



# k a b i r i

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## The Productive Nature of Landscape in Schelling's Philosophy of Art

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When we see a painting, we grasp a material painted on a canvas, but also something spiritual. A landscape painting, depicting nature and scenery, represents not only existing natural things but also the enormous power of nature independent of human beings; it represents, also, the productivity of nature. Schelling uses productive nature as his model, and as the spring of an artist's creativity, in his Munich speech titled *On the Relation of the Plastic Arts to Nature* (1807). According to Schelling, artists should represent productive nature, the "spirit of nature" (*Naturgeist*), in their artworks (SW VII: 301).<sup>2</sup> This speech was influential in making landscape paintings a significant genre of art by clarifying the relationship between art and nature.

Schelling incorporates the idea of "mood" (*Stimmung*) in his theory on landscapes. "*Stimmung*," in German, is a nominalization of the verb "*stimmen*." It means tuning in music. It refers not only to a subjective feeling but also to an objective environment.<sup>3</sup> Many romantic landscape paintings were being produced in Germany during the late 18th and early 19th centuries; for instance, works by C. D. Friedrich and P. O. Runge. Schelling did not criticize romantic painters. When he was the General Secretary of the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich, he did comment on J. A.

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<sup>2</sup> For the citations in this article, I translated the original German texts with reference to some English translations. F. W. J. Schelling, *Concerning the Relation of the Plastic Arts to Nature*, trans. Michael Bullock, in Herbert Read, *The True Voice of Feeling* (London: Faber and Faber, 1953), 332.

<sup>3</sup> Leo Spitzer explains the idea of "*Stimmung*" in relation to Christianity. Leo Spitzer, *Classical and Christian Ideas of World Harmony: Prolegomena to an Interpretation of the Word "Stimmung,"* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1963).



Koch's paintings. Koch is not, strictly speaking, a romantic painter, but he influenced the work of romantic painters. Focusing on Schelling's evaluation of these painters' artworks during this period, we can better understand the application of his theory to artworks.<sup>4</sup>

Prior to his 1807 speech, Schelling had discussed the plastic arts in his lecture series, *The Philosophy of Art* (1802-1803, 1804-1805).<sup>5</sup> The lectures cover various genres based on the principles of the philosophy of identity. Here Schelling displays a wide range of knowledge on art.<sup>6</sup> The lectures cover various genres of art. He analyzes artworks using both methods of theory and practice. The lectures highlight Schelling's ambivalent evaluation of landscape paintings. He focuses on the landscape as a genre of plastic art during a time when the landscape was not highly evaluated as a genre of art.

In this paper we seek to understand the significance and the basic idea of landscape and nature by comparing the idea of nature and the theory of landscape in Schelling's *The Philosophy of Art* and *On the Relation of the Plastic Arts to Nature*. The first section describes Schelling's ambivalent evaluation of landscape painting. The second and third sections present the fundamental characteristics of his landscape theory by focusing on the idea of mood (*Stimmung*). The fourth section investigates how productive nature is developed from the philosophy of nature to the lecture series and, eventually, the 1807 speech. In the last two sections, we will shed light on Schelling's review of artworks in Munich, especially Koch's landscape paintings, which demonstrates a possibility for applying Schelling's philosophy of art to artworks. In conclusion, I address the significant role of productive nature in art and the interaction of human beings and nature in landscape paintings.

### **Schelling's Ambivalent Evaluation of Landscape Painting in *The Philosophy of Art***

In *The Philosophy of Art*, Schelling explains his philosophy of art based on the principle of identity. Schelling defines it this way: "the philosophy of art is the presentation of the universe in the form of art" (SW V: 369).<sup>7</sup> According to Schelling, truth, goodness,

4 This article is a revised version of Sakura Yahata's "The Mood in the Landscape Theory by Schelling," in *Aesthetics*, vol.69-1, 2018, 37-48 (in Japanese).

5 Schelling's philosophy of art dates to the period 1800-1807. After 1807, he did not thematize art in his philosophical system. See *The System of transcendental Philosophy* (1800), *The Philosophy of Art* (1802-1803, 1804-1805), *Bruno* (1802) and *On the Relation of the Plastic Arts to Nature* (1807). One could include the *Oldest System-Programme of German Idealism*, but it is a joint work of Hegel, Hölderlin and Schelling.

6 Arne Zerbst demonstrates the relationship between Schelling's philosophical system and his concrete knowledge of fine arts. Arne Zerbst, *Schelling und die bildende Kunst: Zum Verhältnis von kunstphilosophischem System und konkreter Werkerkenntnis* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 2011).

