems to have grasped, not just the dignity of the body but its glory. While the tradition has tended to read Boehme as crudely materialistic because he lacks the abstractions necessary to a more sophisticated spiritual vision, Oetinger sees Boehme's materialism as his great advantage over his predecessors. The sum of Boehme's vision, in Oetinger's view, is embodiment: "Everything heavenly, everything invisible, has a form and a figure, like the earthly."[37]

It is no surprise then that sin is not a repercussion of embodiment, as it is in many Gnostic and neo-Platonic accounts of redemption. The fall of man in Oetinger's theology does not consist in the descent into the body, quite the opposite. The fall is the result of a failure to fully embody; it is a symptom of a spiritual rejection of the body. The fallen soul no longer fully commands its body; it is no longer fully or properly embodied. That said, the perfect body is not the flesh and blood of this world but a more perfect but every bit as physical archetype of which this body is an imperfect copy.[38] Oetinger draws freely on Hermeticism and Paracelsian alchemy to distinguish a sidereal or ethereal body from the material body. The purpose of this distinction is not to denigrate

34 Oetinger, *Wörterbuch*, pt. 1: 223.
35 Oetinger, *Wörterbuch*, pt. 1: 223.
36 Oetinger, *Wörterbuch*, pt. 1: 131-2.
37 Oetinger, cited in Walter Dierauer, *Hölderlin und der spekulative Pietismus Württembergs: Gemeinsame Anschauugnshorizonte im Werk Oetingers und Hölderlins* (Zurich: Juris), 21.
38 This anticipation of receiving a new body after death is the theme of Schelling's *Clara or, On Nature's Connection to the Spirit World*, trans. Fiona Steinkamp (Albany: SUNY Press. 2002).

matter but to ennoble it. Matter has greater possibilities than have been realized on earth. In Christ the body is restored to its original dignity, re-spiritualized as it were.[39] The soul bears within it an essential relation to its body, a *schema corporeum* and cannot exist without some degree of embodiment. Ultimately its perfection depends on the perfection of its body. "The soul dwells in blood."[40] As in the divine life, the goal of all the soul's striving, self-differentiation and self-seeking is perfect embodiment. "Its end-point or terminus *ad quem* is a pure spiritual-corporeal being (*geist-leiblich reines Wesen*)."

Against neo-Platonism and Leibnizian metaphysics Oetinger posits an essential complexity in the soul. "The soul is no monad, no *punctum indivisibile* .... It is a complex of different forces and essences."[41] The alchemico-Boehmian principle of polarity in Oetinger is developed into an early psychology of the unconscious. Referencing Mesmer and the proto-psychology of animal magnetism, Oetinger identifies a basic electrical polarity in the body-soul of man, a "double-life."[42] The dark principle is the receptive and sensible (*empfindliche*) side of man; the light principle is the active, comprehending and cognizing (*verständliche*) side. The first is passive, animal, and directed "without consciousness" (*hat zwar ohne Bewußtseyn seinem richtigen Gang*); the second is active and spiritual. Both are "electric," i.e., polarized, oriented dynamically to one another. The sensible soul, *die sinnliche Seele*, is Oetinger's figure for the unconscious. It stands opposed by the intellectual soul, *die geistliche Seele*. But the opposition here is more complex than the traditional opposition of will and intellect, for both 'souls' express will, but in opposed directions. Where the sensible soul is inwardly driven, passively drawing data into itself and thereby