7 Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, ed. and trans. Douglas W. Stott (Minneapolis: University of

and beauty are the three ideas of the Absolute, that is, God in different worlds. The idea of beauty can represent the Absolute in a real thing, such as an artwork.

Schelling discusses the philosophy of art in two parts: a general section and a specific section. In the specific section, the genres of art are divided into a real series and an ideal series. Music, painting, and sculpture belong to the real series; namely, to plastic arts. Lyric, epic, and drama belong to the ideal series. Schelling in turn characterizes each genre as either a real unity, an ideal unity, or an indifference of both. In the plastic arts, for example, music is characterized as a real unity, painting as an ideal unity, and sculpture as indifference.<sup>8</sup>

Painting, Schelling says, “is the first art form that has figures and accordingly also genuine objects” (SW V: 542).<sup>9</sup> Music expresses “the development of things” (*das Werden der Dinge*), whereas painting portrays “already formed things” (*schon gewordene Dinge*) (SW V: 542).<sup>10</sup> Painting portrays already formed things because the painting in front of our eyes is a real object with a depicted figure.

Schelling gives three general categories of painting: drawing, chiaroscuro and coloring. Drawing is the most basic art that draws the shape of real things. Second, chiaroscuro expresses the ideal in the effect of light and shadow. In chiaroscuro, individual figures framed by the drawing merge by the power of light and shadow and, “in the highest identity of the whole—nevertheless rendered the greatest variety of lighting effects” (SW V: 535).<sup>11</sup> Third, coloring stands in relation to the “absolute indifferentiation of matter and light;” put differently, light and matter are united (SW V: 541).<sup>12</sup> Schelling calls the unity between the ideal and the real “symbolic.” In this sense, the color in which light and matter synthesize is symbolic.

All stages of painting are determined by the “various relationships of light to corporeal things” (SW V: 542).<sup>13</sup> The three opposing categories of light are “external, inflexible, and inorganic” (*äußerlich, unbeweglich, unorganisch*) and “internal, flexible, and organic” (*innerlich, beweglich, organisch*) (SW V: 542).<sup>14</sup> Schelling regards the former three categories as negative and low, and the latter three categories as positive and high.

Following the number of negative or positive categories, the genres are classified in the following ascending order: still-life, flower and fruit, animals, landscape, portrait, and historical painting. In a still-life painting, for example, “completely inorganic objects” are presented “without internal life, without moving

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Minnesota Press, 1989), 16.

8 In literary arts, lyric is real unity, epic is ideal unity, and drama is indifference.

9 Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, 143.

10 Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, 143. Stott translates “*Werden*” into “the evolution or development,” and “*schon*” into “fully.”

11 Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, 138.

12 Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, 142f.

13 Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, 143.

14 Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, 143.

color” (SW V: 542). For that reason, still-life painting is at the lowest level. By contrast, a historical painting is “the most appropriate subject of painting” because it portrays human figures as the highest material of art (SW V: 555).<sup>15</sup> Landscape paintings, “where light is externally inorganic, yet flexible and to that extent living,” (SW V: 544)<sup>16</sup> has only one positive category. For that reason, it is considered at a lower level than portrait and historical painting.<sup>17</sup>

### The Unity of Mood (*Stimmung*) in Landscape paintings

Schelling is ambivalent in his evaluation of landscape paintings. He highly values landscape painting in one case because he personally favors it over other forms, but also because landscape paintings reflect light well. In his theory of painting, the role of light is first deduced, then he explains how light, which is an ideal, is seen in reality by our eyes. He notes that “*the idea itself* is the *light*, but *absolute light*” is perceptible (SW V: 507).<sup>18</sup> When it is unified with the body, the light appears “as *relative light*, as something relatively ideal” (SW V: 507). Schelling’s understanding of light is influenced by Goethe, particularly in his description of it as “*obscured [getrübbtes] light or color*” (SW V: 509),<sup>19</sup> when the light is with non-light, that is to say, synthesized with body and appears as color. From here, we can understand how Schelling applies his philosophy of nature to the philosophy of art.

In landscape painting, Schelling says, “light itself as such becomes an object.” “This genre not only needs space for painting; it also concerns itself specifically with the portrayal of space as such” (SW V: 544).<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, drawing, which grasps form cannot be found at all in landscape paintings as such (SW V: 545).<sup>21</sup> Through the chiaroscuro of the moment of light, something transient and accidental can be depicted on the canvas. Schelling explains that “everything in it [landscape painting] depends on the arts of aerial perspective and thus on the completely empirical character of chiaroscuro” (SW V: 545). It is, therefore, “a completely empirical art form.” The beauty of the landscape with light, color and air is based on “accidental factor” (*Zufälligkeit*) (SW V: 545), and this contingency is brought by painter’s skill

15 Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, 152.

16 Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, 144.

17 According to Schelling’s categories, the genre of paintings is classified as follows: historical painting is internal, flexible, and organic; portrait is internal, flexible, and inorganic; landscape is external, flexible, and inorganic; Animal is external, flexible, and organic; fruit and plant is external, inflexible, and inorganic; and still-life is external, inflexible, and inorganic.

18 Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, 120.

19 Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, 121.

20 Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, 144. Stott translates “*Gattung*” into “type,” and I translate it as “genre.”

21 Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, 145.

of chiaroscuro and aerial perspective onto the canvas.<sup>22</sup>

Schelling's theory of landscape painting was influenced by A. W. Schlegel's lecture, *The Theory of Art (Die Kunstlehre)*, given in 1801. Schelling borrowed Schlegel's note about his own lecture, to discuss the specific section of his *Philosophy of Art*.<sup>23</sup> In the new *Historical-Critical Edition* of Schelling's *Philosophy of Art*, we can find some explanatory notes regarding Schlegel. The editor pays attention to some of the differences between Schlegel and Schelling; for example, the contingency of the moment of light and drawing in landscape painting.<sup>24</sup>

The differences and common points between Schlegel and Schelling concern the idea of mood (*Stimmung*). For Schelling, "the unity of mood" (SW V: 546)<sup>25</sup> should be painted in landscape painting.

Landscape painting is thus to be viewed as a completely empirical art form. The unity that may inhere in a work of this kind reverts back to the subject. It is the unity of a mood that the power of light and of its miraculous struggle with shadow and night in nature at large elicits in us. The feeling of *objective* meaninglessness of landscapes promoted painters to give this form a more objective meaning by enlivening it with people (SW V: 545f.).<sup>26</sup>

Mood brings forth the struggle and union between light and shadow in nature and in the perceiver. Schelling pays more attention to the effect of feeling in the subjects of landscape paintings than in subjects of other genres. A painter unifies the mood in the subject that represents it in an artwork. When people see the artwork, they can catch the mood within it. The following quotation can illustrate the similarity between mood and Schlegel's idea of "musical unity" (*die musikalische Einheit*).

Schlegel writes, "if painting, as it fixes the mind in the quiet contemplation of an encompassed object, or stimulates the mind to vague fantasies and becomes entangled in an unnamable yearning, approaches either sculpture or music, the landscape can be called as its musical part."<sup>27</sup> He points out the observer's perspective and the psychological effects of appreciation. Landscape "exists only in the eyes of the observers." Landscape painters take "light and air" as direct objects and depict

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22 Harald Schmidt describes this matter in landscape paintings as "emancipation of light from objects." Harald Schmidt, *Melancholie und Landschaft: Die psychotische und ästhetische Struktur der Naturschilderungen in Georg Büchners "Lenz"*, (Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien, 1994), 77.

23 Cf. Schelling's Letter to Schlegel on Sep. 3, 1802, in Schelling, "Briefwechsel 1800-1802," *Historisch-kritische Ausgabe*, vol. III/2, ed. Thomas Kisser (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 2010), 468.

24 Cf. Comments in AA II, 6, 2, 623.

25 Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, 145.

26 Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, 145.

27 August Wilhelm Schlegel, *Die Kunstlehre* (1801-1802), in *Vorlesungen über Ästhetik*, vol. 1, ed. Ernst Behler (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1989), 338.



them according to “aerial perspective.”<sup>28</sup> By seeing landscape paintings, the observer’s feelings change to vague fantasies. As Julia Clout indicates, Schlegel seeks a musical situation in the beholder’s consciousness and the painter’s technique.<sup>29</sup> The production of artworks becomes a matter of stimulating a beholder’s feelings.

The unity which he places in his work, however, can be no other than a musical one, that is, the appropriateness of harmonic and contrasting parts to produce a mood, or a series of impressions in which one likes to dwell, and which preserve the mind in a certain levitation.<sup>30</sup>

Schlegel grasps mood as an undetermined feeling in the soul, and as a harmonious situation of various impressions. For Schlegel, landscape painting is not a mere imitation of real landscape. When a painter depicts a landscape, a harmonious condition arises in his mind, that is, a musical unit. For Schlegel, “when he has felt it into the region, the musical unity is his work, and the real landscape transforms into poetry again in your soul.”<sup>31</sup> The nature of landscape painting is the interaction of painter and objects. Through this interaction, a harmonious condition occurs in the subject.