39 Dieurauer, *Hölderlin und der spekulative Pietismus Württembergs*, 20.

40 Oetinger, *Wörterbuch*, pt. 1: 295.

41 "Die Seele ist keine Monade, kein Punctum indivisibile, sondern ein in alles andere wirksam Wesen durch Kraft ihrer zugeordneten Werkzeugen, davon das Leben der Kraft, das Ens penetrabile oder Tinctur das Fürnehmste ist. Sie ist ein Complexus verschiedener Kräften und Essentien, welche im Anfang herb, feurig und flüchtig seyn, und in ihrem Fortgang süß, lieblich, sanft und fix warden. Die Monaden sollen in instant entstehn, aber die Seele ensteht successive. Ihr End-Punkt oder Terminus ad quem ist ein geist-leiblich reines Wesen, sie gehet aus in ein Continuum; daher sagen die Philosophen, die Seele habe ein Schema Corporeum an sich, das ohne Harmonia praestabilita ihr anhange und zu ihrer Subsistenz gehöre. Von der Seele kan man nichts deutliches verstehen ohne das Ens penetrabile, das sich in alle Gestalten gibt; jedoch ist dies Seele nicht so dünn als das Ens penetrabile der Tinctur. Die Seele wohnet im Blut." Oetinger, *Wörterbuch*, pt. 1: 294-5. The term "*ens penetrabile*" (or Tinctur) is taken from Boehme. It is that which quickens and transforms, the "soul of nature" (*anima mundi*), Mercurius in alchemy. It is the animating principle in all things. "Ens penetrabile ist, das ohne etwas zu verlieren, und ohne Division sich ergibt zur Enstehung eines anderen." Oetinger, cited in Martin Weyer-Menkhoff, *Christus, das Heil der Natur. Enstehung und Systematik der Theologie Friedrich Christoph Oetingers* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht,1990), 192. Oetinger, *Wörterbuch*, pt. 1: 294. Related to Leibniz's privileging of simplicity is Leibniz's other oversight: the forgetting of the essential temporality of the soul. Monads do not develop and so do not need time. The soul, on the other hand, is not ready-made but develops. "The monads develop in an instant, but the soul develops successively." Oetinger, *Wörterbuch*, pt. 1: 294.

42 Oetinger *Wörterbuch*, pt. 1: 218.

asserting its life over and against all else, the intellectual soul is driven outward, towards acts of understanding and love. In the animal the sensible soul develops without consciousness; in the human being the sensible soul subordinates itself to the intellectual soul, consciousness, and thereby serves the whole. But this hierarchical relationship conceals a deeper interdependency: the intellectual soul rests upon the sensible soul, depends upon it as the circle depends upon the centre.[43]

The "two-souled" human being is described in dynamic and energetic terms: man is drive (*Trieb*), striving (*Streben*), and force (*Kraft*), directed as naturally toward the self-othering, mirroring, and image projection which externalizes and potentizes his essence, as is the sprout toward the seed. Oetinger assents to Boehme's metaphysical voluntarism in all essential details, bringing to the discussion of "will" his superior knowledge of Scholastic psychology. He distinguishes sensing, understanding, and willing, but refuses to separate them as faculties. These are not "purely spiritual" in the sense of having no analogue in nature: rather they are potentizations of the three basic forces of nature, which Oetinger defines as receiving (sensing), expansion (understanding), and contraction (willing). But it is not from observing nature that we understand the human being; it is from observing the human being that we understand nature.[44] The human being is not a thing, neither a substance in the Aristotelian sense of a self-identical entity which supports a set of changing attributes, nor a knowing subject in the Cartesian sense of an irreducible thinking thing which represents the external world to itself, but a self-moving will that naturally seeks to differentiate itself, to experience itself by encountering others like itself. As the apotheosis of created life, imaging the life of the creator of all, the human being, with its internal diversity and drive towards relations, is the key to understanding all creatures, from the highest animal to the lowest molecule. This in anticipation of Schelling Oetinger sharply rejects the modern philosophical tendency to dichotomize freedom, characteristic of human spirit, and nature, compelled by necessity.[45] The former is not an immaterial order of disembodied spiritual volition (as in Kant); nor is the latter a spiritless order of mechanistic causality (as in Spinoza). Rather, human freedom expresses the spontaneity of movement characteristic of all life. All life prefigures the dynamic of self-conscious freedom, the capacity to ascent to natural development, to *choose* light and order (development) or darkness and chaos (regression).[46] Everything living figures freedom; the will that freely choose its

43 "Das Psychische oder Seelische seye das erste, das Geistliche das zweite ..." Oetinger, *Wörterbuch*, pt. 1: 219.

44 Schneider, *Schelling*, 130. Man, the pinnacle of creation, the microcosm, is "the point of concentration of all forces in the world." Oetinger cited in Dierauer, "Hölderlin und der spekulative Pietismus Württembergs," 30. "Everything corresponds to man" (Alles bezieht sich auf den Menschen)." Oetinger, *Wörterbuch*, pt. 1: 234. The doctrine of the microcosm is of course a leitmotif of the Western esoteric tradition from Kabbalah to Baader.