Schelling also sees the mood as a harmonious condition between the interaction of subject and object in landscape painting. Accordingly, it is clear that Schelling’s theory of landscape contains some romantic elements, for example, the effects of light and color, contingency, and empirical art, etc., whereas his theory remains within the framework of the philosophy of identity. Accordingly he states:

In landscape painting, only subjective portrayal is possible, since the landscape itself possesses reality only in the eye of the observer. Landscape painting necessarily concerns itself with empirical truth, and the ultimate of which it is capable is to use precisely *this* empirical truth itself as covering through which it allows a higher kind of truth to manifest itself. Yet only this external covering is actually depicted. The true object, the idea, remains formless, and it is up to the observer to discover it from within the gossamer (*duftigen*), formless essence before him (SW V: 544).<sup>32</sup>

The landscape painting is also an art that represents an idea in a particular way, that is to say, through “covering” (*Hülle*). On this, Arne Zerbst points to the aspect of reception aesthetics in Schelling’s philosophy of art.<sup>33</sup> Schelling considers landscape painting as a subjective art. The beauty of landscape painting depends on observers,

28 Schlegel, *Die Kunstlehre*, 338.

29 Julia Clout, *Geheime Texte – Jean Paul und die Musik* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2001), 171.

30 Schlegel, *Kunstlehre*, 339.

31 Schlegel, *Kunstlehre*, 340.

32 Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, 144f. Stott translates “*duftigen*” into “fragrant.”

33 Zerbst, *Schelling und die bildende Kunst*, 166.

not only the painter but also the beholders.

**“The Spirit of Nature” and *natura naturans*  
as a Source of Artists’ Creativity:  
Political Ground and the Theory of Imitation of Nature  
in “On the Relation of the Plastic Arts to Nature”**

Though Schelling did not conduct art-focused lectures after his *Philosophy of Art* lectures, he was asked to give what would become a famous speech, “On the Relation of the Plastic Arts to Nature,” for the name day celebration of the Bavarian King Maximilian I on October 12, 1807. The celebration took place in Munich’s new Academy, with over 500 celebrants in attendance. Despite a mixed reaction, the speech increased Schelling’s fame. In the following year, Schelling received the position of First General Secretary of the Royal Academy of the Fine Arts in Munich. The speech had political purposes. It promoted the sciences and arts in Munich, driven by the Academy, and praised the King’s collection, especially, Guido Reni’s painting, *The Assumption of the Virgin Mary* (1642).<sup>34</sup>

The speech highlights the most influential aesthetic theories of the early 19th century, particularly, classicism and romanticism. Schelling also sheds light on the theory of imitation of nature popular at that time. Schelling clarifies the problem with imitating nature in the pseudo-classicist tradition. He cites the theory of Winckelmann and his book *Thoughts on the Imitation of Greek Works in Painting and the Art of Sculpture* (1755). Schelling casts some doubts on the position that “art should be the imitator of nature” (SW VII: 293),<sup>35</sup> popular in the middle of the 18th century, before Winckelmann. Schelling interprets imitation this way: nature is an object, namely, as dead nature, and art only imitates nature. Schelling appreciates that Winckelmann emphasizes essence over form, the spiritual over the material. Nevertheless, Schelling criticizes Winckelmann’s successors, namely the pseudo-classicists, because they only imitate the form of ancient arts. According to Schelling, artists should not imitate classical artworks. Rather, they should imitate living nature.

According to Schelling, the plastic arts are distinctive in that they represent something ideal with forms or figures. Plastic art is “what active and effective link binds the two together, or what energy are the soul and body together created as it were at once” (SW VII: 296) and is in “the living centre” (*die lebendige Mitte*) of soul and nature (SW VII: 292).<sup>36</sup> “The dictum that art, to be art, must first withdraw from nature and only return to it its final consummation, has frequently been offered as an

34 Lucia Sziborsky comments that Schelling combines art with the politics of early romanticism, and emphasizes the political background of the speech. Lucia Sziborsky, “Einleitung“ in Schelling, *Über das Verhältnis der bildenden Künste zu der Natur* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1983), XXXV.

35 F.W.J. Schelling, “Concerning the Relation of the Plastic Arts to Nature,” trans. Michael Bullock, in H.E. Read, *The True Voice of Feeling: Studies in English Romantic Poetry*, ed. Herbert Read (London, 1953), 323-358. Bullock translates as “art should imitate nature.”

36 Schelling, *Concerning the Relation of the Plastic Arts to Nature*, 327f, 324. Translation altered..

elucidation of the artist's position in relation to nature." (SW VII: 301).<sup>37</sup>

The living idea works "only blindly," that is, unconsciously in all natural things. When an artist produces an artwork, "he must withdraw himself from the product or creature," namely nature as product, "but only in order to raise himself to the creative power and apprehend it spiritually" (SW VII: 301).<sup>38</sup> Schelling articulates that point further in the following:

The artist ought indeed to emulate this spirit of nature, which is at work in the core of things and in whose speech form and shape are merely symbols, and only insofar as he has apprehended it in living imitation has he himself created something true. For works arising out of the combination of forms which are already beautiful in themselves would be devoid of all beauty, since that which now actually constitutes the beauty of the work or the whole can no longer be form. It is above form, it is the essence, the universal, the vision and expression of the indwelling spirit of nature (SW VII: 301).<sup>39</sup>

Schelling states that the form can be beautiful, whereas beauty can appear beyond form. The essential and universal spirit in things is not bound or fixed by form and shape. It is ideal to appeal to the observer. Schelling applies the word "spirit of nature" (*Naturgeist*) to the ideal and essential nature as the universal productivity in things. An artist can produce a true artwork by imitating it in the beginning. The "spirit of nature" can reside beyond the form and be represented within an artwork, and what appears is beauty. We can understand this productivity of nature as "*natura naturans*," which Schelling inherits from Spinoza.

### **"The Spirit of Nature" from the Philosophy of Nature to the 1807 Speech**

In his speech, Schelling regards productive nature as a source (*Urquell*) of an artist's creativity. It is clear that Schelling applies the same relation between essence and thing in the 1807 speech, which he first defined in the philosophy of nature. Therefore, we can compare the relation between nature and spirit with the philosophy of nature and *The Philosophy of Art*. It will clarify the significance of the concept of "the spirit of nature" in his speech.

In the philosophy of nature Schelling attempts to integrate the following two divided and conflicting things: nature and spirit (the I). The terms "*natura naturata*" and "*natura naturans*" are already dealt with in his *Introduction to the Outline of a*

37 Schelling, *Concerning the Relation of the Plastic Arts to Nature*, 331.

38 Schelling, *Concerning the Relation of the Plastic Arts to Nature*, 332. Translation altered.

39 Schelling, *Concerning the Relation of the Plastic Arts to Nature*, 332.

*System of the Philosophy of Nature* (1799) as follows:

Insofar as we regard the totality of objects not merely as a product, but at the same time necessarily as productive, it becomes *Nature* for us, and this *identity of the product and the productivity*, and this alone, is implied by the idea of Nature, even in the ordinary use of language. *Nature* as a mere *product* (*natura naturata*) we call Nature as *object* (with this alone all empiricism deals). *Nature as productivity* (*natura naturans*) we call *Nature as subject* (with this alone all theory deals) (SW III: 284).<sup>40</sup>

Schelling denies a mechanistic view of nature. He revises Spinoza's terms into his system of the philosophy of nature. Nature is self-generating and self-organizing and it has both such aspects: "*natura naturata*," nature as object, and "*natura naturans*," nature as subject. The former, as a product, can be distinguished from the latter, as productive.

After the philosophy of nature, Schelling's philosophy of identity emerges in 1801. In his philosophy of identity, "the absolute identity" of subject and object is the principle of the whole of a system. He describes it as "indifference of subject and object" (SW IV: 114). In *The Philosophy of Art*, which generally conforms to the system of philosophy of identity, "spirit of nature" corresponds to the absolute as the source of art and the idea of beauty. The speech of 1807 also follows the same basic concept of *The Philosophy of Art*. Therefore, the object (nature) is immediately the subject (spirit), so is called "spirit of nature."

What is the specific character of the idea of nature in the 1807 speech? Firstly, it strongly emphasizes the productivity of nature, and it is seen as a source and model of an artist's creativity. Prior to the speech, the productivity of nature was discussed parallel to the productivity of art. For example, the productivity of nature and the imagination (*die Einbildungskraft*) of art. In art, the imagination binds conflicting things, unconsciousness and consciousness, and produce an artwork as a synthesized figure of the idea. In his philosophy of identity, the imagination is defined as a power of "*In-Eins-bilden*," to form plural things into one. The imagination is related to another concept of power, that is, "potency" (*Potenz*), which originally means power, force and potentiality. It has the same role in nature and art. In his philosophy of nature, Schelling adds a mathematical meaning, namely, "exponentiation," as the operation of raising one quantity to the power of another (e.g.  $A^n$ ).<sup>41</sup> He integrates

40 Schelling, in *First Outline of a System of the Philosophy of Nature*, "Introduction to the Outline of a System of the Philosophy of Nature," trans. Keith R. Peterson, (Albany: SUNY Press, 2004), 193-232, at 202.