45 Schneider, *Schelling*, 121.

46 Schneider, *Schelling*, 119.

own development, simplifies and unifies the conflicting forces within itself and becomes itself out of one's own essence. Human being seeks to "other" itself, to differentiate the entangled and conflicting forces within itself, and, imitating God, to give expression to a unified image of itself. Human being, however, is fallen, and cannot achieve this end without grace. True freedom only appears in the grace-ennobled human being. But what appears in the Christ-man or woman is what nature struggles to give expression to, even in its lowliest forms.

These are all strikingly Schellingian themes, at least for any reader with more than a cursory knowledge of the middle Schelling. Oetinger even prefigures Schelling's reworking of the Kantian doctrine of the intelligible act. Schelling resolves the Kantian-Fichtian dichotomy between the spontaneity of the morally culpable act and the causal necessity of every natural event by holding human activity to be pre-determined by the will itself in an intelligible act, a pure noumenal, trans-temporal and non-spatial decision, by which the soul authors itself. Everything that the soul does in the course of historical life is pre-determined by this original, spontaneous election of character. The Freedom Essay is therefore neither deterministic nor libertarian; it advances as an alternative to both of these a doctrine of self-determination, or better, since it occurs once and for all, and is not compatible with libertarian freedom of choice, a doctrine of determination by the self. The human is thus both determined in time and the absolutely free author of his or herself.[47]

One hundred years before Schelling, and drawing on similar Boehmian texts as Schelling, Oetinger defines the human as a will to self-manifestation. Imaging the living and self-manifesting God, whom Boehme holds to "have given birth to himself" in an act of decision that ends the eternal nothingness of the simple infinite and divides the Godhead into a dark-ground and the image which it generates of itself, the human longs to become something for itself: its freedom does not hover in indecision but resolves itself in an act that generates an image. The image, however, is not merely a reflection of an already existent being: rather it is a projection of possibility. It is absolutely crucial to Boehme's doctrine of the mirror of wisdom and Oetinger's psychology to distinguish the ground from the image projected by the ground. In this image, the human beholds itself as it might be. Its image becomes a destiny: the character which then determines its actions.[48] Borrowing Swedenborg's term, Oetinger calls this the "essentification" of the soul: the soul does not simply double itself in the mirror; it becomes, in its image, more intensely and actually itself; to use Schellingian language, it potentizes its powers in a determinate, concrete, and actual manifestation of its essence. The mirroring is not merely a doubling because the soul only really comes to be itself in its image. Only in self-othering is there a self at all. This peculiar structure is repeated in Lacan's mirror stage,

47 See Schelling SW VII: 382-84; *Freedom*, 49-51.
48 Schneider, *Schelling*, 121-122.

likely under the influence of Boehme.[49] A decisive difference between Oetinger and Lacan, however, is that Oetinger does not devalue consciousness on this basis. He does not hold, as Lacan does, that the soul is hereby shown to be virtual, a pseudo-identity masking a lack of being. On the contrary, the soul is not alienated from itself in its image; rather it comes to itself for the first time, as the first person of the Trinity is not alienated in begetting of the Son. Related to this point is the striking concept of desire in desire in Oetinger, desire which is no longer merely privative but productive. In this, Oetinger anticipates Deleuze's and Guattari's notion of desire, which was constructed as an alternative to Lacanian constitutive lack.[50] For Oetinger the will's search for another is not to be interpreted negatively, as though the will begins in a state of lack: the desire of the will is creative: it is not motivated by lack but by the urge to express, to reveal, to let there be more being. Oetinger compares the essentification of the soul to the alchemical *transmutio*: a chaotic and undifferentiated vortex of conflicting forces achieves a new state of unification through a process of separation (*solve*) and recombination (*coagula*).[51] The task of the human, as high priest of creation, is to raise matter into spirit in this axial decision to become *someone*.[52]

Oetinger's anthropology is synthesized in a dense entry on "the will" in his *Biblical and Emblematic Dictionary* (*Biblisches und Emblematisches Wörterbuch*). Anyone familiar with Schelling's Freedom Essay will immediately see the profound similarities between Oetinger's theosophical vision of the human being as an equilibrium of forces and Schelling's mature conception of human freedom.

> No one comprehends what power God has invested in the will. It is also very difficult to explain what the will is. It is disputed among scholars whether the will precedes understanding, or whether the understanding precedes the will, nonetheless the soul is at once willing and understanding. One cannot definitely distinguish what is prior and what is secondary.... Without the differentiation of forces in the soul, the creature could not have been granted any self-movement, for the two conflicting central-forces, which Newton recognizes in creation

49 See Dany-Robert Dufour, *Lacan et le miroir sophianique de Boehme* (Paris: Cahiers de l'Unebévue, 1998).

50 On essentification (also a Swedenborgian theme), see Horn, Swedenborg, 58; Schelling, *Clara,* 237): "Death is therefore not an absolute separation of the spirit from the body, but only a separation from that element of the body that is in opposition to the spirit ... of the good from the evil, then, of the evil from the good. This means that it is not just part of the person that is immortal, but rather the whole person in regard to the true essence—death is a reduction to the essential [*reduction ad essentiam*]."

51 See "Solve et Coagula" in Lyndy Abraham, *A Dictionary of Alchemical Imagery* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

52 Schneider, *Schelling*, 129.

> [attraction/repulsion], are the ground of self-movement. Out of this ground of his freedom God has imparted these two conflicting forces to the creature; the creature is not eternal, but has a beginning and an end. The inexhaustible accidentality or contingency of the creature has a true ground in freedom, although self-movement receives its character of freedom from God. Therefore pantheism or Spinozism is cut off at its roots. Through self-movement a thing changes its state out of itself without movement from another, and this self-active force is the will in the soul, the self-drive in the body.[53]

Several things are worth noting in this remarkable text. First we see Oetinger's refusal to weigh in on one side of the voluntarist debate or the other. The soul's capacity for knowledge is only fully understood in the context of its drive to manifest itself. Prior to all acts of cognition is the basic life-drive (*Trieb*) toward self-manifestation, exfoliation of inner power, the kernel of self-movement, which makes the soul lively, not merely a being or a thing. Secondly, movement is only possible if the soul is originally divided. A self-identical being that excludes all difference within itself cannot move. Third, Oetinger expressly develops this anthropology as an alternative to Spinozistic determinism, with a view to naturalizing freedom without collapsing spirit into matter.

The second half of Oetinger's entry on will describes the theosophical prototype of what comes to be known as the "mirror stage" in Lacanian psychoanalysis:

> When the will moves within itself, through the differentiation of the entangled forces [*in einander laufenden Kräften*], it draws an image of itself out of its hiddenness; it becomes a mirror for itself, in which the darkness fades away. It is not only self-knowledge that develops but a power to reveal oneself to oneself and to others in clear concepts drawn from darkness, the power to distinguish oneself, to compare oneself and to understand oneself. This cannot happen without a simplification of the eternal word in the soul. With this simplification, multiple forces can be balanced in a complex activity [*Bei diesem kan stehen eine Ineinander-Wirkung vieler Kräften*] ... this occurs through the nearness and interpenetration of the eternal word [*die Beiheit und Durchdringung des ewigen Worts*].[54]

53 Oetinger, *Wörterbuch*, pt. 1, 355-6.

54 Oetinger, *Wörterbuch*, pt. 1:356. "Wenn der Wille in sich selber geht, so bringt er aus seiner Verborgenheit das Bild seiner selbst durch Vervielfältigung der in einander laufenden Kräften hervor, er wird sich selbst zu einem Spiegel, in welchem die Finsternis vergeht. Es entsteht nicht nur eine Selbst-Erkänntniß, sondern es warden aus dunklen klare Begriffe, auf dies Art entsteht die Kraft zu unterscheiden, und aus dieser die Kraft zu vergleichen, sich selbst zu verstehen,

The internal movement of the will is a differentiation of undifferentiated or entangled opposites—the *solve* of alchemy. The telos and product of the movement is the projection of an image, not merely a repetition of what the soul was prior to the differentiation that produced the image, but an idealization, a unification of what was divided, a synthesis and balancing of what is inherently conflictual. The mirroring is not self-knowledge in a Cartesian subjectivistic sense; it has a profoundly ontological telos: it is a revelation of the self, to itself and to others outside of it; thus a positing of otherness (if we can use this Fichtian language in this context), an acknowledgement of others, which is, in its first movement, a letting otherness be. Out of this idealization, the soul becomes distinct from others—its internal diversity comes together in a new way, producing a life in its own right (*coagula/transmutio*). The unity of the soul in Oetinger's alchemico-theosophical vision, is not given, but achieved, a simplification of what was originally complex, made possible by "the eternal word," God's first image of himself, which is imaged again in the soul that images itself.