41 Schelling borrows the concept of potency as "Exponentiation" from the German philosopher and physician Adolph Carl August Eschenmeyer. Schelling first refers to potency in *First Outline of a System of the Philosophy of Nature* (1799), and he intensively argues for it in *Introduction to the Outline of a System of the Philosophy of Nature* (1799).

exponentiation by repeating the same elements and constructions at higher stages, which he names “potentiation” (*Potenzierung*). With this definition of potency, Schelling characterizes each artform. Furthermore, the speech not only combines the productivity of nature with the creativity of art, but also reveals that nature and art have the same origin of production as that of “the spirit of nature” (*Naturgeist*). This genuine source of art is “the peculiar power” (*die eigentümliche Kraft*) to produce a new art (SW VII: 326).<sup>42</sup> Secondly, artists are required to have “a restraining exercise in the recognition” of the spirit of nature (SW VII: 305).<sup>43</sup> Through this practice, they (artists) can achieve “the extreme of beauty in constructions of the greatest simplicity with infinity and content” (SW VII: 305).<sup>44</sup>

### Nature in the Landscape Paintings of Joseph Anton Koch

In this section, I would like to present Schelling’s critique of the artworks in Munich, which will show the possibility of applying Schelling’s philosophy of art to concrete artworks. Certain romantic landscape paintings are connected to his philosophy of art, for example, those of Philipp Otto Runge and Caspar David Friedrich.

Runge finds a philosophical affinity to Schelling’s philosophy through the introduction of nature philosopher, Henrich Steffens. Runge depicts a “new landscape,” that represents original nature with symbolic figures, seen in his representative painting, such as his series on the theme of times of day.<sup>45</sup> Despite such a striking similarity between Schelling and Runge, Runge had no direct interaction with Schelling on the topic. He had not read Schelling’s philosophy of art, though he did read his freedom essay.<sup>46</sup> Friedrich is seen as a romantic painter who expresses the sublime in a relationship between nature and humans. Some of his paintings are connected to the concepts of Schelling’s philosophy of art, such as his use of symbolic figures, by which he depicts the endless and enormous power of nature and human unconsciousness, e.g., *The Monk by the Sea* (1809).<sup>47</sup>

Schelling, however, did not mention contemporary artists in his philosophy of art. After the period of the philosophy of art, however, Schelling appreciated one

42 Schelling, *Concerning the Relation of the Plastic Arts to Nature*, 354. Bullock translates the words into “our own energy.”

43 Schelling, *Concerning the Relation of the Plastic Arts to Nature*, 336.

44 Schelling, *Concerning the Relation of the Plastic Arts to Nature*, 336.

45 Cf. Markus Bertsch, Hubertus Gaßner, and Jenns Howoldt (eds.), *Kosmos Runge: Das Hamburger Symposium* (Munich: Hirmer, 2013). This book includes the proceedings of the symposium that was held on the 200th anniversary of his death. It presents the current state of research through numerous contributions and images. Roger Fornoff notes that Runge’s idea of “total work of art” (*Gesamtkunstwerk*) is influenced by Schelling’s philosophy of identity. Fornoff, “Weltverwandlung. Zu Philipp Otto Runge’s Idee des Gesamtkunstwerks,” in *Kosmos Runge*, 37f.

46 Frank Büttner, *Philipp Otto Runge* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2010), 15f.

47 Cf. Dieter Jähnig, *Der Weltbezug der Künste: Schelling, Nietzsche, Kant* (Munich: Karl Alber, 2011), 130-136. Jähnig compares Runge, Friedrich and Koch with Schelling’s philosophy.

landscape painter in particular, Joseph Anton Koch (1768-1839). Koch was born as a Tyrolean farmer's son and immigrated to Rome in 1794. He is a well-known landscape painter.

Alongside the director of the academy, Johann Peter von Langer, Schelling drafted the Academy's Constitution, collected artworks, prepared exhibitions and edited catalogs.<sup>48</sup> Schelling served as the Academy's Secretary General from 1808 to 1821. In October 1811, the Academy organized an art exhibition of about 400 paintings and sculptures.<sup>49</sup> In this exhibit, Schelling mentions his appreciation and enthusiasm for the inclusion of Koch's painting, *Landscape near Subiaco in the Sabine Mountains* (1811).<sup>50</sup> This painting shows the small town of Subiaco, located in Eastern Rome and at the foot of the Apennine Mountains. During the World War II, the work was lost. Today, we only have access to copies. The original work was initiated by an order of a Munich politician, Asbeck, who commissioned Koch, through the mediation of Langer. In his letter to Langer in 1810, Koch suggests painting a landscape of Subiaco. "I believe something that gives a general idea of Italian landscape, that is, a far outstretched land with figures according to their spirit."<sup>51</sup>

Koch also produced a counterpart to this painting called *Tiber landscape at Acqua Acetosa* (1812).<sup>52</sup> Koch speaks about the totality created by light and colors in his letter to Langer on April 6, 1811: "I have produced the effect of all the more powerful colors than shadow and light, because the objects are mostly in the brightsunlight, as I have seen such in nature on the way to S. Benedetto."<sup>53</sup>

## Schelling's Criticism of Koch's Landscape Painting

How did Schelling review Koch's landscape painting? In his letter to J. F. Cotta on October 13, 1811, Schelling described Koch's painting as follows: "The Koch's No.171 is appearing astonishingly marvelous and, indeed, something unique until now, so to speak, fragmentary in the background of old German painting, e.g. Dürer's

48 Catalogs and constitutions to which Schelling contributed can be found in Luigi Pareyson (ed.), *Schellingiana Rariora*, (Torino: Bottega d'Erasmus, 1977).

49 By the time of the catalog and *Allgemeine Zeitung* in October in the same year, there were 427 exhibited works, among them: 24 portraits, about 30 copies by students of the academy, over 70 original creative paintings, 50 historical and figure paintings, over 20 landscapes, two still lifes, 3 animals, original creative history sketches, over 20 sculptures, and about 60 architecture sketches and nature and antique sketches. Pareyson, *Schellingiana Rariora*, 385.

50 "Öl, 100: 133," 1811, Museum der bildenden Künste, Leipzig, missing since 1945. Schelling named the painting "*Subiaco in den Apenninen*," but this is the same painting as "*Gegend bei Subiaco im Sabinergebirge*." Koch exhibits about 20 etchings. Cf. Pareyson, *Schellingiana Rariora*, 372.

51 Koch's Letter to Langer of 1810, Otto R. Lutterotti, *Joseph Anton Koch, 1768-1839: Leben und Werk*, (Herold, 1985), 286.

52 "Öl, 102: 135," 1812, Alte Nationalgalerie, missing since 1945. Cf. Lutterotti, *Koch*, 286f.

53 Ernst Jaffé, *Joseph Anton Koch: Sein Leben und sein Schaffen* (Innsbruck: Wagner, 1905), 40.

painting.”<sup>54</sup> Schelling considers Dürer a great German painter, comparable to Raphael (SW V: 360), and raises Koch as an outstanding painter, ranking with Dürer. On February 25, 1812, Schelling also wrote a letter to J. M. Wagner saying, “The crown of the exhibition was and remained Koch’s landscape.”<sup>55</sup>

In the newspaper *Allgemeine Zeitung*, on November 8, 1811, Schelling wrote an anonymous review of the Munich exhibition. In it, Schelling compares the *Landscape near Subiaco in the Sabine Mountains* with the work of French painter Claude Lorrain:

Undoubtedly the crown of the exhibition [is] in the landscape block, a work of quite peculiar, but really German style. If Claude Lorrain painted, as it were, only the sky and the air, then Koch represents also the earth to us, and indeed in its full strength and consistency, we would like to say, at the same time, in its ancientness. If he leads the eye to almost endless distances, on the other hand, so Koch brings all objects close to [us], and shows them with great clarity. No monotonous or non-transparent green; not merely a superficial light shining on the leaves; no mere crowds in the trees; no misuse of the aerial perspective, extreme clarity and transparency of the air, which is almost never found in paintings. The individual is not lost in a general impression of the whole, but on the contrary, it is produced by the completeness and definiteness of even the most individual.<sup>56</sup>

The individual parts are not lost, but they are harmoniously unified and composed as an artwork. This relationship between parts and whole corresponds to his theory of painting, explained in *The Philosophy of Art*.<sup>57</sup> In the following, Schelling calls Koch’s painting “a beautiful labyrinth.” He analyzes the composition as follows:

A beautiful labyrinth, where the path often disappears and reappears, leads the eye through all the beautiful confusion of the rising, still-falling water living area, through many detours to the height above which the houses of Subiaco begin, and until to the column of smoke that rises from old walls to the sky. The foreground on one side, an ancient grassy ground, is animated by shepherds and a herd of joking lambs and rams fighting among themselves. On the other side, a mother with her child in her arm, sitting on a donkey ... pleasantly reminding us of the escape to Egypt.<sup>58</sup>

54 Horst Fuhrmann and Liselotte Lohrer (eds.), *Schelling und Cotta: Briefwechsel 1803-1849*, (Stuttgart: Klett, 1965), 54.