The Dawn of a New Psychology

The metaphysical repercussions of Oetinger's speculative theology of life are immense. Oetinger overturns basic presuppositions of the eighteenth-century philosophy—the representationalist theory of knowledge, the de-valuation of the body, and the mechanistic model of matter. Oetinger's most significant contribution, however, is to the theory of the unconscious, which is born in this century, and first becomes a medical hypothesis in the next. Through Schelling, Oetinger's model of the doubled soul becomes the central source for the nineteenth-century theories of the unconscious that set the stage for the rise of psychoanalysis. In conclusion, I will sketch out some of the connections between Oetinger's anthropology and the psychology of the unconscious.

The principle of polarity, essential to Oetinger's concept of life, means there must be a 'night' side to the soul. There are no simples in nature according to Oetinger. Atomism is a philosophy of the non-living. The assumption of external causality misses the phenomenon of life entirely. Life is not a pre-given unity that suffers changes over time, but an emergent unity, a hard-won equilibrium of conflicting powers. In another configuration, the strife between these opposites does not lead to growth or development but to decay and death. The psychological counterpart to atomism is the neo-Platonic notion of the simplicity of the soul. Since Plato's *Phaedo*, various arguments have been made

über sich selbst zu denken, kurz eine Kraft sich gegen sich und andere zu offenbaren. Diß kan nicht geschehen ohne Simplification des ewigen Worts in der Seele. Diese simplificiert, was irgend material kan degacht warden. Diese bringt Einheit in die Seele. Bei diesem kan stehen eine Ineinander Wirkung vieler Kräften."

attempting to prove the immortality of the soul on the grounds that, because death is decomposition, and only composites can die, the soul, which lacks composition, must be immortal. The assumption in the neo-Platonic tradition is that the soul is immaterial, non-composite and self-subsistent. From this anthropology, the notion of the unconscious could not develop.[55] A simple soul has no *essentially* unconscious side. It might have degrees of awareness just as it has degrees of moral purity. It might struggle with ignorance, with a heart whose reasons escape it, with passions that overwhelm its ratiocinative powers. It might suffer temptations and disintegrations into multiplicity. But all of this internal division is consequent to the unity of the soul, a degeneration and fall from its essence, not the condition of its emergence into unity. Darkness, passion, desire in neo-Platonic anthropology are understood not as intrinsic to the life of the soul but as symptoms of its loss of unity with the good and fall into embodiment.

As we have seen, Oetinger develops the notion of self-knowledge as mirroring out of Boehme's doctrine of "the mirror of wisdom" and prepares the ground for later psychoanalytical notions of the role of "the ego ideal" in the constitution of personality. Soul-making for Oetginer must be a doubling, a drive towards self-manifestation that fashions an image of itself so that it might know itself. The paradigm is the self-developing and personalizing God, who generates the mirror of his wisdom so that he might be self-manifest. Just so, the created will wills another to itself within which it can behold itself. But what the will beholds in the mirror is not merely a repetition of that which preceded the mirroring: it is rather a new kind of life within the will, a negation of primary narcissism, a release toward the other, which engenders the soul's relations to reality. The image stands to the will as final cause: that is, the will gives to itself its final cause, creates for itself its own destiny, which determines all its subsequent decisions. Thus is the will absolutely free. Oetinger's speculative theology of life thus offers us a rare alternative to the all-too-common denigration of the body and the tyranny of the other-worldly in the history of Western philosophy and theology. Oetinger produces a non-dualistic theology of embodiment without minimizing the disruptive nature of evil. The body is no longer an obstacle to holiness but the end of all spiritual development. Health now takes on a new significance: to be healthy in body is to have the physical analogue of a holy soul. In the union of physical and spiritual health, the human as the microcosm images the universe as it was meant to be. Oetinger's search for a non-Cartesian anthropology anticipates later developments in the psychology of the unconscious (Carus, Fechner, von Hartmann, early Freud), which are each in their own way concerned with the effort to rethink the body-soul relation, no longer in terms of an ontological

55 It is for this reason that I have argued that the unconscious is essentially a modern thought, and cannot be grafted onto ancient theories of the irrational. See McGrath, *Dark Ground*, chapter one.

opposition but as two sides of a living whole. If the human being is truly alive there must be something bodily about the soul and something soul-like about the body.