55 G.L. Plitt (ed.), *Aus Schellings Leben, in Briefen*, vol. 2 (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1869), 292.

56 Pareyson, *Schellingiana Rariora*, 388.

57 The relationship also coincides with the musical unit by August Wilhelm Schlegel.

58 Pareyson, *Schellingiana rariora*, 388.

By depicting not only a natural landscape but also people within the landscape, an observer can understand the theme of the work internally.<sup>59</sup> L. Knatz acknowledges the significance of Koch for Schelling, because Schelling's landscape theory is more applicable to Koch's paintings than Friedrich's.<sup>60</sup> Koch composes his harmonious world with individual elements on the canvas representing a general idea.

Schelling also regards Koch as a great painter comparable to a "history painter." Schelling writes:

Only those who have the same sense for higher, spiritual conditions can deeply feel the living of general nature and its phenomena. The study of nature would be a bad idea for Mr. Koch. The man who made this picture did not consider nature merely for the purpose of his works; in loneliness, far from the activities of society, he felt her life, and thus became one with her in a rare way.<sup>61</sup>

Collaborating with Nazarene artists, Koch continued to practice landscape painting depicting natural landscapes in towns and mountains near Rome. As cited above, Schelling accepts the possibility that landscape paintings are comparable to historical paintings. In historical paintings, a symbolic figure as a historical being which is independent from the idea is depicted. Historical painting is, therefore, symbolic painting, in which "an image (*Bild*) is symbolic whose subject not only means (*bedeuten*) the idea, but *is itself the idea*" (SW V: 554f.).<sup>62</sup>

Schelling did not change his prioritizing of historical paintings. It remains after his *Philosophy of Art* lectures as well. However, a certain evaluation for landscape paintings can be found in Schelling's critique of Koch's painting. Landscape paintings can express the idea differently than historical paintings. The function of landscape paintings is to represent nature, but what is painted is "the living thing of general nature," namely, the productivity of nature itself. Koch does not think of nature as a separate entity. Rather, he sees nature as the productivity of nature in itself (in his mind) and expresses it in his painting.

In landscape paintings, various elements construct the whole on canvas, and they are unified harmoniously. In Koch's landscapes, each figure, for example,

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59 Cf. Schlegel, *Kunstlehre*, 340. Schlegel considers small figures of humans and animals in the foreground as necessary elements. These are emphasized to enliven the landscape and for "the sound of musical unity" (*Ton der musikalischen Einheit*). Schlegel, *Kunstlehre*, 340. The impression, is reflected in the figures like the reflection in a mirror. The observers tune their inner psychological conditions to the tone of the painting.

60 Lothar Knatz, *Geschichte-Kunst-Mythos: Schellings Philosophie und die Perspektive einer philosophischen Mythostheorie* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1999), 241.

61 Pareyson, *Schellingiana rariora*, 388f.

62 Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, 151. Stott translates "*Bild*" as "picture," and "*bedeuten*" as "signify" or "mean."



a mountain, plant, animal, and a human being, is integrated into the artwork. From this, we can conclude that Schelling's theory of landscape, in which he incorporates the productivity of nature and the harmonious unity, corresponds to Koch's contemporary landscape painting.<sup>63</sup>

Koch was elected as a member of the Academy in 1812. In 1815, the Academy bought Koch's landscape painting, *Heroic Landscape with the Rainbow* (1815).<sup>64</sup> This clearly shows that Koch's landscape paintings were highly valued at the time. Not only did his landscape paintings correspond to Schelling's theory of the philosophy of art but, also, Koch was recognized by the Academy as an important contemporary painter.

### Conclusion

Throughout this paper, I show how Schelling discusses the relationship between nature and the art of landscape paintings between the time of his *Philosophy of Art* lectures, his 1807 Munich speech, and his critiques of 1811. An artist can produce an artwork from out of an original power, namely productivity. Schelling makes clear that the productivity of art is connected to the productivity of nature, that is, the spirit of nature. The productivity of an artist is grounded in productive nature and imagination. In the period after 1807, Schelling no longer upholds the position presented in his philosophy of art and identity-philosophy, however, he continues his involvement with art practice at the Academy. Drawing on and taking into account this involvement with the art practice, we can highlight a new image of Schelling.

63 Cf. Cordula Grewe, "Die Geburt der Natur aus dem Geiste Dürers," in *Landschaft am »Scheidepunkt«: Evolutionen einer Gattung in Kunsttheorie, Kunstschaffen und Literatur um 1800*, ed. Markus Bertsch and Reinhard Wegner (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2010), 345.

64 "Öl, 188 : 170," 1815, Munich, Neue Pinakothek.